

# **Media after parity: gender bias in the volume of coverage of local electoral campaigns in Mexico (2012-2015)**

*[Los medios tras la paridad: sesgos de género en el volumen de cobertura mediática de campañas electorales locales en México (2012-2015)]*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Many studies have researched gender bias in the media coverage of electoral campaigns. However, most of them focus in western countries. In this study, data from political campaigns in the state of Jalisco (Mexico) were analyzed to determine if there were gender differences in the volume of radio news coverage and what variables contributed to these disparities. Semi-structured interviews were also applied to journalists and former candidates. The quantitative results show lower average shares of coverage after the increase in female legislative candidates mandated by the parity principle in the 2014 Mexican political reform, demonstrating that parity does not guarantee an absence of gender bias in media attention and also suggesting that gender bias in media attention may increase in electoral campaigns immediately after enforcing mandated candidate parity. Although there were a high number of candidates lacking media attention, this study found that women candidates are not at greater odds of having zero articles about her campaigns compared to men candidates. Qualitative data suggest that these results may reflect adverse attitudes towards female newcomers benefitted by the parity law, differences in campaign resources, candidacy placement criteria and candidate's political experience.

## **RESUMEN**

Abundantes estudios han investigado los sesgos de género en la cobertura mediática de campañas electorales. Sin embargo, la mayoría de estos se refieren a Estados Unidos y países europeos. En esta investigación, se retomaron datos del monitoreo de medios de campañas políticas locales de 2012 a 2015 en el estado de Jalisco, México, para analizar y determinar si existieron diferencias de género en los volúmenes de cobertura radiofónica y qué variables contribuyeron a estas. Además, se aplicaron entrevistas semiestructuradas a periodistas y ex candidatas. Los resultados cuantitativos muestran menores niveles de *shares* de cobertura para candidatas tras el incremento de candidatas legislativas impulsado por el principio de paridad incluido en la reforma política de 2014. Esto muestra que la paridad de género en candidaturas no garantiza una ausencia de sesgo de género en atención mediática y además sugiere que el sesgo puede incrementarse inmediatamente después de la implementación de la paridad de género en candidaturas. Aunque hubo una gran cantidad de candidaturas que no recibieron atención mediática, el estudio encontró que las candidatas mujeres no tuvieron mayores probabilidades de carecer de cobertura sobre sus campañas en comparación con los candidatos hombres. Los datos cualitativos sugieren que estos resultados pueden deberse a actitudes adversas contra nuevas políticas

beneficiadas por la ley de paridad, diferencias en otorgamiento de recursos, criterios diferentes para colocar candidaturas así como diferencias en trayectorias.

## KEYWORDS

Gender parity, gender difference, media coverage, electoral campaigns, mixed-methods

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Paridad de género, diferencias de género, sesgos de género, monitoreo de medios, campañas electorales, métodos mixtos

## INTRODUCTION

In an era of information and highly mediatized environments, media coverage is more important than ever to be 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 political participation of women in the world. In this regard, some studies carried out in Western countries (Khan, 1994; Dan & Iorgoveanu, 2013; Ross, Evans, Harrison, Shears & Wadia, 2013; Hooghe, Jacobs & Claes, 2015) have found that women candidates are at a disadvantage when competing for media attention, whilst other studies have found no gender difference in the volume of media coverage (Smith, 1997; Atkeson & Krebb, 2008; Devitt, 2002; Bystrom, Robertson y Banwart, 2001; Lachover, 2015). Nonetheless, most of the studies report some kind of gender bias, if not in volume, in qualitative aspects of coverage such as attributions of viability, issue coverage and featured candidate traits.

Although plenty of scientific studies examining gender differences in political campaigns coverage have been published since the decade of 1990, none of them is situated in Latin America: most of the studies on gender bias in media coverage of political campaigns have been conducted in western countries, particularly in the United States and Europe. This implies a lack of knowledge about this phenomenon in Latin American countries, 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 referred affirmative action laws typically compel political parties to not exceed a certain proportion (“quota”) of candidates of either gender.

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 legislative elections. In 2012, the Mexican state of Jalisco, our case study, implemented a legal candidate quota mandated by the law requiring political parties to nominate not more than 70 percent of legislative candidates of the same sex. In the following 2015 electoral process, candidate parity (50 percent candidates of each gender) mandated by the law was implemented in the legislative elections.

Expanding the data set from a previous analysis (Rodelo, 2016), we include in this study the local executive and legislative elections in the Mexican state of Jalisco from 2012 to 2015 examining the role of several strategic and contextual factors on the relationship between media coverage of elections and gender: party incumbency, size of political party,

type of election, place of election and existence of placement mandate (parity principle).

To better understand the meaning of the gender differences observed in the quantitative analysis of the media monitoring dataset, semi-structured interviews were applied to journalists and former candidates. In this manner, the subjective understanding of participants about the gender differences in patterns of media coverage during electoral campaigns might help in the generation of hypothesis about the causes of gender bias.

## GENDER BIAS IN VOLUME OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

According to Atkeson and Krebb (2008), there are four main approaches to studying gender bias in news reporting of electoral campaigns: studying the (1) volume of media coverage, the (2) expressions of viability of candidacy, the (3) topics/issues and the (4) discussion of candidates' traits. As stated before, the volume of media coverage varies across western countries but more research is needed to explain such variations.

In one of the earliest studies, Kahn (1994) advanced three possible causes of gender bias: media organization's stereotypes and/or prejudices; organizational incentives and/or news values, such as novelty and newsworthiness; and campaign strategies. Other studies have explored as a cause of gender bias the underrepresentation of women in media organizations (Shor et al., 2015). Up to this point causes of this phenomenon can be classified into two sets of factors: (1) the ones related with the media organizations (including attitudes toward both genders, news values and incentives, presence of women in decision-making posts); and (2) the ones related to the political campaigns and the political parties (including attitudes toward both genders, campaign strategies, allocation of resources, etc.). Additionally, as Lühiste and Banducci (2017) pointed out, much research has been done without explaining the observed variations across countries by conducting cross-sectional designs. According to Lühiste and Banducci (2017), this novelty may underscore the role of a third set of causes: (3) the contextual factors related to the electoral system and political culture.

Candidate's strategies and campaign. Kahn (1994) identified one source of gender bias in the differences in candidate's campaigns. As a source, candidate's strategies and campaign refer to everything the candidates, her/his team, and her/his political party does. For example, the allocation of candidacies, his/her position in proportional representation lists,<sup>1</sup> and the allocation, by the political party, of another kind of resources such as training, budget, social capital (including the presence of party leaders in public meetings, or *acompañamiento*), etcetera.

Within this set of factors, party incumbency can be seen as relevant: in various contexts, an incumbent politician can mobilize resources for his/her party's candidate (Carey and Polga-Hecimovich 2006). One of those contexts is Mexico, where reelection has been banned since the 1910 Revolution to the year 2018. Moreover, on the Mexican multi-party system, the competitiveness of the parties varies, and, with them, the parties' campaign budgets and resources (being material resources, such as budget, or intangible ones, such as social capital).

There are differences in media attention depending on the type of election: unsurprisingly, at higher levels (e. g., presidential compared to state elections) there is more

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<sup>1</sup> Or *representación proporcional*.

media attention. On the other hand, legislative elections seem to gather lesser media attention than executive elections across contexts (Smith, 1997).

Political and cultural context. Not all electoral races gather the same amount of interest and media attention; the latter also varies according to the economic, political and cultural importance of the represented region.

Favorable attitudes toward gender equality may contribute to fewer gender biases in the media coverage of elections (Lühiste and Banducci, 2017). The enactment and enforcement of quota laws are an important part of the context; however, its effect on gender bias in media attention remains to be examined.

## CONTEXT OF STUDY

In Mexico, the political reform of 2014 established in the Constitution the mandatory parity principle (50 percent male candidates and 50 percent female candidates) for all legislative elections throughout the country from 2015 onwards. Three years before, in the 2012 elections, a quota of maximum 70 % of candidates for either gender was implemented—although not without resistance from political parties. Numerous studies have documented gender differences related to political parties and campaigns, in topics 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).

Vega-Montiel (2008) and Cimac (2012) have documented numerous stereotypes prevalent in media discourse, that, together with negative attitudes towards women participation and lack of gender equality make up for an unfavorable climate for women’s political participation in Mexico. Taking this context and the literature review into consideration, we posed the following research questions:

*RQ1: Is there significant gender bias in the volume of radio coverage of the last 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 placement mandate (parity principle), involved in the observed gender differences?*

## METHOD

### *Source of radio monitoring data*

The radio data entered into this analysis comes from the media monitoring commissioned by the Electoral and Civic Participation Institute of the State of Jalisco (IEPC Jalisco) at the 2012 and 2015 local electoral processes. The 2012 radio monitoring was done by the private company Verificación y Monitoreo and comprised 71 radio programs transmitting during electoral pre-campaigns and campaigns. The 2015 radio monitoring was executed by the University of Guadalajara and comprised 20 radio

programs transmitting during the campaigns.<sup>2</sup> The races selected from these data were those where there was at least one women candidate.

Limitations and justification. 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.

### *Sampling and variables*

Recoding. The original data was recoded to have candidates as units of analysis and to have as variables the type of election (governor of the state, deputy or major), candidate gender, share of minutes received in comparison with his/her competitors, location, party competitiveness and party incumbency.

For the 2012 campaigns, we gathered data from the radio coverage of 141 candidates in 22 elections (101 candidates in 13 district elections, 35 candidates in eight 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 12 district elections and 38 candidates in five municipal elections).

Party competitiveness. We equated party competitiveness with campaign budget since the latter is established by the local electoral institute with a formula that takes into consideration last elections' voting.

Seven parties participated in the local elections of 2012 as well as their coalitions. The parties coded as "more competitive" were Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), Partido Verde Ecologista de México, including the PRI-PVEM coalition. These parties received between 14.7 and 40.5 million pesos to spend in their electoral campaigns (IEPC, 2012). 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 participated in the local elections of 2015, their coalitions, 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). These parties received between 11.8 and 21.7 million pesos to fund their electoral campaigns (IEPC, 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 campaigns' budget ranked 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.

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<sup>2</sup> 11 from the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area, four from Puerto Vallarta and five from other municipalities in the state.

Party incumbency. There will be a re-election for the first time in Mexico in the 2018 elections, as re-elections have been banned since the Mexican revolution. In this article, however, we define party incumbency as the success of the party in the last election in the electoral district, municipality or state. This variable is included because we consider that it gives leverage to the competitors of the party holding the represented area.

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

### *Qualitative analysis*

A qualitative state at the end of a quantitative study can be useful to interpret the quantitative data or evaluate an intervention (Ulin *et al.*, 2006). Conversely, quantitative data can be used in an exploratory stage of research, supplying useful information to design a qualitative study (Ulin *et al.*, 2006). In the topic of gender differences in campaign coverage, a (final) qualitative stage comprised of interviews has been suggested at least by Hooghe *et al.* (2015), Lachover (2015), Van Aelst (2009), and Windett (2013). In this study, the rationale for supporting the results with a qualitative phase is to better understand the meaning of the differences observed in the media monitoring: why is there a gender bias in media attention in candidacies with party incumbency or backed by competitive parties? 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 generating hypothesis about the causes of the gender bias in candidacies with party incumbency and backed by competitive parties. Semi-structured interviews were applied to journalists who covered the 2015 electoral campaigns and former candidates. Journalists from different media sectors (television, radio, and newspapers) and former women candidates agreed to be interviewed. 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 (1) the role of media during campaigns, (2) communication strategies of political parties and candidates, (3) media treatment and attitudes toward quotas, and (4) prescription for candidates.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The qualitative analysis was done following the coding procedure suggested by Auerbach & Silverstein (2003). A software (QDA Miner) was used to facilitate the coding. Codes were both inductively created after reading the transcripts and developed from the general knowledge on the topic embodied in the literature review. The author did the coding.

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

## RESULTS

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.

### *Gender and presence of coverage*

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 of absence of gender difference cannot be rejected:  $X^2(1, N = 352) = 1.204, p = .273$ .

However, when the nominal variable is presence of above average media share (> 13.4 %), the null hypothesis can be rejected:  $X^2(1, N = 352) = 4.471, p = .034$ .

### *Gender and minute share averages*

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. After that, share averages were calculated in eleven samples that arranged candidates according with relevant variables: all candidates, legislative, executive, backed by competitive parties, backed by non-competitive parties, in Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA), not in GMA, with party incumbency, without party incumbency, in 2012 and, finally, candidates in 2015.

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.

Globally, in the 48 races analyzed, the 131 female candidates had an average 10.2 % of minutes of coverage whereas the 221 male candidates had an average 15.2 % of minutes of coverage. The mean ranks of proportions of radio coverage were significantly different ( $H = 4.37, 1 \text{ d. f.}, p = .037$ ).

Additionally, male candidates had a significantly greater mean rank of radio coverage in samples of candidates based in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area ( $p = .064$ ), candidates with party incumbency ( $p = .052$ ), and candidates in the 2015 elections ( $p = .030$ ).

However, there were no statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of proportions of radio coverage devoted to men and women in the rest of the variables: legislative, executive, more competitive parties, less competitive parties, outside of GMA, candidates without party incumbency and 2012 elections.

Finally, in none of the samples, the female candidates had a significantly greater mean rank of radio coverage.

TABLE 1  
MINUTE SHARE AVERAGE BY GENDER

	Women		Men		Sig.
	Average (SD)	N	Average (SD)	N	
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: \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , +  $p < 0.10$ .  $N$  corresponds to number of candidates. Significance scores correspond to Kruskal Wallis tests.

Source: author, with data from IEPC.

### *Before and after the parity law*

To examine in more detail the change in share averages before and after mandated legislative parity, the same analysis was made excluding the candidates running for executive posts. Results show a more pronounced share average 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		Sig.
			Average (SD)	N	Average (SD)	N	
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: \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , +  $p < 0.10$ .  $N$  corresponds to number of candidates. Significance scores correspond to Kruskal Wallis tests.

Source: author, with data from IEPC.

### *Qualitative phase*

Five journalists (three women, two men) from television, radio and newspaper outlets with 11-20 years of experience working in journalism, as well as three former candidates (all women), agreed to participate in the qualitative phase. The analysis focused on (1) ideas concerning the coverage of elections, (2) attitudes towards women and quotas in media organizations and political parties and (3) candidates' resources and communication strategies.



### *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: media tending to pay too much attention to conflict affairs labeled by the participants as black campaigns, *golpeteo* (flak), negative campaigns, dirty war, political leaks and scandals (D, F); media seeking topics that attract public's attention (C); coverage is superficial because of economic and legal constraints (B) and there is favoritism toward candidates that will benefit the media organization in the future (F).

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

Interestingly, most of the participants pointed out in a spontaneous manner the existence of corrupt media organizations who sell positive coverage and/or negative coverage of political opponents (E, A, F, C).

### *Journalists' attitudes toward women and quotas*

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

a los hombres sí se les puede... no se les critica que por un asunto de género hayan llegado pero a las mujeres sí, y entonces sí es diferente incluso en cómo aboradas una nota; a los hombres les puedes criticar toda su plataforma política y a las mujeres siempre están buscándole de quién es pareja o de cómo es que llegó ahí.

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 does not have capacities:

todos coinciden en que se les da la oportunidad y están ahí y se quedan, igual es con los hombres, pues, no nomás cuestiones de mujeres, pero las mujeres se nota más. Porque hay muchos hombres que destacan y mujeres que destacan no hay tantas, entonces pues sí como dicen "ay, para qué llegó" o "para qué vino"; a veces hay comentarios de los partidos contra ellas porque ven que no... O bromas.

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).

Some participants asserted as a solution that women need training (F, C) and that some women do not talk too much because they do not feel comfortable (C, A). For example, an interviewee (f, 50) explained:

Siempre hay como mayor... condescendencia con las mujeres de que *ah, sí las candidatas*. Pero realmente no figuran, realmente no tienen mucho que aportar, realmente no tienen mucho que decir; entonces hay como un proceso de invisibilización, de invisibilizarlas; ellas están ahí por otros motivos.

One participant lamented the stereotype that beautiful women are not intelligent (E); and that women candidates are short of ambition (C). Some participants advanced critical ideas about quotas: they will have to disappear (B) and they do not make sense if women lack capacities (F). For example, a respondent (f, 41) asserted:

no tiene ningún sentido si nada más es por cumplir. No, no, no le encuentro así mucho, no están ahí por su capacidad, por su trayectoria, por su puesto, por su inteligencia, sino porque son amigas de, o amante de, comadre de o porque el marido, como no puede, no entró, ah, pos tu esposa, ¿no?

A female participant considered that misogyny in media organizations is not a problem (D), whilst a male interviewee argued that male bosses tend to reinforce an ideology that minimizes women (m, 27).

Entre los reporteros es muy común hablar de esto, incluso externar tus propias dudas sobre lo que está pasando: “oye, está cabrón que esta morra allá llegado por esto y por esto”. Y lo empiezas a platicar y medio lo entiendes en grupo, con tus compañeros, como el soldado raso, pues, pero ya cuando tú platicas con jefes o los jefes de tus jefes ellos son los que te dicen, por eso te digo que se refuerza esta ideología, son ellos mismos los que te dicen cómo es que llegó una mujer a donde está y por eso no es un tema que le interese al periódico. Tú le puedes plantear: “oye, está haciendo esto, esta parte está padre de cubrir con estas mujeres” y te dicen: “no, porque no es interesante para el periódico”. Y entonces lo que están haciendo es... pues sí, el silencio también reproduce ideología y ellos mismos te dicen...

#### *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). One participant (f, 50) reflected on the consequences of poor criteria on parties’ selection of candidates:

los medios de comunicación están al tanto de la entrega de cuotas y el manejo interno de los partidos [...] dependiendo también del pateadero por debajo de la mesa entre los grupos es como se determina qué distritos o que municipios van a jugar las mujeres y bajo ese entendido el grupo tiene que poner un candidato; [...] luego si estas mujeres que el grupo impone, “fulanita va a ser la candidata”, si esta mujer no cubre con ese perfil, nos lleva entre las patas a todas, que es de repente en lo que se fijan los medios, quién es esta candidata, de dónde salió y por qué, qué experiencia tiene: ninguna, de quién es comadre, de quién es amiga, de quién es amante... y toda esta serie de cosas que te achacan a las mujeres, más que por capacidades, por donde estás parada y con quién; eso se estila mucho... esa etiqueta o ese

juicio a priori que dan los medios de comunicación es muy difícil quitar. Si eres candidata, con motivo de qué. No es por tus capacidades: dan por sentado que no es por tus capacidades.

### *Gender differences in campaign strategy and resources*

One interviewee asserted that there are no/very little differences in campaign strategy (B). Other participants identified certain contrasts: a female reporter complained about the strategies in women's campaigns being superficially "pinkified" or "softened" only to reproduce common stereotypes (D). Other 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), that it is rare to see women seeking interviews (C) and there are women who lack knowledge and preparation (C). Another interviewee agreed that there are women who lack public speaking skills (F).

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

[the party's leadership told us that] no va a haber recurso para esas campañas de las designaciones de las candidatas impuestas hasta que un tribunal no resuelva y un poquito ese... ánimo de decir: no sabemos cuándo van a definir, el INE lo mismo puede definir un día antes de la elección que no eres la candidata, entonces no te podemos dar el dinero en tanto el INE no resuelva, entonces si el INE resuelve el mes que viene pues tendrás dinero y si el INE no resuelve entonces no tendrás dinero para la campaña.

### *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 proposal is essential to improve a candidate's coverage, independent of their gender (B, C, D, F). Other recommendations included having public speaking skills (C, E); self-confidence (be certain when speaking) (C, E); not having a political background or having done a relevant work before being candidate (B); having a good team of collaborators or public relation consultants (E); competing for an important position or representing an important party (B), and favoring women's issues (F).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A first good news is that there is no statistically significant difference between men and women in the presence (or absence) of media coverage. In other words, women are not at greater odds of having zero articles about her campaign compared to men. Women were, however, at greater odds of having a below average share of media coverage compared to men, as the difference in media attention between men and women candidates obtaining above average media coverage is statistically significant.

Results show lower average shares of coverage after the increase in women 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 and also suggest that gender bias in media attention may even increase in electoral campaigns immediately after enforcing mandated candidate parity.

Data from the qualitative interviews, along with the literature on the topic, suggest that before parity only women with above-average capacities and perceived chances to win were nominated by political parties; this perception about women having to be *more prepared* than men is backed by empirical data (Beer & Camp, 2016). Low coverage after parity may reflect adverse attitudes towards female newcomers benefitted by the parity law, both from political parties and media organizations; including the frequent perception of women as being not worthy of their nominations or being displacing men candidates. However, these perceptions rest on the legitimate observation of competitive parties constantly preferring loyal over talented candidates.

Other explanations for women's lower average shares after the increase in women candidates include differences in campaigns; especially, lack of resources for women benefitted by quota laws and/or women's fewer political experience (noticed by media after spotting differences in public speaking skills). 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 hard-to-win or less important districts and municipalities.

Quantitative results in this study have to be taken carefully, as alpha levels are sensitive to sample size.

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