Organizational determinants of gender differences in journalistic coverage of electoral campaigns

Determinantes organizacionales de la diferencia de género en la cobertura periodística de campañas electorales

Determinantes organizacionais da diferença de gênero na cobertura jornalística de campanhas eleitorais

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ABSTRACT | This study explores the persistence of gender gaps in the media representation of women in an environment with parity laws by investigating the role of organizational factors linked to three explanatory models of gender differences in news coverage of female candidates: (1) the supply model, (2) the gender model, and (3) the job model. Independence tests were conducted on monitoring data from 52 radio and television programs in Mexico to identify the factors that contributed to smaller gender gaps in the news coverage of the 2021 electoral campaigns. Smaller gender gaps were found in news programs produced by media outlets with a smaller geographic reach, public ownership regime, and led by women. The results support the explanations for the gender gaps in media coverage provided by the supply and job models.

KEYWORDS: mass media; content analysis; women; gender discrimination; socialization; media coverage.

RESUMEN | *Este estudio examina la persistencia de las brechas de género en la representación mediática de las mujeres en un entorno con leyes de paridad de género, mediante la indagación del rol de los factores organizacionales asociados con tres modelos explicativos de las diferencias de género en la cobertura informativa de candidatas: (1) el modelo de oferta, el de (2) género y el de (3) socialización laboral. Se realizaron pruebas de independencia a datos de monitoreo de 52 programas de radio y televisión en México para identificar los factores que contribuyeron a menores brechas de género en la cobertura informativa de las campañas electorales de 2021. Se encontraron menores brechas de género en la cobertura informativa de los programas producidos por medios con menor alcance geográfico, régimen de propiedad pública y dirigidos por mujeres. Los resultados respaldan las explicaciones para las brechas de género en la cobertura informativa proporcionadas por los modelos de oferta y de socialización laboral.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *medios de comunicación; análisis de contenido; mujer; discriminación de género; socialización; cobertura periodística.*

RESUMO | Este estudo examina a persistência das diferenças de gênero na representação midiática das mulheres em um ambiente com leis de paridade de gênero por meio da investigação do papel dos fatores organizacionais associados a três modelos explicativos das diferenças de gênero na cobertura midiática de candidatas: (1) o modelo de oferta, (2) o modelo de gênero e (3) o modelo de socialização do trabalho. Foram realizados testes de independência s em dados de monitoramento de 52 programas de rádio e televisão para identificar os fatores associados a menores diferenças de gênero na cobertura jornalística das campanhas eleitorais em 2021. Menores diferenças de gênero foram encontradas na cobertura jornalística de programas produzidos por meios de comunicação de menor alcance geográfico, regime de propriedade pública e dirigidos por mulheres. Os resultados corroboram as explicações para as disparidades de gênero na cobertura midiática oferecidas pelos modelos de oferta e socialização do trabalho.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: mídia de massa; análise de conteúdo; mulher; discriminação de gênero; socialização; cobertura jornalística.

INTRODUCTION

Gender disparity studies in work and public office often distinguish between explanations that focus on the quantity and characteristics of working people –i.e., the supply-side–, and gender difference explanations that focus on the characteristics of the employers –i.e., the demand-side (Reskin, 1993). Studies of gender disparity in media representation may also draw on this way of organizing disparity explanations: some explain biases in media content by stating that the media simply reproduce the disparate social environment in which men tend to dominate places of greater authority and prestige. Others focus on biases from a newsroom culture where the norm is to prefer authoritative sources on topics such as politics, science, and sports to be male (Baitinger, 2015; Vos, 2013).

Gaps in the quantity and quality of symbolic representation of women by media outlets around the world are well documented (Ross et al., 2018; Shor et al., 2015). The professionals' gender within newsrooms and media organizations –i.e., a demand-related condition– has been a factor worthy of consideration when examining the possible causes of the quantity and characteristics of women's journalistic representation (Shor et al., 2015, 2019). This is due to two reasons: first, the need to predict and theorize about the effects of the gradual arrival of women to positions of greater hierarchy and responsibility within the structure of news organizations (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012). The critical mass concept has prompted speculation about the impact of incorporating a certain proportion of women in authority groups, which would open the potential to change the dominant group's culture (Childs & Krook, 2008). Currently, expectations around the effects of critical masses of women have dissipated (D'Heer et al., 2020; Organista & Mazur, 2020; Steiner, 2012). Positions on the consequences of the arrival of women have evolved, but the need to investigate the phenomena linked to the changing profile of those who practice journalism remains (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012; Shor et al., 2019).

Secondly, the gender of those who occupy leadership positions in news organizations is a trait that can be intervened to bring about social change (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). In recent years, there has been social pressure in different contexts for news organizations to accommodate greater diversity both in their newsrooms and in their authority positions (Craft & Wanta, 2004; Eddy et al., 2022).

Our study explores the role of organizational factors linked to three explanatory models of the symbolic representation of women: (1) the supply model, (2) the gender model, and (3) the job model (the latter two, sub-models focused on the demand-side). To do so, we analyzed the data produced by monitoring the news

coverage of the 2021 local electoral process in the state of Jalisco (Mexico), where gender parity in candidacies is mandatory.

In three ways, we contribute to the literature. First, we identify the main models that explain gender disparities in media representations of candidacies, as well as the features related to media organization (specifically, newsroom-related factors) that emerge from them and that are identified in the scattered literature. Among the research focused on gender disparities in candidate representation in the Latin American context (Álvarez-Monsiváis, 2020; Hudson-Frías et al., 2022; Mitchelstein et al., 2019; Rodelo, 2016; Valenzuela & Correa, 2009; Vidal-Correa, 2020), only that of Mitchelstein and colleagues (2019) investigates to what extent the representation of female candidates is impacted by the gender of staff and people in positions of authority in the media.

Second, as opposed to the majority of the literature on the subject, our case study is located in Latin America, a region where gender quotas in political representation have been promoted with numeric success (Archenti & Tula, 2017; Piscopo, 2015). Along with other countries in the region, Mexico is one of those with the highest parliamentary representation of women in the world (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2022). However, although the law mandates gender parity in candidacies, this is not reflected in media representation. In this regard, the Global Media Monitoring Project reports that, despite the increase in women's political representation in the region, Latin American media continue to present them as actors or sources in only one out of every five news stories on politics (Macharia, 2020).

Third, the case chosen is particularly suited to explore newsroom and organizational factors, as it analyzes gender differences in news coverage attributable to the agency of the people in charge of the program and the organizational culture of the production team.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on gender-based social inequality in organizational settings distinguishes between supply-side and demand-side explanations. This dichotomy has also been taken up in research on gender disparity in media representations (Baitinger, 2015; Vos, 2013). Three explanations of gender differences in media representations are posited: first, an explanation based on the supply of news sources; then, the demand-side explanation, in which two sub-models will be distinguished, that of gender socialization and that of socialization within the organization.

Supply-side explanations

Media content biases can be explained by alluding to the connection between professional journalistic values and environments with gender disparities where the supply of news sources is distorted. In professional journalism, dominant professional values such as the search for conflict, the objective description of facts (the value of seeking to reflect reality as it is), and newsworthiness are usually pointed out. Thus, the preeminence of these values explains the media tendency of focusing their reporting on social actors perceived, either as dominant or as possessing credibility and knowledge (Baitinger, 2015). Along with the above, journalistic professional norms prescribe the use of sources deemed expert and newsworthy, traits that are to a greater extend attributed to men (Baitinger, 2015). In this regard, Shor and colleagues (2015) conclude that the media simply engage in reflecting the situation of disparate social environments, in which men tend to dominate positions of greater authority and prestige.

If we believe on the assumption that media reflect reality, we would expect to observe a smaller gender difference in the amount of news coverage in the media that report on events from places with more electoral parity than in the media that report from places with less (i.e., places with a smaller proportion of female candidates, or where female candidates are supported by small parties). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated for the case studied:

> *H1.* [supply hypothesis]. Gender gap in news coverage is significantly lower in regional radio and television programs, i.e., based in places with electoral parity, compared to programs based in municipalities of the capital, where electoral competition is less gender-balanced.

Demand-side explanations

Demand-side explanations revolve around the conscious or unconscious inclination of those within media organizations –specifically those who make editorial decisions– to present men as sources on topics such as politics, science, and sports (Baitinger, 2015; Shor et al., 2015; Vos, 2013). There are two main mechanisms for demand-based explanations: gender socialization from childhood and socialization within the organization.

Gender socialization from childhood –a mechanism also known as gender model and identified in journalism studies by Hanitzsch and Hanusch (2012) as the gender determination hypothesis– refers to the fact that, due to socialization, women develop from childhood interests, values and networks of contacts different from those of men. Women may bring these differences to the newsroom; therefore, they will behave differently than men in the media organization and tend to produce different stories than those written by men. From this perspective, the

gender of the person who wrote the news article may originate differences in news coverage (De Swert & Hooghe, 2010; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Vos, 2013).

The gender model is criticized for a number of reasons: one is that it seems to assume that all women are equal and share a single standpoint, so that it could be expected that in the newsroom they can represent women as a class and push for change in the same direction (Craft & Wanta, 2004). Second, this approach assumes that journalists have sufficient autonomy to act individually (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012; Shor et al., 2015). Finally, it has been criticized for assuming that gender identity is a more important attitudinal and behavioral influence than other identity dimensions (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012).

The gender model has been tested in studies that analyze content according to the gender of the person who produced it. In various contexts, it has been found that women tend to write articles with a greater number of female sources or that have different attributes than journalistic content produced by men. In Argentina, female journalists cite more female sources than their male colleagues (Mitchelstein et al., 2019). In the United Kingdom and Ireland, female reporters were more likely to write female-focused news stories and to include female sources compared to male reporters (Ross et al., 2018). In the United States, women used a wider variety of sources and tended to stereotype less than men in terms of the topic and tone of the article (Armstrong, 2004). In Belgium, female television journalists tended to quote women politicians more than male journalists, although this difference was not significant (Vos, 2013). These results refer to the gender of the people who produced the content in newspapers and television, so in this study we will examine the role of the gender of people who host radio and television programs through the question:

> *RQ1.* [Question on anchorwomen]. Is there a statistically significant difference in the gender gap in news coverage between programs with female anchors and programs without female anchors?

Newsroom socialization, or job model, is an approach based on the assumption that the work environment socializes workers to understand and adapt to the "internal bureaucratic structures, routines and conventions" of the newsroom, as well as to its "external constraints", such as sources and advertisers (Steiner, 2012, p. 209). If all people are subjected to the same experiences, they will act similarly, i.e., without gender differences (Rodgers & Thorson, 2003). From this perspective, the gender of the writer of the news article will not lead to gender differences in news coverage; differences are instead created by the attributes of the organization, such as its size and gender composition, i.e., whether the editorial staff is led by women or whether they are present on the editorial board.

What does the empirical evidence say about women's leadership in the newsroom? Different studies have found some relationship between the presence of women in positions of authority and journalistic content. U.S. newspapers with a high percentage of women editors tended to cover more positive news (Craft & Wanta, 2004). Also, male and female reporters in these newspapers tended to cover a similar agenda of issues, i.e., not to segregate women in "feminine" issues and men in "masculine" issues (Craft & Wanta, 2004). The authors attribute this to gender differences in the dynamics within the newsroom that include: (1) the greater support of female editors for female reporters, (2) the existence of a gender equality policy in the newspaper, and (3) the willingness of reporters to please their female bosses. In another study, greater visibility of women was observed in female-led sections and in newspapers with high representation of women on the editorial board (Shor et al., 2015). However, the authors consider that this correlation does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship, as it was not the case that after the arrival of female editors the visibility of women in newspaper articles increased.

Relevance of women's leadership can be analyzed based on the following research questions:

> *RQ2.* [question on program leadership]: Is there a statistically significant difference in the gender gap in news coverage between female- and male-headed radio and television programs?

> *RQ3.* [Question on media outlet leadership]. Is there a statistically significant difference in the gender gap in news coverage between radio and television programs whose media organization is headed by a woman and programs in a male-headed organization?

Some other influences on gender gaps in journalistic content under study are attributes of the media organization, such as newspaper size and ownership regime. For example, it has been found that smaller newspapers tend to represent more women (Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Sjøvaag & Pedersen, 2019). This may be due to a greater inertia in large media, in which traditional patterns persist, as well as a greater tendency of small media to fulfill community functions where topics regarded as "feminine" are more valued (Sjøvaag & Pedersen, 2019). In terms of media ownership, public television (despite being the subject of an affirmative action policy to increase news diversity) was found to produce more stories with male sources (De Swert & Hooghe, 2010). Similarly, Sjøvaag and Pedersen (2019) found no difference in the proportion of female representation among Norwegian newspapers with different ownership regimes (State, corporate, foundation, and independent).

Empirical framing studies have found that the media sector is linked to differences in content: television tends to broadcast more controlled and monologic content, while radio tends to produce more improvised and dialogic content (Rodelo, 2020). Likewise, differences related to media ownership have been observed, since public media tend to produce more thematic content, while commercial media tend to have more strategic content (Rodelo, 2020). Another feature that may produce differences is the type of news program, since those of analysis focus to a greater extent on political actors perceived as of greater hierarchy or relevance.

Thus, the relevance of the media organization features can be analyzed from the following research questions:

> *RQ4.* [media sector question]. Is there a statistically significant difference in the gender gap in news coverage between radio and television programs?

> *RQ5.* [ownership question]. Is there a statistically significant difference in the gender gap in news coverage between public and commercial media programs?

> *RQ6.* [question on program type]. Is there a statistically significant difference in the gender gap in news coverage between newscasts and programs of other genres??

Finally, framing studies have demonstrated that news coverage context and temporality of is one of the most important factors influencing content. Due to the normative principle of seeking to transmit current information, the most information on an issue is usually disseminated just after the event from which the information originated or the issue arose (Rodelo, 2020). Likewise, the context influence also refers to the increased attention to ideas, values, or normative principles during specific periods or dates. An example is the tendency to find strategy framing after soccer games (Rodelo, 2020). Given that media organizations tend to report more strategically –i.e., focusing on winners and losers and viewing the electoral competition as a horse race– toward the end of electoral campaigns, we pose the question:

> *RQ7.* [question on temporality]. Is there a statistically significant difference in the gender gap in news coverage between the campaign beginning and end periods?

It would appear from the literature discussed above that certain organizational characteristics (the presence of female editors and editorial advisors and the newspaper's size) produce subtle, but significant, differences in the way women are portrayed or mentioned in journalistic content. In contrast, studies of journalists' ideology have tended to find no differences between the professional values espoused by male and female journalists (De Swert & Hooghe, 2010). Specifically, it

has been observed from survey data that men and women do not differ significantly in the way they think about journalistic work (i.e., in their role conceptions and epistemological beliefs) (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012). Likewise, in the Israeli press, one study found no gender differences in news values or news selection (Lavie & Lehman-Wilzig, 2003). It would thus seem inappropriate to expect journalistic content produced by women or by female-dominated or female-led newsrooms to be different from that produced by men. However, survey data also have their limitations, as it is not clear what exactly is indicated by journalists' responses, since, rather than showing their practices, these could simply indicate their conformity to prevailing professional norms (Lavie & Lehman-Wilzig, 2005; Steiner, 2012).

Given this apparent contradiction between the data from different types of studies, Steiner (2012) proposed developing a more sophisticated view: for this author, instead of thinking of gender as a static attribute, it should be analyzed as a category constructed in articulation with the occupied time and place, and that also intersects with other identity traits, such as racialization, age, class, disability, among others.

Study context

In 2014, as a result of a long struggle to promote women's political participation and guarantee their representation in government, the principle of gender parity was incorporated into Article 41 of Mexico's Constitution, establishing the obligation for political parties to nominate the same number of male and female candidates in federal and local legislative elections. This political reform was followed by others that extended the principle of parity to other electoral and governmental spheres and improved its implementation. After the 2018 elections, Mexico reached a political representation of women of 50% in the chamber of deputies and 49% in the senate, one of the highest in the world (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2022).

Given the recognition of the media's influence, the Mexican Federal Electoral Institute has been involved since its inception in monitoring media coverage during election campaigns. Monitoring of news coverage of the 2021 local elections accounts for modest advances in the visibility of female candidates in the media. The historic 2014 reform that imposed mandatory parity in legislative candidacies resulted in elections in which female candidates occupied about one tenth of the media space. Subsequent reforms focused on parity in municipal candidacies, first to oblige political parties to incorporate men and women alternately in each list of candidates (vertical parity), and later to incorporate women and men candidates in equal numbers in the main position of each list, i.e., to serve as candidates to occupy the presidency of municipalities. These alterations to the electoral legislation to increase women's political representation have had an impact on their symbolic representation, although it still does not reach gender parity (table 1).

Election	Milestone	Representation of women's candidacies
2015	Parity in legislative elections.	9% of radio news; 14.1% of television news.
2018	Also, vertical parity in municipal elections.	16% of radio and television time.
2021	Also, horizontal parity in municipal elections.	31% of radio and television time.

**Table 1. Jalisco (Mexico) local elections and representation
of female candidates in news coverage, 2015-2021**
Source: Universidad de Guadalajara (2015, 2018, 2021).

One of the reasons is that the large parties supported more male than female candidates in the municipalities of the Guadalajara metropolitan area, while in the regions the large parties tended to observe parity in their candidate allocations (Rangel Juárez et al., 2020).

In the 2021 monitoring of news coverage, the difference in male-female coverage between news programs ranged from -7% –in a program that gave slightly more coverage to women than to men– to 89% –in one in which almost all the coverage was about male candidates. Even among programs of the same media organization, wide ranges of gender differences in media representation were found; for example, in the newscast *Zona Tres Primera Emisión*, a difference of 53% was observed, and in *Zona Tres Tercera Emisión*, only 10%. Likewise, in *Buenos Días Metrópoli* the difference was 31% and in *Buenas Tardes*, produced by the same news organization, it was 80%.

These data alone suggest that each program is subject to a unique amalgam of conditions related to the organization's characteristics, the program's editorial staff, the coverage situation (program schedule), and the geographic-electoral context (municipality) that shapes the news coverage. In other words, the data suggest that certain configurations allow news coverage to emerge without a gender gap, so it is pertinent to determine what these configurations are.

METHODOLOGY

To explore the role of the staff's gender in radio and television news programs as a predictor variable of the gender gap in the amount of coverage about male and female candidates, we analyzed the data produced by the monitoring of the news coverage of the 2021 local electoral process in the state of Jalisco (Mexico). The object of analysis was the broadcasts of local radio and television programs during the period between April 4 and June 5, 2021, corresponding to the mayoral and legislative campaigns. The codebook included variables of item identification, time

use, identification of the protagonist of the item and his/her attributes, discourse attributes, evaluations, among others.

Coding was performed by 21 analysts and two supervisors. Training included coding a recording from an alternative sample until each participant reached a mean percent of agreement of at least .90 on the Holsti formula on all variables. During coding (and not at the end of the research), the two supervisors routinely reviewed the data for miscoding and inconsistencies in coding criteria. Disagreements and doubts were resolved through group discussions among analysts, supervisors, and the researcher.

Data analysis

The data were transformed to designate the radio or television program as the unit of analysis. Two programs were excluded as they registered an almost null news coverage on electoral candidacies ($n<1$ minute), so that the number of programs analyzed was 52. Welch's t-tests of independence, an alternative to Student's t-test of independence when sample sizes are unequal (Delacre et al., 2017), were performed. The dependent variable was the difference in percentage of male-female coverage and the independent variables the following attributes of the programs: (1) regional program (versus programs based in the capital), (2) at least one female host, (3) female head in the program (versus male boss), (4) female head in organization (versus male head), (5) television program (versus radio program), (6) public media (versus commercial), (7) newscast (versus other types of news programs, such as talk shows and interview programs). For variable 3, we recorded the programs in which a woman held the position of news head, producer, or director of the radio or television program. Variable 4 included radio and television programs in which a woman held the position of general director of the media organization producing the program.

Variable coding revealed that more than half of the radio and television programs had at least one female host. However, the presence of women at higher hierarchical levels is lower: in 31% of the programs, they held the position of editor-in-chief or producer of the program, and in 25% of the programs there was a woman at the head of the media outlet, in positions such as regional director or deputy director (table 2).

Finally, to answer the contextual question, a paired sample t-test was performed to analyze male candidate-female candidate percentage differences in the first four weeks (beginning) and the last two weeks (end) of campaigning. The full data and analyses can be downloaded from the GitHub repository located at https://github.com/frodelo/.

Attribute	(n = 52)%
Regional program (vs. based in capital)	17 %
At least one female anchor	60 %
Female head in program (vs. male head)	31 %
Female head in media outlet (vs. male head)	25 %
Television program (vs. radio)	25 %
Public media (vs. commercial)	23 %
Newscast (vs. other types)	83 %

Table 2. Attributes of the sample programs
Source: Own elaboration.

RESULTS

A negative male-female difference was found in only one of the 52 programs, i.e., where female candidates had a greater proportion of news coverage than male candidates. The results of the statistical analysis are presented below in four parts, following the same order as the research questions and hypotheses.

The media reflect an imbalanced situation

One example of a gender imbalance situation has been found in the way in which political parties assign candidacies in compliance with the rules of the parity principle, but placing male candidates in positions perceived as of greater political, economic, and symbolic importance (Rangel Juárez et al., 2020). Thus, the elections of mayors in small municipalities tend to have more parity in terms of the number of male and female than those in important municipalities, such as, in the case studied, the municipalities of the State's capital.

The supply hypothesis posits that the gender gap in the amount of information coverage is significantly smaller in regional programs compared to programs based in the capital city. This hypothesis was supported by the analysis, since in addition to showing almost the double of gender differences in the capital-based programs, this difference turned out to be statistically significant (table 3).

Gender socialization

Socialization from childhood, from which men and women develop different attitudes and behaviors in later stages of their lives, can be considered as an explanation for the differences in news coverage. From this perspective, the mere presence of women would suggest differences in news coverage.

Thus, the question on female anchors refers to the existence or not of statistically significant differences in the gender gap in news coverage between radio or television programs with female anchors and programs where there are no female anchors. The analysis found that although programs with at least one female host have a smaller gender gap, this difference is small and not statistically significant (table 3).

Socialization within the media organization

As a result of socialization within the media organization, journalists learn the unwritten rules within and adapt to, and conform to, the rules and norms. Thus, this form of socialization is another source of factors promoting differences in news coverage, which includes features of the programs associated with, on the one hand, the characteristics of the media organization, such as the media sector and ownership regime, genre and focus of the program, or the sexual division of labor within the organization, mainly in terms of the gender of decision-makers.

As for the media organization characteristics, the question on the media sector was answered negatively: although television programs had a larger average gender gap in the amount of news coverage on candidates compared to radio programs, this difference did not reach statistical significance. The question on the type of ownership, on the other hand, was answered affirmatively: in commercial media the gender gap is on average much larger than that observed in public media; this difference is statistically significant (table 3).

Regarding the question on the type of program, which deals with the difference in the gender gap in newscasts and in other type of programs, such as interview and analysis programs, we found evidence that newscasts registered on average a smaller gender gap (34% more coverage for male candidates than for female candidates) compared to interview and analysis programs (45% more coverage for male candidates than for female candidates); however, this difference did not reach statistical significance (table 3).

The presence of women in hierarchical positions within the media organization was evident in the analysis results, as the programs with a female head –either at the program level (question on head of news program) or at the media level (question on head of media)– had on average a smaller gender gap.

Nevertheless, this difference was only significant in the comparison between programs headed by women at the media organization level, where the gender gap was practically halved (table 3).

Variable	Yes M	No M	CI 95 %	d.f.	t	p
Regional program (vs. based in capital)	+21.4%	+39.0%	0.05-0.30	14.81	2.96	< 0.01
At least one female anchor	+34.9%	+37.5%	-0.09-0.14	47.88	0.46	0.64
Female head in program (vs. male head)	+34.3%	+39.9%	-0.19-0.08	24.54	-0.84	0.41
Female head in media outlet (vs. male head)	+21.7%	+40.7%	0.08-0.30	24.91	3.46	< 0.01
Television program (vs. radio)	+40.8%	+34.4%	-0.21-0.08	18.98	-0.92	0.37
Public media (vs. commercial)	+24.2%	+40.3%	0.06-0.27	33.31	3.11	< 0.01
Newscast (vs. other types)	+34.2%	+44.6%	-0.28-0.07	10.84	-1.29	0.22

Note: *M* indicates the arithmetic mean of the percentage difference in the amount of male-female representation. For example, the first row indicates that the programs based in the capital dedicated an average of 39% more news coverage to male candidates; the regional ones, 21.4%.

Table 3. Gender differences between men and women in the amount of news coverage of candidates according to variables of interest and Welch's t-tests

Source: Own elaboration.

Context

A paired t-test was performed to examine the gender differences between men and women in amounts of news coverage at the beginning and at the end of the electoral campaigns (context question), in which it was found that the gender gap in news coverage during the first four weeks of the campaign is slightly lower (M=35.27%, SD=22.0) compared to the coverage during the last two weeks (M=38.21%, SD=28.7). However, this difference, 2.94%, 95% C.I. [-0.0506, 0.1094], was not statistically significant, $t(51)=0.74$, $p=0.46$.

DISCUSSION

The analysis supports the perspective that the media reflect the situation of unequal environments –i.e., the supply model. The above, based on the fact that the gender gap in news coverage was lower in programs based in regions with parity elections, compared to programs based in municipalities close to the capital, where the electoral competition was not gender-balanced. Accordingly, Sjøvaag and Pedersen (2019) found that local and low-circulation newspapers in Norway tend to represent more women compared to newspapers with metropolitan or national reach and high circulation. Although the authors attribute this difference to the community function of local media, the difficulties of women's access to leadership positions, something that increases as the hierarchy of positions and the importance attributed to the environments increases, should also be discussed.

Gender socialization from childhood, or gender model, was not supported in this analysis, since in radio and television news programs, the presence of at least one woman does not make a difference in terms of the proportion of coverage of female candidates compared to programs where there is no female host. This result, which refers to female anchors, is opposite to studies that found differences in journalistic content according to gender (Armstrong, 2004; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Ross et al., 2018; Vos, 2013). This apparent contradiction is not surprising, since writing a journalistic article is a different activity from hosting a television or radio newscast –in writing, one contributes one or several pieces to the newspaper, while when hosting one presents the entirety of the pieces produced for the program. Likewise, the people who perform these activities have different profiles (age, hierarchy, etc.) and may be socialized differently within the media organizations. Therefore, this result suggests that there are barriers that prevent the autonomy observed in female newspaper reporters and editors to emerge in female radio and television anchors, or that female radio and television anchors are less likely, due to their socialization, to harbor attitudes and perform behaviors in favor of a greater representation of female candidates in their media contents.

The socialization within the newsroom, or job model, found support, as two organizational traits were linked to significant differences: having a female head at the helm of the media organization and the ownership regime of the media outlet. This finding is congruent with studies that find greater representation of women in content produced by media outlets with female editors or female editorial advisors (Craft & Wanta, 2004; Shor et al., 2015). However, this does not necessarily indicate that the inclusion of female editors leads to an increase in women representation, as there is a possibility that organizations with better conditions for inclusion may attract female editors and thus achieve a higher proportion of female representation (Shor et al., 2015). On the other hand, some studies in the European context did not find that public media covered more women than men (De Swert & Hooghe, 2010; Sjøvaag & Pedersen, 2019). It is possible that the difference found in this study reflects features of the specific public media where the programs studied were produced.

Finally, the temporality role was not sufficiently supported, since it was not found that in the last two weeks of the campaign the media covered male and female candidates significantly differently compared to the previous period. This suggests that the gender difference is better described as constant rather than temporal.

The limitations of this study must be acknowledged: first, it examined only one dimension of the contents –gender biases in coverage amounts–, disregarding the analysis of frames, evaluations, and stereotypes, which could increase the analysis' richness. Second, due to the database characteristics, which collects data

on program content in a single state, we cannot rule out the possibility that the differences observed are the result of idiosyncratic characteristics of the media organizations that produced the analyzed programs. Third, we acknowledge Steiner's (2012) call to incorporate in the methodological designs a dynamic perspective on gender, i.e., one that considers it as a category that is not static but shaped by intersectionality and the specific context or situation of individuals. A step in this direction would be, for example, to analyze the coverage of female candidates according to their social class, racialization, age, and hierarchy.

CONCLUSIONS

Mexico's law mandates gender parity in the allocation of electoral candidacies. This is not reflected in media representations, which demonstrates that social change is ahead of cultural change without provoking an immediate response from the media. Nevertheless, in the face of social change and the pressure to incorporate women in different spheres of public and economic life, it is worth studying what factors promote greater media representation of female candidates.

This research focused on the role of organizational factors linked to three explanatory models of gender differences in news coverage of female candidates in radio and television. The study fills a knowledge gap by finding in the Latin American context smaller gender gaps in programs produced by media organizations with smaller geographic reach (i.e., regional media), publicly owned, and directed by women. Thus, the results support the explanations for the gender gaps in news coverage provided by the supply and newsroom socialization models (job model).

The findings suggest, firstly, that reinforcing the implementation of electoral quotas in high-ranking political positions (in this case, the positions covered by the media based in the state capital) may lead to an increase in the representation of female candidates. Second, the smaller gap in women-led media organizations may indicate that either it makes a difference because the leadership drives favorable values for the symbolic representation of female candidates, or that the female leadership itself is the result of an organizational culture conducive to both the greater representation of women candidates and women's leadership. Further research should examine in greater detail the impact of women's media leadership on media contents, as well as incorporate an intersectional perspective.

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