

SPECIAL ISSUE ON VIOLENCE AND COMMUNICATION [6/7]
Collective book “[SPECIAL ISSUE ON VIOLENCE AND COMMUNICATION](#)”

How to cite this article in bibliographies / References

T Núñez Domínguez, MT Arenas-Molina, ME Villar (2016): “How do they look? How come? Discriminate in the construction sector”. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 71, pp. 976 to 993.

<http://www.revistalatinacs.org/071/paper/1130/50en.html>

DOI: [10.4185/RLCS-2016-1130en](https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2016-1130en)

How do women managers look? How are they perceived? Discrimination in the construction sector

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Abstract

Introduction: Violence against women takes place not only in situations of armed conflict or natural disaster. It is also present in normalised contexts, and specifically in the workplace, in both symbolic and direct ways, and with devastating psychosocial consequences. **Methods:** This article examines the social image and self-image of women employed in the construction sector, based on the content analysis of two specialised newspapers and in-depth interviews with managers (11 women and 16 men). **Results and conclusions:** The representation of women managers in newspapers specialised in construction is non-existent. The analysis of their self-perception suggests that women managers do not perceive gender-based barriers in their career access and development. In order to counteract gender-based discrimination, more improvements are required on the image of women managers that is projected by the media.

Keywords

Discrimination at work; social beliefs; mass media; stereotypes; prejudices

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1. Introduction

Violence against women occurs not only in situations of armed conflict or natural disasters (Cotarelo Comerón, 2015). It is still present in normalised contexts. In particular, it is present in the workplace, sometimes in a direct way and many others in a symbolic way, but always with truly devastating psychosocial consequences (Urrutikoetxea Barrutia, 2013; Acevedo, Biaggii, Borges, 2009). This work focuses on the discrimination faced by many women in a very competitive and strategic sector: construction. The objective is twofold: evaluate the representation of women working in the construction sector in national newspapers specialised in economy and to evaluate the self-image of women working in this sector to determine whether they perceive themselves as being discriminated against in their career access and promotion possibilities.

1.1. Theoretical framework

The construction industry has traditionally played an important role in national economies due to its contributions to the GDP and job generation. The European Construction Industry Federation (2015) [1], which represents the businessmen in the European sectoral social dialogue, confirms the importance of this sector with the following figures: a total construction output of 1.211 billion Euros, and 14.11 million jobs in construction. Among the main challenges the sector will face by 2020 are the competitiveness of its enterprises as a permanent political priority, not only for growth and employment, but also for ensuring the sustainability of the sector (COM 2012, 433). Spain is also in this path, occupying the fifth position among 28 European countries.

In parallel to this economic reality of the sector there is another social reality to keep in mind: the presence of women in positions of responsibility in the enterprises of the construction sector is lower than that of men. This is confirmed by the organisational charts of the professional groups and associations, regardless of their territorial scope, from the European Construction Industry Federation to the Andalusian Federation of Construction Enterprises. A feminisation index of 9.07 represents a strong horizontal segregation and reflects “the reality of a sector that is still giving priority to the skills and attitudes associated with men, and therefore underestimating the potential of women in this labour market” (Infante, Román & Traverso, 2012, p. 40). The qualitative study of Andalusian women in the construction industry, published by the Andalusian Women’s Institute (2003), recognises two spaces with different value: the construction site and the office. While the first takes place outdoors, is visible and gives social recognition to those working in it (mainly males), the second takes place indoors, is invisible, is supra-represented by women, and lacks social recognition.

The characteristics of the business fabric of the construction industry also influence the greater or lesser presence of women in management positions. Thus, women are, fundamentally, working in large companies (Martínez *et al.*, 2011). Under the protection of the Organic Law 3/2007, for the Effective Equality between Women and Men, Román and Torres (2011) show that nearly 90% of companies with less than 250 employees are not obliged to develop and implement gender equality programmes. Moreover, in opposition to the legal recommendations, provincial collective agreements do not include equality measures.

Agudo and Sánchez de Madariaga (2011) make reference to the male model of the profession of architecture that limits the professional development of female architects and can be extrapolated to the group of women working in other areas of the construction sector. They describe a situation in which, despite the increased presence of women, male colleagues, co-workers, builders and customers are still not used to their presence. In the same line, the work of Román, Rios and Traverso (2013) examines the specific case of female technical architects. Mistrust in their managerial qualities forces them to work twice as much as their male counterparts in order to be valued in the same way in capabilities than *a priori* are implicit in men, like for example, leadership and competence in monitoring activities.

In relation to this female under-representation in managerial positions, we emphasise different metaphors that are linked to the glass ceiling in the construction industry. Thus, the “Crystal labyrinth” refers to the obstacles that appear simultaneously and from very different angles in the promotion of women to higher positions (Barbera, Ramos & Candela, 2011; Eagly & Carli, 2007). The metaphor “glass wall” denounces the limited possibilities available to women to move to higher positions as they are systematically encapsulated in staff positions. Meanwhile, the term “glass frontiers” refers to the difficulties introduced by the phenomenon of globalisation and offshoring of jobs in the professional aspirations of women (Burin, 2008). The fact that there are no social devices nor visible codes that impose such limitation gives these barriers their main feature: imperceptibility (Burin & Dío Bleichmar, 1996), which complicates their eradication.

Research on the causes of the glass ceiling (Fernández-Palacín, López-Fernández, Maeztu-Herrera & Martin-Prius, 2010) identifies the barriers of government responsibility caused by the lack of implementation and forcefulness in the application of the law; organisational barriers, which affect the practices of selection and promotion of managerial positions and barriers that operate outside the control of companies, related to educational opportunities and those caused by, conscious or unconscious, gender stereotypes. A prominent place is occupied by the responsibilities associated with the reproductive role, traditionally attributed and assumed by women for the maintenance of family life. Martínez, Guilló, Santero and Castro (2011), in their research on the career paths of women who occupy high-qualification positions, argue that the professional trajectory of both sexes is characterised by stability, although there are slight differences in favour of men. The analysis of women aged 35 to 44 recognises that their career is more unstable and discontinuous when compared with that of their male counterparts or with that of the rest of women. Moreover, he argues that instability is very similar in the career trajectories of women with and without children, i.e., the mere

possibility of access to maternity has clear adverse effects on these female professionals regardless of whether they get pregnant or not.

In the strategies for the eradication of the barriers previously identified, Estebaranz, Gallego, Ramírez and Rodríguez (2004) focus on the Andalusian women who have paved the way from their managerial positions in companies and institutions. They conclude that the achievement of the highest professional category occurs when there are no family responsibilities, which involves delaying motherhood or renouncing to it. Another strategy is to mitigate the double work-day situation through family and/or external aid, acknowledging the efforts these women have to make to plan and organise their homes. However, Calatayud *et al.* (2005) point out that meeting the practical needs of households and subverting the established order contributes to the maintenance of the *status quo* of the power relations between genders. In relation to the coping strategies of working women, Barberá, Sarrio and Ramos (2000) suggest increasing their visibility in working environments, mainly among those who can help them in their careers, learning to navigate the working environment and managing the unwritten rules that govern management environments as well as becoming part of the informal networks of real power.

But what about the visibility of women managers of the construction in specialised newspapers? It is relevant to examine this situation by taking into account that the media reinforce social beliefs and contribute to the re-construction of group identities (Piñuel Raigada, Gaitán Moya, and Lozano Ascencio, 2013). In the field of social beliefs and, taking them as an influential factor in organisational change, Sarrió (2004) highlights characteristics and skills associated with the feminine stereotype: ability to lead teams, communication and empathy skills, tenacity to meet the management profile required by current and innovative entities. This research contrasts with the persistent prejudice that associates managerial activities with stereotypically male qualities: *think manager-think male* (Shein, Müller, Lituchy & Lui, 1996) and opens the doors of organisations to women.

1.2. Hypothesis

There are two scenarios, one linked to female professionals and another linked to the press and the social image they project of women managers: 1. Women with positions of leadership in the construction sector do not perceive barriers in their career access and promotion. 2. Spanish newspapers specialised in economy do not represent women who are leaders in the construction industry.

2. Method

The in-depth interview is used to establish what women in executive positions within construction companies feel about their professional trajectory and to identify their career promotion options. We use this technique because as Vallés (1997:185) recognises, it “reveals the emotional and evaluative implications of the responses of the people under investigation; it should reveal the relevant personal context, the idiosyncratic associations, beliefs and ideas”.

2.1. The in-depth interview

We studied the case of Andalusia (Spain). The definition of the target population has been one of the most complex tasks due to the breadth of the universe of study. We chose an open sample, selected based on the saturation criterion established by the redundancy of information, with the objective of identifying the differences of cases and trajectories. The structure of this sample responds to three variables: sex, level of responsibility and type of entity. Thus, the variable sex includes women but also men, considering the male hegemony of the sector. The level of responsibility is directed to obtain contributions from people with decision-making capacity and influence in organisational strategies. Finally, the type of entity allows the analysis of the career experiences of people working in entities with diverse idiosyncrasies and objectives.

A total of 27 interviews were applied to women and men who are part of the highest governing bodies or manage the major delegations and departments in: public entities/ autonomous bodies, professional and business associations, and SMEs with national and international projection, as shown in table 1:

Public Entities (PE)

	Management. Urbanism area
	Management. Public companies
	Technical management
	Management. Legal area

Professional Associations (PA)

	Presidency
	Secretary
	Treasury
	Enrolment office
	Self-employed office

Business Associations (BA)

	Presidency
	Secretary

Private Companies (PC)

	Presidency
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	Council member
	Management
	Human Resources Manager
	Territorial Delegation Manager
	Technical management

Table 1. Classification of interviewees based on the variables sex, entity and managerial responsibility. Arenas-Molina, 2014.

The analysis of the interviews was performed with the help of the *Hyper Research* software, which facilitated the organisation, storage and evaluation of coded materials. The data produced in the interviews was transcribed and then subjected to a categorical system aimed to classify text fragments according to topics. The Delphi method was used for the final categorisation (table 2), with the collaboration of three experts in gender studies and business. The final objective was to have an interview-correction sheet that would allow us to obtain data, frequencies/percentages, on various aspects of the public and private life of 27 managers, 16 males and 11 females, in the construction sector in Andalusia (Spain).

ACCESS based on TUTELAGE	
ATm	Men
ATw	Woman
ACCESS based on COMPETENCY	
ACue	University education
ACm	Merits/curriculum
ACe	Experience
ACCESS based on OTHER FACTORS	
AOFo	Opportunity/chance
AOft	Time
AOFm	Mobility
ACCESS based on GENDER FACTORS	
AGFr	Entity is concerned over problems associated with women's reproductive role
AGFd	Higher demands for women (education, performance, etc.)
AGFr	Women reject the promotion
AGFop	Other prejudices
AGFb	Women do not perceive barriers

Table 2. Access and promotion Category (A). Arenas-Molina, 2014

2.2. Content analysis

In parallel, the study involved the analysis of two national newspapers specialised in economics (*Expansion* and *Cinco Días*), in their printed and online versions, over a three-month period (June, July and August 2016).

The criterion of general review and selection has focused on registering articles whose central topic is the leadership of women in the construction sector. To this end, we developed an analysis sheet that takes into account the articles devoted to women in any sector (politics, business, education, society, economy, etc.). Moreover, the analysis also involved the quantification of articles devoted to the sector, regardless of the protagonist gender, in order to determine whether construction is a topic of social relevance. Finally, each text (article) dedicated to women managers from the construction sector was analysed to identify the characteristics with which they represent these women.

3. Results

3.1. Perception of women managers

The results are accompanied by fragments of the interviews, and preceded by an alphanumeric code (00-M/W-ENTITY). We identified the sequence number of the interview, the gender (M or F) and the type of entity in which they work: Public entity (PE), Professional Association (PA), Business Association (BA) or Private Company (PC).

The interviewees mostly spoke about access/promotion backed by people from the management structure itself. In most cases, they made reference to male tutelage (ATm), while only one man manager from a public entity acknowledged the intervention of a woman (ATw) in his career development. In addition, it was confirmed that this mode of access is extended to all types of entities and constitutes the top priority in the case of women managers.

04WPA: throughout my studies I got to know people, building engineers who were part of the management [...] They chose me. They invited me to participate in the governing bodies of the Association.

26MPA: ... the desire to become part of associations arose when I replaced my uncle in the Board of Directors. I assisted him in some activities and he proposed me because he had the authority to do so.

06WPE: These outstanding positions are positions in which the person who forms the team has to have trust in you. Maybe you deserve it a lot, but if you don't have a connection with the leader of the team you won't be chosen.

48.15% of interviewees recognised that their skills have influenced their career path. 31.25% of the men managers and 9.09% of the women managers considered that their education was relevant in their access/promotion to the manager position (ACue). 37.50% and 36.36% of men and women managers, respectively, attributed their position to their achievements and curriculum (ACm). The most frequent references to education and merits were concentrated in the public entity and business

associations. Finally, only 25% of the men managers with roles in the private sector said that their executive promotion was due in part to previous professional experience (ACe).

09MPA: They said: “he comes from outside, has a degree in law, has these references from some companies that the firm advises, is on the list and has made a good impression”.

02MPC: Apart from my seniority, I had played virtually every role and had gone through the accounting department so, I do not know, I did not have to take an exam or anything like that.

When the previous results are accompanied by the knowledge about their entities and the sector, even in cases in which these factors have not had an influence in their professional careers, we observe that 70.37% of the interviewed managers identifies the possession of a university degree as a prerequisite. Similarly, 48.15% and 33.33%, respectively, speaks of the relevance of the curriculum and the professional experience when it comes to get a promotion (table 3).

COMPETENCY-BASED ACCESS			
(ACue) University education			
	Priority	Frequency	Mentioned by
	1	14.46%	75.00%
	6	8.03%	63.64%
(ACm) Merits/curriculum			
	Priority	Frequency	Mentioned by
	7	7.23%	43.75%
	4	10.22%	54.55%
(ACe) Experience			
	Priority	Frequency	Mentioned by
	5	9.04%	43.75%
	7	2.19%	18.18%

Table 3. Competency-based access. Arenas-Molina, 2014

23WPC (got access through tutelage): A university degree would always be required [...] it gives you a wider view, and knowledge about other things. It is not only what you learn in the specific subjects of the study programme, you also learnt to interact with other people, to work as a team, to take on a series of specific roles in those teams, etc.

05MPC: Logically, executives must be people with experience.

25% of the men managers and 18.18% of the women managers pointed out that opportunity and chance (AOFo) had an impact on their executive career. References to this modality come, especially, from private companies and their associations.

07MPC: It was then when a person in the company proposed me to leave to set up a construction company together. [...] it helped me to make the leap to start the business.

Also in this subcategory, 7.41% of the interviewees (men all of them), recognised that an exclusive dedication to the entity (AOfT) has influenced their executive promotion. However, regardless of their own experiences, 50% of the men managers and 18% of the women managers mentioned that the time factor is relevant requisite when it comes to access and promotion. Allusions are made by executives from the private sector and public entities who have previously made a career in private companies.

02MPC: Yes, the company took into account my commitment.

17MPE: I understand that there are fewer women, despite more of them join each day, but dedication is a serious problem. Time is very important.

03WBA: I think that time and the desire to dedicate part of your life to the company are more important in the decision than your level of education. So that is the only wall that we have.

13MPC: The access of women to management positions is very difficult. The dedication in my company, maybe without being written... In the subconscious, maybe yes.

10WBA: Yes, yes. Companies give it a lot of importance, more than they should in my opinion. I think productivity is more important than time. [...] it is very difficult for a woman to be promoted as a man because women cannot attend events, because they cannot be all the day at the bar making deals.

Finally, availability to work at different geographic locations (AM) has not been present in the career of any of the people in the sample. However, 18.75% of the men managers and 9.09% of the women managers identify it as a relevant factor. With respect to the variable entity, the references are made by managers from private companies and their associations.

26MPA: (On the Board there is just one woman) [...] I think the key is mobility, which affects intermediate posts and senior positions also.

The interest of the entities on the possible existence of family burdens (children) (AGf) manifests itself in a small number of cases. Thus, 18.18% of the interviewed women managers have spoken of this. However, allusions to this circumstance are present in 70.37% of the responses and occupy a leading place among their concerns, regardless of the type of entity in which they work. It is largely perceived as an obstacle in the executive career of women, but 12.5% of the interviewed men managers do not see any prejudice in motherhood for the professional development of women. In this sense, we have not registered any allusion by the interviewed women.

17MPE: family responsibilities are an impediment [...] The fear of many companies is: "I'm going to give her a responsibility and I'm going to put her in a position where, at a particular

time, she won't be able to complete a more long-term project because of another set of circumstances”.

04WPA: a woman's age, the topic of getting married, having children and other issues weigh a lot, a lot.

27WPC: To me, my profession has cost me not to be a mother, for example.

05MPC: There is another fundamental factor and it is biological. Women have and need to provide much more support to the family. Whether we want it or not, children belong to the mothers and this is set by God. [...]

Stereotypes and prejudices held by the top managers of the entities (AGFop) have played an important role in the selection process of 18.18% of the interviewed women managers, all of them linked to business associations. In addition, 62.96% of the interviewees identify or denounce stereotypes and prejudices about the managerial capabilities of women (table 9). They come from all types of entities although the highest number comes from managers from private companies.

03WBA: I have to negotiate with unions for a collective agreement that affects a very high volume of workers. [...] they believed that these negotiations with unions were too strong to be carried out by a woman.

08WPA: [...] they see us as more docile, with less leadership skills.

19MPC: The environment in which it moves, the idiosyncrasies of what construction work is, how people is... I think that all that is against the grain of women [...] I think that in general companies do not have anything against the female gender but there are different works.

Regarding objectivity in the assessment of male and female candidates to managerial positions, 54.54% of the women managers stated that much more is demanded from them than from their male counterparts or that they have had to prove their value just because they are women (AGFd). Regardless of their own experiences, 12.5% of the men managers and 90.91% of the women managers acknowledge that women are required to have higher skills than their male counterparts (table 10). In contrast, 31.25% of the men managers and 9.09% of the women managers do not notice this discrimination.

27WBA: I've not felt rejected by men but it has cost me more to prove my worth

04WPA: Leadership, ability to work, effort. And in the case of a woman, she still has to prove it more because you have to assert yourself more with those same characteristics [...] In order for a woman to reach the top she has to be highly valued while stupid men arrive every day. A stupid woman does not.

26MPA: I have also noticed that when a woman reaches that position in a sector as hard as this, it is because [...]. They are very experienced, very prepared. Well, I don't know if she

has been asked more but I do believe that she has had to sacrifice more and has had to prove more.

11MPA: Positions of that responsibility are going to demand more from a woman than from a man. What the employer wants is to company to work.

The reproductive role is mentioned by 27.27% of the female interviewees as being responsible for they having rejected a senior management position (AGFr), at some point in their career. Adding personal experiences and perceptions, we found out that 50% of the men managers and 65.64% of their female counterparts believe that women exclude themselves when it comes to access to the executive position. These statements are present in all institutions (table 11).

21MPE: ...The conclusion I always reach is that women have greater responsibility over the family and decide to prefer family reconciliation over a professional challenge that will distance them from family reconciliation.

45.45% of the interviewed women managers has not perceived the existence of specific barriers or insurmountable obstacles, faced for being a woman (AGFb). Added to these results is the belief, in the same sense, expressed by 31.25% of the men managers (table 12).

15WPE: I've never felt underappreciated or wronged based on my female status.

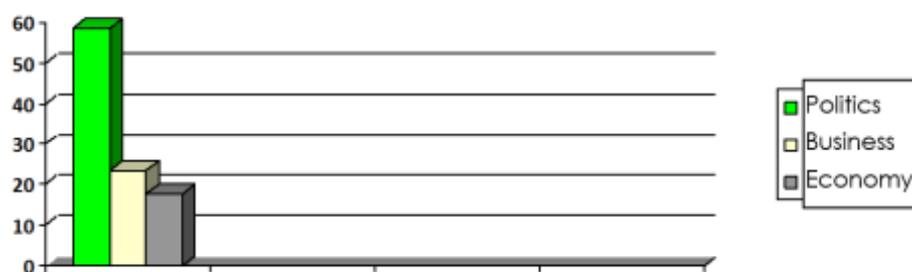
03WBA: I don't know, maybe since I finally made it I do not understand the difficulty to achieve this. You can do it.

02MPC: (There is not a single woman in his Board of administration and management departments). We don't have any type of discrimination towards any kind of woman here.

3.2. Social image of women managers

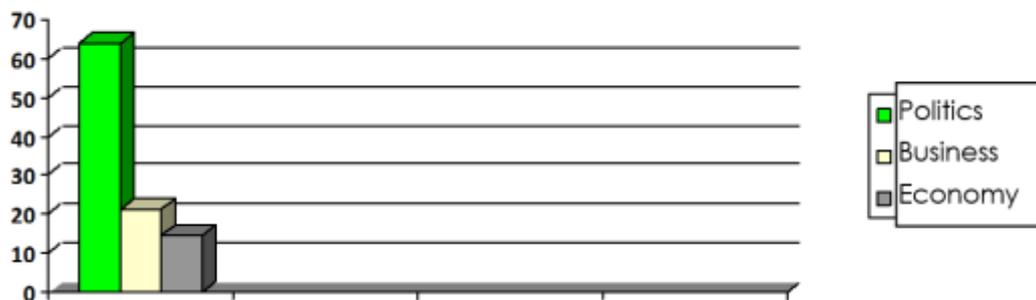
With regards to the representation of the sector and women in economic newspapers, it is important to point out that construction is not a relevant subject at the moment. Only 3% of the published news are linked to this sector. Moreover, women are under-represented. Only 8% of the published news have women as protagonists.

There are three areas where women appear in *Expansion* newspaper:



The only reference to a woman linked to the construction sector is Alicia Koplowitz. However, she is a high-ranking executive and a shareholder and not a manager as we have understood it in this work. In addition, in this case there are other attractive media annexes. Women related to politics are high ranking figures. Specially represented are the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel and the British Prime Minister Theresa May.

There are three areas where women appear in *Cinco Días* newspaper:



Both newspapers coincide in the representation of three female politicians: Clinton, Merkel and May, and a high-ranking female senior official in the area of economy: Elvira Rodríguez, chair of the National Securities Market Commission. The businesswomen featured in the corresponding news do not coincide.

There is one news story whose headline and body are not related with women but is supported by a large photo of a woman (who is not named). The headline says: “A strategy to replace the crutch of the European Central Bank”. The woman in the picture appears speaking in front of some microphones; she seems powerful. In this case, the woman and the activity she carries out are valued positively.

It is also noteworthy that this newspaper includes a considerable percentage of news with a noticeable negative tone. The following headline is an example of this: “Lagarde will be judged in France for Tapie case”.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis of the results shows that the standard selection practices used involve processes in which informal networks assume a leading role when it comes to matching labour supply and demand (Simpson, 2000). The largest number of references provided by managers supports Sarrió’s idea (2004) that the possession of contacts is more important for the case of women. The results also indicate that this does not change depending on the type of entity. Thus, the meritocracy of male and female public servants who enjoy equality of opportunities in access and promotion disappears in the case of high-ranking executive positions.

The main quality of the access based on tutelage is that it is mainly provided by males. As Osca and López-Sáez (1994) have suggested, we should examine the possibility that it is a self-induced phenomenon brought about by the influence exerted by dominant groups to maintain the *status quo*. In this regard, the Unified Good Governance Code of Listed Companies warns that this phenomenon will not be corrected if we do not adopt measures to promote diversity in entities. In this context, the reluctance expressed by women managers when it comes to empowering other women neither helps (Arenas-Molina, 2014).

Work schedules in the highest positions are designed, in general, within a masculine work universe and include evening and night working hours, which are usually not suitable for women with children. In this sense, the fact that this sub-category is particularly valued by male voices is interesting because it is men who identify it as an obstacle in the managerial careers of women, which constitutes, as Núñez Domínguez and Estebaranz (2014), “invisible” barriers that become explicit if one reads carefully. The point of inflection is found in the discourse of women, who feel uncomfortable towards this situation and bet on a change of model.

The belief that women prioritise family over work go beyond their experiences. It is installed in the ideology of men and women managers, causing distrust about their “total commitment”. Based on economic criteria and availability, which are associated to the temporary pregnancy or maternity leave, this behaviour is accepted, openly justified and experienced. In contrast, there are women managers who reject the attitude of companies and HR managers and assert the importance of co-responsibility for the partner. In the absence of references to this code, it is important to highlight that they are people without children and, by default, not affected by this circumstance or cases of male and female managers working in entities with a different management model, oriented to results, and not focused on inclusive and exclusive dedication.

In the environment of associations and private companies, there is also a constructed image of women, which is loaded with prejudices and stereotypes which, coinciding with Shein (1973), spread the belief that women are more docile and are not “tough” enough to cope, for example, with important negotiations. The analysis of their discourses identifies contrary positions among men and women managers. Males reproduce these messages detrimental to women, consciously or not, justifying and encouraging the perpetuation of the sector’s model of masculine power. However, their female counterparts, with some exceptions, denounce the existence of these myths and, occasionally, propose actions that contribute to destruction of that image that complicates their promotion to the top positions.

A third gender-based factor is the use of unequal evaluation criteria and requirements. There is a common denominator in the statements of women managers in comparison to the few references provided by men managers. Most women did not find it easy to reach their current executive responsibility. They confirm it through comments in which they brag about their achievements and their efforts invested to achieve success. Along with a very small number of male executives, women managers identify this factor as an obstacle in their careers. The lack of references and the non-

recognition of this inequality by male executives denotes their indifference towards an issue which, in some way, benefits them professionally. The combination of prejudices and unequal evaluation of competencies in the selection practices also perpetuates the *cement ceiling*. This metaphor refers to the self-imposed rules that make women reject promotions. Possibly, they renounce to the opportunity as a form of self-protection; not moved by fear or incompetence but rather due to an excess of liability or due to their desire to do a perfect job (inside and outside the house), which is permanently demanded from women. Women's self-imposed task of being perfect in all vital aspects is exhausting (Núñez & Estebaranz, 2014). According to the experiences of the interviewed women, in order to overcome it, they require motivation, ambition, organisation, capacity for work and the support of their partners.

The media are social mirrors, and have become a rich source of symbolic resources (Pindado, 2006) and that is why it is relevant to analyse the way in which they project groups. Identity as object of study is booming and transcends the personal realm; its relevance is macro-social. This is what allows people to recognise themselves. As a result, personal identity is everything that defines us as individuals.

This is a concept proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), who understand it as the part of an individual's self-concept that derives from the knowledge of his/her belonging to a social group (or groups) together with the evaluative and emotional meaning associated with this membership. These studies focus on analysing the consequences that being ascribed to a particular category or specific group of people has for a person. The sense of belonging to a group gives way to specific cognitive processes and reinforces the similarities with the group of membership or reference. At the same time, it highlights the differences between groups. These works argue openly that the sense of belonging to a certain group affects individual behaviour.

The underrepresentation of women managers in the two newspapers has consequences in the image of these female leaders, both as a group and individually. Both newspapers, although not purposely in our view, project a stereotyped male and female models and contribute to the perpetuation of biased values and norms. The stereotypical representation of the social reality ends up affecting not only women but society as a whole. Transmitting a limited image of women, and specifically of women in the construction industry, does not favour the economy nor social development.

In this line of thought, we can apply the concept of reciprocal socialisation. Winnicott (1993) speaks of a type of reciprocal socialisation in which children socialise parents just as parents socialise children. So we could argue that the image projected by the media about executive women affects their behaviours, but also that these women can influence the behaviour of the media by demanding to be included and well represented in them.

It can be concluded that women managers in the construction sector:

- Do not perceive explicitly the existence of the so-called glass ceiling in their professional field.

- They state that their professional competencies are what has influenced their career development.
- Recognise, but in an implicit manner that can be evaluated through their reflections, they worry about motherhood because it becomes an obstacle in job promotion.
 - They state that sacrifice, effort and perseverance are what helped them to break any barrier in professional development. Therefore, they implicitly recognise gender-related barriers and discrimination.

It can also be concluded that:

- The construction sector is of no interest for economic newspapers in 2016.
- Women managers are practically invisible for economic newspapers, and exercise a subtle type of social violence on them.
- Women managers dedicated to the construction industry are not represented. The newspapers only included a high-ranking executive but as a majority shareholder of a construction company, although she only appears once, in contrast to the eight times in which the name of her company appears in the headline.

The results reveal the complexity, subtlety and invisibility of these barriers that affect people, businesses and the media.

The study proved that women managers consider that, individually, they can overcome any adversity through dedication, merits or the strength of their desires. They do not explicitly recognise discrimination. It is very possible that this form of management of professional situations are not the most appropriate to break the “glass ceiling” in their vital and professional careers.

We believe that the media offer worldviews and determine and influence our positions and perceptions of reality, which contributes to the re-evaluation of our own reality, and that they facilitate the reconstruction of our identities, influencing who we are and the traits that define us as groups. For this reason, it is essential for the press in general and economic newspapers in particular to use women managers as primary sources and to point out that, despite the sector industry is predominantly masculine, women can ascend and become models for others. At the same time, it is essential to educate women and men with equal opportunities so that both of them can detect gender prejudice and discrimination in the workplace.

5. Note

[1] The following reports are significant:

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Key figures activity 2014 Construction in Europe. European Construction Industry Federation. Retrieved from <http://www.fiec.eu/en/the-construction-industry/in-figures.aspx> [visited on 15.07.15]

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How to cite this article in bibliographies / References

T Núñez Domínguez, MT Arenas-Molina, ME Villar (2016): “How do they look? How come? Discriminate in the construction sector”. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 71, pp. 976 to 993.

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DOI: [10.4185/RLCS-2016-1130en](https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2016-1130en)

Article received on 23 June 2016. Accepted on 29 September.
Published on 6 October 2016.