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The media and the symbolic violence against women

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Abstract

Introduction and methods. This research article analyses the structural violence that is exercised against women in Spanish society and the ways in which the mass media has contributed to this type of violence despite the existence of international and national regulations pertaining to the media and gender equality. The analysis, contributions and conclusions of this research study are framed within the ideas of feminist literary criticism. **Results.** Among the solutions that public institutions can implement to tackle violence against women the article highlights two that are especially relevant in relation to the media’s misrepresentation of women and society’s treatment of women. **Conclusions.** The competent public institutions must demand the media to meet gender equality quotas to improve the representation of women, and must provide media literacy from a gender perspective to the organised civil society.

Keywords

Patriarchal violence; feminism; mass media; sociology; law.

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Translation of **CA Martínez-Arcos**
(PhD in Communication from the University of London)

1. Introduction

Violence against women is a social global phenomenon. No society is free from this type of violence. The idea that has circulated for a long time is that the natural habitat of male violence is heterosexual relationships. However, patriarchal violence is not limited to physical attacks in the sphere of interpersonal relations, because women are also the object of symbolic and material forms of violence. The first type of violence includes the media's persistent dissemination of messages that sexualise women and devalue femininity. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. The production of violence is linked to strong structures of inequality, discrimination and oppression.

Feminism, as a theory and political practice, has worked in the identification of explicit and hidden types of violence. It has fought against symbolic and material violence since the 1970s. The discourse of the violence against women that originates in the patriarchal imaginary depoliticises violence as it ignores its causes, darkens its roots and masks the power relations that underpin violence.

The media in general and television in particular are material structures that reproduce symbolic patriarchal violence not only through gender stereotypes and roles but also through the invisibilisation of women. Against this process of information distortion, there is a regulatory framework that contains two significant strategies that are used in this study to approach the material equality between men and women: gender representation quotas for the media and media literacy.

2. Methodological questions

Violence against women is a complex social phenomenon that has been insufficiently explained from the different paradigms of the social sciences. The keys to understand patriarchal violence are found in the feminist interpretive framework. Feminist theorists have built an explanatory framework to analyse and explain the different forms of patriarchal violence. In recent decades, a theoretical body has been built to account for this social phenomenon. However, as Celia Amorós points out, in feminist theory *to conceptualise is to politicise* (Amorós, 2008). That is why feminist theoretical analyses have a close relationship to the political practices that take place in the framework of the civil society and the State:

“There are many feminists who have been building the theoretical, practical and political body that we have today to understand violence and its consequences in the lives of women. This knowledge has been built in a labyrinthine and interwoven network of sciences, disciplines and experiences, in

close interrelation between feminist female activists, researchers, teachers, politicians, technicians and professionals from different countries and continents. Much of the knowledge that we have today has come from the stories of abusive relationships told by women” (Nogueiras, 2015: 73).

In other terms, theoretical research and political intervention are necessary to disable the practices of male violence.

Researchers on violence against women need to actually make such “feminist” questions as: why men kill women and not vice versa? Why is it that men sexually harass women and not the other way around? Why are women raped in wars and genitally mutilated in the name of their culture but men are not subject to similar practices? Why the sex industry treats women as goods for men and why it constitutes a fundamental sector in the new neoliberal capitalism? Why do the media systematically reproduce gender roles and stereotypes, and poorly report on gender-based violence? As a way of anticipated information, it is important to mention that male violence is deeply rooted in the patriarchal culture of contempt for women.

Today’s feminist theory is the result of intellectual contributions of different sciences and disciplines. The social sciences have formulated feminist analyses that converge on a theoretical perspective that illuminates the dimensions of social reality in which women are present. Indeed, “feminist theory, by providing a new way of questioning reality, has coined new analytical categories that seek to explain aspects of reality that had not been taken into account until the social aspect of gender was revealed” (Cobo, 2000).

From the perspectives of sociology, law and communication, this work aims to contribute to the commitment of feminist literary criticism to the construction of a fairer society (Rald, 1996) and to the efforts of the feminist movement [1].

3. The structural character of patriarchal violence and the mass media

The origin of the violence against women can be found in the symbolic and material structures that underpin patriarchy. To this end, feminism needs to identify the sources of violence against women and reject the definition and limits of violence offered by the patriarchal elites, and governments in particular, even those that are progressive. While it is true that in some societies violence has become a powerful signifier in the public sphere (Marugán and Vega, 2002), in this age of patriarchal reaction this signifier has been deprived of the theory that conceptualised it and the social movement that turned it into a politician issue. Contemporary feminism must take control of the narrative about violence against women to counteract the ideological hegemony that has conquered the most patriarchal sectors of society.

3.1. Structural violence

Societies are composed of material and symbolic structures, of institutions and ideas, of social stratifications and definitions. In order for societies to work harmonically and without conflicts there must be consistency between both structures. The collective imaginary must be adapted to the institutional frameworks and there must be congruence between the social definitions and the social

structure, between the collective imaginary and social life. According to Peter Berger, if this correspondence is broken a crisis of plausibility will emerge. In other words, the lack of correspondence between the symbolic and material spheres leads to a crisis of legitimacy, to conflicts and possible spaces of social decay and disorder.

The constitution and formation of the material and symbolic realities have their origin in the deepest roots of the violence against women. Simultaneously, in the lack of correspondence between both realities, in the inconsistencies and incongruities we can find emancipatory practices to address male violence.

3.1.1. Symbolic structures

Every society has a symbolic centre where the dominant values of society are settled. This symbolic centre is linked to different instances of socialisation. It covers the world of social definitions, from prejudices to the great scientific and religious constructions. Socialising mandates arise from this space and that is why the former underpin individual and collective subjectivities. Socialisation is a central tool in the constitution of subjectivity while social definitions underpin the collective patriarchal imaginary.

The symbolic centre of society has a core and also a periphery. The values, which settle at the core of this symbolic space, are enshrined to get them out of the social and political debate. It is, precisely, for this reason that those values should convey the idea that they are part of a natural order of things that is impossible of alter. Society is based on the values nested at the heart of the symbolic space and it would cease to be what it is without them. For example, the idea of private property and gender hierarchy built as different and complementary regulations are placed at the centre of this symbolic space.

This symbolic space brews the unconscious complicity of the oppressed with the oppressor, which facilitates the hegemony of men. For this reason, the values rooted in the social symbolic centre constitute the basis of the social consensus. When the symbolic structures work properly, the consensus is guaranteed while the origin of male violence is obscured. Consensus brings with it the 'acceptance' of dominance by those who are dominated. Of course, that dominance is not conscious and the success of patriarchy and the conditions of its self-reproduction lie precisely there. In other words, violence and control are two faces of the same coin. Patriarchal violence, the invisible one, is not an anomie nor a dysfunction of the system. It is building block of the system. For this reason, the patriarchal system cannot survive without violence. And for this reason, its symbolic and materials are deeply coercive.

Thus, this symbolic world hosts one of the fundamental knots of the violence against women, despite the fact that it appears as a non-violent and, thus, non-political reality.

3.1.2. Material structures

The material structures of society are the set of institutional and social realities that make up any human community. Economic, political, cultural, sexual, ethnic, racial and gender relations are

engraved in material structures, but how can we identify them? In turn, material structures are configured by social realities like the political power, the economic-financial sector, the labour market, family, unpaid domestic work, the political, trade and professional organisations, the new social movements, religious institutions, the media, cultural practices and networks of diverse associations, among others. Meanwhile, the set of social relations are materialised in a complex network of social stratifications and hierarchies that lead to areas of inequality.

These material structures are built not only to strengthen the capitalist logic and to prevent the State from creating mechanisms and devices to regulate the capital, but also to install the gender hierarchy in each of the material structures.

The fundamental characteristic of these material structures, or “social facts” in the words of Durkheim, is their coercive character. All material structures are coercive even for people who identify with these social realities, although these people would only perceive these structures if they wanted to escape from them. These material realities are significantly coercive with women. In fact, when society creates devalued patterns of representation that suggest their inferiority, it engraves the hierarchy of gender in the material structures.

In fact, these structures are the basis of coercion. And their mechanisms are configured as instances of violence when they exclude, prohibit or stereotype women. However, the stereotyped representation of women in the media, among other social realities, appears as structures of non-violence. They appear as naturalised structures and as part of a natural order of things beyond human control, whose location is beyond the social realm. These structures are enshrined in order to leave them out of the political debate.

Both the symbolic and material structures are inexhaustible sources of violence against women, but they are not questioned because they have the brand of legitimacy that provides what patriarchal society defines as natural. This symbolic and material violence is, therefore, structural and its central nerve is instrumental. The system is organised in a way that allows the patriarchal structures to be reproduced and the mechanisms of self-reproduction to be masked. Therefore, it is instrumental violence.

3.2. Television: as reproducer of symbolic violence

The media, especially television as one of the most important instruments of socialisation, contribute decisively to the perpetuation of a patriarchal system characterised by the subordination of women to men through the dissemination of gender stereotypes and roles. This translates into the reproduction of a situation of inequality that is known as structural discrimination [2]. In addition, the exercise of violence is often ignored by the public in general, especially the media because, as Cynthia Carter has pointed out, it does not meet the news criteria, and because it is perceived as something that people should not worry about (Carter, 2004).

The gender category does not refer to women but to the way in which the identities of men and women and the relations between them have been built [3]. These cultural constructions are expressed and communicated primarily through gender stereotypes and roles.

In this sense, the media's reproduction of stereotypes – understood as sets of simplified beliefs, images and ideas about the characteristics of groups of people commonly accepted by a group or society- and the reproduction of roles -understood as hyper-simplified opinions, socially and culturally rooted on the attributes and characteristics of men and women- reinforces inequality between women and men and, thus, the violence against women. In fact, inequality between women and men through gender stereotypes and roles can lead to inequality, discrimination and violence against women (López 2007; Simón 2010).

Complementary to the function that gender roles and stereotypes perform in the reproduction of structural violence, the invisibilisation of women in the news is a fundamental factor. The analysis of the speaking times given to men and women in television news programmes allows us to draw quantitative and qualitative conclusions. To do this, we must take into account women's interventions in the news, the percentage of the interviewed female experts, the percentage of women who appear without identification, as well as the presence of women in such areas as education, health, sports, politics, accidents, etc.

Thus, “news programmes promote a stereotyped image because the views and opinions of men and women are concentrated on the issues and roles that have been traditionally assigned to them, and which are conditioned by advertising, education, health, social themes and, especially, gender-based violence” (Morillo, 2015).

3.2.1. The legal regime surrounding television in the Spanish legal system

The legal regime of television in the Spanish legal system is characterised by the existence of a retention of title clause. The rationale for this clause, made explicit in article 128.2 of the Constitution, is the designation of broadcasting and television as essential public services.

After the passing of the General law 7/2010, of 31 March, on Audiovisual Communication, private audiovisual media are no longer considered public services but general interest services. Only public media continue to be considered public services.

The designation of public television as essential public service -regardless of their direct or indirect management – and of private media as general interest service, has many consequences, including: 1) the *functionalisation* of the communicative freedoms contained in article 20 of the Constitution and 2) the existence of common principles to govern the activity of the media.

3.2.1.1. General-interest public services and communicative freedoms

According to the consolidated jurisprudence of the Spanish Constitutional Court, the freedoms recognised in article 20.1 a) and d) are not only fundamental rights, but also guarantees of the existence of a free public opinion, which is a fundamental political institution, inextricably linked to political pluralism, which is in turn a fundamental value and a requirement for the existence of the Democratic State [4].

As a logical consequence of this institutional design, the aforementioned freedoms are given superior value and radiant efficiency, which transcends the common and characteristic value of other fundamental rights, which are subjected, however, to the concurrence of certain conditions and requirements:

“The predominant value of the public freedoms of article 20 of the Constitution can only be protected when the freedoms are exercised in connection with matters of general interest based on the issues and the people they pertain and consequently contribute to the formation of public opinion, thus reaching their maximum level of justificatory effectiveness” [5]

The validity of the dual-dimension theory of fundamental rights, which conceives these such rights as both negative subjective rights and guarantees of an order of values, is consecrated by our constitutional jurisprudence, with respect to the freedoms of expression and, in general, the freedoms contained in article 20 of the Constitution. [6]

Constitutionally configured in this way, the freedom of expression and the right to communication and information have a dual function: on the one hand, they work as guarantee of the individual freedom in the dissemination of information -the subjective dimension- and, on the other, operate as a functional basis of democracy, since they guarantee the creation and existence of the free public opinion -the objective dimension-. Thus, the exercise of the communicative freedoms by the media is privileged, taking into account, almost exclusively, the function of the provision of public information services to citizens and the formation of a free public opinion, which is the function of institutional guarantee performed by the media.

However, the fact that the media often –and in most cases- are profit-seeking commercial companies is evaded despite their designation as general-interest services. This is in addition to the media’s progressive abandonment of its traditional primary functions of education and information, in favour of the strengthening of the entertainment function, which privileges the primacy of the objective of economic profitability. In fact, the General Law on Audiovisual Communication itself camouflages this business dimension when establishing that:

“they are general interest services that are provided in the exercise of the right to the free expression of ideas, the right to communicate and receive information, the right to participate in political and social life and the right to freedom of enterprise and within the framework of promotion of equality, plurality and democratic values.”

3.2.1.2. Configuration of the limits of communicative freedoms

Article 20.4 of the Spanish Constitution establishes certain explicit limits to the communicative freedoms, which basically are the respect of other people’s rights, recognised in Title I (in the precepts of the laws that develop it) and the right to honour, personal and family privacy, personal image, and the protection of youth and childhood. In addition, we have to bear in mind that the limits imposed to the aforementioned freedoms involves the respect to the superior values of the Spanish legal system, which include equality. To this we must add the limits established in the community and international legislation [7].

In this regard, it should be noted that the General Law on Audiovisual Communication provides, since its preamble, its aspiration to promote a more inclusive and equitable society, specifically in relation to the prevention and elimination of gender-based discrimination, in the framework of the provisions relating to advertising and the media, in the Organic Law 1/2004, of 28 December, on Integrated Protection Measures Against Gender-Based Violence, and the Organic Law 3/2007, of 22 March, for effective equality between of women and men. For its part, article 4.2 establishes that:

“Audiovisual communication can never incite hatred or discrimination based on gender or any personal or social circumstances and must be respectful of human dignity and the constitutional values, with special attention to the eradication of conducts that favour situations of inequality for women.”

Also, apart from the provisions of the General Law on Advertising with respect to illicit advertising, article 18.1 prohibits all commercial communication “that violates human dignity or promotes discrimination based on sex, race or ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” as well as “any advertising that uses degrading or discriminatory images of women”.

3.2.2. Equality between women and men: value, principle, right

Gender equality, in the framework of human rights, is protected as a right by international legislation, which also establishes the obligation of public authorities to promote it. The United Nations has been meticulous on the documents that establish the human rights of women [8].

Along the developments at the regional European system for the protection of human rights, is the activity of the Council of Europe. In General, the Istanbul Convention [9] stands out since its article 17 expects the private sector and the media to participate in the following terms:

1. The Parties will encourage the private sector, the information and communication technologies sector and the media industry, while respecting the freedom of expression and their independence, to participate in the elaboration and implementation of policies, as well as to establish guidelines and self-regulation standards to prevent violence against women and strengthen the respect for their dignity.
2. The Parties will develop and promote, in cooperation with actors of the private sector, the capabilities of children, parents and educators to face an environment of information and communication technologies that gives access to degrading contents of sexual or violent character that can be harmful.

The specific instruments on gender equality and the media that emanate from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [10] are the resolution 1557 (2007) and the Recommendation 1799 (2007) on the image of women in advertising; the Recommendation 1555 (2002) on the Image of the woman in the media (2007), and the Resolution 1751 (2010) [11], on combating sexist stereotypes sexist in the media”, which states that:

“The sexist stereotypes conveyed vary from humour and clichés in the traditional media to incitement to gender-based hatred and violence on the Internet. Sexist stereotypes are too frequently

trivialised and tolerated under the banner of freedom of expression. Furthermore, these stereotypes are often subtly conveyed by the media which reproduce the attitudes and opinions seen as the norm in societies where gender equality is far from reality. Accordingly, all too often, court action cannot be taken against sexist stereotypes nor can they be penalised by regulatory or self-regulatory authorities, except in cases of the most serious violations of human dignity”.

Among the relevant recommendations of the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe [12], the recent CM/Rec (2013)1 of 10 July 2013 on “Gender equality and the media” is accompanied by “recommended measures” targeting both the States members as the media organisations, and calls for the implementation of measures, such as

- Accountability mechanisms
- Media literacy and active citizenship

Moreover, the Council has made other more general recommendations, especially those relating to the promotion of the diversity of content and the plurality of the media and other recommendations concerning the freedom of expression, the culture of human rights and democracy, as well as the fight against violence in the media.

For its part, the European Union has come a long way, from the basic articles of the original European Economic Community Treaty to this day in matters of equality. However, in relation to the community legislation it is significant that with regards to the structural violence against women the European Union has not produced a concrete obligatory rule that links the principle of equality and the media. In fact, the media were excluded from the equal treatment directive as it was argued that any attempt to regulate them could infringe upon the right to freedom of expression and freedom of enterprise. Therefore, the problem is that the public powers subvert the relevance of the rights of women, giving them less importance than they actually have in our legal system, which reinforces the structural violence against women.

The Constitution of Spain as a social State involves the correction of social inequalities as it advocates for equality as a superior value that must inspire the legal system (art 1.1). While formal equality translates into the demand to the public authorities to refrain from introducing unjustified differences in treatment both in the content and the application of rules, material equality requires the authorities to adopt the necessary measures to achieve effective equality [13], as set forth in article 9.2 of our Constitution.

This mandate for the promotion of real and effective equality, as autonomous principle of material equality, requires the consideration of the differences that characterise each person and each human group with respect to others in order to make it possible to place them in a situation of equal opportunities.

For cases in which formal equality does not contribute to correcting the existence of real inequality, article 9.2 also requires “the right to unequal treatment”, in the terms of the Constitutional Court [14]. The achievement of the egalitarian objective between men and women allows the imposition of an “unequal egalitarian right”, i.e., the adoption of measures that re-adjust pre-existing discriminatory social situations to achieve substantial and effective equality among socially

disadvantaged women and men, to ensure the effective exercise of the right to equality by women (Tribunal Court Sentences 128/1987 and 19/1989).

In this sense, as development of the constitutional recognition of equality as a value (article 1.1), principle (article 9.2) and right (article 14), in 2007 the Organic Law 3/2007, of 22 March, on effective equality between women and men was approved with the desire of unifying and developing in a single text with the status of “organic law” all the national and supranational legislation relative to equality between women and men. With the ambition to become a code-law for the equality between women and men, this document embodies the principle of transversality and dedicated a full Title to the media. However, this law and the Organic Law 1/2004 on Integrated Protection Measures Against Gender-Based Violence suffer from the same lack of specificity that in fact prevents the effective protection of the rights of women, given the difficulty of the competent administrative and judicial authorities to exercise their sanctioning power.

In strict formal legal terms, the conflict between the freedoms of expression and information and the right to equality between men and women currently does not exist. If such a statement is made is because of the persistence of the institutional conception of the communicative freedoms that places it in a preferential sphere, in a hypothetical conflict with any other rights because they not only possess the subjective aspect of rights but also prioritise their objective aspect. Although it exceeds the limits of this work, it is important to at least remark that the real conflict also derives from the fact that the ownership of the communicative freedoms is not only attributable to natural persons but also to legal entities, like companies, which benefit from a status of protection that initially was not designed to protect the freedom of enterprise, which is what it actually does.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Explicit and hidden inequality and the current legal framework’s requirement of gender equality to be real and effective, challenge the public authorities that are competent in this matter to give an answer.

Governments can promote normative actions aimed at combating all manifestations of direct or indirect discrimination and also encourage the adoption of codes of ethics, style books, guides, manuals and editorial policies that encourage and promote the principle of equality in media contents (Morillo, 2015).

In this sense, an example of the actions of the public institutions is that the Mediterranean Network of Regulatory Authorities (RIRM) has agreed on 36 quantitative and qualitative indicators in five areas to foster equality, recognise sexism and combat gender-based violence.

Another example is the recent publication of the “*Guide for the treatment of gender-based violence*” by Andalusia’s Audiovisual Council. This guide contributes to “the construction of a new informative discourse, which involves the formulation of positive proposals to guarantee gender equality in the symbolic sphere” (Jorge, 2015).

Thus, the institutions competent in this matter, both audiovisual institutions and those whose area of competence is gender equality, carry out actions in this area. However, these actions are clearly insufficient in view of the reality expressed in relation to the media and gender equality.

In this sense, our point of view is that these institutions must collaborate with feminist organisations to have an impact in two areas: the media and the organised civil society.

4.1. Gender representation quotas

The legal regulations of the media, and specifically of television, have hardly addressed the regulation of contents given that any action on this area is considered to be censorship, i.e., as an intolerable limitation to the untouchable freedoms of expression and information. However, the Resolution 1751 (2010) of the Council of Europe warns about the existing trivialisation and tolerance of the gender stereotypes subtly linked to the media as a consequence of the protection of the freedom of expression.

Both the Spanish Constitution and the international community legislation provide the legal basis necessary to establish regulatory measures for the activity of the media. Effectively, the demand made to the media to ensure gender equality is based precisely on human rights, both the freedom of expression and the right to send and receive true and accurate information, as well as on the human right to equality.

If the mass media, and particularly the audiovisual media, are “after the law, morality and politics, the last frontier of inequality” (Reiser and Gressy, 2008), the public administrations can and should aim to incorporate in the sector gender representation quotas that promote equality. They can because the law and jurisprudence gives them the power to do so and they should because without a quality relationship between the media (which could only be defined as such if they incorporate equality between men and women) and citizens, the democratic institutions and the principles that underpin them the democratic instances would lack any meaning.

4.2. Media literacy for the organised society

The population has the right to know the power relations that condition, from the outset, the information they receive and the right to have at their disposal tools to critically analyse the messages the media disseminate. This is particularly true for women’s associations, given that they are the entities that work and relate more closely with to equality policies.

That is why a priority objective is to provide media literacy to our society. It is a question of democratic health. Citizens who are able to receive, understand, analyse, and evaluate the messages they receive will be able to produce their own messages and disseminate them through different distribution channels.

On the other hand, the authorities must demand the enforcement of the law so that the media respect their public service function and meet their mandated functions. That is why sanctioning measures

are needed, although complemented with education, in particular, through media literacy with a gender perspective.

The greater difficulty to achieve the maximum effect of the obligations placed upon the media to use the existing tools lies in the existing disconnection between the audiovisual sector and the demands of gender equality made by citizens who are educated in gender but have little related knowledge. For this reason, it is essential to prepare training actions for experts in gender and for associations of women and feminists.

In order to involve the organised civil society, in particular feminists' and women's associations, in the raising of awareness about the media's responsibility, the public administrations have to develop specific actions to promote media literacy with a gender perspective.

In this sense, the collaboration between all the public institutions is key to optimise resources and enhance media literacy with a gender perspective, which is necessary to provide citizens with the basic knowledge to keep a critical and analytical attitude towards the messages disseminated by the media.

Finally, it can be concluded that these measures are even more necessary when, on the one hand, the future of the media in general, and television in particular, is the Internet, where there is practically no regulation nor self-regulation, and when, on the other hand, the project of renewal of the directive of audiovisual communication services does not mention gender equality a single time, which reinforces the aforementioned idea of the subversion of the hierarchy of rights to the detriment of the equality between men and women.

Dates:

-Start of research: March 2016

-End of research: June 2016

5. Notes

[1] The so-called “women's studies” emerged in the United States and Europe along with the resurgence of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s and in Spain after the Francoist dictatorship.

[2] Also known as systemic discrimination and diffuse discrimination.

[3] As Simone de Beauvoir points out at the beginning of volume two of *The Second Sex* before this term was coined, “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”.

[4] For all, Tribunal Court Sentence 79/2014, FJ. 6

[5] Tribunal Court Sentence 107/88, FJ 2 and 4; Tribunal Court Sentence 171/1990, FJ 4 and 10; Tribunal Court Sentence 181/2006, 5 FJ

[6] Established early in the Tribunal Court Sentences 6/81, 12/82 and 159/86, and ratified more recently as Tribunal Court Sentence 79/2014, FJ 6.

[7] See Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 12) and the international treaties and agreements ratified by Spain (art. 10.2 of the Spanish Constitution). Thus, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Civil Liberties (art. 10.2) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (art. 19.3) also establish mandatory limits to the dissemination of information.

[8] The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Vienna Declaration (1993); the International Conference on Population and Development of Cairo (1994), its Programme of Action, and later the Cairo +5 assembly session; the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and its global Platform for Action; the Millennium Declaration (2000); and the several Resolutions of the CEDAW Committee.

[9] Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and violence domestic, ratified by Spain in 2014. BOE No. 137, of 6 June.

[10] All information taken retrieved from <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home> (30/06/2016).

[11] Information retrieved from <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1770223&Site=CM> 20 (30/06/2016).

[12] All information retrieved from <http://www.coe.int/en/web/cm/home> (2016/06/30).

[13] As pointed out by Spain's Constitutional Court with regards to the mandate of article 9.2 of the Spanish Constitution, "the promotion of the equality of individuals and groups (...) sometimes requires a legislative policy that cannot be reduced to pure equality before the law" (Tribunal Court Sentence 27/1981, of 20 July).

[14] Tribunal Court Sentence 229/1992 of 14 December.

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