

After parity. A mixed methods study on gender bias in the volume of media coverage of electoral campaigns

Tras la paridad. Un estudio de métodos mixtos sobre sesgos de género en el volumen de cobertura mediática de campañas electorales

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Abstract: The absence of gender bias in the media coverage of political campaigns is one of the elements of the much sought after political participation of women. In this respect, Mexico is an interesting case as its legal framework has transitioned in a few years to include a mandated parity principle. In this study, we examine the relationship between the volume of coverage and gender to determine if there were gender differences in the radio coverage of local elections in Mexico (2012-2015). Findings show lower average shares of coverage for women after the increase in female candidates mandated by the parity principle. Semi-structured interviews conducted with journalists and former candidates suggest that the gender bias may reflect adverse attitudes towards female newcomers benefitted by the parity law, and gender differences in campaign resources, candidate placement criteria, and candidates' political experience.

Keywords: Gender discrimination, broadcasting programmes, elections, women in politics

Resumen: La ausencia de sesgos de género en la cobertura mediática de las campañas políticas es uno de los elementos de la buscada participación política de las mujeres. A este respecto, México es un caso interesante ya que su marco legal ha cambiado en pocos años para observar de manera obligatoria el principio de paridad. En este estudio, examinamos la relación entre el volumen de cobertura mediática y el género para determinar si hubo diferencias de género en la cobertura de radio de las elecciones locales en México (2012-2015). Los resultados muestran una menor proporción promedio de cobertura para las mujeres después del aumento de candidatas por la implementación del principio de paridad. Las entrevistas semiestructuradas con periodistas y ex candidatas sugieren que el sesgo de género puede reflejar actitudes adversas hacia las mujeres recién llegadas beneficiadas por la paridad, así como diferencias de género en la distribución de recursos de la campaña, colocación de candidaturas y experiencia política de aspirantes.

Palabras clave: Discriminación sexual, programa radiofónico, elecciones, mujer en política

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Introduction

In an era of information and highly mediatised environments, media coverage is more important than ever for being effective as an electoral candidate. The absence of gender bias in the media coverage of political campaigns is, thus, one of the elements of the much sought after political participation of women in the world. In this regard, some studies carried out in the United States and European countries (Dan & Iorgoveanu, 2013; Hooghe, Jacobs, & Claes, 2015; Kahn, 1994; Ross, Evans, Harrison, Shears, & Wadia, 2013) have found that women candidates are at a disadvantage when competing for media attention, while other studies have found no gender difference in the volume of media coverage (Atkeson & Krebb, 2008; Bystrom, Robertson, & Banwart, 2001; Devitt, 2002; Lachover, 2017; Smith, 1997). Nonetheless, most of the studies report some kind of gender bias, if not in volume, then in qualitative aspects of coverage such as attributions of viability, issue coverage and featured candidate traits.

Plenty of scientific studies examining gender differences in the coverage of political campaigns have been published since the 1990s. However, most of the studies on the topic have been conducted in the United States and Europe (Raicheva-Stover & Ibroscheva, 2014). On the other hand, Latin America is a region with culture and values different to those of the above-mentioned regions, and, most importantly, where quota and parity laws have been enacted since the 1990s. The affirmative action laws referred to typically compel political parties to not exceed a certain proportion of candidates of either gender. To this day, most of the countries in Latin America have adopted legislated quotas to tackle women's underrepresentation in legislative bodies (International IDEA, 2019). However, their effects vary, as they depend on the precision of the law and the existence of penalties for non-compliance (Palma Cabrera & Cerva Cerna, 2014). In this respect, Mexico is an interesting case as its legal framework has transitioned in a few years to include a mandated parity principle in elections following the 2014 political reform. Nonetheless, affirmative action benefitting women candidates has been met with considerable resistance from political parties (Palma Cabrera & Cerva Cerna, 2014; Freidenberg & Osornio, 2017).

The Mexican state of Jalisco, our case study, implemented candidate quotas requiring political parties to nominate not more than 70% of legislative candidates of either sex in the 2012 elections and mandating candidate parity (exactly 50% candidates of each gender) in the 2015 local legislative elections. Hence, expanding the data set from a previous study (Rodelo, 2016), in this article we analyze data from the media monitoring of news radio coverage of the local executive and legislative elections in the Mexican state of Jalisco from 2012 to 2015 —covering the transition from 70/30 quotas to parity. Radio data was used as this media sector remains the second most important source of information about politics (IFT, 2016) also a vibrant and plural industry in the country.

To determine if there exist gender differences in the radio coverage of elections, in this study we examine the relationship between volume of radio coverage of elections and candidate gender, as well as the significance of several contextual factors. As we found statistically significant gender differences in the quantitative analysis of the radio monitoring dataset, we sought to better understand their meaning. Following a sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2009), semi-structured interviews were applied to journalists and former candidates. In this manner, the subjective understanding of participants about gender differences in patterns of media coverage during electoral campaigns might help in explaining the causes of persistence of gender biases.

This study contributes to the literature on gender biases in media coverage of elections in two ways: First, results show lower average shares of coverage for women candidates after the increase in female legislative candidates mandated by the parity law in the Mexican context, suggesting that gender bias in media attention may increase after implementing this sort of affirmative action. Second, thanks to its mixed-methods design, this study explores adverse attitudes toward female newcomers benefitted by the parity law and their potential for explaining the observed gender bias after parity law was implemented.

The rest of the article is structured as follows: first, we examine the literature on gender bias in the volume of media coverage of electoral campaigns and its possible causes, followed by the context of the study. The method and the results are then presented in accordance with the study's sequential logic (first the quantitative phase, then the qualitative one). Finally, we present the discussion and conclusion of the study.

Gender bias in the volume of media coverage of electoral campaigns and its possible causes

According to Atkeson and Krebb (2008), there are four main approaches to studying gender bias in news reporting of electoral campaigns: studying the volume of media coverage, expressions of candidates' viability, topics/issues, and discussion of the candidates' traits. The volume of coverage usually refers, in radio and television, to the amount of airtime and, in publications, to the number of articles or square centimeters dedicated to candidates. The measurement of volume is relevant because the greater the candidate's visibility, the greater his/her probability of being voted (Kahn, 1994). From this point of view, candidates without media coverage or with less coverage would be at a disadvantage compared to their peers. Volume is the easiest aspect to measure because it is a manifest feature of the contents with a low risk of reliability failures.

Among the studies that follow this approach, we can distinguish between those that do not find biases —such as those of Smith (1997) and others in the United States; or that of Lachover

(2017), in Israel— and those that do, for example, in Belgium (Hooghe et al., 2015) and countries of the European Union (Lühiste & Banducci, 2016). If we chronologically order the studies published in the United States we can notice that the first studies reported significant gender biases in media attention —Kahn (1994)— while later studies —such as Smith (1997) and Hayes & Lawless (2015)— report non-significant gender biases, so that contemporary studies have turned their interest towards the substantive aspects of media contents. The variations in findings across studies seem to reflect not only cultural changes but also the particular context of each setting. For example, one of the few studies examining media coverage in Latin America reports that as a presidential candidate Michelle Bachelet received more favorable coverage compared with those of her adversaries — something that reflected her advantageous position in the electoral surveys (Valenzuela & Correa, 2009). Thus, any attempt to generalize research results should be done with caution due to the great variety of research designs, variables and race sampling involved. As stated before, gender differences in the volume of media coverage varies across western countries but more research is needed to explain such variations.

Up to this point causes of this phenomenon can be classified into two sets of factors: (1) those related to the media organizations and (2) those related to the political campaigns and the political parties. Additionally, as Lühiste & Banducci (2016) pointed out, much research has been done without explaining the observed variations across countries. According to the above-mentioned authors, this novelty may underscore the role of the third set of causes: (3) contextual factors related to the electoral system and political culture.

Factors related to media organizations include attitudes toward gender, news values and incentives, and the presence of women in decision-making posts. In one of the earliest studies on the topic, Kahn (1994) advanced as possible causes of gender bias in the media coverage of electoral campaigns newspeople's stereotypes and/or prejudices; and organizational incentives and standards of newsworthiness, such as the reference to elite persons and novelty. Women candidates for certain positions may be still rare and, hence, newsworthy (Kahn, 1994). Other studies have explored as an explanation of gender bias the underrepresentation of women in the top positions of media organizations. For example, Shor, van de Rijt, Miltsov, Kulkarni, and Skiena (2015) found out that media-level factors such as male-dominated board compositions and newsroom cultures may heighten gender biases in coverage.

The factors related to political campaigns and political parties may include gender biases in the allocation of candidacies, including candidates' position in proportional representation lists, and the allocation of another kind of resources, such as training, budget, and social capital by the political party, including the public endorsement of candidates in meetings or communications by party leaders (referred to as *acompañamiento* in Spanish). Research by Palma Cabrera and Cerva Cerna (2014) has focused on the allocation of women candidates in areas where the party is less competitive ("lost districts") to comply with quota laws, thus reducing the impact of this kind of affirmative

action. Hence, party incumbency may be a relevant factor for media attention, as it is an indicator of the party's competitiveness in the area, and, also, in certain contexts, an incumbent politician can mobilize resources for his/her party's candidate (Carey & Polga-Hecimovich, 2006). One example is Mexico, where reelection was banned from the 1910 Revolution until 2018. Moreover, in the Mexican multi-party system, the competitiveness of the parties varies, and, with that, the parties' campaign budgets and resources (these being material resources, such as budget, or intangible ones, such as social capital).

Not all electoral races gather the same amount of interest and media attention. There are differences in media attention depending on the type of election: unsurprisingly, at higher levels (e. g., presidential compared to state elections, as well as state compared to municipal level) there is more media attention. On the other hand, legislative elections seem to gather less media attention than executive elections, whatever the context (Smith, 1997). At the same time, executive positions are perceived as more "masculine" by the public (Meeks, 2013); and, across countries, women tend to occupy legislative rather than executive positions (Beer & Camp, 2016). Media attention also varies according to the economic, political and cultural importance of the represented region.

Among the factors related to the electoral system and political culture, favorable attitudes toward gender equality may contribute to fewer gender biases in the media coverage of elections (Lühiste & Banducci, 2016). A characteristic of the political context relevant to gender bias in media attention during electoral campaigns is the existence of gender quota laws in the region or country. But do gender quotas contribute to less bias in media coverage? An investigation on the subject reveals that, in fact, the opposite could be the case. A cross-sectional comparative analysis of the European Parliament election campaigns by Lühiste & Banducci (2016) found out that "quota legislation appears to have no effect on women candidates' news media coverage" (p. 245), and that in countries with quota laws without mandated placement, women candidates have lower visibility in campaign coverage. Furthermore, the authors anticipate that "If quotas are adopted in less progressive countries, the gendered media culture may not reflect the political push to increase women's representation and therefore lag behind in terms of representing women in its coverage" (p. 250). However, the effect of the enactment and enforcement of gender quota laws on gender bias in media attention remains to be examined in other contexts.

Context of study

From 1993 onwards, a series of law reforms implemented gender quotes in publicly elected posts in Mexico, transitioning in a few years from a non-obligatory recommendation (1993) to mandated 70/30 (2002) and 60/40 quotes (2008) in federal legislative elections (70/30, meaning a maximum of 70 percent of candidates of either gender). Soon afterward, the political reform of 2014 estab-

lished in the Mexican Constitution the mandatory parity principle (50 percent male candidates and 50 percent female candidates) for all legislative elections throughout the country from 2015 onwards. The numbers of elected women in Mexico have increased considerably in a very short period: from 37% of women elected for the lower chamber after the 2012 elections to 43% after the 2015 elections, and 48% after the 2018 elections (INE, 2017).

However, the gender quotas have been implemented in Mexico with a lot of resistance from political parties (Freidenberg & Osornio, 2017; Palma Cabreva & Cerva Cerna, 2014). Numerous studies in the country have documented gender differences that affect women in areas including campaign financing (Speck & Mancuso, 2014), recruitment and training of cadres (Beer & Camp, 2016), internal selection of candidates (Vidal Correa, 2013), allocation of nominations in “lost districts” (Palma Cabrera & Cerva Cerna, 2014) and partisan symbolic support (Cerva Cerna, 2014). Women have been hampered in such a way that the greater the political participation of women, the greater the political violence against them because of their gender (Freidenberg & Osornio, 2017). As an explanation of the latter phenomena, Cerva Cerna (2014) argues that the pervasiveness of patriarchal values in the organizational structure and dynamics of Mexican political parties is the main source of obstacles for women politicians—for example, the beliefs that politics should be a space reserved for men and that women are taking positions that belong to them.

In relation to media coverage, Vega-Montiel (2008) and Címac (2012) have documented the pervasiveness of negative stereotypes about women candidates in media discourse, something that, together with negative attitudes towards women’s participation, political violence, and lack of gender equality, makes up for an unfavorable climate for women’s political participation in Mexico.

The case of Jalisco

The Mexican state of Jalisco implemented in 2012 a legal candidate quota mandated by the state law requiring political parties to nominate not more than 70% of local legislative candidates of the same sex. In the following 2015 local electoral process, candidate parity (50 percent candidates of each gender) mandated by the state law was implemented by all the political parties for the election of 39 state legislators.¹

Jalisco is the fourth most populous state in Mexico (after the State of Mexico, Mexico City, and Veracruz) (INEGI, 2017). Most of the population (87%) lives in urban locations—most of it inhabiting the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA). The human development index (HDI) of Jalisco in 2012 was 0.751, the 13th place among the country’s 32 states (UNDP, 2015). By 2016, indicators of women’s political participation in Jalisco were close to the national averages: 46.2% were

¹ 20 seats for relative majority and 19 for proportional representation.

female local deputies (41.1% national average); 4.8% were female mayors (9.4% national average), 35.6% were *regidoras* (female councilors in municipalities) (35.1% national average) and 37.9% were *síndicas* (female legal representatives in municipalities) (25.7% national average) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [INEGI], 2016).

The availability of radio monitoring data from both local elections (2012 and 2015) provides the means to observe gender differences in the volume of media coverage on a changing electoral context where radio remains as the second media sector most used by citizens to gather news about politics (IFT, 2016). Compared with television, the radio sector has a larger quantity and diversity of programs about politics, as there are more licenses granted for radio than for television broadcasting. Hence, it can be argued that the potential for pluralism is greater in radio compared to television.

Taking the above into consideration, we posed the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there significant gender bias in the volume of radio coverage of the local electoral campaigns (2012-2015) in the state of Jalisco (Mexico)?

RQ2: Are institutional and contextual factors, such as party incumbency, size of political party, type of election, place of election and existence of a placement mandate (parity principle), involved in the observed gender differences?

RQ3: What meanings and understandings about gender differences in patterns of media coverage during electoral campaigns emerge from the actors most involved in this activity—journalists and candidates?

Method

Source of radio monitoring data

An analysis of existing radio monitoring data made possible this study. During the 2012 and 2015 local electoral processes, comprehensive media monitoring research commissioned by the local electoral institute (Electoral and Civic Participation Institute of the State of Jalisco, IEPC Jalisco) adhered to methodological guidelines that included a large sample of radio news programs², training of coders, and data inspection by supervisors (IEPC Jalisco, 2011, 2012, 2015).³

² The 2012 radio monitoring was conducted by the private company Verificación y Monitoreo and consisted of 71 radio programs transmitted during electoral pre-campaigns and campaigns. The 2015 radio monitoring was executed by the University of Guadalajara and consisted of 20 radio programs transmitted during the campaigns, 11 from the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area, four from Puerto Vallarta and five from other municipalities.

³ Trained operators listened to the radio programs and coded them. A supervisor “with greater political knowledge” reviewed all the collected data (IEPC, 2011, p. 51).

The media monitoring was done by different organizations in 2012 and 2015; thus, the radio programs sampled were not exactly the same. However, as relative data (share of radio coverage received by each candidate in relation to his/her counterparts in the same race) was analyzed instead of absolute data, we can still compare the volumes of media coverage devoted to each candidate across different periods. Also, using relative data allowed us to compare candidates in races that attract different levels of media attention.

Recoding and sampling of races

The original data was recoded to have candidates as units of analysis and to account for the following variables: candidate gender, type of election (gubernatorial, local legislative or municipality), share of minutes received in comparison with competitors in the same race, location, party competitiveness, and party incumbency. A previous analysis found that minutes and frequency of radio reports correlated significantly (Rodelo, 2016). Accordingly, in this study, we only use minute data as measurement variable.

The 47 races selected from these data were those where there was at least one-woman candidate. For the 2012 campaigns, we gathered data from the radio coverage of 141 candidates in 23 elections (101 candidates in 15 district elections, 35 candidates in seven municipal elections and five candidates in one state election). For the 2015 campaigns, we gathered data from the radio coverage of 211 candidates in 24 elections (173 candidates in 19 district elections and 38 candidates in five municipal elections).

Operationalization of nominal variables

Mean values of the share of minutes received in comparison with competitors in same race were compared among all male and female candidates and among the following subgroups:

Less and more competitive parties. We used campaign budget as a proxy for competitiveness since the latter is established by the local electoral institute with a formula that takes into consideration voting in previous elections. Seven parties and their coalitions participated in the local elections of 2012. The parties coded as “more competitive” were Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), and Partido Verde Ecologista de México, including the PRI-PVEM coalition. Each of these parties received between 14.7 and 40.5 million pesos to spend on their electoral campaigns. The parties coded as “less competitive” were Partido del Trabajo (PT), Partido Nueva Alianza (Panal) and Movimiento Ciudadano (MC), as they did not receive any public funding from the local electoral institute.

Nine parties and their coalitions participated in the local elections of 2015, as well as (for the first time) independent candidates. The parties coded as “more competitive” were Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), Movimiento Ciudadano, and their coalitions (PAN-PRD and PRI-PVEM). Each of these parties received between 11.8 and 21.7 million

pesos to fund their electoral campaigns (IEPC Jalisco, 2014). The parties coded as “less competitive” were Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), Partido del Trabajo (PT), Partido Nueva Alianza (Panal), Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (Morena), Partido Encuentro Social (PES) and Partido Humanista (PH), as their campaign budgets amounted to between 1.4 and 6.6 million pesos. The only independent that entered into the analysis was also coded as “less competitive”, as independent candidates were assigned 0.75 million pesos to fund their campaigns.

Candidates with and without party incumbency. Re-election was made possible again in Mexico after the 2018 elections, as re-election had been banned since the Mexican revolution of 1910. In this study, however, we take into consideration party incumbency —defined as the success of the party in the last election in the same electoral district, municipality or state—, as we consider that it gives leverage to candidates from the party holding the represented area.

Races in and out of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area. The Guadalajara Metropolitan Area is the largest urban agglomeration in the state and its elections attract the most media attention (in particular, the race for the municipality of Guadalajara).

Finally, other analyzed subgroups included: legislative and executive races, and 2012 candidates (before mandate legislative parity) and 2015 candidates (after mandate legislative parity) races.

Qualitative analysis

A qualitative phase at the end of a quantitative study can be useful for interpreting the quantitative data or to evaluate an intervention (Tolley, Ulin, Mack, Succop, & Robinson, 2016). Conversely, quantitative data can be used at an exploratory stage of the research, to supply useful information for designing a qualitative study (Tolley et al., 2016). For the topic of gender differences in campaign coverage, adding a (final) qualitative stage comprised of interviews has been suggested at least by Hooghe et al. (2015), Lachover (2017), Van Aelst & de Swert (2009), and Windett (2014). In this study, the rationale for supporting the findings with a qualitative phase is to better understand the meaning of the statistically significant differences observed in the quantitative analysis: Why is there a gender bias in media attention? Why is it that gender differences in the volume of coverage are greater after mandated candidate parity in legislative posts? How does this bias originate?

We sought to explore the subjective understanding of participants about the gender differences in patterns of media coverage during electoral campaigns with the purpose of explaining the causes of this bias. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during 2017 with four women that participated as candidates in the same electoral process, and with eight experienced journalists (five women, three men) who covered the 2015 local electoral campaigns of Jalisco for radio and newspaper outlets. Participant journalists were part of the same journalistic community as the media staff that produced the radio coverage analyzed in the quantitative phase of this study and had

been practicing journalism for a range of 10-20 years. Six of the eight participant journalists were producing contents for radio at the time; also, most of the participants were producing contents for more than one media sector at the same time (for example, newspaper and radio).

All participants were briefed about the purpose of the interview and the confidential use of the data. After the initial background questions, the interview guide included items about the role of media during electoral campaigns, resources and communication strategies of candidates, media treatment and attitudes toward quotas, and recommendations for candidates.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The qualitative analysis was conducted by the author following the coding procedure suggested by Auerbach & Silverstein (2003). A software program (QDA Miner) was used to facilitate this procedure, which included creating and structuring codes, coding interview segments and retrieving units of meaning. Codes were both developed from the general knowledge of the topic embodied in the literature review and inductively created after reading the transcripts.

Names of participants were omitted to ensure their privacy. Gender (m. or f.) and age were considered the most relevant subject variables, and, as such, both are reported before the quotations.

Findings

A large quantity of competing candidates (44.3%) in the selected 47 races did not get any radio coverage. Therefore, the distribution of minute shares ($n = 352$, $M = 13.4\%$, $SD = 0.223$) has a high number of zero values (44.3%) and a high number of candidates with relatively low shares, this causing a right-skewed distribution. For this reason, we opted for non-parametric tests. The findings are presented below in the same order as the research questions.

RQ1: Is there significant gender bias in the volume of radio coverage of the local electoral campaigns (2012-2015) in the state of Jalisco (Mexico)?

To answer the first research question, we began with scrutinizing the relationship between gender and presence of coverage. Then, we tested the differences in the minute share averages for male and female candidates. As previously mentioned, a high percentage of candidates running in the Jalisco local elections (44.3%) did not obtain any media coverage during the campaigns. A first test having as nominal variables the presence of media coverage and the candidate's gender was run to find out if there were differences attributable to gender when candidates were arranged according to the presence or absence of media coverage. A Chi-square independence test allowed us to conclude that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected: $\chi^2(1, N = 352) = 1.204$, $p = .273$. Hence, there is no evidence of gender difference in the presence of coverage. However, when the nominal variable is

“presence of above-average media share” (in other words, presence of coverage greater than 13.4%), the null hypothesis can be rejected: $\chi^2(1, N = 352) = 4.471, p = .034$. Thus, there is a gender difference in the presence of above-average coverage that cannot be attributed to chance.

To find out if there was gender bias in the volumes of radio coverage devoted to candidates, we calculated the shares of coverage for each candidate in relation to their competitors in the same race. Kruskal-Wallis tests were done to find out if the mean ranks of radio coverage minutes are the same in both groups —men and women. This non-parametric test is used when the measurement variable is not normally distributed (McDonald, 2014), as in this case: as previously explained, there were a high number of candidates without any radio coverage. We ran this test for the eleven samples.

Table 1. Minute share average by gender

	Women		Men		<i>p</i>
	Average percent (<i>SD</i>)	<i>N</i>	Average percent (<i>SD</i>)	<i>N</i>	
All the candidates	10.2 (20.2)	131	15.2 (23.4)	221	.037*
Legislative races	9.4 (19.7)	113	14.5 (26.0)	161	.423
Executive races	16.3 (23.3)	17	16.5 (14.1)	56	.426
More competitive parties	13.0 (18.8)	44	21.4 (25.9)	108	.117
Less competitive parties	8.8 (20.8)	87	9.3 (19.0)	113	.436
Inside GMA	9.3 (19.3)	86	15.9 (25.9)	145	.064
Outside GMA	12.1 (21.8)	45	13.9 (17.6)	76	.252
With party incumbency	16.0 (19.9)	11	34.1 (30.3)	36	.052
Without party incumbency	9.7 (20.2)	120	11.5 (19.9)	185	.423
2012: before legislative parity	16.6 (28.6)	37	16.2 (23.5)	104	.794
2015: after legislative parity	7.7 (15.2)	94	14.3 (23.3)	117	.030*

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. *N* corresponds to number of candidates. Significance scores correspond to Kruskal-Wallis tests. Source: Author, with data from IEPC Jalisco (2012, 2015).

Globally, in the 47 races analyzed, the 131 female candidates had an average of 10.2% of the minutes of coverage whereas the 221 male candidates had an average of 15.2% of the minutes of coverage (see Table 1). The mean ranks of proportions of radio coverage were significantly different, $H(1, N = 352) = 4.37, p = .037$. Thus, there is a gender difference in the volume of radio coverage that cannot be attributed to chance.

RQ2: Are institutional and contextual factors involved in the observed gender differences?

To answer the second research question, share averages were calculated in ten subsamples that arranged candidates according to relevant variables: all candidates, legislative, executive, backed by competitive parties, backed by non-competitive parties, in the Guadalajara Metropolitan

Area (GMA), not in the GMA, with party incumbency, without party incumbency, competing in 2012 (before legislative parity) and, finally, competing in 2015 (after legislative parity).

Male candidates had a greater mean rank of radio coverage in samples of candidates in the 2015 elections, $H(1, N = 211) = 4.74, p = .030$, candidates with party incumbency, $H(1, N = 47) = 3.77, p = .052$, and candidates based in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area, $H(1, N = 231) = 3.43, p = .064$ (see Table 1). Although “party incumbency” and “inside GMA” are not statistically significant, they remain very close to .05. On the contrary, there were no statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of share averages of radio coverage devoted to men and women in the rest of the variables: legislative, executive, more competitive parties, less competitive parties, outside the GMA, candidates without party incumbency and the 2012 elections.

To examine in more detail the change in average shares before and after mandated legislative parity, the same analysis was made including only the candidates running for legislative posts. Results showed a more pronounced average share difference after the implementation of legislative parity (see Table 2). However, both tests were not statistically significant.

Table 2. Minute share average by gender. Legislative races

	Women		Men		<i>P</i>
	Average percent (SD)	<i>N</i>	Average percent (SD)	<i>N</i>	
Before legislative parity (2012)	15.5 (28.5)	27	14.6 (25.8)	74	.867
After legislative parity (2015)	7.5 (15.7)	86	14.5 (26.4)	87	.359

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. *N* corresponds to number of candidates. Significance scores correspond to Kruskal-Wallis tests. Source: Author, with data from IEPC Jalisco (2012, 2015).

RQ3: What meanings and understandings about gender differences in patterns of media coverage during electoral campaigns emerge from the actors most involved in this activity?

To answer the third research question, eight experienced journalists (five women, three men, 10-20 years of journalistic experience), as well as four former candidates (all women), agreed to participate in the qualitative phase of this study. The analysis focused on (1) ideas concerning the role of media during electoral campaigns, (2) attitudes towards women and quotas in media organizations and political parties, and (3) resources and communication strategies of candidates.

Media coverage of elections: how it is and how it should be. The first topic discussed in the interviews was media coverage of elections. Descriptions of trends in coverage included: the media tend to pay too much attention to conflict issues labeled by the participants as “black campaigns”, *golpeteo* (flak), negative campaigns, dirty war, political leaks and scandals (D, F); media seek topics that attract the public’s attention (C); coverage is superficial because of economic and legal constraints (B) and there is favoritism towards candidates who will benefit the media organization in the future (F).

As prescriptions of media conduct during elections, interviewees proposed: that the media should scrutinize the candidates' proposals (and their repercussions for the people) as well as the candidates' backgrounds (B, D, E, F, J); that the media should be neutral and give equal space to all candidates (C, F) and that the media should seek the benefit of society (C).

Interestingly, some of the participants brought up in a spontaneous manner the unscrupulous action by media organizations of selling positive coverage, and/or negative coverage of political opponents (E, A, F, C).

Journalists' attitudes towards women and quotas. Some participants stated that there are women representatives without the capacity to perform their duties (C, F, A, B). Other related ideas were that there are women with capacities whose parties do not allow them to compete as candidates (C, F, E), that there are women who "arrive" *only* because of their connections (F, B) and that media outlets emphasize women's acquaintances while the media do not tend to question men's capacities or connections (A, B, L). For example, an interviewee (m., 27) set forth:

Men... they are not criticized for getting in as the result of a gender issue, but women are. And so, yes, it is different even in the way you tackle an article: you can criticize the whole political platform of men, but with women, they [the reporters] are always trying to find out whose wife they are or how they managed to get there.

A participant (f., 43) explained that lack of capacity is more noticeable in women and that people in political parties make fun of women who do not have the capacity:

Everyone agrees that they should have the opportunity and get there and stay, just the same as with men, though not just for women's issues, but you see more women... Because there are many men who stand out and not so many women who stand out, so, yes, as they say: "oh, why did she get in?" or "why did she come?" Sometimes there are comments from the parties against them because they see that they don't... Or [there are] jokes.

Some participants asserted that women need training (F, C, J), are short of ambition (C) or do not talk too much because they do not feel comfortable (C, A, L). For example, an interviewee (f., 50) explained:

There are always more... patronizing attitudes towards women as in [changing voice]: *Oh, yeah, the female candidates.* But they really do not stand out, they really do not have much to contribute, they really do not have much to say; so there is a kind of invisibilization process, of making them invisible; they are there for other reasons.

A female participant considered that misogyny in media organizations is not a problem (D), while male interviewees lamented the stereotype that beautiful women are not intelligent (E) and argued that male bosses tend to reinforce an ideology that minimizes women (B, L). For example (m., 27):

Among reporters it is very common to speak about this, even to express your own doubts about what is happening: "hey, it is damn tough that this girl has made it there for this and that." And you begin to talk and to make sense of it in company, with your colleagues, like the private soldier, you know, but when you talk to the bosses or the bosses of your bosses they are the ones that tell you, that's why I tell you that this ideology is reinforced. It is they

who tell you how it is that a woman got to be where she is and that is why it is not an issue of interest to the newspaper. You can say: “hey, she’s doing this, it would be cool to cover this part with these women” and they say: “no because it doesn’t concern our newspaper”. And then what they are doing is... yes, silence also reproduces ideology and they themselves tell you...

Regarding the existence of quotas, some participants advanced critical ideas: quotas will have to disappear (B) and they do not make sense if or because women lack capacities (F). For example, a respondent (f., 41) asserted:

It does not make any sense if it is only to comply. No, no, I don’t really think, if ... they are not there because of their ability, their career, their position, their intelligence, but because they are friends with someone, or somebody’s lover, or somebody’s companion. Or because the husband can’t compete, so it’s the wife, you know?

The allocation of candidacies by political parties as a resource. Some participants complained that women are given candidacies in places difficult to win (A, E) and that women are sent to less important positions (E), echoing a charge often made and highly documented in the literature (Palma Cabrera & Cerva Cerna, 2014). One participant explained that candidacies are given in accordance with two values: loyalty and obedience to the political group (A), something that implies that political parties prefer “recommended” or loyal women over talented ones (C, D). A female interviewee (f., 50) reflected on the consequences of poor criteria in the parties’ selection of candidates:

The media are aware of the need to fill quotas and of the internal arrangements of parties [...] depending also on the kicking under the table between groups is how they determine which districts or municipalities women will play for and in line with that understanding the group has to back a candidate; [...] then if these women that the group imposes, “Jane Doe is going to be the candidate”, if this woman does not satisfy that profile, she drags all us women down, which is when the media suddenly take notice: Who is this candidate? Where did she come from and why? What experience does she have? None? Whose companion is she, whose friend is she? Whose lover is she?... And all these series of things that you as a woman are blamed for, rather than your abilities: Where are you and who with? That is very common... this label or pre-judgment made by the media is very difficult to remove. If you are a candidate, what is your motive? It’s not because of your abilities: it is taken for granted that it’s not because of your abilities.

Other ideas displayed by respondents were that female candidates are seen by members of political parties, in the context of quotas, as an imposition (A) and that people in parties don’t like quotas because female candidates are dull (D) or unprepared (I). An interviewee (f., 30) stated that:

The men were getting very nervous and we have had to remove from their imaginary and their vocabulary the idea of “damn, it’s complicated because there are no women.” No, here we are, asshole, it’s just that we were never given a chance to participate [...] Today I feel those who take decisions are very nervous: [they say] “and where we are going to find them [female candidates]?” [...] or “they are not prepared.” Well, neither are the men, huh. 2018 is going to be a very interesting election, I do think we’ll continue to see on the ballot the wife of the guy who was going to be the candidate, but there’s going to be a transition, and

you'll see it sooner than we think, that will be much more real; you can see it was sudden, that the reforms were very, um, that they came to many as quite a surprise, didn't they? But if it wasn't going to happen that way, then it wasn't going to happen at all...

Gender differences in campaign strategy and resources. One interviewee asserted that there are no or very few gender differences in campaign strategies (B). Other participants identified certain contrasts: a female reporter complained about the strategies in women's campaigns as being superficially "pinkified" or "softened" only to reproduce common stereotypes (D). Another female reporter pointed out that men candidates are more tactful and have more public speaking skills because they have had more experience, while women are beginners (C, J, L), that it is rare to see women seeking interviews (C) and that there are women who lack knowledge and preparation (C). Another interviewee agreed that there are women who lack public speaking skills (F). Former candidates elaborated on women's difficulties. A participant (f., 32) considered this gender difference to be the result of personal responsibility:

Really it is a lack of knowledge, of experience, in certain matters that can make you limit yourself for fear of spoiling everything or for finding you have to say: I am not... er... specialized in this matter so let someone else who has the expertise do it.

Another interviewee (f., 30) reckoned the differences in skills formed a pattern:

Yes I think there must be a tremendous predominance of men and attention is still on men and I also think women... that women suddenly do not feel up to —this does not apply to me, by the way— I think they do not feel up to coming out with their own voice, or they are more timid to...: "hey, let me consult the boss to see if he will give me the chance to speak and..." I do not know, these are styles that... I think they are patterns that I think little by little have been breaking down, you know. That is, I do believe that the empowerment of women in politics will be greater day by day; well, it is recent; and you cannot expect us women overnight to grab the microphone and, er, come out with a solid result...

One participant (f., 50) reported gender differences in access to resources related to the perception of benefitted women as an imposition and to a lack of willingness to comply with the parity principle, to the extreme of parties seeking annulment of female candidacies by legal means:

[the party's leadership told us that] there will be no financial resources for the campaigns for the nomination of imposed candidates until a court has resolved it and a little of this... mood of saying: we do not know when they will decide, the electoral institute can decide even the day before the election that you are not the candidate, so we cannot give you the money as long as the institute has not decided. Then if the institute decides in a month you will have the money and if not then you will not have any money for the campaign.

What can a female candidate do to improve the media coverage about herself and her attributions of viability? Most journalists concurred that a clear and convincing plan is essential to improving a candidate's coverage, irrespective of their gender (B, C, D, F, J). Other recommendations included having public speaking skills (C, E, J); self-confidence (speaking with conviction) (C, E); not having a political background but having done relevant work before being a candidate (B);

having a good team of collaborators or public relations consultants (E); competing for an important position or representing an important party (B), and favoring women's issues (F).

Discussion and conclusions

First of all, the good news deriving from the findings of this study is that there is no statistically significant difference between men and women in the presence of radio coverage. In other words, the odds are no greater for women getting zero coverage about their campaigns than they are for men. The odds were however greater for women to get a below-average share of radio coverage than they were for men, as the difference in media attention between men and women candidates obtaining above-average radio coverage is statistically significant.

The results of the quantitative phase of the study show lower average shares of coverage for women candidates after the increase in female legislative candidates mandated by the parity principle in the 2014 Mexican political reform. These results demonstrate that mandated candidate parity does not guarantee an absence of gender bias in media attention —or, as argued by Lühiste and Banducci (2016, p. 24-25), “becoming a candidate does not equal media coverage”— and also suggest that gender bias in media attention may increase in electoral campaigns immediately after implementing mandated candidate parity.

Not all participants in the qualitative phase of the study agreed in acknowledging the existence of gender biases. However, data from the qualitative interviews make evident a variety of negative attitudes towards women politicians and gender quotas both in media organizations and political parties. These negative attitudes towards women include the belittlement of women and an insistence on explaining their career success through their political connections.

Taking together both pieces of evidence, it seems that women's lower radio coverage after the enactment of the parity principle reflects adverse attitudes towards female newcomers benefitted by the parity law, *both* from political parties and from media organizations; including the frequent perception of women as not being worthy of their nominations or as displacing men candidates. However, these perceptions rest on the common observation of competitive parties constantly preferring loyal to talented candidates.

Nowadays, women representation in legislative bodies is greater in Mexico in comparison with most of the Latin American countries. The rise in quota effectiveness in Mexico is associated to tighter and more precise quota laws (Palma Cabrera & Cerva Cerna, 2014). Greater effectiveness and increasing difficulty in getting around quota laws may have given rise to negative reactions towards women politicians benefitted by this gender policy —backlash that included unfavorable attitudes toward women politicians and manifested through a smaller average share of media coverage

compared with the previous elections. The latter describes a way in which the implementation of parity rule has the potential to influence gender differences in media coverage.

Alternative explanations for women's lower average shares after the increase in women candidates include differences in campaigns; especially, women's lesser political experience (noticed by media after spotting differences in public speaking skills) and a lack of resources for women benefiting from quota laws. The reported outcomes may also be caused by other inequalities in access to political representation already documented in the literature, such as the placement of women candidates in "lost" and/or less important districts and municipalities, as in both cases candidates receive fewer party resources (including symbolic support, or *acompañamiento*) and therefore become less appealing to the media.

In addition to the volume of media attention, further studies should just as well examine the substance of news items and include a sample that is representative of more Mexican states. Quantitative findings in this study have to be taken with care, as significance levels are sensitive to sample size.

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