

Spaniards' Views on Abortion

Analysis of a nationwide public opinion survey in Spain November 2009

I. Introduction and Summary of Results

The Spanish public is currently engaged in a national debate over potential changes to the nation's abortion laws. Belden Russonello & Stewart worked with Catholics for Choice to conduct public opinion research on Spaniards' attitudes toward abortion and their views on Catholic Bishops' efforts to restrict access to abortion. The short survey reported here is based on 1,001 interviews with Spaniards age 18 and over, conducted from November 10 to 13, 2009.

Major Findings

- The Spanish public, which is at least three-quarters Catholic, largely rejects the position of the Catholic Bishops on abortion. Two-thirds of Spaniards (68%) disagree with the Bishops' opposition to abortion, while fewer than two in ten (19%) say they stand on the side of the Bishops.
- There is strong, widespread support in Spain for abortion to be legal in a range of diverse circumstances women may face. Over eight in ten Spaniards believe abortion should be legal when a pregnancy poses a serious threat to a woman's life (87%), when it poses a serious threat to a woman's physical or mental health (86%), or is the result of rape or incest (82%). Another 79% believe abortion should be legal if test results show fetal malformation.
- Beyond extenuating circumstances, a large majority of Spaniards support a basic right to abortion. Fully six in ten (62%) say that abortion generally should be legal during the first trimester of pregnancy, leaving the decision up to women and their doctors.

Summary of Methodology

This survey for Catholics for Choice is based on a random sample of 1,001 Spaniards age 18 and over. Seven questions were included as part of an omnibus random-digit-dial telephone survey conducted in Spain from November 10 through 13, 2009. The margin of sampling error at the 95% level of confidence is ± 3.1 percentage points. A detailed methodology is available in Appendix A. The findings and questionnaires are available in English and Spanish.

In reading the report, tables and graphs in the text are expressed in percentages. The base for each table is all respondents (n=1,001) unless otherwise noted. In reading these data, when the percent sign (%) appears at the top of a column, the numbers add vertically; when % appears at the left of a row, the numbers add horizontally. An asterisk (*) indicates less than 1%; a double hyphen (--) indicates zero. Due to weighting, rounding, omission of "don't know," "refuse," or other responses, percentages may add to more or less than 100%.

II. Detailed Findings

Broad support for legal abortion in range of circumstances

The survey finds robust support for legal abortion in a range of different situations.

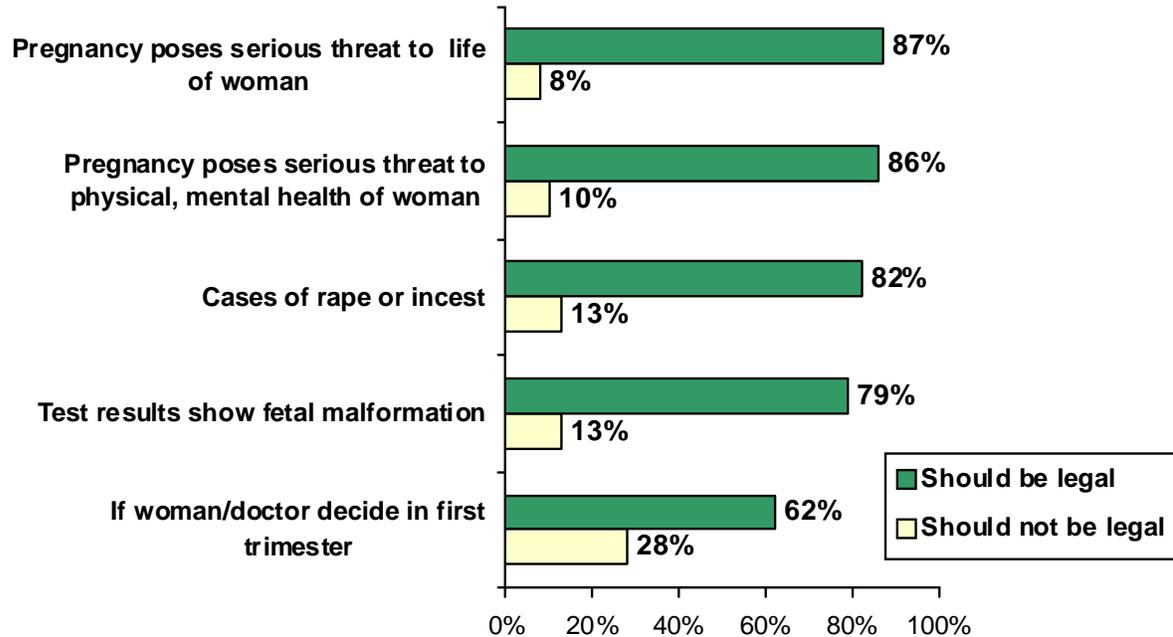
- **Woman's life or health threatened:** Over eight in ten Spaniards believe abortion should be legal when a pregnancy poses a serious threat to a woman's life (87%) or poses a serious threat to a woman's physical or mental health (86%).
- **Rape or incest:** Eight in ten Spaniards believe abortion should be legal in cases of rape or incest (82%).
- **Fetal malformations:** Another 79% believe abortion should be legal if test results show a fetus has a malformation.
- **Decision by woman/doctor in first trimester:** Over six in ten (62%) believe abortion should be legal in the first trimester if a woman or her doctor decides upon it.

Support for legal abortion in all of the circumstances tested in the survey is widespread across subgroups of the Spanish public.

- In cases where there are serious threats to the life, physical or mental health of a pregnant woman; in cases of rape or incest; or fetal malformation, strong majorities across all subgroups support legal abortion. This includes both genders, all age groups, both Socialists (those who voted with Partido Socialista Obrero Español in 2008) and those who voted with the Partido Popular, and each of the four largest autonomous communities – Andalucía, Catalonia, Madrid, and Valencia.
- Majorities of most subgroups also say abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy – for any reason – should be legal, leaving the decision up to women and their doctors. Support is at six in ten among men (65%) and women (59%), Spaniards under age 64 (77% of those between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine; 64% of those aged thirty to forty-four; and 65% of those aged forty-five to sixty-four), Socialist/PSOE supporters (75%), and Spaniards in each of the four largest autonomous

communities. Support drops below a majority only among Spaniards age 65 and older (38% support) and the Partido Popular voters (49%).

Views on Legality of Abortion in Various Circumstances



Now I would like your views on abortion. Please tell me if you believe abortion should or should not be legal in Spain under each of the following situations: Q1. When a pregnancy poses a serious threat to the life of a woman. Q2. When a pregnancy poses a serious threat to the physical or mental health of a woman. Q3. In cases of rape and incest. Q4. When test results show a fetus has a malformation. Q5. In the first trimester, if a woman or her doctor decide.

Views on Legality of Abortion in Various Circumstances by Cross Tabs

Now I would like your views on abortion. Please tell me if you believe abortion should or should not be legal in Spain under each of the following situations: Q1. When a pregnancy poses a serious threat to the life of a woman. Q2. When a pregnancy poses a serious threat to the physical or mental health of a woman. Q5. In cases of rape and incest. Q3. When test results show a fetus has a malformation. Q4. In the first trimester, if a woman or her doctor decide.

<i>% saying "should be legal"</i>	Serious threat to life of a woman	Serious threat to physical, mental health of a woman	In cases of rape or incest	Test results show a fetus has a malformation	In 1 st trimester if woman/doctor decide
Total	87%	86%	82%	79%	62%
Gender					
Men	89%	88%	83%	81%	65%
Women	85%	83%	80%	78%	59%
Age					
18-29	91%	92%	91%	82%	77%
30-44	90%	87%	88%	83%	64%
45-64	92%	89%	84%	82%	65%
65+	71%	72%	60%	68%	38%
Gender by Age					
Men <45	91%	89%	88%	82%	74%
Men 45+	86%	87%	78%	80%	56%
Women <45	91%	89%	91%	84%	66%
Women 45+	80%	78%	70%	72%	52%
Political party					
PSOE	94%	94%	90%	89%	75%
PP	83%	81%	79%	71%	49%
Selected Autonomous Communities					
Andalucía	84%	84%	77%	79%	63%
Catalonia	90%	91%	83%	82%	67%
Madrid	83%	83%	84%	78%	61%
Valencia	88%	85%	84%	83%	59%

Spaniards push back against Catholic Bishops on Abortion

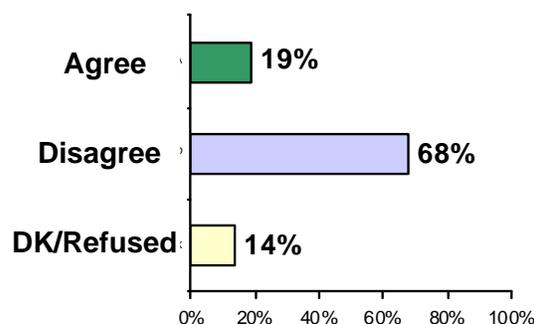
Much of the Spanish public takes a different position from that of the Catholic Bishops on abortion. Two-thirds (68%) disagree with the Bishops' opposition to abortion, while only about two in ten (19%) say they agree with the Bishops.

This dissent runs through all segments of Spanish society. Across all demographic and political groups, pluralities disagree with the Bishops on abortion. Majorities of all the following groups part ways with the Bishops: men (71% disagree), women (65%), Spaniards under age 64 (81% of those between the ages eighteen and twenty-nine; 73% of thirty to forty-four year-olds; and 69% of forty-five to sixty-four year-olds), and PSOE supporters (83%). Even among Partido Popular supporters, many more disagree than agree with the Bishops (52% disagree; 36% agree).

Also, at least six in ten Spaniards in the four largest autonomous communities – Andalucía (63%), Catalonia (79%), Madrid (66%) and Valencia (67%) – disagree with the Bishops.

Similar to their views on the legality of abortion, older Spaniards (age 65 and older) are less likely than their younger counterparts to differ with Catholic Bishops. Still, more of these older Spaniards disagree with the Bishops' opposition to abortion (45%) than agree (35%).

Opinions on the Catholic Bishops' Opposition to Abortion



Q6. Do you agree or disagree with the Catholic Bishops' opposition to abortion [voluntary interruption of a pregnancy]?

Opinions on the Catholic Bishops' Opposition to Abortion by Cross Tabs

Q6. Do you agree or disagree with the Catholic bishops' opposition to abortion [voluntary interruption of a pregnancy]?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know/Refused
Total	19%	68	14
Gender			
Men	16%	71	13
Women	21%	65	14
Age			
18-29	10%	81	9
30-44	15%	73	13
45-64	18%	69	14
65+	35%	45	19
Gender by Age			
Men <45	11%	77	12
Men 45+	22%	63	14
Women <45	15%	75	10
Women 45+	28%	55	18
Political party			
PSOE	10%	83	7
PP	36%	52	12
Selected Autonomous Communities			
Andalucía	19%	63	18
Catalonia	10%	79	10
Madrid	23%	66	12
Valencia	22%	67	10

Appendix A: Detailed Methodology

To measure Spaniards' views on abortion and the Catholic hierarchy's opposition to abortion, BRS surveyed 1,001 adults (age 18 and over) by including seven questions as part of a national omnibus survey.

The questions used in this study were designed in collaboration with Catholics for Choice. The fieldwork was conducted by telephone using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, from November 10 through 13, 2009. Interviews were conducted by a team of professional, fully-trained and supervised telephone interviewers located in Spain, as part of the omnibus survey administered by Sigma Dos Internacional.

The sampling frame was a list of randomly created phone numbers (a technique known as random-digit-dial or RDD) for telephone exchanges stratified by geographic region and habitat size. Telephone numbers were selected at random from this frame. Within households, respondents were selected randomly.

The survey data have been weighted by age, gender and region to match the proper proportions in the current population according to the official estimates from the Instituto Nacional Estadística (INE). The table below shows the demographic composition of the survey respondents and INE's estimates of Spain's population. All tables and analysis in the text refer to the weighted data.

All sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error, *i.e.*, the results may differ from those which would be obtained if the entire population under study were interviewed. The margin of sampling error for this survey of 1,001 is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size ($n=1,001$), the results would fall in a range of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every individual age 18 and over in Spain had been interviewed. The sampling error is larger for smaller groups within the sample. Other non-sampling error may also contribute to total survey error.

Demographics		
	Weighted survey data	Spanish adult population (Instituto Nacional Estadística)
Total	100%	100%
Men	49%	49%
Women	51	51
18-29	22%	20%
30-44	30	31
45-64	28	30
65+	21	20

Encuesta Nacional en España National Spanish Public Opinion Survey

Interviewing conducted November 10 through 13, 2009.

N= 1,001 Spaniards age 18 and older

Data have been weighted by gender, age and region.

Margin of sampling error is ± 3.1 percentage points.

Percents may add to 99% or 101% due to rounding.

* indicates less than 1%; -- indicates zero.

Por favor, dígame si usted cree que el aborto debe ser legal o no en España, en cada una de las siguientes situaciones: [ALEATORIAMENTE Q1-5]

Now I would like your views on abortion. Please tell me if you believe abortion should or should not be legal in Spain under each of the following situations: [RANDOMIZE Q1-5]

	Legal (Legal)	No legal (Not legal)	No Sabe/ Rehusa (Don't know/ Refused)
Q1. Cuando el embarazo representa una seria amenaza para la vida de la mujer. <i>When a pregnancy poses a serious threat to the life of a woman.</i>	87%	8	5
Q2. Cuando el embarazo representa una seria amenaza para la salud física o mental de la mujer. <i>When a pregnancy poses a serious threat to the physical or mental health of a woman.</i>	86%	10	5
Q3. Cuando los resultados muestran que el feto tiene una malformación. <i>When test results show a fetus has a malformation.</i>	79%	13	7
Q4. En el primer trimestre si una mujer o su médico lo deciden. <i>In the first trimester, if a woman or her doctor decide.</i>	62%	28	10
Q5. En casos de violación o incesto. <i>In cases of rape and incest.</i>	82%	13	6
Q6. ¿Está Vd. de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con la postura de los Obispos católicos en contra de la interrupción voluntaria del embarazo? <i>Do you agree or disagree with the Catholic bishops' opposition to abortion [voluntary interruption of a pregnancy]?</i>	De acuerdo (Agree) Desacuerdo (Disagree) No sabe/Rehusa (Don't know/ Refused)		19% 68 14

Q7. ¿Por cuál partido político votó usted en las elecciones de 2008?	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)	43%
<i>Which political party did you vote for in the 2008 election?</i>	Partido Popular (PP)	39
<i>(BASED out of those who voted/ could recall; N=500)</i>	Izquierda Unida (IU)	5
	Otros (<i>Others</i>)	13

Género	Hombre (<i>Male</i>)	49%
<i>Gender</i>	Mujer (<i>Female</i>)	51

Edad	18 - 29	22%
<i>Age</i>	30 - 44	30
	45- 64	28
	65+	21

La región autónoma/ comunidad autonoma	Andalucía	17%
<i>Region</i>	Aragón	3
	Asturias	3
	Baleares (<i>Balearic Islands</i>)	2
	Canarias (<i>Canary Islands</i>)	4
	Cantabria	1
	Castilla - La Mancha	4
	Castilla y León	6
	Cataluña	16
	Comunidad Valenciana	10
	Extremadura	2
	Galicia	7
	Madrid	14
	Murcia	3
	Navarra	1
	País Vasco (<i>Basque Country</i>)	5
	La Rioja	1
