



COVID-19 CRISIS

IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS FOR EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY





PREFACE

This country case study is an integral part of the project COVID-19 crisis: implications and lessons for European social democracy, which the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) conducted in collaboration with the Instituto Cattaneo in Bologna and successfully completed with the invaluable help of Kieskompass in Amsterdam. As a report, this is one of six documents supplementing a comparative study, completed to offer a detailed perspective on Spain.

At its inception in 2020, the founders' ambition was to investigate citizens' attitudes during and after the pandemic. As COVID-19 continued, the two waves of the survey put in the field by Dynata simply captured the opinions in two respective moments—December 2020/January 2021 and October/November 2021—showing how perspectives fluctuated during the profound crisis. All the partners involved in this project wanted to dive deep to gain a comprehensive picture; thus, the survey was comprised of 13 sociodemographic and 63 thematic questions. These allowed for the segmentation of the vast data, which was collected in a sample of 1,000 citizens twice in six countries (France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Sweden, and Poland). Thanks to cross-tabulations and analyses of the overlap of the vote propensity, it was possible to extract very specific answers regarding the trends among diverse groups. There was a special focus on the opinions held by the voters and sympathizers of the centre-left, of course. And, in this spirit, the next pages and the section entitled Key Findings are meant to serve as a piece of policy advice.

After the first wave, FEPS and FES took some time to discuss the initial results internally as well as with circles of experts from the six countries in question. The objective of these discussions was to put the findings in a country-specific context and explain both similarities and points of divergence when making an overall comparison. These debates took place during closed round tables consisting of Members of National Parliaments, Members of the European Parliaments, academics, trade unionists, civil society experts, party strategists and pollsters, youth representatives, and publicists. The organisers remain incredibly grateful to all these individuals for their time, enthusiasm, and input. It is not possible to name them all, as the total number surpassed 200. That said, we would like to mention our gratitude towards the organisations that helped with these events, especially the Centrum im. Ignacego Daszynskiego, Olof Palme International Center, Foundation Pablo Iglesias, Foundation Rafael Campalans, as well as the respective FES regional Offices in Madrid, Stockholm, Warsaw, Paris, and Rome. The insights gained were invaluable and relevant for this country's case study and the comparative study.

With this in mind, we are eager to present you with this study, thanking again Instituto Cattaneo (including Salvatore Vassalo, Moreno Mancuso, and Federico Vegetti) for all the cooperation in designing the questionnaire and obtaining the data; Dynata for conducting the two waves of surveys; Kieskompas (including André Krouwel and Yordan Kutiyski) whose team engaged with us in several rounds and then completed these important documents. Finally, we would like to thank our colleagues, especially Celine Guedes (FEPS) and Adrianna Hornung (FES), who shouldered all the organizational load.

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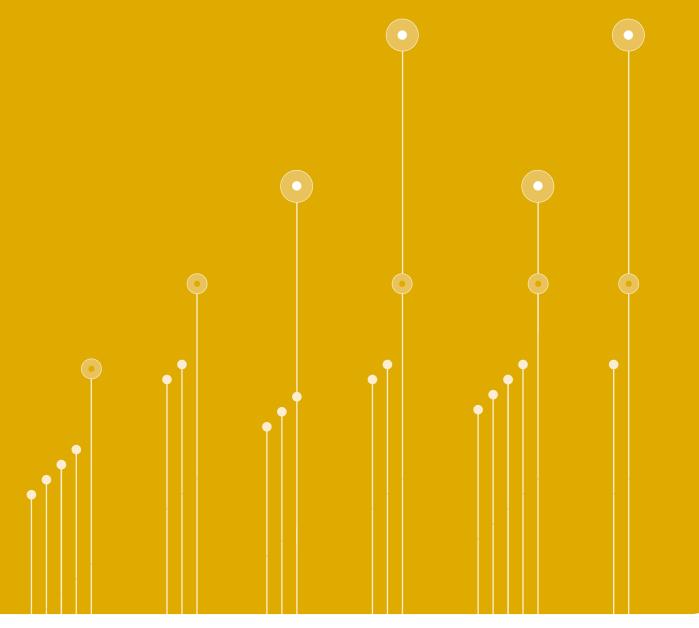
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SUMMARY

RELATIVE POLITICAL STABILITY AND SENSE OF DIRECTION



- 1) The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened political and societal divisions in Europe and Spain is no exception, as evidenced by the data analyses presented in this country report. It is notable that many respondents' opinions did not change substantially between 2020 and 2021.
- 2) Substantial changes that were observed reflect increased support for pandemic mitigation measures among all demographic groups, coupled with a critical opinion of the general handling of the pandemic, including public spending. This increase in criticism coincided with relatively stable levels of institutional trust, perceptions of deepening social divisions, and an increased concern about climate change.
- The opinions of voters for specific parties and different demographic groups remained largely the same from one year to the other. When it comes to pandemic-related matters and overall satisfaction with governance, voters that support the governing party Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), Podemos-IU, and smaller parties can be characterised as having the highest levels of satisfaction with the way the pandemic was handled, the highest degree of institutional trust, and the highest likelihood of following the recommendations of the government in relation to the pandemic.
- 4) On the one hand, voters of the centrist Ciudadanos party and of the Partido Popular (PP) also exhibit relatively high levels of institutional trust and often lack cynical opinions.
- 5) On the other hand, Vox voters are particularly critical of the way the government is handling the pandemic, but also with Spanish politics at large. Vox voters have a different profile, are more conservative and government-critical, compared to the rest of the electorate.
- 6) A demographic group that is similarly cynical consists of those who have difficulties making ends meet: as in other countries, respondents struggling with their financial situation are among the most critical.
- 7) Nevertheless, respondents without a clear ideological persuasion are much more moderate compared to the same group in other countries. In Spain, they are supportive of immigration and concerned about climate change. They are also more institutionally trustful than other respondent groups. This group of voters is predominantly represented within the Ciudadanos electorate.
- **8)** Voters with a left-wing orientation are also supportive of government policies and the way society operates in general.
- 9) Contrary to other countries, political centrists are similar to respondents who identify as right-wing and are often critical of the government or adopt stances typical for the radical right.
- 10) When it comes to demographics, the most cynical and politically distrustful respondents can be found among citizens with income difficulties: such respondents are

- much more distrustful, anti-immigration, anti-climate policy, and are generally more dissatisfied with governance than other demographic groups. These citizens are also more likely to be critical of the European Union and doubtful that climate change will have a serious impact on future generations.
- 11) However, it is worth pointing out that, contrary to the findings in other countries, this study found that people in Spain with less education do not have very cynical stances and do not differ substantially from respondents in other education categories. In terms of age, older generations were less negatively impacted by the pandemic when it comes to quality of life and work conditions.
- **12)** Nevertheless, older respondents are more likely to think that the measures against the pandemic should have been stricter.
- 13) In sum, the data points that even though there are many different, often polarised, opinions in Spain, the majority of Spanish citizens are politically moderate, have relatively high confidence in their government, have a high degree of institutional trust, support their country's membership in the EU, believe that immigrants are a benefit to society, and are concerned about climate change.



DATA AND METHODS



This country report offers an in-depth overview of public opinion in Spain by comparing the stances of various demographic and political groups. Respondents were segmented by gender, age, educational attainment, economic well-being, and ideological orientation. Most importantly, voter groups were identified based on respondents' current vote intention. Comparing citizen categories allows policy-makers and political campaigners alike to make informed decisions when targeting specific population groups.

The results compare how the aforementioned groups of respondents answered the various closed-ended survey questions. Questions on the same topic (e.g., support for measures against the COVID-19 pandemic) that use a scale rather than ordinal answer categories were used to create indices after a reliability analysis was performed to confirm that they measure the same concept. For these indices, the mean scores for each respondent group were estimated; the groups were subsequently plotted on two-dimensional scatterplots comprised of two indices. Again, the average mean scores between the two waves were calculated for each voter group.

Two waves of survey data in six countries: France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Sweden, were collected by Dynata, in coordination with the Cattaneo institute, in December 2020/January 2021 and October/November 2021, respectively. In Spain, each wave comprises a sample of 1,000 respondents, representative of the demographic composition and political preferences of the Spanish population. The questionnaires used in both waves contained largely overlapping questions, allowing for an over-time comparison of public opinion on various socioeconomic issues. Given that there were very minor opinion differences between the two waves for items included in both survey iterations, the average percentage and mean scores for these questions are reported, with several exceptions. The following questions were only asked in the first wave of the survey and, therefore, only results from this wave are reported:

- There are different views on how the national government balanced, in the short run, protecting jobs and protecting public health when responding to the coronavirus pandemic.
- There are different views on how the national government balanced preserving public health and preserving individual freedom when responding to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Some hope to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible, others believe that it would be risky to get vaccinated. If the health authorities provide you an opportunity to get vaccinated, how likely is it that you will do so?
- Have you installed the national contact tracing app Radar COVID on your smartphone?

In addition, several questions were only included in the second wave of the questionnaire and, therefore, only results from this wave were reported:

- Some people argue that the COVID-19 vaccination should be mandatory for everyone to stop the pandemic, others that people should always be free to choose whether to get vaccinated or not.
- Compared to the end of 2020, do you think that your own economic situation...
- And thinking about the next 12 months, do you think that your own economic situation...

The indices measuring conspiracy belief, populist sentiments, and the question asking respondents to evaluate the "NextGenerationEU" plan were also included in the second wave only; therefore, only this second wave data is analyzed for these items.



CHAPTER 1

PANDEMICS UNDERMINED COHESION, AFFECTING MORE THE YOUNGER AND THE LESS EDUCATED

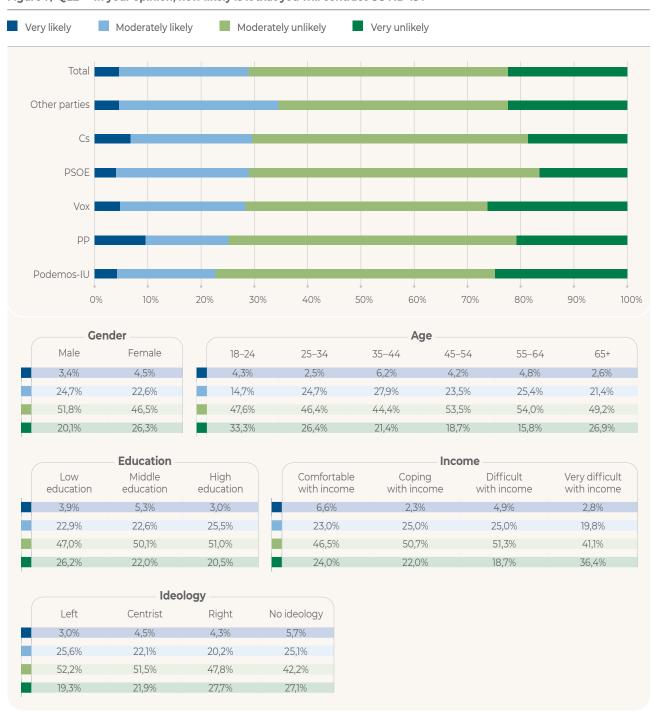


Likelihood of and Concern about Contracting the Virus

Despite the danger posed by COVID-19, the vast majority of Spanish citizens (70.9 per cent) did not think it likely that they would contract the virus. Voters of Ciudadanos (Cs) and smaller parties were most likely to consider that they would contract the virus, while Podemos and PP voters were least likely to think they would get infected.

When it comes to demographics, women, those of younger age, less educated people, and people struggling with their income considered it less likely that they would contract the virus. In terms of ideology, right-wing respondents and those with no political orientation considered it less likely that they would get infected with COVID-19.

Figure 1 / Q22 - In your opinion, how likely is it that you will contract COVID-19?

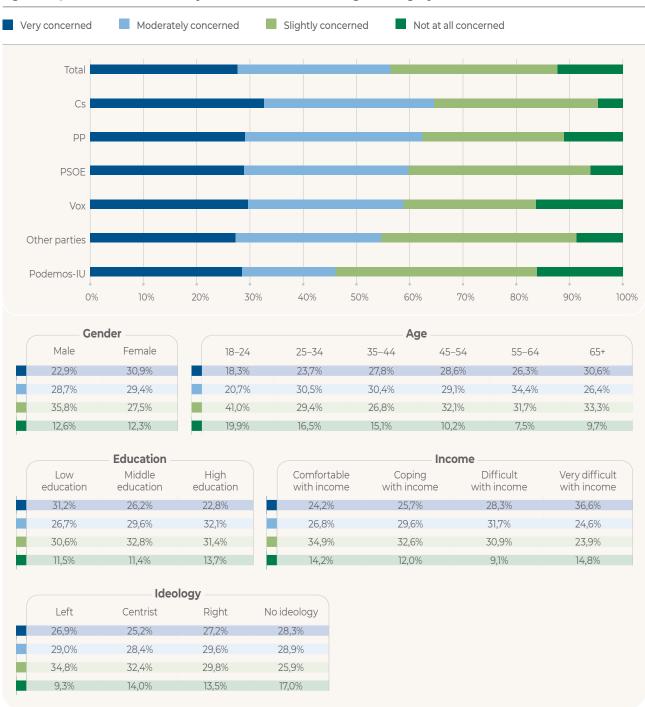




When it comes to the dangers the virus would pose to individuals' health, it is clear that the majority of Spanish citizens (nearly 90 per cent) were at least slightly concerned. Voters of Podemos differed most from other respondents since less than 50 per cent of them were very or moderately concerned about the health risk posed by the COV-ID-19 infection. Over 15 per cent of these voters reported

being not at all concerned, which is higher than the proportion of other party voters and similar to Vox voters. Women, respondents of older age (particularly those aged 55 or more), respondents with income difficulties, and respondents with less education were most concerned about the health risks posed by COVID-19.

Figure 2 / Q23 - How concerned are you that a COVID infection might endanger your health?

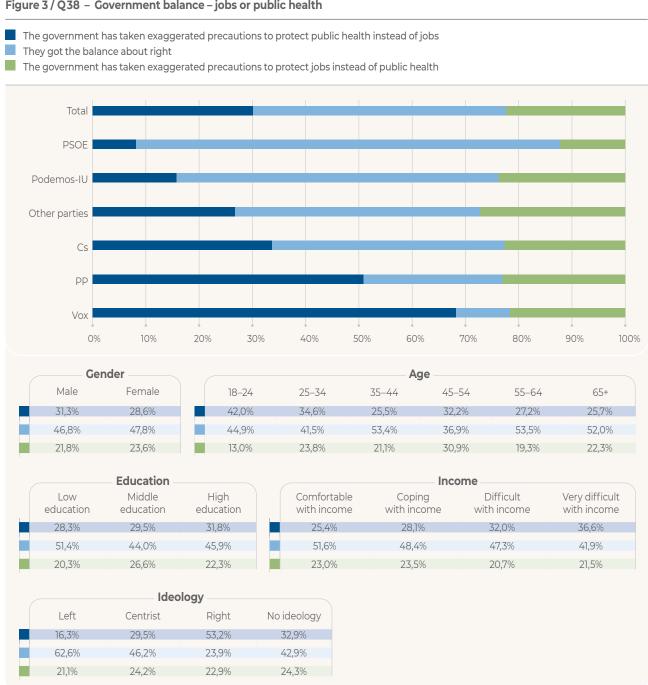


Evaluations of Government Policy against the Pandemic

While nearly half of Spanish citizens reported that they thought the government response to the pandemic was balanced, there were substantial critical voices on the matter: 30 per cent of those surveyed answered that government measures did not take protecting jobs sufficiently into account, while 22.6 per cent thought that the government should have taken stronger measures to protect public health. Voters of PSOE and Podemos are all overwhelm-

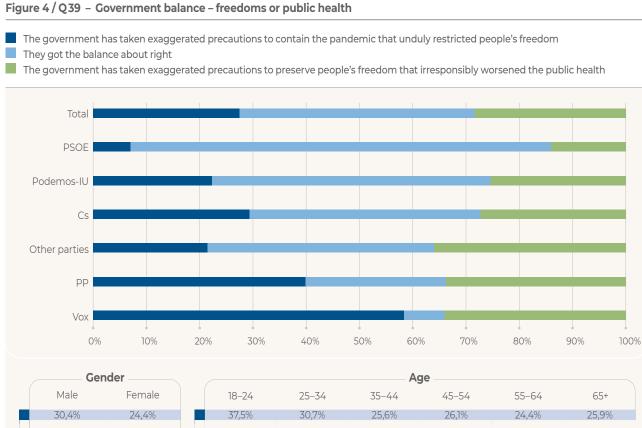
ingly supportive of the government policies, while right-wing voters are most critical of the government policy and consider more should have been done to protect jobs. In terms of demographics, younger people and those struggling the most with their economic situations, who were arguably hardest hit by the pandemic, are most likely to think that the government should have put more focus on protecting jobs. Respondents with no ideology or who identify as rightwing are most critical of the handling of the pandemic.

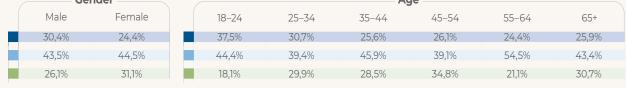
Figure 3 / Q38 - Government balance - jobs or public health





A similar pattern emerges when looking at how citizens view the government response as a trade-off between preserving people's freedom and protecting public health: a large minority of 44.2 per cent of Spanish respondents consider that the balance was about right, while nearly 27.4 per cent think freedoms were restricted unduly. Finally, 28.4 per cent think the restrictions should have been more far-reaching. Again, voters on the left are most supportive of the restrictive measures, while those on the right, particularly Vox and PP voters, think that freedoms were unduly restricted. Younger citizens and those in more economically precarious situations were most likely to think that freedoms were restricted unduly.





	Education —				Income				
Low education	Middle education	High education		Comfortable with income	Coping with income	Difficult with income	Very difficult with income		
26,5%	28,9%	27,6%		26,4%	25,5%	28,5%	32,3%		
45,7%	41,2%	44,5%		47,1%	44,2%	43,5%	44,4%		
27,8%	29,9%	27,9%		26,4%	30,2%	28,0%	23,2%		

	Ideology —						
Left	Centrist	Right	No ideology				
14,4%	28,7%	43,5%	35,6%				
60,6%	48,1%	21,1%	33,6%				
25,0%	23,3%	35,4%	30,8%				

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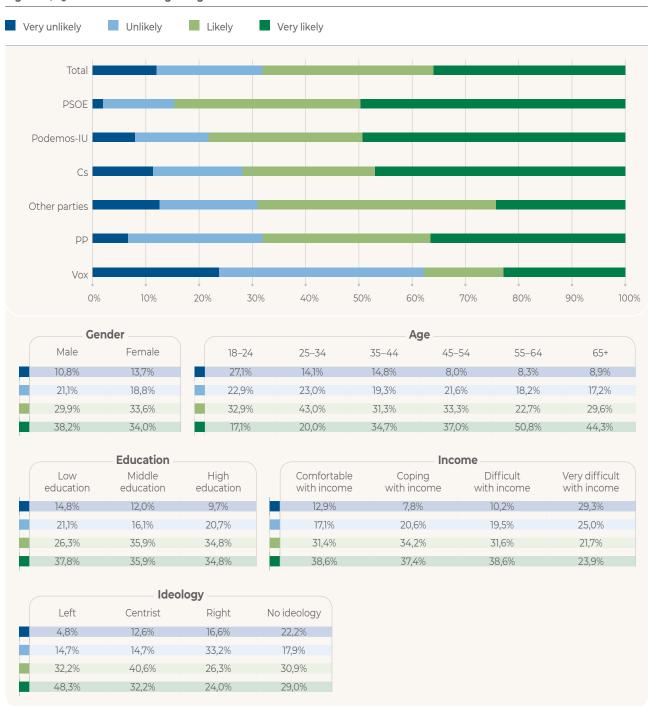
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Likelihood of Getting Vaccinated

When the survey was conducted in November 2020, 68.1 per cent of the respondents stated that they would get vaccinated if health authorities offered an opportunity for them to do so. This number is much lower than the current vaccination rate in Spain, which stands at about 83 per cent. Similar to the trends reported above, voters for centrist and left-wing parties are most likely to get vacci-

nated, while a clear majority of about 60 per cent of Vox voters would not do so. Somewhat surprisingly, women are slightly less likely than men to get vaccinated. More in line with previous findings, younger respondents are substantially less likely to get vaccinated than older generations. Similarly, respondents with less education, lower incomes, and those with right-wing ideology or no ideological persuasion are less likely to get vaccinated.

Figure 5 / Q52 - Likelihood of getting vaccinated





The Impact of COVID-19 on Quality of Life and Working Conditions

There is very little variation among the different population groups when it comes to the impact of the pandemic on the quality of people's lives: more than 70 per cent of Spaniards reported that they had been affected negatively. Still, smaller party voters and PP voters reported having felt the most negative impact on their lives, while PSOE

voters were less likely to report having been negatively affected. Women experienced a higher degree of quality of life deterioration, along with the less educated and those with more precarious financial situations. Right-wing respondents and those without clear ideological persuasion also reported having been more negatively impacted by the pandemic compared to political centrists and leftwing respondents.

Figure 6 / Q74 - Overall, how would you assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the quality of your life?



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A thin majority of Spanish respondents report that their working conditions were unaffected by the pandemic (51.1 per cent). Nevertheless, on both sides of the political spectrum, PSOE and PP voters reported a much more substantial deterioration of their working conditions than Podem-

os and Vox voters. Those reporting to have been most negatively affected by the pandemic are women, younger respondents, those with lower levels of educational attainment, lower-income individuals, and respondents without an ideology.

Figure 7 / Q75 - How would you assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on your working conditions?





COVID-19 Contact Tracing App

A rather underwhelming proportion of respondents have installed Spain's national contact tracing app (Radar COVID)—a mere 23.4 per cent. Voters of governing PSOE and Ciudadanos were more likely to have installed the app compared

to other voter groups, especially Vox and Podemos. People with lower levels of education and precarious economic conditions were less likely to have installed the contact tracing app. Moreover, right-wing voters and those claiming no ideological orientation were the least likely to have installed it.

Figure 8 / Q61 - Have you installed on your smartphone the national contact tracing app (Radar COVID)?



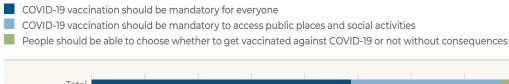
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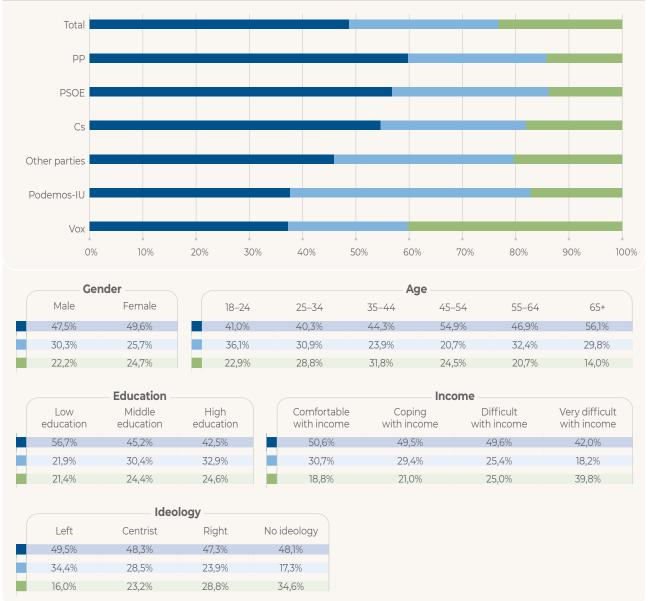
Mandatory Vaccination

More than 75 per cent of Spanish respondents believe that there should be some form of mandatory vaccination against COVID-19. Voters of the centrist parties (PP, PSOE and Cs) are most supportive of mandatory vaccination, whereas Vox voters and, to a lesser extent, Podemos-IU voters are most opposed. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that more than half of all voter groups are in favour of some form of mandatory vaccination. Older respondents are more like-

ly than younger ones to support mandatory vaccination, along with those with higher incomes and those with left-wing ideology (although the latter are much more supportive of vaccine mandates for accessing public spaces). Likewise, less educated respondents are more likely to be supportive of mandatory vaccination compared to other education categories, a finding different from other countries where the highest educated respondents were found to be the most supportive of mandatory vaccination.

Figure 9 / Q21G - Mandatory vaccination







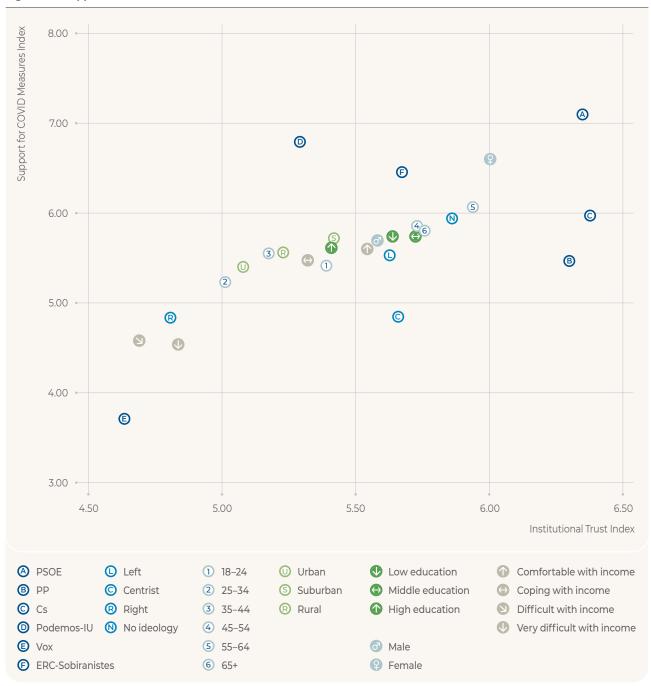
Institutional Trust, Support for COVID Measures and Public Perceptions of the Pandemic

The Support for COVID-19 Mitigation Measures Index comprises five separate questions; respondents were asked to evaluate the measures various institutions have taken to respond to the pandemic. The Institutional Trust Index is generated from six separate questions that ask respondents to what extent they trust various national and international institutions on a 10-point scale, where 0 means "no trust at all" and 10 means "complete trust". All questions used in the scatterplots are asked with a 10-point scale answer category. For all indices included in the country report, lower scores indicate a low level of support or agreement with what is measured, while higher scores ac-

count for a high level of support. In sum, a lower institutional trust index score signifies a lower degree of institutional trust. The average values of numerous respondent groups are reported in a two-dimensional scatterplot with the various population segmentations based on age, gender, educational attainment, difficulty coping with income, political orientation, and party support.

There is a clear linear relationship between the two indices: the more institutionally trustful respondents are, the more likely they are to support COVID-19 measures. In particular, voters of the moderate centrist and the left-wing parties, people older than 45, and women are more supportive of the measures against the pandemic and also

Figure 10 - Support für Covid Measures



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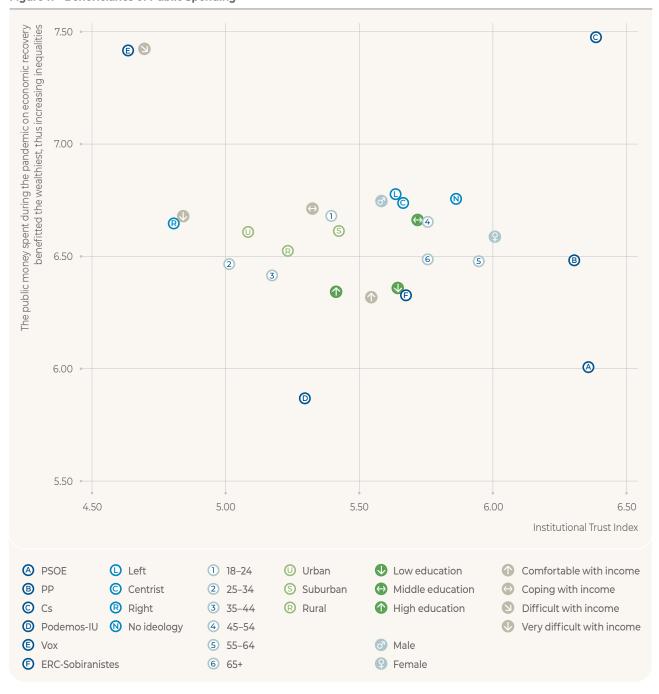
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have the highest levels of institutional trust. On the other hand, Vox voters and the respondents in the most precarious economic situations have substantially lower degrees of trust and are less likely to support COVID-19 measures.

When it comes to perceptions of who has benefitted from the public spending during the pandemic, it is clear that Vox and Ciudadanos voters, along with those on the lower steps of the economic ladder, perceive that the wealthiest have benefitted the most from public spending for economic recovery. Highly educated respondents, those with more comfort with their financial situations, and Podemos and PSOE voters are less likely to believe that public spending has benefitted the wealthiest. However, it is im-

Figure 11 - Beneficiaries of Public Spending

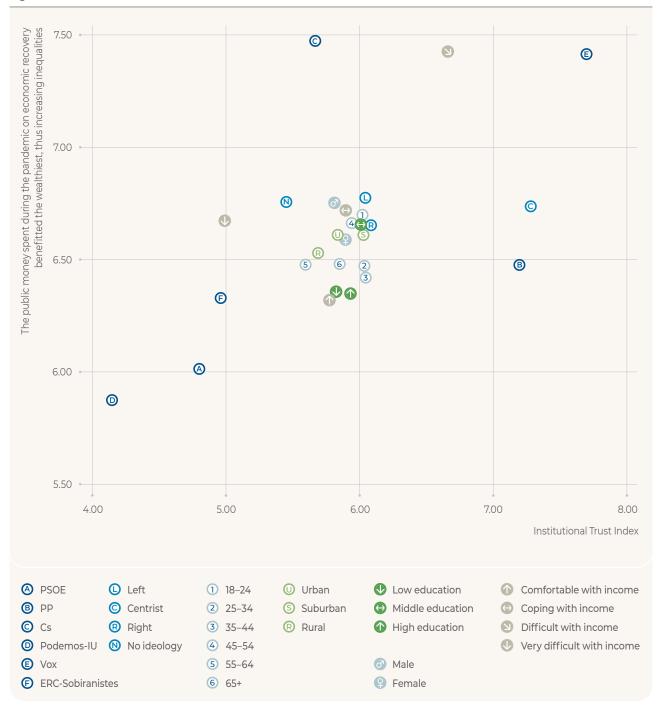




portant to note that the question on the vertical axis is a 10-point scale, meaning that all respondent groups in the graph score above the mean of the scale. This suggests that the public is rather dissatisfied with the handing of public spending during the pandemic. There is a general and widespread perception that the pandemic exacerbated existing societal inequalities.

When it comes to the perception that measures against the pandemic go against constitutional and democratic principles, it is clear that the Spanish population is divided on the matter. Clearly, Vox voters are the outlier again, together with political centrists, those struggling with their income, and PP voters. However, many respondent groups have a rather moderate position on the matter. Respond-

Figure 12 – Covid Measures and Constitutional Rules



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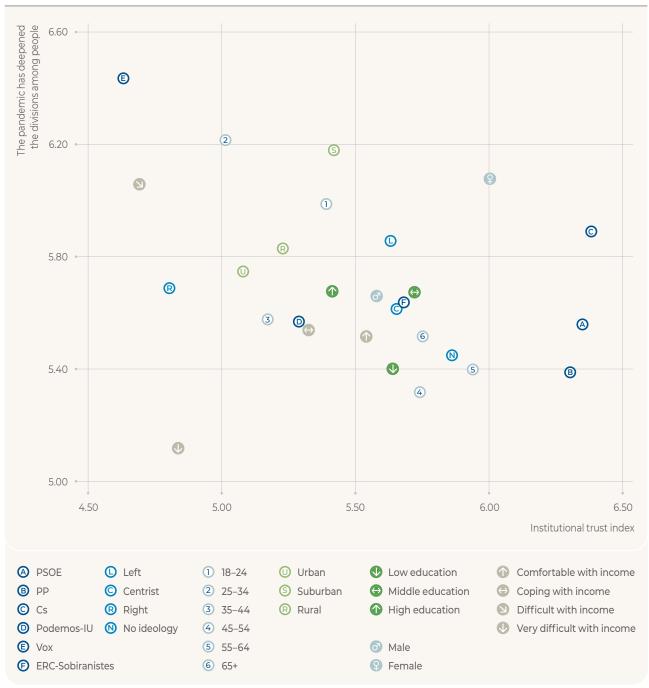
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ents who vote for the left-wing parties, as well as those in the most precarious economic situations, are the least likely to think that the government's response to the pandemic was unconstitutional and anti-democratic.

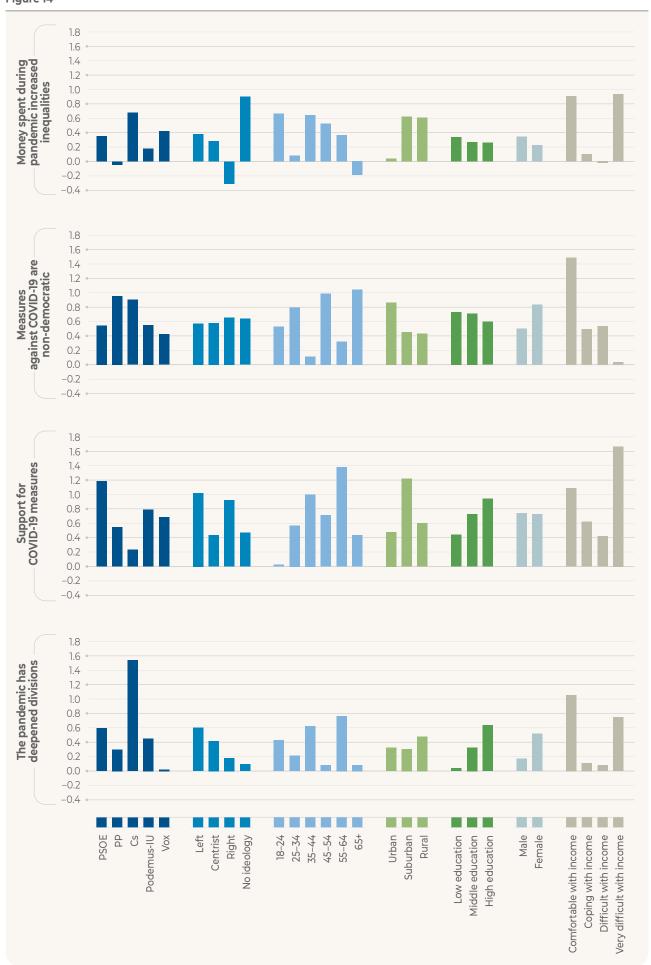
Most Spanish respondents agree that the pandemic has deepened the divisions among people. Vox voters, respondents with income difficulties, and those aged 25 to 34 are most likely to agree with this proposition.

Figure 13 – Covid and Divisions Among People



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Figure 14



When it comes to the differences between the results in the two waves, we report how the mean values for each index changed for each sociodemographic respondent group. There is a clear pattern: most respondent groups agreed more strongly in 2021 compared to 2020 that the pandemic has deepened divisions between people. Support for the COVID-19 mitigation measures also increased substantially among all voter groups. Moreover, all respondent groups agreed to a larger extent in 2021 that the measures have been non-democratic and consider the public investments during the pandemic to have increased inequalities.

KEY FINDINGS (1)



- O- Although the majority of Spanish respondents under-
- O- While the vast majority of Spaniards were concerned
- O- Nearly half of Spaniards consider that the government
- O- Although the majority of respondents report their
- O- When it comes to deterioration of quality of life and

- O- The majority of Spaniards believe that there should be
- O- The more institutionally trustful respondents are, the supportive of the pandemic measures and also have
- O- The perception that measures against the pandemic
- O Nearly all respondent groups agreed to a larger extent



CHAPTER 2

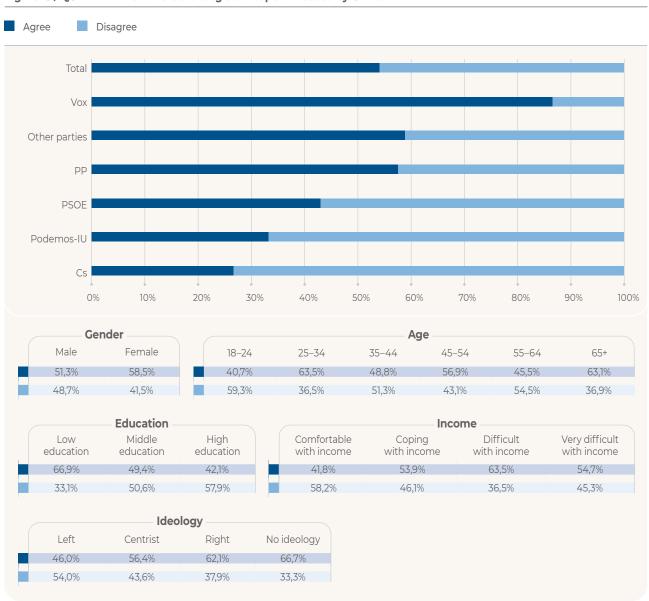
VOX, PP AND SMALLER
PARTY VOTERS MORE OPEN
TO CONSPIRACY THEORIES



When it comes to belief in conspiracy theories, the proposition stating that "the virus is a biological weapon intentionally released by China" has the largest degree of support among Spaniards: 54 per cent of those surveyed state that they believe in this theory. This is the highest percentage of all six countries in this study. Vox voters are most likely to

agree with the proposition (86 per cent), while Cs and Podemos voters are least likely to do so. Women, respondents aged 25 to 34, respondents aged 65 and above, those with lower levels of education, those with income difficulties, and respondents with right-wing or no ideology are more likely to believe in this conspiracy theory than other groups.

Figure 15 / Q57 XB - "The virus is a biological weapon released by China"

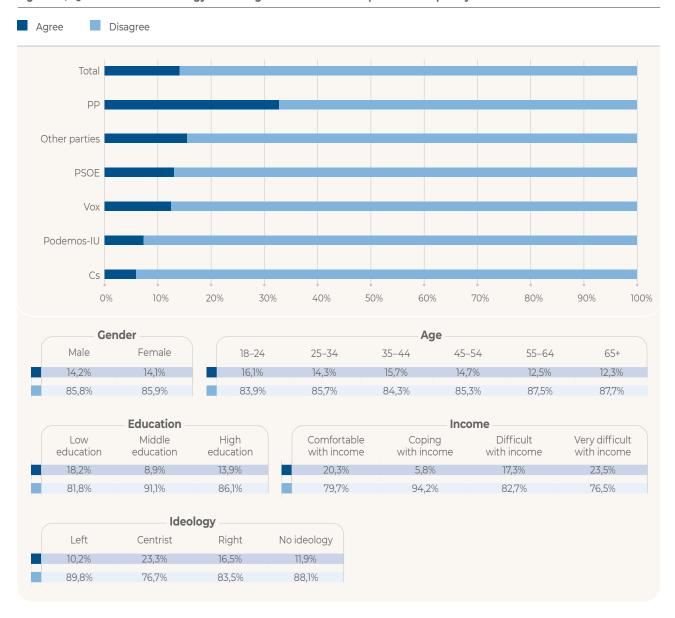




Another conspiracy theory addressed in this survey is the proposition that "5G technology is causing the coronavirus to spread more quickly". This theory has a low degree of support: 14 per cent of those surveyed state that they believe in the theory. PP voters are most likely to agree with the prop-

osition, while Cs and Podemos voters are least likely to do so. Respondents with less education, those least able to cope with their income, as well as respondents with centrist ideology are more likely to believe in this conspiracy theory compared to respondents from other demographic groups.

Figure 16 / Q57 XB - "5G technology is causing the coronavirus to spread more quickly"



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A rather high degree of agreement among the populace was found for the conspiracy theory "The virus has been spread by multinational pharmaceutical companies now ready to make huge profits by selling the vaccine" — 40 per cent of those surveyed stated that they believe in the theory. Vox voters predominantly agree with the proposi-

tion (57 per cent), while Podemos and Cs voters are least likely to do so. Respondents with lower levels of educational attainment, the economically precarious, and those on the political right or centre are more likely to believe that multinational pharmaceutical companies have spread the virus for their own economic gain.

Figure 17/Q57XB – "The virus has been spread by multinational pharmaceutical companies so they can make huge profits by selling the vaccine"





The proposition stating that "the coronavirus is a hoax" has the lowest degree of support; only 10.8 per cent of those surveyed doubt that the virus is a genuine threat. Again, Vox voters are most likely to agree with the proposition, while smaller party and Podemos voters are least likely to think that COVID-19 is a hoax. Younger respondents, those with middle education, those both comfortable and having difficulty coping with their income, as well as respondents with right-wing ideologies, are more likely to believe in this conspiracy theory compared to other demographic groups.

Figure 18 / Q57XB - "The coronavirus is a hoax"



KEY FINDINGS (2)

- O- Given that conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic were prevalent during the first two years of the pandemic, it comes as no surprise that a large proportion of Spanish citizens agree that some conspiracy theories are true.
- O- Vox, PP, and smaller party voters are notably more likely to believe in conspiracy theories than other voter groups, along with less educated respondents and those with income difficulties.
- O- Two conspiracy theories (that the virus was intentionally released by China and that it is spread by pharmaceutical corporations on purpose) have the largest degree of support among the Spanish public: 54 and 45 per cent, respectively.
- O— A substantial number of respondents also agree with the two other conspiracy theories, even though one would expect otherwise, given their very unlikely propositions: 14 per cent of respondents agree that 5G technology helps the virus spread faster and 11 per cent agree that the coronavirus is a hoax.
- O- Contrary to popular belief, the data suggests that there is a widespread belief in conspiracy theories in Spain. These findings could indicate that at times of crisis, public opinion is more susceptible to suggestive messages disseminated by populists and organizations with possibly anti-democratic aims.



CHAPTER 3

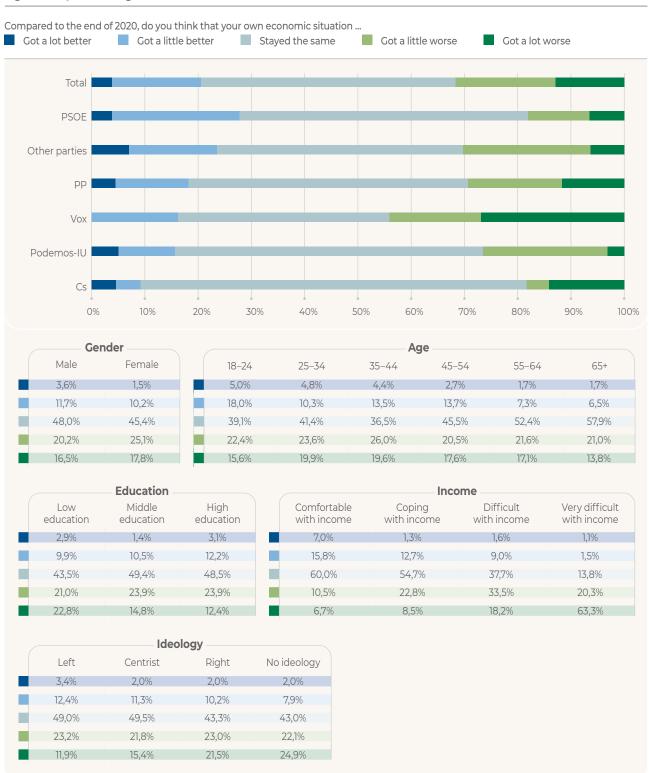
60 PER CENT OF SPANIARDS REPORTED THAT THEY LIVE COMFORTABLY OR AT LEAST COPE WITH THEIR INCOME

Changes in Economic Situation between 2020 and 2021

A large minority of Spanish respondents (48.2 per cent) state that their economic situation remained the same from 2020 to 2021. Understandably, only 20.5 per cent state that their situation improved, while the economic situation of about 31 per cent of respondents deteriorated since 2020. PSOE voters reported having experienced the largest degree of improvement, while the op-

posite is the case for Cs voters. Cs and PSOE voters are also the voter groups whose economic situation remained largely unchanged from 2020 to 2021. The proportion of respondents with a deteriorating economic situation is most prominent among Vox voters, younger respondents, those with less education, those struggling with their income, and those with a right-wing or no ideology.

Figure 19 / Q27 - Changes in Economic Situation between 2020 and 2021



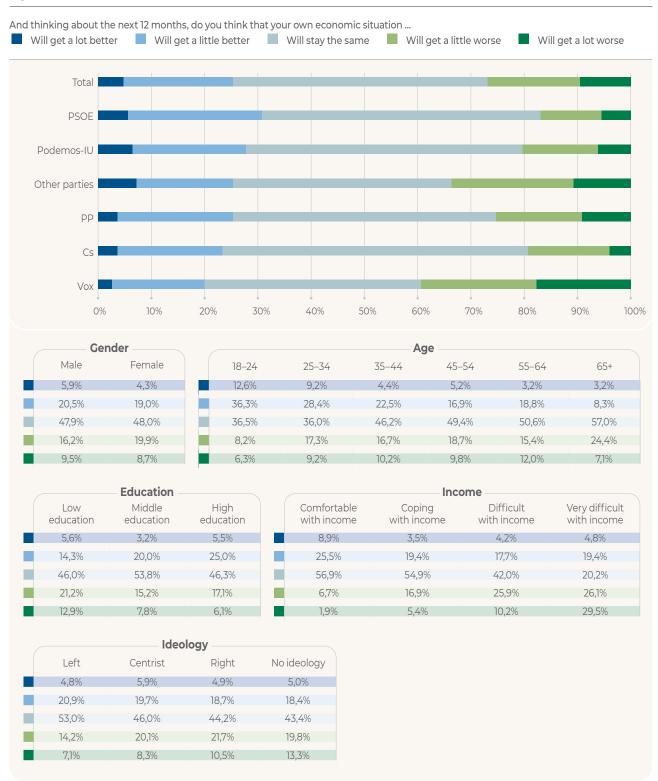


Future Economic Outlook

When it comes to their economic expectations for the next 12 months, 47.6 per cent of respondents expected that their economic situation would not change. More voters are optimistic (29.6 per cent) than pessimistic (23 per cent). PSOE and small party voters were the most positive

when it came to their expectations for the coming year, while Vox voters were the most negative. Also, middle-aged respondents, those with less education, those with more precarious financial situations, as well as rightwing respondents had the most negative economic expectations for the next 12 months.

Figure 20 / Q28 - Economic outlook for the next 12 months

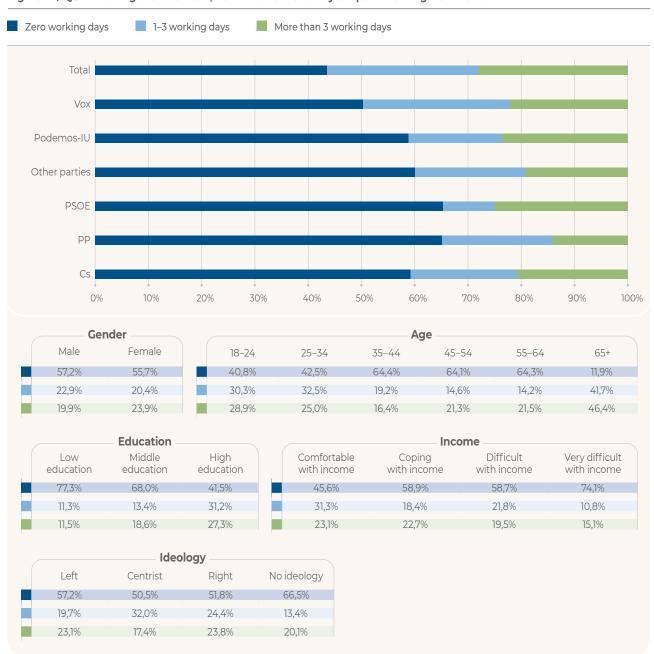


Working from Home

The majority of all voter groups, apart from Cs voters, had not worked from home during the previous week at the time in which the data was collected (November 2020/2021). Vox and Podemos voters were least likely to have worked from home, while Cs voters spent the most time working

from home. Women, younger respondents (aged 18 to 34), older respondents (65 and above), those with high levels of comfort with their income, and those with higher levels of educational attainment were more likely than other groups to report having recently worked from home, along with respondents without a clear ideological persuasion.

Figure 21 / Q9 - "During the last week, how much time have you spent working from home?"





Income Situation

The majority of Spanish citizens (63 per cent) report that they live comfortably or cope well with their income. The voter groups experiencing the most economic difficulties are voters of Vox and Podemos, while PP and PSOE voters

predominantly reported being well-off economically. Women, respondents aged 25 to 34, the less educated, centrists, and people with no ideology are more likely to experience financial difficulties.

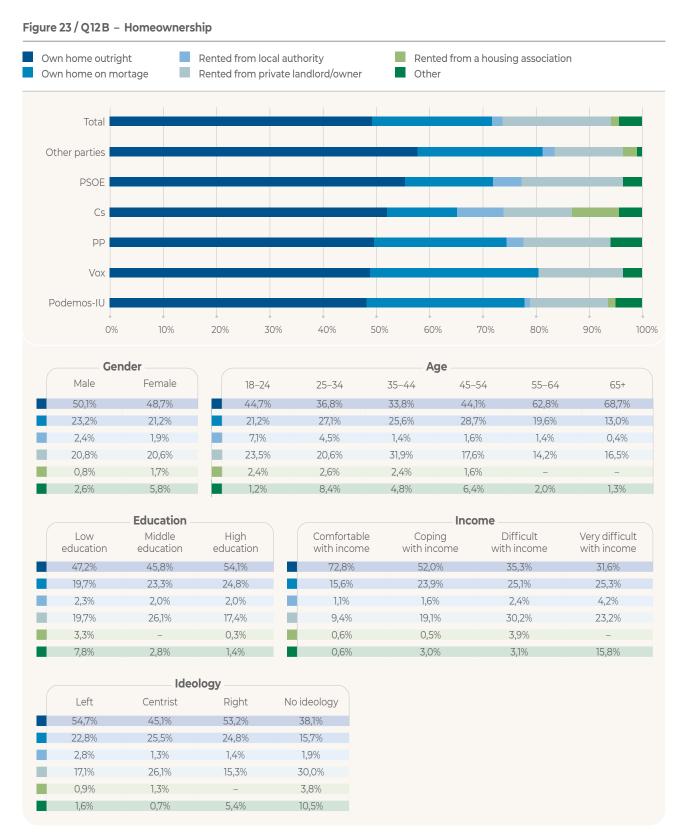
Figure 22 / Q12 - Income situation



Homeownership

When it comes to homeownership, it is clear that smaller party voters, PSOE, and Cs voters are more likely to own a home outright compared to other voter groups. Nevertheless, when owning a house on a mortgage is also included, Vox voters are the voter group most likely to own a home. While men are slightly more likely than women to own a home, it comes as a surprise that respondents aged 18 to 24 are substantially more likely to own a home compared to respondents aged 25 to 44. However, on average,

respondents aged 55 or older are more likely to own a home outright. Education is clearly related to home ownership, as evidenced by the finding that those with higher education are more likely to own a home compared to other education categories. Income is the strongest predictor of home ownership: the higher income a person has, the more likely they are to own a home. In terms of ideology, respondents with centrist or no ideological orientation are less likely to be homeowners compared to other voter groups.



KEY FINDINGS (3)

- O— The vast majority of Spaniards reported that their economic situation has stayed the same or improved from 2020 to 2021. Vox voters and respondents with income difficulties were most likely to report a deterioration of their economic situation.
- O- Most Spaniards had a positive economic outlook for the upcoming year (2022) or think that the economic situation will remain the same. Respondents who vote for smaller parties, PSOE, and Podemos-IU, who are younger, and who have less education had the most positive expectations, whereas Vox voters and people in a difficult economic situation or no political ideology had the most negative expectations.
- O— When it comes to income, more than 60 per cent of Spaniards report that they live comfortably or at least cope with their current income. PP and PSOE voters are the economically most comfortable voter groups, along with older and highly educated respondents. Vox voters and those with lower education are most likely to experience income difficulties.
- O- Voters of smaller parties and PSOE are much more likely to own a home outright compared to other voter groups.
- O- Income and age are also predictors of home ownership: the higher income a person has, and the older they are, the more likely they are to own a home.





CHAPTER 4

90 PER CENT OF VOTERS
BELIEVE THAT STATE SHOULD
PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN
REGULATING ECONOMY



EU Membership

A large majority of Spanish respondents (64 per cent) consider their country's EU membership to be a good thing, while only 7.6 per cent perceive EU membership negatively. A majority of all voter groups are positive

about Spain's EU membership, yet Vox voters and supporters of smaller parties are most likely to think it is a bad thing. In terms of demographics, only those with income difficulties are substantially more critical of the EU than other groups.

Figure 24 / Q20 - Membership in the EU



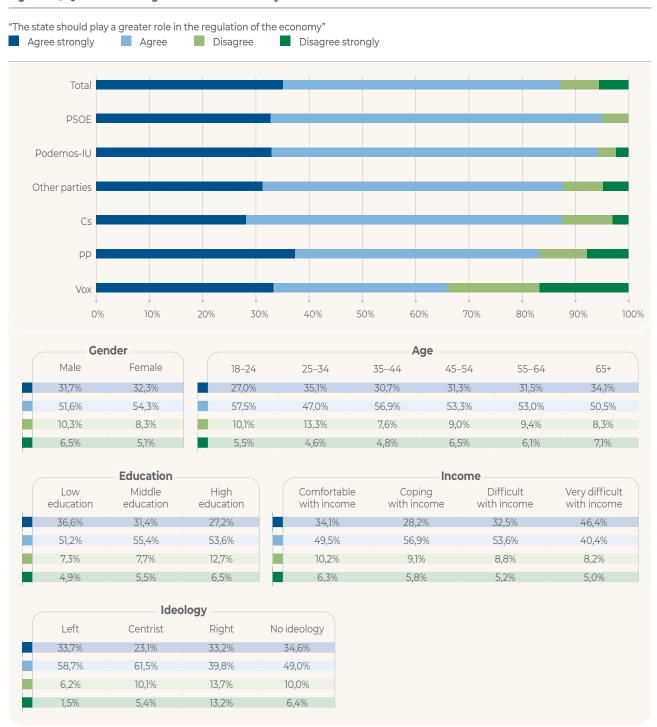


Economic Regulation by the State

In what can be seen as good news for the (moderate) left, a clear majority (87 per cent) of Spanish respondents agree that the state should play a greater role in regulating the economy. PSOE and Podemos voters agree with

this proposition the most, while the Vox electorate agrees the least. Higher educated and right-wing respondents are least likely to agree with the statement; however, there is a large degree of agreement even among those groups.

Figure 25 / Q41C - State regulation of the economy

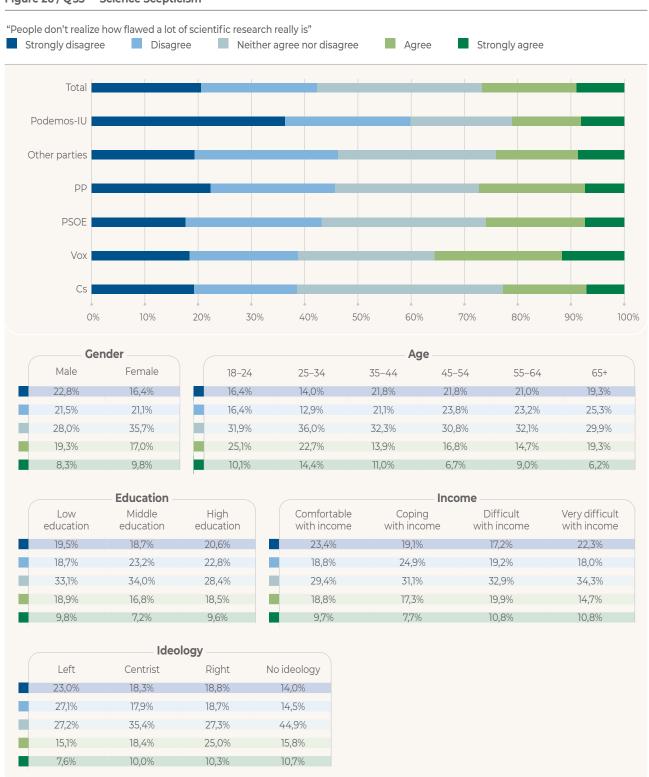


Science Scepticism

When it comes to distrust in science, a common sentiment among citizens critical of the way the COVID-19 pandemic is handled, Spain is one of the few countries surveyed in which more respondents disagreed than agreed with the statement "people don't realise just how flawed a lot of scientific research really is" (43.3 per cent disagree

and 26.4 per cent agree). The proportion of respondents who disagree with the statement comprises a majority across all voter groups, and is the lowest among Cs and Vox voters. Younger respondents and those who identify as right-wing are more likely to agree that science is more flawed than people realise, although the degree of agreement is relatively similar among all demographic groups.

Figure 26 / Q53 - Science Scepticism





Not too many respondents are concerned about the influence of scientists in society: 25 per cent of those surveyed agree with the proposition compared with 44.6 per cent who disagree; 30.4 per cent neither agree nor disagree with the proposition. The voters of Vox and PP are more worried about the influence of scientists in society than supporters of other parties; Podemos and smaller party

voters are the least likely to worry about the influence of scientists. Younger respondents, those with lower levels of educational attainment, respondents in economically precarious situations, people with no ideology, and those with a right-wing political orientation are more likely to be concerned about the influence of scientists in society compared to other demographic groups in Spain.

Figure 27 / Q53 - "I am concerned by the amount of influence that scientists have in society"

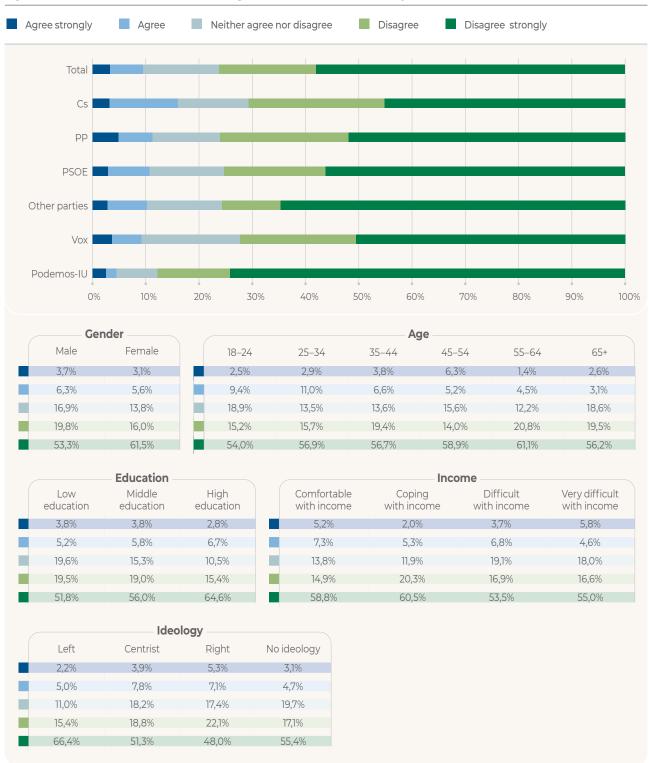


Opinions on Gender Inequality

When it comes to traditional gender roles when jobs are scarce, there is an overwhelming opposition regarding this proposition across the Spanish public at large, with 76.2 per cent of respondents (strongly) disagreeing with the proposition. Nevertheless, voters of the centre-right

parties Cs and PP are most likely to agree with prioritising male employment over female employment. In terms of demographics, younger respondents, those comfortable with income, and those on the right are more likely to agree with the statement.

Figure 28 / Q64 - "Men should have more right to work than women when jobs are scarce"



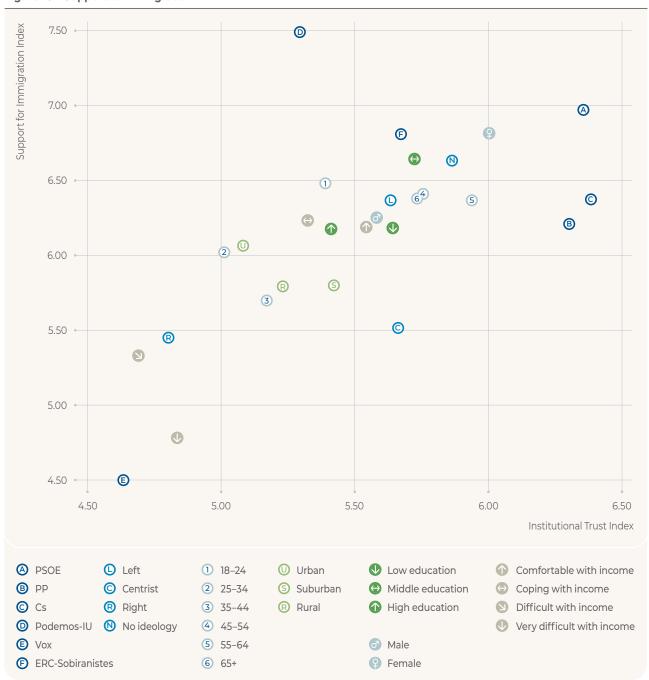


Support for Immigration, Opinions on Climate Change, Populism, and the NextGenerationEU Program

The Support for Immigration Index is comprised of two separate scales, which asked respondents whether immigrants are a benefit to the country's economic development and whether they culturally enrich the country. The Institutional Trust Index is comprised of six separate questions that ask respondents to what extent they trust various national and international institutions (please see the section on methodology for more information). The average values of numerous respondent groups are reported in a two-dimensional scatterplot.

Ideologically left-wing respondents and those without ideology, voters of Podemos, PSOE, Cs, and PP, as well as those with middle education, are most supportive of immigration in Spain. On the other hand, Vox voters, respondents on the ideological right, and those most struggling with their income are the least supportive. This suggests that citizens in the most precarious economic situations feel the most threatened by immigration.

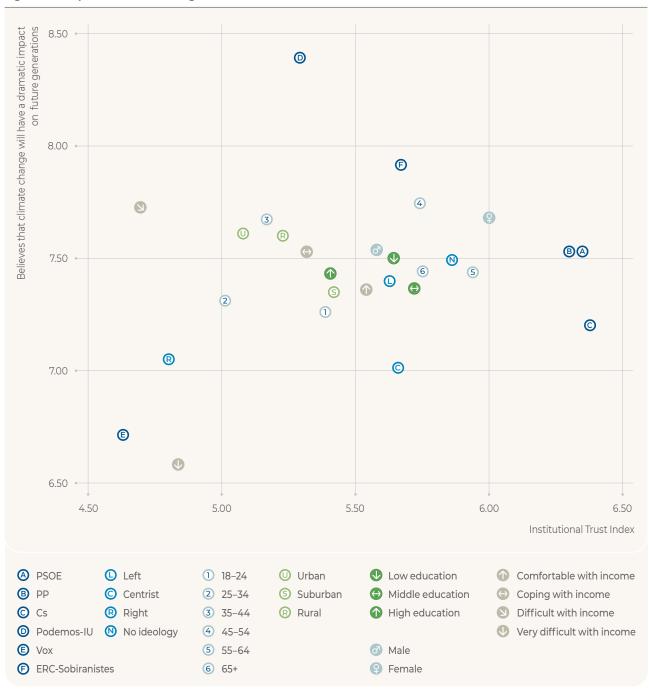
Figure 29 - Support for Immigration



A majority of Spanish citizens are seriously concerned about climate change for future generations, as evidenced by the graph above: all respondent groups, including Vox voters, score above the average on the scale of concern about climate change. Podemos voters are most con-

cerned about climate change, as are voters of the other moderate parties and those with income difficulties. Rightwing and centrist respondents, Vox voters, those with lower levels of educational attainment, and those struggling financially are the least concerned about climate change.

Figure 30 - Impact of Climate Change

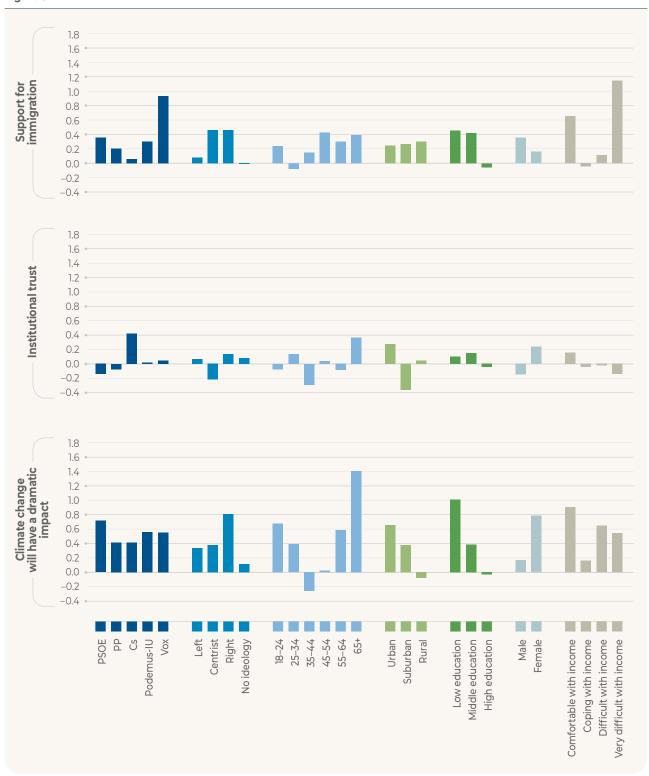




In terms of change over time, most voter groups reported being more concerned about climate change in 2021 than in 2020, with Vox voters and those with the lowest incomes having a marked increase. However, it is worth pointing out that these voter groups already had among the lowest concern about climate change. In contrast, the

shifts in institutional trust are not substantial. None of the respondent groups changed their opinion with more than a single scale point. When it comes to support for immigration, the results show that it increased among nearly all voter groups, especially among respondents aged 65 and above.

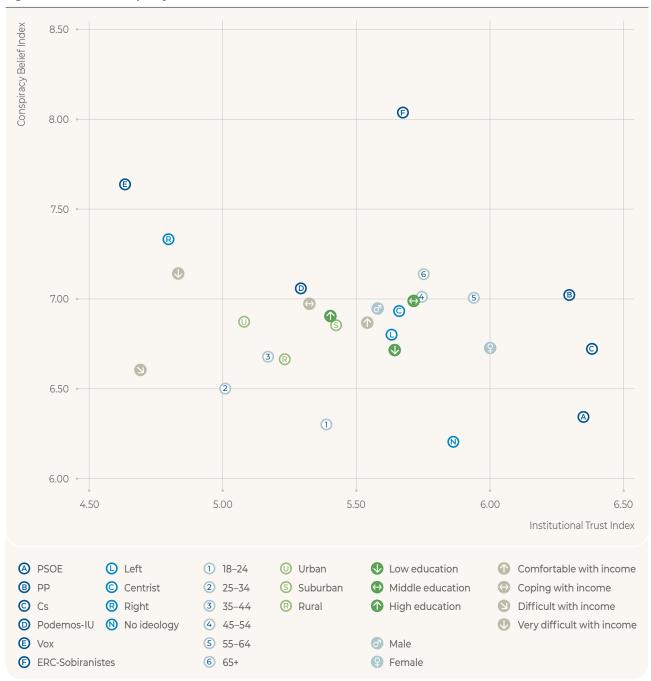
Figure 31



A substantial number of Spanish respondents believe in at least one conspiracy theory, as measured by the high average scores (higher than 6 out of 10) on the Conspiracy Theory Belief Index. It comes as no surprise that Vox and ERC-Sobiranistes voters are most susceptible to conspira-

cy belief, along with right-wing respondents. The differences between other respondent groups are rather small, although PSOE voters, voters with no political ideology, and respondents aged 18 to 24 are least likely to believe in conspiracy theories.

Figure 32 - Belief in Conspiracy Theories

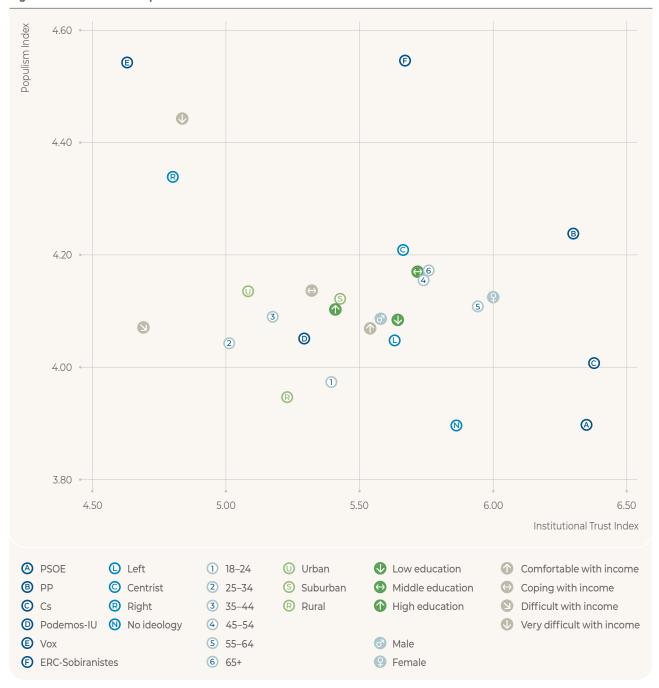




When it comes to populism, as measured by anti-elitist sentiments, it is clear that Vox and ERC-Sobiranistes voters and respondents with income difficulties and right-wing ideologies are among the most populist respondent groups. PSOE and Cs voters, respondents aged 18 to 24,

and those without a political ideology are among the least populist demographic groups. Interestingly, less educated respondents have, on average, lower populism levels than highly educated respondents.

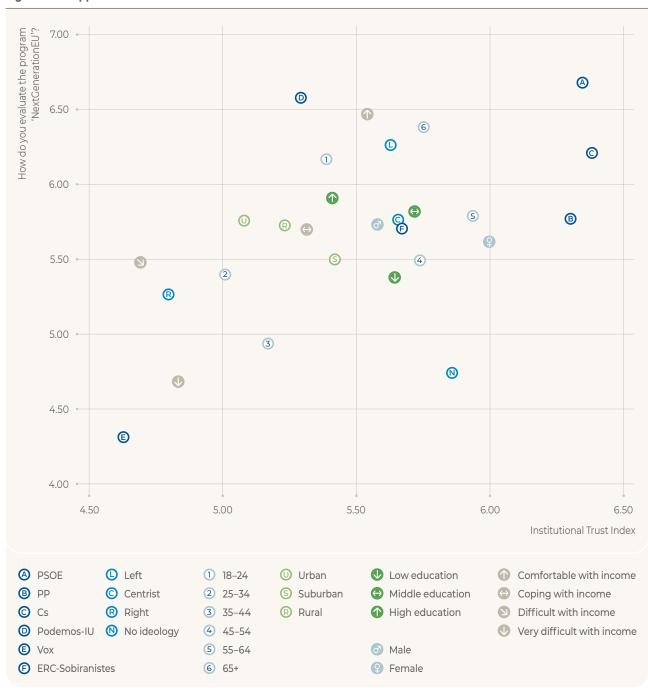
Figure 33 - Followers of Populism



The 'NextGenerationEU' plan, designed by the European Commission as a strategy for transforming societies and economies in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, enjoys moderate support among the Spanish public. PSOE, Podemos-IU, and Cs voters, those who have a leftwing political orientation, respondents aged 65 and above, and those comfortable with their income are the demographic groups most supportive of the program. Con-

versely, Vox voters, right-wing respondents, those with no ideology, and those with economic difficulties are the least supportive of the plan. The less educated are also less supportive of the plan compared to respondents with more education, although the difference is small. This could mean that economically vulnerable groups are concerned that the socioeconomic transformation will have a negative impact on their lives.

Figure 34 - Support NextGenerationEU Plan



KEY FINDINGS (4)

- O- Although very few Spaniards perceive their country's EU membership negatively, there is a substantial proportion of respondents who are ambivalent towards the EU. PP and PSOE voters are the most positive about Spain's EU membership, while Vox voters and supporters of smaller parties are most the likely to think Spain's EU membership is a bad thing.
- O- A striking majority (nearly 90 per cent) of Spanish respondents agree that the state should play a greater role in regulating the economy. Even among Vox and PP voters, the proportion of those who agree is higher than 60 and 80 per cent, respectively.
- O- The results suggest that there is some distrust in science among Spaniards, although most respondents view science positively. Vox voters are the most distrustful, while Podemos and PSOE voters are most likely to see science positively.
- O- A very small number of Spaniards believe that men should have a job priority when employment positions are scarce. Cs and PP voters are most likely to agree with the proposition.
- O- Party preference, gender, and ideology are the strongest predictors of support for immigration, with voters of left-wing parties, women, and people without a political ideology being most positive towards immigrants. On the other hand, Vox voters, respondents with right-wing ideology, and respondents with income difficulties are most likely to oppose immigration.

- O- All respondents are at least somewhat concerned about climate change, even those traditionally sceptical about the human influence on climate, such as less educated and right-wing respondents. Nevertheless, citizens are unlikely to accept measures against climate change that will directly impact their economic situation negatively, such as increasing energy prices.
- O- Belief in conspiracy theories (based on an index containing questions unrelated to the pandemic) is most widespread among Vox voters. Respondents with income difficulties or right-wing ideology are also susceptible to believe in conspiracy theories. PSOE voters and respondents with no political ideology are least likely to believe in conspiricy theories.
- O- The most populist respondent groups are Vox and ERC-Sobiranistes voters, along with respondents with income difficulties and right-wing ideologies. PSOE and Cs voters, along with people without ideology, are the least populist voter groups in Spain.
- O— When it comes to the 'NextGenerationEU' plan, it is clear that it is supported the most by voters of the centrist and left-leaning parties, while Vox voters, as well as people with no ideology and income difficulties, have a rather negative evaluation of the policy program.





CHAPTER (5)

PSOE AND PODEMOS
ARE MOST LIKELY
TO RETAIN THE SAME
EU ELECTIONS VOTERS

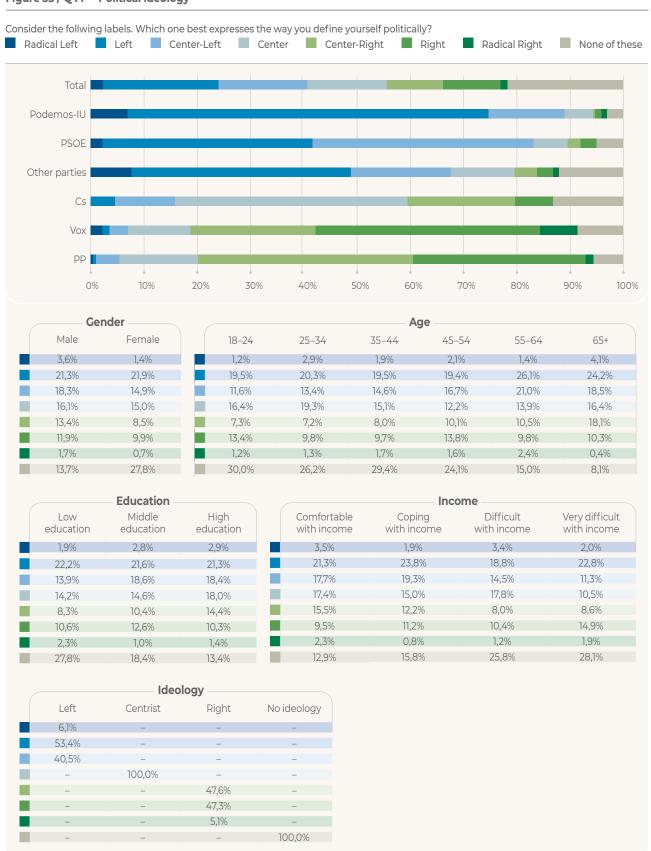


Political Ideology

A very logical and consistent pattern arises from data gathered connecting political orientation to party choice. More than a third of those with a left-leaning political orientation consider themselves centre-left, while the majority consider themselves left. On the right, the division between centre-right and right voters is almost similar —

around 47 per cent in each ideological group. Clearly, there is a larger proportion of Spanish citizens on the left than on the right, while more than a fifth of respondents reported their ideology was not listed. The radical left and right are very small fractions of the electorate. Fifteen per cent of Spanish place themselves in the political centre.

Figure 35 / Q71 - Political ideology



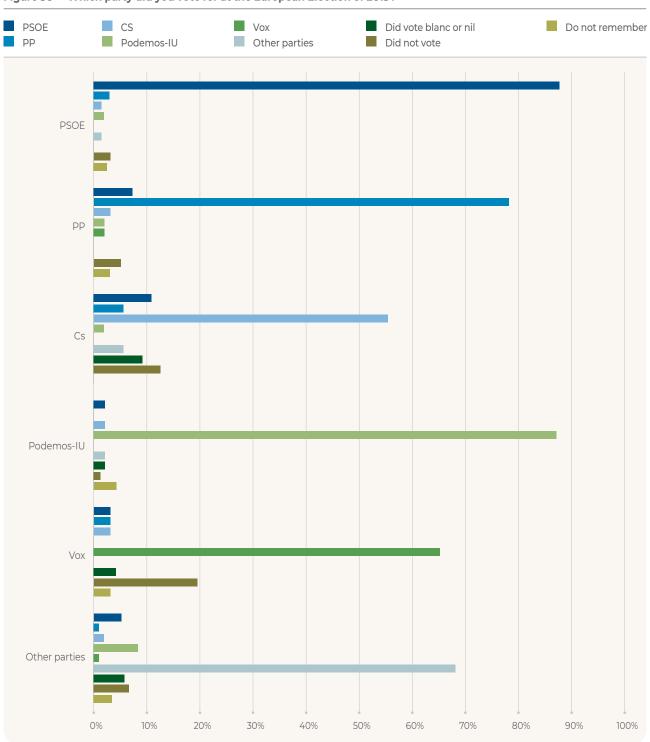


Those considering themselves on the radical left are primarily concentrated within the Podemos and smaller parties electorate, with very few aligning themselves with PSOE. The largest proportion of right-wing respondents can be found among the PP and Vox electorates. The largest proportion of centrist respondents votes for Ciudadanos.

Vote Recall in the 2019 European Parliament Elections

Most respondents who voted for a particular party in the 2019 European elections were still planning to vote for the same party if a national election was held at the time of data collection. PSOE voters are the most loyal ones to their party — 87.6 per cent of them were still planning to vote for the party in a national election, while only 55 per cent of Ciudadanos voters stated they would do so. There appears to be a notable electoral migration from Ciudadanos to PP and Vox.

Figure 36 - Which party did you vote for at the European Election of 2019?

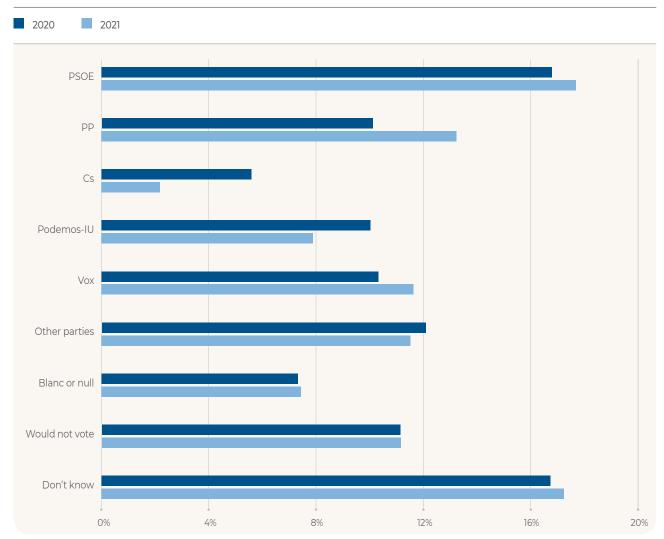


Vote Intention Changes from 2020 to 2021

Vote intention in Spain has remained relatively stable over time. Nevertheless, support for the centrist parties PSOE and PP has increased, whereas support for Cs has declined. Support for the radical left party Podemos-IU has

declined as well, while support for Vox has increased. Analyses conducted elsewhere indicate that the declining support for Cs has primarily benefitted Vox, although the results from this study suggest that PP and PSOE might also be attractive to former Cs voters.

Figure 37 - If there were a national general election tomorrow which party would you vote for?



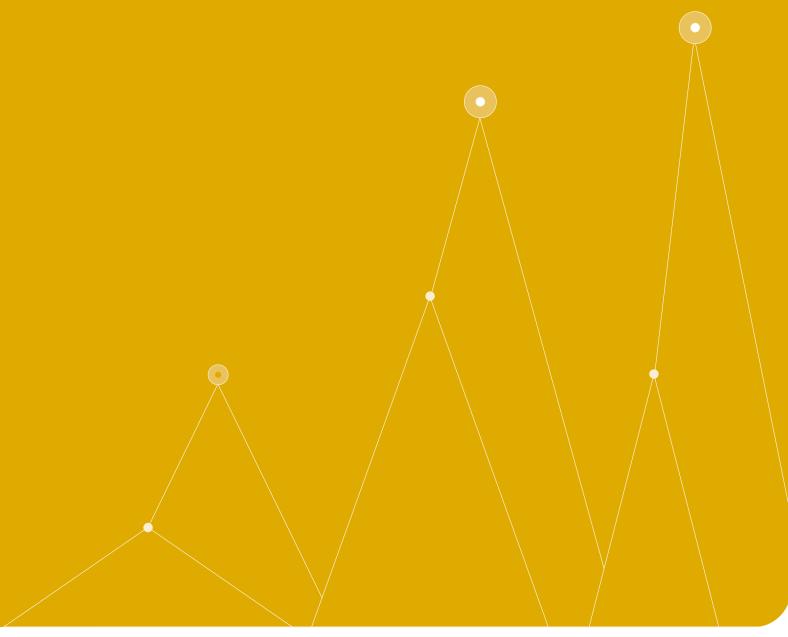
KEY FINDINGS (5)

- O- Respondents who identify with radical ideologies, on
- O- Most people who voted for a certain party in the 2019
- O- The reported changes in voting behaviour from 2020



CHAPTER 6

THE LESS EDUCATED VOTERS ARE OVERSPREAD AMONG FAR RIGHT ELECTORATE

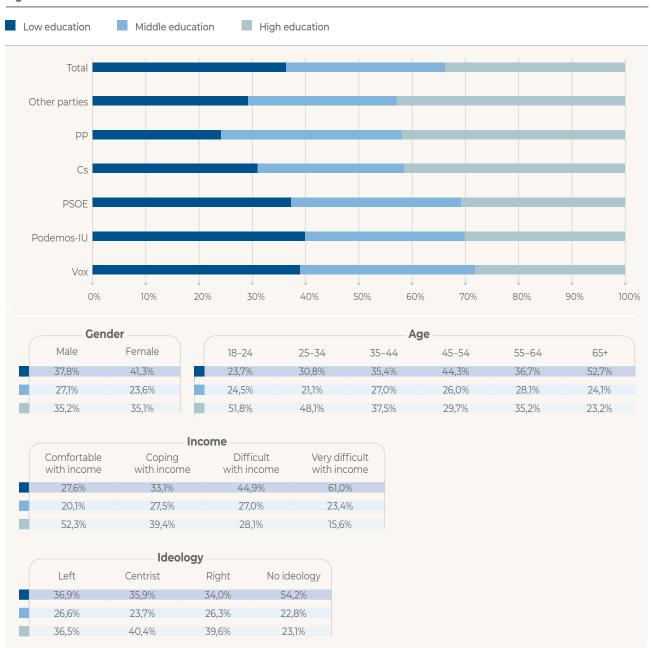


Education

In terms of education, PP voters are the voter group with the largest proportion of highly educated respondents, while the groups with the smallest proportion of highly educated respondents are Vox and Podemos

voters. Parties on the right and smaller parties enjoy the support of highly educated voters to a larger extent. Younger respondents and those with higher incomes are more likely to be highly educated than other voter groups.

Figure 38 - Education



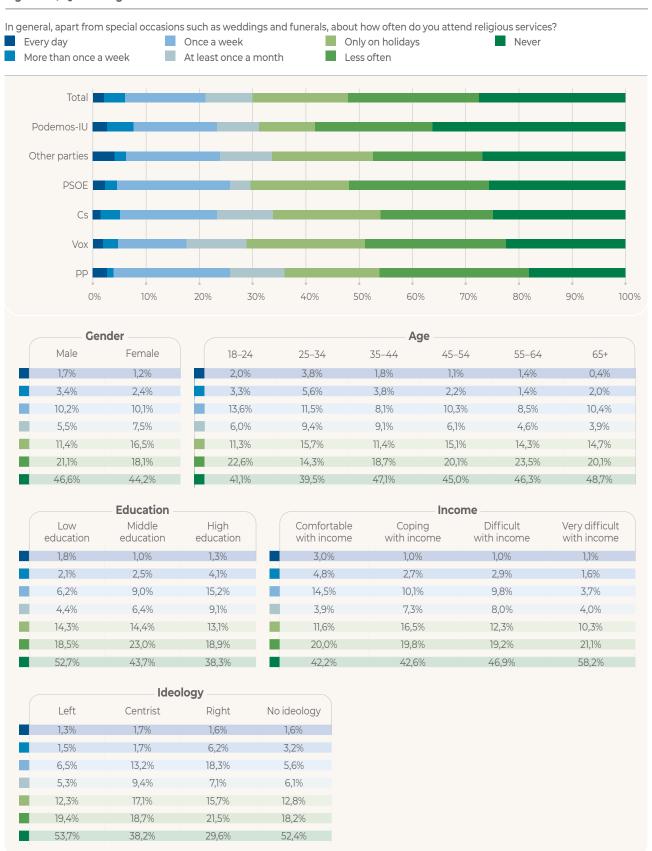


Religious Service Attendance

When it comes to religious service attendance, less than 20 per cent of Spaniards attend such services regularly. People who vote for smaller parties and Podemos are least likely to attend religious services, while PP and Vox

voters are most likely to attend religious services more than once a week. Notably, all parties have become parties of the 'secularised majority' that attend religious services infrequently, only on holidays, or never attend a religious service.

Figure 39 / Q11 - Religious Service Attendance



KEY FINDINGS 6

- O- Education is usually a good predictor of party preference, with more highly educated respondents voting for centrist parties and less educated respondents overrepresented among the far-right electorate. This appears to also be the case in Spain, where PP and Cs voters enjoy the support of a large proportion of highly educated voters, while Vox voters are least likely to have higher levels of educational attainment.
- O- Religion has been increasingly losing its importance in Western Democracies, including in Spain, where about 20 per cent of respondents say they attend such services regularly. Voters of the Cs, PP, and Vox attend religious services most often, while voters of Podemos-IU and smaller parties are least likely to ever attend such services.



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About Kieskompas (Election Compass)

Kieskompas is an independent scientific research institute specialising in quantitative data analysis, opinion polling, and voter profiling. Founded by Dr André Krouwel in collaboration with the VU University Amsterdam in 2006, Kieskompas is a market leader in the development and innovation of Voting Advice Applications (VAAs), used by more than 30 million people. Kieskompas is embedded in the academic community and is driven by a team of established researchers with a strong focus on political science, data science, and statistics. The company is best known for creating a methodology for visually displaying the positions of political parties in country-specific political landscapes in its VAAs. These online tools have been developed in collaboration with local academics in more than 40 countries, generating large-N datasets suitable for in-depth analyses.

André Krouwel

André Krouwel teaches comparative political science and communication at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and is the founder of Kieskompas (Election Compass). He develops online Voting Advice Applications that collect data on party positions and voter opinions. Krouwel's research focuses on public opinion and politically relevant sentiments, voting behaviour, political parties, and social movements. Recent research has also resulted in publications on conspiracy beliefs, opinions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the vote determinants for European fringe parties and Euroscepticism.

Yordan Kutiyski

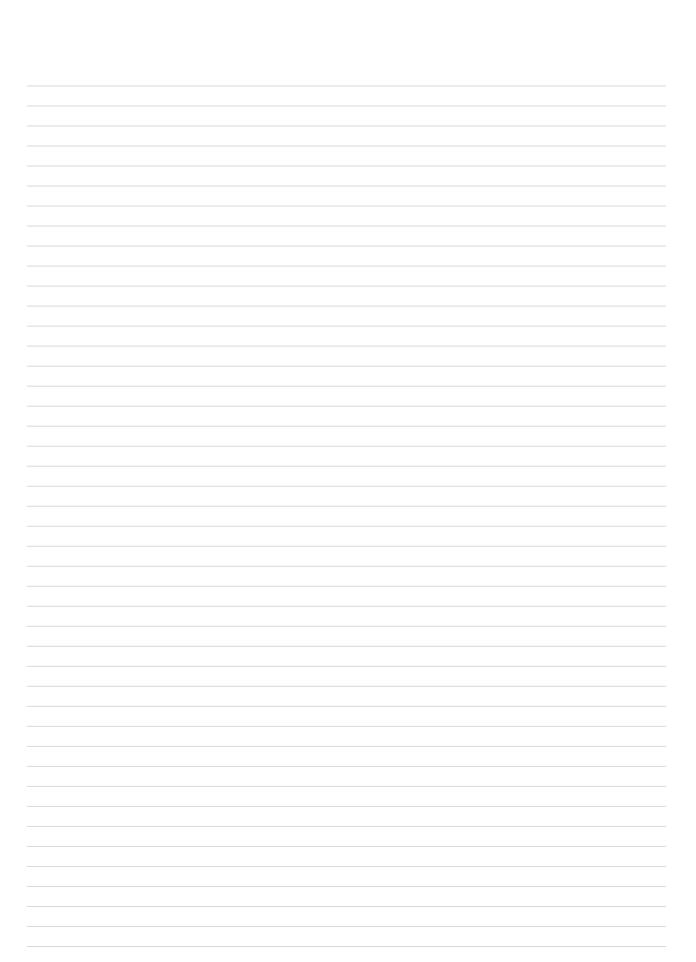
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Design and Illustrations: pertext, Berlin | www.pertext.de

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ISBN 978-3-98628-385-8

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