

Implementation of the transparency laws in Catalonia

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Abstract

Despite theoretical forecasts that have linked transparency policies with improvements in the fight against corruption, increased trust in institutions, and the development of quality in governments, several empirical studies have shown that this connection is not so simple. For it to happen, regulations of sufficient quality must be embedded in a holistic policy of good governance and adequately implemented. The transparency policy cannot generate the desired impacts if it is not implemented in the first place. The transparency policy of the governments of Catalonia does not seem to have had the desired effects, despite being of sufficient quality and being formally inserted in a holistic framework of good governance. The hypothesis this article attempts to test is the weakness of the implementation of *Act 19/2014* as the cause of the non-existent or piecemeal outcomes. An exhaustive evaluation of the law's implementation was conducted to test the hypothesis, with five series of surveys in five years (2015–2020) sent to more than 1,000 entities bound by the law, a review of transparency portals, a quality analysis of resolutions on the right of access, a quality analysis of citizens' charters and codes of conduct, the use of the mystery shopper technique, and in-depth interviews with public decision-makers. The analysis results do not guarantee that the relative failure in impact is due to weak implementation of the law. However, it also cannot be ruled out that failure to implement some aspects of the rule influences its lack of effectiveness.

Keywords

Transparency; Implementation; *Ex post* evaluation; Policy impact; Good governance; Right to good administration; Right of access; Better regulation; Ethics codes; Lobbies; Catalonia; Spain.

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1. Introduction

When analyzing the transformations in public administrations since the end of the 20th century, one of the most remarkable phenomena is the concern for promoting transparency in public activity. The regulatory foundations of this phenomenon can already be found at the heart of the model of representative democracy (**Manin**, 1997). But it is, above all, the development of the institutionalist approach to understanding how the State operates (**North**, 2010; **Acemoglu; Robinson**, 2012; **March; Olsen**, 1989) that has opened the doors to a whole set of international initiatives (for example, *World Bank*, 1997) that have emphasized creating rules of play which, by controlling political power, encourage it to serve the interests of society. Among these, those related to transparency and accountability stand out (**Bovens; Goodin; Schillemans**, 2014), which, together with the development of new information and communication technologies, make it possible to create a new paradigm of public action known as “open government” (**Lathrop; Ruma**, 2010; **Campos-Domínguez; Coroján**, 2013; **Cruz-Rubio**, 2015).

In this context, policies that promote transparency in the public sector have so far had three types of ultimate goals: to reduce corruption, to reduce disaffection with the consequent promotion of institutional trust (**Adserà; Boix; Payne**, 2003; **Bastida; Benito**, 2007; **Benito; Bastida**, 2009; **Brunetti; Weder**, 2003; **Cucciniello; Porumbescu; Grimmelikhuijsen**, 2017; **Cerrillo-Martínez**, 2011; **Hood**, 2010; **Hood; Heald**, 2006; **Lederman; Loayza; Soares**, 2001; **Meijer**, 2013; **Rose-Ackerman**, 2016), and, lastly, to foster government effectiveness, with the consequent economic development (**Bellver; Kauffman**, 2005; **Green; Porter**, 1984; **Meijer**, 2013; **Ortiz-Escobar; Ordóñez-Beltrán**, 2019; **Prat**, 2006; **Roberts**, 2015; **Ruvalcaba-Gómez**, 2019; **Stiglitz**, 2002).

Overall empirical evidence shows that progress towards these objectives has been modest so far (**Bauhr; Grimes**, 2014; **Grimmelikhuijsen; Piotrowski; Van-Ryzin**, 2020). It seems that the tendency to connect transparency with corruption and control of government dysfunctions has caused more mistrust than legitimacy (**Pozen**, 2019). Moreover, the relationship between trust and transparency is quite complex and non-linear (**Piotrowski; Van-Ryzin**, 2007). In general, measuring the impacts of transparency has shown that success requires:

1. Good regulation. This regulation is necessary but not sufficient to achieve positive impacts. For example, in 2011, *Access Info* developed a quality ranking for global transparency laws. According to 2019 data, with 128 countries evaluated, the top three countries were: Afghanistan, Mexico, and Serbia. Denmark was in 105th place. It seems obvious, once again, that society is not changed by decree, as **Crozier** (1984) preached.
2. Regulation must be embedded in a holistic strategy of good governance. Transparency must be inserted into broader policies that connect it with accountability, governmental integrity, citizen participation and collaboration, impartiality and legality, and good regulation and administration.
3. If it is possible to design a transparency policy that is properly included in good governance policies, the key to subsequent success is implementation. An unimplemented or poorly implemented policy cannot generate positive impacts (**Sabatier; Mazmanian**, 1980; **Hill; Hupe**, 2002). Proper implementation of these policies is key to success. It could be said that a good standard, inserted into holistic strategies and properly implemented, creates the conditions necessary for transparency to have a positive impact.
4. Nevertheless, even if all these steps are successfully taken, a transparency policy may not succeed in the short to medium term in the presence of conditions that hinder the connection between policy and positive change. There are always exogenous conditions to good governance policies that can either hinder or facilitate success. Thus, success is hindered:
 - when the starting point is at a high level of corruption, since, when new scandals come to light thanks to transparency, more mistrust is generated;
 - when the starting point is at a high level of institutional mistrust that can be reproduced with any scandal that arises;
 - when there are perceived levels of high inefficiency in the public sector, especially when associated with public service cut strategies; or, lastly,
 - when administrations are located in an environment of political instability that prevents them from working strategically.

All these exogenous conditions, in addition, most likely affect the previous phases, especially the implementation phase, thereby generating veto points and distortions on the system that hinder change. The institutionalist approach in political science, in its historical variants, does an excellent job explaining this difficulty of overcoming the paths of dependence and of foreseeing the unwanted effects on the administrative system (**Pierson; Skocpol**, 2001; **Steinmo; Thelen; Longstreth**, 1992).

That being said, the ultimate goal of this research is to validate, through a specific case study, this theory of success and failure in transparency policies. However, as this is a very ambitious goal, this paper focuses on an aspect of the theory that has usually been placed on the back burner. The paper will analyze the importance of implementing the transparency policy. In this case, its implementation in an “Autonomous Community” of Spain. The chosen autonomous community is Catalonia. There are three reasons why it was selected:

Firstly, the rule of origin is one of the most advanced among those developed in Spain, and, above all, it is the one that has a more ambitious holistic dimension.

Secondly, despite this, no relevant impacts have been observed, at least so far.

Thirdly, its levels of implementation have been highly influenced by factors of exceptional political instability.

In short, the research question to ask is:

How has the transparency policy been implemented in the governments of Catalonia?

The hypothesis on which this paper is based is that one of the reasons for the relative failure to achieve impacts—such as reducing corruption, reducing disaffection, or fostering government effectiveness—so far, lies in the fact that the application of *Act 19/2014, of December 29, on transparency, access to public information, and good governance*, remains weak (España, 2013). As already noted, it is true that there are other reasons that explain the relative failure to obtain the desired impacts. Nevertheless, this research focuses on this variable considered so key: implementation.

The study of the implementation phase measures, to a large extent, the “effectiveness” of the policy, that is, the outputs—direct, objective and measurable products (Mungiu-Pippidi; Dadašov, 2016)—generated in the short and medium-term because without them there can be no positive final impacts. *Act 19/2014* establishes a whole set of legal obligations to public authorities and what is measured is to what extent those obligations of the law are being fulfilled and, in some cases, how this is being done. The authors believe that it is necessary to distinguish between the efficacy, efficiency, and effectiveness of a policy, especially a policy that is developed in the long term (Dye, 2013) and produces effects at different times and from different perspectives. In these dimensions, a transparency policy is:

- “effective” if it delivers what it proposes in the expected timeframe, such as transparency portals, reusable data, or adequate training;
- “efficient” if the cost of implementation and maintenance is lower than the financial return, for example, in reduction of fraud and embezzlement or in waste avoided with *red flags*;
- “successful” if it ultimately has the desired impacts, reduces the number of corrupt transactions and the scope of profits in each transaction, or boosts trust in the public authorities or the quality of services (Villoria, 2021).

In short, the content of this article is essentially descriptive, although it could be placed within the theoretical framework of the impact assessment of transparency policies, in particular, the importance of achieving efficacy to obtain the desired success.

From here, the methodology created to evaluate the implementation of the *Act* will be explained; additionally, the assumption that there is a relative failure in its impact will also be explained. Subsequently, data will be provided and used to demonstrate that more than seven years after its approval, the *Act* has had weak application in practice, although there are some parties that implement better than others. The paper closes with some conclusions that will help us better understand the lessons learned from the case of Catalonia and, after identifying the limitations of the study, pinpoint some possible avenues for further research.

2. Methodology

Right from its very first year of approval, 2015, the implementation of *Act 19/2014* was under evaluation. This is because the *Act* itself did not establish a grace period to begin the evaluation, as is commonly the case with other laws in neighboring countries. The *Act* entrusted the *Síndic de Greuges*, the Catalan ombudsman, with the annual evaluation of the implementation since its approval. The authors of this text were responsible for designing the evaluation model and for all analyses prior to the evaluation’s publication. Clearly, the first assessment faced many difficulties and yielded low or inconsistent response rates to many of the survey questions. This is especially true when the new local governments that emerged from the May 2015 elections were formed in July of that year and were, understandably, not prepared to prioritize this task. Since then, annual assessments of the implementation and enforcement of the *Act* have yielded a survey response rate of more than 90% for the vast majority of questions. Consequently, the *Act*’s *ex-post* evaluation spans six years.

The evaluation’s design distinguished between the evaluation of active advertising and the right of access to the evaluation from the *Act*’s other obligations. For active advertising, it was initially decided that the evaluation should include an analysis of the transparency or related portals of all the entities bound by the *Act* in order to verify that all the items required by the standard were included; it was also necessary to verify that the information was updated, clear, and intelligible, that reusable formats were utilized, and that the portal was structured and had content search elements. Each annual evaluation examined more than 2,400 portals, spread out across administrations, dependent bodies and entities, and private subjects. The first assessment excluded municipalities with fewer than 500 inhabitants. For entities dependent upon regional administrations and private entities, trade unions and business organizations, political parties, etc., a representative sample was chosen. This evaluation was carried out by the *Fundació Carles Pi i Sunyer*.

To assess compliance with the right of access, in addition to a questionnaire, as shown below, applications were made as anonymous citizens. The methodology of the *mystery shopper* or observer participation consists of placing the analyst in

the same situation in which the user or recipient of a public service can be found. In this case, a person requests access to public information from public administrations in order to measure compliance with the provisions of *Act 19/2014*. The person then proceeds to measure whether there is a response, its timeframe, and its quality. The quality control included aspects such as the channel through which the request was collected, the notification of receipt of the request, the response to imprecise requests, the reasons for the refusal, if any, the deadlines, and whether or not the response was free of charge. The data requested sought to capture typical demands of a control model aimed at preventing corruption and promoting integrity. For each type of entity, four questions were asked and randomly sent to the entities that made up the sample. The first year, they were sent to 132 entities. The sample was later expanded to 731 in 2020. In addition to the questionnaires and the mystery shopper test, it was decided to use another assessment tool. Thus, a decision was made to conduct a quality analysis of the resolutions on access that had been resolved by the *Catalonian Government* and local entities. These resolutions, selected at random, are those that would be published by these entities in their transparency portals. The quality of these resolutions was evaluated using a methodology developed specifically for the evaluation, which sought to be consistent with national and international good administration standards.

For the rest of the information required, it was decided that a set of questionnaires should be prepared containing all the *Act's* requirements and that the entities bound by the *Act* (more than 1,000) should be asked to answer the questions added to the aforementioned questionnaires. The questionnaires were prepared in such a way that the questions were comprehensible, despite trying to stick to the act's strict wording, and ensuring that the grouping of questions was consistent with the different elements of which the standard is composed. An attempt was made to create questions that could be answered with a simple yes or no, but in many cases, it was important to know the number of procedures or resolutions and, lastly, in other cases, the questionnaire sought a documentary accreditation of the answers given. All of this resulted in complex and rather extensive questionnaires that were significantly revised and simplified in successive editions.

Lastly, for each annual report, a series of interviews were conducted with subjects of special relevance with respect to implementation of the act. In total, twenty-five in-depth interviews were conducted. To check all these data in detail and to be able to analyze them in depth, the links to the original documents are included in the note 1, section 5 of this article.¹

3. Key assessment results

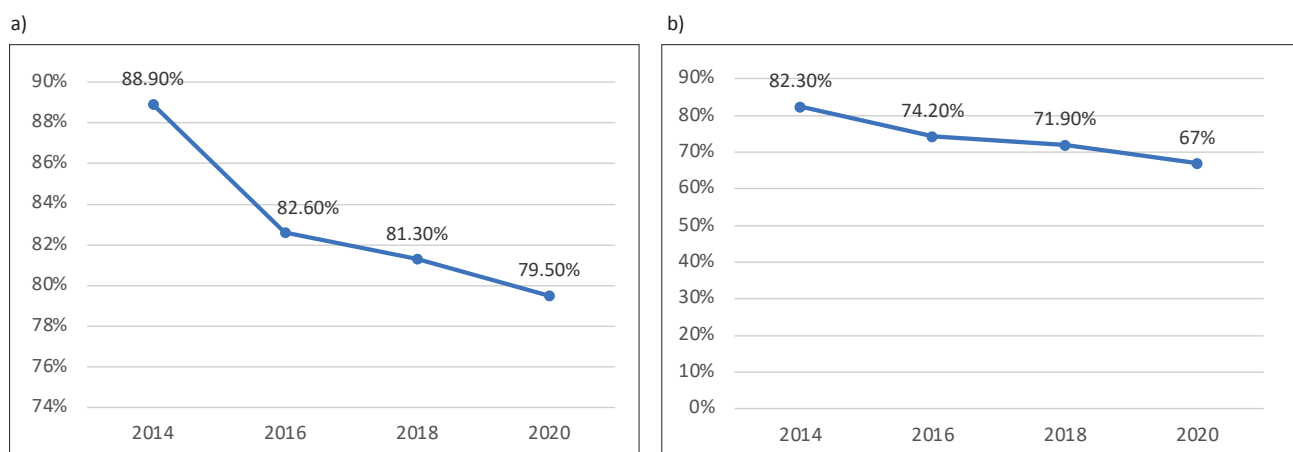
3.1. Impact problems

Before presenting the data on implementation, it is important to first reflect on the existing impact problems. The policy's relative temporary failure has already been noted, and this strong statement should be supported by hard data. In any case, it is important to highlight that transparency policies are long-term policies, the impacts of which cannot be evaluated immediately, nor, most likely, even in the six year-period that this study covers. Nevertheless, what is, indeed, a fact is that there is no success to speak of right now. To demonstrate this lack of successful impact, this paper will provide some data that attempt to measure the three types of impact desired.

First, it looks at data on the perception of corruption. Next, data on confidence in the institutions. Lastly, data on the perceived quality of government. These data are for Catalonia as a whole, as they do not exist at the disaggregated municipal level. However, considering that the *Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya)* in Catalan language) is, in general, the entity with the greatest and best implementation of the *Act*, as will be demonstrated, if, as a whole, its impact data are not positive, it is highly unlikely they would be positive where implementation is low or very low.

Data on the perception of corruption

To analyze this evolution, the successive surveys conducted by the *Anti-Fraud Office* of Catalonia on a representative sample of citizens from 2014 to 2020 will be used (see Graphs 1 and 2).



Graphs 1 and 2. Evolution of the perception of corruption in Catalonia.

a) "In Catalonia there is a lot or quite a lot of corruption"

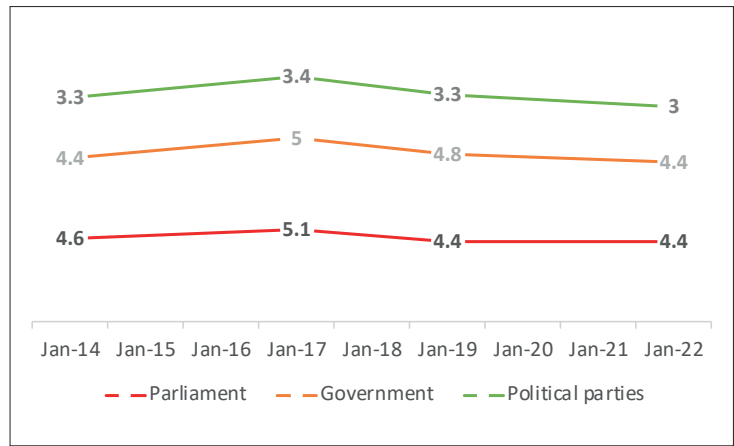
b) "Corruption in Catalonia is a very or quite serious problem"

Source: Corruption perception barometers. *Anti-Fraud Office of Catalonia*.

The data show a reduction in the perception of corruption over the years since *Act 19/2014* took effect, which, at first glance, contradicts the previous statement that there was no impact. In any case, the fact that almost 80% of respondents still believe that corruption is a serious or very serious problem conveys the persistence of this belief.

Data on confidence in the institutions

Next is an analysis of the data on confidence in the institutions, obtained from the *Centre d’Estudis d’Opinió* of Catalonia. Graph 3 shows how at no point in time do any of the institutions receive clearly positive scores (out of 10) and how, as a whole, seven years after the Act was passed, their scores are lower than their initial ones in 2014. The initial lack of confidence has not been overcome.



Graph 3. Political opinion barometer of Catalonia. Scores received by the Catalan institutions (out of 19).

Source: Centre d’Estudis d’Opinió - Baròmetre d’opinió política de Catalunya.

Data on the perceived quality of government

Lastly, insofar as government quality data is concerned, the *European Quality of Government Index* –developed for the European Union by the *Quality of Government Institute* of the *University of Gothenburg* will be used.

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/maps/quality-of-government_en

The *European quality of government index (EQI)* compiles the average of citizens’ perceptions and experiences of corruption, quality, and impartiality of three essential public services –health, education, and police– in their region of residence. Other areas of public administration, such as immigration, customs, or national security, are intentionally not assessed because they are handled at the national or even supra-national level. By focusing on these three services, the researchers ask respondents to rate their public services on three concepts related to good governance: the quality, impartiality, and level of corruption of these services. To do this, they develop a battery of questions. In addition, they include two more questions in the index: one on the impartiality of the regional elections and the other on the strength and efficacy of the region’s media in denouncing corruption.

Table 1 shows the evolution of the quality of *Government in Catalonia* from 2010 to 2021. The Spanish average is marked by the arrow that crosses the rankings. The reality is that these data do not show that the policies of transparency and good governance have had the desired impact on the quality of public services in Catalonia. Rather, there seems to be a deterioration in the quality of government in recent years. This deterioration is not common in Spain, and it gives rise

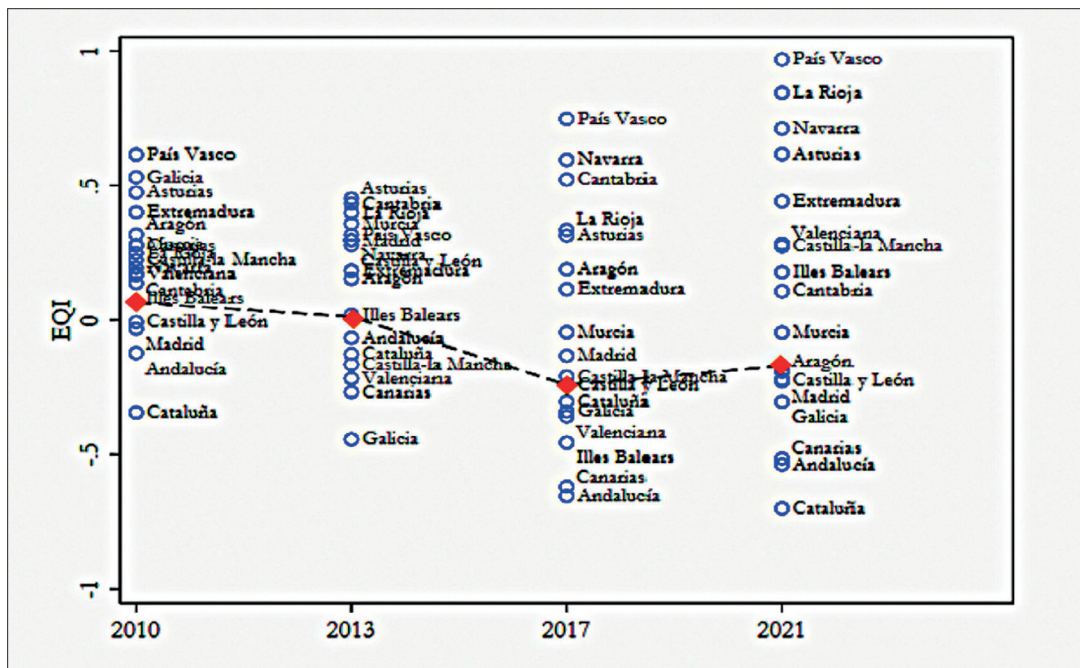


Table 1. Quality trends in regional governments over time
Source: Charron; Lapuente; Bauhr, 2021, p. 18.

to an increasing disparity between autonomous communities. Of course, this deterioration is not due to good governance policies themselves. Rather, by not being properly implemented, as this paper aims to test, these policies have not managed to stop the deterioration that exogenous phenomena have produced on citizen perception.

After an overall analysis, it can be confirmed that the transparency and good governance policy has, for the most part, so far, failed to generate positive impacts in the sense that the anticipated impacts of reducing disaffection and promoting government effectiveness have not been achieved. Only the perception of corruption has improved, a fact that is very sensitive to the existence or lack thereof of scandals during the period of measurement. Since there have been no new relevant scandals, this perception has declined. In any case, one can assume that the implementation of various instruments derived from the act has also contributed to lowering of existing expectations of corruption.

3.2. Active transparency

The assessment of compliance with the obligations of active transparency has been complex; as previously indicated, more than 2,400 portals were examined each year. Overall, the level of compliance has been quite high in the general aspects of active information from the outset. For this, the portal created by the *Open Administration Consortium of Catalonia (AOC)* and made available to interested entities has been fundamental. Naturally, since 2015, there has been a close to 90% compliance rate with the obligations by the *Government of Catalonia*, as well as in the large municipalities. One reason is that the autonomous community and the large municipalities were already participating in the competition which generated the transparency indices that *Transparency International-Spain* launched starting in 2008 for the municipalities and in 2010 for the autonomous communities. The information that was already being systematically published, such as that on procurement, was simply incorporated into the portals. However, new information, which required extra effort and the creation of new data that could then be incorporated, was not always included. Even today, in 2022, for these advanced compliance bodies, the content pending publication is the same as that which has already appeared in previous reports (citizen's charters, public service evaluations, and anonymized responses to citizen queries). Publication of citizen proposals and suggestions and anonymized responses in citizen queries are very low. The main reason is not that they do not want to publish them, but that the previous obligations that would lead to the preparation of these documents have not been fulfilled. In general, all this leads us to highlight the clear correlation between the fulfillment of obligations, with their inclusion in the portals, and the size of the administration or entity. Smaller administrations with fewer resources find it more difficult to meet all the active transparency requirements. This is particularly true when some of the transparency demands made of them cannot be met because the relevant reforms have not taken place, or the instruments required in the *Act* have not been introduced. Therefore, when some shortcomings are already observed in the large administrations, it can be predicted that in the small ones the shortcomings usually become failures.

Logically, providing aggregated data from 2,400 portals requires overgeneralization. However, it is possible to affirm that, save for a few exceptions, there is no information in a reusable format or which allows the citizen to interact. A large portion of the published data does not yet allow the public to print, export, or search information using minimally sophisticated parameters. What is worrying has been to see how the differences in compliance have widened over time, so a kind of double track of compliance has been consolidated: some of the entities bound by the *Act* are approaching full compliance in terms of content and others are stuck in limited compliance that does not make substantial progress (*Síndic de Greuges*, 2022, p. 17). This stagnation is seen in small municipalities, but also in the instrumental entities of the Administration, especially at the local level. It is true that the instrumental entities, in many cases, are very small and with very little personnel, which makes it difficult to comply with these obligations, but this does not reduce the responsibility of the parent administrations that should help them to comply with the *Act*. At the same time, there are instrumental entities that are extremely large, especially in the *Government of Catalonia*, in areas essential for citizen well-being (such as health, social services, transportation...) that should improve their level of compliance with the active transparency obligations, one of the essential aspects of *Act 19/2014*. Altogether, consortia and commonwealths (*mancomunitats*) accumulate the most deficits in compliance.

As previously stated, the portal created by the *Open Administration Consortium of Catalonia (AOC)* has been key to facilitating the implementation of the act, and, as a platform shared by many entities, it generates a common content structure, based on the standard's requirements, thereby making it easier for citizens to locate active transparency content. Even so, it is not used in a fully widespread fashion, which leads to a plethora of platforms that confuse users. Moreover, some municipalities use the electronic office as a transparency portal, which prevents citizens from locating essential information.

To conclude this section, it is important to highlight the weaknesses that we view as most important in this area. In general, the information that would allow greater control of clientelistic activities or conflicts of interest is the weakest. As mentioned in the report of the *Síndic de Greuges* (2022, p. 19), in all population categories, the absence of information

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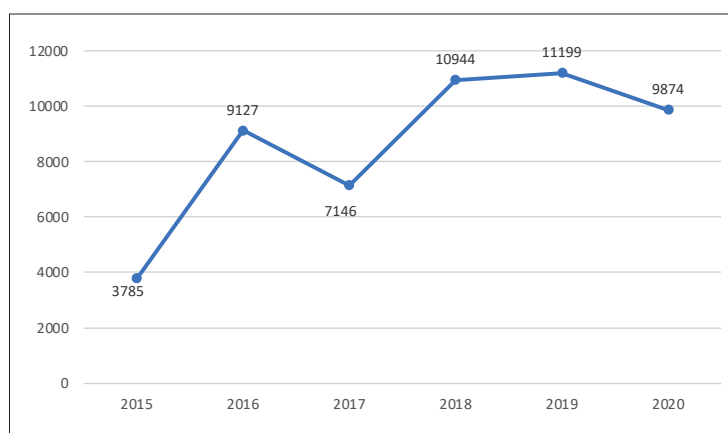
on lobby groups related to municipal public offices is noteworthy. This shortfall responds to the fact that most of the entities do not have their own register of lobby groups nor has the use of the registry of lobby groups of Catalonia or the publication of the agenda of municipal public offices become widespread at the local level, so it is not possible to determine the relationships of influence in the municipal area across the board. Another example is the publication of declarations of assets or interests. The declarations of assets of elected officials, from 2018 to 2021, in municipalities with 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, have gone from 50% to 66%. In those with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants they have gone from 16% to 30%, and in those with less than 500 from 12% to 16%. Regarding ethical codes, from 2018 to 2021, in municipalities with 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, they have gone from being published in 18.5% of cases to being published in 56%, in municipalities with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants from 19% to 33%, and in municipalities with less than 500 from 10% to 23%. And in statistical data on public procurement, only 7% of municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants comply with this obligation.

3.3. The right of access

Access to information is the transparency mechanism that allows anyone to ask the public administration to provide any information in its possession, without the need to prove any interest. Access to information is regulated in our legislation as a subjective right, the exercise of which is formalized and which offers guarantees both in the administrative field – through the complaint process before an independent guarantee body (for example, the *Council for Transparency and Good Governance* at the state level or the *Commission for the Guarantee of the Right of Access to Public Information*, in the case of Catalonia)– (*Catalunya*, 2014, art. 18) as well as in the judicial arena.

Access to information is, in turn, the mechanism for guaranteeing the principle of transparency insofar as it allows citizens to be aware of all information that has not previously been proactively disseminated by the public administrations themselves. Access to public information has been consolidated since the entry into force of *Act 19/2014*. In this regard, there is evidence of an increase in the number of requests for access to information received by the Catalan public administrations since they began the application of the transparency standard (see Graph 4). This is clear from reading the data extracted from the questionnaire prepared by the *Síndic de Greuges*. In fact, in 2016, the first year in which the *Act* was fully applied, 9,127 requests for access to information were submitted. Despite the fact that in 2017, the number of requests submitted decreased by 21.7% (7,146), the following year (2018), requests for access to information amounted to 10,944. Subsequently, applications rose again to 11,199 in 2019, decreasing in 2020 by 11.8% (9,874).

However, these variations have not been homogeneous in all public entities. In this regard, it is important to remember that 85% of the total requests registered in 2020 correspond to local entities and 13.1% to the *Government of Catalonia*. It should also be considered that, in general, local entities with a larger population receive more requests for access to information than smaller ones (29.5% for entities with more than 50,000 inhabitants compared to 1.6% for entities with less than 500 inhabitants). In any case, this situation is not linear, since there are medium-sized municipalities (with 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants), which receive more requests for access to information (24.8%) than large municipalities



Graph 4. Variation in the number of requests for access to information.
Source: *Síndic de Greuges* (2017-2021).

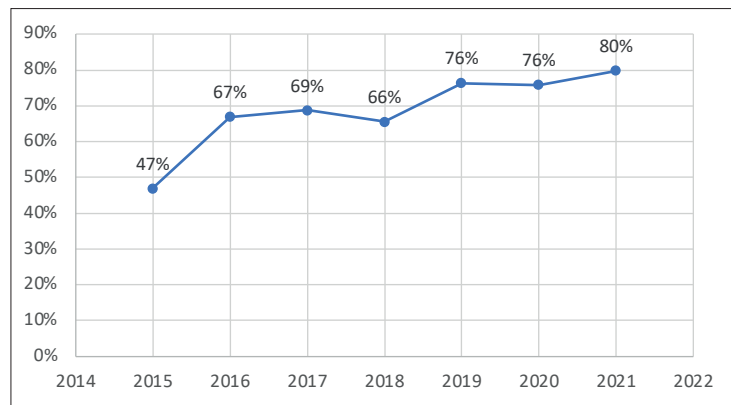
Table 2. Number of requests for access to information per inhabitant

	Requests received 2019	Requests per 1,000 inhabitants 2019
Andalusia	7,245	1.09
Navarre	315	0.61
Aragon	459	0.43
Extremadura	357	0.41
Balearic Islands	322	0.35
Galicia	746	0.33
Asturias	279	0.32
La Rioja	81	0.32
Murcia	293	0.25
Catalonia	1,286	0.21
Castile-La Mancha	296	0.18
Castile and Leon	337	0.17
Cantabria	74	0.15
Canary Islands	181	0.10
Basque Country	179	0.10
Valencian Community	360	0.09
Community of Madrid	nd	

Source: *Síndic de Greuges* (2022)

(with 20,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, with 12.7% of the total requests). It is also surprising that 35.06% of public entities in Catalonia did not receive any request for access to information. These were mostly entities with less than 500 inhabitants (52.85%). In fact, as the population group increases, the number of entities that did not receive any requests for access to information decreases significantly (4.35% in the case of municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants).

In addition, we can see that, although there have been a greater number of requests for access to information, Catalonia (0.21) is below the average among the autonomous communities (0.32), with a lower number of requests per 1,000 inhabitants, as can be seen in Table 2.



Graph 5. Variation in the number of mystery shopper test responses.
Source: *Síndic de Greuges* (2022).

Most likely, the above can be explained by the fact that the current regulation of the right of access has different limitations that can hinder the exercise of the right and its fulfillment by public administrations and, ultimately, the effectiveness of this transparency mechanism (Cerrillo-Martínez, 2020). First and foremost, the basic legislation has been very demanding in terms of anticipating the requirements that must be met in the requests (for example, the requirement to use a means to establish the identity of the requestor, which has been translated, in practice, into the requirement to use an electronic signature) and the steps that must be part of the procedure in order for it to be processed (for example, making a period of fifteen days available to third parties whose rights or interests may be affected to file claims). This has made it difficult to exercise the right of access, as well for said right to be processed by public administration. In fact, through the mystery shopper test, a process of deformalization of the resolution of requests for access to public information has been observed. Indeed, 36% of requests for access to information have been resolved by providing the information (e.g., by e-mail) without a formal resolution or communication. Although in 2020 there was a decrease in cases without resolution as compared to the previous year (when they accounted for 45% of the cases), it continues to be a sign of the need to reduce red tape.

Secondly, the time it takes to access information is extremely long. Indeed, as can be seen from the current legislation, the deadline for resolving requests for access to information is one month. This period may be extended by up to 30 days to provide the information in the format requested. This period is far from the shorter resolution periods envisaged in other neighboring countries, where requests for access to information are resolved much more quickly (for example, in Portugal it is 10 days, in Finland, Poland, and the Czech Republic it is 15 days, and in the United Kingdom and Slovenia it is 20 days, while in France and Italy it is also one month, according to data provided by Fernández-Ramos and Pérez Monguió, 2020). In any case, it cannot be ignored that, in 2022, only 66.8% of the requests made by the mystery shopper were resolved within the established period, although 46% of them were resolved in half of the expected one-month period.

Thirdly, the number of requests for access to information that are resolved is relatively low. At least, this is what the data obtained through the mystery shopper test indicate. They show that one out of every five requests for access to information do not receive a response from public administrations. Although the situation has been improving year after year—as can be seen from Graph 5—these numbers may be an indication of the unwillingness of some public administrations to respond to requests for access to public information or of the difficulties some of them face in doing so.

Fourthly, on a negative note, the number of public administrations that have adopted regulations to implement the provisions of the legislation and of entities that have equipped themselves with units to process requests for access to public information is low. Along these lines, the data obtained reveal that, in 2021, only 3.28% of the entities bound by the Act had an approved procedure for processing the right of access to public information. The same data showed that only in 7.35% of the cases analyzed had a unit been established to handle requests for access to information. In particular, the local authorities with the largest population reported having created such a unit (47.83% among those with more than 50,000 inhabitants and 36.36% among those with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants).

Taken together, one can conclude that the implementation of the right of access also has a dual track, where some entities progress and others remain stagnant. In addition, the right of access generates positive impacts when citizens get involved and make demands, whereas it remains a mere formality when there is no call for shared transparency.

“The evaluation’s design distinguished between the evaluation of active transparency and the right of access to the evaluation from the law’s other obligations”

3.4. Transparency of lobbying

The regulation of lobby groups is a key piece of any regulation of transparency, good governance, and good administration (Bernadí-Gil; Cerrillo-Martínez, 2017; Ponce-Solé, 2019a). Along these lines, one of the novelties that led to Act 19/2014, of December 29, was the approval for the first time in Spain of a regulation of lobby group activity. The main purpose of this regulation is to guarantee the transparency of lobby group activity in the development of their influence on public administrations, such that it is possible to know who the recipients of influence are, as well as the beneficiaries of it thereof. In Act 19/2014, of December 29, lobby group transparency is guaranteed through two mechanisms:

- the registration of lobby groups in a public register; and
- the publication of lobby group activity, mainly through the dissemination of the agendas of the senior officials with whom they meet².

Despite the novelty of this rule at the time, it has been found, in practice, that it has not been sufficient to achieve adequate lobbying transparency. Over these years, it has been observed that there are some problems derived from the rule itself which, in the absence of comparative references, included some provisions which, in practice, have been difficult to interpret (for example, the definition of lobby groups or of the influence activities that must be transparent), to comply with (for example, the creation of a registry of lobby groups in each public administration)³ or to enforce (for example, the sanctions system) (Bernadí-Gil; Cerrillo-Martínez, 2017; Cerrillo-Martínez, 2019).

Likewise, there are other aspects that were not clearly included by Act 19/2014, the regulation of which would significantly increase the transparency of lobby group activities (for example, standardizing the regulatory footprint) (Ponce-Solé, 2019a, p. 156).

All of the above must be assessed while also taking into account that the application of the regulation of lobby groups is complex and takes time to bear fruit (Bernadí-Gil; Cerrillo-Martínez, 2017) and recognizing

“the difficulties inherent to implementing a regulation of lobbying activity that has no precedent in our country” (Síndic de Greuges, 2017, p. 27).

However, beyond these difficulties stemming from the regulations themselves, the limitations that have existed in practice when implementing the provisions of the transparency legislation cannot be ignored. In fact, according to the data collected for the evaluation of Act 19/2014 of December 29, despite the great number of meetings Catalan public administrations held with lobby groups (in 2020, there were 6,619), only 22 entities published the contacts maintained on their transparency portal and 29 checked whether the lobby group with which the meeting was held was registered in the register of lobby groups. These graphs are more striking considering that 70.96% of the registered meetings were held by senior officials and managers of the Administration of the *Government of Catalonia*; this fact demonstrates how the implementation of the control of lobbying system defined under Act 19/2014 in Catalan public administrations, as a whole, is low.

Moreover, it is necessary to highlight how, in the case of the *Government of Catalonia* administration, beyond the entry into force of Act 19/2014, the decisive element for compliance with the publication of agendas was the adoption of Agreement Gov/82/2016, of June 21, which approves the *Code of conduct of senior officials and managers* of the *Government of Catalonia* administration and of its public sector entities, as well as other measures related to transparency, lobby groups, and public ethics. This agreement includes a protocol of action applicable to the relations of *Government of Catalonia* administration senior officials and managers and its public sector with lobby groups which stipulates, among other aspects, that

“senior officials and managers can maintain contact with a lobby group if its inclusion in the register of lobby groups has been verified.”

The protocol also states that

“before holding meetings or carrying out joint activities with lobby groups, senior officials and managers must verify that the lobby groups in question are listed in the register of lobby groups and, in the event that they are not, remind those who represent them of the obligation to request this registration whenever they want to act as a lobby group.”

Lastly, senior officials and managers are expected to incorporate their contacts with lobby groups into their official agendas. Another issue that will be left for future analysis is the quality of the information incorporated in the records, which is very low, since it provides only basic information, making it difficult to determine in detail the content of the meetings.

3.5. On good governance and good administration

At least from a formal perspective, the text of the Catalan act is one of the most advanced on these issues in Spain, both at the state level –where Act 19/2013 (*España*, 2013) only contains a reference to principles of good governance but no specific instrument for its effectiveness– as well as at the regional (Autonomous Community) level. Title V of Act 19/2014 is entitled, precisely, “Good governance” and includes several chapters: Chapter I, entitled “Code of conduct for senior officials,” Chapter II, “Right to good administration and quality public services,” and chapter III, dedicated to “Im-

provement of regulatory quality.” Despite specifically referring to the right to good administration in Chapter II of Title V (right provided for in art. 30 of the *Statute of autonomy of Catalonia*, as well as in art. 41 of the *Charter of Fundamental rights of the European Union*) (Ponce-Solé, 2019b), ultimately, good administration is only mentioned in the name of the *Act*. It is true, in any case, that the boundaries between the concepts of good governance, good government, quality of government (with the whole debate that goes along with it; see Rothstein; Teorell, 2008; Agnafors, 2013), and the aforementioned good administration are not yet too clear, which explains, for example, the confusing concept included in art. 2d of the *Act*, which mixes good governance and good administration.

3.5.1. Codes of conduct for senior officials

This section provides a brief analysis of compliance by the entities bound by the *Act* with the duties associated with promoting integrity in the public service sector and, in particular, those relating to the *Code of conduct and ethical clauses in tenders and grants*. Article 55.3 of *Act 19/2014* establishes that

“the Government, local authorities and other public bodies and institutions included in article 3.1 must draw up a code of conduct for their senior officials that specifies and develops the principles of action referred to in paragraph 1, establishes additional ones, where appropriate, and determines the consequences of failing to comply with them, without prejudice to the sanctions system established under this *Act*.”

The evaluation have consisted, first and foremost, of knowing whether the entities have approved a code of ethics (see Table 3).

Then, for those who answered in the affirmative, which barely reaches 25%, it has been requested that a link be sent where the code can be analyzed. Lastly, criteria have been established to assess the quality of the code. Specifically, the minimum established contents of the *Code* is shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Approved codes of ethics

Entities bound by the Act:	Yes	No	Entities
Administration of the <i>Government of Catalonia</i>	1		1
Municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants	15	8	23
Municipalities with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	29	15	44
Municipalities with 5,001 to 20,000 inhabitants	50	94	144
Municipalities with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants	88	315	403
Municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants	36	297	333
Area councils (<i>Consells comarcals</i>)	19	21	40
Provincial governments	4		4
Supra-municipal entities and regulatory or control entities	8	1	9
Universities	1	6	7
Overall total	250	758	1,008

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

Table 4. Minimum code contents

1. Establishment of ethical principles and rules of conduct consistent with the provisions of <i>Act 19/2014</i> , of December 29.
2. Development of at least the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of the agenda. - Definition of conflicts of interest and criteria for their regulation. - Guarantees of impartiality while in office. For example, the prohibition against accepting gifts, or protocols in case of holding shares in companies that contract with the administration.
3. Existence of an explicit system of adherence to the code.
4. Creation of an ethics committee that responds to requests for clarification and monitors compliance.
5. Existence of mechanisms for reporting breaches of the code with protections for the whistleblower.
6. Existence of a sanctions system for non-compliance.

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

In 2017, all the codes sent (161) were analyzed to test their quality. Subsequently, in 2018 and 2019, a fairly large sample was analyzed. Overall, it can be said that, of the 250 approved up to 2020, 56% met the quality conditions defined in the study. However, 44% still did not comply with them. It is important to note that there will be a substantial increase in the coming years, as the *Catalonian public service code of ethics* has been approved, as well as two codes of conduct at the local level (*Code of conduct for senior officials of local authorities*, prepared by the *Network of Transparent Governments of Catalonia* in March 2017, and the *Code of conduct and good governance for elected representatives and public officials of local governments and their institutional public sector entities*, prepared by the *Federation of Municipalities of Catalonia*). In short, copying the corresponding code will be relatively simple. It is another matter to ensure its implementation.

Compliance with Section 2 of Article 55 has been even less successful. Article 55.2 of *Act 19/2014* establishes that

“the administrations and bodies included in the scope of application of this Act must include, in the specifications of contractual clauses and in terms of grant programs or aid, the ethical principles and rules of conduct to which contractors and beneficiaries must adapt their activity, and they must determine the effects of a possible breach of these principles.”

To facilitate compliance, *Agreement Gov/85/2016*, of June 28, was passed, which

“approves the model of regulatory bases of the procedures for issuing grants by competitive tendering, processed by the *Government of Catalonia* administration and its public sector.”

After this approval, it can be said that, in 2020, almost 90% of the *Government of Catalonia* grant programs and approximately 72% of the tenders met this obligation. However, in the rest of the entities, the data are much smaller (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. Grant programs with ethical principles

How many grant programs have included ethical principles and rules of conduct in the basis for the programs?	Average	Sum of grants
Municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants	63%	368
Municipalities with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	19%	151
Municipalities with 5,001 to 20,000 inhabitants	37%	475
Municipalities with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants	35%	213
Municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants	17%	25
Area councils (<i>Consells Comarcals</i>)	30%	48
Provincial governments	64%	76
Supra-municipal entities and regulatory or control entities	84%	16
Universities	12%	34

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

Table 6. Calls for tenders with ethical principles

How many calls for tenders have included ethical principles and rules of conduct in the basis for the calls?	Average	Total
Municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants	91.6%	3,502
Municipalities with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	59.0%	830
Municipalities with 5,001 to 20,000 inhabitants	48.0%	1,053
Municipalities with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants	40.0%	1,364
Municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants	22.0%	114
Area councils (<i>Consells Comarcals</i>)	49.0%	361
Provincial governments	95.0%	471
Supra-municipal entities and regulatory or control entities	100%	418
Universities	55.7%	390

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

In any case, to analyze the impacts of these rules, especially on the perception of corruption, it would also be important to consider the approval on January 15, 2020 of the *Government of Catalonia's "Estratègia de lluita contra la corrupció i d'enfortiment de la integritat pública"* [Strategy to combat corruption and strengthen public integrity]. This ambitious strategy had 25 actions and 89 sub-actions that also included measures in the areas of integrity. Their implementation was completed in January 2022.⁴ After fulfilling a significant part of its objectives, it has been left, for now, without continuity.

3.5.2. Citizen's charters and good administration

Insofar as citizen's charters are concerned, a well-known technique of good public management first promoted in the United Kingdom in the 1990s (Deakin, 2009), as stated in *Opinion of the Spanish Council of State 219/96*, they make it possible

“to implement the principle of information for citizens and of publication of administrative action by achieving greater transparency in administrative action, with the consequent increases in the oversight thereof and citizen

participation, as well as an improvement in the efficacy and quality of the provision of services.”

Catalonian Act requires the mandatory approval of these charters, which must set specific standards of good administration (art. 59 of the Act). In addition, these charters become mandatory for the entity that approves them and regulatory in nature, so they cannot be modified by administrative resolution, only by new regulation. This normative character has been modified by Act 5/2020, in the new wording of art. 59 of Act 19/2014, which seeks to make its regulatory regime more flexible.

The evaluations carried out in this area identify two distinct levels of compliance. At the regional level, the approval of citizen’s charters is surprisingly low, while, at the local level, many more citizen’s charters have been approved, without, however, rigorously complying with the legal requirements, especially with respect to quality (Table 7).

It is important to note that one of the most laborious tasks of the evaluation has been to analyze the quality of the charters approved so far. To this end, parameters have been established with which to study each charter and give it a score of 0 to 10 (Table 8).

From this analysis, which involves a study of more than 350 charters, it can be highlighted that:

- In general terms (for statistical detail, go to the complete reports referred to in note 1), there is not usually full compliance with the minimum legal requirements, save for exceptions that demonstrate good practice.
- The charters rarely include reference to the fact that, according to the Act, they are of a regulatory nature and that the content of the citizen’s charters is binding on the Administration and users and can be invoked as a remedy or claim.
- On some occasions, the charter does include a clause exempting the Administration from financial liability for non-compliance with the standards, which would be inappropriate and illegal.
- There is often a reference to tax ordinances on the cost of the service, making it difficult for citizens to understand.
- A common practice has been to simply create catalogs of services, presenting the services provided but without setting required standards. The historical lack of tradition in setting standards of good governance required by citizens largely explains these results.

As for the obligation established in the Act on the evaluation of the quality of public services, an aspect closely linked with the previous one, the different analyses conducted show –based on the surveys carried out year after year– a clear lack of structuring of a system, adapted to the provisions of the Act, for evaluating public service users’ level of satisfaction as well as a failure to comply with the obligation to publish the results of the satisfaction surveys in the transparency portal.

Table 7. Approved citizen’s charters

	2016	2017	2018	2020
<i>Government of Catalonia</i>	2	3	0	0
Municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants	128	153	267	
Municipalities with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	43	47	125	
Municipalities with 5,001 to 20,000 inhabitants	39	2	42	
Municipalities with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants	88	172	16	
Municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants			25	
Area councils (<i>Consells comarcals</i>)	1	1	3	
Provincial governments	1	0	1	
Regulatory entities	0	9	7	
Universities	88	242	90	
Public entities				
Total				24 ⁵

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

Table 8. Contents of citizen’s charters under evaluation

1. The organization and way of managing the service
2. Identification of those responsible for management
3. The minimum service standards, broken down where appropriate by categories of services
4. The indicators for evaluating implementation
5. Access terms and conditions
6. Tools for evaluating implementation
7. User rights and duties
8. The applicable economic regime, noting any applicable public fees and public
9. Available complaint channels
10. The channels through which users may obtain information and guidance regarding the service

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

After an overall analysis, it can be confirmed that the transparency and good governance policy has, for the most part, so far, failed to generate positive impacts in the sense that the anticipated impacts of reducing disaffection and promoting government effectiveness have not been achieved

3.5.3. Improving regulatory quality, good governance, and good administration

With regard to regulatory quality, of note is the vast number of existing rules and the importance of simplifying them. At the beginning of July 2022, when this paper was drafted, the *Legal portal of Catalonia* had 996 laws, 7,682 decrees, and 17,924 orders in force, although in the latter two cases, the nomenclature does not guarantee that these are actually authentic legal norms. This well-known regulatory proliferation is also evidenced by the successive evaluation reports on the *Act* carried out since 2015. In this field, the analysis of the regulatory quality improvement (*better regulation*, in the language of the European Union), a key element of good governance and good administration, has also made it possible to distinguish here –as in the field of citizen’s charters, but conversely, as will later be shown– between two very different levels of compliance with *Catalonian Act*.

On the one hand, the autonomous government, where the *Government of Catalonia* has a specific unit that has been incorporated into the Department of the Presidency, which has been offering support for more than a decade to the other departments of the *Government of Catalonia*, and where the *ex-ante* evaluation, expressed in the development of regulatory impact assessments, as required by *Catalonian Act*, in connection with the law relating to the procedure for preparing regulations, *Act 26/2010* are well established. In any case, the *ex-post* evaluations have shortcomings, and this is an area in which the legislation is vaguer and development, in practice, has been non-existent.

On the other hand, there is the municipal level, an area where regulatory quality is very poor, and where *ex-ante* evaluations are quite scarce, not to mention *ex-post* evaluations, which are completely non-existent (see Table 9). The reasons for this difference likely lie in the absence of specific local units dedicated to better regulation and in the lack of public management culture in this area, as well as of staff trained in the regulatory improvement toolbox. The conclusions drawn from the evaluations of the *Act* have emphasized the important role that the supra-municipal levels should play in supporting the performance of these evaluations, which has yet to occur.

3.6. On the sanctions system

In addition to the internal controls of each entity, *Act 19/2014* stipulates that the *Síndic de Greuges*, the *Court of Auditors*, and the *Anti-Fraud Office of Catalonia* must ensure compliance with the *Act*. To ensure compliance, *Act 19/2014* provides for a complete sanctions system that includes an extensive list of violations in terms of transparency, access to public information, good governance, and open government. In this area, the *Act* also determines responsibility for the commission of the offenses established under the *Act* and defines the sanctioning procedure, specifying the competent bodies to order its initiation,

Table 9. Approved standards with a regulatory impact assessment

	2016	2017	2018	2020
<i>Government of Catalonia</i>	138	160	180	162
Municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants	46	96	66	40
Municipalities with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	80	26	84	10
Municipalities with 5,001 to 20,000 inhabitants	nd	21	39	39
Municipalities with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants	nd	318	109	47
Municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants	nd ⁶			10
Area councils (<i>Consells comarcals</i>)		11	13	2
Provincial governments		1	1	0
Supra-municipal entities		0	1	0

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

Table 10. Sanctioning proceedings initiated for non-compliance with *Act 19/2014*

	2016	2017	2018	2020
Municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants	0	2	0	0
Municipalities with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	0	0	2	0
Municipalities with 5,001 to 20,000 inhabitants	0	0	2	6
Municipalities with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants	12	0	1	3
Municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants				0
<i>Government of Catalonia</i>	0	0	0	0
Area councils (<i>Consells comarcals</i>)	0	0	0	0
Provincial governments	0	0	0	0
Supra-municipal entities	0	0	1	0
Universities	0	0	0	0
Total	12	2	6	9

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

Table 11. Number of sanctions imposed for non-compliance with *Act 19/2014*

	2016	2017	2018	2020
Municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants	0	2	6	0
Municipalities with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	0	0	0	0
Municipalities with 5,001 to 20,000 inhabitants	0	0	0	2
Municipalities with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants	0	0	7	10
Municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants			3	0
<i>Government of Catalonia</i>	0	0	0	0
Area councils (<i>Consells comarcals</i>)	0	0	0	0
Provincial governments	0	0	0	0
Supra-municipal entities	0	0	0	0
Universities	0	0	0	0
Total	0	2	16	12

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

guide it, and resolve it. One of the best examples of the weak implementation of some of the standard's commitments is precisely that of the sanctions system. The sanctions system was one of the most innovative aspects of the regulation as compared to the state regulation, which essentially fails to impose sanctions for breaches of the transparency obligations. Nevertheless, in general, after six years, it can be said that the sanctions system remains practically unused (see Table 10).

As an example of the low interest in developing sanction systems, it is worth noting, as far as compliance with Article 89.2 of *Act 19/2014* is concerned, the continuous delays in the establishment of the chartered sanctioning body provided for by *Act*. All of this leads to the fact that the number of sanctions ultimately imposed for breaches of the *Act* is practically zero (Table 11).

Perhaps, this certain feeling of impunity and uselessness when it comes to reporting breaches of compliance could explain why no headway has been made with complaints and why they have even backtracked, year after year, since 2017 (see Table 12).

4. Discussion and conclusions

After conducting an exhaustive analysis of the degree of compliance with *Act 19/2014* over a five-year period (no assessment was conducted in 2019), the conclusion is that the initial hypothesis did not fully come true. The data indicate that the application of this *Act* by the *Government of Catalonia* (save for a few exceptions, such as the approval and publication of citizen's charters) and larger municipalities is acceptable. Clearly, there is room for much improvement, especially with respect to ex officio investigation –or through complaints– of breaches and to the implementation of sanctions in cases that prove to be true. Nevertheless, for such a complex and demanding law with so many cultural innovations made to the traditional legalistic bureaucracy, the progress made with respect to transparency gives it a passing grade, and there is no clear failure in implementation.

Another matter entirely is implementation in the smaller municipalities and in the instrumental entities, where there is a tremendous potential for improvement and, six years after the *Act's* approval, there is a certain lack of effective application, especially in relation to obligations that are not channeled through the services and instruments provided by the *Open Administration Consortium of Catalonia*. On the other hand, there appear to be significant problems in the implementation of the mechanisms of good governance and good administration provided for by the *Act*. Implementation in this area is proceeding very slowly and appears to be encountering a culture of governance and administration that has historically paid little attention to institutional quality issues. This explains why the regulatory development carried out under the *Act*, for example, has not included any regulation of the crucial aspects of good governance and good administration (*Decree 8/2021*, of February 9).

In any case, it is important to highlight that the majority of the Catalan population has witnessed some improvements in institutional quality, from the development of active transparency to the regulation of lobby groups and the approval of codes of ethics. However, this has not prevented the distrust of institutions from being preserved and even increasing, the perception of the quality of government from falling to unheard-of levels, and approximately 80% of the population from considering corruption to be a fairly or very serious problem in Catalonia. All this leads to a new hypothesis for future research: although the transparency law is of acceptable quality and is sufficiently implemented in its specific elements of transparency, a lack of attention to the application of specific instruments of good governance and good administration can prevent it from having the appropriate impact. Additionally, there is the importance of exogenous phenomena, which generate polarization and break basic consensus in society, and which would prevent, even with more demanding implementation, the foreseeable impacts from fully manifesting.

This article has its limitations, as it has focused on a specific element of the theory initially outlined and has provided an essentially descriptive development of the application of *Act 19/2014*. More in-depth studies that address the causes of successes and failures of the existing implementation will help to provide a more complete picture. However, the authors believe that, for the first time in the literature on public transparency in Spain, a study of policy implementation with a strong empirical basis and comprehensive development has been provided.

Table 12. Number of complaints of non-compliance with *Act 19/2014*

	2016	2017	2018	2020
Municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants	0	17	19	18
Municipalities with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	0	13	8	5
Municipalities with 5,001 to 20,000 inhabitants	10	9	12	13
Municipalities with 500 to 5,000 inhabitants	8	33	16	14
Municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants				0
<i>Government of Catalonia</i>	0	2	1	0
Area councils (<i>Consells comarcals</i>)	0	0	0	1
Provincial governments	0	0	0	0
Supra-municipal entities				0
Universities	0	1	3	0
Other entities	0	0	1	
Total	18	75	60	51

Source: *Síndic de Greuges*

5. Notes

1. The documents with the data can be found at the following links:

2021: <https://www.sindic.cat/ca/page.asp?id=609>

2019: <https://www.sindic.cat/ca/page.asp?id=497>

2018: <https://www.sindic.cat/ca/page.asp?id=479>

2017: <https://www.sindic.cat/ca/page.asp?id=451>

2016: <https://www.sindic.cat/ca/page.asp?id=358>

2. According to data provided by the *Registry of lobby groups of Catalonia*, 3,819 lobby groups were registered in December 2020.

3. In order to respond to this problem, *Executive Order 1/2017* of February 14 was adopted to create and regulate the *Registry of lobby groups in Catalonia*.

4. See the final report at:

https://governobert.gencat.cat/web/.content/01_Que_es/09_Estrategia_integritat/docs/informe_final_estrategia_2022.pdf

5. In 2020, after analyzing all the charters sent by public entities, it was found that there were only 24 that met all the conditions. We did not include this question for.

6. The data provided were clearly erroneous in that first year of evaluation. When specifically asking local public administrations about standards subject to regulatory *ex-ante* impact assessments, it seems they provided the total number of approved standards, without consideration for what was asked. Once the questionnaire was nuanced and strengthened in subsequent editions, the number of responses dropped sharply.

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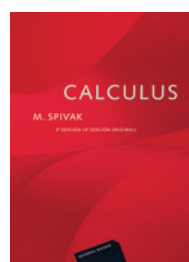
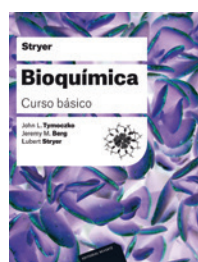
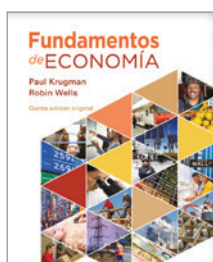
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