

# Gender disparities in the media coverage of local electoral campaigns in Mexico

## Disparidades de género en la cobertura mediática de campañas electorales locales en México

### Disparidades de gênero na cobertura midiática das campanhas eleitorais locais no México

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#### ABSTRACT

A full exercise of the right of women to participate in politics also implies fair and non-discriminatory news coverage of electoral campaigns. In order to determine if there were gender differences in the volume of coverage of the first campaigns in which the principle of gender parity was applied in Mexico, we analyzed data from the local campaigns of Jalisco. We found that men candidates obtained significantly higher percentages of stories and minutes than their females counterparts. The volume of coverage devoted to male candidates was higher especially when comparing candidates representing incumbent parties and candidates representing large parties.

**Keywords:** gender parity, gender bias, media coverage, electoral campaigns, gender quotas.

#### RESUMEN

*Un ejercicio pleno del derecho de las mujeres a participar en la política implica también una cobertura mediática no discriminatoria de las campañas electorales. Para determinar si hubo diferencias de género en el volumen de cobertura de las primeras campañas en que se aplica el principio de paridad de género en México, se analizaron datos provenientes de las campañas locales de Jalisco. Se encontró que los hombres obtuvieron medias de porcentaje de notas significativamente superiores a la de sus contrapartes mujeres, especialmente cuando se compararon los volúmenes de cobertura de candidaturas postuladas por partidos gobernantes (incumbents) y por partidos grandes.*

**Palabras clave:** paridad de género, sesgo de género, cobertura, campañas electorales, cuota de género.

#### RESUMO

Um exercício pleno do direito das mulheres de participar na política também implica uma cobertura eleitoral não discriminatórias das campanhas eleitorais. Para determinar se houve diferenças de gênero no volume de cobertura das primeiras campanhas em que se aplicou o princípio da paridade de gênero no México, foram analisados dados da eleição local de Jalisco. Candidatos homens obtiveram médias percentuais de notícias e minutos significativamente mais elevadas do que as médias obtidas por mulheres candidatas, especialmente quando foram comparados os volumes de cobertura dos candidatos de partidos do governo e partidos competitivos.

**Palavras-chave:** paridade de gênero, diferença de gênero, cobertura da mídia, campanhas eleitorais, quotas de gênero.

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## INTRODUCTION

A full exercise of the right of women to participate in politics and government also implies equality in areas such as media coverage of electoral campaigns. Absence of bias in media attention is important due to the fact that lack of information about female candidates can be disadvantageous for them, since it is more difficult for those who vote to choose an option that they remember less (Kahn, 1994). Faced with this, a question arises: do women receive less media coverage than their male counterparts during electoral campaigns? This article analyzes the volume of media coverage of local electoral campaigns in Mexico during the first implementation of the principle of gender parity in legislative candidates (2015).

The historical struggle for gender equality has been aimed at guaranteeing the rights of women not only to live a dignified (in areas such as work, health, education, housing, food) and free of violence life, but also to participate in politics and government. In general, women are still underrepresented in the formal political spaces in the world (Paxton, Kunovich & Hughes, 2007). Empirical evidence supports the relationship between gender and development and the need to include a gender perspective in development and democracy studies to build public policies that contribute to narrowing gender gaps. For example, according to a longitudinal study with data from 123 countries (Wyndow, Li & Mattes, 2013), empowering women (by increasing their schooling and participation in the labor force and lowering the fertility rate) fostered the development of democracy in the world during the 1980-2005 period.

Since the 1990s, gender quotas have been established in Latin American countries to ensure women's access to publicly elected positions (Archenti & Tula, 2014; Jones, Alles & Tchintian, 2012). In Mexico, the political reform of 2014 incorporated in article 41 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States the principle of gender parity in the formation of candidacies of federal and local legislators, as a measure to increase the political representation of women in the country's legislatures. This principle forces political parties to posit the same number of men and women candidates.

But, in addition to gender quotas and parity, ensuring the full exercise of women's right to participate in politics and government implies gender equity and non-discrimination in the media coverage of election campaigns. The first reason for this is that differences in media attention would put these candidates at a disadvantage (Kahn, 1994). Secondly, the difference in media attention may invisibilize the political participation of women, so that people judge that women's participation is not important or that women are not interested in politics; and also contributing to the absence of role models for girls and adults. According to Unesco (2012), the media "continue to be one of the main sources of information, ideas and opinion for the majority of the world's people" (p.15) and, therefore, can spread stereotypes and ideas with the potential to improve or worsen social problems: in this case, problems such as misogyny, sexism or discrimination against women and, in general, attitudes that support the persistence of gender gaps in different areas of social life, such as labor, economy, politics and education. As they are extremely important information vehicles, the media "must reflect the diversity of society" (Unesco, 2012, p.15).

From the above, an agenda for media research includes, among other tools, systematically conducting content analysis and media monitoring with a gender perspective (Gallagher, 2014), to account for the status of women's access to what Vega-Montiel (2010) calls a "right to communication" (which includes freedom of expression and the right to information).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### THE CAUSES OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN NEWS COVERAGE OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

The pioneering study of Kahn (1994) establishes three possible explanations for gender differences in the coverage of election campaigns: (i) stereotypes of media organizations, (ii) news reporting standards in newsrooms and (iii) differences in campaign strategies. We will mention a fourth explanation in literature: the gender of decision makers in media organizations (Shor, Van de Rijt, Miltsov, Kulkarni & Skiena, 2015). These explanations are discussed below.

The first possible explanation –stereotypes within media organizations– can dictate in advance the best areas of competence of male and female candidates according to their gender (Kahn, 1994; Meeks, 2013), relating, for example, men with themes of foreign policy and women with education (Kahn, 1994); or imposing traditional gender roles (Mota & Biroli, 2016). Moreover, media organizations can assume and reproduce certain arguments that oppose the political participation of women. Vega-Montiel (2008) mentions three: the “rooted perception that women are less effective for positions of representation and performance of public functions”; the belief that “society is not prepared to have a female president”; and the conviction that “women must (...) have exceptional abilities to engage in politics” (p.75).

The second possible explanation is that media organizations prioritize information that meets the highest standards of news reporting, including novelty and rarity. Thus, in certain contexts, the rarity of female candidates may make them more newsworthy (Kahn, 1994) or influence on how the candidate is described (Meeks, 2013).

Third, news coverage may reflect differences between campaign strategies of male and female candidates (Kahn, 1994). Likewise, gender differences in issues such as campaign financing (Speck & Mancuso, 2014), recruitment and training of cadres (Beer & Camp, 2016), internal selection of candidates (Vidal Correa, 2013) –particularly the allocation of nominations in “lost districts” (Palma Cabrera & Cerva Cerna, 2014)–, partisan symbolic support (Cerva Cerna, 2014), among others, influence the effectiveness of campaigns and, therefore, can also translate into differences in media attention.

The fourth possible explanation places the reason for gender differences in media coverage on the gender of media workers, especially decision makers, such as media owners and directors (Shor et al., 2015). According to Mexico’s *Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres* [National Institute of Women] (2005, p. 14), executive positions (CEOs, presidents, vice-presidents, seats in councils, etc.) in Mexican radio stations are occupied by women in only 12% of cases. For television stations, this same statistic is

reduced to 5%. In addition, despite the fact that about 60% of those who study journalism in Mexico are women, labor access to media organizations does not correspond proportionally with this trend, as women are 16.3% of the written press journalists in the Federal District and 24.2% of journalists in the other Mexican states (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, 2005, p. 13). A similar situation prevails outside the media sector (Zabludovsky, 2015). In a study on the explanatory role of this variable, Meeks (2013) found the following differences in the way men and women journalists covered candidates in the United States: women who covered Senate elections emphasized more than their peers the feminized qualities and issues; men who covered state and presidential elections emphasized masculinized contents more than their comrades. Meeks’ (2013) interpretation of this data is that journalists, both men and women (possibly unconsciously), support the “genderization” (i.e., gender-based allocation) of popularly elected positions (p. 68).

#### GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE VOLUME OF COVERAGE DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Gender differences in media coverage of election campaigns can be of different types. Atkeson and Krebb (2008) have distinguished four main approaches in the literature on this topic: (i) the volume of coverage, (ii) the viability of the candidates, (iii) the candidates’ issues, and (iv) the qualities of candidates. Since this study focuses on the first of these approaches, the following literature review will mainly comment on evidence referring to biases in volume of media coverage.

According to the literature review by Shor et al. (2015), the evidence indicates that despite greater participation of women in various spheres of social life, a very large gender gap remains in the proportion of news coverage, to the extent that these authors speak of a “paper ceiling”, since the studies they reviewed “typically find that women’s names constitute about a quarter of the total mentions [of actors]” (p.962). Shor et al. (2015) have proposed that “inequalities in media coverage often reflect societal realities and everyday societal inequalities” (p. 964). In a similar

vein, Baitinger (2015), after finding that fewer women than men appear as guests in talk shows, mentions that “these gender differences can be explained, for the most part, by women’s under-representation in the political professions from which guests are selected” rather than by sexism in the media (p. 587).

Focusing specifically on news coverage of political campaigns in the United States, Kahn (1994) found gender differences in coverage by monitoring 47 campaigns for Senate and governorships between 1982 and 1988. The differences were: (i) lower volume of coverage of female candidates to Senate compared to male counterparts, and (ii) more negative female candidate coverage compared to their male counterparts. In the gubernatorial campaigns, the author did not registered differences in volume of coverage.

In a later analysis, referring to the coverage of the senatorial campaigns and the U.S. gubernatorial campaigns of 1994, Smith (1997) obtained results different from those of Kahn. On this occasion, the author performed two regression analyzes to predict coverage volumes, the first with data on men’s coverage, and the second with women’s data. One of his findings is that the fact that a female candidate competes for governor contributed an additional 5.65 square inches per day of coverage (possibly because of the novelty factor), whereas it was not a significant factor for male candidates. Smith’s conclusion was that there is “little evidence of gender-based patterns of coverage in 1994 senatorial and gubernatorial contests [in the United States], at least in terms of quantity” (p.76).

According to Smith, the difference between his results and those of Kahn (1994) is explained by the fact that in the 1990s the United States experienced an era of greater awareness of the role of women in politics (1992 had been proclaimed the “year of the woman”). Other studies report similar results: Atkeson and Krebb (2008) also found no differences in volume in the U.S. municipal elections, nor Devitt (2002) in gubernatorial elections —also in the United States. By contrast, Bystrom, Robertson, and Banwart (2001) found evidence of greater coverage for female candidates in gubernatorial and senatorial elections in the United

States in 2000; likewise, Meeks (2012) also recorded greater media coverage of female candidates in four selected cases of women-versus-men races won by women in the United States. Campaign studies in Israel also show coverage with “quantitative gender parity” (Lachover, 2015, p.3), that is, absence of gender differences in media attention.

Outside the United States, there have been fewer studies on gender differences in the volume of media coverage. One of these is Hooghe, Jacobs and Claes (2015), concerning the television coverage volumes of members of the Belgian Parliament. The conclusions of these authors were that “news media continue to have a biased treatment of male and female MPs [members of parliament]” (p.407). In addition, having a longitudinal sample allowed them to reject the notion that the increase of women in positions of power will increase also their media coverage. This is because, among other reasons, this differential treatment is particularly detrimental to women who occupy the most important positions, such as being party president, being a minister, presiding over the House or leading the parliamentary group (Hooghe et al., 2015).

In another study, Dan and Iorgoveanu (2013) observed gender biases in their analysis of the coverage of Romanian representatives’ elections to the 2009 European Parliament: female candidates appeared more in tabloids; male candidates appeared more in broadsheet newspapers. Likewise, more trivialization and a greater number of gender issues were observed in the coverage of female candidates than in the coverage of male candidates. Ross, Evans, Harrison, Shears and Wadia (2013) obtained a similar result in their analysis of coverage of the 2010 United Kingdom general elections, as women were less mentioned in the news stories than men, but appeared more often in articles focused specifically on gender issues.

Studies of differences in coverage during campaigns usually consider within the analysis factors that, coupled with gender, may also explain the differences in media coverage of candidates. In the case of Kahn (1994), these factors were the competitiveness of the election<sup>1</sup>, the candidate’s incumbent or challenger

status, or being in an “open race”<sup>2</sup>. Smith (1997) took into account, in addition to the previously mentioned factors, the gender of the writer of the news story, and presence of newspaper’s endorsement for the candidate, among other variables.

#### GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE MEXICAN COVERAGE OF ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

In his early work on news coverage of the 1988 Mexican presidential elections, Arredondo (1991) stated that “unequal access to news spaces by various individuals and social groups is an undeniable reality” and called attention to the “underrepresentation of these groups and their problems in informational discourses” (p.137). The same work of Arredondo indicates that the only women candidate to the presidency in that election, Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, from the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, was protagonist of 3.27% of the television news and occupied 0.36% of air time, occupying the last place of media attention in both areas (p.156).

However, the specific academic interest in the coverage of women candidates did not manifest until years later. Subsequent studies show how, for example, presidential candidate Patricia Mercado (the only female contender in the Mexican presidential elections of 2006) was the least mentioned in television and radio and the one with the least television spots (Vega-Montiel, 2008, p.77). There have been also studies on the qualitative differences in coverage: Cimac (Comunicación e Información de la Mujer, 2012) monitored the 2012 presidential election, in which a female candidate to the presidency participated (Josefina Vázquez Mota) and concluded: “Sadly, there were many examples, pitiful because of the sexist sense they contain, of gender stereotypes that are ingrained and transmitted mechanically” (p.106).

In analyzing the political communication of presidential candidates during the 2006 election campaigns, Vega-Montiel (2008) concluded that “the media reproduce gender stereotypes and patterns prevailing in culture, politics and economics, which discriminate, and at the same time hinder the full participation of women in politics” (p.78).

#### THE CASE OF JALISCO IN THE MEXICAN CONTEXT

The human development index (HDI) of Jalisco in 2010 was 0.743, the 15th place among the country’s 32 federal entities (Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo [PNUD], 2014). In the Gender Inequality Index (GDI) –in which *zero* reflects an “egalitarian panorama” and *one*, broad disadvantages for women (PNUD, 2014, p.105) –, Jalisco obtained a score of 0.336, which is lower than the national average and the fifth lowest among the federal entities. The most important indicators of women’s political participation in Jalisco are close to the national averages: 26.3% are female local deputies (27.4% national); 4.8% are female mayors (6.8% national), 37.2% are *regidoras* (female councilors in municipalities) (32.8% national) and 36.0% are *síndicas* (female legal representatives in municipalities) (21.1% national) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [INEGI], 2014). However, Vidal Correa (2013) describes Jalisco as one of the “lagging” states in terms of nominations of legislative female candidates by the principle of relative majority; and as a state with a high percentage of women candidates despite having “the lowest percentage of women participating in politics or in activities related to political parties [in comparison with other selected states]” (Vidal Correa, 2015, p.336).

The electoral legal framework reformed in 2014 made gender parity compulsory in the federal and local legislative races (article 41 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States) and in the integration of the lists of candidates to municipalities (“vertical parity”, see articles 5 and 24 of the Code of Elections and Citizen’s Participation of the State of Jalisco), although no provision was included in the reform to enforce a “horizontal” gender parity, that is to say, between those who head the municipality and, therefore, are appointed as municipal presidents. As we will see in the results, this led to parity in candidates to the local Congress, but not in candidates to municipal presidencies. It should be noted that the same interest in gender equity manifested in the aforementioned political reform was what determined that for the first time candidate’s gender was included as a variable in the media monitoring of the local

campaigns of Jalisco, and this was what made the present study possible.

Regarding the relevance of the radio sector, it is one of the main media used by Jalisco citizens to gather information: according to the 2010 National Survey of Cultural Practices and Consumption (Conaculta, 2010), 77.1% of Jalisco citizens listen to the radio (76% in the country). Among those who listen to it, 24.7% say they listen to news programs (34% in the country). Although the proportion of Jalisco people who declare to watch television is greater than that of those who claim to listen to the radio (Conaculta, 2010), during the 2015 electoral campaigns Jalisco's Radio and Television System (SJRTV) and the largest commercial television channels opted for not to disseminate information on electoral campaigns (University of Guadalajara, 2015). For this reason, radio coverage was more varied and abundant.

Considering the above data, we asked the following research question about the radio coverage of the 2015 local election campaigns in the state of Jalisco: what gender differences can be observed in the volume of radio coverage (volume of stories and minutes aired) received by the candidates in the local electoral campaigns of Jalisco (Mexico) in 2015?

## METHOD

### CONTENT ANALYSIS

The data used in this study comes from the monitoring of the radio and television coverage of the local electoral campaigns in Jalisco prepared by the University of Guadalajara under the order of the Institute of Elections and Citizen's Participation of the State of Jalisco. The sample of radio newscasts<sup>3</sup> included twenty programs, of which eleven transmitted from the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA), four from Puerto Vallarta and five from other urban centers of Jalisco. All the radio programs transmitted from Monday to Friday between April 5 and June 3, 2015 were analyzed. The monitoring unit of analysis was the radio story about local electoral candidates. The codebook included among its variables the gender of the main candidate of the story, its party, type of candidate (municipal or legislative), municipality or district for which it competes, mention of proposals, type of proposals, and duration of the story.

### SAMPLING AND STUDY VARIABLES

We collected data on the radio coverage of 211 candidates in 24 elections of two types: 173 legislative candidates in 19 electoral districts<sup>4</sup> and 38 municipal

candidates competing in 5 municipalities<sup>5</sup> ( $N = 2261$  radio stories). The data were organized and codified to have candidates as units of analysis, as well as the following variables: type of election, name or number of municipality/district, candidate's gender, percentage of stories obtained in their race, percentage of air minutes obtained in their race, membership of a municipality or district to the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA), size of the candidate's party and success of the candidate's party in that municipality or district in the previous local elections (party incumbency).

Nine political parties, their coalitions and independent candidates participated in the 2015 local elections of the state of Jalisco. The criterion for determining the size of the parties was the campaign budget defined by the Institute of Elections and Citizen's Participation of the State of Jalisco. Parties codified as *large* were the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), the *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN), *Movimiento Ciudadano* and its coalitions (PAN-PRD and PRI-PVEM), which obtained between 11.8 and 21.7 millions of Mexican pesos for the funding of their electoral campaigns (Instituto Electoral y de Participación Ciudadana del Estado de Jalisco [IEPC], 2014). The parties coded as *small* were the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD), the *Partido del Trabajo* (PT), the *Partido Nueva Alianza* (Panal), *Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional* (Morena), the *Partido Encuentro Social* (PES) and the *Partido Humanista* (PH), since their budget was between 1.4 and 6.6 millions of Mexican pesos. The only independent candidate that entered into the analysis was also codified, for practical purposes, as a *small party*, as independents were allocated a budget of only 745,000 Mexican pesos.

The success of the party in the previous election (party incumbency) was included as variable. According to Carey and Polga-Hecimovich (2006), such a condition can give advantage to the competitors of the party that governs or represents the municipality or district, because their candidates can receive resources from the government; although it can also be a disadvantage, since "the popularity of governments tends to decline over the period of government" (p.535).

The Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA) is the largest and most populous urban agglomeration in the state of Jalisco and, therefore, the campaigns of its municipalities and legislative districts attract more media attention than the rest of the campaigns in Jalisco.

## RESULTS

Overall, in the 24 races analyzed, 94 female candidates obtained a total of 390 stories (17%), while 117 men candidates obtained 1871 stories (83%). However, these 24 races had different levels of media attention, the extreme being the election of the municipality of Guadalajara (the most important

city of Jalisco), which alone obtained 1480 stories (65% of the stories of the sample). Therefore, in order to know if there were gender differences in the media coverage in general, we calculated the share of volume of media coverage (aired stories and minutes) obtained by each candidate against their peers in the race in which they competed.

	Women		Men		Sig.	D
	Average (SD)	N	Average (SD)	N		
All elections	0.08 (0.14)	94; 390	0.14 (0.23)	117; 1871	0.028*	0.32
Legislative	0.08 (0.15)	86; 168	0.14 (0.26)	87; 294	0.059+	0.29
Municipal	0.09 (0.06)	8; 222	0.14 (0.10)	30; 1577	0.175	0.59
Large parties	0.11 (0.13)	31; 117	0.25 (0.26)	41; 1554	0.009**	0.72
Small parties	0.06 (0.15)	63; 273	0.08 (0.19)	76; 317	0.567	0.10
In GMA	0.06 (0.10)	58; 261	0.15 (0.26)	69; 1586	0.010**	0.52
Outside GMA	0.12 (0.19)	36; 129	0.12 (0.18)	48; 285	0.863	0.04
With party incumbency	0.14 (0.19)	9; 30	0.36 (0.32)	15; 557	0.074+	0.87
Without party incumbency	0.07 (0.14)	85; 360	0.11 (0.20)	102; 1314	0.174	0.21

Table 1: Average shares of radio stories obtained by gender

Note: The p-value corresponds to a two-sample T-test (\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . \*  $p < 0.05$ . +  $p < 0.10$ ). N corresponds to total numbers of candidates and radio stories.

Source: own elaboration.

	Women		Men		Sig.	D
	Average (SD)	N	Average (SD)	N		
All elections	0.08 (0.15)	94; 764.9	0.14 (0.23)	117; 2841.8	0.020*	0.31
Legislative	0.07 (0.16)	86; 413.2	0.14 (0.26)	87; 635.4	0.035*	0.33
Municipal	0.11 (0.06)	8; 351.6	0.14 (0.11)	30; 2206.5	0.468	0.34
Large parties	0.11 (0.13)	31; 291.8	0.24 (0.26)	41; 2095.5	0.011*	0.68
Small parties	0.06 (0.16)	63; 473.1	0.09 (0.20)	76; 746.3	0.373	0.16
In GMA	0.06 (0.12)	58; 395.8	0.15 (0.27)	69; 2030	0.011*	0.51
Outside GMA	0.11 (0.19)	36; 369.1	0.13 (0.18)	48; 811.8	0.698	0.09
With party incumbency	0.12 (0.18)	9; 92	0.34 (0.33)	15; 685.6	0.069+	0.90
Without party incumbency	0.07 (0.15)	85; 672.9	0.11 (0.20)	102; 2156.3	0.130	0.23

Table 2: Average shares of radio aired minutes obtained by gender

Note: The p-value corresponds to a two-sample T-test (\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . \*  $p < 0.05$ . +  $p < 0.10$ ). N corresponds to total numbers of candidates and aired minutes.

Source: own elaboration.

With these data, we performed Student's *t*-tests for two samples. This test is ideal when there is a nominal variable (such as gender) and a continuous variable (such as percentages of stories and aired minutes) (McDonald, 2014). The null hypothesis of this test is that there is no statistically significant difference between the average coverage share obtained by men and women; the alternative hypothesis, that it is significant. In addition, Cohen's *d* tests were performed to determine the effect sizes. Tables 1 and 2 show the data and the results of the statistical tests.

#### COVERAGE SHARE FOR ALL ELECTIONS

Table 1 shows the average shares of stories obtained by women and men. Women obtained an average share of 8% (SD = .14), while men obtained an average share of 14% (SD = .23). This difference in averages is statistically significant and with a moderate effect size:  $t(209) = 2.21$ ,  $p = .028$ ,  $d = .32$ .

As for the average share of aired minutes, table 2 shows that women obtained an average of 8% (SD = .15) and men, 14% (SD = .23). This difference in averages is statistically significant and with a moderate effect size:  $t(209) = 2.35$ ,  $p = .020$ ,  $d = .31$ .

#### COVERAGE SHARES BY SAMPLE SEGMENTS

The sample of candidates was segmented according to factors that may have a role in the differences observed. The gender difference in volumes of media coverage was statistically significant in favor of men ( $p < 0.10$ ) in the comparison between legislative candidates, candidates representing large parties, candidates in elections in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA) and candidates with party incumbency. In other words, men who competed for legislative seats obtained more media attention than their female counterparts, and so did men from large parties, men competing in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA), and men with party incumbency (see tables 1 and 2).

The greatest inequality was observed when comparing the media coverage dedicated to people competing in districts or municipalities previously won by their parties (see tables 1 and 2). In this case, men obtained, on average, more than twice the share of media coverage than their female counterparts: in women's stories:  $M = 0.14$ ,  $SD = 0.19$ ; in men's stories:

$M = 0.36$ ,  $SD = 0.32$ . The difference is statistically significant ( $p < .10$ ) and the effect size in both cases is .9, which is considered large:  $t(22) = 1.88$ ,  $p = .07$ ,  $d = .87$  (stories);  $t(22) = 1.91$ ,  $p = .07$ ,  $d = .90$  (aired minutes).

In addition, despite the parity of men and women legislative candidates (87 and 86 candidates, respectively) mandated by the parity reform, women competing for legislative seats also obtained a significant lower share of media coverage than that of their male counterparts.

Finally, municipal female candidates, female candidates nominated by small parties, female candidates outside the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area, and female candidates representing parties that lost in the previous election also obtained lower share averages of media attention than those received by their male counterparts, but these differences were not statistically significant.

#### CORRELATION BETWEEN MINUTES AIRED AND NUMBER OF RADIO STORIES

In order to know to what extent the two dependent variables used in this study are equivalent to indicate the media attention in radio newscasts, we obtained the Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients between the average shares of aired minutes and radio stories, as well as between standard deviations of shares of stories and aired minutes. In both cases, the variables were strongly correlated: for the share averages of stories and minutes,  $r(16) = .993$ ,  $p < .001$ ; for the share standard deviations of stories and minutes,  $r(16) = .994$ ,  $p < .001$ . This suggests that either of the two variables can be used to indicate media attention in radio coverage.

#### DISCUSSION

In this study we analyzed the local electoral campaigns conducted in the state of Jalisco, Mexico, in 2015, to determine if there were gender differences in the volume of radio coverage. When comparing the share averages of media coverage received by men and women in their races with those of their direct competitors, we found statistically significant differences in favor of men. These biases mainly affected

female candidates with party incumbency (candidates representing parties that had won in the previous 2012 local elections) and female candidates representing large parties. There were also significant differences in favor of men who competed in races in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA) and in legislative elections. This last difference of shares occurred despite the first application of the principle of gender parity in the number of legislative candidates.

In addition to the above, male candidates obtained a higher total volume of radio coverage than female candidates. In overall terms, despite existing a similar number of female and male candidates, men had more total coverage than women, both in terms of aired minutes (of which they obtained almost four times more) and number of stories (of which they obtained almost five times more). Some reasons that may explain the lower visibility of female candidates in these elections are the low number of municipal elections with female candidates and media attention as well as the reluctance of political parties to have municipal female candidates<sup>6</sup>. Also contributing to the above is the fact that executive elections in Jalisco receive more media attention than legislative ones.

Although the results of this study refer to media coverage in elections held in a single federal entity in Mexico, they may suggest trends in other parts of the country, since, as noted, the indicators of women's political participation in Jalisco are close to the national averages. On the other hand, the high correlation between the number of minutes aired and radio stories shows that future research can be based on any of the two variables to indicate the media attention in radio coverage.

This study, focused on the volume of coverage of electoral campaigns, did not analyze the qualitative aspects of the coverage (i. e., framing of candidates, stated qualities of female and male candidates, expressions about their viability, among others). While Smith (1997) reminds us that it is relevant to study both

the quantity and the qualities of newspaper coverage, the same author points out that the importance of the former is that it indicates the use of "their most valuable resource—space" (p.73). It is, of course, necessary to continue this line of research and complement these findings with studies that consider the other dimensions of the content that have been addressed by the literature on gender bias in media coverage of electoral campaigns.

## CONCLUSIONS

Compared with evidence that indicates fairness of coverage in countries such as the United States and Israel (Atkeson & Krebb, 2008; Devitt, 2002; Lachover, 2015; Smith, 1997), or even more coverage for women candidates (Robertson & Banwart; 2001; Meeks, 2012), these results concerning local electoral campaigns in Mexico indicate that there is less media coverage for female candidates, especially when women candidates represent incumbent parties or large parties. It should be noted that the fact that in the United States elections there are only two candidates can contribute to gender equality in media attention, since a balance is expected in the volume of media attention received, balance which is also easier to assess. In contrast, in an election with multiple contenders, such as those conducted in the Mexican multiparty system, pointers are expected to capture much of both media attention and vote intention.

The disadvantages of women in terms of volumes of coverage that we observed converge with the results obtained by Ross et al. (2013), in the United Kingdom elections, and Hooghe et al. (2015), in Belgian elections. In the latter study, the authors found evidence of differences in coverage that favor men and which especially disadvantage women in politically important positions. This is similar to the evidence gathered in the present study, in which women nominated by large parties or by incumbent parties were more adversely affected by gender bias.

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## FOOTNOTES

1. Competitive elections were those in which winners obtained less than 65% of the vote and the non-competitive ones, those in which they won with more than 65% (Kahn, 1994).
2. In the U.S. system, where re-election is well established, incumbent candidate is the one in office and the challenger, the candidate of the opposing party who will try to take the post. As its name implies, in open elections there are no incumbents.
3. It comprised: Buenos Días Metrópoli, En Punto Puerto Vallarta, La Red Puerto Vallarta, Milenio Radio, Noticias al Momento del SJRTV, Noticias de Verdad del SJRTV, Noticias MVS Jalisco, En Punto DK, Paréntesis W, Pulso Informativo Autlán, Radio Noticias Primera Edición, Señal Informativa Autlán, Señal Informativa Ciudad Guzmán, Señal Informativa Guadalajara Primera Emisión, Señal Informativa Guadalajara Segunda Emisión, Señal Informativa Guadalajara Tercera Emisión, Señal Informativa Lagos de Moreno, Señal Informativa Ocotlán, Señal Informativa Puerto Vallarta and Zona 3 Noticias.
4. Local District 1 was not included because there were no radio stories regarding candidates from that district.
5. This were: Guadalajara, Tlaquepaque, Ocotlán, Zapotlán El Grande and Lagos de Moreno. The criterion for choosing them was that there was at least one female candidate and that the radio coverage dedicated to these races was greater than six radio stories.
6. The legislation of Jalisco does not mandate horizontal parity in municipal candidates (i. e., gender parity in the heading of the lists of candidates for municipal presidencies).

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