

### **Abstract**

The most significant changes in the Spanish “Higher Education” (HE)-sector within the last 20 years are the granting of autonomy to the universities, the transfer from state competencies to the autonomous regions, the enormous intakes of students and the founding of many public and private universities. The impacts these changes had and still have on women are numerous. The foundation of universities in all regions facilitated their access to HE-institutions. Nowadays more than half of the students are female. Nevertheless, their distribution according to field is still uneven, for example only a few study technical subjects. Due to the increase of the number of students, more lecturers have been required. Because of this demand many women were able to fill this need and became university teachers. Even though the current women’s share of university staff is only slightly less than those of all female employees, only a minority occupy posts in the highest level of the hierarchy, that of university professors. The reasons for this under- representation have not been sufficiently investigated. They are certainly connected with the severe problem of endogamy in the hiring of university staff. In this respect it is remarkable that women tend to have better chances to occupy the highest position in the bigger and the newer universities. However, due to the often higher working load at the latter and their often worse reputation, we cannot assume that these institutions are automatically “women friendlier”. A profound analysis of the reasons for the under- representation could serve as a basis for the introduction of equal opportunity measures. However, from my point of view the granting of university autonomy and decentralization make this unlikely. In addition, an even further decentralization is planned and also the observable shift towards the market could be disadvantageous in this respect.