

Gender mainstreaming in the Spanish regions: achieving the leadership?

Alba Alonso Álvarez
University of Santiago de Compostela
albrocha24@yahoo.es

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Abstract

Gender mainstreaming is a transformative strategy that requires the involvement of all levels of government. In decentralized states as Spain, this requirement includes its regions. This paper explores the evolution of this kind of policy in Spanish sub-national level through the analysis of three main aspects. First, its inclusion in binding rules and in equality plans, which represents a political commitment. Second, it examines the shifts and enlargements of institutional feminism that mainstreaming has provoked as well as the creation of organisms that institutionalize women's participation in the policy process. Finally, it addresses the introduction of new methodologies in policy management, with special regard to the progressive inclusion of gender impact assessment. With this purpose, I analyse key documents from a qualitative perspective. Norms, plans and main toolkits or guides published by the different governments give us a clear vision of the extent to which mainstreaming is leading to certain shifts in the policy processes and in the institutional structure as well. Additionally, this paper points out the main role and even the leadership that regions have reached in the field of gender policies.

1. Introduction

Gender mainstreaming has been gaining momentum during the last decades. Since its introduction in key documents such the Beijing Conference or the IV Communitarian Action Programme, it has become part of gender policies in a wide variety of countries and institutions. This means that the *dual-track* strategy (specific actions+ gender mainstreaming) is commonly accepted. Despite this outstanding diffusion, gender mainstreaming is far from being actually embedded in policy-making. Rather, its main requirements are far from being fulfilled. One of the most important challenges is represented by its inclusion in the current multi-level system. This means that the gender perspective should be considered in all the governmental levels, from the international to the local one.

Spain offers a great example of a multi-layered government, where both the national and the regional level count with their own gender policies. The decentralization process occurred in the 80's indeed led to the adoption by the sub-national level of a broad set of competences. Among them, the promotion of gender equality was one of the most quickly developed. As a result, gender policies rapidly became one of the issues where the multi-level character was relevant the most (Subirats and Gomá, 1998). With this regard, not only European and national

institutions were involved in the same issue but also emerging regions did so. Although the latter began as being clearly the laggard, always a step behind the national level, this tendency has been clearly softened in the last decade. Current regional gender policies are not only comparable to the national ones, but are also directly influenced by the international institutions, namely the EU.

This *fragmented landscape* is clearly appropriate for addressing gender mainstreaming implementation, since it is supposed to be equally present in at least the national and regional policies. Besides, it gives the possibility to assess which one is actually achieving the leadership. For doing so, I will start by undertaking a general overview of the literature focused on gender mainstreaming in order to underline its pitfalls and potentials. Subsequently, three key elements will be analysed. First, the inclusion of gender mainstreaming within the most relevant instruments regarding Spanish policies, that is, plans and acts related to gender equality. The goal is that to assess when and how this strategy has been introduced. Second, I will address those shifts concerning the equality machineries which are closely linked to this inclusion. This is the case of the organisms aimed at improving coordination, at acquiring more expertise and at increasing women's participation. Finally, I will pay attention to the development of a concrete tool such as that of gender impact assessment. The main goal is to determine which level has included these elements in the first place, as well which one is more likely to implement gender mainstreaming successfully.

2. Gender mainstreaming: revisiting the literature

As it has been argued by several scholars, gender equality policies have experienced a clear evolution towards a more structural approach (Rees, 2005; Móssessdóttir and Erlingsdóttir, 2005; Squires, 2005; Verloo, 2001). Whereas during the 70's and the 80's the idea was either to reform legislation (*equal treatment*) or to undertake specific measures targeted at women (*specific/positive actions*), the 90's have witnessed the emergence of *gender mainstreaming*. In this case, the starting point is the recognition of the existence of structural gender inequalities which embrace all realms, including policy making. Given the structural roots of discrimination, specific actions are not enough for acquiring real equality and the introduction of gender perspective in all the public policies is needed. The core idea is to revise all the actions in order to guarantee that they are not androcentric. Besides, responsibility is not only related to equality bodies but to government and society as a whole. This complex and ambitious strategy is recognised as positive since it introduces the transformation of gender relations as the core objective. As opposed to the previous types of policies, it does try to eliminate the symptoms of the problem but the roots. This transformative approach appears as the main strength connected with this new strategy (Daly, 2005; Beveridge and Nott, 2002; Woodward, 2001; Verloo, 2001; Havnor, 2000).

Besides emphasising the potentials, scholars have paid attention to main weaknesses linked to gender mainstreaming. Regarding its conceptualization, some of them have pointed out the presence of some pitfalls attached to such a complex strategy. First, there is an initial contradiction between its bureaucratic means and its transformative aims. As it has been argued before, technocratic procedures are more likely to prevail than the structural aims (Charlesworth, 2006; Woodward, 2001). When referring to the definition, it has emerged a debate concerning which is the best way of explaining this strategy. The positions vary from those who claim that the concept is too broad (unclear, ambiguous, soft etc.) (Daly, 2005; Beveridge and Nott, 2002;

Woodward, 2001) and those who affirm that from some points of view it is rather narrow (not transformative, not intersectional, too technocratic etc.) (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007; Squires, 2005; Lombardo, 2003a; Jahan, 1995). Both positions are far from being contradictory. Rather, they pay attention to some of the weaknesses that gender mainstreaming should overcome, that is, either its misunderstanding or its limited conception.

When it comes to implementation, the first conclusion is that gender mainstreaming has been rarely put into practice as well as not deeply investigated (Benschop and Verloo, 2006; Squires, 2005; Mósesdóttir and Eringsdóttir, 2005; Rubery, 2002). In those few researches which have addressed this topic, we find several examples of its shortcomings. First, this strategy is mostly included in non-binding rules and instruments (Lombardo, 2003b; Mazey, 2002). As a result, its implementation actually relies on the will of each department as well as on the 'power of persuasion' of the equality machineries. In this case, it is not easy to point at responsible actors for its performance as it would be the case for a compulsory procedure (Benschop e Verloo, 2006; Staudt, 2003; Mazey, 2002). The same types of problems emerge when referring to the lack of material and human resources.

In addition to these general pitfalls, scholars have highlighted that gender mainstreaming has frequently led to a partial implementation. Thus, this strategy is rarely fully developed and we can find differences regarding policy issues, countries, policy stages or levels of government. Concerning the former, it has been shown that gender mainstreaming is introduced unevenly depending on the policy issue which is considered (Roggeband and Verloo, 2006; Mazey, 2001; Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2000). Indeed, whereas some departments/areas are more likely to introduce it, others show more resistances. While addressing differences among countries, it is clear that the implementation is far from being similar. Not only methodologies and procedures are different, but also the level and the quality of implementation is quite patchy (Mósesdóttir and Erlingsdóttir, 2005; Rubery, 2002; Verloo, 1999). In this case, some countries appear as the advanced and others as the laggards. Policy stages have been also analysed as appropriate for measuring gender mainstreaming performance. Verloo and Roggeband have pointed out that one of its main tools, that is, gender impact assessment has not been present in all the policy stages, as it was expected (Roggeband and Verloo, 2006). On the contrary, some of them are gender-blind. Finally, we must note that some voices have claimed that a multi-level commitment is needed for acquiring transformative outcomes (Liebert, 2002). This means that a full implementation should be undertaken through the different levels of government. As a consequence, multi-level governance could be seen in this case both as a challenge and as an opportunity.

As we can infer, literature about gender mainstreaming opens several questions about this strategy. Although it is described as an accurate methodology which tackles the roots of gender inequalities, it is referred as mostly ignored and/or partially implemented. This research will focus on the analysis of two of the abovementioned gaps. First, it will address whether or not this strategy is being introduced in the Spanish policies. I do so by answering these questions, is gender mainstreaming causing any changes in the structures and/or in the policy processes? Have Spanish public policies been adapted for matching with this new strategy? Besides seeking some evidences of gender mainstreaming impact, I will assess the differences between the regional and the national level. That is, I will raise some pending questions such as, are Spanish regions being better performers with regard to gender mainstreaming? Are they achieving the leadership? Does the level of government matter when referring to the introduction of a

gender perspective? This approach will help us to explore the extent to which gender mainstreaming is present in the Spanish multi-layered government.

3. Gender equality policies in Spain: playing with two levels.

Spain took the step towards the introduction of gender policies in 1983 when the Women's Institute (*Instituto de la Mujer*) was set up. Even though the introduction was delayed compared to that of other equality machineries, it became comparable in a very short period of time (Valiente, 1995). This meant that in a few years the IM was developing the same kind of policies as in other European countries. Since 1988, multi-annual equality plans were the most relevant instruments. The main idea was that of following the European Action Programmes and of introducing an articulated set of actions (Martinez Hernández, 1997). Besides, the strategies have also evolved as fast as in other countries. Positive actions and equal treatment have been combined with gender mainstreaming starting from the mid 90's. This quick evolution has been explained by emphasising the development of Europeanization processes (Astelarra, 2005; Lombardo, 2004; Liebert, 2003). The introduction of plans, new strategies as well as many norms based on the European directives indeed can not be understood without considering the EU's influence. More recently, the governmental change that took place in 2004 slightly shifted the Spanish position. The approval of those pieces of law regarding gender equality, gender based violence, same-sex marriage and gender identity have put the country under the spotlight¹. Unlike previous decades, Spain is considered as a great performer in gender equality (Bustelo, 2008b).

Beyond this, Spanish gender policies have another special feature, that is, their multi-level character. This means that besides developing this kind of activities at the national level, regions (*Comunidades Autónomas*) have also gained relevance. The development of a decentralized state during 80's led to the approval of regional main laws, the statutes (*Estatutos de Autonomía*). Although they were conceived in a very limited way, they caused a sort of *spillover* phenomenon. As a consequence, all the regions passed their own regulations which included a wide variety of competences. Among them, gender inequalities were indirectly referred by covering the discrimination based on sex as well as by stating the promotion of equality as a main goal. Both references meant that gender policies were included as part of the sub-national agenda during the period 81-86 (Linos, 2003). In subsequent years, first programmes targeted at women were undertaken. In spite of these steps forward, the main turning point took place during the end of the 80's and the beginning of the 90's, when the regional level started to set up its own femocracy. Following the IM's example, several organisms were created in order to lead regional gender policies. At the beginning, most of the regions opted for informal and temporary organisms. Only Cataluña, País Vasco and Andalucía counted with independent and stable machineries before 1990. However, most of them have witnessed an evolution towards more fixed structures called autonomous organisms (*organismos autónomos*), which count with their own budget and are created by law (Bustelo and Orbals, 2007). Nowadays, 12 out of the 17 regions have set up these kinds of structures. The other ones still place gender policies under the responsibility of temporary and dependant departments. All of them have evolved very quickly and now are one of the most relevant gender equality

¹ Organic Law 3/2007 for the effective equality between women and men; Organic Law 1/2004, approves measures for integral protection against gender violence; Law 13/2005, modifies the Civil Code regarding rights to get married; Law 3/2007, regulates the rectification of the sex in the registry.

advocates in their respective territories. Given that fact, the IM is no longer the sole actor concerning this issue.

The national model was not only followed when referring to equality machineries. The introduction of multi-annual equality plans also represents an example of this influence. After the approval of the first national plan in 1988, regions started to develop their own documents. They were clearly inspired by this document, adopting not only its structure but also its priorities and strategies (equal treatment and positive actions). This national influence has been losing relevance during the 90's when the plans were more likely to follow international recommendations (Bustelo, 2002; Orbals, 2007). Whereas the first wave of plans used to quote the constitution or the national texts in order to justify the emerging regional policies, following documents mentioned either the UN Conferences or the European Action Programmes. As we have argued before, this international influence is especially relevant when referring to gender mainstreaming. Indeed, Europeanization could be described as the main phenomenon explaining its introduction in the Spanish sub-national realm (Alonso, 2007).

Concerning legislation, some regions have also developed their own pieces of law. Up to now, many of them count with concrete regulations addressing gender equality and/or gender based violence². In both cases, their legislative capacity was used in order to improve gender policies, going beyond the previous soft measures. Gender equality acts usually mention those topics and principles which had been already consolidated by their inclusion in previous equality plans. Thus, besides exposing positive actions and gender mainstreaming as key strategies, they address several concrete issues, such as labour and employment, education or women's participation. Regarding gender based violence, approved laws aim at defining this type of violence as well as assuring both prevention and attention to victims. Additionally, Spanish regions have specific plans targeted at this gendered crime. Both instruments give us a clear idea about the extent to which this topic takes part of the Spanish agenda.

As it can be inferred, both levels of government have witnessed a quick and deep evolution of their gender policies. Equality machineries, plans and legislations appear as great examples of this transformation. However, regions began being clearly the laggards, always a step behind the national level. This tendency has clearly softened in the last decade.

3.1 Introducing gender mainstreaming: equality plans and binding rules

As some scholars have claimed, gender mainstreaming is frequently included in soft norms, which are far from being compulsory (Lombardo, 2003b; Mazey, 2002). Therefore, equality plans are the tools which are chosen more often for introducing this strategy. Concerning Spain, gender mainstreaming appeared as part of these kinds of documents during the mid 90's. As we have mentioned above, two waves and/or types of plans can be distinguished both in the national and in the regional level. The first generation of plans was centred on including specific actions targeted at women. The idea was that of improving women's situation rather than transforming gender relations. Additionally, they sought to engage other departments but only by delegating the implementation of some concrete actions. As a result, equality machineries still had the

² Only when it comes to Galicia we can find a equality law regarding labour and employment. This is mainly due to the presence of a two-party government, within which both parties wanted to carry out their own legislation.

main responsibility regarding these topics. Gender equality was still seen as a competence belonging to somebody else. This limited approach was very common from the end of the 80's to the mid 90's. This period includes the approval of the first and in some cases the second equality plans. Although they include an embryonic version of gender mainstreaming by spreading some charges, we have to wait until 1995 for finding the first plan including this strategy (Table 1). This is the case of the *III Plan for Positive Actions for Women 1995- 1998* approved by the government of the Pais Vasco, which affirms that the principle of equal opportunities between men and women must be transversally included in all the activities. This text started off the second generation of plans. This implies that, as well as in the first wave of plans, implementation was in charge of several departments. However, they not only had to carry out concrete activities but also to revise their general policies. This revision must be undertaken through all the policy stages aim at eliminating the gendered roots of the problem. After the Pais Vasco, all the regions have included this strategy as complementing the specific actions. Most of them did it either before or simultaneously to the national level which included gender mainstreaming in its *III National Plan for Equal Opportunities 1997-2000*. This lack of delay could inform us about the extent to which the national level was losing its leading role. In this case, gender mainstreaming emerged as an international acquired concept. Indeed, the Beijing Conference and especially some European documents, namely the *European Framework Strategy* and the *IV Communitarian Action Programme*, were vastly quoted in the regional plans. In parallel, references to the Spanish Constitution or to the national texts had disappeared. Unlike the previous plans, the national level was neither the reference nor the most advanced one.

Although gender mainstreaming was included as a key strategy in both levels, it merely appeared among soft tools. The approval of some gender equality acts was a good opportunity for changing this shortcoming. Thus, during the 00's this gap was partially fulfilled by introducing this strategy in several binding rules. The first piece of law was passed by the government of Navarra in 2002, when *Law 33/2002, promoting equal opportunities between women and men* was approved. It stated that one of its goals would be "the introduction of a gender perspective in all the activities undertaken by the public administration" (art. 1). This example was followed by other 8 regions which nowadays have their own regulations.

It is worth to highlight that in the case of Cataluña we can find this strategy as part of the Statute, that is, in the region's main law. Thanks to the recent modification of this norm, the government of Cataluña had the opportunity to enlarge its references to equality. As we saw before, these kinds of norms only included a general reference to discrimination based on sex and to the promotion of equality. In this case, the regional government opted for taking a step forward. Indeed, article nº 41 affirms that "public authorities have to assure the introduction of gender perspective in all the public policies in order to achieve a real and effective equality as well as the parity between women and men". Besides, this key norm includes references to gender based violence, to freedom of choice for women or to gender equity as a main right. These shifts guarantee that both gender mainstreaming and other key issues are covered by the main rule regulating the regional government. Although it is a positive achievement, it must be noted that the relevance of this norm goes with the difficulty of its modification. This means that in order to reform the statutes a complex political process has to be undertaken. Due to this fact, up to now only the statutes of Cataluña and Valencia were reformed.

Concerning the national level, gender mainstreaming has been explicitly mentioned in the *Organic Law 3/2007 for the effective equality between women and men*. Even though there was a previous norm regarding gender impact assessment, this is the first time that the introduction of gender perspective is referred as a key principle³. Like in regional laws, it appears as complementing specific actions, which are still needed. Once again, the regional level arrives before the national one. In this case seven of the abovementioned norms were approved before 2007, when the Organic Law 3/2007 was passed. Nevertheless, there are still many regions which only include gender mainstreaming as part of soft measures. In these cases, equality plans are the sole instruments for persuading other governmental areas. In spite of this fact, gender mainstreaming counts with a clear political commitment in Spain. Its inclusion either in plans or in laws entails that gender perspective has to be considered in all the public policies and in the government as a whole.

Table 1. Laws and plans including gender mainstreaming per region.

<i>REGION</i>	<i>EQUALITY LAW</i>	<i>PLAN</i>
ANDALUCIA	Law 12/2007 promoting gender equality in Andalusia	
ARAGÓN		II Plan 1997-2000 III Plan 2001-2004
ASTURIAS	<i>New law under elaboration</i>	III Plan IV Plan 2001-2005 Strategic Plan 2005-2007
BALEARES	Law 12/2006 for the woman.	II Plan 1996-1999 III Plan 2002-2005
CANARIAS		II Plan 1997-2000 III Plan 2003-2006
CANTABRIA		II Plan 1998-2000 III Plan 2003-2006 Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming 2007-2015 Plan for Governance 2004-2007 II Plan for governance 2009
CASTILLA LA MANCHA		III Plan 1999-2003 IV Plan 2004-2008
CASTILLA Y LEÓN	Law 1/2003, for equal opportunities for the equality between women and men in Castilla y León Law 7/2007, modifies the Law 1/2003	III Plan 2001-2005 IV Plan 2007-2010
CATALUÑA	Organic Law 6//2006 reforming statute of Cataluña	II Plan 1994-1996 III Plan 1998-2000 IV Plan 2001-2003 V Plan 2005-2007 VI Plan 2008-2011
PAIS VASCO	Law 4/2005 the equality between women and men	II Plan 1995-1999 III Plan 1999-2005 IV Plan 2006
EXTREMADURA		II Plan 2000-2003 III Plan 2006-2009
GALICIA	Law //2004 for the equality between women and men <i>New law under elaboration</i>	III Plan 1998-2001 IV Plan 2002- 2005 V Plan 2007-2010
LA RIOJA		III Plan 2006-2009
MADRID		III Plan 1997-2000 IV Plan 2002-2005
MURCIA	Law 7/2007,for the equality between women and men, and the protection against gender based violence in the Region of Murcia	II Plan 1997-2000 III Plan 2004-2005
NAVARRA	Law 33/2002, promoting equal opportunities between women and men	I Plan 2006-2010
VALENCIA	Law 9/2003 for the equality between women and men	II Plan 1997-2000 III Plan 2001-2004 IV Plan 2006-2009
SPAIN	Organic Law 3/2007 for the effective equality between women and men	III Plan 1997- 2000 IV Plan 2003-2006 V Plan 2008-2011

³ See Law 30/2003.

3.2 Institutionalising gender perspective: enlarging the equality machineries.

Given that mainstreaming is a key principle for both governmental levels, we should find any evidence of its presence. This section focuses on addressing its impact on the structural level, trying to determine whether or not institutions have been modified because of its introduction. I do so by looking at three types of organisms. First, at those bodies aimed at improving cooperation among areas and/or institutional levels (interdepartmental and inter-institutional bodies). Second, at those technical organisms focused on facilitating a general access to know-how (gender units, observatories etc.). Finally, I consider those participatory organisms where the women's movement plays the main role (participatory and advisory councils). All of these emerging structures aim at covering some of the main requirements connected with gender mainstreaming, that is, the engagement of the government as a whole, the improvement and diffusion of knowledge about gender inequalities and the participation of women in the decision-making (Council of Europe, 1998).

Interdepartmental and inter-institutional cooperation

Gender mainstreaming has been described as a complex strategy which requires the participation of all the actors that are normally involved in the policy making (Council of Europe, 1998). But, how can we assure this general engagement? Should we rely on the political will of each department? Or, do we need new structures? One of the main options for trying to guarantee this general commitment as well as for undertaking an articulated strategy is to create organisms oriented at improving cooperation. The idea is to coordinate either the different governmental areas or the different levels of government. Both seek to assure that all the public policies are being revised so that the gender perspective becomes an embedded strategy.

When it comes to coordination among policy areas, Spanish regions have a long experience in creating interdepartmental organisms. Since the approval of the first wave of plans, cooperation among areas has been a relevant objective. Thus, most of the texts mentioned which department is supposed to implement each action. Due to this fact, several plans developed their own structures aimed at gathering the different departments. They were mostly informal organisms which only involved some departments. However, some of them were already created by Decree and were integrated by all the policy areas. This is the case of the *Interdepartmental Commission for the Coordination of the Implementation of the Positive Action Plan of Pais Vasco* which was set up 1993 (Decree 251/1993). These kinds of measures entailed the first step forward an understanding of gender equality as a transversal target.

Nevertheless, we have to wait until 1994 for finding an interdepartmental organism which was not directly connected with an equality plan. This year the *Interdepartmental Commission for Equality for Women* was set up in Castilla y León. It emerged with the purpose of integrating all the Departments (*Consejerías*) in order to coordinate and mobilize them. Similar organisms were created in other 8 regions during the last decades (Table 2). All of them have three special features which differentiate them from the abovementioned structures. First, they have been created by binding norms, mainly by decree⁴. This means that these new organisms are much less informal and that they imply the regulation of some stable procedures and a compulsory participation. Second, all the policy areas are supposed to be engaged. As opposed to

⁴ The sole exception is Cataluña.

the previous commissions, participation is not related to the implementation of specific actions but to the general mandate about gender equality. As a result, no policy issue is seen as irrelevant for gender equality. Finally, the structures do not have the implementation of equality plans as the sole objective. Rather, the emphasis is put on spreading a general commitment about gender equality within which the initiative and the political will are not only a matter of equality machineries.

As we can infer, these kinds of structures are directly connected with the introduction of gender mainstreaming. On the one hand, they show a chronological coherence with this strategy. Thus, with the exception of the very first structure, all of them were set up after the mid 90's. Additionally, their core goal is strongly linked to its main requirements, that is, the engagement of all the policy areas. Collaboration based on an equality plan is no longer the reason for creating interdepartmental structures. On the contrary, gender mainstreaming is to be understood as the main cause.

Regarding the national level, equality plans also entail the participation of all the ministries. However, the first interdepartmental structure was created in 2007 when the *Organic Law 3/2007 for the effective equality between women and men* was passed. It includes an *Inter-Ministerial Commission for the Equality between Women and Men* which seeks to coordinate all the governmental areas (art. 76). In spite of this official approval, it still has to be regulated by decree in order to detail its functioning.

Table 2. Interdepartmental organisms created in Spain.

YEAR	REGION
1994	Castilla y León (Decree 53/94)
1997	Valencia (Decree 210/1997 modified by Decree 223/1999, Decree 15/2004 and Decree 7/2008)
1999	Castilla y León (Decree 300/1999)
2003	Murcia (Decree 152/2003) La Rioja (Decree 86/2003)
2004	Asturias (Decree 29/2004)
2006	Pais Vasco (Law 4/2005 and Decree 261/2006) Cataluña (informal)
2007	Galicia (Law 11/2007) Andalucía (Law 12/2007 and Decree 437/2008) Cantabria (Plan for Governance 2007) Spain (Organic Law 3/2007)

Besides engaging all the policy areas, gender mainstreaming requires full implementation through the different levels of government. When referring to gender policies, it does not only imply the participation of the regional and the national level. On the contrary, the local level is also expected to implement these kinds of actions. This competence has been regulated in the main law concerning local government, that is, *Law 7/1985, regulating the basis of the local regime*. It includes the promotion of social services as one of the policy issues to be developed. Gender equality quickly became part of this general goal (see for instance, Gelambí, 2005; Lombardo, 2002; Valiente, 1998). As a result, Spanish regions paid great attention to this level of government. All of them have special funding, programmes and informal networks for supporting gender equality policies in the municipalities. Moreover, all equality acts approved up to now by the Spanish regions, mention the local key role and the need for more inter-institutional collaboration. This regional support as well as the political will of the municipalities led to the approval of many local equality plans, to the creation

special units for supporting women (*Information Centres for Women*)⁵ and to the implementation of a great number of concrete programmes focused on employment, education, reconciliation etc. Their special role on developing services which are especially appropriate for victims of gender based violence, in particular deserves attention. Indeed, local special units usually count with legal and psychological support. None of these activities could be understood without the initiative and the financial contribution of the regional level. Communitarian funds are also relevant, mainly when referring to those regions that are less developed (Alonso, 2007). Thus, many European programmes were targeted at developing local gender policies, and some of them at including gender mainstreaming in the local level⁶.

In spite of this strong relation between the local and the regional policies, only two out of the 17 regions have regulated this kind of collaborations by setting up an inter-institutional organism. This is the case of Pais Vasco and Andalucia which include these kinds of structures in their respective equality acts. The Basque example is remarkable, given that the cooperation with the local level has been undertaken since the very beginnings of these types of policies. From 1991 until 2005, it did so by creating informal networks which actually had successful results (Novo *et al.*, 2007). The main idea was to connect the three governmental levels, namely the regional, the provincial (*Diputaciones Forales*) and the local one⁷ in order to generalise gender policies. After the approval of the Law 4/2005, this structure was officially recognised. What is more, Decree 5/2007 has regulated it in detail, clarifying that this new commission must assure a full implementation of the gender equality act through all the levels of government (art. 2).

Table 3. Inter-institutional organisms created in Spain.

YEAR	REGION
1991	Pais Vasco (informal)
2005	Pais Vasco (Law 4/2005 and Decree 5/2007)
2007	Andalucia (Law 12/2007)

Both the interdepartmental and the inter-institutional organisms are great examples of structures which seek to facilitate gender mainstreaming implementation. Thus, the main idea is to spread gender equality as a general commitment. Its evolution from informal and limited structures connected with equality plans, to stable organisms where all the areas are involved, alludes to the introduction of this new approach.

New specialized machineries: broadening the equality agenda

As it has been noted before, gender mainstreaming is a complex strategy which really requires a deep knowledge about gender inequalities as well as about the best ways of opposing them. This entails a high level of expertise, which in this case should

⁵ For instance, Galicia has 78 local centres called *Information Centres for Women*.

⁶ See for instance programmes such as ELAS or CERES which are funded by the IV European Action Programme.

⁷ Spain has two types of local governments, that is, the municipalities and the provinces. The latter is very relevant in the case of Pais Vasco, since it counts with special competences derived from their historic acquired rights.

be located not only in the equality bodies but also in all areas. But, how can this general expertise be acquired? In other words, how can we make gender mainstreaming affordable for all the actors? One of the main options is to offer some gender training to those actors usually involved in the policy making. The core objective is to provide them with some basic tools so that they are able to introduce a gender perspective. This is the most common strategy. Indeed, almost all the Spanish plans and acts mention gender training as a main mean for including this new perspective. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting that other structures centred on spreading this know-how were also created. This section will address some of them, that is, gender equality units, gender equality observatories and other specialised organisms such as the women and science units.

Regarding the former, the Spanish regional level tends to create special gender equality units (Table 4). Andalucía and Cantabria were the very first regions to set up those kinds of organisms. Since 2001 and 2004 respectively, they count with a central unit aimed at facilitating the introduction of gender perspective in all the policies (*Unidad de Igualdad de Género*). In the case of Andalucía, the gender unit is tightly linked to the European policies. Indeed, it was not only inspired by the EU strategy regarding gender mainstreaming but also created thanks to Communitarian funding⁸. This is the reason why it has been recently eliminated, since the European funding period has finished. In any case, this unit acted as a support structure for the regional government by giving information, training and accurate tools. All these tasks were conceived in order to facilitate the general introduction of a gender perspective. With this purpose the unit generated many specialised guides, diagnoses, expertise meetings etc.

When it comes to Cantabria, the gender unit is based on a dual strategy, that is, on the combination of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment⁹. The former is related to the implementation of the *Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming 2007-2015*, approved by the regional government. As we can infer, it focuses on institutionalizing gender perspective in all the public policies of Cantabria. For doing so, the gender unit not only addresses the institutional level but also promotes measures targeted at researchers, social partners, women's movement and citizens. This gives it a wider vision than the Andalusian unit, given that policy makers are not the sole target group. Concerning women's empowerment, this structure aims at achieving a three-fold goal related to self-esteem (individual), to ties among women (groups) and to visibility (society).

In addition to these two central organisms, other Spanish regions opted for creating several gender units attached to each department. The first region in doing so was the País Vasco, which regulated them in *Law 4/2005 the equality between women and men*. It stated that each department and some of the autonomous organisms and public entities must have an administrative unit focused on fostering, coordinating and collaborating in the implementation equality policies. After its approval, it has been regulated by decree in 2007¹⁰. This norm includes concrete objectives and states that the civil servants belonging to this unit must count with some degree of expertise. This example was followed by other two regions, namely Andalucía and Murcia as well as by the national level. All of them have included these special structures in their respective equality acts. In spite of this positive shift, neither Andalucía nor Spain and

⁸ See <http://www.unidadgenero.com/programa.cfm>

⁹ See http://www.unidaddeigualdad.com/uig/ampliar.php?Id_contenido=1027 .

¹⁰ Decree 213/2007, regulates the administrative units in charge of fostering and coordinating the equality policies in the departments of Basque government, autonomous organisms and public entities.

Murcia have regulated these units in detail as Pais Vasco did. As a result, they are still in the form of project. Other two regions, Canarias and Navarra, claim that gender units are planned as further actions¹¹. Both also describe them as a key mean for introducing gender mainstreaming. However, those gender units are not regulated yet by any norm.

Finally, it is worthy to note that a gender unit was created in the Labour and Employment Department belonging to Galicia. As it is stated in *Law 2/2007, regulates equality for women in labour*, this department must create its own equality unit. Its core goal is to integrate gender perspective in all the policies to be undertaken by this area. For doing so, it has to work in collaboration with the equality machineries. In spite of this creation, Galicia has not set up other structures aim at spreading this general mandate about equality yet.

Table 4. Gender equality units created in Spain.

YEAR	REGION
2001	Andalucia (Gender Equality Unit)
2004	Cantabria (Gender Equality Unit)
2005	Pais Vasco (Gender Units [regulated by Decree 213/2007])
2007	Andalucia (Gender Units [not developed]) Murcia (Gender Units) Galicia (Gender Unit in the Labour Department) Spain (Gender Units [not developed])
2008	Canarias (Gender Units [project]) Navarra (Gender Units [project])

Besides these administrative units, the regional level also pays attention to the presence of available information about gender inequalities. Most of the laws regarding equality machineries state that one of their main purposes is to gather, to analyse and to diffuse information about these topics. For doing so, most of these bodies have elaborated equality plans which include these kind of tasks as relevant. The core idea was to generate statistics broken by sex. In order to accomplish this general goal, equality bodies not only have made their own studies but also have set up special alliances with governmental statistical units¹². Research carried out by feminist scholars was also a frequent option. Thus, besides undertaking some concrete collaboration, many regions count with special funding focused on promoting gender studies. These common sources of knowledge couple with the presence of some new organisms centred on generating information (Table 5.). Unlike previous topics, in this case the national level was not the laggard, since the Women's Institute created its *Women's Image Observatory* in 1994. Subsequently, the strategy became that of establishing new specialized observatories aimed at covering some concrete areas, such as advertising, gender based violence, health, army and police forces. Many of them imply either the cooperation of other departments or are directly attached to them. The underlying idea is to mainstream this task. In addition to these specialized bodies, a general observatory about equal opportunities between men and women was set up in 2000 by the Decree 1686/2000. Its main goals are "to gather, to analyse and to spread systematic

¹¹ For Canarias see the institutional press release available at <http://www.gobcan.es/noticias/index.jsp?module=1&page=notapreview.htm&id=34994> ; For Navarra see its *I Plan for the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2006-2012*.

¹² The Spanish regions frequently count with their own organisms aim at generating official statistics. Very recently, they have introduced sex a main variable.

information about the situation of men and women” as well as to “propose public policies focused on improving women’s situation” (art. 2)¹³.

When referring to the regional level, the very first observatory was created in Asturias in 2001. It belongs to the *Asturias Women’s Institute* and it is centred on elaborating an annual study aimed at gathering several key statistics. After this approval, Castilla y León, Murcia and Andalucía have set up their own observatories with similar purposes. Moreover, other regions have followed the example given by the national government and have created specialized structures. Valencia, Galicia and Andalucía did it by creating their respective observatories about the presence of sexist publicity. The core objective is to analyse the existing advertising as well as to receive complaints about these kinds of offences. More recently, other four regions opted for creating their respective *Gender Violence Observatories*. As well as in the national realm, they emerged due to the relevance acquired by this topic in the public agenda. Indeed, these observatories are mostly created by those laws and plans targeted at combating this type of crimes. They are part of a complex intervention.

Table 5. Observatories about gender inequalities created in Spain.

YEAR	REGION
1994	Spain (Women’s Image Observatory)
1997	Spain (Sexist Advertising Observatory)
2000	Spain (Equal Opportunities Observatory)
2001	Asturias (Equal Opportunities Observatory)
2002	Spain (Gender Violence Observatory)
2003	Valencia (Gender Equality Observatory; Sexist Advertising Observatory) Andalucía (Sexist Advertising Observatory) Galicia (Sexist Advertising Observatory)
2004	Spain (Women and Health Observatory)
2005	Spain (Women in the Army Observatory) Castilla y León (Gender Equality Observatory) Madrid (Gender Violence Observatory)
2007	Spain (Women in the Police Forces Observatory) Andalucía (Gender Equality Observatory) Murcia (Equality Observatory) Galicia (Gender Violence Observatory) Aragón (Gender Violence Observatory)

Besides these general structures which embrace gender policies as a whole, other types of organisms have been created as attached to a concrete policy issue/department. There are three main topics leading to these specialized structures: research policies, gender budgeting and once again, gender based violence. When referring to the former, Spain as well as Cataluña and Galicia count with their respective *Women and Science Units*. The one belonging to the national level was created in 2005 with the main purpose of promoting equality in the research system. For doing so, it has been attached to the Ministry of Science and Innovation. During the same year, Cataluña set up its *Women and Science Commission*, which seeks to promote gender equality in those policies linked to the university system as well as to research activities. Due to this goal, both the department in charge of these kinds of topics and the Catalan universities are expected to collaborate. When referring to the *Woman and Science Unit* of Galicia, we have to note that it has a more ambitious structure. Indeed, it aims at embracing three different departments, namely those related to education, research and gender

¹³ Its wide variety of activities is available at <http://www.migualdad.es/mujer/mujeres/igualdad/index.htm>.

equality. These three areas are expected to contribute equally to the achievement of gender equality in science. As we can infer, all of these units are a great mean for spreading gender mainstreaming to other policy areas. Thus, the responsibility is no longer seen as fully attached to the traditional equality bodies. These sorts of shifts have been clearly inspired by the EU, since this institution has not only established a well-known strategy about gender mainstreaming in research policies, but also has set up several specialised bodies¹⁴ (Alonso, 2008). The Spanish regional and national realms were aware of this emerging policy issue and tried to match with the EU priorities.

When referring to gender budgeting, several regions have started to recognise that public budgets should be revised from a gender perspective. Although many of them include these kinds of actions in their respective equality plans, only the Pais Vasco and Andalucia have stable procedures and structures about this topic. The latter is clearly the most remarkable example. Since 2004, its general budgets have been revised in order to promote gender equality. At the beginning, the *Commission for Gender Budgeting* functioned in an informal way attached to the Department of Economy and Treasure. Since the approval of *Law 12/2007 promoting gender equality in Andalucia*, it is legally recognised. When referring to the Pais Vasco, it seeks to introduce gender budgeting since its third equality plan, albeit it only counts with a *Working Group* led by the Women's Institute which has not been regulated yet.

Unsurprisingly, gender violence is the other policy issue that has generated new specialized bodies. As I have argued before, this has become one of the main topics in the Spanish policies, with a wide variety of plans and norms. This interest goes with the creation of some new structures focused on eliminating this phenomenon. This is case of the abovementioned gender violence observatories, as well as of the emerging interdepartmental commissions for eliminating these types of crimes. The first example is that of Valencia, which in 2002 set up its own commission aimed at promoting coordination among departments. More recently, Cataluña and Andalucia did it by including these bodies in their respective legislation. All of them are clearly related to the outstanding growth suffered from this policy issue as well as for the complex intervention that it entails. Thus, coordination both among departments and among levels of government is an essential condition.

Finally, it is worthy to underline the presence of an odd organism which is not comparable with the ones exposed before. This is the case of the special ombudsman protecting equality that has been created in the Pais Vasco and Valencia. Given that the latter is not regulated yet, the Pais Vasco is the sole region which actually counts with this kind of equality body. As it has been stated in its regulation, it seeks to promote the principle of equal treatment and to defend citizens from discrimination. These competences are based on some EU directives which recommend creating an independent body with these set of aims¹⁵ (Bergara, 2006). Even if there are already Ombudsmen in all the regions seeking to protect equality, they do so only when referring to the public realm. Therefore, the Basque government set up this specialized structure in order to assure equal treatment also in the private sector.

To sum up, Spanish gender policies have led to the creation of new organisms focused on making gender mainstreaming possible. They do so either by creating units

¹⁴ Gender mainstreaming has been included as a main strategy since the 5th *Framework Programme about research, technological development and demonstration activities*. As a result, the DG RTD has created several equality machineries which are specialised on these topics. This is the case of the *Women and Science Unit*, the *STRATA-ETAN Group* or the *Helsinki Group on Women and Science*.

¹⁵ Article 8 Directive 76/2007/CEE, modified by the Directive 2002/73/CE, and in the article 12 of the Directive 2004/113/CE (Bergara, 2006).

based on their expertise or by improving the generation of knowledge. With the exception of the observatories which are traditionally included in the equality plans, all the structures are tightly connected with this new strategy. All of them seek to introduce gender perspective so that the equality agenda can be enlarged.

Councils and women in the decision making

One of the main requirements for implementing gender mainstreaming is the participation of women in the decision making (Council of Europe, 1998). This means that females' interests, needs and opinions must be considered during the policy process. While addressing the Spanish case, this involvement counts also with a multi-layered context. The decentralization process indeed led to the creation of separated political arenas where social movements were able to mobilize. Women's organizations are also part of these sub-national contexts, where dynamics can vary from one region to another. Although the presence of more than one level of government can be seen as an opportunity structure for feminists, this feature also couples with a fragmented landscape (Ortbals, 2008; Bustelo and Ortvals, 2007). Despite this diversity, strategies regarding female's participation are quite similar in all the cases. Thus, most of the regions have not only included this priority in their respective plans and laws, but also have reflected it on the equality machineries. The starting point are those councils attached to the respective equality bodies (*Consejos Rectores*) which besides including several institutional actors (representatives, departments etc.), sought to gather some civil society voices, most of them recognised experts and/or feminists. These structures are part of the direction of the Women's Institutes.

During the same period, the Spanish regions have created several *Women's Councils* (Table 6). As opposed to the abovementioned structures, they focus on a two-fold aim, that is, to promote women's participation in to the policy process and to act as advisory councils. For doing so, only civil society voices are supposed to be present. The very first Council was set up in Castilla La Mancha in 1990. After its creation, other eight regions as well as the national level have followed this example. Unsurprisingly, the Spanish national government is once again the laggard, since this structure is only referred in the equality act approved in 2007. Despite having similar aims, these Women's Councils can be classified according to several criteria. As Bustelo have argued before, some of them are independent bodies created by law, whereas others are included in less relevant norms and/or dependent on other organisms (Bustelo, 2008a). In line with this argument, we could claim that there is a continuum from: a) councils which are independent and created by law (Madrid, Cantabria and Pais Vasco¹⁶); b) councils which are created by law but dependent on other bodies (Galicia, Castilla y León, Valencia and the national council); c) and finally, those which are not only dependant but also included in less relevant norms (Cataluña, La Rioja, Navarra, Asturias and Murcia). As it could be expected, the former category is rather scarce.

¹⁶ The new law regarding the Basque Women's Council is still a project. It represents a step forward in comparison with the previous *Advisory Council* attached to the Basque Women's Institute.

Table 6. Women's participatory organisms created in Spain.

YEAR	REGION
1990	Castilla La Mancha (Decree 35/1990 and Decree 84/1998)
1993	Madrid (Law 3/1993)
1994	Castilla y León (Decree 53/1994 and Law 1/2003)
1996	Navarra (Norm 351/1996)
1997	Valencia (Norm 1997 and Law 9/2003) La Rioja (Norm April 8 th 1997) Cantabria (Law 3/1997)
1998	Pais Vasco (Decree 103/1998)
2000	Asturias (Resolution July 27 th 2000)
2003	Castilla y León (Law 1/2003)
2004	Cataluña (Decree 460/2004)
2005	Murcia (Norm February 11 th)
2007	Spain (Law 3/2007) Galicia (Law 2/2007)
2008	Pais Vasco (Law project)

Besides these general organisms, Spain counts with the presence of some specialized councils. This is the case of the *Galician Council of Women's Participation in Employment and Labor Relations*. It has been created by *Law 2/2007, regulates equality for women in labour* in order to improve women's participation in these kinds of policies. In spite of its approval, it still has to be regulated. Secondly, it is worthy to note their presence in the local level, where many entities have created new Women's Councils. This shift is due both to the regional strategy focused on enlarging the presence of these kinds of structures to the municipalities and to the quick development of gender policies in this realm¹⁷.

Generally speaking, women's participation has always been a policy issue in Spanish policies. However, its reflection in the equality machineries has been slowly developed. The national level is clearly the laggard in this new institutionalization, since the first regional council was created almost twenty years before. Due to this gap, gender mainstreaming is less likely to be fully implemented.

3.3 No shifts without new tools: gender impact assessment at stake.

Besides the abovementioned general requirements (participation, knowledge, high level of involvement etc.), gender mainstreaming also entails some concrete tools aimed at revising existing policies. Once again, the core idea is to make it more affordable for all the actors as well as to include it as part of the policy routines. Undoubtedly, *gender impact assessment* (GIA) is one of the tools that have been applied the most. Roggeband and Verloo imported this methodology from the environmental related policies in order to analyse all the actions from a gender perspective (Roggeband and Verloo, 2006). The main purpose was to undertake an *ex-ante* evaluation so that the effects on men and women could be assessed when undertaking each policy stage. Many countries have adopted the GIA so that all the policy actors count with a harmonised and reliable tool. Spain is not an exception on

¹⁷ See for instance the programme undertaken by Extremadura in order to create these new structures in the local level.

this dissemination and has also regulated these kinds of appraisals (Table 6). The first example was Cataluña, which in 2001 approved *Law 4/2001, modifies Law 13/1989, regulate organization, procedures and juridical regime of the administration of Cataluña*. It states that all the proposed regulations must be complemented with a gender impact assessment with the purpose of making gender mainstreaming an embedded principle. During this decade, other six regions as well as the national level have passed similar legislation. However, there are some elements that draw differences among them. First, the organism which is in charge of elaborating the GIA. In this case there are at least three possibilities: a) the equality body (Balears, Cataluña and Galicia); b) the departments which elaborate the norm (Spain); c) or a combination where the departments elaborate the assessment and the equality body revises it later (Andalucía and Euskadi). These categories go with their respective strengths. The first option is expected to entail a greater level of expertise, while the second one is more likely to lead to a deeper involvement of the administration as a whole. Andalucía and País Vasco opted for combining both strategies, so that expertise and commitment were present. Unsurprisingly, these are the only regions that count with a legislative development concerning GIA. That is, besides approving a general law about this topic, they have specific norms regulating this procedure more in detail. The core idea was not only to establish which organisms are in charge of each step, but also to assure that each GIA presents a concrete set of contents, that is, a high level of quality. Other regions such as Murcia or Cataluña also sought to determine a minimum structure, even if by publishing only a non-binding guideline. The third criterion distinguishing the analysed cases is the type/s of norm/s for which the GIA must be elaborated. In this case, there is a wide variety of compulsory levels. From those stating that only laws must count with this analysis, to those considering that also plans and soft rules must be revised. This is the case of the national level which after the approval of the new equality act, states that laws, regulations, plans, general norms and civil servants' recruitment related norms must own their respective GIA. This is the sole criterion where the state has gained relevance, since it neither has the first norm regarding this topic, nor a detailed regulation.

Table 6. Norms concerning Gender Impact Assessment in Spain.

REGION	LAW	WHO MAKES THE GIA?	ARE THEY COMPULSORY?	IS THERE A STRUCTURE?
Andalucía	Law 18/2003 Law 3/2007 Decree 93/2004	Departments (revision by the equality body)	Laws, regulations and plans	Yes (minimum contents)
Balears	Law 12/2006	Equality body	Laws and norms	No
Cataluña	Law 4/2001	Equality body	General regulations	No
Euskadi	Law 4/2005 Resolution 5/2007	Departments (revision by the equality body)	Laws, regulations and administrative acts	Yes (minimum contents and objectives)
Extremadura	Law 1/2002			No
Galicia	Law 7/2004	Equality body	Laws	No
Murcia	Law 6/2004		Laws	No
Spain	Law 30/2003 Law 3/2007	Departments	Laws, regulations, plans, general norms and civil servants' recruitment	No

Although GIA is quite common in the Spanish policies, what is its real impact? Has this strategy led to deep changes in the Spanish legislation? Up to now, only two researches have been undertaken in order to address this issue. The first one analyses the national level by concluding that the GIA has had a very little impact both in the legislation and in the policy process (Pujol, 2005). This can be explained by two main reasons. First, many laws have been approved despite not counting with their respective assessments. Besides, when this procedure has been undertaking, most of the GIA only affirm that gender is not pertinent and that as a result, no shifts are needed. The consequence is a null impact in the new Spanish legislation. The other example addresses the Galician case by measuring the impact of *Law 7 /2004 for the equality between women and men*, where GIA is defined as a compulsory procedure concerning laws. The analysis of all the GIA from 2005 to 2008 raises some differences with the national case. Thus, in Galicia all laws have their respective assessment, and even other types of norms which are not supposed to include it are also revised from a gender perspective (Alonso *et al.*, 2009). This means that this tool is at least quite consolidated. When referring to the real impact, conclusions are not as positive. Proposals included in the GIA are only partially included in the approved legislation. This impact depends on the department that has elaborated the norm, since some policy areas are more resistant than others. Besides, the more transformative are the suggestions the lesser possibility to be included. Thus, norms frequently opt for including either non-transformative measures or actions which are already legally covered.

Generally speaking, gender impact assessment is one of the most common gender mainstreaming related tools, especially regarding Spain. Both the national and the regional level tend to include it as part of the legislative process. However, further research is needed for shedding light on its real impact. The abovementioned analyses put the emphasis on a well-known shortcoming, that is, its partial (null) implementation.

4. Conclusions

In this paper I have examined gender mainstreaming in Spanish policies, with special regard to the regional level. The first conclusion is that it can be considered a quite consolidated strategy. Thus, all the regions as well as the national level have included it repeatedly in their respective plans and norms. As a result, gender policies can no longer be considered as only connected with specific actions. Rather, the *dual-track strategy* imported from the EU already prevails. In spite of this inclusion, gender mainstreaming frequently appears connected with a lack of real implementation. While referring to Spain, I have addressed some of its main requirements in order to assess its concrete impact. The analysis concerning the equality machineries' enlargement has clearly shown how new structures have been created during the last decades. Most of them could be directly connected with the introduction of gender mainstreaming. Thus, they have appeared either simultaneously or after this strategy, that is, since the mid 90's. Besides, they are mostly focused on introducing gender perspective all over the policies. This is the case of the interdepartmental and the inter-institutional commissions, of the gender units and of some specialized bodies such as the women and science units or the gender budgeting commissions. All of them aim at making gender mainstreaming possible by improving the coordination and the access to expertise and knowledge. Other kinds of structures, namely the observatories and the women's councils, are not directly related to this emerging strategy. On the contrary, they appear because of their inclusion as policy priorities within equality plans. However, these

organisms are key elements for fulfilling gender mainstreaming requirements, since available data and women's participation in the decision-making are strategic achievements. Regarding tools, gender impact assessment has been introduced in several regions as part of their legislative processes. Despite its limited regulation and its lack of actual impact, this shift has entailed a great step forward in order to embed gender perspective in the policy routines.

Compared with the national level, regions tend to include these new strategies and structures either simultaneously or before the central government. This feature clearly shows to what extent international institutions emerge as the main influence. Thus, whereas at the beginning regions merely followed national policies, recently the EU and the UN have become the model which is quoted the most. As a result, gender mainstreaming can be labelled as an international imported strategy. Additionally, regions are also likely to influence each other, causing sort of a mimicry/competition process (Linos, 2003). Although some of them can be considered as the pioneers and others as the laggards, this distinction should be nuanced. Thus, the role played by each region depends on the topic at stake. Anyhow, Pais Vasco, Andalucia and Cataluña are the ones which are qualified as influential the most.

This paper has shown the extent to which the sub-national level matters in the Spanish gender policies. This means that while considering this country, its multi-layered government must be taken into account. Otherwise, a great part of existing policies will be disregarded. Concerning gender mainstreaming, this decentralized state implies a greater effort so that this strategy becomes actually embedded. Its inclusion in the national level is not enough but only the first step for a multi-level commitment.

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