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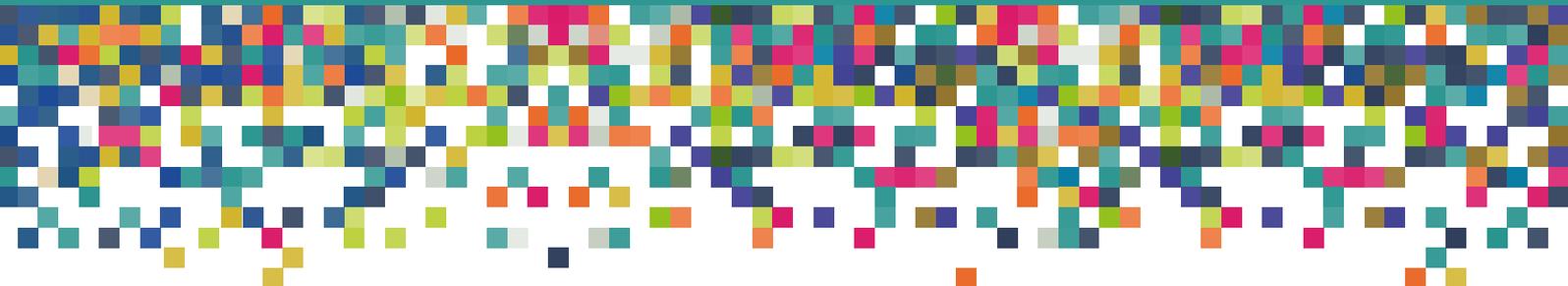
Not Manly Enough

A Quantitative Analysis of Gender Stereotypes in Mexican Political Advertising 2010-2016

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ABSTRACT

In Mexico, 49 of the last 50 gubernatorial races have been won by men, an unsurprising outcome given stereotypes embedded in public opinion and the sexist coverage by the media. However, little attention has been paid to the role of political communication in the under-representation of women. The aim of this study is to address similarities and differences in the way male and female candidates present themselves to the electorate in television advertising—still the most relevant form of campaign communication, as a first step to counter exclusion by promoting more competitive women candidacies. This project adopts quantitative content analysis to examine the 1,260 television commercials of the 47 gubernatorial campaigns celebrated in Mexico between 2010 and 2016, obtained from the database of the National Electoral Institute. Using a codebook based on a theoretical framework, three dimensions of verbal communication were scrutinised: negativity, traits and issues. Then, the data was analysed in two binary logistic regression models, controlling for year, ideology and competitiveness, to get a more accurate measurement of gender effects. Results show a significant influence of gender in campaign advertising. Firstly, mixed campaigns hinder overall negativity and promote attacks on policy proposals more than on image. Secondly, women emphasise stereotypical traits more than men. Thirdly, stress on issues reinforce feminine stereotypes, while mixed campaigns disincentivise the promotion of certain topics. These findings challenge the notion of a fair contest, as the deliberative democracy school of thought implies, and provide hints on how more female electoral success can be generated, which should be considered in future research.

1 INTRODUCTION

'Mexico will not accept female governors'. This is how Jesús Reyes Heroles, Secretary of State for the Home Department, responded to Griselda Alvarez in a private meeting in 1979 when she was requesting the support of the ruling-party, a political institution formed by members of the Revolution that had appointed every single public officer for decades. Legitimization of these appointments came from non-democratic elections, in which only male names appeared on the ballot paper. Against all the odds, however, Griselda overcame structural barriers, winning the candidacy and becoming the first woman to be sworn in as governor1. Nonetheless, this case was the exception that proves the rule.

Over the years that followed, Mexico experienced a series of transformations that finished in 2000, with alternation in presidential office (Domínguez and Lawson, 2004). Currently, candidates interact with the electorate, votes are respected and, as a consequence, political parties lose elections2. However, male hegemony in political representation remains unchallenged. In fact, women succeeded in only one of the last 49 gubernatorial races, men dominate all the relevant positions in Congress regardless of gender quotas, and no female politician has won the presidency—a phenomenon that is part of a wide problematic since just 15 world leaders are women (Geiger and Kent, 2017). After four decades, the words of Reyes Heroles remain valid to describe Mexican and global reality. Politics is a place for men.

In the past, exclusion in Mexico was attributed to autocratic practices. Now, the absence of women in political life is justified through the ideals of deliberative democracy, the foundation of contemporary elections. According to this approach, the candidate with the best argument is the one who wins, while universality of vote guarantees plurality and inclusiveness in representation. Nonetheless, the electoral process is far from a neutral space for deliberation. Actually, voters hold gender stereotypes that affect the evaluation of candidates. Research has evidenced this trend by discovering that people associate women with a soft image of compassion and warmth, while men are seen as more able to exercise leadership positions due to the strong traits they evoke (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Iyengar et al. 1997; Jamieson, 1995; Lawless, 2009).

However, candidates have the opportunity to overcome prejudices embedded in public opinion and promoted by news media (Falk, 2010; Hinojosa, 2010) through television advertising, still the predominant form of communication in campaigns (Sapiro et al. 2011). In democratic races, commercials allow the delivery of controlled messages in an interpersonal environment, but reaching a greater audience. Given the evident gender gap and the scant attention that scholars have paid to

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1 The autobiography of Griselda Álvarez (2014) represents a valuable resource regarding female incursion into Mexican politics.

2 According to Przeworski (2003), the conditions of uncertainty ex ante and certainty ex post that define a democracy are fulfilled when political parties lose elections. This implies real competence because results are defined by the voters and solid institutions assure the pacific transition from the old government to the new one.

it, this project analyses the 1,260 television advertisements of the 47 Mexican gubernatorial races that took place between 2010 and 2016. The objective is to detect patterns in the most relevant form of interaction between candidates and voters as a first step in generating more successful women candidacies. Exclusion can be solved solely with more women in leadership positions (Eagly & Karau, 200; Kerevel & Atkeson, 2015), and this will be achieved with votes.

The overall structure of the study takes the form of five sections, including this introduction. Section 2 addresses female exclusion in the Habermasian public sphere—the foundation of contemporary democratic practices— as well as the relevance of campaign advertising as a way to overcome under-representation of women in executive positions. The third section justifies the use of content analysis as an appropriate method to analyse a large sample political commercials, explains the research design and describes the statistical technique used to examine the data. Section 4 presents the outcomes of the analysis and the interpretation of the results. Finally, a summary of the key findings are shown in the conclusions.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section shapes the discussion of female under-representation and its relation to political communication. In order to do this, I develop a critique of the Habermasian public sphere in terms of exclusion since deliberative democracy is the basis of contemporary democratic practices. Then, I argue that elections, far from being a deliberative arena, foster domination due to the existence of gender stereotypes[3], so politics of presence becomes a necessary condition in order to counter segregation. Finally, I contend that television advertising, as a direct and controlled form of interaction in campaigns, can help to overcome male hegemony in political representation.

2.1   Deliberation and exclusion

Twenty-five centuries ago, the principle of the exchange of arguments between equal citizens was established in Athens as an essential feature in reaching public decisions. Based on this conception, contemporary deliberative theory has promoted the importance of reasoned debate to the extent of its becoming the prevailing trend in contemporary democracies (Chambers, 2003; Gutmann and Thompson, 2004; Mansbridge, 1993; Mouffe, 2000). This school of thought claims, in opposition to the

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3 Even though sex refers to biological differences and gender to cultural appropriations, for the purposes of this work the two terms are used indistinctly.

dominant field of political science in the 20th century, that the public interest should be built on rational discussion rather than the simple aggregation of uninformed individual preferences[4].

Within the deliberative approach, the Habermasian public sphere has played a pivotal role not only for democratic practice, but also for communication studies (Lunt & Livingstone, 2013). Originally developed in 1961, although widespread after its translation into English[5] (Dahlberg, 2014), the conception places communication at the core of the democratic method by stating that citizens discuss common issues through deliberation—the exchange of arguments— where the outcome takes the form of an agreement on the common good. To achieve its goal, the communicative process involves four conditions: a) openness and accessibility, b) absence of private interests, c) lack of status differences, and d) participants conversing as equals (Fraser, 1990). Therefore, free and impartial individuals are informed and become critical of concerns, and at the same time, they argue without any kind of hierarchy, generating a consensus of what is best for society grounded on the most convincing argument. This is how, according to Habermas (1989), the shift from absolute sovereignty to popular sovereignty is produced.

However, the conception of the public sphere has been criticised for concealing domination. First, socio-economic gaps and power relations cannot be overlooked in any form of interaction; thus, communication as equals becomes untenable given the disparities between citizens (Dahlberg, 2014). Second, the parameters of democratic dialogue are shaped on a male bourgeois prototype that hampers the principle of inclusiveness. Then, citizenship is limited to civil society, associations composed by bourgeois men who were preparing their rise to the ruling class in that historical moment (Eley, cited in Fraser, 1990). Moreover, republican public speech is constructed on a virile and manly logic, triggering gender segregation (Landes, cited in Fraser, 1990).

By drawing on the concept of universal citizenship, Young (1989) coincides with the appraisal of deliberative theory by exposing the silencing of the voices of those who were not able to adopt what the elite decides and those who could create conflict. In particular, feminist critique states that attributes emerging from male experience, like reason and impartiality, embody the only acceptable characteristics for democratic deliberation, whilst passion and sentiment, those related to women, are rejected. Hence, the dichotomy between reason and passion—the desirable and undesirable— means in reality a struggle between masculinity and femininity.

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4 For an account of democracy as an aggregation of preferences as in a marketplace, see Schumpeter (1950).

5 Although the original proposal of 1962 has been reformulated by the author in subsequent years (1984, 2006), this work focuses on the conception presented in The Structural Transformation of the Public sphere (Habermas, 1991) due to its transcendence of both communication theories and democratic practice. Furthermore, the reviewed versions of the Habermasian public sphere do not escape the post-structuralist critique that is developed in the following paragraphs.

As a consequence, the deliberation process becomes an irony: 'a discourse of publicity touting accessibility, rationality, and the suspension of status hierarchies is itself deployed as an strategy of distinction' (Fraser, 1990: 115). On the one hand, the public sphere seeks to generate public opinion through an informed debate among all sectors of society. On the other hand, the rules of the Habermasian public sphere jeopardize accessibility and confine participation, so the space for critical exchange of discourses, considered a guidance for democratic practice (Dahlberg, 2013), becomes a mask for female exclusion given two inter-connected strands: 1) gender stereotypes that permeate public opinion in democratic elections, and 2) unbalanced political representation as a consequence of sexist votes.

2.2 Gender stereotypes

In daily life, men and women are not perceived equally, but it was not until the 1970s that Bem (cited in McDermott, 2016) demonstrated empirically the existence of gender stereotypes. In a pioneering study conducted at Stanford University, she found that personal attributes like leadership, competence and assertiveness were desirable for males, whilst compassion and cheerfulness were considered more suitable for females. These findings, tested throughout the years, remain relevant in spite of the social changes experienced over the last few decades (Carver et al. 2013; Holt & Ellis, 1998).

In politics, voters view candidates through gendered lenses, not only with respect to traits, but also with regard to issues. Therefore, male candidates are linked to taxes and crime, while female nominees are related to education, health and honesty (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Iyengar et al. 1997, Lawless, 2009). Overall, masculinity is associated with the intellect, and femininity with the heart (Jamieson, 1995), a conclusion valid for political campaigns too. Thus, the struggle for votes is not played on neutral ground.

Social-Role Theory elucidates this phenomenon through the different activities that the sexes have historically developed. Because of men's ancient role as breadwinner, they are seen as independent, strong and dominant. On the other hand, women's home labour lead to an image of nurturing and kindness (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Consequently, there is a correspondence between stereotypes and expectations, like male attributes and leadership positions, creating a prejudice. A second explanation, the Exemplar Theory, states that stereotyping emerges as the effect of concrete exemplars rather than a dilatory process of social construction (Smith & Zárate, 1992). According to this theory, immediate referents—personified by a single individual or a group— cause the association of personal attributes, but the lack of current female leaders discourages equality in the perceptions of the citizens (Kerevel & Atkeson, 2015). Therefore, campaigns represent an unfair

contest where female candidates are seen as less suitable to be governor, president or member of parliament.

2.3   Politics of ideas and politics of presence

In an era in which democracy is founded on openness, inclusiveness, and deliberation among peers, men dominate the entire spectrum of political representation. From the Nordic countries (72%) to the Pacific (83%), a single gender monopolise the parliaments in every single region. Even in the United Kingdom, where the 2017 General Election saw a record level of female candidates, just 32% of the seats in the House of Commons will be occupied by them. On average, two out of every 10 representatives in legislative branches all over the world are women (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017). Furthermore, only 15 countries have female heads of state or government (Geiger and Kent, 2017). In the United States, the democratic referent, none of the ten presidents across the last fifty years has been a woman, the same case for 44 of the 50 present-day governors, whilst only ten countries in South America have elected a female president in history.

Mexico shows a similar trend in political representation. Even though the country has 43% of women in the Lower House, this percentage does not imply a significant achievement since all the important positions, like the Budget and Finance Committees, are destined for men. Moreover, the presidential system makes executive charges the cornerstone of politics, where gender quotas do not exist[6]. Given this scenario, it is not surprising that female victories are less frequent than in parliamentarian regimes (Jalalzai, 2008). In fact, female mayors govern only 14% of the municipalities, and 49 of the last 50 gubernatorial elections have been won by male candidates.

But why is presence essential in political representation? Phillips (1994) addresses this question by posing an apparent contradiction between *ideas* and *experience*. The first approach states that differences— in beliefs, orientations and preferences— are solved in terms of intellectual diversity; thus, it does not matter who the agent is, but the ideas he or she represents, a principle guaranteed by universal suffrage since the delegates are elected by a plural citizenship. The politics of ideas is founded on the public sphere conception, and it actually represents a justification for male hegemony in contemporary democratic practices. If male candidates succeed, as happens in every election, it is because they provide the best argument in the deliberation process where opportunities remain equal. Therefore, women are adequately represented.

However, if opportunities were equal, disparity in representation would not exist. In opposition to politics of ideas, the second strand—politics of presence— contends that experience cannot be

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6 President and governors are elected by popular vote every six years. If it is true that local and federal legislatures are also chosen by popular suffrage, executive races are a staple for democracy in presidential systems.

replaced by sympathy or understanding because thoughts are inexorably attached to the people who convey them (Phillips, 1994, Young, 1989). Consequently, the presence of women turns out to be a necessary condition to challenge exclusion: 'If it is simply a question of representing a given range of ideas and interests, it may not much matter who does the work of representation. But if the range of ideas has been curtailed by orthodoxies that rendered alternatives invisible, there will be no satisfactory solution short of changing the people who represent and develop the ideas' (Phillips, 1994, p. 78). In other words, homogeneity is not a solution, but a mask of domination. Segregation will not be faced by the same bourgeois men who employ the public sphere rules to preserve their privileges.

Nonetheless, the arrangement of representational bodies goes further than mere acceptance of recognition and new voices in the public arena. Additionally, the politics of presence is a determinant in social transformation. Social-Role Theory recognises new occupants of roles as an instrument to defy stereotypes within a historical social process, while Exemplar Theory argues for a quicker modification in the association between gender and expectations, as has been demonstrated in the case of municipalities ruled by female mayors in Mexico (Kerevel & Atkenson, 2015) and quotas in Uruguay (Hinojosa et al. 2017). Either through a gradual course or a sudden progression, women in power challenge prejudices. However, this possibility entails a paradox: men win elections because they are perceived as more suitable for the job, and public opinion associates male candidates with leadership positions because they win elections. This is how the vicious circle of female exclusion operates in a model inspired by deliberative democracy.

2.4 Television advertising

Political campaign communications represent a window of opportunity to contest the stereotyped world by breaking the highest glass ceiling[7]. Once women surpass the social and institutional barriers to get a nomination[8], they have the chance to address the electorate directly, although it is true that this process is far from being a fair contest. Thus, it is necessary to develop a communication strategy to win the election. On the one hand, female candidates can choose to reinforce prejudices and play on favourable ground to assert their strengths. On the other hand, they may challenge traditional

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7 Even though there are a variety of proposals to improve gender representation—like quotas and grassroots efforts—, in this study I focus on the political communication alternative, specifically on television advertising. This does not mean that television has the power to manipulate people, as Bernays (1928) stated; actually, the Magic Bullet Theory was disregarded since the 1950s. What mass media can do, for example, is to influence public agendas and frame issues (see McCombs, 2014).

8 There was no presence of female candidates in 38% of Mexican gubernatorial elections between 2010 and 2016.

social expectations by exhibiting stereotypical masculine traits and issues to counterbalance perceived weaknesses.

During campaigns, candidates and voters interact through two means of message delivery. The first is uncontrolled communication, like the news, in which people receive biased information through gendered journalistic practices. Far from democratic ideals, women candidates obtain less media coverage (Kahn, 1994; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008) and receive more criticism (Falk, 2010; Hinojosa, 2010). In the last Mexican presidential election, for instance, the only female nominee got the most hostile press treatment (Instituto Federal Electoral, 2012). Furthermore, the media pay a disproportionate amount of attention to banal features like dress, hairstyle and the height of women's heels (Murray, 2010). They also produce double binds, a maze of false options that undermine the image of female politicians. For example, *too feminine* means ineptitude and *not feminine enough* implies that the woman is an aggressive pseudo-man, while not having babies is catalogued as aberrant, but those female leaders with children are called negligent mothers for not taking care of them (Hall, 1995).

In contrast, non-mediated channels offer candidates the opportunity to decide how they present themselves to the electorate (Holtz-Bacha & Kaid, 2004). This direct interaction can adopt the form of rallies, canvassing operations, social networks, billboards or commercials. However, from the spectrum of possibilities, television advertising emerges as the most important means—even in the age of Facebook and Twitter (see Table 1)— due to its capacity to reach larger audiences (Kaid, 2004; Sapiro et al. 2011), an essential feature in developing countries like Mexico, where only 18% of homes have access to the Internet (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2015). Therefore, given its relevance, candidates show in advertisements what is central to their campaign (Bystrom, et al. 2004; Kahn, 1993; Scammell, 2006; Windett, 2014), so an analysis of these items may reveal trends in communication strategies to challenge the unbalanced representation.

Table 1. Prominence of television in the last American and Mexican presidential elections

	Expenditures	Number of ads	TV as primary source of news
United States (2016)	£643 million	1 million	57%
Mexico (2012)	-	22 million	76%

Source: Arellano et al. (2013), Secretaría de Gobernación (2012), Fawler (2016) and Mitchell et al. (2017).

2.5 Body of research

Low numbers of female representatives, stereotypes in public opinion, and the importance of television have led some scholars to go against the normative ideals of deliberative democracy and explore whether male and female candidates run different styles of campaign based on the content of advertising. However, after decades of research, evidence is still contradictory. While some studies found substantial differences, others concluded that their strategy is almost identical. These attempts can be summarized in three areas:

a) Negativity. Far too little attention has been paid to the role of gender in negative advertisement than, for example, their democratic consequences (see Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Geer, 2006). Available research states that attacks made by female nominees contradict a stereotypically *soft* image, which is associated with positive tone (Trent & Sabourin, 1993). Consistent with these social expectations, analysis of American commercials in gubernatorial and Senate races in the eighties showed that female candidates produce fewer negative advertisements than their male counterparts did, although the negative messages focused on issues rather than image (Kahn, 1994; Johnston & White, 1994; Bystrom, 2013). More recently, after interviewing candidates who ran for statewide, congressional, and judiciary offices, Herrnson and Lucas (2006) confirmed that women prefer to focus on their own candidacies rather than condemning their opponents when they decide to go negative.

Hypothesis 1: Mexican female candidates produce less negative advertising and their attacks are focused more on issues than image

b) Traits. People associate certain personal characteristics with the sex of the candidate, although the ones required for leadership positions are exclusively male, so a greater presence of them would be expected in campaign advertising. This was the case in the Finnish Parliamentary elections, where commercials displayed almost identical content between genders, both prioritizing masculine stereotypical traits (Carlson, 2001). Nonetheless, evidence in the United States suggests that candidates portray attributes belonging to the opposite sex, so that they can ameliorate perceived weaknesses. In that country, it has been found that men performed a compassionate image, whilst

women promoted toughness and strength to persuade voters (Benze & Declercq, 1985; Bystrom, et al. 2004; Kahn, 1997).

Hypothesis 2: Mexican candidates promote traits in opposition to gender expectations in order to counter weaknesses

c) Issues. In the same way, some issues are considered typically masculine—like crime, the economy and foreign policy— while others are connected with femininity—such as education, healthcare and the environment. Even though Williams (1994) did not detect any significant difference between male and female policy concerns in the 1992 American Senate campaigns, subsequent research revealed that candidates emphasize topics which are beneficial to them given the public opinion bias (Bystrom, 2013; Panagopoulos, 2004). Thereby, women prefer to discuss *soft* issues and men promote *strong* policy proposals. In other words, they choose to play on advantageous ground.

Hypothesis 3: Mexican candidates adopt stereotypically gendered issues to capitalize on strengths

Nevertheless, the study of gender differences in campaign advertising is not exempt from difficulties. Firstly, the low number of female candidates narrows the potential for research (Murray, 2010). Apart from the difficulty in finding cases to analyse, a limited number of campaigns can lead to a misinterpretation of evidence since a conjuncture may resemble a systematic pattern. In the case of Mexico, for instance, 18 out of the last 47 gubernatorial elections were all-male races and not until 2006 did a female presidential candidate obtain more than 3% of the votes. Secondly, the geographical constraints represent an obstacle to contrasting evidence and, even inside the United States, the time gap and the diverse races—from local to judiciary campaigns— hinder the comparison of results.

Thirdly, there is a sampling problem in most countries, especially in those places where advertising is not strictly regulated and broadcasting becomes a private arrangement between candidates and television companies (Trent & Sabourin, 1993). Consequently, there is no official record of the aired messages and, in order to obtain the materials, scholars need to contact campaign headquarters or trust in data archives—as in the case of the United States— with the risk of obtaining an unrepresentative sample.

Fourthly, the absence of analytical tools —especially in the studies developed in the eighties and the nineties— limits the analysis to a descriptive exercise. In previous decades, differences in negativity, traits and issues were reported in simple percentages, while no other factor was taken into account. It was not until recently that scholars incorporated more complex models that allow researchers to isolate the effect of gender (see Walter, 2013), controlling for other determinants of campaign advertising.

In Mexico, the Electoral Institute publishes all the radio and television commercials online since this public entity is, by law, the only body authorized to manage the broadcasting of commercials in campaigns, a valuable resource that avoids the sampling problem. However, research on Mexican political advertising is still in its infancy. Available studies focus on presidential elections, specifically the presence of emotions (Aguilar, 2013), personal attributes (Juárez Gamiz, 2007) and negative advertisements (Díaz Jiménez & Alva Rivera, 2016), although they lack basic methodological procedures, such as inter-coder reliability. Likewise, female under-representation has been ignored, except for one single examination of the 2015 gubernatorial election in Nuevo León (Ruiz Vidales & Muñiz, 2017). Nonetheless, this case study employs quantitative content analysis of a scarce sample of 37 commercials, and it does not include control variables to test the validity of gender as a determinant factor of the content. In sum, the interest of communication scholars contrasts with the evident exclusion of women in Mexico.

2.6   Aim of study and research question

In Mexico, 46 out of the last 47 gubernatorial elections were won by men, but exclusion is not an issue in the public debate. Instead of finding solutions to break the gender gap, the unbalanced representation is justified based on the ideals of deliberative democracy: *'If male candidates win, it is because they pose the best arguments'*. However, elections are far from being a space for reasoned deliberation. In reality, gender prejudices reduce the possibility of women being elected. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the communication styles of male and female Mexican candidates in order to detect opportunities so that male hegemony in political representation can be challenged.

Walliman (2006) asserts that a research question should contain two elements: a relevant problem and an achievable proposal. Given the low presence of women in executive positions and the lack of attention that scholars have paid to the issue, this study starts from a basic principle: 'Before we can answer the question of whether and how gender differences in the way candidates present themselves and are presented by others affect public perceptions and votes, we first need to establish that there are in fact differences' (Sapiro et al. 2011: 107). Thus, the research question is as follows:

Research question: To what extent do male and female Mexican candidates differ in their television advertising strategy?

In order to answer this question, the present study focuses on three particular areas of verbal content: negativity, traits and issues, testing the individual hypotheses—previously stated— derived from empirical evidence originating mainly in the United States.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research strategy and methodological tools that this project has developed in order to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. To begin with, I justify content analysis as the appropriate method for the project, its advantages and limitations. Then I explain why the selection of gubernatorial campaigns is representative of the gender gap in Mexico, as well as the sampling process of the commercials. Finally, I present the statistical technique used to analyse the data —binary logistic regressions—and detail the operationalisation process.

3.1 Research strategy

This study adopts quantitative content analysis as a method to examine gender differences in Mexican campaign advertising. Defined as 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use' (Krippendorf, 2004: 18), this approach is particularly useful in the systematization of large amounts of data in order to detect patterns (Deacon et al. 1999, Thomas, 1994), an objective which corresponds with the research question, unlike other approaches in the field. Experimentation, for example, measures the effects of advertising (see Iyengar et al. 1997), while interviews with consultants and questionnaires to candidates evaluate motivations rather than actual campaign messages (see Kahn & Gordon, 1997; Scammell, 2007).

A major advantage of content analysis is transparency. Databases and methodological resources are usually open to public scrutiny (Hansen, 1998), an academic practice that gives scholars the chance to reproduce research procedures in order to test and compare results. As a consequence, mistakes and flaws are evidenced, while techniques and evidence are constantly enhanced. In sum, replicability permits the accumulation of knowledge, a key feature in the study of gender stereotypes. Nevertheless, this approach does not estimate audience effects. Content analysis is about categorizing, counting and interpreting the elements of visual and written texts (Hall, 1982), which are produced in this case by candidates. Thus, the analysis asserts what the politician is saying, but not how the electorate respond.

This method has been catalogued as a technique that reduces the analysis to 'counting numbers'. However, this critique refers solely to one part of the process. If it is true that commercials are fragmented into their basic elements, then all the parts are reintegrated through interpretation, supported by a theoretical framework (Thomas, 1994). Therefore, reporting the number of negative advertisements would be insignificant, but asserting that gender exclusion manifests in the use of stereotypically masculine traits to attack female candidates becomes relevant. To sum up, this method is appropriate for answering the research question. Before assessing the effects or intentions of

advertising, it is necessary to determine how male and female nominees present themselves to the electorate.

3.2   Units and sampling

The unit of analysis, understood as what is being counted (Hansen, 1998), is the 30-second piece produced by political parties, which is the only legal practice of televised advertising in campaigns. Advertisements are divided into basic elements, whose origin is theoretical, like stereotyped traits. Each one is filled with claims, which represent the smallest element in the analysis, or coding units (Krippendorf, 2004). For example, a commercial may be predominantly positive, but a negative claim is recorded, in the same way the presence of an issue is documented even if it is mentioned just once. Afterwards, the next step consists in choosing the type of campaign and period to be scrutinized.

The gender gap in Mexican political representation lies in executive positions, the most important offices in presidential systems and where candidate quotas do not operate. For this project, the 47 gubernatorial elections held in the period between 2010 and 2016 were chosen as the sample because they fit the criteria of representativeness of the problematic (Riffe et al. 2005) given its frequency[9] and a considerable number of commercials, both absent features in the rest of the executive races. Next, the selection of the period was in line with the times and dates of the event concerned (Hansen, 1998: 102). Throughout the chosen interval, men won 98% of the elections, although 62% of them involved female candidates and in 38%, at least one woman obtained more than 5% of the votes.

A cluster of 4,012 pieces was gathered from the Electoral Institute database, the entire political material throughout the six-year period, including non-electoral terms. Then, a depuration process was settled, eliminating those advertisements from presidential, municipal and legislative races, as well as generic and repeated materials[10]. In the end, it was determined that 1,260 commercials belong to the 47 campaigns for governor, a universe of items that this project fully analyses (see Table 1). Ethical approval was obtained by the dissertation supervisor for the collection and management of the data given its public nature.

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9 Governors are elected for a six-year period, but each one of the 32 states has its own constitution, so the country witnesses gubernatorial campaigns almost every year.

10 This is a common situation due to the breaching of legal requirements like the presence of a party logo and name of the coalition.

Table 2: Television advertisements in Mexican gubernatorial campaigns

Year	Number of Commercials	States
2010	295	Aguascalientes*, Chihuahua, Durango*, Hidalgo*, Oaxaca*, Puebla, Quintana Roo*, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala*, Veracruz, Zacatecas
2011	164	Baja California Sur*, Coahuila, Estado de México, Guerrero, Michoacán*, Nayarit*
2012	153	Chiapas*, Ciudad de México*, Guanajuato, Jalisco*, Morelos, Tabasco, Yucatán*
2013	35	Baja California
2015	241	Baja California Sur, Campeche*, Colima*, Guerrero*, Michoacán*, Nuevo León*, Querétaro*, San Luis Potosí*, Sonora*
2016	372	Aguascalientes*, Chihuahua, Durango*, Hidalgo*, Oaxaca, Puebla*, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa*, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala*, Veracruz*, Zacatecas*

*Elections with at least one female candidate

3.3 Coding

To analyse the advertisements, a codebook was designed based on Videostyle, a methodological proposal developed by Kaid & Davidson (1986) and validated over the years in races at all levels (see for example Bystrom, 1995; Kaid, 1998; Kaid & Johnston, 2000; Kaid & Tedesco, 1999; Scammell & Langer, 2006). Then, a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the significance of the categories. Through this methodological tool, which refines the research instrument (Hansen, 1998), a total of 28 variables including metadata were validated to test the hypotheses in three categories of verbal communication:

1. Negativity: The overall tone of the commercial, as well as the presence of negative appeals and the purpose of the attack.

2. Traits: The presence of personal attributes that are stereotypically masculine (leadership, toughness, willing to take risks) and feminine (cheerfulness, honesty, compassion and love of children) based on Bem (cited in McDermott, 2016), Carver et al. (2013) and Huddy (cited in Kahn, 1996) findings.

3. Issues: The existence of topics that are stereotypically masculine (the economy/jobs/taxes, crime, farm issues, public transportation) and feminine (education, healthcare, poverty, the environment, integrity in government, women's rights) according to experimental research (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Iyengar et al. 1997).

Without inter-coder reliability—a comparison between the results of two coders—, 'content analysis is useless' (Neuendorf, 2002). To estimate it, this project adopts Krippendorf's Alpha, a coefficient that guarantees accuracy, reproducibility and stability in the outcomes (Krippendorf, 2004) given the

integration of the agreement expected by chance, unlike a simple percentage (Lombard et al, 2002). In this project, reliability was calculated using ReCal software, whose results indicated that none of the variables obtained less than 0.81[11], the higher standard according with the author's own criteria, so measurements can be trusted.

3.4   Analytical tools and operationalisation

Traditionally, gender differences in commercials have been assessed by simply reporting the frequencies of categories, although in campaigns, distinct agents influence the development of communication strategies, a dynamic that descriptive statistics do not reflect. To overcome this difficulty, the data was analysed through a series of multiple regressions, a technique that estimates associations between variables—sex of the candidate and stereotypes, for in this case— while controlling for other elements, although causal relationships cannot be determined (Agresti & Finlay, 2014). In sum, regressions grant a more accurate prediction of the response variable including several factors, a substantial advantage in the analysis of complex political interactions.

In this project, the association between nineteen dependent variables and two independent, the sex of the candidate and mixed campaigns, is tested. Negativity includes the tone of the advertisement and the main purpose of the attack, whilst the seventeen stereotypical traits and issues are evaluated individually. To prove the validity of the relationships, a series of variables are taken into account, besides the sex of the candidate:

a) Presence of female candidates. According to Windett (2014), male gubernatorial candidates strategically evoke stereotypes by enticing women to campaign on female issues. Thus, all-male campaigns would differ from those races with at least one b) Competitive female candidate.

c) Political party is a key source of campaign agendas due to the worldview that the institution represents[12] and also involves expectations of the electorate (Sides, 2006). For example, it is more probable that right-wing candidates would choose crime as a cornerstone of their strategy. Ideology has also been studied as a determinant of negativity. For instance, Republican campaigns for the Senate from 1992 to 2002 were 9% more negative than Democratic ones (Lau & Pomper, 2004).

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11 Following the principle established by Lombard (2010), inter-coder reliability was performed in 10% of the 1,260 advertisements.

12 For a detailed account of the right-left divide and its appropriation of values, see Lakoff (1996).

d) Competitive race. Close elections increase perceived threats, so candidates tend to alter decisions in a campaign. For instance, competitiveness is associated with an increase in negativity (Kahn & Kenney, 1999).

e) Year. Over time, gender differences in public opinion—and consequently in campaign decisions— should diminish due to the increasing number of women in leadership positions (Bystrom et al. 2004; Dahlerup, 1988).

Explanatory variables: sex of the candidate, mixed campaigns, competitive female candidates, political party, competitive race and year

Due to the nature of the variables, two binary logistical models are run for each of the response variables in the three categories, as shown in Table 2. The first includes party ideology and year. The second comprises two factors taken from the result of the election: a close race—where the margin of victory was less than 5%— and a competitive woman nominee, for those who obtained at least 5% of the votes. Since both are variables gathered *a posteriori* and do not necessarily correspond to the reality perceived by headquarters during the campaign, conclusions in this realm are considered tentative and not complementary of the first model. In both models, dichotomous variables derived from the measurement of year were designed to detect non-linear effects in time, something that a single ordinal variable would not perceive (see Table 3). Finally, significance levels were set at the 5% level, the standard in social sciences.

Table 3: Operationalisation of variables

Name	Category	Model	Measurement	Codebook question
Overall tone	Response	1, 2	1 = Negative 0 = Positive	8 (transformed into a dummy variable)
Content of the attack	Response	1, 2	1= Issues 0= Traits	10 (transformed into a dummy variable)
Traits	Response	1, 2	1 = Present 0 = Absent	7 (individually measured)
Issues	Response	1, 2	1 = Present 0 = Absent	10 (individually measured)
Sex of the candidate	Explanatory	1,2	1 = Woman 0 = Man	2
Type of campaign	Explanatory	1	1 = Mixed 0 = Same-gender	5
Ideology	Explanatory	1	1 = Present 0 = Absent	3 (transformed into four dummy variables)
Year	Explanatory	1, 2	1 = Present 0 = Absent	4 (transformed into six dummy variables)
Close race	Explanatory	2	1 = Competitive 0 = Uncompetitive	6
Competitive female candidate	Explanatory	2	1 = Competitive 0 = Uncompetitive	7

4 FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the outcomes of the study. Firstly, a thorough description of the results in each one of the the three verbal dimensions assessed is presented. Secondly, the theoretical and practical implications of communication styles are considered, including a critique to the Habermastian democratic approach and opportunities to generate more competitive female candidacies. Lastly, methodological contributions and limitations of the work, as well as further research, are discussed.

4.1 Results

In order to identify similarities and differences in the way male and female candidates run for office in Mexico, three hypotheses were formulated based on previous research conducted in the United States, where the majority of campaign advertising studies have been performed. However, the outcomes of the binary regression models developed for this project rejected, fully or partially, each one of the predictions. This does not mean that gender was not an influential factor in campaigns, but indicates the inconsistency of American observations of Mexican gubernatorial races. In fact, the sex of the candidate and races between both male and female candidates proved, to some extent, statistical significance in each of the assessed dimensions holding for ideology and year in the first

model, while controlling for *close race*, *female competitiveness* and *year* in the exploratory one. Previous research has evidenced that gender matters in public opinion and nomination processes within parties. The results of this project suggest that gender also matters in Mexican political campaigns.

4.1.1 Negativity

A significant difference in how men and women candidates address negativity was projected given the existing literature (Bystrom, 2013, Herrnson and Lucas, 2006; Johnston & White, 1994; Kahn, 1996; Trent & Sabourin, 1993). In order to confirm or refute the prediction, two response variables were estimated in this dimension: overall tone of the message—positive or negative— and content of the attack—based on traits or issues. However, *sex* was not associated with any of them holding for *party, mixed campaigns, competitiveness*, and *year*. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is rejected, although gender effects cannot be disregarded. Actually, the presence of at least one female candidate was associated with a reduction in the odds of negative advertisements, and it correlated positively with attacks based on issues. In the same vein, control factors such as ideology, as well as 2013 and 2016 periods, also proved to have significant influence compared to 2010. In sum, evidence suggests that having candidates of both sexes involved in mixed competitions decreased the amount of negative advertising, and those candidates are more likely to criticise policy proposals than the nominees who participated in male-only races.

Hypothesis 1 (rejected): Mexican female candidates produce less negative advertising and their attacks are focused more on issues than image.

Findings: The sex of the candidate was not associated with the tone of the message or the content of the attacks, but fewer negative advertisements and more attacks on issues were produced in mixed campaigns compared with same-gender campaigns.

As can be seen from the table below, the sex of the candidate was not significantly correlated with the production of negative advertisements in Mexican gubernatorial campaigns. Nonetheless, the presence of a woman showed a significant impact on campaign style since the odds ratio in mixed campaigns is 0.47, in other words, the probability of negativity decreased by 53% when there was a female candidate on the ballot. *Ideology* and *year* also proved significant in this realm. Belonging to *center*, *left* and *right* parties was a predictor of fewer attacks compared to *other parties*, the variable of reference, while 2013 and 2016 campaigns were more likely to show negative advertisements in comparison to 2010. Regarding the exploratory model, *competitive races* were surprisingly linked to a reduction of 44% in the likelihood of negativity. This result is somewhat counterintuitive since a close competition is usually related to an increase in attacks, but it is important to bear in mind that this variable, along with a *competitive female nominee*, is based on the outcomes of the election, so there is

a gap between available information during the campaign, when advertisements are produced, and the number of votes that the candidates obtained.

The second response variable corresponds to the content of the attacks. This included a candidate either criticising the personal characteristics of the opponent, like dishonesty, or questioning his or her policy proposals—holding a pro-life position, for instance. From the data, it can be seen that *mixed campaigns* multiplied by 1.87 the probability of having attacks based on issues, while the *2015* and *2016* races were more likely to emphasise traits than the 2010 period. In the exploratory model, however, only *2016* proved statistically significant at a similar rate to the previous regression. In sum, the analysis evidenced a gender impact on negativity, but rather than the sex of the candidate, the effect lies in the presence of a woman.

Table 4: Logistic Regression Analysis of Negativity in Mexican gubernatorial campaigns 2010-2016

	Tone of the commercial 0 = positive, 1 = negative		Purpose of the attack 0 = traits, 1 = issues	
Sex	1.4626(.419)	1.373(.403)	.638(.153)	.676(.166)
Mixed campaign	.468(.105)**	–	1.875(.365)**	–
Competitive race	–	.560(.131)**	–	1.213(.221)
Competitive woman	–	.817(.201)	–	1.230(.255)
Party ideology				
Reference: Other				
Left	.312(.108)**	–	2.298(.726)**	–
Center	.144(.050)**	–	6.933(2.279)**	–
Right	.382(.126)**	–	1.910(.586)*	–
Year				
Reference: 2010				
2011	1.236(.449)	1.093(.393)	1.251(.408)	1.295(.415)
2012	1.232(.460)	1.044(.384)	1.255(.420)	1.334(.436)
2013	5.147(2.325)**	7.274(3.414)**	.758(.404)	.740(.392)
2015	1.747(.593)	1.443(.486)	.562(.155)*	.619(.167)
2016	2.368(.643)**	2.319(.612)**	.475(.107)**	.464(.101)**
Constant	.570(.263)	.135(.050)**	1.216(.492)	4.517(1.398)**
Pseudo R2	0.078	0.035	0.088	0.028
Log likelihood	-414.564	-433.970	-505.827	-538.868

Entries are the estimated Odds Ratio with Standard Error in parenthesis. Left ideology: PRD, PT, Movimiento Ciudadano, Morena; Center: PRI, Partido Verde; Right: PAN, Encuentro Social; Other: Independents and local parties. The first column shows Model 1, whereas the second column shows the Exploratory model.

*p < .05
**p < .01

4.1.2   Traits

Gubernatorial candidates in the United States emphasise traits associated with the opposite sex as a strategy to compensate for weaknesses (Kahn, 1996). However, Mexican campaigns showed mixed results. From the seven stereotyped characteristics that were investigated in the study, the presence of female candidates increased the odds of *toughness*, *compassion* and *love of children* featuring, while males did not present positive correlations. As a consequence, Hypothesis 2 is rejected. Evidence indicates that candidates did not use traits to overcome their stereotypical images. On the one hand, women are correlated with one 'masculine' and two 'feminine' personal attributes. On the other hand, men did not mention any of them.

Hypothesis 2 (rejected): Mexican candidates promote traits in opposition to gender expectations in order to counter weaknesses.

Findings: There was not a straight association between the sex of the candidate and the use of stereotypical gender traits. Indeed, gender was not related to the promotion of leadership, willingness to take risks, cheerfulness or honesty, whilst female nominees increased significantly the odds of toughness, compassion and love of children featuring.

Table 5 shows the effects of independent variables in relation to the presence of masculine traits. For *leadership* and *willingness to take risks*, the influence of gender was not statistically significant; in other words, being a man or woman did not make any difference in the promotion of these characteristics, whose frequency seemed to conform to particular contexts due to the significance of year variables. By contrast, female candidates were 3.6 times more likely to describe themselves as *tough*, whilst data indicates that mixed campaigns inhibited this manifestation. This apparent discrepancy can be attributed to a change in the behaviour of male candidates, who avoided mentioning the attribute of *strength* when facing a woman. Sex was also significant in the exploratory model, where *competitive races* and a *competitive woman* decreased the probability of commercials containing this 'male' characteristic.

Table 5: Logistic Regression Analysis of Masculine Traits in Mexican gubernatorial campaigns 2010-2016

	Leadership		Strength/Toughness		Willing to take risks	
Sex	1.249(.239)	1.189(.238)	3.628(.731)**	3.252(.689)**	1.374(.626)	.865(.401)
Mixed campaign	.842(.127)	-	.364 (.063)**	-	.759 (.271)	-
Competitive race	-	1.020(.143)	-	.656 (.109)**	-	.895 (.322)
Competitive woman	-	.880(.141)	-	.630 (.119)**	-	1.855 (6.795)
Party ideology						
Reference: Other						
Left	1.790(.671)	-	.704 (.236)	-	3.635 (.3.803)	-
Center	2.834(1.034)**	-	.685 (.223)	-	1.800 (1.897)	-
Right	2.642(.973)**	-	1.258 (.408)	-	2.842 (2.976)	-
Year						
Reference: 2010						
2011	1.059(.235)	1.023(.228)	1.765 (.438)	1.555 (.379)	2.172 (1.341)	1.930 (1.195)
2012	1.807(.390)**	1.674(.359)*	1.156 (.317)	.898 (.243)	1.563 (1.069)	1.478 (1.011)
2013	1.275(.490)	1.395(.545)	.395 (.248)	.626 (.398)	1.779 (1.992)	2.103 (2.399)
2015	1.639(.339)*	1.482(.308)	2.548 (.617)	1.809 (.432)**	2.173 (1.331)	1.398 (.856)
2016	1.370(.242)	1.244(.216)	2.106 (.428)	1.740 (.343)	3.499 (1.783)**	3.306 (1.673)*
Constant	.190(.079)	.436(1.075)	.293 (.102)	.228 (.038)	.010 (.012)	.013 (.009)
Pseudo R2	0.017	0.006	0.070	0.042	0.036	0.029
Log likelihood	-767.165	-775.695	-625.364	-644.421	-187.190	-188.528

Entries are the estimated Odds Ratio with Standard Error in parenthesis. Left ideology: PRD, PT, Movimiento Ciudadano, Morena; Center: PRI, Partido Verde; Right: PAN, Encuentro Social; Other: Independents and local parties. The first column shows Model 1, whereas the second column shows the Exploratory model. Dependent variable: 1 = presence, 0 = absence.
*p < .05
**p < .01

Turning to stereotypically feminine traits, Table 3 reveals the lack of meaningful variation in how male and female candidates portrayed *cheerfulness* and *honesty*. However, the probability of evoking *compassion* increased by 3.2 in commercials featuring women, an effect also present in model 2, where 2011 and 2015 also achieved a significant positive influence. In the same vein, female nominees tended to use *love of children* more frequently than males, controlling for the explanatory variables, but this time no other factor emerged as a significant predictor. Overall, mixed findings prevent a straight

interpretation of the strategic use of traits, as the hypothesis implied, since women highlighted more than half of the 'feminine' traits and one out of the three masculine items, but men did not stand out in any of them.

Table 6: Logistic Regression Analysis of Feminine Traits in Mexican gubernatorial campaigns 2010-2016

	Cheerfulness		Honesty		Compassion		Loves children	
Sex	.910(.185)	.789(.168)	.984(.239)	.766(.192)	3.217(.690)**	3.421(.794)**	2.337(.795)	2.382(.859)*
lixed campaign	1.010 (.150)	–	1.027 (.199)	–	.757 (.144)	–	.717 (.222)	–
petitive race	–	1.064 (.156)	–	.903 (.170)	–	.772 (.146)	–	.888 (.261)
etitive woman	–	1.239 (.202)	–	1.552 (.308)*	–	.690 (.148)	–	.770 (.261)
ideology								
nce: Other								
Left	1.252 (.430)	–	3.058 (1.400)**	–	1.440 (.645)	–	.413 (.239)	–
Center	1.417 (.474)	–	1.176 (.543)	–	2.145 (.928)	–	.909 .467)	–
Right	1.182 (.401)	–	2.208 (1.010)	–	1.627 (.716)	–	.588 (.317)	–
nce: 2010								
2011	1.019 (.231)	.990 (.226)	1.393 (.458)	1.353 (.445)	2.682 (.703)	2.640 (.698)	1.937 (.790)	1.861 (.766)
2012	1.634 (.359)*	1.631 (.357)*	1.985 (.623)**	2.042 (.635)*	1.591 (.464)	1.423 (.415)	.926 (.471)	.839 (.427)
2013	1.535 (.592)	1.565 (.614)	1.249 (.811)	1.218 (.795)	.964 (.548)	1.294 (.748)	.549 (.583)	.718 (.770)
2015	1.269 (.270)	1.125 (.242	3.093 (.883)*	2.596 (7.389)**	1.802 (.488)	1.744 (.480)	1.685 (.703)	1.003 (.381)
2016	1.0169 (.188)	.985 (.179)	2.217 (.572)*	2.282 (.581)**	1.350 (.328)	1.220 (.294)	1.096 (.422)	1.003 (.381)
Constant	.223 (.091)	.247 (.064)	.047 (.026)	.065 (.022)	.068 (.0318)	.129 (.026)	.067 (.039)	.046 (.0142)
Pseudo R2	0.007	0.007	0.049	0.0299	0.046	0.042	0.046	0.0211
.og likelihood	-728.526	-728.670	-504.715	-515.064	-526.094	-528.058	-526.093	-256.254

Entries are the estimated Odds Ratio with Standard Error in parenthesis. Left ideology: PRD, PT, Movimiento Ciudadano, Morena; Center: PRI, Partido Verde; Right: PA Encuentro Social; Other: Independents and local parties. The first column shows Model 1, whereas the second column shows the Exploratory model. Dependent variable: presence, 0 = absence.
*p < .05
**p < .01

4.1.3   Issues

Research in the United States has revealed that male candidates tend to choose *strong* issues like the economy and crime, while women prefer *soft* topics such as education and the environment (Bystrom, 2013; Panagopoulos, 2004); thus, behaviour according with stereotypical expectations was expected in Mexican gubernatorial races. However, evidence from the binary logistical models revealed a null relation between men and 'masculine', but evidence of women using 'feminine' topics. As a consequence, Hypothesis 3 is partially rejected.

Hypothesis 3 (partially rejected): Mexican candidates adopt stereotypically gendered issues to capitalize on strengths.

Findings: Overall, there is no evidence of men's strategic use of stereotypical issues, but some gender trends were identified. Women were more likely to emphasise the 'feminine' issues of poverty and integrity in government, while men do not stand out in 'masculine' topics.

Statistical models showed that only a few variables reached statistical significance in relation to 'male' issues, as can be seen in Table 4. First, *the economy/taxes* was correlated with *center ideology* and the *2011 period* at a 5% significance level, but only the latter remained meaningful in the exploratory model, where the effects of *close race* and *competitive woman candidate* were irrelevant. Second, the odds of *crime* featuring decreased by 28% in mixed campaigns, which means that this topic was less

frequent when a woman took part in the electoral competition. Finally, *farm issues* and *public transportation* presented an identical performance because none of the explanatory variables in both models could predict their behaviour. As with regard to traits, male candidates did not exceed women in the occurrence of masculine issues.

Table 7: Logistic Regression Analysis of Masculine Issues in Mexican gubernatorial campaigns 2010-2016

	Economy/Taxes		Crime		Farm issues		Public transportation	
Sex	1.163(.212)	1.164(.223)	.998(.202)	1.107(.237)	1.483(.494)	1.213(.427)	.956(.560)	.729(.429)
Mixed campaign	1.068 (.145)	–	.723 (.106)*	–	1.551 (.438)	–	.774 (.327)	–
Competitive race	–	0.954 (.127)	–	.825 (.121)	–	.580 (.179)	–	0.608 (.280)
Competitive woman	–	0.964 (.146)	–	.662 (.112)**	–	1.668 (.492)	–	1.502 (.660)
Party ideology *Reference: Other*								
Left	1.590 (.509)	–	1.220 (.409)	–	1.505 (1.172)	–	581064.4 (1.64e)	–
Center	1.943 (.604)*	–	1.129 (.370)	–	3.483 (2.588)	–	1964343 (5.55e)	–
Right	1.606 (.507)	–	1.241 (.410)	–	1.422 (.1.095)	–	5185474 (1.47e)	–
Year *Reference: 2010*								
2011	.629 (.128)*	.627 (.128)*	1.123 (.240)	1.124 (.242)	1.070 (.467)	.925 (.405)	1.479 (.984)	1.062 (.700)
2012	.683 (.141)	.674 (.139)	.933 (.210)	.861 (.194)	1.394 (.580)	1.243 (.518)	1.127 (.816)	0.878 (.632)
2013	1.143 (.414)	1.190 (.439)	.858 (.343)	1.010 (.411)	1.890 (1.280)	2.916 (2.047)	1.311 (1.454)	2.120 (2.441)
2015	.695 (.134)	.694 (.136)	1.130 (.237)	1.151 (.245)	.820 (.346)	.647 (.280)	1.850 (1.148)	1.108 (.687)
2016	.766 (.124)	.737 (.117)	.921 (.163)	.869 (.152)	1.538 (.521)	1.385 (.461)	1.775 (.920)	1.514 (.770)
Constant	.526 (.190)	.967 (.224)	.400	.532 (.136)	.026 (.022)	.067 (.030)	8.38e (.000)	0.017 (.012)
Pseudo R2	0.009	0.006	0.005	0.006	0.037	.019	0.069	0.0115
Log likelihood	-834.105	-837.173	-746.177	-745.290	-281.613	-286.903	-142.189	-151.003

Entries are the estimated Odds Ratio with Standard Error in parenthesis. Left ideology: PRD, PT, Movimiento Ciudadano, Morena; Center: PRI, Partido Verde; Right: PAN, Encuentro Social; Other: Independents and local parties. The first column shows Model 1, whereas the second column shows the Exploratory model. Dependent variable: 1 = presence, 0 = absence.
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

In the same way, little association between independent variables and four 'feminine' topics was found, as can be inferred from the low pseudo r-squared values in comparison with the rest of the models, although two showed association with women. In reference to *education* and *healthcare*, their appearance was explained by particular contexts, as the statistical significance of some years indicates. In a similar vein, none of the factors influenced the appearance of *the environment* and *women's rights*. Nonetheless, there was some evidence of strategic use of strengths, particularly with regard to two issues. *Poverty* was a more recurrent topic among women candidates, showing higher odds of 2.3, but its frequency was reduced in mixed campaigns, a consistent result in the exploratory model. Women also tended to emphasise *integrity in government* more than men did, an issue that male candidates used to avoid when facing a woman. To sum up, the analysis demonstrated similarities, but there are hints of gender strategical behaviour in relation to the predominance of women's reference to 'feminine' issues and the refusal of men to discuss topics that, conversely, are recurrent in same-gender races.

Table 8: Logistic Regression Analysis of Feminine Issues in Mexican gubernatorial campaigns 2010-2016

	Education		Healthcare		Poverty	
Gender	1.304(.300)	1.106(.265)	1.115(.314)	.937(.273)	2.332(.769)*	3.3(1.216)**
Female presence	1.745 (.124)	-	.897 (.173)	-	.648 (.769)	-
Competitive race	-	.747 (.127)	-	.797 (.158)	-	.686 (.205)
Competitive woman	-	.982 (.184)	-	1.067 (.233)	-	.438 (.161)*
Party ideology						
Reference:Other						
Left	1.150 (.478)	-	1.069 (.547)	-	.510 (.247)	-
Center	1.769 (.710)	-	2.228 (1.088)	-	.478 (.221)	-
Right	1.070 (.440)	-	.923 (.469)	-	.543 (.2555	-
Year						
Reference: 2010						.569 (.300)
2011	.810 (.189)	.748 (.175)	.765 (.210)	.713 (.197)	.550 (.289)	
2012	.698 (.173)	.614 (.152)*	.484 (.157)*	.441 (.142)*	1.100 (.479)	1.028 (.446)
2013	.140 (.103)**	.204 (.153)	.110 (.114)*	.156 (.162)	1.021 (.798)	1.341 (1.073)
2015	.600 (.145)	.483 (.119)	.496 (.147)*	.411 (.124)**	1.339 (.531)	1.616 (.657)
2016	.594 (.117)	.517 (.101)	.762 (.170)	.660 (.144)	1.193 (.405)	1.162 (.390)
Constant	.364 (.168)	.439 (.124)	.163 (.092)	.221 (.744)	.120 (.061)	.0660 (.018)
Pseudo R2	0.027	0.019	0.041	0.019	0.0240	0.028
Log likelihood	-599.466	-604.79	-459.912	-470.380	-272.094	-270.885

	Environment		Integrity		Women rights	
Gender	1.028(.540)	.928(.503)	2.231(.545)**	1.857(.472)**	1.025(.686)	1.346(.985)
Female presence	.801(.287)	-	.666 (.139)*	-	1.0761(.537)	-
Competitive race	-	.686 (.266)	-	.805 (.162)	-	2.161 (.984)
Competitive woman	-	1.092 (.447)	-	.991 (.222)	-	.587 (.349)
Party ideology						
Reference:Other						
Left	.347(.223)	-	2.133 (.934)	-	.298(.279)	-
Center	.589(.342)	-	.678 (.304)	-	.634(.510)	-
Right	.210(.142)*	-	1.967 (.853)	-	.521(.436)	-
Year *(Reference: 2010)*						
2011	.544(.317)	.507 (.297)	.568 (.220)	.563 (.216)	2.523(1.955)	3.171 (2.518)
2012	.765(.415)	.685 (.370)	.980 .336)	.921 (.312)	1.314(1.215)	1.527 (1.411)
2013	1	1	2.285 (1.159)	2.317 (1.179)	1	1
2015	.609(.331)	.507 (.281)	1.471 (.442)	1.228 (.367)	1.177(1.017)	1.693 (1.453)
2016	.826(.342)	.755 (.304)	2.255 (.548)**	2.179 (.515)**	2.392(1.636)	2.717 (1.837)
Constant	0.116	.048 (.030)	.087 (.041)	.111 (.023)	.018(.018)	.0102 (.010)
Pseudo R2	0.029	0.009	0.074	0.036	0.0241	0.030
Log likelihood	-174.301	-178.041	-454.701	-473.501	-103.645	-102.990

Entries are the estimated Odds Ratio with Standard Error in parenthesis. Left ideology: PRD, PT, Movimiento Ciudadano, Morena; Center: PRI, Partido Verde; Right: PAN, Encuentro Social; Other: Independents and local parties. The first column shows Model 1, whereas the second column shows the Exploratory model. Dependent variable: 1 = presence, 0 = absence.
 *p < .05
**p < .01

Discussion

In this investigation, the aim was to assess the way male and female candidates address the electorate in the most relevant form of campaign communication, television advertising, as a first step to challenge male hegemony in political representation. Although the outcomes revealed similarities, they also indicate that gender is a significant predictor of the advertisements' content, which can be interpreted in two strands. Firstly, it challenges the deliberative school of thought, the epitome of democracy, since there is evidence of personal affiliations and experiences in public discussion. Secondly, it provides some hints regarding negativity, traits, and issues that open the door to the

construction of more competitive women candidacies in the short term and, consequently, considerable modification of gender stereotypes in the medium and long term.

Although the consolidation of women's electoral success as a research goal could seem discriminatory at first sight, historical marginalisation and current under-representation levels in Mexico and the rest of the world demand a solution. In order to counter segregation, selection by sex is necessary to counter the unfair selection by sex (Gaspard, cited in Scott, 2005). This reasoning firstly involves the visualisation of exclusion, a problem which has been camouflaged by the current normative ideals of democracy.

Contemporary elections are constrained to the deliberative principles of openness, inclusiveness, and equality, apparently guaranteed by universal suffrage. Therefore, electoral victories are interpreted as a result of a rational debate guided by the arguments of candidates, rather than based on their status. Empirical evidence, however, have demonstrated the existence of stereotypes in public opinion along with sexist coverage by the media, which challenges the notion of a fair contest (see McDermott, 2016; Falk, 2010). In the same vein, the analysis of the 1,260 Mexican advertisements showed that the sex of the nominee and the presence of female candidates altered the route of campaigns in three dimensions of verbal communication.

If an absence of status differences—a Habermasian condition for democratic dialogue— was accomplished, there would not be any differences between male and female candidates regarding the production of negative advertisements or promotion of traits. However, women emphasised attributes such as *toughness*, *compassion* and *love of children* more often. There is also evidence of strategic use of stereotypes, as men behave differently when facing a woman, particularly regarding tone and issues, a pattern that can be explained by the competitive nature of campaigns. When running for office, candidates try to maximise utility in terms of votes. For this to occur, decisions are made based on a candidate's own strengths and an opposing candidate's weaknesses, including stereotypes held by the public. In sum, affiliation and prior experiences of nominees play a relevant role in the democratic decision-making process, an empirical finding that deliberative democracy tends to ignore.

The post-structuralist critique states that the public sphere rules, in which identity is not considered, were shaped by bourgeois men and its reproduction implies the reinforcement of privileges, hence it is not a coincidence that 'masculine' attributes are considered desirable in the process of deliberation, while 'feminine' characteristics remain unwanted (see Fraser, 1990). Therefore, when a woman is blamed for an electoral defeat because her proposals were not *convincing enough*, it really means that she was not *manly enough*. However, the justification of 98% male victories in gubernatorial elections

over the last six years lies in the values of deliberative democracy —reason and impartiality—, ignoring historical female exclusion.

In campaigns, considering unequal candidates as equals only reinforce the privileges of the advantaged (see Young, 1989). This means that normative ideals grounded on the Habermasian approach of democracy operate as a mask for female exclusion. Democracy urges a profound change, but this will not come from the privileged groups. On the contrary, the only feasible solution to change gender stereotypes involves placing more women in leadership positions, as stated by theories of social change (see Eagly & Karau, 2002). To achieve this, it is necessary to promote more competitive female candidates, a significant challenge given gender barriers within a masculine system. Democracy cannot continue to disregard half of the population, and the controlled messages that candidates deliver to the electorate can provide some hints to overcome segregation.

Ideally, a candidate would shake hands with all citizens during a campaign, an unrealistic objective given the financial, time, and logistic constraints. What candidates can do, however, is deliver controlled messages to a large audience through television. There, nominees select the strategic tone, emphasise favourable traits, and set the agenda with the topics they want to discuss; in other words, the analysis of advertisements reveals communication styles, which include the use of gender stereotypes.

Previous research in the United States discovered that female candidates produce less negative advertisements than men, and when they use these, the attacks focus more on topics than personal characteristics of the opponent. Surprisingly, identical behaviour was detected in the Mexican gubernatorial elections, but with *mixed campaigns* rather than the *sex of the candidate* variable. This means that the single presence of a woman in the race alters the strategy of male nominees by inhibiting the attacks and promoting the critics based on issues, even after controlling for the rest of the factors. Then, it is likely to talk about the *feminisation* of campaigns with respect to the tone of the message.

The alteration in communication strategy indicates that mixed campaigns are conducted on the stereotypical ground, which suggests strategic behaviour since men might try to stress the differences embedded in public opinion about gender expectations. This represents an actual drawback for women, as leadership positions require 'masculine' attributes, which include a more aggressive style. Even though attacks are unpopular among women (Herrnson & Lucas, 2006), these tactics have proven effective in reducing evaluation of opponents (Fridkin & Kenney, 2014), being more influential than positive messages (Lau, 1985), and promoting turnout (Freedman & Goldstein, 1999), so the presence of more negativity could help them to avoid a *soft* image in the race.

Similar to the previous dimension, the use of traits behaved differently from what was expected. In the United States, candidates emphasised traits in opposition to gender expectations to counter perceived flaws, while Mexican gubernatorial candidates showed erratic performance, where more similarities than differences were found. Female candidates, however, are more likely to mention the 'masculine' trait of *toughness* more than their counterparts, while they also reinforce the stereotypical 'feminine' characteristics of *compassion* and *love of children* to a greater extent. In summary, most of the traits are promoted equally, but some are highlighted more by women.

Patterns related to traits hint at adverse conditions for women. On the one hand, there is inconsistency in the use of 'masculine' personal characteristics, since men and women are perceived differently, but they present themselves in almost identical forms. As the data shows, female candidates missed the opportunity to emphasise characteristics that are considered desirable to govern, such as *leadership* and *willingness to take risks*. If both sexes present traits in the same proportion, but only men are credible in those linked to what people are looking for, they have an advantage over female candidates.

On the other hand, women reinforced two 'feminine' prototypical attributes, triggering stereotypical views that hinders their ability to construct a competitive candidacy. Gender prejudice embedded in public opinion consists of a contradiction between what is *expected* and what is *desirable* for executive positions. In this case, women portrayed a warm image, which is incompatible with the toughness that is expected from a governor. In the same vein, it is assumed that women should stay at home and take care of children, and this stereotypical bias reinforced by female candidates when they stressed the *love of children* attribute.

Lastly, the issues category reported a partial strengthening of gender stereotypes. While male and female candidates in the United States give more weight to the topics associated with their sex in order to capitalise strengths, only women nominees showed this pattern in Mexico, specifically concerning *poverty* and *integrity in government*, even after controlling for year, a significant predictor of the agenda given the large period analysed and the temporal validity of conjunctural topics. This discrepancy can be explained by the importance of 'male' issues, which are the most recurrent subjects in Mexican campaigns, indicating that there might not be place for women to stand out.

However, the reinforcement of 'feminine' issues entailed a disadvantage for women. Correspondingly to the promotion of female characteristics, similar communication strategies benefited men since they have more credibility when it comes to gubernatorial for no other reason than the simple fact that they are men. Meanwhile, the emphasis on stereotypical topics associated with women bolsters predispositions, although their promotion can be benefitial in particular

contexts of change (Murray, 2010), a task that future research with a qualitative approach should investigate.

Together these results provide important insights into the study of female exclusion in Mexican gubernatorial campaigns. The sex of the candidate is not only a relevant factor before elections, given the presence of prejudices; but also during campaigns, as the results of this study evidenced. Corresponding to the paradox of selecting by sex to counter the selection by sex, it becomes necessary to be aware of stereotypes in order to generate competitive female candidates and reduce stereotypical views. This does not mean that women should behave like men, but that the idea of fair conditions when running for office should be discarded, thus strategic decisions need to be made to overcome gender barriers.

After 17 years of democratic elections, Mexican levels of female representation in executive positions are identical to those experienced during the autocratic regime that ruled the country for seven decades, though scholars have ignored this issue. In fact, research on campaign communications has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of a few races disregarding the sex of the candidate. This study, the first attempt to analyse the influence of gender in Mexican political campaign advertising, aims to fill this research gap by providing a new understanding of the communication styles of male and female nominees, specifically about negativity, traits, and policy proposals.

One of the strengths of the investigation was the process of collection and analysis of the data. To begin with, the sample covered a reasonable period to detect trends and patterns—47 campaigns in seven years— and embraced the totality of the advertisements, 1,260 items, avoiding a biased selection problem, a common feature in American research studies since scholars depend on campaign headquarters to obtain materials rather than a public database. Then, categories of commercials were measured in a codebook, a procedure that has been criticised for being unable to capture the complex reality (Livingstone, cited in Thomas, 1994). All the methods, however, not just content analysis, involve categorisation. Furthermore, the different dimensions were tested and adapted to the Mexican case in a pilot study. Finally, the accuracy of the results was proved using Krippendorf's Alpha, a rigorous measurement of inter-coder reliability.

In order to determine the impact of gender in political advertising, data was analysed using two binary logistic models. The first included *ideology* and *year* as control variables, obtaining reasonable pseudo r square values. The second incorporated *close race* and the presence of *competitive female candidates*, though these factors were determined from the outcomes of elections and did not necessarily represent the conditions under which advertisements were produced and broadcast. Future research should take into account the measurement of competitiveness from a different

source—data from polls, for instance— to obtain more precise indicators and, as a consequence, more accurate results.

This work provided some hints regarding the association between gender and campaign advertising, but they represent only a first step in the attempt to challenge male over-representation in executive positions. Since the study was limited to the content of advertisements, audience effects and consequences on votes were not evaluated. Once similarities and differences in communication style have been addressed, what is now needed is how people perceive these patterns and the way they influence voting decisions, specifically in the Mexican context, a task for future research. The more men elected, the more difficult it is to dispel gender stereotypes; however, female candidates have an opportunity to break the vicious circle using political communication.

5 CONCLUSION

In contemporary elections, the principle of inclusiveness is apparently guaranteed by universal suffrage. Therefore, it is assumed that campaigns represent a fair competence in which people vote for proposals, disregarding affiliations and personal experiences of candidates. However, less than 10% of worldwide leaders and only two out of every 10 members of parliament around the globe are women (Geiger and Kent, 2017; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017), which is evidence that normative ideals of elections actually operate as a mask for exclusion. In reality, men play on advantageous grounds since masculine attributes are commonly associated with top leadership roles, while the compassionate prototypical image of women is considered undesirable for public charges, a predisposition reinforced by the sexist media coverage. In other words, 'letting the people decide' actually means 'letting the people decide *between male nominees*'. However, candidates have the opportunity to counter stereotypes in campaigns using television advertising, a direct way to address a large audience of voters.

 The present study adopted quantitative content analysis to assess the 1,260 advertisements of the 47 gubernatorial campaigns in Mexico between 2010 and 2016, where only one female candidate succeeded. The unique research design implemented in this work allowed the overcoming of three common obstacles in content analysis. To begin with, the considerable six-year period prevented bias produced by single case studies and conjunctures. The collection of the complete campaign materials obtained from the National Electoral Institute ensured the evaluation of the complete panorama, unlike United States' investigations where advertisements gathered from campaign headquarters are usually incomplete. Furthermore, binary logistic regression models employed to examine the data provided a more accurate measurement of gender effects than simple percentage procedure, since they permit controlling for other factors, such as ideology, year and competitiveness.

The aim was to compare communication strategies of male and female nominees as a first step to generating more competitive women candidacies in order to challenge the unbalanced rates of political representation. Findings revealed similarities, but also significant differences in communication styles. Firstly, the presence of a woman in a race encouraged a more positive campaign, as well as more attacks on issues rather than on image. Secondly, women candidates stressed more the stereotypical traits of *toughness*, *compassion* and *love of children* than men. Thirdly, female candidates were more likely to emphasise the prototypical 'feminine' issues of *poverty* and *integrity in government*. In sum, female candidates in Mexico tended to reproduce stereotypical views rather than challenge them, a discovery that represents an opportunity for women to break the highest glass ceiling.

Additionally, this work provided empirical validation to the post-structuralist and feminist critique of the Habermasian public sphere. As the results indicated, candidates carry their own identity in campaigns, where being a male represents an advantage over women for electoral purposes because their attributes are seen as more suitable for public office. Rather than a reasoned arena where the best proposal wins, campaigns are played on stereotypical grounds. The vicious circle of exclusion, masked by the notion of public sphere, is then complete: stereotypes pervade public opinion, campaigns show stereotypical behaviour and men are elected in overwhelming proportions.

There is an agreement among theorists that the key to tackling exclusion consists of placing more women in leadership positions, but if the problem remains invisible under the facade of deliberative democracy, female defeats will continue to be catalogued as 'normal', while in reality women play in unfair conditions because they are not considered '*manly* enough' to govern a municipality, a state or a country. Overall, this dissertation found that gender influences the behaviour of Mexican gubernatorial candidates in negativity, traits and issues, which represents a useful starting point for further research. Once similarities and differences have been established, future studies should determine *why* they exist and *how* they affect the outcomes of elections in order to counter under-representation.

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APPENDIX A: CODING BOOK BASED ON KAID'S VIDEOSTYLE

METADATA

1. Commercial ID (given in the lists)
Number of commercial given on your list of ads

2. Gender of the sponsor candidate
(0) Man
(1) Woman

3. Political party (Code 1 if present; 0 if not present)
(a) CENTER (PRI, Partido Verde)
(b) RIGHT (PAN, Encuentro Social)

(c) LEFT (PRD, Morena, PT, Movimiento Ciudadano)

(d) Other

4. Year of the election (given in the lists)

5. Type of campaign (given in the lists)

(0) Only male candidates

(1) Mixed race (presence of female candidates)

6. Is it a competitive race in general (given in the list)?

(0) No

(1) Yes

7. If it is a mixed race, is there a female competitive candidate? (given in the list)?

(0) No

(1) Yes

(99) NA

NEGATIVITY

8. What is the tone of the commercial? (If dubious, count the number of appeals to determine it)

(1) Positive: Emphasizes in the sponsor candidate. Not an explicit attack on the opponent.

(2) Negative: Emphasizes in the opponent. Explicit attack on opponent's record, character, campaign, etc.

(3) Comparative: Balanced between positive and negative information--mark only if there is no dominance of one over the other. Use this choice only rarely; usually only in a long spot where one type of information is not clearly dominant.

9. If a negative appeal is made, who makes the attack?

(1)Candidate attacks his/her opponent

(2)Surrogate attacks opponent: someone other than candidate appears as attacker

(3)Anonymous announcer attacks opponent: attacker is unknown and is not actually seen or identified

(99) NA

10. If a negative appeal is made, what is the dominant purpose of the attack?

(1) Attack on personal characteristics of opponent: an attack on the personal characteristics of the opponent; use of negative words denoting flaws in character of opponent.

(2) Attack on issue stands/consistency of opponent: criticizes the issue or policy stands of the opponent; criticizes the opponent's inability to 'make up his/her mind' where he/she stands on an

issue; may use quotes from opponent to show him/her switching a position.

(3) Attack on candidate's group affiliations/associations: attacks the opponent's ties to certain groups which have undesirable characteristics, members, philosophies.

(4) Attack on opponent's background/qualifications: criticizes the opponent for something in his/her background, family ties, prior job or office (or lack thereof)

(5) Attack on opponent's performance in pas offices/positions: attacks opponent's performance or job accomplishments in prior offices such as voting record.

(99) NA

TYPE OF ADVERTISEMENT

11. Is the emphasis of this ad on: (Code for dominant emphasis. If dubious, count the number of appeals to determine it)

(1) Issues (ad emphasizes broad issue concerns or specific policy issues or positions of the candidate or opponent)

(2) Image (ad focuses on the personal characteristics, background or qualifications of the candidate or opponent)

TRAITS

12. Which candidate traits are emphasize the sponsor candidate? (Code 1 if present; 0 if not present)

a. Leadership

b. Toughness/strenght (e.g., 'tough on crime')

c. Willing to take risks

d. Cheerful

f. Honesty/integrity

e. Compassion/warmth (focus on human relationships; e.g., showing concern for elderly, children, victims)

f. Loves children

ISSUES

13. Which issues are emphasized in the ad? (Code 1 if present; 0 if not present)

a. Economy/jobs/taxes

b. Crime (security)

c. Farm issues

d. Public transportation

e. Education

f. Healthcare (medical approach)

g. Poverty

h. Environment

i. Honesty and integrity in government (corruption)

j. Women rights

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