

What have we learned this year?

Social science research

TheSocialObservatory



Credits

**The Social Observatory
of the "la Caixa" Foundation**

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Emotional well-being in children with neurodevelopmental disorders and their families

This research aims to study the emotional impact that neurodevelopmental disorders create in children and their families. Almost 300 families from Catalonia with children aged 6-12 took part, both with and without neurodevelopmental disorders such as developmental language disorder, dyslexia, dyscalculia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The results show that children with these disorders display greater emotional distress, manifested by internalising symptoms such as depression and anxiety and also externalising symptoms such as aggression, than typically developing children do. Furthermore, problems in social relationships and attention difficulties are exacerbated, particularly in girls, when more than one diagnosis is present.

With regard to families, those with children who display multiple diagnoses report higher levels of emotional distress, including anxiety, depression and stress. In terms of emotional competence, these children exhibit greater difficulty in regulating their emotions, resulting in increased irritability, tantrums and sudden mood swings. Families, for their part, express difficulty in accepting their emotions and maintaining daily routines when feeling overwhelmed. These findings highlight the need for a holistic approach that incorporates emotional well-being into evaluation and intervention.

Mari Aguilera and Oriol Verdaguer-Ribas, Universitat de Barcelona; Nadia Ahufinger, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya; Ernesto Guerra, Universidad de Chile; in collaboration with the Associació Catalana de la Dislèxia and the Associació de Famílies amb Dificultats d'Aprenentatge a Catalunya

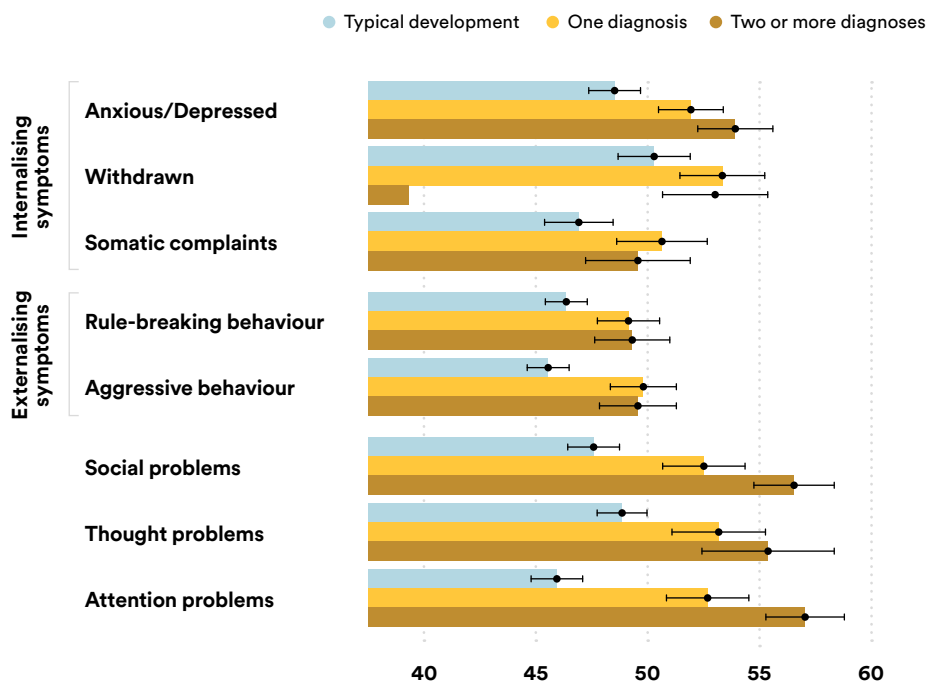
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Project selected in the Connect Call, 2021

- 1** Families of children with neurodevelopmental disorders claim that their children experience greater emotional distress than those without these diagnoses, expressed through symptoms of depression, anxiety and aggressive behaviour.
- 2** When children have more than one diagnosis, their emotional suffering, and that of their families, increases significantly.
- 3** Girls displaying two or more neurodevelopmental disorder diagnoses show significantly greater emotional distress than boys.
- 4** Difficulties in emotional regulation are observed in both children and their parents. Children with neurodevelopmental disorders find it difficult to manage their emotions, and their families find it difficult to accept their emotions.

The degree of emotional distress is related to the number of diagnoses

Emotional distress in children with neurodevelopmental disorders according to the number of diagnoses and children measured with typical development



Note: the black bars show the confidence intervals for each mean. The difference between two groups is statistically significant only when their intervals do not overlap. The horizontal axis shows the standardised score for each psychological symptom assessed, and the vertical axis shows the type of psychological symptom.

Source: compiled by the authors.

Mealtime grants for children improve academic outcomes in the Catalan language

This research study assesses the impact of school mealtime grants on children's educational achievement in Barcelona. More than 40,000 children (approximately 25% of the total) benefit from this grant programme each academic year. The results indicate that the grants offer more than just a meal during the school day. They also help disadvantaged pupils to spend more time at school, sharing their leisure time with children from more affluent backgrounds who are more proficient in the language and from whom they can learn.

Sara Ayllón, Department of Economy, Universitat de Girona, IZA and EQUALITAS;
Samuel Lado, Department of Economy, Universitat de Girona and EQUALITAS

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Social Research Call, 2022

1

Pupils who receive a partial mealtime grant – equivalent to 70% of the cost of a daily meal – achieve better results in the basic Catalan skills exam than children who apply for this grant but are unsuccessful.

2

Catalan grades are also higher among beneficiary children in academic years in which they are awarded a full grant – equivalent to 100% of the cost of a daily meal – compared to the grades obtained by the same pupils in academic years in which they are only awarded a partial grant.

3

Among the pupils benefitting most from this grant programme are the ones attending large, low-complexity schools where they share daily life with children from more advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

4

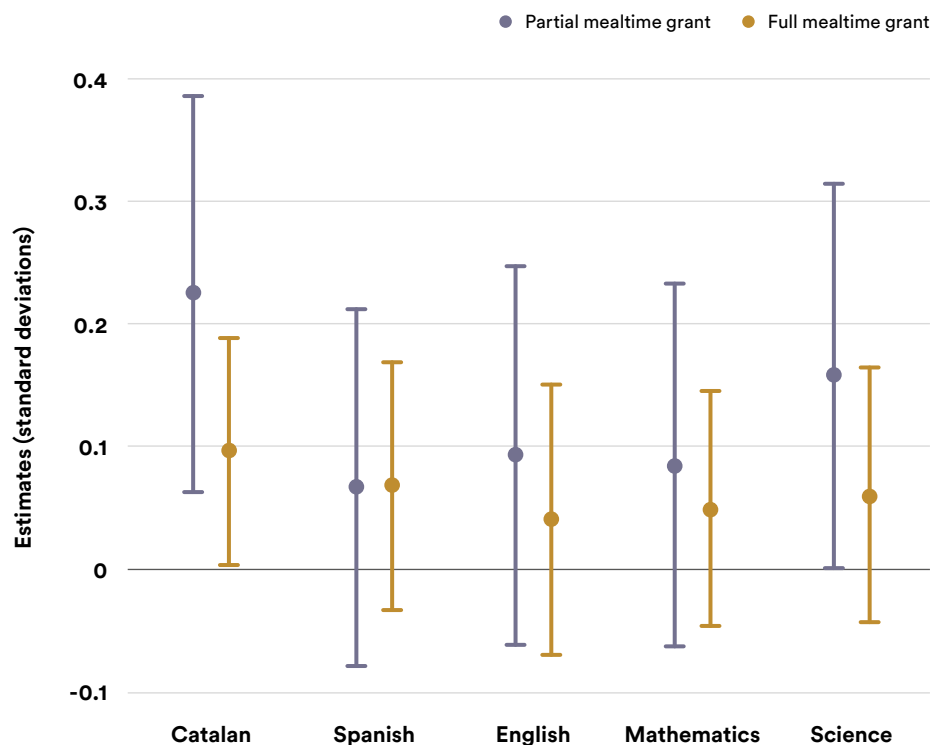
Mealtime grants help beneficiary pupils to spend more time at school, thereby encouraging socialisation and interaction with peers who typically speak Catalan. This exchange improves the Catalan language skills of children in vulnerable situations.

5

Beneficiary pupils also demonstrate higher levels of subjective well-being, especially when it comes to satisfaction with classmates and school.

Mealtime grants improve academic results in Catalan

Impact of mealtime grants on sixth-grade basic skills test results and annual grades



Note: the vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the Barcelona Education Consortium and the Catalan Department of Education.

Hope and concern are driving climate action among young Spaniards

Recent climate events, such as heatwaves, floods and droughts, demonstrate that such extreme phenomena are directly and immediately impacting society. In addition, climate change generates indirect and less obvious effects. Global surveys reveal that levels of concern about the effects of global warming are on the rise, particularly among young people. However, the same scientists who warn about the seriousness of the climate crisis are also delivering messages of hope when they point out that we still have time to mitigate many of its effects if we act appropriately. This study analyses the concern and hope associated with climate change among young people, and how these influence their everyday personal actions. With this aim in mind, 1,404 Spaniards aged 16-40 were surveyed.

The results show a high level of concern. A correlation was identified between concern and hope, indicating that people who are concerned also have hope. Three distinct groups were identified according to their levels of concern and hope. Respondents who reported being very concerned yet hopeful were characterised by having greater knowledge of the problem and also by carrying out specific climate actions more frequently.

Anne-Marie Ballegeer, Enzo Ferrari Lagos, Rebeca Ferreira Corchero, Diego Corrochano Fernández and Camilo Ruiz Méndez, Universidad de Salamanca

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Project selected in the Flash Call to support projects on the social impact of climate change

1

Concern and hope coexist among Spaniards: 50% of respondents showed high levels of both.

2

People with a combination of concern and hope have a higher level of knowledge of climate change, with an average score of 6.3 out of 10, compared to those who report low levels of concern and hope, with an average score of 4.6 out of 10.

3

Participants aged 25 and under show less concern. Similarly, those in the same age group have an average climate action score of 6 out of 10, which is slightly lower than the rest of the participants (average score of 6.3).

4

The average level of trust in scientists (7.26 out of 10) is higher than the level of trust in politicians (6 out of 10). Similarly, people with higher levels of concern and hope show higher trust in scientists.

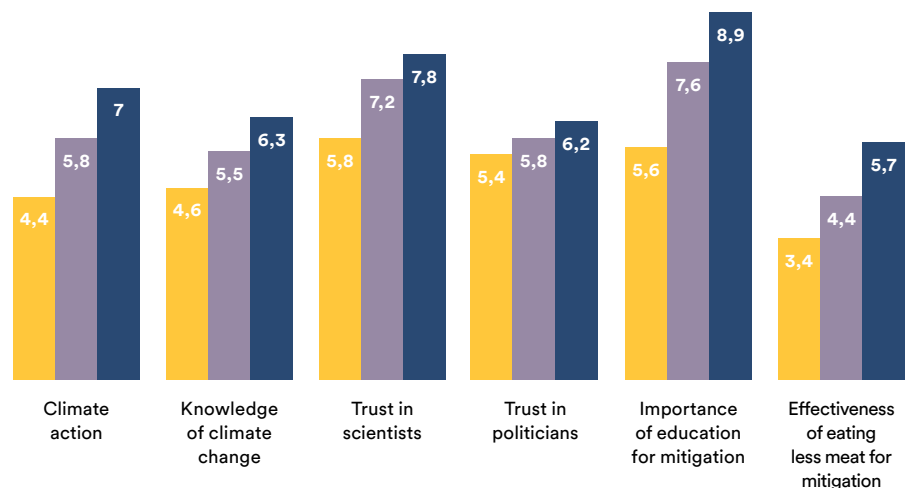
5

Education about climate change is thought to be an effective way of combatting the problem, with a score of between 5.5, for respondents with low levels of concern and hope, and 8.8, for respondents with high levels of concern and hope. Consuming less meat is considered less effective, with scores ranging from 3.4 to 5.7.

The level of concern and hope divides participants into three groups

People with high levels of concern and hope have greater knowledge of climate change and carry out more pro-environmental actions

Level of concern: ● Low ● Medium ● High



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from EmoClimateSpain project surveys.

The communication style of teachers influences the digital consumption of students

When it comes to considering the impact of digital content, it is important to take into account your own well-being, that of others and the impact in your environment. Factors such as age, education and individual or social vulnerability can influence how this content is consumed. In the case of minors, besides the family and social environment, the educational centre can be a decisive setting in encouraging a more responsible relationship with digital content.

This study examines the results of a survey of 804 Spanish children aged 10-15, revolving around the concept of positive pedagogical communication and focused on reinforcing learning. The results reveal two main trends: on the one hand, children who perceive more positive communication with their teachers tend to consume content related to the meaning of life, culture, education and social support more often. On the other hand, those who report less positive interactions tend to consume sensationalist or violent content more often, and they participate more in digital social networks.

These results underline the key role of teachers, because they can actively offer emotional and cognitive tools to interpret online spaces and build a safe and conscious relationship with media content.

Daniel Barredo Ibáñez, Universidad de Málaga; Lucía Caro Castaño, Ana Merchán and Silvia Vega, Universidad de Cádiz

ElObservatorioSocial

Project selected in the Flash Call to support projects on childhood and vulnerability

1
77% of Spanish children aged 10-15 believe that the pedagogical communication they receive is positive or fairly positive. 23% of respondents perceive a less positive pedagogical communication from their teachers.

2
Digital social networks are the space where minors spend most of their time. 63.5% claim they often or very often read publications there. 35.2% say they regularly watch series or films with violent content.

3
The data reveal a clear trend: when children perceive more positive communication with their teachers, they tend to use digital social networks less and consume content more responsibly.

4
This positive perception is also related to the type of content they consume. Those who perceive more positive communication with teachers consume more programmes that promote social support (10%), content that addresses the meaning of life (7.3%), or series with a cultural and educational focus (7.3%), compared to 8.5%, 5.6% and 5.6% respectively of those who perceive worse communication with their teachers.

5
These results indicate a key conclusion: the influence of teachers ultimately transcends the classroom.

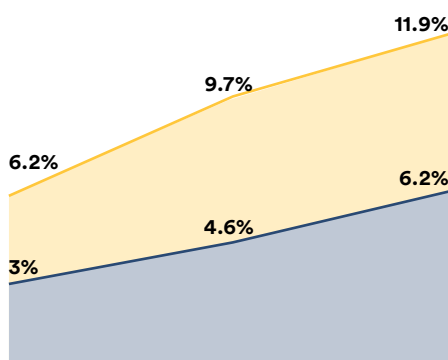


Positive pedagogical communication is related to more responsible digital consumption

Types of pedagogical communication and consumption of digital media content, with significant associations according to the chi-square coefficient

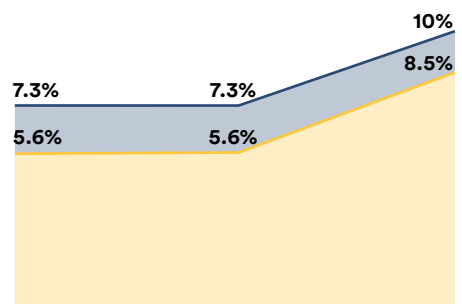
- More positive pedagogical communication
- Less positive pedagogical communication

Frequent or very frequent **risky** media consumption



Watching news about violent deaths Watching action series or films with violent content Playing violent video games

Frequent or very frequent **responsible** media consumption



Watching programmes that promote reasons for living Watching series or films with cultural or educational content Watching programmes that promote social support

An analysis of Spain's social inclusion policies based on randomised evaluations

Spain has for years been facing constant challenges in its fight against poverty and social exclusion. In 2021, the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration set up an Inclusion Policy Lab to assess the efficacy of 32 social inclusion policies designed to supplement the minimum living income (IMV by its Spanish acronym) aimed at vulnerable groups. It is a pioneering initiative because of its scale and ambition, the collaboration between the three levels of government and several non-governmental organisations, and its commitment to rigorous evaluation in partnership with the field of academia. Thanks to the use of randomised evaluations, empirical data have been provided on interventions in areas such as employment and entrepreneurship, social support and access to social benefits, education, digital skills, and housing and energy policies. These evaluations have revealed significant effects on participants in their aim to foster a culture of designing policies in Spain based on empirical evidence.

Samuel Bentolila, Centre for Monetary and Financial Studies;
Ana García-Hernández and Inés Torres-Rojas, J-PAL Europe

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected as part of the Social Research Call, 2022

- 1** Spain has the fourth highest rate of poverty and social exclusion in the European Union: 24.5%. This figure rises to 34.7% among children under 16.
- 2** The Inclusion Policy Lab conducted 32 randomised evaluations involving an investment of €212 million, benefiting 175,662 people directly and indirectly across the country.
- 3** Collaboration among governments, non-governmental organisations and academic researchers ensured scientific rigour and effective implementation.
- 4** A programme designed to reduce the educational gap among Romani youth resulted in notable advances in standardised test scores, greater educational aspirations of pupils and significantly increased parental involvement in their children's education.
- 5** Personalised employment support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities helped to improve their employment rate, the number of hours worked, the number of contracts signed and participation in training activities. It also increased social inclusion, well-being and participation in volunteering activities.



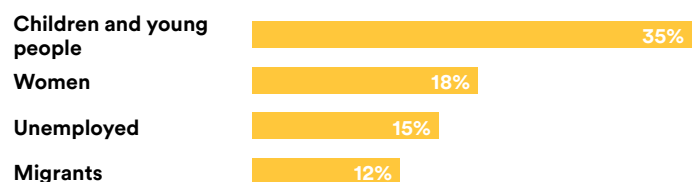
The Inclusion Policy Lab: measuring the impact of social policies in Spain

Territorial distribution of participants in the 32 randomised evaluations carried out



Source: Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration.

The four most notable target groups (% of projects)



The four aspects with the greatest impact on results (% of projects)



Philanthropy in Spain and Portugal

Social attitudes and behaviour

This report focuses on the knowledge, social attitudes and philanthropic behaviour in Spanish and Portuguese societies. It provides an overview of the subject of philanthropy: what it is, who is involved, how it has changed over time, its relationship with government and business, its role and relevant contributions, and its weaknesses. It explains that philanthropy plays a unique role when it comes to meeting needs that are not met – at least for the time being – by the state or the market. It allows donors to share their surplus resources for the common good, to improve society and to do things better, as well as to express solidarity with their fellow citizens. After noting that giving money, volunteering and helping strangers are common activities throughout the world, although there is a dearth of robust recent data on philanthropy in Spain and Portugal, the results of a recently commissioned survey are presented. The data show that philanthropic behaviour is common and viewed positively, with a few interesting variations between the two countries and among people of different ages, genders and educational levels.

Beth Breeze, Centre for Philanthropy at the University of Kent; Maria Gutiérrez-Domènech, the Social Observatory of the "la Caixa" Foundation

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Research by the Social Observatory of the "la Caixa" Foundation in collaboration with the Centre for Philanthropy at the University of Kent

1 The three most commonly mentioned words to define philanthropy in Spain and Portugal were help, love and humanity.

2 The three most cited philanthropic organisations in Spain were the "la Caixa" Foundation, the Red Cross and Cáritas; in Portugal, these were UNICEF, the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and the Red Cross.

3 Opinions about philanthropy are quite favourable in both countries, although there is some mistrust towards philanthropists. Those interviewed prefer that the government be responsible for meeting the needs of society, rather than charities.

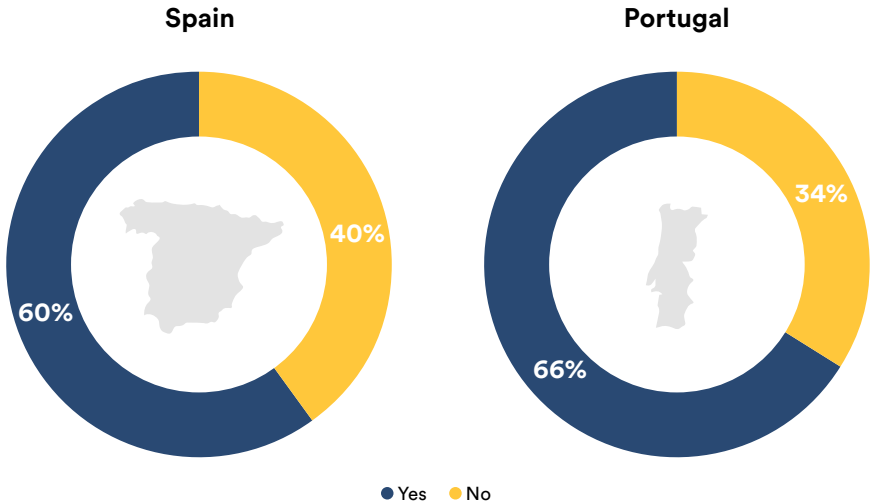
4 Support for charities is common: 39% of those interviewed in Spain and 43% in Portugal volunteered their time; 59% in Spain and 65% in Portugal made at least one donation in the past year.

5 Health is by far and away the top priority in both countries: three-quarters of those interviewed deeming it an urgent issue. This is in line with the fact that health is also the cause that receives the most time and money.

6 Although respondents claim that the level of solidarity of society is not very high – an average of 6 – the actual figures for participation in a variety of pro-social acts show that people are more philanthropic in their daily lives than they perhaps think.

Does society know what philanthropy is?

60% of the sample from Spain and 66% from Portugal say they know what philanthropy is



Source: compiled by the authors.

Social stratification and integration of immigrants

Six social classes were identified based on nationwide representative data from 223,568 adults. These data help to shed light on patterns of inequality and explore how social and economic advantages and disadvantages shape social classes in Spain. The study also examined how immigrants integrate into these social classes by taking into account differences observed according to region of origin and if they are first- or second-generation immigrants. The results indicate major inequalities between Spanish-born citizens, immigrants and their children, with each group experiencing these inequalities differently.

Andrés F. Castro Torres, Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics;
Carlos Ruiz-Ramos, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Social Research Call, 2022

1

The upper and upper-middle classes represent 33% of the Spanish population, while the middle and lower-middle classes constitute 24%.

2

Immigrants make up 16% of the studied population and are present in all social classes, although to varying degrees depending on their region of origin. Africans, however, are excluded from the upper and upper-middle classes and are over-represented in the lower and very lower classes.

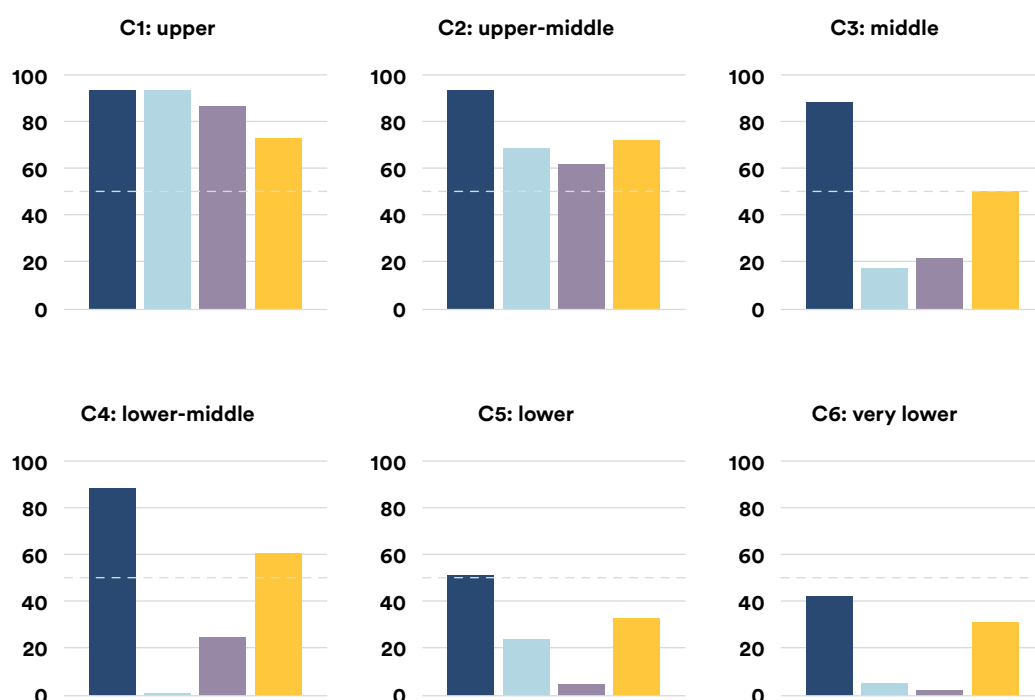
3

A significant proportion of the Spanish-born population live in the lower (77%) and very lower (63%) classes, which means that social inequality affects the Spanish-born and foreign-born populations differently.

More than 75% of those surveyed in the upper class have employment, tertiary education, high income and own a home without any financial burdens

Comparison of the socioeconomic advantages and disadvantages of different social classes among adults aged 35-54 in Spain in 2021

- Employment
- Higher education
- High income
- Home ownership



Shadow education on the Iberian Peninsula

Private tuition, often referred to as 'shadow education', has become a key tool for personalising learning and addressing the individual needs of students, particularly in situations where traditional teaching fails to bridge all gaps. This practice is common among families in countries such as Portugal and Spain who are seeking to help their children overcome learning difficulties or prepare them for important exams. It is therefore essential to understand and measure this market in order to tackle educational inequalities.

In 2024, national representative surveys were conducted in both countries: 2,400 households surveyed in Portugal and 2,500 in Spain. These helped to analyse the private tuition market from a sociodemographic perspective. The results show that students who perform poorly academically, exhibit behavioural problems, or have special educational needs are significantly more likely to receive private lessons. This indicates that families use private tuition to support their children through specific educational challenges.

Bruno P. Carvalho, Pedro Freitas, Susana Peralta, Francisco M. Pereira, Juan Carlos Rodríguez and Mercedes Esteban Villar

TheSocialObservatory

Research by the Social Observatory in collaboration with the European Foundation for Society and Education and the Nova School of Business and Economics

1

Private tuition is more common in Spain (25%) than in Portugal (20.1%), with its use increasing significantly at the upper secondary level, where approximately one in three students receives external support. This pattern reflects the importance that families attach to this stage of education, which precedes university entry, thereby suggesting a growing reliance on private lessons as a tool to ensure academic success at decisive moments.

2

The most requested private lesson in Portugal is mathematics (68.4%), followed by the country's mother tongue (Portuguese, 45.8%). While in Spain, the leading subject is English (52.7%), followed by mathematics (40.2%). This difference may be related to national educational priorities and pressure to pursue STEM careers, in which mathematics plays a central role.

3

A history of poor performance (such as failing a subject or repeating a year) correlates with higher rates of private lessons (for example, 33.5% versus 19.9% among those who have never failed in Portugal; 29.6% versus 24.8% in Spain).

4

The average monthly expenditure per student is 126.40 euros in Portugal and 97 euros in Spain, a difference of almost 30 euros. Expenditure in Portugal is more evenly distributed across subjects, whereas in Spain, the largest share of expenditure is accounted for by mathematics. There is also a significant informal economy, especially in Portugal, where only 58% of services are invoiced, representing an informal market worth 127 million euros per year.

5

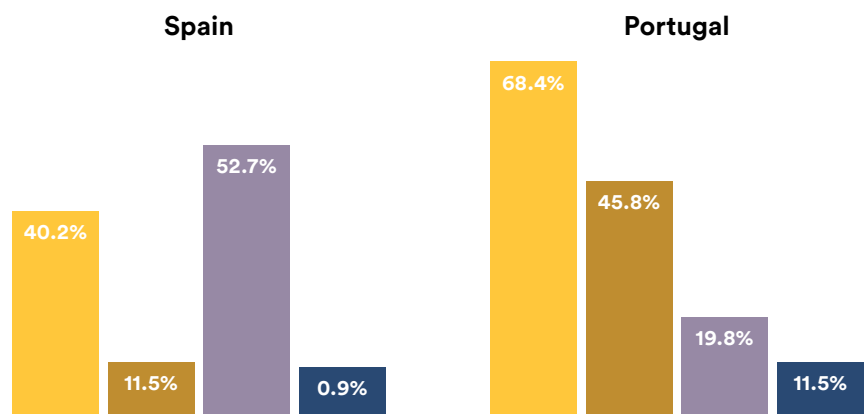
Families with greater economic capacity spend 18% more in Spain and 28% more in Portugal on private tuition than families with limited income. Nevertheless, many families with financial difficulties choose to invest in private tuition, which may involve sacrifices in other areas of family spending. This demonstrates that private tuition can exacerbate educational inequalities, given that access to this resource is largely dependent on income levels.



Mathematics is one of the most requested subjects in both countries

Distribution of subjects across all educational stages

- Mathematics
- Official language
- English
- Physics/chemistry



Source: compiled by the authors.

Do financial incentives boost fertility in the long term?

Governments are concerned about the economic consequences of low fertility rates. The situation is particularly severe in Spain, a country with one of the lowest fertility rates worldwide. In 2007, the Spanish government introduced its so-called ‘*cheque bebé*’, a 2,500-euro transfer for people having a baby. The data reveal that births rose by 6% during the following 9 months. This study goes one step further. Using a model that simulates fertility and the labour market participation of women throughout their life cycle, it finds that the total number of children per woman would have increased by only 3% in response to this incentive. Since demographic dynamics depend on the total number of children per woman – known as the ‘completed fertility rate’ – policymakers need to take this figure into account when evaluating the effectiveness of financial assistance for boosting fertility rates.

Lidia Cruces and F. Javier Rodríguez Román, Goethe University Frankfurt

TheSocialObservatory

Project funded by the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme

1 Fertility rates in the developed world have remained below the replacement rate (2.1 children per woman) for over two decades. With a rate of fewer than 1.3 children per woman, Spain’s is among the lowest worldwide.

2 Governments are concerned about the effects of population decline on the economy, and some have introduced policies to encourage people to have children, including financial incentives in the form of cash transfers. In 2007, Spain introduced the *cheque bebé*, consisting of a 2,500-euro transfer to families following a baby’s birth.

3 Evidence suggests that these types of incentives increase births in the short term. In Spain, births increased by 6% nine months after the *cheque bebé* was implemented. However, policymakers should note the effect on completed fertility rates, the main driver of demographics.

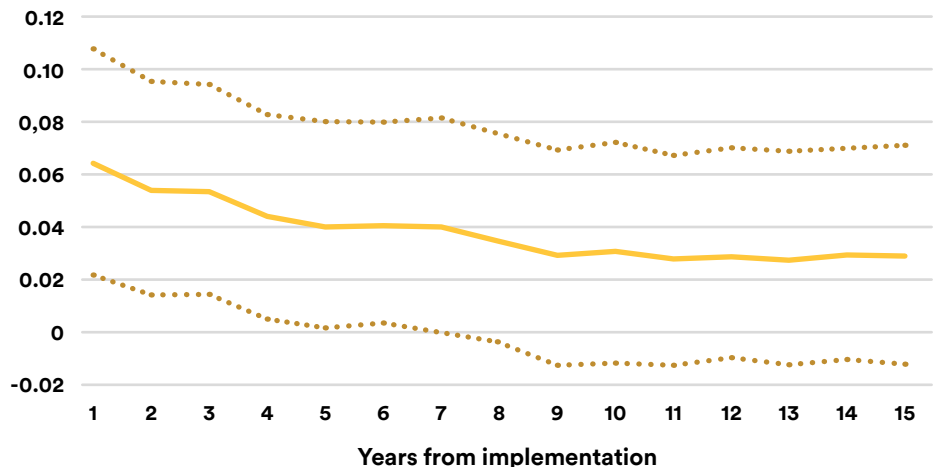
4 Women in developed countries, including Spain, claim that they want to have more children than they ultimately have.

5 One of the main reasons women choose to have fewer children is that combining a career with family responsibilities remains challenging. In Spain, ten years after the birth of their first child, women are 37.5% more likely to be working part-time, with earnings 33.4% lower, on average.

6 This study evaluates the effects of the *cheque bebé* on the total number of children per woman via a model that simulates women’s labour force participation and their decisions related to fertility, taking into consideration their willingness to have children and associated costs. The model indicates that the *cheque bebé* increased completed fertility rates by just 3%, only half of the increase seen in the short term.

The effect of the *cheque bebé* declines over time in the model simulations

Change in fertility rate with respect to the year the scheme is implemented in the simulated data



Source: model simulations compiled by the authors.

..... 95% confidence intervals

Households in transformation in Spain and Portugal

According to data from the Labour Force Survey (EPA), the average size of households in Spain and Portugal decreased steadily between 1991 and 2022, thus narrowing the gap with other European Union countries. This change reflects three trends according to household type: a) a greater number of people living alone, b) a decrease in extended households, and c) a reduction in the size of nuclear family households due to falling fertility rates and the break-up of couples through separation and divorce.

Albert Esteve, Juan Galeano and Jesús García, CED

TheSocialObservatory

Research by the "la Caixa" Foundation's Social Observatory in collaboration with the Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics

- 1** Between 1991 and 2022, the average household size fell from 3.3 to 2.4 people in Spain and from 3.1 to 2.5 in Portugal. Regardless of population growth, this reduction accounted for 68% and 85% of the increase in household numbers in Spain and Portugal respectively.
- 2** The number of single-person households increased by 81% in Spain and 53% in Portugal compared to 1991. Households with five or more people decreased by 73% and 70% respectively.
- 3** On an individual level, people share fewer years with both parents on average, spend fewer years living with their children and spend more time alone in old age.
- 4** Between 1991 and 2021, the average number of years people spent living alone increased from 3.8 to 7.5 in Spain and from 4.2 to 5.8 in Portugal.

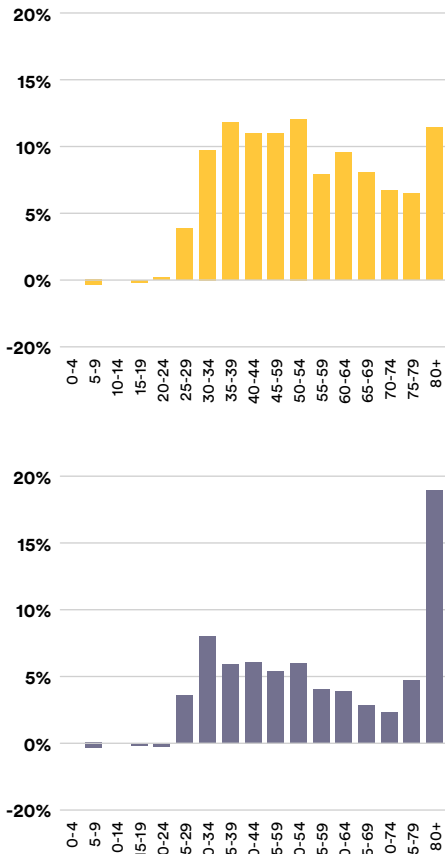
From the nuclear family to the single-person household

Relative increase in the number of people living alone by gender, age and country of residence between 1991 and 2022

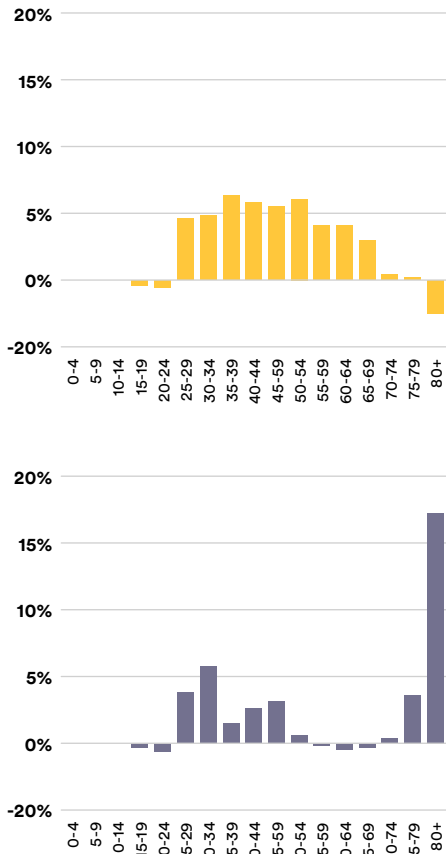
● Men ● Women



Spain



Portugal



Source: compiled by the authors based on the CORESIDENCE (CoDB) database, Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics.

Attitudes and emotions of Spaniards with regard to the climate emergency

Against an international backdrop marked by global political instability and a retreat from environmental commitments, it is essential to evaluate public awareness when it comes to the climate crisis. This study analysed a representative sample of 1,912 people in terms of age, gender and place of residence, with the aim of exploring the attitudes and emotions of Spaniards when it comes to the climate emergency, as well as the sociodemographic and psychological factors associated with sustainable behaviour.

The results reveal high levels of perception, concern, anger, sadness and *climate agency* – feeling like an agent of change – as well as low levels of *eco-anxiety*. In terms of pro-environmental behaviour (recycling, saving water, using public transport, etc.), only 26% of respondents reported frequently engaging in such environmentally friendly behaviour. From a sociodemographic perspective, women, people over 50, those with a higher level of education, and those with a progressive ideology report pro-environmental behaviour more frequently. The study likewise revealed that life satisfaction and *climate agency* are associated with a higher degree of pro-environmental behaviour, while *weariness* arising from frequent references to climate change are linked to lower levels of sustainable behaviour.

Cintia Díaz-Silveira, URJC; María Luisa Vecina, Universidad Complutense;
María Alonso-Ferres, Universidad de Granada; Francisco Burgos, URJC

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Flash Call on the social impact of climate change

1

Spaniards display a high level of perception in terms of the seriousness of the climate emergency (4.06 out of 5). However, both eco-concern and sustainable behaviour are at average levels (3.5 out of 5 in both cases). In fact, perception of the climate emergency only explains 15% of pro-environmental behaviour.

2

44% of respondents feel high levels of anger about the state of the climate. At one extreme, 28% claim to experience eco-anxiety due to the lack of progress that has been made. At the other extreme, more associated with denialism, 33% report high levels of climate weariness, in other words, they believe that constant information leads to unfounded climate hysteria.

3

In terms of gender differences, slightly higher levels of sadness, guilt and pro-environmental behaviour are found in women than in men.

4

As age increases, emotional intensity in terms of anger, sadness and a sense of agency also increases, and sustainable behaviour becomes more pronounced.

5

Climate agency – feeling like an agent of change – and eco-concern are the variables that best explain pro-environmental behaviour: 33% and 32% respectively, well above anger or climate perception.

6

There is a positive relationship between sustainable behaviour and life satisfaction. However, 22% of the population states that their living conditions are so difficult that they cannot concern themselves with issues related to the environment.

Attitudes of Spaniards with regard to the climate emergency

Averages of each psychological variable



Perception	4.06
Anger	3.97
Sadness	3.76
Agency	3.72
Sustainable behaviour	3.53
Eco-concern	3.49
Hope	2.95
Weariness	2.88
Guilt	2.79
Eco-anxiety	2.29

Gender gaps in the valuation of working conditions

This study examines how men and women value different aspects of jobs, such as flexibility, commuting time and workplace atmosphere. Based on a survey of 8,000 people in Spain, it found that men and women alike are prepared to accept lower wages in exchange for shorter commutes, more flexible schedules and a good workplace atmosphere. However, a clear gender difference appears when it comes to avoiding sexual harassment at work. Women are prepared to give up around half of their wage if it ensures them a safe workplace. These findings highlight the toll that unsafe workplaces impose on women and show how harassment contributes to persistent gender inequality in the labour market.

Lídia Farré, CSIC; Marta Curull, Universitat de Barcelona; Laia Maynou, Universitat de Barcelona; Libertad González, Universitat Pompeu Fabra & BSE

TheSocialObservatory

Projected selected in the Social Research Call, 2022

1 Both men and women are willing to give up substantial parts of their wage to avoid jobs with rigid schedules, long commutes (over an hour), or with no option to work from home. They also attach value to an agreeable workplace environment, accepting up to 20% lower wages for a good workplace atmosphere and up to 33% lower to avoid conflicts with managers.

2 There are pronounced gender differences in the valuation of workplace safety. Women are willing to give up 50% of their wage to avoid jobs with a risk of sexual harassment, a percentage that falls to 36% in the case of men.

3 Both men and women show stronger aversion to jobs where the potential victims of harassment are female.

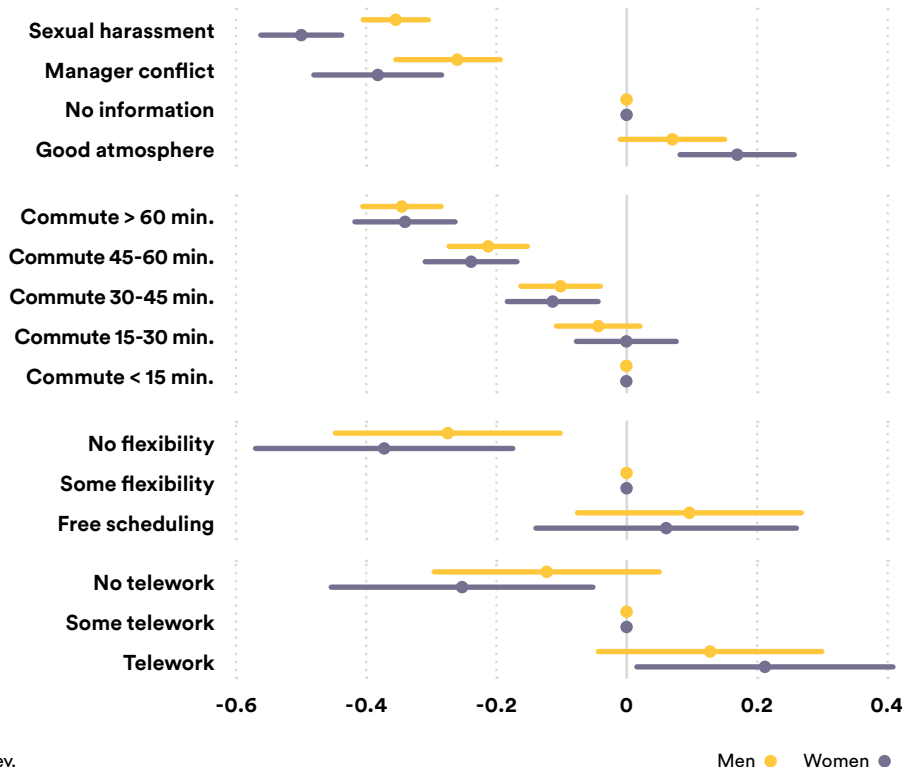
4 Women who have been victims of sexual harassment tend to show stronger negative valuations of sexual harassment compared to women who have not experienced it. Women who were victims of a harassment situation in the last year require up to 87% higher pay to accept jobs involving a risk of sexual harassment for female workers.

5 While policies promoting flexible work arrangements are unlikely to exacerbate gender pay gaps, policies that strengthen enforcement of anti-harassment regulations, improve monitoring and promote a culture of respect could play a key role in fostering gender equality and improving labour market efficiency.



Willingness-to-pay (WTP) estimates from job choice experiment: gender differences

Note: the experiment is based on 16,626 pairs of job offers, with 3 job choices per respondent. Dominant offers are excluded. Confidence intervals of 95% are adjusted for clustering of respondents. WTP estimates are expressed as a percentage of a respondent's wage. Results are weighted using population weights.



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the survey.

Inequalities among adolescents in terms of access and exposure to urban green spaces

The time spent at home by adolescents has increased in recent years, whether they are doing homework, watching television or using electronic devices. Consequently, the time they spend enjoying urban green spaces, such as parks and gardens, has decreased, despite the benefits that contact with nature provides them. This study examines the inequalities in access and exposure to these spaces among a sample of 1,610 adolescents aged 10-16 residing in the major metropolitan areas of Spain.

Marco Garrido-Cumbrera, Alicia González-Marín, José Correa-Fernández, Health & Territory Research (HTR), Department of Physical Geography and Regional Geographic Analysis, Universidad de Sevilla

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Flash Call to support research projects on childhood and vulnerability

1 Although the majority of adolescents (71.6%) lived within six minutes of a green space, only a small percentage of them (11.6%) visited it daily, while 18.6% visited it three to five days a week.

2 9.6% of adolescents from low-income households never visited green spaces, compared to 2.8% of those from high-income households.

3 Among those living in problem neighbourhoods (for example, those affected by crime, insecurity or insufficient lighting), 27.8% visited parks more than three days a week, compared to 32.6% of those living in neighbourhoods without any of these problems.

4 More than half of adolescents would rather stay home and use electronic devices than go to parks, and 25% spent more than 20 hours a week in front of screens.

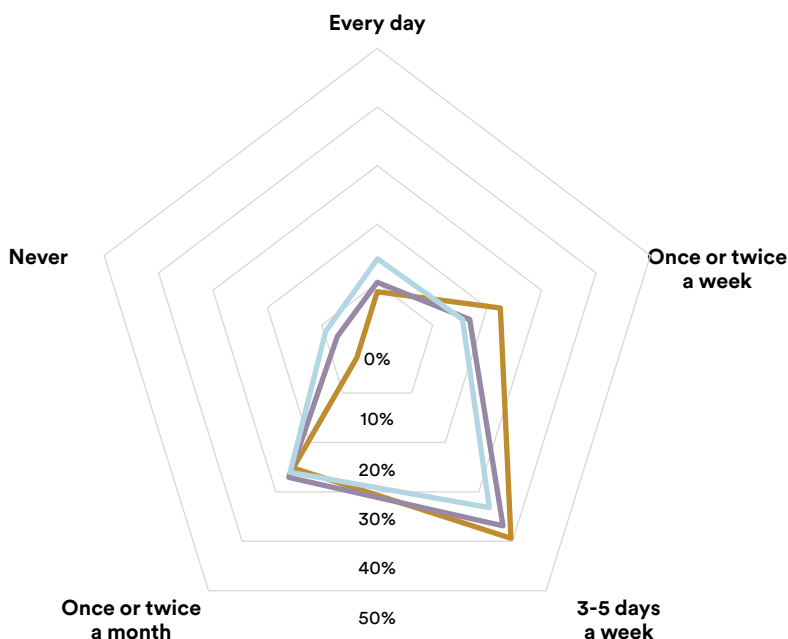
5 30.9% of adolescents with high self-esteem visited green spaces more than three days a week, compared to 22.9% of those with low self-esteem. Furthermore, 51.4% of adolescents with low self-esteem never visited green spaces.

6 When they did visit green spaces, the most common activities were spending time with friends (58.2%), walking or jogging (52.3%) and playing ball games (44.8%).

Socioeconomic status is related to the frequency of visits to urban green spaces

Categories of frequency of visits to green spaces by adolescents as represented on a radial axis

Socioeconomic status of adolescents:
 ● Low ● Medium ● High



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the GreenTEENS survey.

Stigma and discrimination as vulnerability factors in adolescence

Stigma and discrimination frequently affect adolescents and may be key factors in the vulnerability of this group. The aim of this study is to analyse these two variables based on an online survey conducted among 1,000 Spanish adolescents aged 12-16. Between 14% and 30% of the adolescents surveyed say that they are frequently discriminated against. Over 65% of adolescents say that they have witnessed discrimination against other young people. In both experienced and witnessed discrimination, the most common causes include belonging to an ethnic minority, physical appearance, or various physical and mental health conditions. The results also reveal the existence of a certain stigmatisation of adolescents with disabilities, mental disorders or physical illnesses. The results of this research help to identify particularly vulnerable groups of adolescents and highlight the relevance of both variables during a critical period of their life development.

Clara González Sanguino, Jairo Rodríguez Medina, Alba Ayuso Lanchares, Elena Betegón Blanca, María Jesús Irurtia Muñiz, Universidad de Valladolid

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Flash Call to support research projects on childhood and vulnerability

1

Up to 30% of adolescents often experience discrimination. Between 15% and 18% say they are treated with little courtesy or respect, or as if they are not intelligent. Meanwhile, 14% are called nicknames or receive insults. Over 6% say they receive threats or aggressions frequently.

2

Adolescents with a physical illness, disability or mental disorder, as well as those with friends or family members experiencing any of these conditions, are discriminated against more often. This discrimination is greater when they live in large cities.

3

Within the educational context, over 60% of adolescents have witnessed other pupils being discriminated against by their peers: the latter made fun of or insulted them, mainly because of their ethnic origin, physical appearance, gender, mental disorder or psychological particularity.

4

In the hypothetical case of a young person who has a physical illness, a disability and/or a mental disorder, adolescents show stigmatisation in the form of excessive help and pity for that person, as well as segregation: they think that the person affected would be better off in a special needs classroom rather than in their own mainstream classroom.

5

In that same case, adolescents would prefer to maintain a greater social distance in their closest and most intimate relationships: they would not mind if a young person with these characteristics was their neighbour, but they would not want them as a partner or friend, or they would not want them to take care of their pet.

6

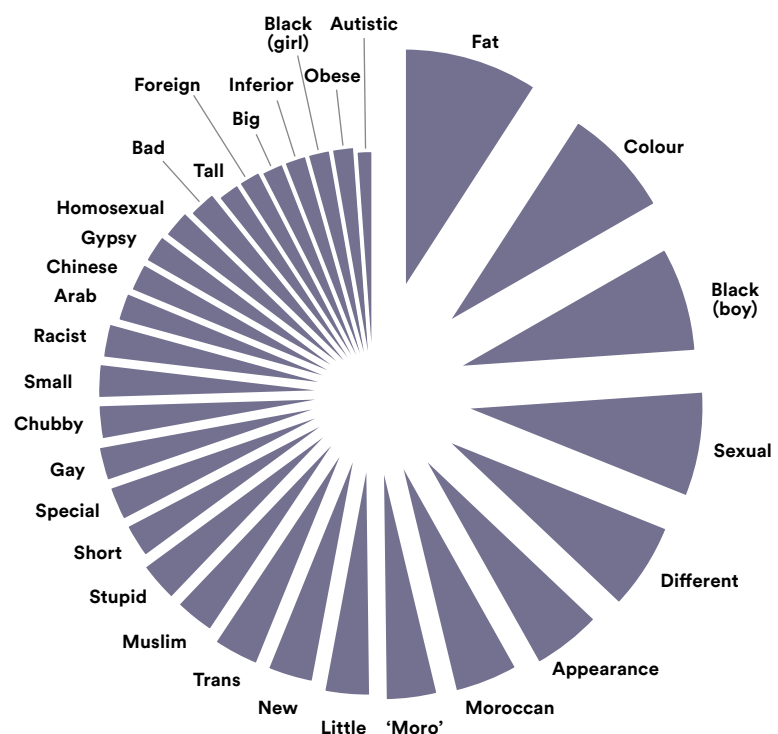
Both the stigmatisation and discrimination experienced – compared to those witnessed – explain up to 20% of the quality of life of the adolescents surveyed and are key factors in their vulnerability. The presence of health disorders can be a double vulnerability factor: in addition to the health disorder, there is the consequent discrimination and stigmatisation.

Most common reasons for discrimination among adolescents

Most common words in responses to: 'Describe a discrimination situation that you have recently experienced or witnessed'



Source: compiled by the authors based on the SAVED survey.



Social perception of forest fire risk in Spain: socioeconomic factors, risk exposure and experiences

Against a backdrop of increasingly extreme weather events and more impactful wildfires, this study examines risk culture in Spain by surveying 3,690 individuals from all the country's autonomous communities. Its aim is to evaluate the factors associated with the Risk Perception Index (RPI). The results reveal that most of the population has a low perception of risk, with 77% scoring below 50%. Nonetheless, this perception increases in areas most affected by wildfires, among people concerned about climate change, residents near forests or in small towns and those with a greater knowledge about wildfires. A higher RPI is also observed among vulnerable groups, such as people with mobility issues, respiratory problems or pets. A higher RPI is associated with more self-protection measures, such as taking out insurance, having fire extinguishers or participating in preventative activities, which contributes to strengthening citizen resilience. Television and radio are the main sources of information, and greater media exposure or conversation about the subject increases the RPI. Regression analysis identifies general perceptions of natural hazards and concerns about climate change as the most influential variables, followed by experience of wildfires, knowledge of the subject and trust in the political class. These findings offer key insights into designing more precise and effective public policies.

Elena Górriz, Centre de Tecnologia Forestal de Catalunya

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Flash Call on the social impact of climate change

1

Most of the Spanish population has a low perception of the risk of forest fires in their municipality (< 50%). The higher the frequency of fires in an autonomous community over the last decade, the higher the RPI among its citizens, with Galicia as the region leading this trend.

2

Men under 44 years of age living in urban environments make up the social group with the lowest risk perception. Conversely, people who are more concerned about climate change, who live near forests or visit forest areas for leisure activities or who live in municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants have a significantly higher risk perception.

3

People who report respiratory illnesses, mobility difficulties and those who have pets show a higher perception of fire risk. These groups are particularly vulnerable when it comes to emergency management.

4

A greater perception of risk is linked to the adoption of more self-protection measures, such as participating in informational talks or clean-up efforts, joining alert groups or taking out insurance. These practices strengthen citizen resilience because they facilitate the development of better preparedness, response and recovery strategies in the event of potential fires.

5

The degrees of perception of other natural hazards, as well as concern about climate change, are the factors that most influence the perception of forest fire risk. To a lesser extent, prior experience of forest fires, knowledge of the subject and trust in the political class also influence how the Spanish population classifies risk.

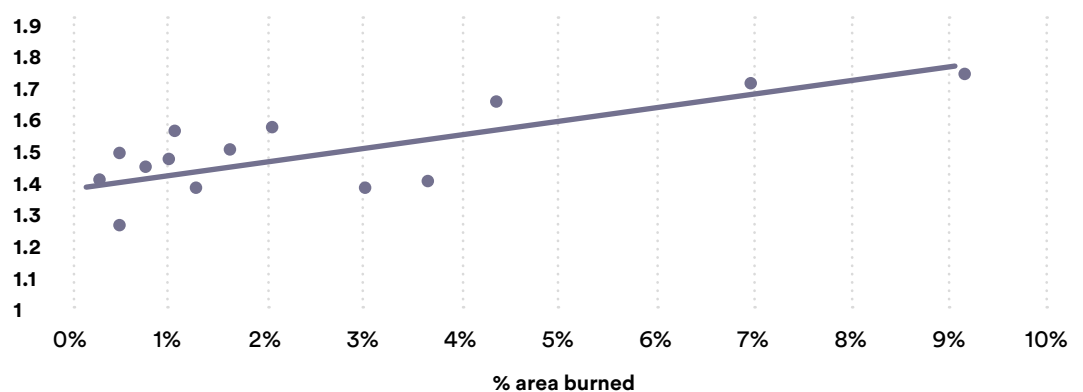


Citizen perception of the risk of forest fires is medium-low

Risk Perception Index



Relationship between RPI and area burned by region in Spain



Source: compiled by the author based on data from the FireRisk survey (2024).

Perceptions and attitudes in the population towards degrowth as a climate change mitigation strategy

Today's socioeconomic model is based on unlimited growth, which generates environmental impacts such as climate change and exacerbates social inequalities. Degrowth has been proposed as an alternative to reduce the use of resources and energy in a planned and equitable manner, with the aim of protecting the environment, promoting social justice and improving collective well-being. This study examines the perception of degrowth in the Spanish population through a survey of 3,000 adults.

The results reveal a high level of awareness of the effects of climate change on extreme events such as droughts, heatwaves and heavy rainfall, as well as a moderate degree of eco-anxiety, particularly among individuals aged 25-45. Although 65% of respondents recognise the need to change the development model, 77% are unfamiliar with the concept of degrowth and 43% view it negatively.

47% adopt individual practices consistent with degrowth, even though they do not associate them with this term. But involvement in collective actions is low. The study concludes that the social understanding of degrowth must be fostered through information campaigns and public policies promoting sustainable practices.

María D. López-Rodríguez, Antonia Lozano Díaz, Rubén Rodríguez Puertas, Juan M. Bellido Cáceres and Juan S. Fernández Prados, Universidad de Almería; Rosemberg Franco, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

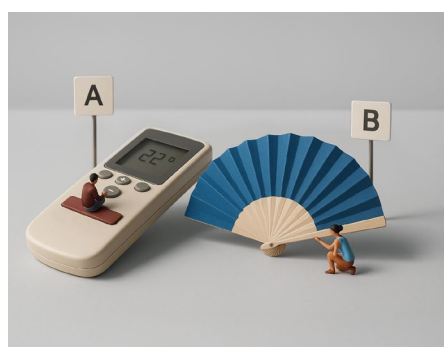
TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Flash Call on the social impact of climate change

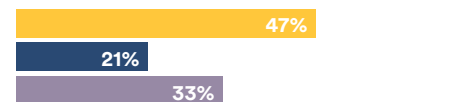
- 1** 70% of respondents identify the effects of climate change in Spain. These perceived impacts are essentially related to an increase in phenomena such as droughts, heatwaves and heavy rainfall.
- 2** 50% of respondents display average levels of eco-anxiety – higher among people aged 25-45 – with women and people with a higher level of education also having higher average scores.
- 3** 62% of respondents attribute climate change to human causes, and 58% believe that unlimited growth exacerbates it compared to alternative models such as degrowth.
- 4** 77% of respondents are not familiar with the concept of degrowth, and 58% have never heard of it. This lack of understanding generates ambivalent emotional reactions: 43% of respondents view it negatively.
- 5** 47% of respondents claim they quite often adopt individual practices consistent with degrowth principles aimed at reducing their carbon footprint – such as reducing air travel or using renewable energy – even though they do not explicitly associate them with this concept.
- 6** Only 25% of respondents promote a degrowth-related lifestyle on social media, and 18% participate in campaigns.

Frequency of different individual and collective practices for climate change mitigation related to degrowth principles

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely



I strive to reduce my carbon footprint, for example, by minimising air travel and using renewable energy



I share or comment on degrowth-related social media posts



I participate in social movements or groups that defend adopting simple, degrowth-oriented living practices



I get involved in awareness campaigns about adopting simple, degrowth-oriented living practices



How urban proximity transforms daily life in five Spanish cities

The STEPP project examines the influence of the 15-minute city (15MC) model, based on proximity to essential services, on mobility and social life in Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, Granada and Palma de Mallorca. Using surveys and accessibility data, the project looks at whether living close to schools, health centres, shops and public spaces reduces car use, encourages active travel and strengthens neighbourhood bonds.

While proximity alone does not guarantee a change in habits, the results show that it does indeed create the necessary conditions for it to occur. When urban design, infrastructure and social context are aligned, 15MC neighbourhoods can encourage more sustainable, cohesive lifestyles. In particular, a reduction in car dependency, a greater number of trips on foot or by bicycle, and more interaction among neighbours are observed. The study also reveals how the urban layout interacts with social factors to determine who can benefit most from the opportunities offered by proximity.

Oriol Marquet, Serena Mombelli, Monika Maciejewska, Marta-Beatriz Fernández-Núñez, Laia Mojica, Jerònia Cubells and Carme Miralles-Guasch, Geography Department at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected as part of the Social Research Call, 2022

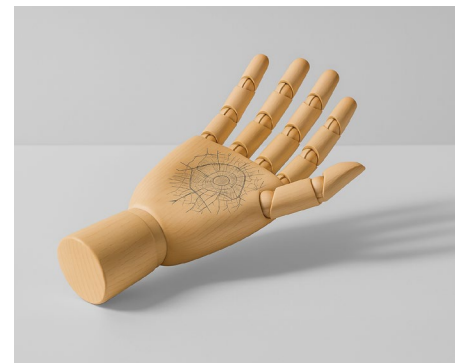
1 Although 95% of Barcelona’s population lives in conditions typical of a 15-minute city, only 26% adopt a 15MC lifestyle and barely 38% adapt to a 30-minute model.

2 Most citizens do not follow a strictly 15MC lifestyle. What they do is combine active trips within the neighbourhood – on foot or by bicycle – with other longer trips by car or public transport. Rather than being seen as a failure, this should be interpreted as reflecting a flexible approach: mixed mobility patterns can be equally compatible with accessible urban planning.

3 In terms of cars, the percentage of drivers is higher in the least accessible areas (33%) than in the most accessible areas (21%), but the average time spent driving remains stable at around 60-67 minutes per day in both cases.

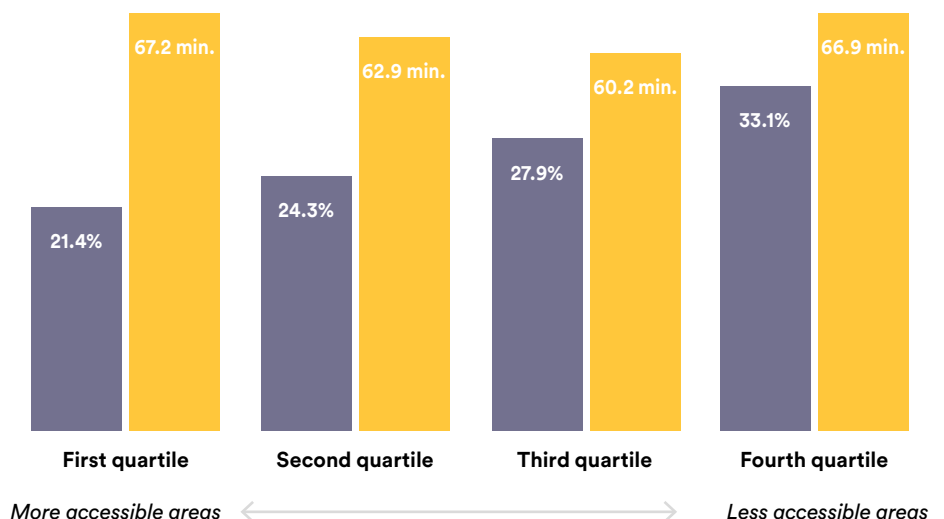
4 The gender gap in car use persists in all the urban areas studied. But differences in driving patterns between men and women are reduced in the most accessible environments. This suggests that 15MC environments can help to reduce inequalities, although they may not eliminate them completely.

5 Citizens residing in 15MC zones report higher levels of social cohesion in their neighbourhoods, particularly with regard to meeting their daily needs and the feeling of belonging to local groups.



Higher car use in areas with less accessibility

● Percentage of drivers
● Minutes per day behind the wheel



Source: compiled by the authors based on the results of the STEPP project.

Using statistical modelling to combat gender-based violence

Approximately 30% of women worldwide have suffered physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime. Primary healthcare could be ideal for detecting these situations, but victims often decide not to seek healthcare after suffering an episode of violence. The main objective of this project was to estimate the actual magnitude of gender-based violence cases that could be detected by the primary healthcare system in the metropolitan area of Barcelona on the basis of the 3,110 recorded cases in the period 2010-2021. Another objective of the study was to identify possible inequalities in gender-based violence victims when it comes to accessing the primary healthcare system.

David Moríña, Amanda Fernández-Fontelo and Pere Puig, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; Isabel Millán and Víctor Alonso-Lara, Universitat de Barcelona; Pere Toran, Meritxell Gómez-Maldonado and Gemma Falguera, Institut Universitari d'Investigació en Atenció Primària

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Social Research Call, 2022

- 1**

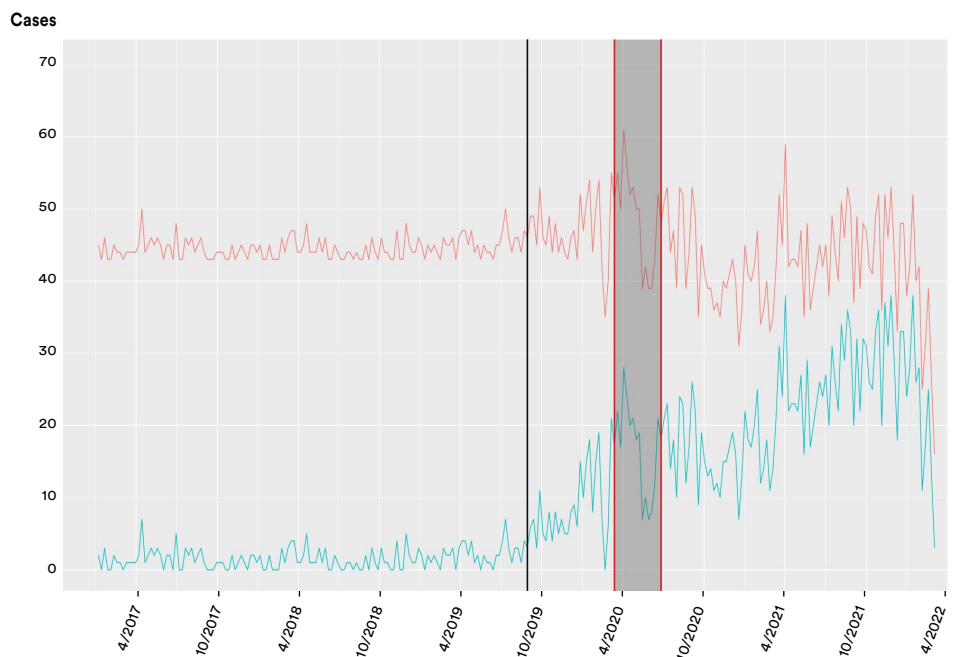
This project addresses the issue of undetected gender-based violence cases using an advanced data modelling approach. It estimates that, on average, only 11% of cases were identified by the primary healthcare system during the period 2010-2021. The detection rate was even lower prior to the awareness campaigns conducted in 2019.
- 2**

Training campaigns are useful in reducing the issue of underdetection. They are especially effective in the short and medium term, suggesting the need for periodic reminders.
- 3**

After the awareness campaign in 2019, the primary healthcare system in Catalonia might be recording only around 42% of gender-based violence cases, according to the number of cases estimated by the model.
- 4**

Use of the primary healthcare system varies across the population of gender-based violence victims, so the underdetection issue might be even worse in especially vulnerable groups, for instance younger victims.

The detection of gender-based violence cases increased significantly after the implementation of the training programmes



In green: evolution of the weekly number of gender-based violence cases detected in four of the subareas of Barcelona's Northern Metropolitan Health Area
In red: reconstruction of the most likely number of cases
Black vertical line: the moment when training started to impact the detection of gender-based violence cases
Area between red vertical lines: period of confinement because of covid-19 pandemic

Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the primary healthcare system.

The impact of new technologies on wage inequality in Spain

This study examines the impact that new technologies, such as automation and artificial intelligence, had on wage distribution in Spain between 2000 and 2019. The data reveal that technological changes contributed to an increase in wage inequality during this period. Among the observed socioeconomic effects, the most notable is the widening of the wage gap according to educational level, while the gender pay gap displays a tendency towards reduction. Although technological progress undoubtedly improves general well-being, the results of this study underline the urgent need to prepare the workforce for the challenges posed by digital transformation.

Juan César Palomino, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, INET Oxford, ICAE and EQUALITAS; Juan Gabriel Rodríguez, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, ICAE, EQUALITAS and CEDESOG; Pedro Salas-Rojo, CUNEF University, International Inequalities Institute at LSE and EQUALITAS; Raquel Sebastián, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, ICAE and EQUALITAS

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected as part of the Social Research Call, 2022

1 The study uses a counterfactual simulation without automation to conclude that the Gini index would have been 21.7% lower. This suggests that wages would have been distributed more equitably, with significant transfers from the top 10% to middle and lower levels.

2 New technologies have widened the wage gap among people with different levels of education. Those with higher qualifications have not been as exposed to the automation of their tasks.

3 The gender pay gap would have been wider without technological advances. This is because the most automated jobs in Spain have generally been occupied by men. Nevertheless, it is young workers – regardless of gender – who have suffered the most from the negative effects of technological change.

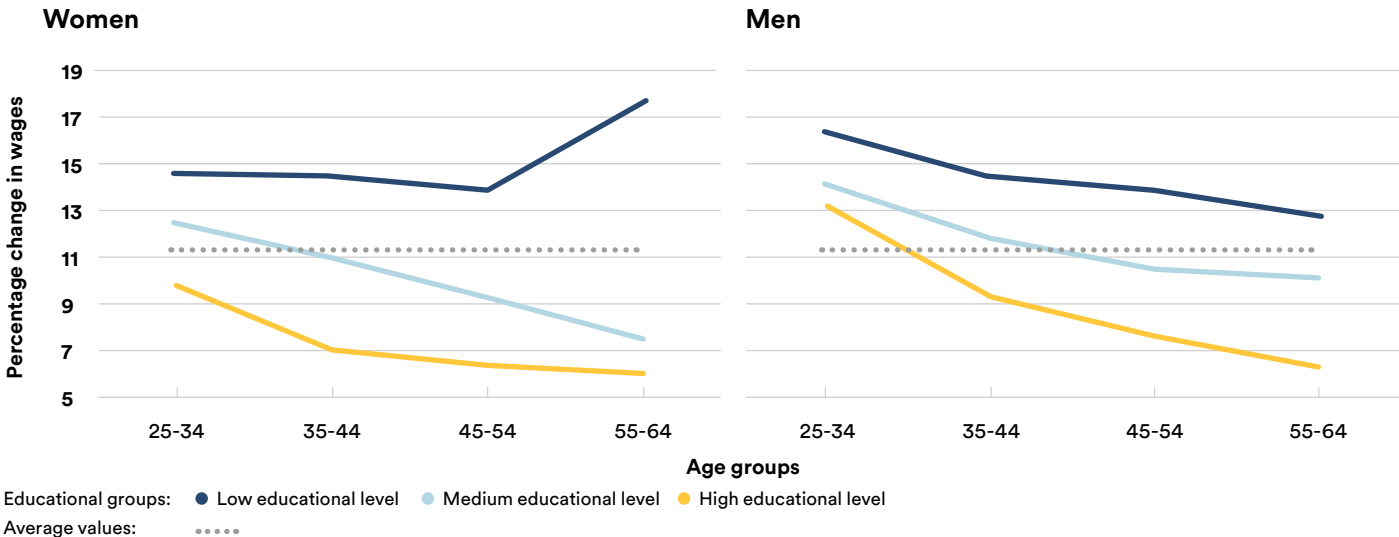
4 Artificial intelligence had a similar effect to automation between 2015 and 2019, primarily benefiting more qualified workers by increasing their wages.

5 Although factors such as commercial openness and the employment structure of places of residence have also impacted wage variation, the effects of these factors have been less pronounced than that of technological change. Variables such as profit margins or relocation have not had a significant impact.



How would wage inequality have changed without automation?

Relative change in wages according to gender, age group and educational level in a counterfactual scenario for the period 2000-2019



Source: compiled by the authors.

How are we adapting to climate change in Spain?

Among other effects, climate change is generating an increase in extreme temperatures and a decrease in rainfall in Mediterranean regions. These phenomena have a significant impact on society, whose capacity to adapt depends on how these effects are perceived, the associated costs and the resources available at an individual level. This study uses a nationally representative survey of 9,318 participants to analyse how Spanish households are adapting to climate change, especially when it comes to heatwaves and droughts. The study considers factors such as socioeconomic profile, climate scepticism and the information sources used by individuals. 80% accept climate change, while 16% are sceptical, a view that is more prevalent among people with lower educational levels. Traditional media are the primary source of information, although those who use social media tend to be more denialists. A notable finding is that 50% of respondents reported feeling hotter inside their homes than outside, suggesting inadequate home adaptation. Altruism encourages the adoption of measures, while risk aversion and social alignment reinforce scepticism. Although providing information positively influences climate change adaptation, its impact is moderate, given that personal perception is a more determining factor with regard to action.

Angel Perni and Laura Riesgo, Department of Economics, Quantitative Methods and Economic History, Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Seville

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Flash Call to support research on the social impact of the climate emergency

- 1**

Adaptation has been greater in regions more exposed to climate change, with low-cost measures such as air conditioning units (49%) predominating over investments in thermal insulation (10%).
- 2**

40% of the population have changed their hygiene and eating habits because of the heat, while 34% have reduced their domestic water consumption in the face of scarcity and 80% associate a lack of water with rising food prices.
- 3**

Approximately 80% of the Spanish population accepts the existence of climate change, thereby confirming that climate scepticism in Spain is not widespread.
- 4**

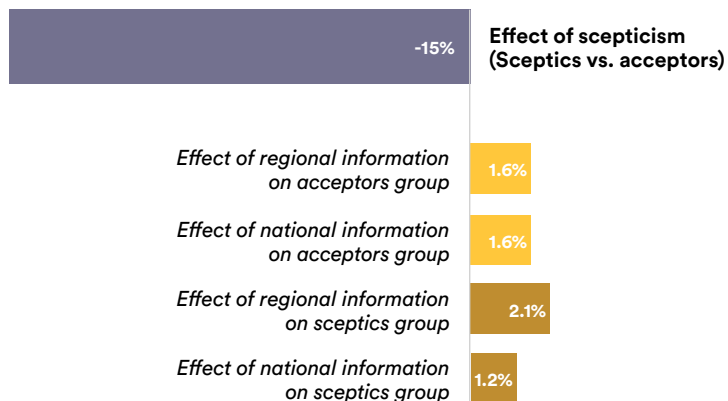
Climate scepticism varies depending on the media used for information about scientific issues. 36% of those who rely on mobile messaging and 25% of those who rely on social media are sceptical.
- 5**

Only 20% of sceptics have adapted their habits because of heat or water scarcity, compared to 50% and 45% respectively among those who do not doubt climate change.
- 6**

The Future Adaptation Index rises when information on climate change projections for Spain or its regions is provided, although it is substantially lower for the sceptical group.

Willingness to adapt increases with information, although attitudes towards climate change have a greater influence

Results of the experiment between groups with and without access to information. The distribution of acceptors and sceptics is even across both groups. Differences in the Future Adaptation Index between acceptors and sceptics are analysed.



Health and mortality in Spain: keys to understanding the gender paradox

Although women live longer than men, several studies have shown that men tend to have better health indicators. Understanding the origin of this gap is vital for two reasons: a) to design interventions that enable both genders to enjoy a longer and higher-quality life, and b) to narrow the gender gap in health.

This study examines the difference between men and women in terms of disability-free life expectancy (DFLE). It is the most rigorous and detailed analysis to date, and it explains the processes related to functional disability and mortality that lead to this gender gap. The research is based on data from the SHARE survey, which was conducted in Spain in 2017. The survey collected information on disability trajectories in people over 50, thereby enabling the study of functional decline and recovery as well as variations in mortality risk according to health status.

The results show that lower mortality among women is the main factor behind their advantage when it comes to DFLE. Although men develop fewer functional limitations, women are more likely to recover. Reducing mortality in both groups would therefore not only increase DFLE, but also help to close the gender gap.

Tim Riffe, Rustam Tursun Zade, Ainhoa Alustiza, Anna Barbuscia and Amaia Bacigalupe, Universidad del País Vasco

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Social Research Call, 2022

1 Life expectancy at 40 in Spain in 2017 was 46.5 years longer for women and 41.1 years longer for men. This means that, on average, women lived 5.4 years longer than men. Furthermore, women also had a 3.4-year advantage over men in terms of disability-free life expectancy.

2 Although men tend to live fewer years than women, 95% of that time is spent without any serious disability. In contrast, the percentage drops to 91% for women. This suggests that if quality of life is measured by the number of years lived without severe disability, the gender gap is favourable for men.

3 Among people without a functional disability, men aged 60-80 are more than twice as likely to die as women of the same age group. Among those with some sort of disability, the mortality risk for men is also double that of women, at least until the age of 85.

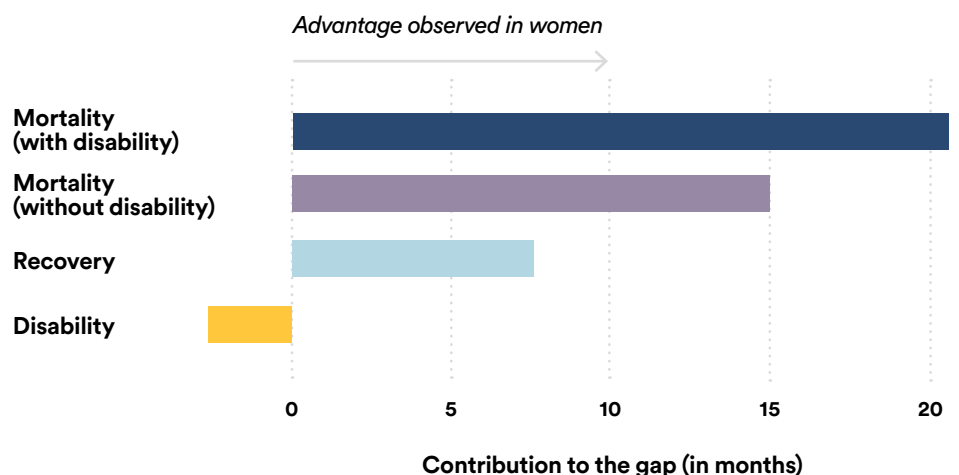
4 Almost 3 years of the difference in disability-free life expectancy between men and women can be explained by lower female mortality. This advantage is also observed among women with functional limitations as well as those assessed using other health indicators. Women's greater capacity for recovery is noteworthy in Spain, contributing approximately 0.6 years to this gender gap.

5 Reducing mortality among people without disabilities by 20% would increase DFLE by 0.5 years for men and 0.3 years for women. Conversely, a 20% reduction in the onset of disability would increase DFLE by 1.4 years for both men and women, without altering the gender gap.



Contribution of various factors to the gender gap in years lived without severe disability (values expressed in months)

Different contributions make up the total gender gap of 3.4 years, corresponding to the year 2017 in Spain



Suicidal behaviour among young students in Catalonia: risk and protective factors

In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in suicidal behaviour among young people, making it one of the main causes of unnatural death in this age group. In order to better understand this phenomenon, a study was carried out focusing on young people aged 16-22 in Catalonia.

Its main goal was to determine how many young people exhibit suicidal behaviour and which factors influence the occurrence and prevention of this behaviour. This information can then be used to design more comprehensive and effective prevention strategies.

The study was based on a sample of 3,159 baccalaureate, vocational training, adult education and university students who were given an online questionnaire that included sociodemographic variables, suicidal behaviour (thoughts and attempts), health status and psychological distress.

Regina Vila-Badia, Arnau Carmona, Queralt Sales, Jordi Mestres, Ariadna Corbella, Alícia Colomer and Judith Usall, Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Déu

TheSocialObservatory

Project selected as part of the Social Research Call, 2023

1

The data obtained reveal a high prevalence of suicidal behaviour among the participants in the sample: 30.6% have contemplated suicide at some point, while 10.6% have attempted it at some point. On the other hand, 25.9% have harmed themselves without intending to take their own life.

2

40.8% of participants have experienced some form of childhood trauma, including emotional abuse (24.8%), physical neglect (19.5%), emotional neglect (18.4%), sexual abuse (13.1%) and physical abuse (9.8%).

3

Certain problematic behaviour can intensify emotional distress in young people. These include consuming pornography (51.7%), frequent gambling (17.4%) and compulsive social media use (4.1%).

4

The mental health of young people is influenced by a multitude of personal, family and social factors. The most relevant of these are bullying (31.5%), cyberbullying (11%), separation of parents (31.1%), currently or previously living with relatives who abuse drugs and exposure to violence in relationships (20.4%), significant economic difficulties within the family (19.2%) and the loss of a first-degree relative (10.1%).

5

The risk of suicidal thoughts and attempts increases significantly among certain profiles of young people. The most relevant factors include non-heterosexual sexual orientation, pornography consumption, a history of childhood trauma (especially emotional abuse) and high levels of anxiety and depression. In cases of suicidal thoughts, loneliness, impulsivity and problematic social media use are also identified as risk factors. Identifying these profiles can help to detect risk situations and highlights the need for comprehensive, preventive approaches.

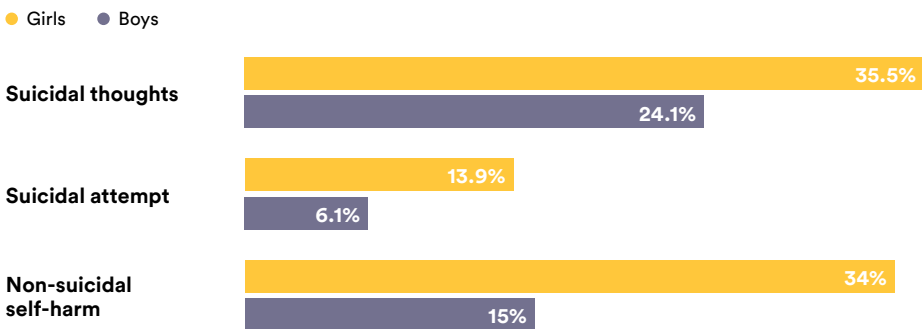
6

In terms of gender differences, girls exhibit greater emotional distress, higher levels of anxiety and depression, and also greater impulsivity and loneliness than boys. They also exhibit a higher prevalence of childhood trauma and have lower levels of resilience and life satisfaction.



Differences by gender in suicidal behaviour

Suicidal behaviour is more prevalent among girls, who also report more psychological distress



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the PROSIA-Y project (2024-2025).

Protective and well-being factors in the face of youth suicide

What helps young people cope with emotional distress?

According to this study, carried out in Catalonia in 2024-2025 with a sample of 3,159 young people aged 16-22, the indicators related to suicidal behaviour in this group are extremely worrying: 25.9% of young people had self-harmed, 30.6% had experienced suicidal thoughts and 10.6% had attempted suicide. These truly alarming figures require the design of strategies to promote the mental health of young people and preventive public policies. It is therefore crucial to identify not only the risk factors, but also the protective factors that favour the emotional well-being of young people.

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TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Social Research Call, 2023

1 The results show that social support and resilience are the main protective factors, while social media addiction produces the opposite effect.

2 Social support – understood as the perception of having a network of important individuals who provide emotional, practical and communicative support – is notably lower among young people with suicidal thoughts (11% lower), particularly among those who have attempted suicide (17% lower), compared to the control group. Conversely, the difference observed in the self-harm group is not statistically significant.

3 Resilience – understood as the capacity to face difficult experiences and adapt positively to them – is notably lower among young individuals with suicidal thoughts (8% lower), and this difference is more noticeable among those who have attempted suicide (11% lower), compared to the control group. Conversely, the difference observed in the self-harm group is not statistically significant.

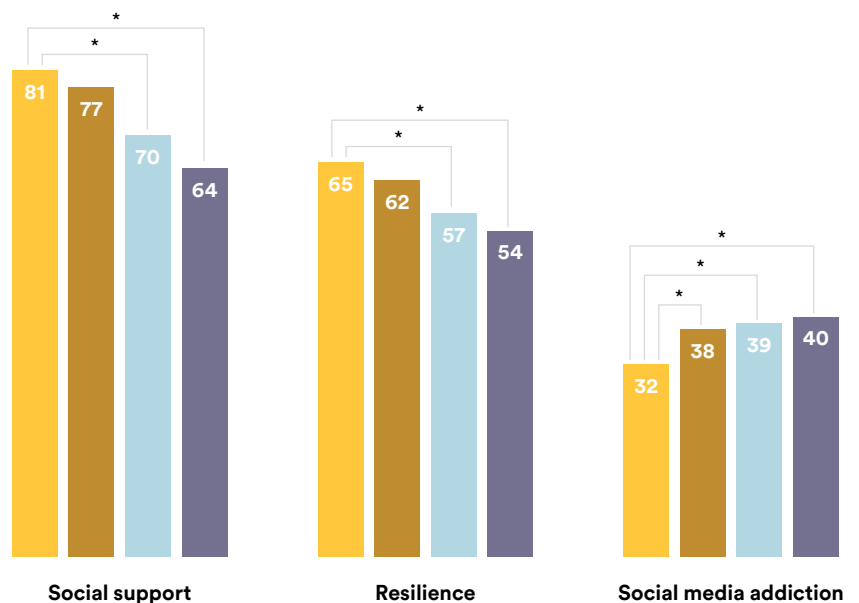
4 A significant increase in the problematic use of social media is observed among the other groups compared to young people who have never exhibited suicidal behaviour: 6% among those who self-harm, 7% among those who have experienced suicidal thoughts and 8% among those who have attempted suicide.

5 The key to reducing the risk of suicidal behaviour lies in strengthening social support, resilience and the healthy use of social media in schools, at home and within the community.



Levels of social support, resilience and social media addiction according to the presence or absence of suicidal behaviour

- No suicidal behaviour
- Self-harm
- Suicidal thoughts
- Attempted suicide



Note: the scores for each variable have been converted into a 0-100 scale in order to facilitate comparisons. The bars represent the adjusted means obtained through analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), which adjusts the results to take into account differences in gender, age, migration process and previous mental health diagnoses. An asterisk (*) indicates a statistically significant difference (p < 0.001) between the indicated groups.

Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the PROSIA-Y project (2024-2025).

Does moving to more polluted areas cause children to gain weight?

This experiment assessed whether changes in air pollution exposure resulting from a new place of residence were linked to changes in body mass index (BMI). The sample included 46,644 children and adolescents aged 2-17 who had moved home once between 2011 and 2018 and were registered with primary healthcare services in Catalonia. Levels of particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide air pollution in their areas of residence were estimated before and after the move. Children's weight and height were routinely monitored at primary healthcare centres, and these data were used to calculate BMI before and at least 180 days after their change of residence. Depending on the pollutant, 60-67% of participants moved to areas with similar pollution levels, 15-49% moved to less polluted areas and 14-31% moved to more polluted areas. Moving to areas with higher environmental pollution was linked to increases in BMI. These increases occurred with all pollutants, although the effects were most pronounced in preschool and school-aged children. In contrast, moving to less polluted areas had no significant effect on BMI. This study suggests that increases in atmospheric pollution can lead to childhood weight gain, thereby highlighting the importance of ongoing efforts to reduce pollution levels.

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TheSocialObservatory

Project selected in the Social Research Call, 2021

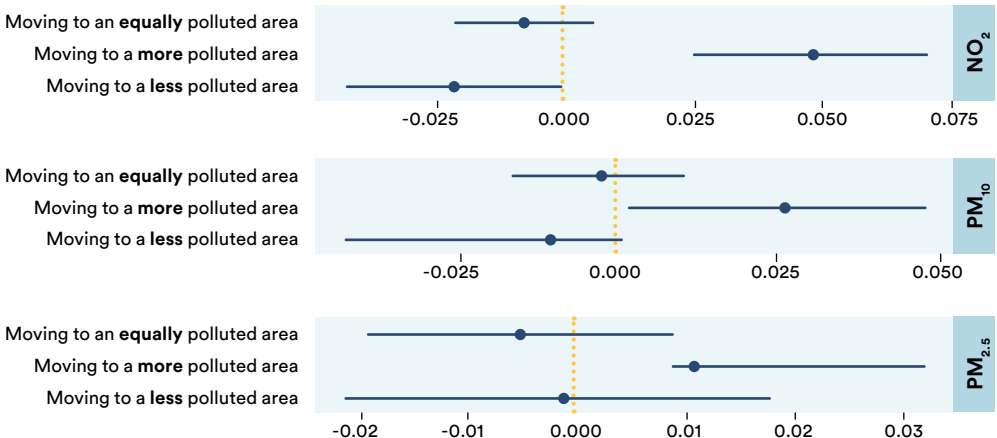
- 1** Previous evidence has shown that exposure to traffic-related atmospheric pollution may be linked to increases in BMI during childhood. This study found that increases in exposure to particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide due to a change of residence were linked to increases in BMI in children and adolescents.
- 2** BMI decreases were observed in children and adolescents who moved to areas with similar levels of air pollution, but not in those who moved to less polluted areas. Reductions in air pollution levels are apparently less relevant in those who had already been exposed to higher levels compared to those who had been exposed to lower levels.
- 3** Age was found to modify the links between changes in air pollution and BMI, given that more pronounced links were observed in younger age groups (preschool and school age) than in adolescents.
- 4** The observed links between air pollution exposure and childhood weight are limited, although the potential impact on global public health could be significant. Changes in individual behaviours, community structures, lifestyles, built environments and pollutant exposure are linked to childhood weight, so community prevention strategies should therefore be focused on these aspects.

Body mass index increased in preschool-aged children who moved to more polluted areas

Links between changes in air pollution after moving to a different residential area and changes in BMI in the middle age of the preschool group (2-5 years), N = 29,730



Changes depending on type of air pollutant



Note:
 IMCz = Body mass index standardised by age and sex
 NO₂ = nitrogen dioxide
 PM₁₀ = particulate matter ≤ 10 microns
 PM_{2.5} = particulate matter ≤ 2.5 microns

Source: compiled by the authors based on the results of the natural experiment.



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