



## GENDER EQUALITY INDEX OF THE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES OF SPAIN: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS

Anna María GIL-LAFUENTE<sup>1</sup>, Agustín TORRES-MARTINEZ<sup>2\*</sup>,  
Luis AMIGUET-MOLINA<sup>3</sup>, Sefa BORJA-REVERTER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Business, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Barcelona,  
Av. Diagonal, 690, 08034, Barcelona, Spain*

<sup>2</sup>*Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción,  
Av. Alonso de Ribera 2850, 4070129 Concepción, Chile*

<sup>3</sup>*Department of Communication Studies, Rovira i Virgili University,  
Av. Catalunya, 35. 43002 Tarragona, Spain*

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**Abstract.** The main aim of this document is to establish a diagnosis of inequality between men and women in the autonomous communities of Spain. This study proposes a multidimensional methodology composed of 25 variables and classifies them in four dimensions: education, labor market, social conditions, and empowerment, using the subjective preference model to determine the weight of each variable. Then the four dimensions are added with equal weight to obtain a general indicator for each of the autonomous communities. Therefore, this study presents an adequate diagnosis that allows comparing the gender gap for each of the autonomous communities in any of the different issues raised: both in every dimension and at a general level. The final goal is to establish a methodological reference framework to estimate how gender equality benefits the regional economy. This estimation will be done in our next research.

**Keywords:** gender equality, gender gap, multidimensional analysis.

**JEL Classification:** B54, D63, J16.

### Introduction

During recent decades, women have waged many battles against discrimination based on gender. Gender equality is part of the social change in the world (Bericat, 2012), and one of the deepest forms of discrimination in today's society (Agarwal, 2018). In Spain, the Organic Law 3/2007, of March 22, for the effective equality of women and men (Official State Gazette, 2007), requires the implementation of new indicators which can improve our knowledge about the differences between women and men. Those indicators will monitor the progress made in different areas of society and territories. The design of indicators to measure this

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\*Corresponding author. E-mail: [atorres@ucsc.cl](mailto:atorres@ucsc.cl)

phenomenon is fundamental not only to analyze its evolution, but also to identify the most complex elements that hinder actions that make equality between men and women effective. The progress of countries or territories to reduce the gender gap is essential to promote development (Adina, 2014) and positive social changes. Although inequality is obvious everywhere, its nature and degree are heterogeneous (Dilli, 2018). But it has a negative impact on the economies as well as in politics and social institutions (Agarwal, 2018).

Public administrations should assume the challenge of achieving equality of duties, rights, and opportunities between men and women. The reasons are ethical, social or legal and many others with a high economic impact that needs to be identified. The approach to gender issue has gone beyond the strictly biological sense (Alvesson, 1998; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Redding, Ruiz-Cantero, Fernández-Sáez, & Guijarro-Garvi, 2017). Those approaches allow us to support public policies to guarantee real equality between men and women besides the quota systems. In order to establish a concise diagnosis of gender inequality, we need to quantify its level by measuring the asymmetry either from the percentage gap or by establishing ratios between men and women. In this case, many organizations have proposed different types of gender indicators (Adina, 2014; Bericat, 2012; Dilli, 2018) to monitor the progress of public policies against discrimination. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) monitors progress in gender equity since 2013 through the Gender Equality Index (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017) with 31 variables that are classified in six dimensions (work, money, knowledge, age, power, and health). This indicator is the reference to check progress in the issues that establish an imbalance with negative effects on women in the countries of the European Union. However, it is necessary that countries harmonized comparable indicators to assess gender equity in their territories.

The negative effects of the gender gap also have a high economic impact, according to the recent report *Unrealized Potential: The High Cost of Gender Inequality in Earnings* (Wodon, & De La Briere, 2018) in which 141 countries are analyzed and which estimates in 160.2 trillion dollars the losses of human capital wealth, because of gender inequality. In this sense, it warns that women represent only 38 percent of human capital wealth compared to 62 percent for men, emphasizing two main factors that lead women to have less profit and, therefore, lower wealth of human capital than men: lower participation rates in the labor force and fewer hours worked in the labor market, and consequently lower wages. Therefore, the economic benefits and sustainable development of the countries are clearly demonstrated, estimating that the wealth of human capital could increase by 21.7 percent worldwide, and total wealth by 14.0 percent with gender equality in earnings.

The gender equality index presented in this paper is a new proposal that establishes a comparative indicator that measures gender asymmetries in different areas. This indicator is composed of 25 variables that measure the percentage gap between men and women and which, in turn, are classified into the following four dimensions: education, labor market, social conditions, and empowerment. Therefore, it is possible to establish different measures of equality between autonomous communities and compare the variables or dimensions with the global index. This indicator is relevant to design policies to reduce gender imbalances in each region. It shows the evolution of different variables in Spain autonomous communities, such as a diagnosis to identify the factors and elements that determine the gap between men and women effectively.