

# SPANISH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

María Lidón Lara Ortiz

Jaume I University (Spain)

[mlara@uji.es](mailto:mlara@uji.es)

## INTRODUCTION

**Introduction** - The Sustainable Development Goals are seventeen goals that the United Nations considers universal, transformative and inclusive challenges for humanity from an economic, social and environmental view. They are considered the main current development challenges for humanity. For its achievement is crucial the implementation of proper regulations and administrative policies that tends to sustainability.

**The aim of research** - The aim of the research is double: firstly, we will get to know the situation in Spain regarding the accomplishment of Sustainable Development Goals, and secondly, we will demonstrate de great relevance of promoting sustainability culture.

**Objectives** - This paper contains an assessment of the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Spain through Administrative Law, pointing out the main regulations, and the most outstanding actions taken through public programmes and plans proficient to perform great impact on each and every one of the seventeen objectives of United Nations. In addition, this work goes much further, since it shows how through Administrative Law, considered as a discipline, awareness about sustainable development can be promoted, as an example of social responsibility of Universities regarding the Sustainable Development Goals in each region.

**The methods of the research** - The research starts from a detailed qualitative analysis of each Sustainable Development Goal (hereinafter, SDG) from the point of view of theoretical Administrative Law and by case law, including the main regulations, plans and administrative programs carried out in Spain to reach each SDG. The qualitative aspect is obtained from specific seminars regarding each SDG in which the control group has an active role through collaborative learning techniques, that intended to encourage the autonomous learning about this issue. Subsequently, the research includes a quantitative evaluation about the impact of the legal rules, programs and planning initiatives applied in Spain, considering individually each SDG. The quantitative aspect is the result of a critical analysis carried out with the feedback from the surveys answered by the control group formed with those who participated in the theoretical seminars. The control group consisted of a total of 52 people whose assessment allows us to analyze the degree of compliance with each SDG in Spain. The quantitative results for each SDG refer to:

1. Whether in Spanish Administrative Law there are sufficient and adequate regulations to achieve compliance with each SDG.
2. If the SDG in question is fully accomplished in Spain through such regulations.
3. To what extent can more measures be taken through administrative regulation to achieve full compliance with each SDG. Regarding the previous questions, the control group was ask for indicating from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest degree and 5 is the highest degree about the existence of regulation, compliance or possibilities for future normative development.

## Theoretical background

“Education cannot solve all development problems by itself, but a humanistic and holistic vision of education can and should contribute to achieving a new development model. In this model, economic growth must be governed by respect for the environment and concern for peace, inclusion and social justice” (UNESCO, 2015: 10). Consequently, the role of universities, as centers for higher education is essential in training for sustainable development, due to its potential to transfer sustainable values, which contributes to fulfill the social commitments that universities assume. Administrative Law is very related with almost all the Sustainable Development Goals because the controlling role of Public Administrations are able for reducing harmful modalities of activities when impacting in development and also is very useful to promote new ways for sustainable development. In the scope of the higher education, teaching Administrative Law could suppose a difference for a more sustainable future introducing awareness regarding it. The main hypothesis that we support is the adaptability of the theoretical knowledge naturally contained in the subject of Administrative Law, with the transfer of a social awareness about sustainability, as a value add-on that could be determinant to preserve future advance on Sustainable Development Goals. So, this research has two dimensions, being the first one the assessment of the real current stage of achievement of the each one of the Sustainable Development Goals, and being the second one the demonstration of the adequacy of the Administrative Law as a discipline to disseminate knowledge about sustainability.

## Main findings

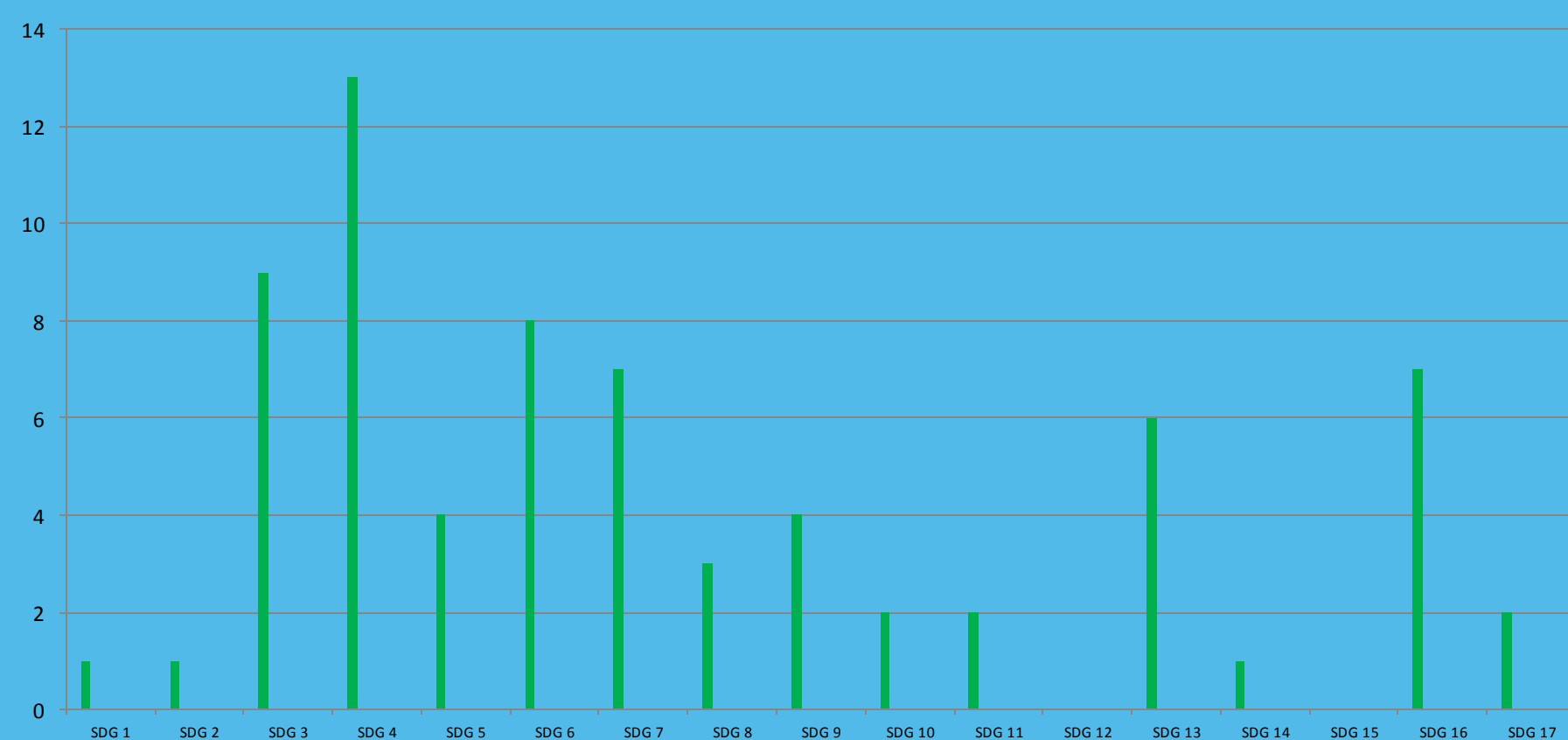


Figure 1

The global assessment offered by the control group in relation to the current contribution of Administrative Law to the achievement of the 17 SDGs, offers an overview of the current compliance in Spain. Thus, as shown in figure 1, SDG 4 (Quality education) is the most highly achieved by regulations, followed by SDG 3 (Health and well-being), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), SDG 13 (Climate action), and SDG 17 (Partnerships to achieve the goals). However, the students pay attention to the fact that there is less regulatory development in favor of other SDGs, with SDG 12 (Responsible production and consumption) and SDG 15 (Life of terrestrial ecosystems) being the worst considered, followed by SDG 1 (End of poverty), SDG 2 (Zero hunger), and SDG 14 (Life below the sea).

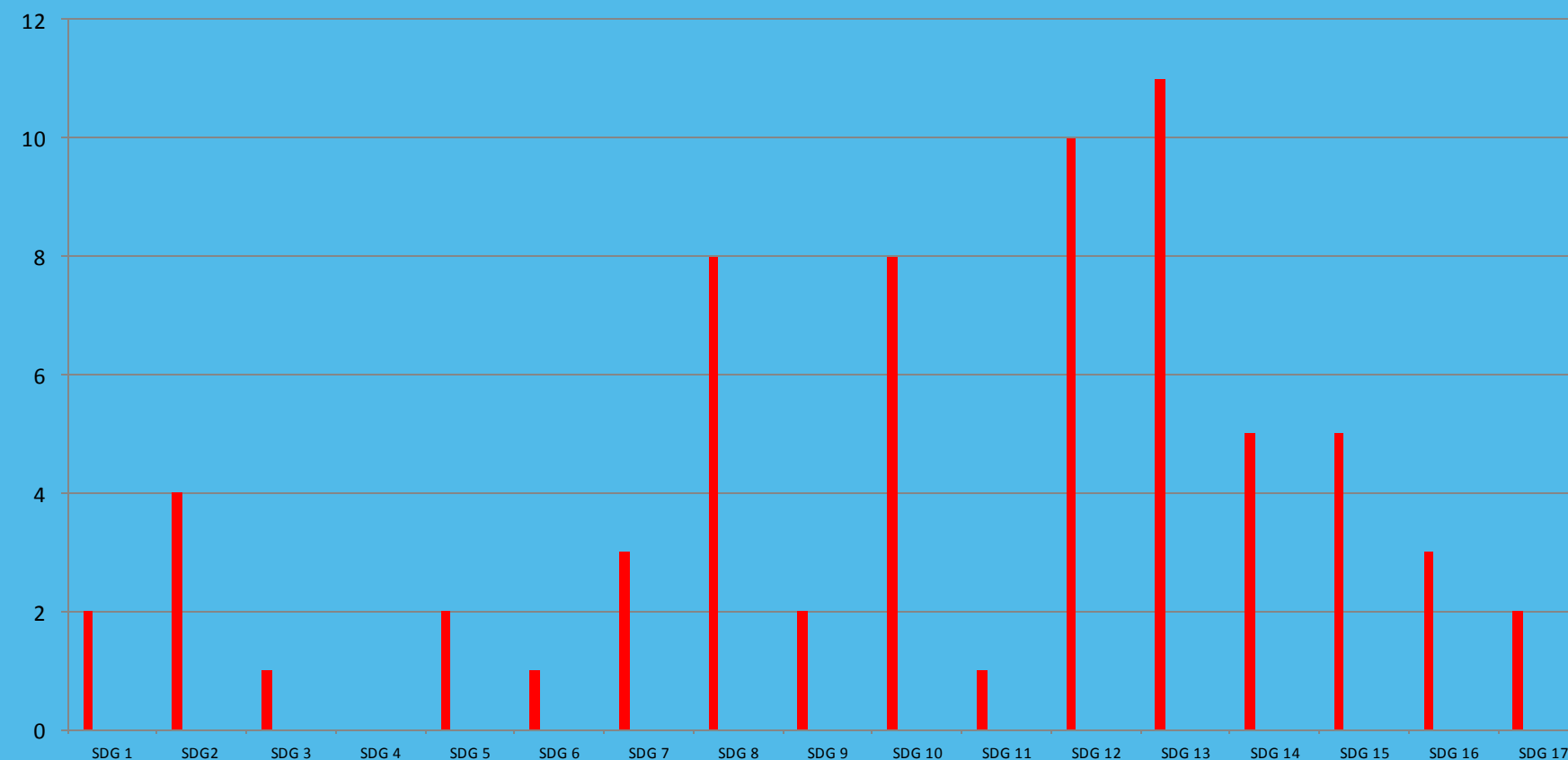


Figure 2

It was also asked in the surveys which SDG is furthest from being fully met in Spain (figure 2), confirming that SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) does not have sufficient regulatory development in Administrative Law to be fulfilled, surpassed in its lack of regulation for compliance, by SDG 13 (Climate Action), regarding which there is some regulation, since the control group recognize a medium normative development, but ineffective. SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 10 (Reduction of inequalities) do not have sufficient regulation either, in the opinion of the surveyed people. Coherently with the results shown in the figure 1, the current administrative regulation is quite adequate to achieve SDG 4 (Quality education), followed by SDG 3 (Health and well-being), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), and SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy).

## MAIN RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

This analysis reveals the degree of accomplishment of the SDGs through Spanish Administrative Law, which is analyzed both in the qualitatively and in the quantitatively sense. The results show medium-high compliance of the SDGs considered in general terms in Spain. The study demonstrated too that the incorporation of activities that allow transferring knowledge about sustainability in Universities produces the result of increasing the awareness on the subject, and training in critical thinking to achieve a sustainable future, as a manifestation of the social responsibility that the University owes to the society in which it is inserted. The innovative nature of the action described has allowed not only to assess the degree of compliance with each one of the Sustainable Development Goals through Spanish Administrative Law, but also to provide critical thinking to the control group and, above all, what is more important, to verify that the transfer of knowledge to future legal professionals has been done, and this will undoubtedly contribute to achieve higher levels of sustainability in the near future.