

ECREA Organizational and Strategic Communication Section

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The normative imperative: socio-political challenges of strategic and organizational communication

# Active citizenship, companies and purpose: the perspective of Spanish society

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UNIVERSIDAD  
DE MÁLAGA

# INTRODUCTION

## Achieving the SDGs requires:

- A more **engaged society**
- Businesses seeking to (re)define their **purpose**
- Triple Bottom Line Approach (Elkington, 1997): **profits + people + planet**

Spain → New legal figure: **SBIC (Sociedades Beneficio Interés Común)** in Law 18/2022. Lobbying campaign led by B Lab Spain → **Purpose-driven companies**



Organisations that generate a social and environmental benefit as well as an economic return.



Previous studies (Barroso et al., 2023; Barroso et al., 2020; Milano et al., 2020; Canvas & Corporate Excellence, 2022) have shown that companies that follow this approach have a **positive impact on business, society and the planet.**

# INTRODUCTION

There is a **debate** about the need to reframe the current economic system (Canvas, 2022) towards one that is more inclusive and sustainable, providing an opportunity to **take action and move towards the 2030 Agenda**. An engaged citizenry and organizations seeking to (re)define their purpose will be vital to this.

In this emerging scenario, **citizenship assumes an active and pollinating role** (Fernández & Díaz, 2020; Theben et al., 2021), encouraging organizations to rethink their purpose, measuring beyond the financial dimensions.

Purpose-driven companies (B Lab Spain & Gabeiras and Asociados, 2021), are aligned with the triple bottom line framework (Elkington, 2020; Abramovay et al., 2020) and stakeholder capitalism (Freeman, 1984; Ferreira et al., 2020).

**"purpose-driven"**  
in contrast to "market-driven" organisations  
(Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2019)

New genetics of business: **strong impact on trust and reputation**  
(Barroso, 2021; Edelman, 2022)

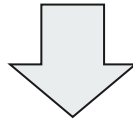


**an opportunity to respond to global demands.**

# OBJECTIVE & RQS

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Analyzing **Spanish society's perception** of the capitalist system; of purpose-driven companies; and the role of citizenship.



**RQ1.** How do people value the economic system we live in, what are they most concerned about, and what should be the priorities?

**RQ2.** What does the public expect from purpose-driven businesses?

**RQ3.** What is the population willing to do as active citizens for sustainability?

# METHODOLOGY

Period:

2022

Technique:

Anonymous telephone survey (1004 valid responses).

Measurement:

Citizens' perception of the current system; knowledge and attitudes about purpose-driven businesses; personal role.

Strands:

System; Purpose Driven Business and Active Citizenship.

Review:

Experts to test approach and relevance.

Profile:

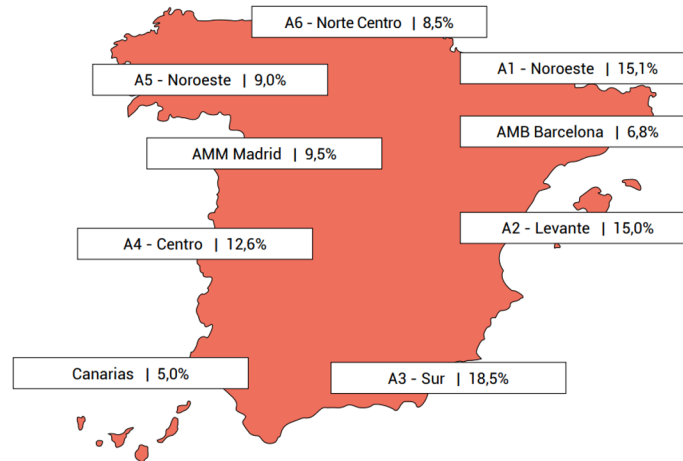
Women and men 18-65 years old. Representative universe (gender, age, social class, residence).



# RESULTS

## Sample distribution

1,004 interviews were carried out, distributed according to the main socio-demographic variables as follows:



### CUOTAS POR EDAD

GENERACIÓN Z (De 18 a 27 años)	16,0%
GENERACIÓN Y (De 28 a 40 años)	24,7%
GENERACIÓN X (De 41 a 52 años)	31,2%
BABY BOOM (De 53 a 65 años)	28,1%

### CUOTAS POR SEXO

MUJERES	48,5%
HOMBRES	50,7%
PREFERIO NO DECIRLO	0,80%

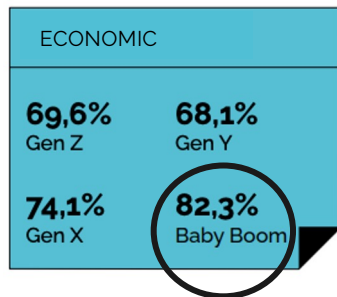
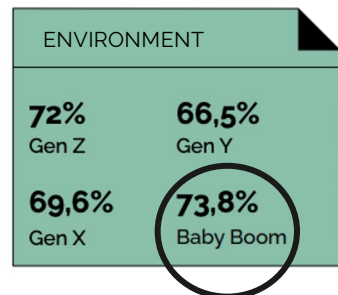
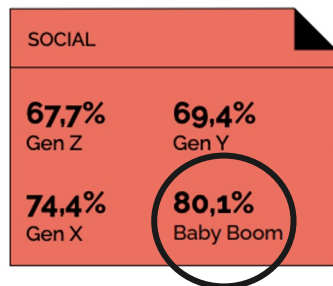
### CUOTAS POR INDICE SOCIOECONOMICO DE LA POBLACION

A1	5,0%
A2	11,9%
B	11,4%
C	24,9%
D	14,9%
E1	20,0%
E2	12,0%

Índice socioeconómico consensuado entre AIMC (Asociación para la Investigación de Medios de Comunicación, que realiza el EGM) y ANEIMO (Asociación Nacional de Empresas de Investigación de Mercados y Opinión Pública). Se tiene en cuenta la profesión y nivel de estudio de quien sustenta de forma principal el hogar, los ingresos del hogar y número de personas que lo componen.

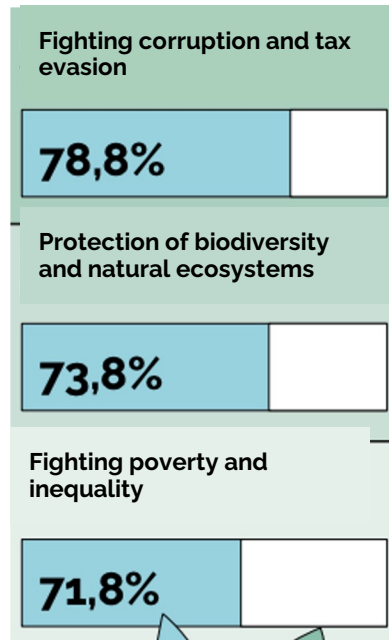
# 1. How do people value the system we live in, what are they most concerned about, and what should be the priorities?

## 1.1. Generation concerns

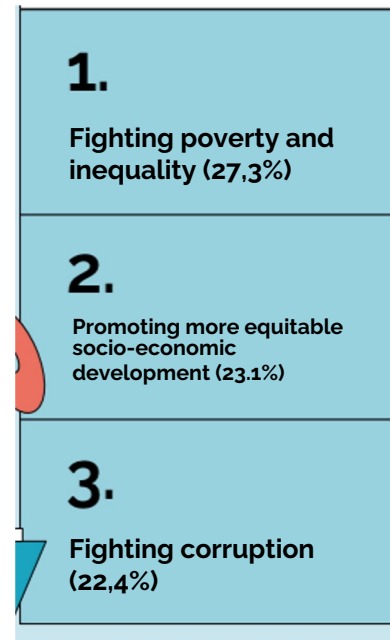


There is a clear need for transformation and the realization of a general crisis in the way we organize ourselves as a society. **55.6% of Spanish citizens do not approve of the current capitalist system** and 77% believe that the current system should undergo a major transformation, at the very least.

## 1.2. Top public concerns



## 1.3. Top priorities for system transformation

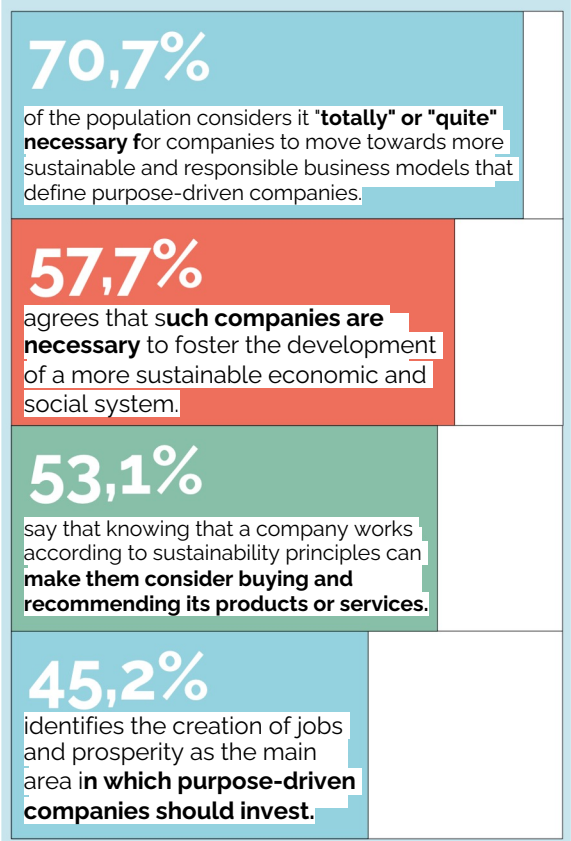


## 2. What does the public expect from purpose-driven businesses?

The lack of knowledge about purpose-driven companies is the same throughout Spain. However, it can be observed that there are people **who have heard of them and who have had dealings with this type of company**. In line with this lack of knowledge, a certain generalized distrust of the role of these companies is also observed.



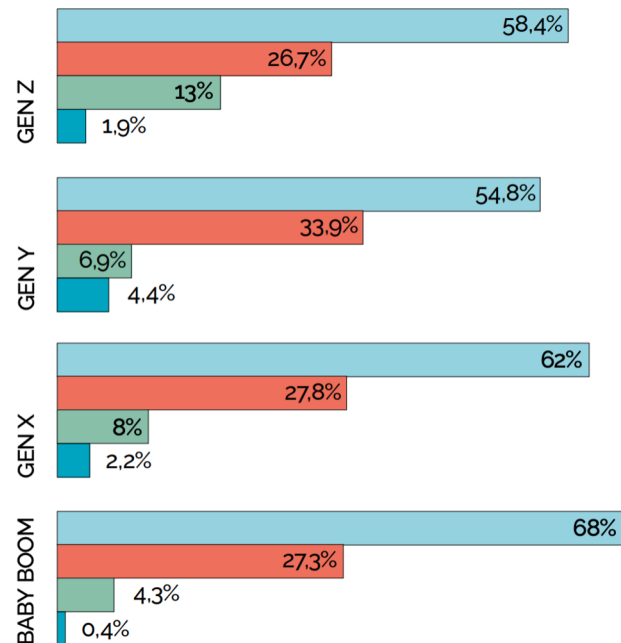
**SECTORS** with which purpose-driven companies are associated: **energy, textiles, footwear, fashion and cosmetics and food and beverages, retail and distribution, along with telecommunications and entertainment.**





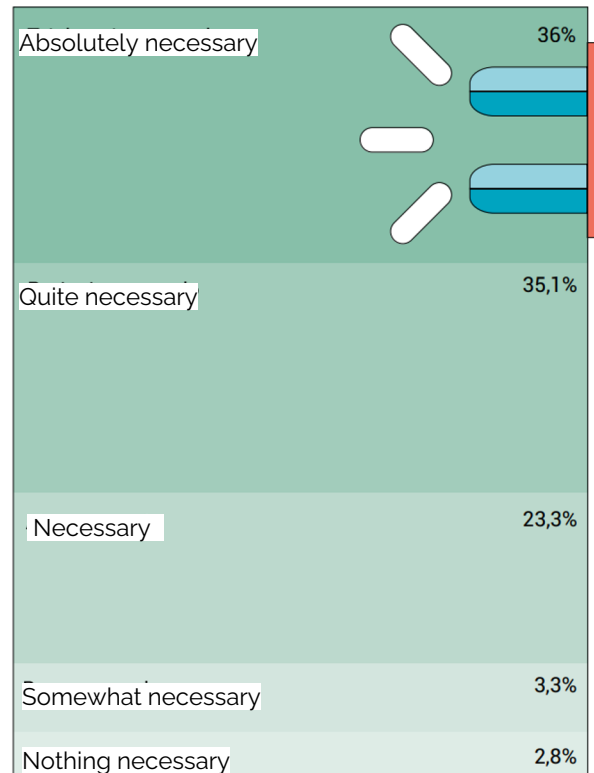
## 2. What does the public expect from purpose-driven businesses?

### 2.1. Knowledge by generation



**64.8% of WOMEN** say they are not aware of purpose-driven businesses and **32.1% of MEN** have heard of such businesses, although they could not name any of them.

### 2.2. Do you consider it necessary for purpose-driven purpose-driven companies?



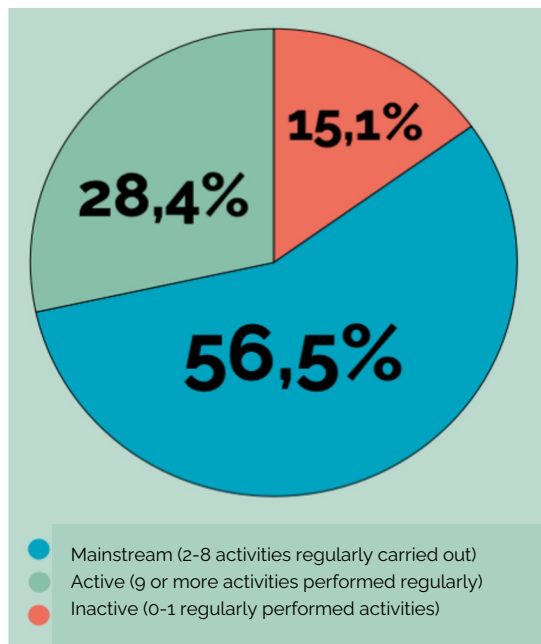
- I was unaware of this trend towards trend towards business models of "Companies with purpose" business models
- I have heard about the shift to these business models, but I can't tell you the name of any company
- I have heard about this shift towards business models and I know companies that have taken the step
- I have heard of such companies and I have had a direct relationship with one of these companies (purchased products or services)

### 3. What is the population willing to do as active citizens for sustainability?

**64.5% of people** say that they make small decisions in their daily lives to take care of the planet's resources, but 34.2% are not entirely satisfied with their own actions to impact the planet.

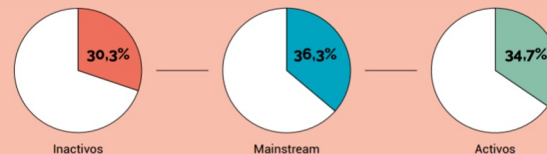
**Active citizenship has a more female profile** (59.3% women and 40.7% men); in the mainstream there is hardly any distinction by gender; inactive citizens are mostly men (57.2% men and 42.8% women).

3.1. Typology of citizen profiles

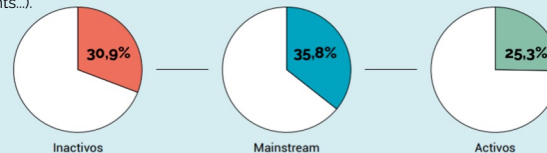


3.2. Main habits that citizens seek to improve

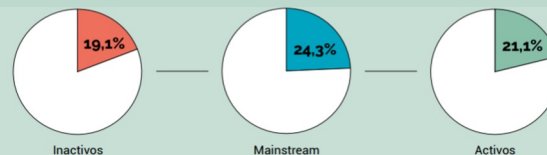
Prioritise **shopping in local** shops or businesses rather than on large online platforms.



**Make decisions in my daily life** that contribute to the care of people and resources (short showers, turning off taps, walking, turning off lights...)

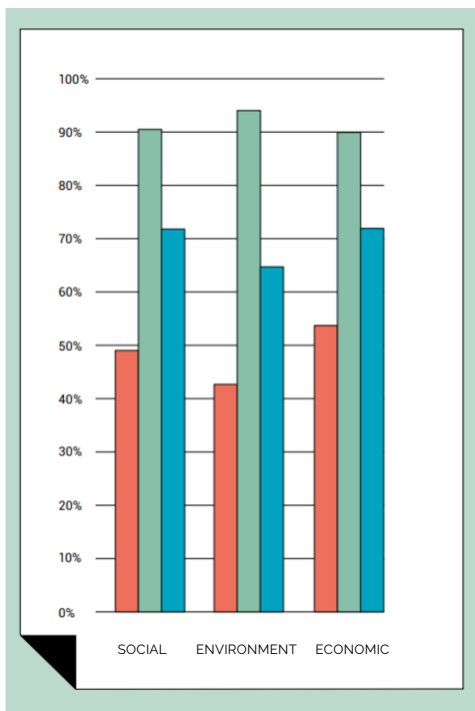


Buying and/or selling **second-hand** goods (furniture, household appliances, books, clothes...)

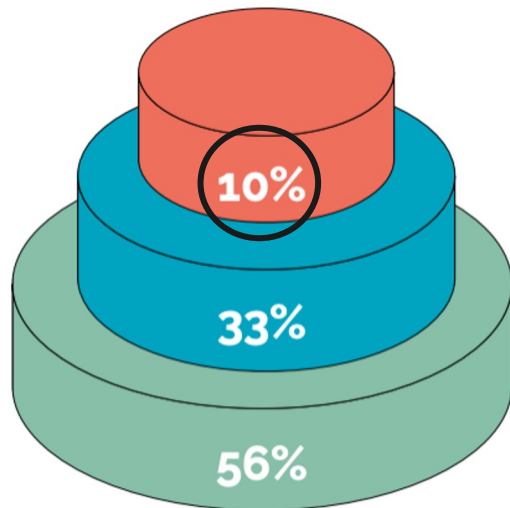


### 3. What is the population willing to do as active citizens for sustainability?

#### 3.3. Degree of awareness on social, environmental and economic impact

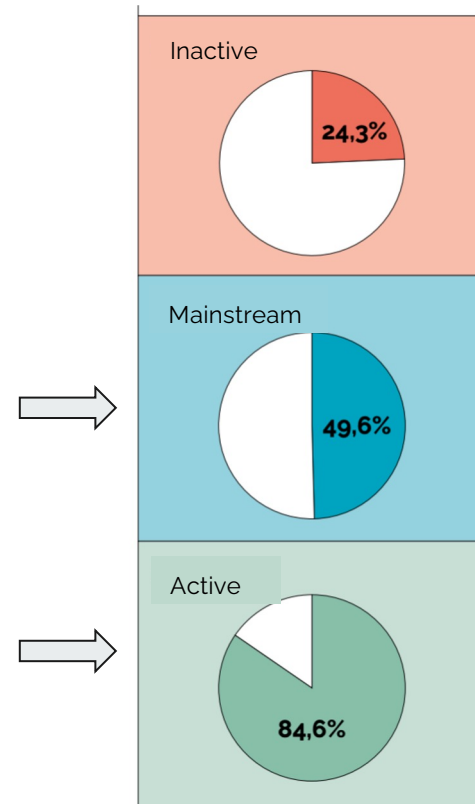


#### 3.4. Degree of satisfaction with the actions carried out for a positive impact



● Active ● Mainstream ● Inactive

#### 3.5. Influence of purpose on purchase decisions and recommendation (A lot + Quite a lot)



# DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS



The need to **transform the system is consolidated.**

- The valuation of **the economics system continues to fall.**
- Increasing **concern for the impact** on people and the planet.
- **Leaving no one behind**, the top priority.
- Sustainability with a **gender perspective.**

Increase **recognition of purposeful businesses.**

- New business models **are considered necessary.**
- The triple bottom line framework increase the **consumer trust.**

There is an evolution of the **active citizenship profile.**

- Citizens are taking a more **active and pollinating role.**
- Citizens are encouraging organizations to **rethink their purpose and sense of success.**

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# Thanks for your attention.

## Research group



Proyecto de Investigación "Ciudadanía activa y empresas con propósito. La configuración del cuarto sector en la reinención del capitalismo y la búsqueda de la sostenibilidad" (Código: B2-2022\_01). Universidad de Málaga. [www.febicom.es](http://www.febicom.es)



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