



NATIONAL REPORT

SPAIN



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1. Legal framework regarding gender violence in Spain

In the Spanish State, violence against women has traditionally been considered a private or a family problem and, because of this, no national policies or regulations have dealt with this issue until the last decade, when the State started to recognise that violence against women was a public matter and took the first policy and legal actions on this area.

Generally speaking, two elements have been essential for favouring in the Spanish State the process of social recognition of violence against women; on the one hand, the role of women's organisations and, on the other, the Declaration adopted by the United Nation's *Fourth World Conference on Women* (Beijing, 1995):

- Women's organisations have played a key role when lobbying for shedding light on this phenomenon and bringing it to the public sphere, claiming that violence against women was not a private issue but a social matter, a brutal example of the inequality between men and women and a question of human rights. In this sense, women's organisations have sought to raise awareness at policy-level and among general society on the seriousness of violence against women and the need to fight against it¹. Their valuable work has taken place not only in the lobbying area (decisive in late 90's and the beginning of 21st century) but also in the field of support and defence of women victims (since late 70's). Thus, women's organisations, on the basis of volunteer work and by creating networks among them, organised self support groups and provided legal counselling and shelter to women victims of male violence². These organisations were the first to develop services for women victims and their influence and work are, actually, in the roots of the current public services and programmes in Spain. Therefore, their efforts in lobbying and their expertise and experience in this field have been decisive because Spanish policy-makers have taken them into account when developing new legislation and policy measures on this area.
- The Declaration adopted by the United Nation's *Fourth World Conference on Women* hosted in Beijing in 1995 had an important impact in the Spanish state since this declaration was an international public recognition and

¹ Alberdi, I & Matas, N. (2002) *La violència domèstica. Informe sobre els maltractaments a Espanya*. Fundació La Caixa. Barcelona.

² SURT, Bosch et al. (2006), *Spanish National Report*, ALTRA project. European Commission's Daphne II Programme to combat violence against children, young people and women (2004 - 2008). Not published.

condemnation of gender violence and a claim to the responsibility of all states in combating violence against women. This conference set the base for a common definition of gender violence as “*any act of violence based on gender, which may result or actually results in physical, sexual or psychological harm, including threats, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, in either private or public life*”³. With this Declaration the issue of gender violence was progressively incorporated in the Spanish political agenda. As Alberdi and Matas⁴ claim, the most committed political action against gender violence in Spain started after this Declaration. This was the case (as it will be explained in the following section) of the Third Equality Plan between Men and Women (1997), which included, for the first time, an specific section on violence.

Within this framework, in Spain, the first legislative initiatives regarding violence against women came into light in the beginning of the 21st century: the Organic Law 11/2003, of 29 September, of *Concrete Measures in Citizen Security, Domestic Violence and Social Integration of Foreigners* was the first legal measure that dealt with domestic violence; the Organic Law 15/2003 of 25 November that modifies the Organic Law 10/1995, of 23 November, of the Penal Code, changed some provisions of the Penal Code for covering domestic violence crimes; and the Law 27/2003, of 31 July, *regulating the Protection Order for Domestic Violence Victims*, which unified all protection instruments for the victim foreseen in the legal system (penal, civil, and protection and social assistance) with the need of a unique request form.

However, it was not until 2004 that a specific legal regulation for the issue of violence against women came into force in Spain. It is the so-called ***Integral Protection Law Against Gender Violence***, Organic Law 1/2004, of 28 December. This law meant an undoubtful step forward in the fight against this phenomenon in Spain. In particular, it is important to stress that with this law the term gender violence was used for the first time in a legal regulation. Until then, the unique form of violence against women that was addressed in general legal regulations (like the laws mentioned earlier) was domestic violence. Thus, with this Law, the Spanish State broadens the scope of the matter by recognising that women, as a result of gender inequality, are victims of multiple forms of violence and, therefore, talks about gender violence to capture the multidimensionality of the problem. The law refers to gender violence as any act of physical and psychological violence,

³ Platform for action. Item 113 - Fourth World Women's Conference.

⁴ Alberdi, I & Matas, N. (2002) *La violència domèstica. Informe sobre els maltractaments a Espanya*. Fundació La Caixa. Barcelona.

including aggression to sexual freedom, threats, coercions or the arbitrary privation of freedom.

The philosophical background behind this law is that gender violence is the most brutal symbol of inequality in our society. In this sense, it is considered that gender violence is a violence perpetuated against women for the sole reason of being women and, for this reason, their offenders consider them as persons with no rights of freedom, to be respected and no capacity for deciding for themselves.

The bases of this law are the recommendations of international organisms about the need of tackling violence against women. In this sense, in the roots of the law there are the “Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women” (CEDAW, Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979); the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (United Nations General Assembly, 1993); the Resolutions and the Declaration adopted by the “Fourth World Conference on Women” (Beijing, 1995); the Resolution of the World Health Assembly (WHA 49.25), declaring that violence against women is a priority problem of public health, as well as it has been proclaimed by the World Health Organization in 1996; the European Parliament Report published in July 1997; the Resolution adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Commission in 1997 on Gender Violence; the disposition that declared 1999 as the European Year of the Fight Against Gender Violence; the 803/2004/EC European Parliament Resolution on a Communitarian Programme to prevent and to fight violence against children, younger and women, and to protect the victims and the social risk groups (II Daphne Programme, 2004-2008)⁵.

The law deals with prevention, education, social, welfare, legislative and jurisdictional measures. As Bosch et al.⁶ state, in these two last fields, the law takes into account many legal aspects in which violence has influence, such as the civil, criminal and labour issues, as well as the coordination among the Public Administrations, the Courts and the Police forces to guarantee the effectiveness of the measures adopted to protect the victims.

The Title II of the law deals with the rights of the women suffering gender violence such as the right to full information, integral social work, legal assistance, labour and social benefits, etc. The right to integral social work, for instance, comprises social services of attention, emergency, support and reception. One of the areas

⁵ SURT, Bosch et al. (2006), *Spanish National Report*, ALTRA project. European Commission’s Daphne II Programme to combat violence against children, young people and women (2004 - 2008). Not published.

⁶ Ídem.

that this attention should comprise, states the law, is the support to training and labour insertion. Thus, this Title means an step forward in the sense that it aims to tackle the consequences that the suffering of gender violence can have in the social and labour spheres of a woman. The most significant measures in the labour and social security rights foreseen by the law are the following:

- In the field of labour and social benefits, the law foresees that the woman worker who has been victim of gender violence, having issued a protection order on her favour, will have the right to reduce or reorganise her working time, to geographic mobility, to change to another work centre, to suspend the labour relation keeping the position and to extinguish the labour contract. In these last two cases, the woman will be considered to be in a situation of legal unemployment, with the rights foreseen under the Social Security System. In another sense, the absence or lack of punctuality in the work place because of the physical or psychological situation caused by gender violence will be justified when the social or care services confirm it. The law also foresees an specific employment plan for the victims of gender violence registered as job seekers.
- Those victims with an income lower than the 75% of the guaranteed minimum wage will receive income support if her situation is of great vulnerability and has no possibilities to participate in the specific employment plan. The women victims, therefore, have these economic rights recognised under the Social Security System.
- In the field of housing, women victims of gender violence will be considered a priority group in the access to social housing and public residences.

The Title II, therefore, when stating the rights of the victims deals not only with the help and assistance that the women can receive in terms of legal assistance, psychological and medical care but also with other dimensions in which gender violence can have effects, such as the labour and housing dimensions.

The Title III prescribes the penal protection of victims against physical and psychological damages (even when these acts were not included as a crime in the Penal Code) when the offender has been the husband, ex-husband, boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, partner, ex-partner, or any other person who has had some other similar

relationship, or the victim has been a specially vulnerable person who was living with the offender at the moment of the aggression⁷.

The Title IV incorporates a very significant innovation in this field, since it prescribes that all the legal procedures on violence against women must be judged in the same jurisdiction⁸. Thus, an specific and special jurisdiction, the “Courts on Violence against Women” will be created with competences on criminal and civil matters at national level.

In another sense, in March 2007, entered into force the Organic Law 3/2007, of 22 March, **for the effective equality between men and women**, which aims to make effective the right to equality of treatment and opportunities between women and men, by the elimination of the discrimination against women in any sphere of life and, in particular, in the political, civic, labour, economic, social and cultural ones. In the Title I, the law refers to general concepts regarding equality and determines the legal consequences of the discriminatory conducts. The law explicitly refers to:

- Sexual harassment as any behaviour, sexual or physical, of sexual nature that has the aim or produces the effect of attempting against the dignity of a person, in particular when it creates an intimidating, degrading and offensive environment.
- Harassment by reason of sex as any behaviour developed by reason of sex of a person, with the purpose of attempting against her dignity and of creating an intimidating, degrading and offensive environment.
- Discrimination for pregnancy or maternity.

As a response to any potential discriminatory conduct, such as the ones referred above, the law defines legal consequences, which are: to declare null the conducts and to ask for responsibility through a system of reparations or compensations and of sanctions.

Another novelty of the law is that it establishes the Effective Legal Tutelage, which sets that the person who reports a discrimination does not need to prove that. On the contrary, is the legal or physical person being denounced who should demonstrate that the discrimination has not taken place.

⁷ SURT, Bosch et al. (2006), *Spanish National Report*, ALTRA project. European Commission's Daphne II Programme to combat violence against children, young people and women (2004 - 2008). Not published.

⁸ SURT, Bosch et al. (2006), *Spanish National Report*, ALTRA project. European Commission's Daphne II Programme to combat violence against children, young people and women (2004 - 2008). Not published.

All in all, the current Spanish legal framework regarding our subject of study is characterised by an specific piece of legislation on gender violence and a law that dealing with the equality between men and women also refers to certain forms of gender violence such as sexual harassment or harassment by reason of sex.

2. Public policies on Gender Violence

Public policies at national level

As mentioned earlier, in the Spanish state the first policy actions on the field of violence against women were influenced by the women's organisations and the Declaration adopted by the *Fourth World Conference on Women* from United Nations (Beijing, 1995).

The first policy measure on this area was developed in 1983, with the creation of the **Women's Institute** (Law 16/1983, 24 October). The Women's Institute is an autonomous organism dependent on the Spanish Ministry of Work and Social Affairs. Its aim is to promote and foster gender equality and the participation of women in the political, cultural, economic and social life.

The Women's Institute shortly after its foundation, in 1984, created the first shelter for women victims of male violence.

The main tools being used by the Women's Institute to boost measures for combating discriminations against women have been the Equality Plans, which set up the objectives and actions to be developed by all stakeholders on the field of equality. The *first Equality Plan* was developed in 1987 although it was not until 1997 that an Equality Plan, the *Third Equality Plan between Men and Women* included an specific section dealing with violence. This plan was very influenced by the IV World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and, in this sense, included the principle of gender mainstreaming in all policies and dealt specifically with violence against women. In particular, the section related to gender violence stressed the aim of promoting integrated measures for preventing and eliminating violence against women; eradicating sexual harassment in the work place; and promoting measures for eliminating trafficking and exploitation of prostitution of women and female children.

In November 1997, shortly after the launch of the third Plan, an extraordinary sectorial conference on violence took place; within the framework of the conference,

it was decided to elaborate an *Action Plan against Domestic Violence*. The first one covered the period 1998-2000 and established 57 measures articulated around 6 areas of action: sensitisation, education and training, health, welfare resources, legislation and legal practice, and research. Among the activities carried out within this plan it is important to point out a research on the obstacles of women who were in shelter houses in terms of employment. For the first time in Spain, it was recognised that women victims of domestic violence could have difficulties in entering in the labour market as well as in housing⁹. Nevertheless, no deep research has been carried out so far specifically on these particular dimensions, just some researches have explored a bit further the labour consequences of those women who had a job when suffered gender violence.

The *Second Plan against Domestic Violence* was approved in May 2001 for the period 2001-2004. It kept the main measures set up in the first plan and added new ones. The four areas covered by this plan were: prevention and sensitisation measures, legislative and legal measures, welfare measures, and research¹⁰.

In 2003 the Women's Institute elaborated the *Fourth Plan for Equality between Women and Men*, for the period 2003-2006. The Plan deals with 8 priority areas, being one of them the promotion of equality in civil life. In this area, one of the aims is to develop active policies to eradicate violence against women in all its forms (women traffic, domestic violence, genital mutilation, etc.). Within this objective, the main measures foreseen are the following:

- To elaborate a Charter on rights and minimum social measures for women victims of male violence.
- To give allowances in the Social Security cotes to those enterprises that hire battered women.
- To establish additional income for those women who have to leave their residence place.

Apart from the Women's Institute, another body with an active role in policy formulation in the field of gender violence is the **Special Government Delegation against violence against women**, which was created in 2004 by the organic law 1/2004, of 28 December of *Integral Protection Law Against Gender Violence Protection Measures*. This is a body dependent of the General Secretary of Equal policies from the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, whose main aim is to formulate the public policies with relation to gender violence that develops the government

⁹ Alberdi, I & Matas, N. (2002) La violència domèstica. Informe sobre els maltractaments a Espanya. Fundació La Caixa. Barcelona.

¹⁰ MTAS (Ministry of Work Social Affairs), 2002, Revista del Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, 40.

and that comprises all the actions to guarantee the rights of the women victims of this violence.

In particular, the functions of this body are to formulate the public policies on gender violence; to foster and develop sensitisation and prevention measures; to promote the knowledge on the phenomenon of gender violence; to coordinate and collaborate with other institutions; and to evaluate the situation of gender violence.

In another sense, in March 2006 the Spanish government created the **State Observatory on Violence against Women** as an inter-ministerial organ belonging to the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs (Royal Decree 253/2006, of the 3rd of March).

This body is responsible for assessing, evaluating, collaborating with institutions, elaborating studies and reports and action proposals on the field of gender violence. The Observatory will gather information from public and private institutions on the social, health, education, judicial and police fields involved in the fight against gender violence with a view to analyse the scope of the phenomenon and its evolution. The Observatory will also evaluate the impact of the policies and measures developed with the aim of eradicating gender violence and lessen its effects.

The Observatory will send to the government and the Autonomous Communities¹¹ an annual report on the evolution of violence against women. This report will stress the needs of legal reform (if any) and evaluate the effectiveness of the measures developed.

The composition of this body is based on parity between public institutions and civil society: 13 members from social agents and civic associations on this field; and 13 members from the Public Administrations, judicial bodies and experts.

Since these last governmental bodies on the field of gender violence have been created quite recently, it will be needed to wait for some years before getting any output from them.

¹¹ Spain is politically organised in 2 main levels of government: the central one (government of the Spanish state) and the autonomous ones (17 main regions with self-government institutions called Autonomous Communities, plus 2 Autonomous cities). In some specific areas the State has got exclusive competence to legislate (established in art. 149 of the Spanish Constitution); the Autonomous Communities, on the other hand, can assume other detailed competences as well as any competence not exclusive from the State. The result, therefore, is that Autonomous Communities can have high levels of self-government.

Public policies at autonomous level: the case of Catalonia

Generally speaking, according to the political organisation of the Spanish State (see footnote 11), the Autonomous Communities can develop policies in all areas except the ones that the Spanish Constitution defines as exclusive for the State government. The field of gender equality is not an exclusive competence of the Central government and, therefore, despite the existence of national policies on this area, the Autonomous Communities can also develop their own policies and actions. Thus, the reality is that all of them have developed policies or measures to combat violence against women, some of them have created Women's Institutes at regional level and elaborated Equality plans.

In these plans violence against women is understood not only as physical abuse but also as psychological abuse, sexual violence or sexual mobbing. The Plans of Canary Islands (2003-2006) and Catalonia (2005-2007), also include in the definition of gender violence forms such as mobbing, trafficking of women, female genital mutilation, economic violence and gender violence in religions or rituals, etc¹².

In Catalonia, the Catalan Women's Institute was created in 1989 (Law 11/1989), although, subsequently, other legislation has modified it enhancing its functions. The Catalan Women's Institute is the body that designs, fosters, coordinates and evaluates women's policies and policies for women developed by the Catalan government.

Currently, the framework of women's policies in Catalonia is the *Fifth Action and Development Plan of Women's policies in Catalonia (2005-2007)*¹³. The sixth pillar of this plan is called Programme for a comprehensive approach to violence against women.

The philosophy behind this programme is the consideration that women who suffer situations of violence are not victims but survivors. The programme stresses the

¹² SURT, Mona and Packhaus (2007), Comparative report (Hungary / Germany / Spain) - Programmes within and outside of prisons for women who have suffered gender violence and for men who have perpetrated gender violence. ALTRA project. Daphne II Programme. Available at: http://www.surt.org/altra/documentos_en.html

¹³ V Action and Development Plan for women's policies in Catalonia (2005-2007). Government of Catalonia. Catalan Women's Institute. Barcelona. 2006.

need to work from the centrality of women overcoming their traumas but without forgetting their active role in the prevention of all forms of violence¹⁴.

The strategic criteria of action defined in the mentioned Programme are the following:

- to tackle violence against women from a structural approach;
- mainstreaming, coordination and inter-institutional cooperation;
- comprehensive response to the phenomenon. It is worth stressing that the programme underlines that the institutional response to violence has to come not only from social services but also from the police and health, justice, educative, cultural, employment and housing institutions, etc.;
- participation and co-responsibility;
- access and proximity in the intervention with women;
- quality of the response; and
- knowledge of the reality; the programme highlights that it is essential to obtain secure data on violence against women in Catalonia; it is mentioned the need to further research on the nature, causes and consequences of violence against women with a view to better define the prevention, detection and intervention strategies.

On the basis of these criteria, the programme defines a set of strategies and measures:

- 1) Attention: to define and develop models of comprehensive attention in all spheres with a view to respond adequately to the needs and processes of women who have suffered situations of violence. This objective includes measures such as the improvement of the help lines of attention and information, the development and improvement of the shelter houses, the guarantee of social security benefits for those women who are the sole responsible of the family, the provision of an economic contribution for housing, the facilitation of access for women to occupational training, the advancement towards the guarantees of job maintenance, the establishment of the control, surveillance and supervision of the specific systems of protection, the proper attention to migrant women (legal and illegal) suffering gender violence, the guarantee of an adequate and therapeutic treatment for the women, the promotion of specific programmes of information, support and recuperation for women suffering moral and sexual harassment, the

¹⁴ V Action and Development Plan for women's policies in Catalonia (2005-2007). Government of Catalonia. Catalan Women's Institute. Barcelona. 2006.

elaboration of a medical report on the biopsicosocial effects of women who are suffering violence processes, etc.

- 2) Coordination and cooperation: to establish the coordination and cooperation structures in all fields (social, judiciary, health, police, etc.) for the prevention, detection and intervention in all situations of violence against women.
- 3) Prevention and awareness-raising campaigns in order to promote strategies of prevention and sensitisation in both institutional and social fields, with the aim of advancing towards no tolerance to violence against women and to a culture of peace.
- 4) Research and knowledge of the reality: to increase the knowledge on the phenomenon and its causes and consequences with a view to better intervene. In this field, the Programme underlines the need to design instruments to register specifically all kinds of gender violence; to unify criteria, instruments and variables in the collection of information; to compile, assess and analyse all the data related to violence against women in Catalonia; to design indicators to evaluate, from a quantitative and qualitative approach, the attention/support given to women suffering gender violence; to investigate the explaining factors of gender violence, the difficulties that women face, the impact of violence in women's health (physical and psychical), etc.

On the basis of these measures, it is important to highlight some points:

- The Programme defines a set of measures for specific kinds of gender violence. In this sense, the measures deal specifically with domestic violence, sexual aggressions, moral and sexual harassment, victims of exploitation mafias, traditional practices that are harmful for the health and sexuality of women and minors, and violence derived from armed conflicts. Thus, the approach of the Programme is very broad and aims to deal with all kinds of gender violence with the objective to reach a culture of peace in social and personal relationships.
- In one of the measures of the strategy of attention, the Programme refers to the biopsicosocial effects on women, which is an innovative element since usually the attention has only dealt with physical and psychological effects (which are of course very important but not the only ones), without giving enough attention to other effects beyond these.
- In the set of measures contained in the strategy of research and knowledge of the reality, the Programme stresses the need to unify criteria for a better data collection on this issue as well as the

importance to further research on the explaining factors of and effects of violence. However, when talking about the effects, in this case just the impact of violence in health is mentioned, forgetting other effects affecting other spheres (social networks, employment, family relations, housing, etc.).

In Catalonia, the services of attention and support for women suffering gender violence provided by the Women's Institute that are currently available are the following:

- Help line working 24 hours, 365 days par year. It is a free and confidential service that offers information on the existing resources and counselling about the possible actions to undertake in a situation of violence.
- A face-to-face and free service to orientate and counsel women and derive them to other specific resources.
- A face-to-face and free service to give legal assistance and counselling to women.

However, there are other centres of support and counselling run by NGOs available for women suffering gender violence in Catalonia.

3. Main official studies on the issue of gender violence

In Spain, the first official studies¹⁵ developed in the field of gender violence date of the 90's and these were mainly focused on domestic violence; progressively, though, public institutions have broadened the framework of analysis and have paid attention to other kinds of gender violence apart from domestic violence.

In this section, the main researches carried out by public authorities at both national and regional/Autonomous Community level on this field will be briefly explored. Since the work being done by public institutions in this area (above all regarding the study of the incidence of this phenomenon and its approach), has been very fruitful during the last years, here, with a view to focus the attention on those aspects more related to the GVEI's field of research, the studies being covered in this section will be those that have to deal, to a greater or lesser extent, with effects of gender violence and indicators.

¹⁵ Official understood as those studies carried out or ordered, and published by public authorities

National level

The first research published by the Spanish Women's Institute on the issue of gender violence was "***Violence against women in the domestic sphere***¹⁶", and dates of 1991. This research was based on telephonic interviews to 20.552 women in Spain. From the ones that responded affirmatively to have been victims of domestic violence and accepted to be further interviewed, 395 interviews were carried out. The first part of the fieldwork focused on analysing the profile of women victims of domestic violence whereas the second one concentrated on the kinds of abuses/battering, the consequences, the circumstances, the causes of the abuse according to the women, etc. When talking about the consequences of domestic violence, it refers to the psychological, affective and physical effects such as anxiety, depression, headaches, insomnia, eating disorders, lack of motivation to have contact with family and friends and insecurity. Therefore, the only effect mentioned beyond the physical and psychological ones is the one related to the loss of contact with family members and friends because of the impact of violence. Although it does not explore this dimension further, it sheds light on the effects that violence against women can have on social and civic life and nets of women.

This research was the preamble of the current macro-survey that the Spanish Women's Institute develops every 3-4 years. This macro-survey is the broadest and most important tool available in Spain to assess the reality of the phenomenon of violence against women in the familiar sphere, by quantifying its dimension, going deeply into the profile of the women and the consequences of the violence, etc.; it provides data comparable not only among the Autonomous Communities but also across the time (within the several editions of the research). However, it is necessary to be cautious since the complexity of such a sensitive phenomenon cannot be captured in a survey, in particular for the biases that might take place when developing telephone interviews on such a sensitive issue.

The last macro-survey dates from July 2006 and is called "***Third macro-survey on the violence against women***¹⁷". The aims of this study are: to quantify the violent acts against women in the domestic sphere; to get to know the social and personal features of women who have suffered gender violence; and to assess the physical and psychological consequences of the psychological abuse and battering. The main conclusions of this study are the following:

¹⁶ Instituto de la Mujer (1999), Macroencuesta sobre la Violencia contra las Mujeres en el ámbito doméstico. MTAS. Madrid.

¹⁷ Instituto de la Mujer (2006), Tercera Macroencuesta sobre la Violencia contra las Mujeres. Informe de resultados. MTAS. Madrid.

- The persistence of the situation of psychological abuse or battering. 60% of the women suffering domestic violence have suffered it for more than 5 years.
- The most part of the violent acts at domestic level are perpetuated by the couple.
- The 3.6% of the women residing in Spain have declared themselves as having suffered domestic violence. The 9.6% of the women residing in Spain are suffering any kind of psychological abuse or battering although they do not recognise it (they have been considered, for their responses, as battered/abused technically).
- Until the age period of 45-65, the higher the age, the higher the proportion of battered/psychologically abused women.
- The main effects of domestic violence at psychological and physical level are: need to weep, changes of mood, anguish, loss of sexual appetite, irritability, tiredness, insomnia, headache, back pain, flues, etc. Furthermore, women who have suffered domestic violence experience to a greater extent than general population these symptoms.

In 1999, the Women's Institute published two studies on this field: ***"Domestic violence: its impact on physical and mental health of women"¹⁸*** and ***"The daily violences when the victims are women"¹⁹***. The first one was based on a psychological approach and underlined and analysed the psychological effects of violence, mainly post-traumatic stress (PTS).

The second one claimed that statistics and available data on domestic violence did not reflect the whole magnitude of the problem. Thus, in late 90's, the lack of data and difficulty for quantifying the magnitude of the phenomenon was already an issue at stake. This study, based on both qualitative fieldwork with women and secondary sources, pointed out the effects of partner violence in four dimensions: psychological (depression, anxiety, insecurity, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, etc.), physical (haemorrhage, eating disorders, muscle pain, etc.), labour (difficulties to find a job or bothering from the men perpetrators during working hours) and in the social, familiar and intimate relationships (breaking up of family contact, difficulties in maintaining other sexual or affective relationships).

¹⁸ Villavicencio, P. Sebastián, J. (1999), *Violencia doméstica: su impacto en la salud física y mental de las mujeres*. Instituto de la Mujer. Madrid.

¹⁹ Martín Serrano, E. and M. (1999), *Las violencias cotidianas cuando las víctimas son las mujeres*. MTAS. Instituto de la Mujer. Madrid.

The book also put attention on the violence that women suffer in the workplace, in particular: sexual harassment. With relation to the consequences of this kind of gender violence for women, the study states that it provokes:

- Psychological consequences: sadness, depression, fears, anxiety, loss of self-esteem, ...
- Physical effects: headache, insomnia, tiredness, ...
- Labour consequences for the women: absenteeism, low productivity, low concentration, reduction of promotion opportunities,...
- Labour consequences for the enterprise: loss of workers, deterioration of labour relations, reduction of economic efficacy,...
- Social effects: stigmatisation, obstacle for gender equality.
- Interaction consequences: affective problems, loss of confidence in family, partner, men...

Thus, this study points out some of the effects of violence against women (in this case, domestic violence and sexual harassment) that take place in diverse spheres of women's life. The most known and studied are the physical and psychological effects, but this early research already claims effects in other dimensions such as labour, social and intimate relationships, etc. It is also interesting to note that the consequences underlined caused by both domestic violence and sexual harassment are very similar, which is an element to keep in mind.

In 2001 the Women's Institute published its first research (and the fifth in Spain) on the field of sexual harassment. It was called "**Sexual harassment in the workplaces**"²⁰ and put its attention to the concept of sexual harassment and the factors that favour it, without approaching the effects that it might cause.

In 2006 the Spanish Women's Institute published its second research on this field, "**Sexual harassment to women in labour sphere**"²¹, based on quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This study frames sexual harassment within 3 axis: violence against women, sexist labour environment and power abuse. The main aspects being researched in this piece of work are the women's attitudes to sexual harassment; the understanding, conceptualisation and delimitation of sexual harassment; the incidence and profile of this type of violence; the situations and the itinerary of sexual harassment in Spain; women's, social/environmental and enterprise reactions and response to sexual harassment; the perpetrators; and the repercussions of this kind of violence against women.

²⁰ Alemany, C; Luc, V.; Mozo, C. (2001), El acoso sexual en los lugares de trabajo. Instituto de la Mujer. Madrid.

²¹ Instituto de la Mujer (2006), El acoso sexual de las mujeres en el ámbito laboral. Estudios e investigaciones. MTAS.

When talking about the effects, this study, in contrast with the previous one, only refers explicitly to physical and psychological aspects. At some point it is mentioned that sexual harassment might lead to a change of job but it is not further explored. Concerning the physical and psychological effects, the research mentions apathy, low self-esteem, palpitations, nightmares related with the job, insomnia, etc.

Autonomous Community level

Most of the Women's Institutes in the Autonomous Communities have published studies on the issue of gender violence. Here, however, we will refer to the studies carried out in Catalonia and to one research very relevant in the field of indicators and costs of domestic violence published by the Women's Institute of Andalusia.

In Catalonia, the Catalan Women's Institute published in 1992 **"Silenced experiences: interviews to victimised women"**²², a research based on qualitative interviews to women who had suffered domestic violence. It was one of the first official studies approaching this issue and bringing into light women's experiences of violence in Spain. Although its results nowadays may be of not much interest, since the current approaches to this phenomenon are different, it is important to refer to this research as one of the first ones that shed light on the phenomenon and experiences of violence suffered by women and recognised that violence was a consequence of the position of inequality of women in society.

In the field of indicators, the Catalan Women's Institute has recently published **"A proposal of new indicators from the feminist experience"**²³ that suggest new gender indicators on diverse fields and one of them is the "access to a life free of violence". This publication aims to create a system of indicators that takes into account the situation of the women in diverse areas, by recovering the female experience.

In the area of "access to a life free of violence" the authors claim that the right to live in safety is directly related with the right to life. Thus, developing the right to life means to have the physical, psychological and social conditions of subsistence for maintaining an equilibrium that allows to fully enjoy the rest of rights. The authors relate these conditions with the safety and, therefore, argue that to live in safety

²² Altarriba, F. Vivències silenciades : entrevistes a dones víctimitzades . Barcelona: Institut Català de la Dona, 1992.

²³ Carrasco, C. (2006) Estadístiques sota sospita. Proposta de nous indicadors des de l'experiència femenina. Institut Català de les Dones. Barcelona.

means to live without violence. Women are more exposed to violence, specially in the family sphere. However, violence against women affects all spheres, public and private, and its causes should not be sought in the family relations, but on the patriarchal structure, in a deep-rooted cultural model with an unequal distribution of power between men and women. The visibility of this violence is still very partial and incomplete. Thus, the proposal of indicators in this dimension aims, at a first stage, to make visible the situations of violence (all forms of violence) and, at a second stage, to incorporate elements that foresee the lack of safety of women in a wider sense, covering the welfare, the freedom, the fullness of rights, the possibilities to access to an own project of life.

The indicators being proposed are:

- *Auto-perception of violence*: number of women who declare that have suffered violence, independently that they have made an accusation. Variables of desegregation: origin, age groups, existence of sons/daughters, social level and geographic distribution.
- *Extension of violences against women*: number and percentage of women subjected to a violence situation, both of women who define themselves as battered and the ones that are in an objective situation of violence but who do not recognise their situation. Variables of desegregation: origin, age groups, existence of sons/daughters, social level and geographic distribution.
- *Degree of satisfaction with the penal and police system*: percentage of women who manifest satisfaction in their experience with the police system and the Justice Administration. Variables of desegregation: origin, age groups, social level and geographic distribution.
- *Detection of the emotional and physical abuses by the primary attention centres; social and health services*: number of women who suffer abuses and physical violence detected indirectly in the primary attention centres. Variables of desegregation: origin, age groups, social level and geographic distribution.
- *Victimisation at midterm*: proportion of women who do not suffer consequences caused by violence, after four years of having presented the first accusation. This indicator aims to show the secondary victimisation, illustrating the difficulties of the legal system for satisfying women who have suffered gender violence, and the functioning of social services for repairing the damage suffered by women and achieving their integral recuperation. Variables of desegregation: origin, age groups, social level and geographic distribution.
- *Perception of violence depending the neighbourhood*: percentage of women who declare to feel safe in the neighbourhood where they live. Variables of desegregation: origin, age groups, social level and geographic distribution.

- *Number of entry phones in the buildings and visibility of the halls:* percentage of sexual aggressions committed against women by unknown people in the urban buildings with lack of safety in the halls without entry phones out of the women aggressed in the public space. Variables of desegregation: origin, age groups, social level, neighbourhoods and time of the day.
- *Violence against women in the public space:* proportion of sexual aggressions committed in women in the corridors of the underground, in the bus stops, in the parkings, in the parks or in the urbanised areas. Variables of desegregation: origin, age groups, social level, neighbourhoods and time of the day.

At the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, in 2004 the Women's Institute of Andalusia published a very innovative study on the **“Social and economic costs of violence against women in Andalusia”²⁴**. The authors claim that domestic violence engages women to a process of social exclusion with an important capacity of horizontal propagation through the time and which affects other agents.

This piece of work is relevant because it constitutes the first research in Spain that investigates, from a multidisciplinary approach, the effects of domestic violence in several spheres of women's life (physical, psychological, social, labour, etc.) by getting the information directly from the victims and not just theoretically as it had been done so far. This research is based on almost 300 structured interviews to women suffering domestic violence.

The research, therefore, goes beyond the physical and psychological effects to women, since it investigates the social effects of violence as well (in fact, the effects are pointed out not just for the women but also for the sons/daughters, third persons, employers and general society), as a preamble for quantifying the economic and social costs of violence for Andalusia (this is done by building a system of indicators).

The effects of domestic violence for women that this research points out can be structured in the following dimensions:

- *Physical health:* the main consequences for the physical health of women are:
 - Wounds such as cuts or others in hidden parts of the body; physical symptoms such as headache, lumbar and abdominal pains, fibromyalgia;

²⁴ Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer, Deloitte&Touche (2004), Los costes sociales y económicos de la violencia contra las mujeres en Andalucía (Estudios 20). Sevilla.

- gynaecological problems such as irregular menstruations, pelvic pain and pre-menstrual syndrome;
 - Higher vulnerability of women to diseases.
 - Impact on the reproductive health: sexual autonomy and non desirable pregnancies; violence leads to pregnancies of high risk and complications.
- *Psychological*: the main effects detected in women in the psychological field are:
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): re-experiencing the traumatic fact by remembering it with unease, dreaming about it, etc.
 - Anxiety disorders: phobic and obsessive.
 - Affective disorders: major depression.
 - Sleep disorders: disorder of the rhythm, insomnia, awakenings during the night, etc.
 - Psychosomatic disorders: presence of a disease that might have been caused or may be influenced by psychological factors.
 - Somatoform disorders: the woman presents physic symptoms that can mean a physical alteration but no proofs of this can be found. However, there is positive evidence that the symptomatology is related to psychological conflicts.
 - Sexual disorders: changes in the sexual appetite, phobia, absence of orgasm, pain, etc.
 - Eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia.
 - Addictions like alcohol or drugs.
 - Deficits in the social behaviour: loss of communication abilities, problems of relation with the others, difficulties in ordinary conflicts resolution, etc.
 - *Labour Sphere*: the consequences of domestic violence in the labour sphere can affect both active and non active women. The most studied ones have been those for active women. The main effects for them are:
 - Difficulties of access to education, life-long learning and employment because of the health and psychological conditions of women. This conditions the opportunities of professional promotion.
 - Absenteeism.
 - Low productivity: domestic violence reduces the performance at work due to the deterioration of health and psychological state.
 - Disabilities that impede to carry out some tasks associated with the job position. This means that the women need to be relocated to another job.
 - Sick leaves.

- Reception of threats at the workplace from the men perpetrator.
 - Problems of relationships with the inmates.
 - Increase of the probabilities of having a labour accident.
 - All the aforementioned effects might lead to a loss of the job for the women and to a reduction of the employability.
- *Social and economical dimensions:* the main effects of domestic violence for women, at social and economic level are the following:
- Loss of social relations and nets: isolation. Loneliness.
 - The fact of growing apart from the family or loss of the contact with family members.
 - Loss of relations with the neighbours.
 - Economic dependence, which shows very significant when the women split up the relationship.
 - Loss of the housing, which implies loss of relationships at a communitarian level, isolation, anxiety, etc.
 - Institutional dependence.
 - Loss of quality of life.
 - Decline of the social and political participation of the women (associations, sports clubs, cultural activities, school parents associations, voting).

The main outcomes of this research are: on the one hand, a system of indicators on the seriousness and prevalence of domestic violence, impact of violence to the victims, risk factors, social and institutional response, access and use of the services targeting women, and perception and social attitudes. On the other hand, an estimation of the social and economic costs of domestic violence for Andalusia society. In particular, domestic violence against women has got an annual cost for Andalusia society of 2.356,8 millions of euros (direct and indirect costs).

4. Key non-official studies on the field of gender violence

Since late 90's and, particularly, from 2000 onwards, the research carried out in Spain in the field of gender violence has been very extensive. Factors such as the fact that the phenomenon of gender violence came to the political agenda and started to be considered a public problem, the worrying extent of the number of victims of this violence and the complexity of the phenomenon might have influenced the development of such a vast work. For the purpose of this report, only

those studies that approach the effects of gender violence and that bring about new insights to the phenomenon will be mentioned and briefly described.

Most of the non-official studies published in Spain on this field approach the issue of effects of violence against women referring only to the psychological dimension, outlining the Battered women's syndrome, the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. This is the case of the studies **“Domestic violence. Report about mistreatments to women in Spain²⁵”**, **“Violence against women in the familiar sphere²⁶”** or **“Violence: Tolerance zero²⁷”**.

Corsi in the book **“Mistreatment and abuse in the domestic sphere²⁸”** points out the consequences of violence in the family context in several dimensions such as employment (absenteeism, reduction of performance at work), health (physical harm, mental effects and lethal consequences) or economic (increase of the expenditure in health, education, legal services, etc.).

The Centro Reina Sofía para el Estudio de la Violencia²⁹ in 2003 published two reports on the issue of violence against women, **Violence against women. Current world situation³⁰** and **International Report 2003. Violence against women in partner relationships³¹**. Both reports expose the consequences that violence can have on women's life and at social level. The first report, apart from outlining psychological and physical problems derived from the suffering of gender violence, also claims the social effects of the phenomenon for both women and society. The ones for women relate to isolation, secondary victimisation (guilt), loss of efficiency and decline of the performance at work (delays, absenteeism, difficulties of concentration), and the ones for society refer to the costs of health, police and legal services associated with the consequences of gender violence.

The second report approaches the consequences of gender violence from a new perspective: the personal and socio-economic costs of violence. With regards to the personal costs, the report stresses the deterioration of quality of life of women, the

²⁵ Alberdi, I & Matas, N. (2002) La violència domèstica. Informe sobre els maltractaments a Espanya. Fundació La Caixa. Barcelona.

²⁶ Benítez Jiménez, M.J. (2004) Violencia contra la mujer en el ámbito familiar : cambios sociales y legislativos. Madrid : Edisofer.

²⁷ Alberdi, I. Rojas Marcos L. (2005) Violència: tolerància zero. Obra Social “La Caixa”. Barcelona.

²⁸ Corsi, J. (coord.) (2003) Maltrato y abuso en el ámbito doméstico. Paidós. Barcelona.

²⁹ In English: Centre for the Study of Violence Queen Sofía.

³⁰ Centro Reina Sofía (ed.), 2000, Violencia contra la mujer (situación actual mundial). Serie Documentos (vol.2)

³¹ Centro Reina Sofía (ed.), 2002, Informe Internacional 2003. Violencia contra la mujer en las relaciones de pareja (estadísticas y legislación) Serie Documentos (vol. 5)

increase of women's vulnerability towards diseases and psychopathologies, the increase of mortality, the physical harms, non desirable pregnancies, etc.

Concerning the socio-economic costs, the report refers to the ones related to health, police, legal and social services (also pointed out in the first report) and the ones regarding productivity and employment such as the increase of sick leaves, the reduction of women's participation in the labour market, the reduction of work performance, absenteeism or loss of work, which can have effects on women but also in society.

An empirical study published in 2006, "**About the mistreatment to women**³²", in their sample of 163 women found out that, as a consequence of violence:

- 52% of battered women experienced psychological effects, such as apathy, fears, depression, mistrust, anxiety, low self-esteem.
- 33% of battered women had received medical treatment/assistance (psychological, psychiatric, pharmacological, stay at hospital and others).
- 9% of battered women suffered physical effects such as blows, scars, burns, tiredness, nightmares.
- 2% of battered women had effects in employment such as inability to work, absenteeism and low productivity.
- 2% of battered women experienced social effects such as limitations in her social relationships, isolation, difficulties to talk, etc.
- 2% left experienced other effects

A thesis carried out by Espinar and being published in 2006 in Spain, "**Gender violence and processes of impoverishment**³³" offers an innovative and interesting approach to gender violence and its effects in the sense of impoverishment in women. It claims that gender violence can become an impoverishment factor and mean an inflection point in the life trajectory of many women in this sense. Understanding processes of impoverishment as "those that impede people to achieve personal fulfilment as human beings in all their dimensions and potentialities" (translation of Espinar, 2006, p. 81), the author concludes that in the core of relationships characterised by frequent physical violence, sexual aggressions, relationships of subordination, control, fears and domination, victims will have serious difficulties for covering their needs of well-being, safety and identity, with a consequent damage in the development of their

³² Morillas, Cueva, Lorenzo y otras. (2006) Sobre el maltrato a la mujer. Una serie de 338 casos. Madrid. Editorial Dykinson.

³³ Espinar Ruiz, E. (2006) Violencia de género y procesos de empobrecimiento. Córdoba. Servicios de publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba.

potentialities. As a consequence of violence and its mechanisms of exploitation or marginalization, therefore, women can be pushed to poverty or social exclusion.

Espinar carries out a qualitative and a quantitative research; the findings regarding the effects of gender violence conclude that:

- the processes of violence in which women have been trapped meant an important point in their life trajectories.
- the effects in terms of health are diverse: from anguish, sadness, depression, changes of mood, insomnia, tiredness, to nervousness, loss of self-esteem, carelessness of one's care, suicide tendencies, or reproductive health. This last element includes, both the violation of women's reproductive rights (control of her reproductive capacity) and the transmission of diseases and risks related to pregnancy.
- the effects in terms of impoverishment³⁴ are significant; the consequences of violence in their health, for instance, have an impact on women in terms of impoverishment since the fulfilment of some basic needs is threaten, their rights to enjoy a decent life, well-being, safety and identity are being limited and, as a result, the development of their capacities is reduced. Besides, gender violence limits the autonomy and freedom of women. Economic violence also has an impact in processes of impoverishment of women since they have no possibilities of satisfying the most basic needs of themselves and, usually, of their children;
- those women who split up the violent relationship may suffer even more severe effects than the ones pointed out; The fact of ending the relationship itself can mean an increase of the lack of safety for the woman, since in many cases violence after a separation continues or even becomes more dangerous. Women perceive this threat and their fears increase with the separation. Furthermore, Espinar claims that the psychological and physical effects being suffered during the relationship increase after the separation due to the fears and stress.
- separation can mean an starting point for impoverishment processes. The combination of the precarious physical and psychological state of women suffering gender violence, their vulnerability after the separation, the need to start from zero (move to a new place, break of social and family nets, etc) and the need to develop strategies of survival taking into account their usual situation of economic shortage, family responsibilities, deficiencies in the

³⁴ In our view, the term impoverishment used in this research is closer to the concept of processes of social exclusion rather than to poverty. We understand poverty more in an economic sense, whereas social exclusion goes beyond the economic dimension, considering also other conditions that impede a person to enjoy of individual autonomy and rights to participate fully to social, comunitarian, economic, educative,... spheres of life.

social services, labour difficulties and physical and mental state, may lead to a situation of impoverishment.

5. Main official statistics collected at national level

In Spain, since 1983 the governmental institution responsible for gathering data on gender violence has been the *Ministry of Home Affairs*, although the *Women's Institute* has been the body presenting these data. In this sense, traditionally, the source of data used by the Women's Institute has been the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, since 1999, in order to have more complete data, the Women's Institute elaborates its own statistics on the basis of the information provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the media, the Special Government Delegation against violence against women and the judicial statistics.

Until February 2002 the statistics only gathered those cases of physical abuse within the family and assaults. But since then it was decided, on the one hand, to increase the penal infractions that can be committed within the family but that till then were not included in statistics; and, on the other hand, to consider other forms of relationship between victim and perpetrator in order to cover those offences that might take place once the relationship was finished (the current list of relations are husband/wife/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend and ex husband/wife/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend).

The statistics are gathered around the following topics:

- **Accusations:** it gathers accusations from the partner or ex-partner in relation to the type of relation among them, legal offence, nationality, age, Autonomous Communities, ...
- **Deaths:** it gathers dead women because of gender violence, killed by their partners or ex-partners according to their relation with the criminal, par Autonomous Communities, nationality, age, month of the death...
- **Macro-survey "violence against women"**³⁵: it gathers the percentage of battered women in relation to the age group, the Autonomous Communities, the dimension of the place of residence, civil state, level of education, level of income, labour situation, etc. It also collects the physical and psychological symptoms suffered by the women.
- **Sexual violence:** it gathers the known crimes of sexual abuse, harassment, and aggression by Autonomous Communities, months and type of crime; the

³⁵ See section 3, page 15 for further information.

known crimes against sexual freedom and integrity within the family scope by sex and minor age of the victim, and by relation victim-perpetrator; and the victims of prostitution and human trafficking by nationality, Civil Police demarcation and persons involved as actors in prostitution in Civil Police demarcations.

- **Welfare and support resources:** it shows the attention and support centres for women victims of gender violence par Autonomous Communities and number of users; the information or counselling centres par Autonomous Communities and par number of users.
- **Judicial:** it shows the number of protection orders demanded and conceded par Autonomous Communities; people prosecuted and sentenced of domestic violence par nationality and sex; and number of accusations, denounced persons and victims of domestic violence par sex.

The *State Observatory on Violence against Women* and the *General Council of Judicial Power* also gather statistics containing data on domestic violence. In particular, the statistics collect data on women victims of mistreating in the family sphere par provinces, women victims of mistreating by their partner or ex-partner par provinces and dead women in the family sphere par provinces.

The *Ministry of Health and Consumption*, in the National Health Survey in Spain, since 2006 has introduced a specific section on Aggressions, which covers if the person has suffered any kind of aggression or mistreating and if yes, where it has taken place (workplace, home, sports centre, street, education centre, etc) and who has perpetuated it (partner, unknown or known person different from the partner). The survey also includes a section on Discrimination, in order to find out if the person has been discriminated, has not been allowed to do something, has been felt inferior or has been bothered by reason of sex, ethnic group, sexual orientation, etc. and in which spheres (in the workplace, at home, in hospitals, searching for job, in public places).

Thus, in Spain there is not a centralised collection of statistics on gender violence. Diverse authorities such as the police, the judicial authorities, the Women's Institute and the Ministry of Health gather data on the issue but these are not fully comparable and do not cover the real extent of the problem since, for instance, the data coming from the Police or the judicial authorities only reflect the cases where the woman has made an accusation and it is known that many women suffer gender violence in silence since they do not dare to go to the Police. These statistics, therefore, only collect those cases of gender violence being criminalized.

Furthermore, there are seldom statistics on the effects, just the one from the macro-survey on violence against women from the Women's Institute referring to physical and psychological symptoms.

Finally, the statistics available only collect data on domestic violence and on sexual violence (gathered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs); gender violence in the workplace is only considered in form of aggression and discrimination in the National Health Survey, but without going in depth since it does not detail the type of discrimination or aggression being suffered.

6. Concluding remarks

The social, political and policy recognition of violence against women and the commitment to fight against it in the Spanish state cannot be understood without referring to the role of women's organisations, since late 70's, and the Beijing Declaration of the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Both elements are in the roots of the *Integral Protection Law Against Gender Violence*, which entered into force in 2004. This law meant an unquestionable step forward in Spain since it was the first time that a legal regulation incorporated the term gender violence (till then the term being used was domestic violence) and related this phenomenon with the situation of gender inequality, which places women in a vulnerable spot for suffering multiple forms of violence. Thus, the law outlines that women receive violence for the sole reason of being women. In addition, gender violence is understood in the law in a broad sense, since it refers to any act of physical or psychological violence, including aggression to sexual freedom, threats, coercions or the arbitrary privation of freedom.

The approval of this law, however, was not free from criticisms and polemic. In this sense, the more conservative sectors claimed that the law discriminated men. Even a female judge presented an appeal to the Constitutional Court claiming that the law violated the article 14 of the Spanish Constitution, which establishes that *Spanish citizens are equal in front of the law and that no discrimination for reason of birth, race, sex, religion or other personal or social condition or circumstance can exist*. These reactions show that in Spain there is a part of the society that is still reluctant to admit the existence of gender inequalities and deal with them.

With this law, women who suffer gender violence have access to a more integral protection and attention. In this sense, for instance, apart from legal protection, attention services for women suffering gender violence are thought to deal with

consequences of violence beyond the physical and psychological ones. In this way, the law, without lessening significance to the health aspects, stresses the importance of tackling the impact that gender violence has in the social and labour spheres. Thus, it foresees measures to deal with employment issues (changing of work schedules, absenteeism, specific employment plans, etc.), housing and social security rights and benefits.

However, it is too early to assess the development and functioning of the provisions and mechanisms foreseen in this law. The provisions “in paper” are very valuable but it is necessary to wait for more time to assess if the law, in practice, works properly. In fact, there have already been some criticisms in this sense, coming from the judicial sector or third sector organisations.

In the field of public policies, the Spanish Women’s Institute, created in 1984, is the main body to promote and foster gender equality and, therefore, also combat gender violence and discriminations. The Institute has been elaborating successive plans on gender equality and against domestic violence.

At the Autonomous Community level, the Catalan Women’s Institute has issued the *Fifth Action and Development Plan of Women’s Policies in Catalonia (2005-2007)*, which has a programme (sixth pillar) focusing on violence against women. Within the strategies defined under the programme, it is stressed the need to offer women a comprehensive attention in all spheres and considers the importance of biopsicosocial effects of gender violence. However, the strategy of research, despite underlying the main areas that should be further investigated such as indicators or unification of criteria, tools and variables for data collection, just refers to the need to further study the impact of violence in women’s health (physical and psychological), losing the comprehensive and broad rationale that is claimed when talking about attention.

With regards to the main researches and studies on the field of gender violence in Spain, it is important to stress that:

- The macro-survey on violence against women (from the Spanish Women’s Institute) is an important tool that allows us to assess the extent of this phenomenon and improve the knowledge on the type of abuses and the profile of abused/battered women. However, it only refers to the physical and psychological consequences of domestic violence for women. Therefore, it would be desirable to broaden the scope of analysis and introduce effects on

other dimensions. These would provide very valuable data to better understand and prevent the phenomenon.

- An study investigating the effects of violence against women and sexual harassment in the workplace³⁶ revealed that the consequences of both types of gender violence for women are very similar.
- Many studies based on secondary data refer not only to the physical and psychological effects but also to the labour ones. However, this dimension is less studied in the researches based on fieldwork with women.
- There are still many gaps in the study of the effects of gender violence in spheres like social and political participation, relations with men, social and family nets and economic. Thus, for being able to provide integral responses to women who have suffered gender violence, these dimensions should be further researched.
- Some recent researches relate gender violence with processes of social exclusion and impoverishment as one of its effects. This approach shows, therefore, the brutal and multidimensional impact that gender violence can have on women's life. This area is still little studied but the results obtained so far by means of the fieldwork are quite stunning.

In the field of statistics, in Spain there is not a unique body that centralises the collection of statistics on gender violence but diverse authorities gathering fragmented and not completed data on the phenomenon. Furthermore, these data are not always comparable and mostly collect the cases of gender violence (only domestic and sexual violence) that have been criminalized. Moreover, only the Macro-Survey of the Women's Institute collects data on the effects of gender violence but this dimension should be strengthened much more since this survey just refers to physical and psychological consequences of violence. As a result of these difficulties, statistics available in Spain offer a partial picture of the whole phenomenon.

To conclude, it is undeniable that nowadays in Spain the situation of women suffering gender violence, in terms of social, policy and legal recognition, juridical protection and social attention is much better than ever. However, the extent of the phenomenon is still very worrying and much effort is needed to combat violence against women, to prevent it and to support women who have suffered it. In this sense, it is necessary to develop the provisions foresee in the Integral Law, to continue working on collecting more complete and comparable statistics, to further

³⁶ Martín Serrano, E. and M. (1999), *Las violencias cotidianas cuando las víctimas son las mujeres*. MTAS. Instituto de la Mujer. Madrid.

investigate this issue and its multidimensional effects on women, to build indicators to capture the whole dimension of the phenomenon, etc.