
Divide between Men and Women

**Collection
Social Divides**

Jordi Sevilla
Belén Santa Cruz
Diana Ortega
Economists

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Translations:
Debbie Smirthwaite
Graphic design:
César Jara

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This issue forms part of the Collection “Social Divides”,
which is made up of the following publications:

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- **The Divide between Rich and Poor**
- **The Divide between Men and Women**
- **The Divide between the Young and the Elderly**
- **The Divide between the Rural World and the Urban World**
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- **The Divide between Analogical and Digital**

1

Spain's gender gap: significantly reduced, but work still required

Key points

- 1** The mass mobilisations calling for equality between women and men are the best and most faithful reflection of the gender gap that is manifest the world over. Despite the progress made in recent decades, Spain is still a long way from achieving real and effective gender equality; a profound fracture still persists which urges analysis if Spain is to aspire to being the fair and equal country so demanded by Spanish civil society. In this sense, a feminist wave is currently sweeping the world and growing in strength: "feminism 4.0" (according to the term coined by Nuria Varela in her book *Feminismo 4.0. La cuarta ola*). This feminism is proposing important challenges, such as putting an end to the opportunity cost, in economic and talent terms, of the gender gap, finding a new space for coexistence and ensuring that society advances towards a new egalitarian reality.
- 2** The main international bodies recognise the progress, in gender equality terms, that Spain has made in recent years, without ceasing to highlight aspects needing improvement. Following the pandemic, in the year 2021, we have moved from being in the eighth position worldwide to 14th (ninth if we reduce the sphere of analysis to Western Europe and North America, while in the pre-pandemic we occupied the sixth) of the 156 countries included in the Global Gender Gap Report in 2021. This study, which has analysed the gender gaps in 153 countries since 2006, has shown Iceland to be the best performing country for more than 10 years. This report highlights the need to introduce improvements in the spheres of education; wage equality and incomes; the presence of women in management posts; reconciliation between personal, working, and family life; and the recognition of the care economy and other, nonremunerated activities.
- 3** One of the most notorious gaps in this area is manifest in the labour market, where there are prominently high unemployment rates among women and employment precarity rates among the general population, as well as a wage gap that borders 22%. Similarly notorious is the so-called "glass ceiling": women barely occupy between 12% and 18% of senior management posts in business. In March 2021 we learned that in 2020, IBEX 35 companies reached an average presence of 31.17% of women on their boards of directors, exceeding overall the recommendation of 30% marked for that year by the Spain's National Securities Market Commission (CNMV), which regulates the Spanish securities markets.
- 4** Equally obvious is the gap linked to time reconciliation, motherhood, and the so-called "care economy". Reconciliation between private, work, and family life is a problem that usually holds back women's professional careers. This gap increases with the passing of the years and motherhood appears to aggravate it: among the female population aged from 25 to 29 years, without descendants, the gender gap is at its lowest rate (14.1%), whereas in a subsequent phase, when members of this group have children, the rate rises to 17.5%. According to data from the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security

and Migrations, coinciding with the strong socio-economic impact caused by covid-19 in the year 2020, the number of women requesting leave for childcare fell from 93% to 87.17% of the total of leave granted that year. This reduction could be one of the consequences of the strong economic crisis that followed the healthcare crisis in the country. Women, furthermore, devoted double the time that men did to nonremunerated activities, which represents 67% of nonremunerated production in Spain. If non-professional work in care were formalised, it would be equivalent to over 977,000 full-time employees per year, with an economic potential of 7,812 million euros, according to the study *Coste de oportunidad de la brecha de género en la conciliación* (Opportunity cost of the gender gap in time reconciliation) by the ClosinGap platform, spearheaded by Merck, one of the major corporations behind this platform.

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- 5 The gender gap culminates in the highest rates of female poverty and economic vulnerability, especially among groups such as young women, immigrant women, and single-parent families. Added to this, furthermore, is the insufficient and inefficient social public expenditure aimed at families and children, as pointed out by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for Spain.
 - 6 With a view to the future, the current dynamics of the masculinization and feminization of determined professions are concerning, as well as the gender gaps in education and among graduates in new technologies and in science, technology, engineering and mathematical (STEM) disciplines. Thus, for example, in the sphere of artificial intelligence and on an international scale, barely 22% of its professionals are women. With regard to another great challenge, climate change, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in

its study [Gender-based violence and environment linkages](#), alerts that it is women and girls who, potentially, will most suffer the negative effects of the climate emergency.

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- 7 Overcoming the gap between women and men is a question of social justice, people's dignity, and democratic quality. However, furthermore, it is key for social wellbeing and for the country's social and economic development, given that it enables use to be made of 100% of its potential and talent. Is Spain willing to let half of the population's talent go to waste? It is evident that this potential should not be neglected; for this reason, this report includes a range of future proposals, extracted from a debate with women experts on the subject, to contribute solutions that help to overcome this gap.

Key figures

22%

The wage gap between women and men in Spain stands at 22%.

87%

Some 87% of leave for childcare is requested by women.

2.5

Women devote 2.5 hours more per day to the home and family than men.

35%

The average contributory pension received by men is **35%** higher than that received by women.

4%

Only 4% of fathers apply for a reduction in working hours or choose part-time working when returning to work.

50

Above the age of 50 years, the wage gap between men and women reaches its highest value.

88%

Some 88% of the population employed in the services sector are women.

67%

Some 67% of nonremunerated production in Spain is done by women.

-10

The employment rate among women is over 10 percentage points lower than among men.

30%

Only 30% of information and communication technology (ICT) professionals are women.

60%

Women concentrate 60% of the increase in unemployment following the pandemic, according to data from the Survey on the Active Population of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021.

2

Gender gap: inequality and economic vulnerability

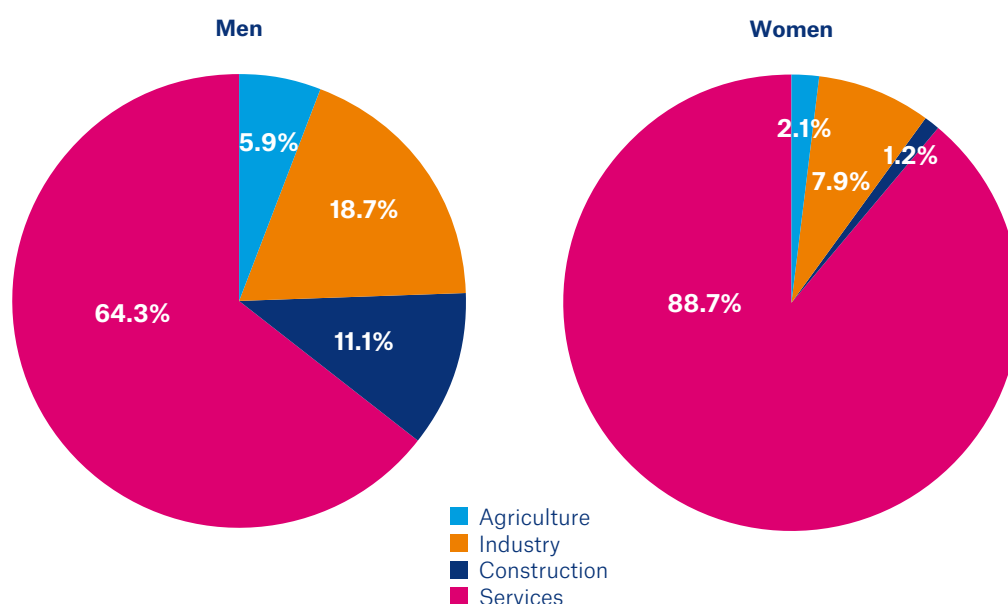
The gender gap is especially notorious in the labour sphere, characterised by a combination of different factors that negatively affect women in relation to men: higher unemployment, lower wages, greater seasonality and employment precarity, lower visibility, and a lesser presence in management posts and positions of power, among others. Furthermore, as will be explained over the course of the report, women have been the main group jeopardised following the covid-19 healthcare crisis which has generated a strong economic and employment impact on society, worsening the gender divides and inequalities between women and men.

On the one hand, according to data from the Active Population Survey at the close of 2020, female unemployment (18.3%) is higher than male unemployment (14.2%). Since August 2020, Spain has been European leader in female unemployment because women have been more affected by the destruction of jobs caused by the covid-19 crisis, and also because Greece, which did head the female unemployment classification, ceased to publish updated data. In this sense, the situation suffered by women at the helm of single-parent families stands out (according to the data from the report *Monomarentalidad y empleo* (Single-motherhood and employment) by the Adecco Foundation, some 82% of so-called *single-parent families* are led by women). The study warns that 46.4 percent of women caring for a child are unemployed, while this percentage increases to 75% in the case of single mothers with three children. It should be highlighted that during the year 2021, the benefits and subsidies available for childbirth have been reinforced with the aim of facilitating child-rearing and childcare. Moreover, in all age groups, a gender gap exists in terms of unfavourable employment for women: out of 19.9 million employed people in Spain, only 9.1 million are women, which leads to an occupation differential of over eleven percentage points.

Overcoming the gap between women and men is a question of social justice, people's dignity, and democratic quality

Furthermore, employment precarity in Spain affects women more greatly. Firstly, the female population occupies, mainly, the positions belonging to the worst valued and worse remunerated sectors and those with the highest precarity indexes. This is due fundamentally to the tertiarization of female employment: 88% of people employed in the services sector are women. Secondly, nonremunerated activities such as household chores, childcare, and care of dependents, are taken on largely by women. This means that they cannot take the option of employment or, if they do so, they may be obliged to involuntarily interrupt their working hours and their professional careers. Thus, the part-time work rate in the year 2020, according to the INE, affected 22.8% of women, much higher than the male average: 7%. Another figure to take into account is that over 25% of job contracts formalised by women are for temporary work. In this way, “extreme precarity”, understood as the combined precarity of seasonal work and part-time work, affects 9% of women, while affecting only 4% of men, according to data from trade union UGT.

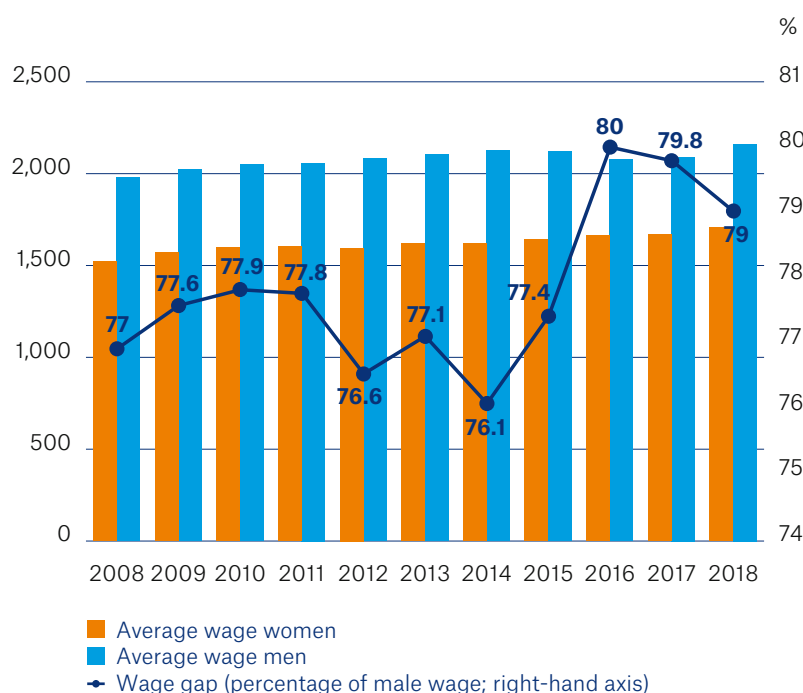
Figure 1. **Distribution of occupation by sectors and sex (%)**



Source: Spanish Institute of Statistics (INE).

The wage gap due to gender issues is another of the major (negative) signs of this fracture. It is appropriate to clarify that, within the framework of this report, wage gap is understood to mean the resulting percentage from dividing two amounts: the difference between the wages of men and women, divided by men's wages. The different methodologies for calculating the wage gap put it at around 22%, as estimated by trade union UGT, and 15.1%, according to the INE and Eurostat. These figures exceed the European average and, in this respect, Spain occupies the sixteenth position in the classification with regard to the wage gap by gender. Furthermore, women are over-represented at the lowest wage levels: some 30% of female wage-earners are situated among the 20% of workers that earn the least, while this percentage is reduced to 11.5% in the case of male wage-earners.

Figure 2. **Evolution of the wage gap (2008-2018)**

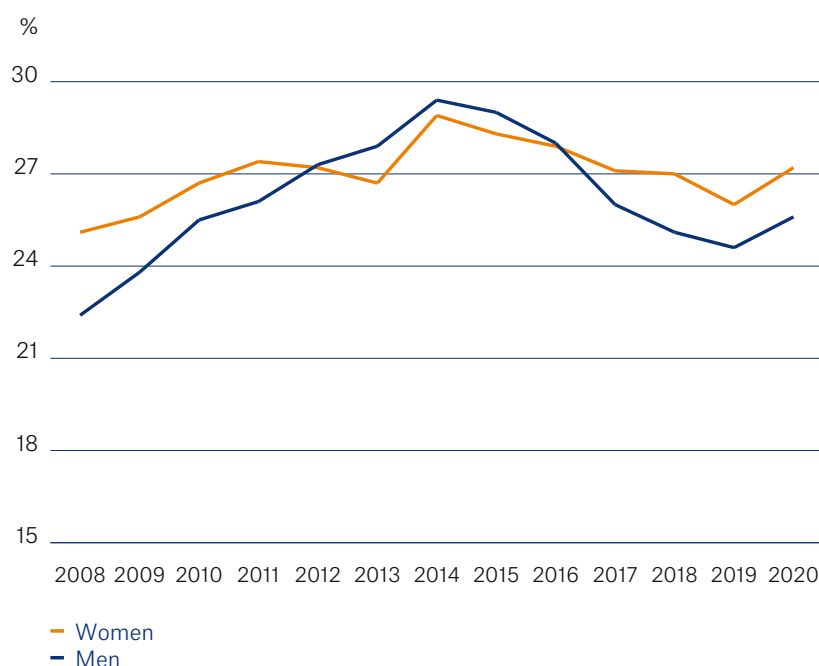


Source: INE.

This situation is, together with other factors, the cause and explanation of the higher levels of economic vulnerability that are suffered by women. The female collective, like collectives such as young people, migrants, and older workers with low levels of education, are the great losers of the economic crisis and those who have most suffered its consequences over the last decade, as indicated by the eighth FOESSA Report on Exclusion and Social Development in Spain, from the year 2019.

In terms of average income, women earn lower incomes, which thus means they are overrepresented in the poorer strata of the population: while 31.2% of women are situated in the lowest incomes group (30% of total income), barely 28.6% of men are found in this group. If the female poverty risk rate or social exclusion rate is used (according to the INE's AROPE indicator), it is noticed that this rate stands at 27%, nearly two percentage points higher than the male rate (25.1%). Furthermore, in the case of young women, the rate rises to 37.2%. In total, some 22.2% of women live below the poverty threshold, versus 20.9% of men; some 5.5% of women suffer material deprivation, against 5.3% of men; and 11.2% of women, versus 10.1% of men, live in households with low labour intensity.

Figure 3. **Evolution of the poverty risk rate by sex (2008-2020)**

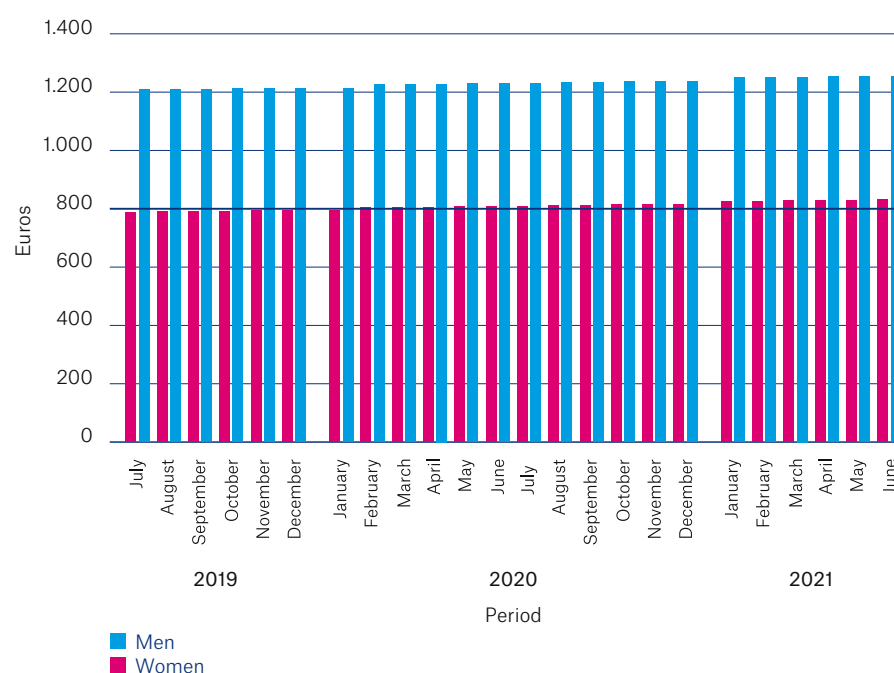


Source: INE.

One of the most significant pieces of evidence regarding the greater economic vulnerability of women is their lower level of social protection. The fact that the current social protection model is very closely linked to contributions, means that female coverage by the system is lower. If we take into account that the gender gap in the sphere of pensions makes reference to the difference that exists in the average pension amount received by men and women, in the case of retirement pensions, the average pension for men is more than 30% higher than that of women, according to a study recently published by the BBVA Pensions Institute. And if we include all the types of pensions, in February 2021 the average pension of the system in the case of men was 1,250.87 euros per month, while the average pension of women rose to 826.41 euros. Furthermore, some 82.17% of those who are in the group with average pensions, totalling between 150 and 450 euros, are women. In relation to survivors' pensions, over 90% correspond to widow's pensions, and although the average retirement pension is 1,182 euros per month, survivor pensions stand at 736.6 euros.

According to the report by Luisa Fuster "Las pensiones de viudedad en España" (Survivor pensions in Spain) published by FEDEA in January 2021, in the last 40 years women's labour market participation has increased from 30% to 70%; however, at the present, if the survivor pension did not exist, 50% of women would not be receiving any contributory pension and the gender gap in pensions would be 60%, instead of the current 30%. It is necessary to point out that the survivor pension prevents situations of poverty among women who did not pay in contributions in the past. Moreover, most non-contributory pensions correspond to women (65.41%), whose average pension stands at 383 euros; in the case of invalidity, it reaches 422 euros.

Figure 4. **Comparison between the average pensions of men and women**



Source. Ministry of Employment and Social Security.

One of the most significant pieces of evidence showing the greater economic vulnerability of women is that the level of social protection that they enjoy is lower

In the latest report by Spain's Public Employment Service (SEPE), in May of 2021, it was specified that 54% of beneficiaries of the cover offered had been women and 46% men. This majority of women is more significant in the welfare sphere, reaching in excess of 68% in agrarian subsidy. The above reflects a change in tendency in the cover of benefits provided by the Institutions, following the healthcare crisis caused by covid-19. Within this context, it is worth underlining the role represented by social spending, which in Spain totals just 16.6% of GDP, below the eurozone average and especially, social spending targeting families and children barely represents 0.7% of GDP. In fact, the report *Effectiveness and Equity in Social Spending. The Case of Spain*, published by the IMF in January 2020, highlights the need to re-organise social spending, which does not adequately ponder certain factors such as single-parent homes or number of children.

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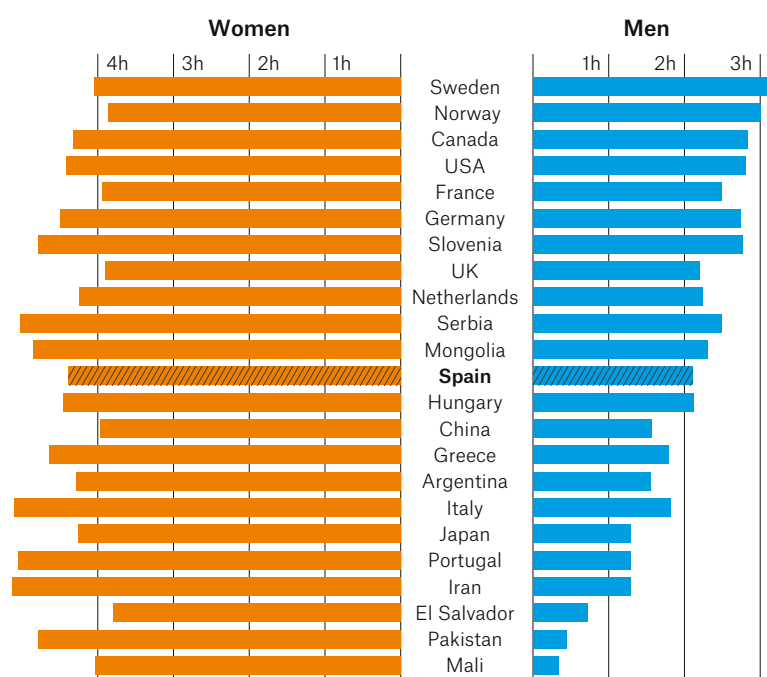
A fracture in personal and family life. The care economy

The gender gap is clearly manifested in different aspects of personal or family life. This is especially true in areas such as personal, family, and work reconciliation within the sphere of the so-called care economy, due to the majority of household tasks and the care of dependent persons, or of the whole family, being taken on by women. These activities are sustained, often without recognition or economic compensation, mainly by women. According to data from the [Social Observatory of "la Caixa"](#), women are responsible for some 39% of all market production in Spain while, in contrast, they bear the burden of 67% of nonremunerated production.

Women take on the majority
of household tasks and the
care of dependent persons,
or of the whole family

When analysing in detail the distribution of time by gender, it is observed that the fact that women devote nearly double the hours per week to nonremunerated activities is not related with the hours they devote to paid employment. Women add these nonremunerated work hours to their working hours, so that they effectively are working, on average, 63 hours and 36 minutes per week, versus the 56 hours and 36 minutes per week worked by men, according to data published by the INE.

Figure 5. **Time allocated to care work and domestic chores in each country**



Source: Report on Care work and care jobs for the future of work by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

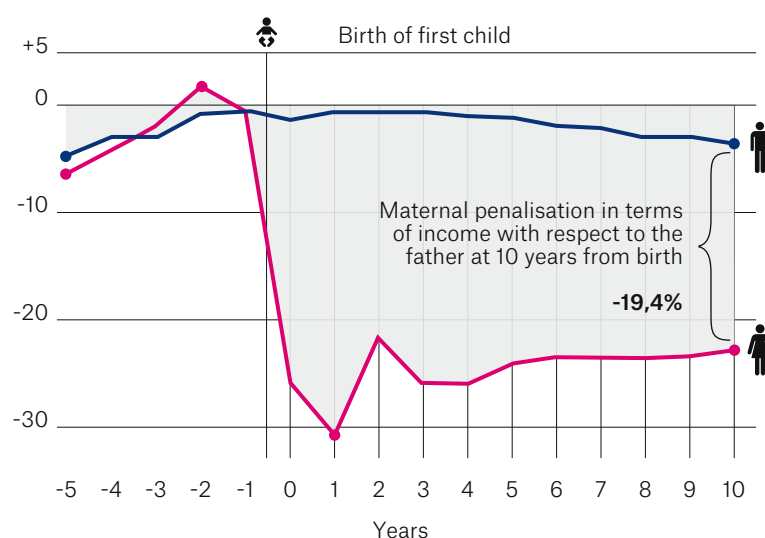
According to data from ClosinGap, women in Spain devote two hours more to the home and family than men do. Overall, the female population devotes over double the number of hours to these nonremunerated activities, specifically 87 million hours per day, versus 37.5 million hours per day devoted by the male population. Furthermore, according to the CIS barometer of May 2017, only two out of every ten men share these tasks on equal terms with their partners.

It is worth pointing out, furthermore, that over 95% of those who opt for working voluntarily on a part-time basis to devote themselves to the care of dependent people are women. With respect to women in a situation of inactivity, some 91.7% of them decide not to enter the jobs market because of “family responsibilities or personal reasons”, whereas this percentage accounts for only 8.03% in the case of men.

At this point, motherhood is a key factor. Its implications are related, firstly, with women’s greater devotion to nonremunerated work and, secondly, to the consequent involuntary interruption of their professional careers. Numerous investigations coincide in pointing out the link that exists between motherhood and the pay gap, as well as other realities, such as the so-called glass ceiling. In the article “La brecha salarial en España se amplía tras la maternidad (y ahí se queda)” (The wage gap in Spain widens after maternity, and remains wide) published on the blog *Nada es Gratis*, García Hombrados and González Luna explain how “the incomes of fathers maintain the same tendency following

the birth of their first child, whereas those of women suffer a heavy fall in the first two years, which they do not recover from during the period studied. By the end of five years, the gender gap that has opened with respect to the initial year is 17%”. In a report on this same area, by the Bank of Spain, a divide is indicated that rises to 23% by the end of five years. Also, as observed in figure 6, produced based on a research study by Kleven, Landais and Søgaaard (2017) for Denmark – which was widely reported in the different media – having children is related with a greater wage gap.

Figure 6. Variation in income following the birth of the first child with respect to the alternative case of not having children (%). Denmark, 1980-2013



Source: *El País*, based on the research by Kleven, Landais and Søgaaard (2017) for Denmark.

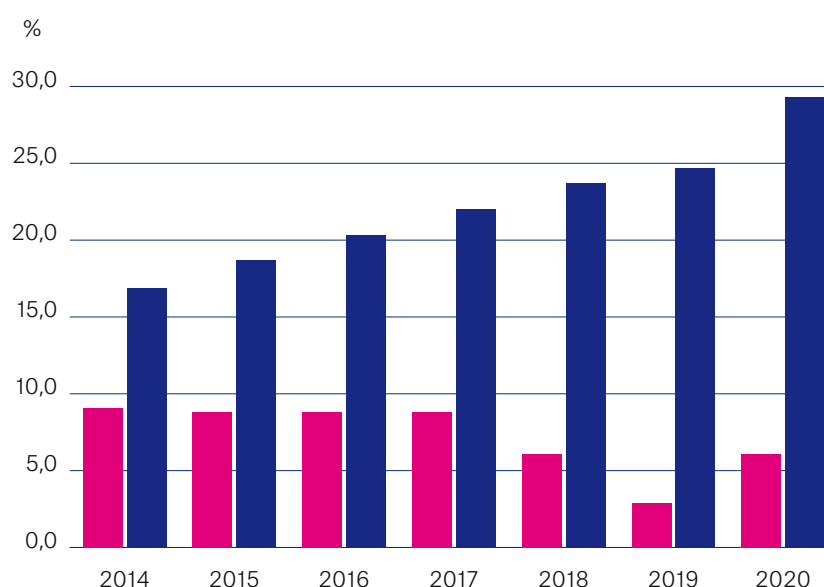
Notwithstanding this, it is not a voluntary option, as reconciliation is a problem that, in a large number of cases, represents an obstacle in the employment career of women and not of men. In Spain, according to UGT, some 93% of leave taken to care for children is requested by women, who, furthermore, devote double the amount of time devoted by men to housework and caring for relatives and children. On average they work, over the course of their working career, 1.1 hours per day more than men. According to data published by the previous Ministry of Employment and Social Security, for the first half of 2017, some 98% of women who took maternity leave did not share it with the other parent.

4 Woman: prominence and power

In the private or business sphere, different indexes or indicators, such as the Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index (GEI) or the latest data published by the association European Women on Boards (EVOW) and by the Spanish market regulator Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores (CNMV), reflect the broad margin for improvement in terms of visibility and leadership of women in management boards and bodies. For example, just 30 of the 600 largest listed companies in Europe comply with criteria of parity, as their boards of directors have an average of just 33% of female representation.

Specifically in Spain, in relation with data provided by the CNMV, the percentage of women in boards of management of IBEX 35 companies in 2020 was 31.17%, exceeding overall, for the first time, the recommendation of 30% marked by Spain's National Securities Commission (CNMV). Even so, the Spanish stock markets supervisor is not content with this and advises the presence of women on boards of management to be raised to 40% by 2023. Although this rise is nearly twelve points higher than that obtained in the year 2013, it is still insufficient. Another fact that we must consider is that only 4% of IBEX 35 board members are executive board members, which translates into a clear sign of lack of female empowerment and of effective and real decision-making by women. When the companies making up the IBEX 35 are individually analysed, it is observed that only 21 of the 35 comply with the recommendation (in 2019 there were 16 and in 2018, just 12), with Red Eléctrica being the only company with equal numbers of men and women.

Figure 7. **Chairwomen and women members on boards of management of IBEX 35 companies**



Note: This data relates to the second half of each year

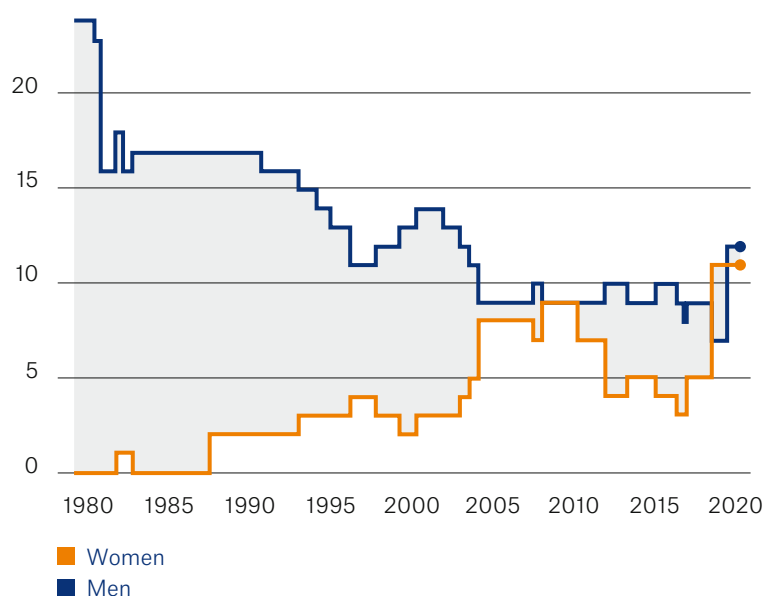
Source: Spanish Institute of Statistics (INE).

This dynamic is reproduced if the company size is defined and the data from the latest Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report on female entrepreneurship is studied, as is how the number of women entrepreneurs has progressively increased in Spain. Currently, over 650,000 women aged from 25 to 34 years head business initiatives, but these levels are still much lower than average values in the eurozone. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Spain 2019-2020, some 48.4% of entrepreneurs are women, against 51.6% of men, in 2019. In the GEM 2020-2021 it is quite clear that the covid-19 crisis has caused a strong standstill in entrepreneurial activity. Thus, the Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate stands at 5.2%, with a year-on-year fall of one percentage point. In the digital and technological entrepreneurship sector, barely 17% of emerging technology companies have been founded by women, moreover they have had to tackle more obstacles than the male population to take their companies forward, such as less economic support, a lack of visibility, cultural problems, few female leaders as models to follow, etc.

In the political sphere, a progressively more balanced presence is observed between the two sexes, with special mention of Spain's last coalition executive, made up of 11 women and 12 men, including the Prime Minister, which represents a balanced distribution in which women represent 48% of the total. After the recent reshuffle of the Governing team, it has gone on to be formed by 63.6% women, 14 women ministers and 8 men, thus exceeding the rest of the European countries and becoming, therefore, an example of male-female equality in government. Following the recent reform of the Government team, this is now made up of 63.6% of women, 14 women ministers and 8 men, thus exceeding the rest of the European countries and setting an example for gender-balanced Executives.

Figure 8. **Evolution of the distribution of political responsibilities in Spain**

The graph reflects women's access to the government team in Spain.



Source: Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities
(Instituto de la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades).

Nevertheless, there are some traditionally male-dominated responsibilities, such as the ministerial posts for Justice, Defence, and Industry, despite the fact that, currently, all three ministries are headed by women. Separate mention is merited by the Ministry of the Interior, which has never been occupied by a woman. However, if the spectrum is broadened, it is confirmed that, despite the fact that the female presence in the Spanish Congress and the Senate had been improving, the rise of the far right has meant that Spain's Congress no longer has the highest gender balance in Europe and fifth highest in the world, according to data from UN Women. Finally, it is worth highlighting that the interest that women declare to have in politics is 16% less than that manifested by men.

There is still a long way
to go in progressing female
representation in all public and
private management bodies

Thus, though bearing in mind that there is still a long way to go in progressing female representation in all public and private management bodies, the efforts made to date in Spain and the milestones achieved cannot be overlooked.

5

Looking to the future: technological inequality. The role of education and climate change

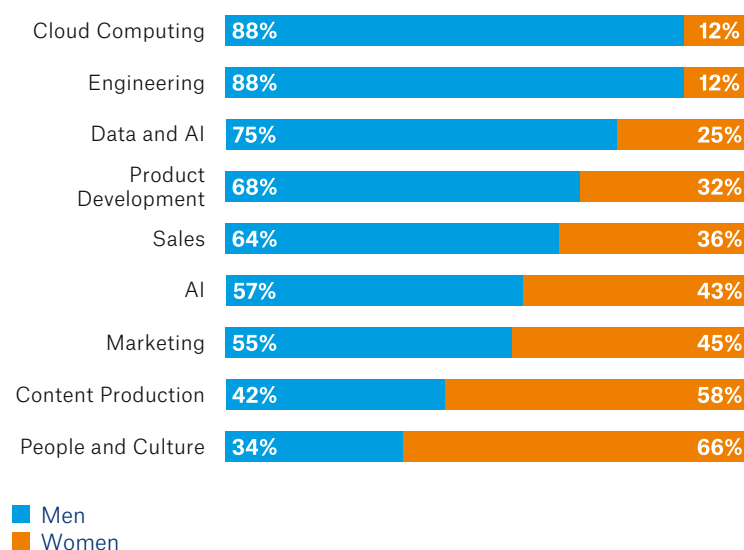
Societies are immersed in a fourth industrial revolution, with the digital inundating everyday life. This situation, while opening up new opportunities, is posing important challenges that could have a greater impact on the more vulnerable sectors of the Spanish population. The starting point is different for men and for women. By way of example, currently only 30% of professionals in the ICT field are women, whereas labour demand for such professionals is growing unstoppably at 3% year on year.

Incorporating women into the technological and digital sector is urgent. For this, it is important to highlight one of the most important factors found at the origin of this gap: education. While women have a higher average level of education than men, they are very much underrepresented in courses in the STEM areas. If this tendency is not reverted, in Spain, a deficit of 3 million professionals with ICT or STEM knowledge is forecast for this year 2020, according to the *Libro blanco de las mujeres en el ámbito tecnológico* (White paper on women in the technology sector), published by the Secretary of State for Digital Advancement in March 2019. This gap is even greater in basic vocational training, where training cycles in information and communication technologies are the option chosen by 17.8% of women who enter this level of learning. The same thing happens with intermediate and higher education, where barely one in every ten students are women.

Incorporating women
into the technological and
digital sector is urgent

In this sense, one of the results extracted from the PISA report is especially discouraging: the lack of confidence shown by Spanish girls with regard to embarking on courses in science and technology. The report refers to this phenomenon as “proficiency in sciences”; this factor means that there are fewer women who wish to work in the ICT field.

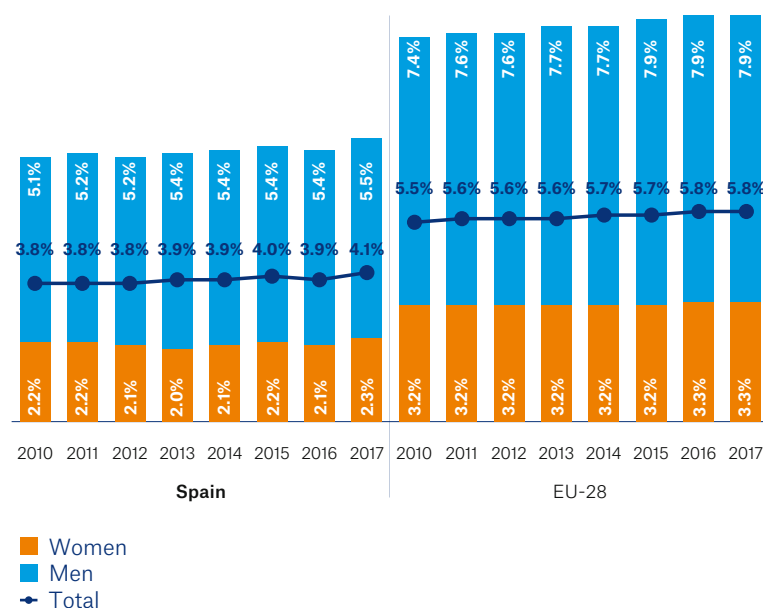
Figure 9. **Percentage of men and women per professional cluster, data for Spain**



Source: World Economic Forum.

The study *Científicas en cifras* (Women scientists in figures), produced by the FECYT (Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology) and published by Spain's previous Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities in 2017, enables observation of how the evolution of women's labour participation in the high and mid-high technology sectors of industry is not very positive. If the aim is to continue advancing, then one of the most important factors found at the origin of this gap must be targeted: education, as has been indicated previously.

Figure 10. **Evolution of the distribution of the population occupied in the high and medium-high technology sectors, by sex**



Source: World Economic Forum.

Along with the technological revolution, the other major global challenge is the climate emergency. It is crucial, in this sense, to introduce a gender perspective into both its analysis and the policies promoted to fight climate change. Women have a lower carbon footprint than men, but it is women and girls who suffer the main impacts of this emergency most because of their very role in society and their situation of greater vulnerability. The female population is the most threatened by extreme temperatures, natural disasters, and climate migration, as well as by fuel poverty. Given this situation, a total of 45 countries have committed to making gender equality and female empowerment into key pillars in the fight against climate change. Thus, at the last COP25 Climate Summit, held in Madrid in 2019, it was agreed that a new Gender Action Plan would be drawn up, that would enable this equality to be guaranteed.

6

Debating the gender gap: a look at feminism

A wave of feminism is travelling the world. The crowds demonstrating on 8 March and the #MeToo movement are evidence of the key moment being faced by feminism, whose transformative potential is enormous. Feminism is one of the main tools for change in the 21st century: a “purple tsunami” with a clear and shared slogan: achieving real and effective equality between women and men. There are currently people talking about post-feminism, supposing that there will be greater integration and social proximity thanks to opportunities offered by new technologies and platforms; this is what could be called an “interconnected and globalised feminist movement”. This is the reality that Nuria Varela reflects upon in her book *Feminismo 4.0. La cuarta ola*.

This feminism 4.0 poses important challenges, such as answering the question of what is the cost of opportunity, in economic and talent-loss terms, of the gender gap. The World Economic Forum estimates that global GDP could increase by 5.3 trillion dollars by the year 2025 if female economic participation were to improve by 25%. For its part, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has confirmed that greater gender equality could mean an increase in staff hiring of between 0.5 and 0.8 percentage points by 2030 and of up to 2.1 and 3.5 percentage points by 2050.

Equality between men
and women is not only a
fundamental right but, also,
it is considered the basis for
sustaining a society of wellbeing

Another of the challenges facing feminism is the role of men. Closing the gender gap means putting an end to the patriarchy, in other words, to a society in which the figure and the power of men are predominant over those of women. This is a complex task if what Celia Amorós defines as “meta-stable patriarchal pacts” are taken into account. These represent the continuous transformation of the patriarchy in adapting to different phases and perpetuating its dominant role, or “gender socialisation”, which represents the transmission of different gender cultures, values, and stereotypes, and means that women are associated with certain roles in society. Men should be direct participants in the search for

effective equality, in order to find their own new space. In parallel, society must be capable of adapting to a new reality of equality, through the feminisation of society as a whole.

The gender gap is not a problem of ideology, nor one of personality; it is not even a biological issue. It originates in a social fracture, with different implications, that could be considered one of the most relevant political problems that exists today. Just as it has often said that “the personal is political”, so the feminist movement is aiming to transfer existing problems or needs into the public arena. When attempting to tackle this gap in Spain, it must be accepted that it poses a public problem, one that needs to be approached from every angle, including the political angle. Equality between men and women is not only a fundamental right but, also, it is considered the basis for sustaining a society of wellbeing that is equal, fair, and free, and capable of responding to the challenges that lie before it.

There are diverse analyses and opinions in relation with these aspects, just as there are differing viewpoints and focuses that are manifested in this sense, but it is not the aim of this report to conduct any rigorous study of these, but to promote debate in order to be able to arrive at the drawing up of appropriate policies from the most in-depth knowledge.

7

Proposals for the future. Conclusions

This report was written before the outbreak of the covid-19 crisis. However, in July 2021, it was revised and the data contained within it were updated in order to reflect an accurate snapshot at the time of its publication. Over the course of the report it has been explained how the coronavirus pandemic has increased the gender gap in Spain, given that it has amplified the inequalities in employment and social areas that already existed. An example of this is the strong increase in the female unemployment rate: 60% of the rise in unemployment in Spain has affected women.

Furthermore, it is evidenced that the nature of this crisis is different to those that occurred to date, since the sectors affected most are no longer construction and industry, rather, it has affected the services sector, whose activity requires a high level of social interaction and it is the sector with the highest proportion of women.

After having analysed the gap that exists between women and men for reasons directly related with gender, and then having covered different spaces or spheres that are affected by it, such as the economic, labour, personal and educational spheres, etc., this section aims to contribute a reflection regarding what the main aspects or points are that should be tackled from both the public and the private spheres of society. To produce these reflections, a series of women experts were invited to participate in a debate and to propose measures with which to tackle this serious divide and try to put an end to it. From their different contributions, it can be concluded, first of all, that a deficit exists when including a gender perspective in current public policies. Furthermore, still prominent today are gender stereotypes and roles that continue to pigeonhole women in the role of non-professional carers, the negative consequences of motherhood on the working life of women, as well as a society in which machoistic and sexist behaviours and realities still persist in spaces of economic, political and social life. Among these reflections, prominent is the need to develop policies to encourage employment, minimum incomes to tackle the exclusion of women with family burdens, support for time reconciliation or, of an urgent nature, palliative actions that contribute, at least, towards tackling severe problems of child poverty, especially in single-parent families.

A deficit exists when including a gender perspective in current public policies

In the business sphere, the spotlight is placed on the important role of non-transferable paternity and maternity leave, although it is necessary to continue advancing towards a complete cultural change. For this purpose, it is fundamental that companies and men play an active role. The idea is that companies advance progressively towards a new egalitarian reality. In this reality that companies must face, the expectations of workers, men and women alike, with respect to their family life and the assuming of care tasks, must be increasingly similar. However, this demands, furthermore, cultural changes in companies that facilitate the development of upwardly mobile professional careers, which are compatible with people's family responsibilities.

The care economy is, precisely, one of the major issues that focused the debate that was held. Altering the current situation requires a cultural change that must take place from childhood, in homes, and from an education based on equality. Advances must be made, furthermore, towards co-responsibility rather than just time reconciliation, and towards the assuming of care tasks by men, including the care of older family members.

With respect to the gender differences in economic activity, the key point for debate was the guarantee of equality in access to employment. For this, it is fundamental to act from the earliest stages of education, in order to destroy stereotypes and gender roles linked to the different training areas and professional capabilities. Furthermore, it is necessary to highlight, improve visibility of, and socially recognise activities traditionally performed by women, by increasing their wages and improving their employment conditions.

Considered crucial is the dependency system, for which it is necessary to have sufficient budgetary resources, as well as to guarantee its role as a pillar of the welfare state. The reflection, furthermore, opens up towards the necessary professionalisation of care tasks.

As for the aspects of the debate most focused on the future, it is considered crucial to include the gender focus in education in order to put an end to stereotypes, and so that women can be protagonists in key activities for the near future, such as in STEM and ICT disciplines. This means, for example, having female references among the teaching staff of these study areas. So that young women can compete in equality in the jobs market of the 21st century, companies in the technological and digital sector must develop inclusive practices, such as equality in recruitment processes, equality policies, job flexibility, training programmes for retaining female talent, etc.

In short, the authorities, businesses, and society as a whole, must become more aware that it is not possible to assume the loss of half of the talent pool, so necessary in a transformation like the present one.

Below is a list of proposed solutions, based on the reflections and opinions generated within the context of the debate. There is no inference that these are the result of any consensus agreement or uniform opinion among all the women experts who participated:

Economic and business sphere: the role of women

- 1** Incorporation of a gender perspective into the design of the General State Budgets.
- 2** Guarantee of a minimum living wage, a non-contributory social security benefit, as the ultimate social protection safety net.
- 3** Ratification of ILO Convention 189 on domestic workers, full inclusion of women in the General Regime of the Social Security system and compliance with Royal Decree-Law 6/2019:
 - Equality in remuneration.
 - Protection of female workers in situations such as pregnancy or gender violence.
- 4** Design and execution of public policies (promotion of employment, minimum income, fighting situations of violence, vulnerability, etc.), taking into account the gender perspective in a cross-disciplinary way, coordinated between the employment services and social services.
- 5** Implementation of gender quotas in professional recruitment and promotion, as well as positive action measures to alleviate imbalances between women and men, with sanctions in case of non-compliance.
- 6** Implementation of training programmes to retain female talent in posts related with new technologies.
- 7** Consideration of economic and fiscal measures to promote the incorporation of a gender perspective into business management, such as subsidies and tax credits.
- 8** Reactivation and promotion of the wages register established in Royal Decree-Law 6/2019, of 1 March.
- 9** Strengthening of Work Inspection and Social Security resources.
- 10** Incorporation of equality clauses into the public contracts system, so that all ministerial departments and public bodies make the obtaining of funding conditional on respect for parity and equality.

Care economy and time reconciliation sphere

- 1 Expansion of public services linked to the welfare and care of dependent people, such as nursery schools and centres for the elderly, health, and education.
- 2 Equal and non-transferrable maternity and paternity leave.
- 3 Awareness-raising mechanisms, plus sanctions in case of infringement, such as favouring flexi-hours, hours banks, teleworking, shifts, etc.
- 4 Reinforcement, through economic and human resources, of the Autonomy and Dependency Care System, through the General State Budgets, to put an end to the concept of the care economy as nonremunerated work.
- 5 Professionalisation of care activities and of the role of carers.

Personal sphere: the role of education in the eradication of technological inequality

- 1 Special training for teaching staff in equality skills, for the different undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses. Revising of curricula, contents, educational materials, etc., from a gender perspective, in order to eliminate sexist stereotypes. Incorporation to a greater extent of women's contributions to STEM areas and promotion of different applications of these disciplines in society, among others.
- 2 Promotion, support, and funding of the drawing up of programmes and plans for equality between women and men in education, at all scales (schools, municipalities, autonomous communities and state-wide).
- 3 Design of educational campaigns and policies, aimed at primary and secondary education, to dismantle stereotypes and fight sexism and gender roles with regard to personal and professional abilities. There should be emphasis on areas especially vulnerable to sexism, such as language and communications; internet and social networks (to fight the sexist hate discourse); the media, advertising, and other communication products and services; job positions; public sectors and, specifically, the justice sector; educational institutions; culture, and sports, as well as the private sphere.
- 4 Application of new training orientation plans during secondary education, with the consideration of gender focus.
- 5 Implementation of a national inter-sectoral continuous training plan for teachers in STEM, to facilitate the closing of the gap between pupils and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects. This plan could become a powerful tool for promoting teaching staff.

- 6 Promotion of women teaching on courses in the STEM areas so that students have more reference points of their own sex in these fields.

- 7 Production of information campaigns and promotion of new technologies in the educational, social, and extracurricular environment (campuses, summer camps, marathons, competitions, etc.).

- 8 Generation and visibility of new reference points during childhood.

- 9 Support for women entrepreneurs in the STEM areas facilitating, above all, access to funding and training.

- 10 Promotion of collaboration between private, public, and organised civil society actors to give added impetus to joint information and awareness-raising actions (lectures by professional women, visits to universities and companies, as well as advertising campaigns, among others).

All these proposals should be geared towards achieving a society in which gender equality is real and effective.



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