

Media inequality: female senators in the coverage of the Uruguayan media

Desigualdad mediática: las senadoras en la cobertura de los medios uruguayos

Desigualdade midiática: as senadoras na cobertura da mídia uruguaia

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to analyze the characteristics of the mass media coverage on female politicians in Uruguay, with emphasis on mentions of female and male senators in 2017. From the analysis of the media framework (framing), we used the content analysis method to study different key factors that serve to describe the differences between the media coverage of female and male political leaders in Uruguay. We concluded that the space given to female senators in the media is proportionally less than that of their male counterparts, and that traditional gender roles continue to be reproduced: women are underrepresented, stereotyped and excluded.

Keywords: political women; mass media; political communication, gender, framing.

RESUMEN

Esta investigación busca analizar las características de la cobertura de los medios de comunicación masivos sobre las mujeres políticas en Uruguay, específicamente sobre las senadoras en el año 2017. Partiendo desde un análisis del encuadre mediático (framing), se utiliza el método de análisis de contenido para estudiar las diferencias entre la cobertura mediática de las mujeres (invisibilización y reproducción de rol de género tradicional) y de los hombres políticos en Uruguay. Se concluye que el espacio brindado en los medios a las senadoras en Uruguay es proporcionalmente menor que el de sus pares varones, y que se las sigue colocando en marcos estereotipados.

Palabras clave: mujeres políticas; medios de comunicación; comunicación política, género, enfoque.

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa tem por objetivo analisar as características da cobertura dos meios de comunicação de massa sobre as mulheres políticas em Uruguai, especificamente sobre as senadoras no ano de 2017. Começando desde uma análise do enquadre midiático (framing), se usa o método de análise de conteúdo para estudar as diferenças entre a cobertura midiática das mulheres (invisibilidade e reprodução de rol de gênero tradicional) e dos homens políticos em Uruguai. Pode-se concluir que o espaço dado nos meios para as senadoras em Uruguai é proporcionalmente menor que o de seus parceiros homens, e que se continua posicionando a mulheres em âmbitos estereotipados.

Palavras-chave: mulheres políticas; meios de comunicação; comunicação política; gênero; enfoque.

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INTRODUCTION

This article aims to analyze the characteristics of the media coverage made by the press, radio and television on the female senators in Uruguay during 2017 and understand why the concept of media inequality can be used in the context of Uruguayan politics. To this end, we propose three specific objectives: 1) compare the place given to male senators and female senators in the information products of the media in Uruguay in the first half of 2017; 2) analyze the framing that was done on the female senators in the press, radio and television in Uruguay in the first half of 2017, and 3) compare the coverage of the media (press, radio and television) on female Uruguayan politics in 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2017.

The article takes up the answer to the questions posed for the years 2004 to 2014 from the reality of the year 2017 for the female senators: What is the weight of the female political figures regarding the male ones in the media coverage and how do they appear? What topics do the media cover? (Johnson & Pérez, 2010, p. 112). The study has special interest in studying the process of invisibilization of female senators in the media against the role assigned to male senators and the reproduction of the traditional gender role (Panke & Amado, 2012) in the content of the media analyzed.

As an introduction, it is important to point out that Uruguayan politics is characterized by a strong *partyocracy*, understood as a centrality of the political parties that had the *Partido Nacional* and *Partido Colorado* ruling the country from the late 19th century until 2004, when for three consecutive periods the center-left coalition called *Frente Amplio* began to govern the country (Piñeiro, 2004; Yaffé, 2003; Caetano & Rilla, 2003; Moreira & Johnson, 2003).

To this permanent and solid stability of the Uruguayan political system is added a main feature: the demographic component of its political staff. Uruguay is known because the frontline political leaders, reunited mostly in the Senate of the Republic (Uruguay has a single national constituency for the Senate), are mostly elderly men (Garcé, 2007). In addition to age, there is a strong homocentric component in the integration of political staff, leaving women out of most decision places (De Giorgi, 2018; ONU Mujeres & Unión Interparlamentaria, 2014).

Therefore, the way to cover political news by journalists is part of this reality: most of the coverage is for older men, as has been reported in previous studies (Johnson, 2005; Johnson & Pérez, 2010).

For this reason, in 2009, a law was introduced in Uruguay that demands the participation of a third of women in the integration of national and departmental elective bodies and in the governing bodies of political parties (Law 18,476 and Law 18,487). The law promotes the intervention of women in politics, promoting their access to positions of power and their participation in formal decision spaces.

However, the political parties have not fully complied with the quotas (Johnson, 2015), and that reality is transferred to the coverage made of political women in the Senate. Therefore, to analyze the characteristics of the media coverage of the female senators in Uruguay, this work follows the methodology proposed by IDEA Internacional and UN Women in *Mirando con lentes de género la cobertura electoral. Manual de monitoreo de medios* (Looking at the electoral coverage with gender eyes. Media monitoring manual) (Llanos & Nina, 2011), a tool used by other studies that monitor the coverage of women done by the media in Uruguay.

Considering the situation of political women in Uruguay, it is necessary to visualize what is the media construction that is done regarding their participation in the Senate.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From the point of view of how this political reality is reflected in the discourse reproduced by the media, framing can help to understand how the male senator's role is hierarchized versus that of the female senator in the media.

According to Amadeo (2002), the consideration of a framing as a communicative process exists on three levels: the elaboration and treatment of the news, the message and the reception of the message by the audience.

In the field of newsroom sociology, which analyzes the processes by which novelties becomes stories that take time and space in the news, Tuchman was one of the pioneers in stating that the needs of the media affected the individuals who work in them, i.e., journalists (Tuchman, 1978). But it will be Entman (1993) who will deliver a more operational definition of the term framing. According to the author, "journalists apply their criteria, values and needs or those of the company (...) to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/

or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

In his review of the central aspects of framing, Amadeo (2002) states that there is a cognitive facet, linked to the way in which the media think about a subject. In this regard, another of the main currents related to framing is that which responds to the reception and the effects of the information. This approach constitutes one of the central points for our investigation, in the sense that it will state that “the framing of news depends both on how the media frame the information, as well as on the norms, habits and expectations of those than when receive the message form an opinion” (Entman, 1991, p. 7).

Semetko (1995) goes further and states that, in short, the audience has other frames previously learned and stored through their experiences and knowledge and defines that process as a social frame. Media and journalists interact through filters through which messages pass and create the news through different processes of analysis, interpretation and criticism. The role of political women does not escape this, so considering the media framing analysis, it is relevant to study how much space they devote to female senators in Uruguay and, in turn, to which issues they are linked to.

In 2010, the Global Media Monitoring Project analyzed how many times political women and men appeared in the Uruguayan media. In 2013, the year before the presidential elections, men were in 87% of the pieces. Of the total, 72% corresponded only to men, 15% to female and male politicians and 13% to women.

Raquel Martínez Gómez and Cecilia Lucas (2015) analyzed gender issues in the 2014 elections in Uruguay, for the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, concluding that “there are few media committed and proactive with the equality agenda and there are a majority who omit it or, in some specific practices, act as reproducers of inequalities” (Martínez Gómez & Lucas, 2015, p. 49). The use of stereotyped patterns, sexist prejudices, the invisibilization of women in places that were traditionally occupied by men and other narratives repeat and legitimize inequality between men and women.

Regarding the framing that the media do, in a study conducted by Panke and Amado (2012) on Latin American female presidents it is explained that women usually appear in the media associated with *female* stereotypes, related to domestic, aesthetic or personal issues. The same is stated by Martínez Gómez and Lucas (2015), who argue that the media “continue to

represent women –in most cases– as housewives, or as ‘object’ bodies, placed there to be looked at without other attributes than their bodily measures” (p. 9).

In the aforementioned study, Panke and Amado analyze the cases of presidents Cristina Fernández (Argentina, 2007-2015), Michelle Bachelet (Chile, 2006-2010 and 2014-2018) and Dilma Rousseff (Brazil, 2011-2016). Although they have very different profiles and trajectories, the authors conclude that the media continue to present them from the qualities traditionally assigned to women.

Chaher (2014), which makes a comparative regional study, shows that the image of women in the media is presented in an incompletely, biased, stereotyped and discriminatory way. Men “continue to hold political, economic and symbolic power” and “there is an insufficient and inadequate implementation of gender policies” to change this situation (p. 5). In turn, it is shown that women occupy few places among the media shareholders and that few countries have laws designed to change sexist content in the media. Rachel Moreno, in the chapter of Brazil, affirms that “very few times women appear in the media as specialists, but we are in advertising, to sell things, we are hinted as gifts” (Chaher, 2014, p. 6).

In the Uruguayan case, Lilian Celiberti (2014) explains that stereotyped representation affects society as a whole, both men and women, because it conveys a limited image that “classifies femininity or masculinity in rigid and obligatory patterns, the product of a misogynist culture with specific roles for men and women” (Chaher, 2014, p. 77). Celiberti states that the media are agents that build reality, so that what is transmitted in them has direct consequences on citizenship:

Symbolic violence –which occurs and is reproduced both in the media and in cultural patterns, education, habits, often in an almost imperceptible way– is a fundamental support of the other forms of gender violence. The media are increasingly important in the construction of the social imaginary and are one of the main agents for the transmission of cultural patterns (Chaher, 2014, p. 77).

Based on this theoretical vision, we propose an analysis of the reality in the Uruguayan media system.

METHODOLOGY

In this research we used the content analysis method, which combines qualitative and quantitative tools

according to the variables to be studied, visualizing which are the patterns of media framing on female senators. By quantitatively measuring the level of appearance of the female senators and the male senators, we can determine their invisibilization. By analyzing the content qualitatively, we can describe the reproduction of the traditional gender role in the contents of the analyzed media.

As Sautu, Boniolo, Dalle and Elbert (2005) explain, this method makes it possible to transform the texts contained in newspapers, radio or television programs into analysis units, to “assign a value or category to each of these units, in each dimension or aspect of the material that the variables role play” (p. 59).

We analyzed the media coverage of political actors in Uruguay between January 1 and June 30, 2017, semester in which the international strike of women and the massive demonstration “8M”, on March 8, occurred. It is estimated that 300,000 people (almost 10% of the Uruguayan population) met on Avenida 18 de Julio to demand gender equality and a stop to violence against women. The event represented a wake-up call by public opinion, as this number of people did not meet in a demonstration since 2004, the year in which the *Frente Amplio* (current political party in power) came to the government for the first time.

We decided to focus the sample towards the acting female and male senators (without considering other political agents) because they have greater relevance in the political system (Garcé & Yaffé, 2005), are usually recognized by the citizens and have more presence in the media. The members of the Senate acting between January and June 2017 were the following:

The units of analysis proposed are:

1. Segments¹ of television news.
2. Segments of journalistic radio programs.
3. News pieces in national newspapers.

Table 2 shows the number of segments of the three types of media analyzed in the sample.

The Uruguayan media system is characterized by an audiovisual distribution among community media, the commercial sector and the public sector, as defined by recent legislation: the Law on Audiovisual Communication Services (Law 19,307) and the Law on Community Broadcasting (Law 18,232). However, in general, the audience has a prominence of the

commercial private sector that covers most of the territory and audience (Ponce, 2015).

We decided to use as a base the methodology proposed in *Mirando con lentes de género la cobertura electoral. Manual de Monitoreo de Medios* (Llanos & Nina, 2011), published by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA Internacional) and UN Women. We decided on this mechanism after a meeting with representatives of six Latin American institutions with experience in media monitoring. The tools it provides are useful for analyzing the subject and allow a successful comparison with previous studies that have used the same methodology. We also analyzed variables that are not contemplated in this publication but were necessary to meet the research objectives, which are specified below.

As for the media to be analyzed, the mentioned methodology recommends choosing a representative sample of newspapers, television channels and radio stations that are media: 1) of national reach and open signal, 2) that record the highest levels of audience or readership, 3) representing a plurality of ideological tendencies, and 4) private and public. Following these guidelines, the news of the main television channels (4, 5, 10 and 12), the newspapers and weekly newspapers with the highest circulation (*El País*, *El Observador*, *La Diaria*, *La República*, *Brecha* and *Búsqueda*²) and the radio programs *Informativo Carve*, *Informativo Montecarlo*, *En Perspectiva*, *Informativo Sarandí* and *Radio Uruguay* were analyzed.

The sample includes all segments and news pieces in which the male and female members of the Senate were mentioned between January 1 and June 30, 2017, which can be tracked thanks to the multimedia survey platform MiPaís.uy. This company constantly monitors, archives and classifies the written press, digital press, radio, open television and cable television of Uruguay, and allows the search of content using pre-established keywords and filters. Thus, the name of each female senator and male senator was searched and all the television segments, radio segments and written news pieces in which they appeared in the period analyzed were gathered.

Based on this tool, we made a quantitative count of the mentions of male senators and female senators to meet the first objective of the investigation (compare the place given to female senators and male senators in the media's information products in Uruguay in the first half of 2017). We also conducted a qualitative analysis of each segment and written news piece in

| Political party | Male senators | Female senators |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Frente Amplio (FA)</i> | Daniel Garín; Enrique Pintado; José Mujica; Leonardo De León; Marcos Carámbula; Marcos Otheguy; Rafael Michelini; Raúl Sendic; Rubén Martínez Huelmo (N=9) | Constanza Moreira; Daisy Tourné; Daniela Payssé; Ivonne Passada; Lucía Topolansky; Mónica Xavier; Patricia Ayala (N=7) |
| <i>Partido Nacional (PN)</i> | Álvaro Delgado; Guillermo Besozzi; Carlos Daniel Camy; Javier García; Jorge Larrañaga; José Carlos Cardoso; Luis Alberto Heber; Luis Lacalle Pou (N=8) | María Carol Aviaga; Verónica Alonso (N=2) |
| <i>Partido Colorado (PC)</i> | Daniel Bianchi; Germán Coutinho; José Amorín; Pedro Bordaberry (N=4) | (N=0) |
| <i>Partido Independiente (PI)</i> | Pablo Mieres (N=1) | (N=0) |

Table 1. Description of senators observed during the first half of 2017 according to political party

Source: Own elaboration.

| Type of media | Number of segments analyzed |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Radio | 261 |
| Newspapers | 4,716 |
| Television | 323 |

Table 2. Segments of the analysis units

Source: Own elaboration.

which the female senators were mentioned, granting special attention to the issues with which women are associated, the image given about them, if there are gender stereotypes or not and the role they play in the news pieces. This allowed us to fulfill the second objective of analyzing the framing that was done on the female senators in the press, radio and television in Uruguay in the first half of 2017.

The following variables were considered for the analysis, described in the methodology of IDEA International and UN Women:

- Type of medium: radio, press or television.
- Daily/program.
- Location: page of the newspaper in which the news piece appears.
- Dimension: number of seconds that refer to the female/male senator on radio and television. The external methodology also suggests measuring the square centimeters occupied by the news pieces in the newspapers, but we decided to eliminate this

option since the material was accessed through its web form.

- Main source of the news, gender and political party. We made a distinction between Executive Power (President, vice-president and female/male ministers), Legislative Power (female/male parliamentarians), political organizations (leaders and spokesmen/spokeswomen of political parties and movements), churches, civil society, the media itself and others.
- Main actor (female/male), its gender and political party. It is the person that is discussed in the news piece, in case the source is talking about another and not about itself. In the news pieces in which there is no defined female/male actor, the source and the female/male actor coincide.

In addition, we added some variables that allowed to develop the second research objective with greater precision:

- Female/male senator named.

- Role of the female/male senator named: protagonist (is the main person in the news piece), secondary (appears as second source or actor) or mention (only his/her name appears, without any performance or voice).
- Whether or not the name of the female/male senator appears in the headline of the news piece.
- Subject of the news piece. Although the methodology of IDEA Internacional and UN Women poses a division only between programmatic and non-programmatic information, for this research the news pieces were grouped into 15 topics to develop a more specific analysis: 1) accusations or complaints, 2) opinions on other political agents, on government or on political parties, 3) civil society, 4) gender equality, 5) economy, employment, investment and infrastructure, 6) education, 7) health, 8) security, defense and internal order, 9) multiculturalism, 10) development and environment, 11) social policies and the fight against poverty, 12) international relations, 13) legislative changes, 14) dictatorship in Uruguay, and 15) others. The first three are grouped into programmatic information and the others into non-programmatic.

The coding was conducted by the authors during the second half of 2017, given that a pre-existing methodology was used, and had a total of 6,122 segments of radio, press and television news pieces. The reliability calculation between encoders (Krippendorff's Alpha) was 0.89 (on a scale of 0 to 1, which gives reliability to the index that exceeds 0.8).

Once this stage was completed, the results of the first half of 2017 were compared with the secondary data available from media coverage in 2004, 2009 and 2014 to meet the third research objective.

RESULTS

In the analyzed period there were nine female senators and 22 male ones, so women occupied 29% of the Senate and men 71%. The media coverage of the female senators in the media analyzed was even lower than the percentage they occupied in the Chamber: if we count the times that each male senator and each female senator was mentioned between January 1 and June 30, 2017, in the sample media, we can see that

women were named 1,017 times and men 4,283. The female senators only occupied 19.19% of the news pieces, while the male senators monopolized 81.81%.

When analyzing by type of medium, women occupied a less relevant role in the press, radio and television, as indicated in table 1.

When the data were disaggregated by political party, we found differences within each one. The *Frente Amplio* occupied 58.61% of the total news pieces (42.49% men and 16.12% women), the *Partido Nacional*, 23.48% (20.04% men and 3.44% women) the *Partido Colorado*, 12.11% and the *Partido Independiente*, 5.80%.

The seven female senators of *Frente Amplio* had 858 mentions in segment and news pieces, while the nine male senators had 2,262. The two female senators of the *Partido Nacional* (whites) had 183 and the seven male senators, 1,067. The five male senators of the *Partido Colorado* appeared in 645 notes and that of the *Partido Independiente* in 309.

This implies that the male senators of *Frente Amplio* were named more than 2.6 times more than women in the same sector. In the media, the FA women appeared in 27.5% of the mentions of senators of the party, although they represented 44% of the bench. The male senators of the *Partido Nacional* were named 5.8 times more than the female senators of the same party. Here, women represented 22.2% of the party's seats, but they appeared in 14.64% of the news pieces. In turn, men occupied 77.8%, but appeared in 85.36% of the news pieces.

It is evident that also within each party the media give more importance to men than to women, which is especially visible among the female senators and the male senators of the *Frente Amplio*. Males occupy the highest ranks when it comes to news pieces.

The most mentioned male, José Mujica (992) –who, although a former president, was then a senator– was mentioned almost four times more than the most mentioned woman, Lucía Topolansky. The second man, Raúl Sendic –who was then the vice president of the Republic and in Uruguay is also considered a senator member of the Legislative Power– was mentioned almost three times more than Topolansky. It is significant that the first five places are occupied by men and, of the last six places, four are women. Carol Aviaga, the woman with the least informative mentions, was named proportionally 70 times less than the first on the list.

It is necessary to clarify that Pedro Bordaberry, Jorge Larrañaga and Luis Lacalle Pou were candidates for the Presidency of the Republic in the 2014 elections.

| | Radio | Television | Press |
|---|-------|------------|-------|
| Mentions to female senators as protagonists of the news or source of information. | 911 | 50 | 56 |
| Mentions to male senators as protagonists of the news or source of information. | 3,805 | 273 | 205 |

Table 3. Media coverage of male and female senators by type of media (in total numbers)

Source: Own elaboration.

| | Representation in the Senate | Mentions in the media |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Total female senators | 29.03 | 19.19 |
| Total male senators | 70.97 | 80.81 |
| FA female senators | 22.58 | 16.12 |
| FA male senators | 29.03 | 42.49 |
| PN female senators | 6.45 | 3.44 |
| PN male senators | 22.58 | 20.04 |
| PC male senators | 16.13 | 12.11 |
| PI male senators | 3.23 | 5.8 |

Table 4. Representation of women and men in the Senate and in the media in the first half of 2017

Source: Own elaboration.

| Party | Representation within the party | Mentions in media per party |
|-------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| FA | Female senators | 44 % |
| | Male senators | 56 % |
| PN | Female senators | 22.2 % |
| | Male senators | 77.8 % |

Table 5. Representation of women and men within each political party in the Senate and in the media

Source: Own elaboration.

IMPORTANCE GIVEN WITHIN THE NEWS PIECE TO MEN AND WOMEN

The number of television and radio segments and written news pieces of men and women is relevant at the research level, but it is also necessary to analyze the importance given to female senators and male senators in each news piece. For this, we studied specific variables for each medium: if the name of the person

appears in the headline of the news or not (press), the location of the news piece (press), who are the male and female protagonists of the news piece and what role has the female senator mentioned in news piece. For the first two, we made a comparative analysis between the mentions of women and men. For the last two, whose analysis required the reading, viewing or exhaustive listening of each news piece, the analysis

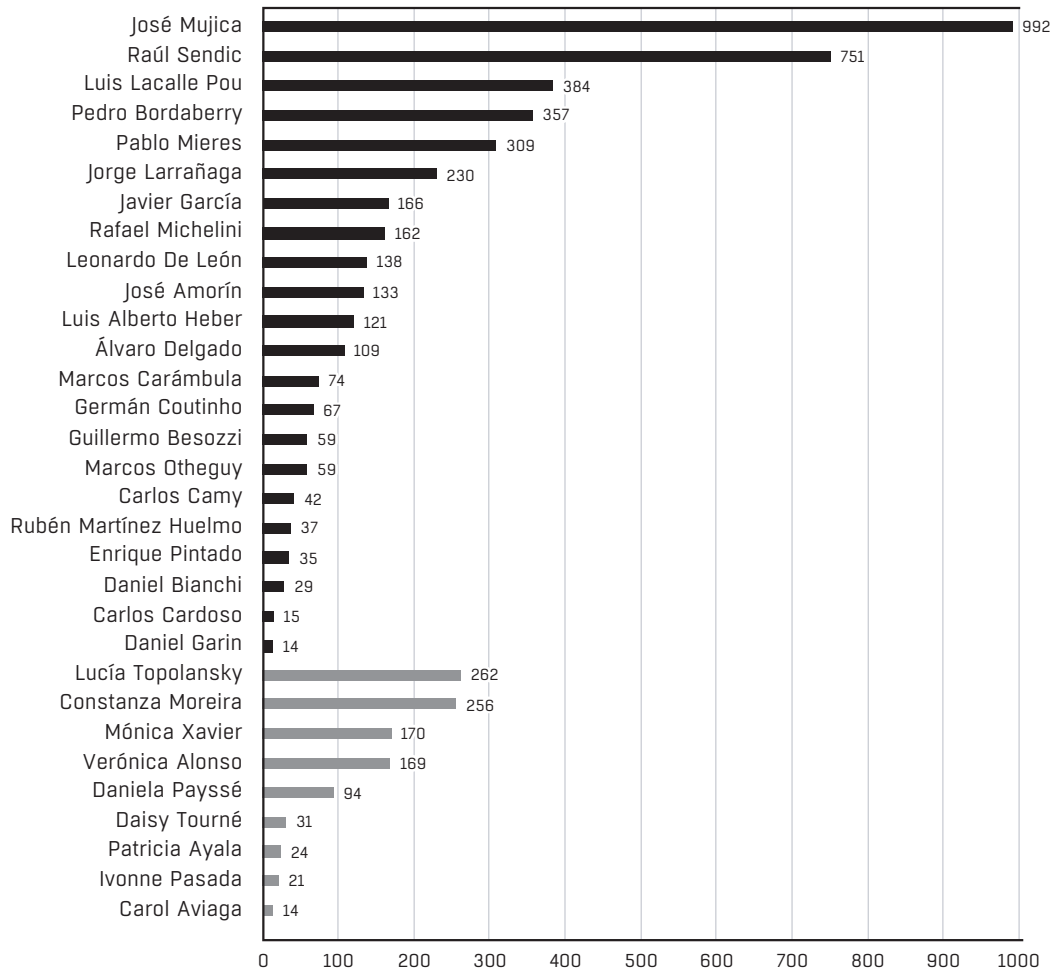


Figure 1. Mention of each male/female senator in the media analyzed

Source: Own elaboration.

only contemplated the informative mentions of the female senators and we did not have access to the *Brecha* and the *Búsqueda* material.

NAME IN THE NEWS HEADLINE

The male and female representatives of the Senate were mentioned in the headlines of the news pieces 393 times. Of these, the women were mentioned only in 13.78% of the cases.

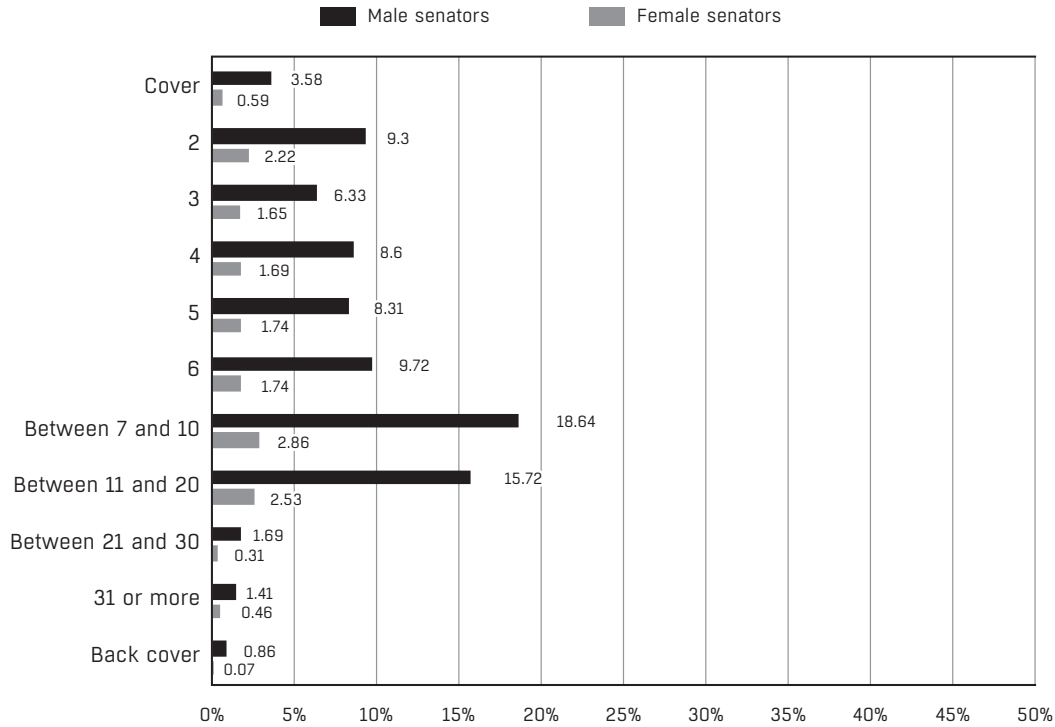
Within all the segments and news pieces in which the female senators were mentioned, their name appeared in the headline 9.52% of the time. However, of all the mentions of male senators, their names were in the headline 14.25% of the time.

Considering that the headlines are more read than all the news, this variable also demonstrates that the media analyzed gave greater importance to male than female senators. A person who only looks at the headlines of the news will read the names of male senators more than six times more than those of women.

LOCATION OF THE NEWS PIECES IN WRITTEN PRESS

Of the total news pieces, female senators had 911 mentions and male senators 3,805.

Regarding the appearance on the front page, 3.74% of the mentions of women appeared in them, while men appeared 4.26% of the times. However, 14.01%



Graph 2. Mentions according to female/male senator by page number (in %) in written press

Source: Own elaboration.

of the mentions to female senators were on the second page, while 11.05% of those of male senators appeared in that page. In both cases, most of the mentions were between page 7 and 10, and then between 11 and 20.

If we analyze the numbers in comparison to the total, we can see that in 0.59% of all mentions of female senators and male senators there was a woman on the cover, while in 3.58% of cases there was the name of a male senator. As seen in figure 2, men appeared to a greater extent on all pages.

As with headlines, the study of this variable demonstrates that the media decided to give less space to women politicians than to men. People who only looks at the front pages of the newspapers will see the names of the male senators six times more than those of the female senators, despite the fact that in the House the proportion is 2.4.

NEWS PROTAGONISTS

The male/female protagonists of the news are those people who are talked about (female/male actors) or who appear as main sources of information. This variable

was analyzed to study the penetration that men had in women’s news.

Of the 1,017 mentions of the female senators in the written press, radio and television, we analyzed 878, since the content of *Brecha* and *Búsqueda* were not available with our research tools.

If the sources are separated by gender, it is found that in most of the mentions of the female senators the main source was a man (34.18%). Only in 24.03% the main source was a woman, while in 28.36% sources of both genders were cited. In the remaining 13.43%, the gender of the source was not specified and in no case did sources of other genders appear. In other words, in 62.54% of the media coverage provided to the female senators there was at least one man among the main sources.

In other words, most of the times a female senator was mentioned in a news piece it was accompanied by a man. Of the small number of segments and news pieces in which female senators were mentioned, only a quarter of the time the main source was a woman, so it becomes clear again that

the importance given to political women in the media is even smaller than it seemed with the results of the first variables analyzed. Considering the framing mechanisms used by the media to influence public opinion, and as Martínez Gómez and Lucas (2015) pointed out, when analyzing who speaks in the media there is a preponderance of the masculine (p. 79).

As for the male/female actors of the news (the main person mentioned in the news piece), 56.27% came from the Legislative Branch, 18.06% from other spaces, 16.57% from the Executive Branch, 6.42% of political organizations, 1.94% of media, 0.45% of churches, and 0.3% of civil society. Separating by gender, we can see that almost half of the segments and news pieces that mentioned the female senators had a man as an actor (44.18% of the cases) and slightly less than a third had actors of both genders (31.94%). Only 21.19% of the mentions had a woman as an actor. The remaining 2.69% did not specify and there were no cases of a protagonist of another gender. In other words, 76.12% of the mentions of the female senators had men among the main actors.

In short, only a fifth of the news in which the female senators were mentioned had a woman as the main actor and only a quarter as the main source.

ROLE IN THE NEWS: PROTAGONIST, SECONDARY OR MENTION

In addition to studying who the main sources and actors were, in each segment and news piece we analyzed what role the female senator played. We divided the categories in: leading role (source or main actor), secondary (used to provide extra information) and mention (when only her name appears, without any other information). Only in 226 of the 878 segments and news pieces studied did the female senators had a leading role (25.8%), in 430 they had a secondary role (48.97%) and in 222 they were barely mentioned (25.34%).

As noted in the previous section, these numbers show that female senators are rarely considered as protagonists of the political scene, which puts them in a position of inferiority regarding men.

ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEWS OF FEMALE SENATORS

In this section we studied the main topic of the informative news pieces that mentioned female senators. The most repeated was that of opinions on the government (20.30%); then, gender equality (14.03%); accusations about other politicians

(13.58%); economy, employment, investment and infrastructure (13.58%); others (11.94%); laws (8.06%); security (5.97%); international relations (3.88%); health (2.99%); education (2.39%); development and environment (1.49%); dictatorship in Uruguay (1.49%); multiculturalism (0.15%), and social policies and the fight against poverty (0.15%). Following the methodology of IDEA Internacional and UN Women, 66.12% of the mentions were on pragmatic issues and 33.88%, non-pragmatic.

Most of the news pieces are related with the position of the female senators as politicians: 33.88% have to do with opinions about the government or other political agents and 8.06% with the discussion about laws that are being treated in Parliament. There are no substantial differences in socio-cultural issues (gender equality, health, education, environment, multiculturalism and social policies) or geopolitical and economic issues (economics, security and international relations): they correspond to 21.2% and 23.43% of the news pieces, respectively.

However, the picture changes completely when the subject variables issue, *actors' gender* and *source gender* are crossed.

If we analyze the cases in which the news pieces corresponded to socio-cultural issues, it turns out that almost in half of them the actors were a woman (45.77%). Only 19.72% of this news had as an actor a man and 31.69%, senators of both genders. The remaining 2.82% did not specify the gender.

The opposite happens in the economic and geostrategic news pieces: the vast majority of the time (58.60%) the actor was a male, while only 15.92% was a woman and 22.29%, of senators of both genders.

It is also significant that in more than half of the news about government opinions, accusations against other political agents and discussions about laws to vote in Parliament, the main actor was a male (54.80%). Only in 14.23% of cases, one seventh, the actor was female. The media gave more importance to men in terms of party policy issues, which could translate into more legitimacy before public opinion when it comes to political office. In the same sense, if we focus on all the news pieces that had a woman as the main actor, it turns out that in almost half of the cases (45.77%) she was associated with a socio-cultural issue and in less of a fifth (17.61%), to economic and geostrategic issues.

However, when analyzing the news pieces that had a man as an actor, we find that half were related to political opinions (52.03%), a third with economic

and geostrategic issues (31.08%) and barely one tenth with sociocultural issues (9.46%).

The same happens when the issue is analyzed according to the source: in the press news pieces of sociocultural issues, 39.44% of the time the main source was a woman, 26.76% senators of both sexes, 23.94% the source was male and in the remaining 9.86% it was not specified.

Once more, in the case of economic and geostrategic issues, almost 40% had a man as a source, while a fourth consulted a woman (24.84%) and a fourth consulted sources of both genders (26.11%).

As for the news pieces on political opinions, most of the time the source was a man (43.42%). In less than a fifth of the cases the source was female (18.51%), 23.49% were people of both genders and 14.59% did not specify it.

Likewise, of all the news pieces in which the main source was a woman, 34.78% corresponded to socio-cultural issues, 24.22% to economic and geostrategic issues, 32.30% to political opinions and 8.70% to other issues. On the other hand, of all the news pieces in which the main source was a man, socio-cultural issues only occupied 14.85%. Economic and geostrategic issues occupied 25.76% and more than half of the news was devoted to issues related to government or other political agents.

In summary, most of the news pieces that featured a woman were associated with socio-cultural issues (gender equality, social policies, health, education, development, multiculturalism, environment) and most of the news pieces with a male protagonist were linked to issues of party politics (opinions about the government, accusations about other political agents, discussions to vote laws in Parliament). In turn, men monopolized most of the news related to economic and geostrategic issues (economy, infrastructure, security, international relations).

COMPARISON WITH THE 2004, 2009 AND 2014 MONITORING

The last part of the analysis is dedicated to comparing the results obtained with the secondary data available from previous research. We used the data from the media monitoring conducted by the Institute of Political Science of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Universidad de la República (ICP-FCS-UDELAR) along with *CNS Mujeres por Democracia, Equidad y Ciudadanía* on the coverage prior to the 2004 presidential elections and *Cotidiano Mujer* on those of 2009 and 2014.

The last monitoring was based directly on the methodology of IDEA Internacional and UN Women, and the other two used the same tools, so their results are comparable to each other and to the research proposed here. However, the three are framed in shorter periods and in election campaign times, and the samples contemplate the news that referred to all political figures, not just female senators and male senators. In any case, it is possible to compare the data obtained regarding two central questions: What is the weight of female political figures with respect to male political figures in media coverage and how do they appear? What topics do the media cover? (Johnson & Pérez, 2010, p. 112).

The media coverage of women in the media was significantly lower than that of men in all periods analyzed. The coverage on female/male candidates for the Senate in the 2014 elections was the one that presented the smallest inequality gap, but no other exceeded 20% of the news pieces. There has been a growing but slow trend in the space provided to female politicians (3.8% in 2004; 4.9% in 2009; 7.7% in 2014), still far from the real proportion of policies and still farther from parity.

CONCLUSIONS

This study describes gender differences in coverage and treatment of actors in the Senate. The mass media coverage in Uruguay on women senators is scarce and is framed in traditional gender roles. If the evolution from the year 2004 to the year 2017 is analyzed (date of the study), we can see how a 3.8% coverage of women politicians in the Senate in 2004 has grown to 19.1% in the year 2017.

As expected, some figures stood out more than others. However, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that the five people with the most mentions in the period were men and, of the last six places, four were women. In turn, the most mentioned man had almost four times more mentions than the most mentioned woman. It should be noted that the most mentioned political men were a former president, who then held the vice presidency (Raúl Sendic), and three former presidential candidates. This could contradict the fact that gender is the relevant thing to rank media appearances, when it would be a matter of political trajectory. However, political trajectories precisely account, in this case, for levels of relegation of women against men both in representation in political power, and in that of the media

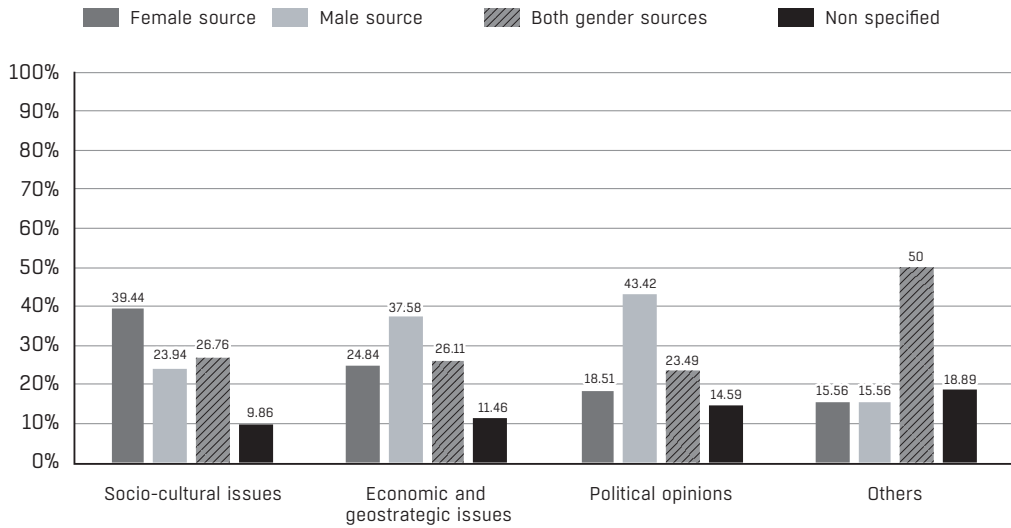


Figure 3. Topic of the news piece according to the gender of its main source

Source: Own elaboration.

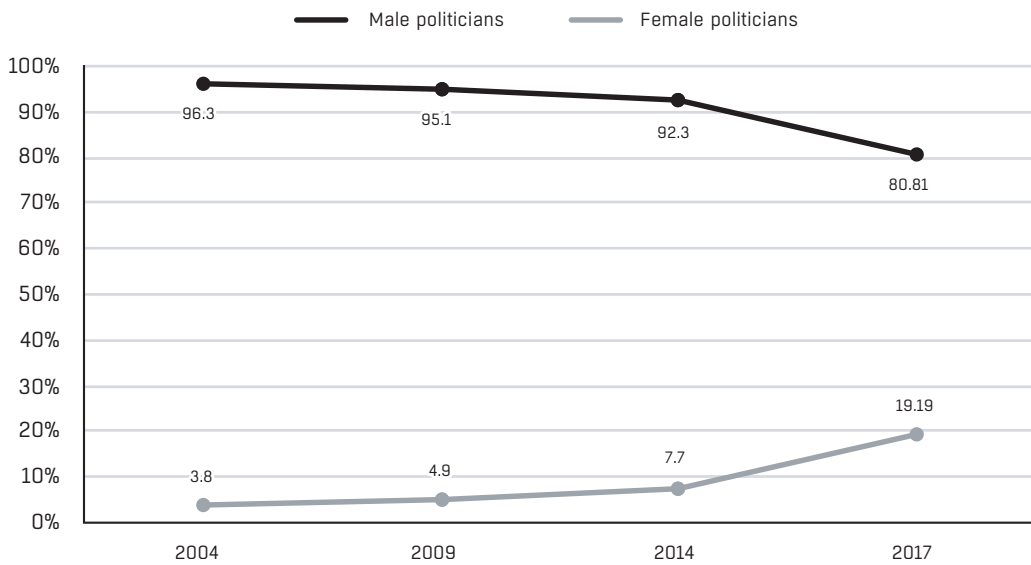


Figure 4. Comparison over time of media coverage on political figures 2004-2017 regarding gender

Source: Own elaboration with data from the studies of Johnson (2005), Johnson and Pérez (2010) and Martínez and Lucas (2015).

analyzed, as a former presidential candidate, Constanza Moreira, had also less coverage than male politicians.

Regarding the coverage by type of media, it was the radio that gave the most coverage to women compared to men (24% women, 76% men), compared to television (18.3% women, 81.7% men) and the written press

(27.3% women, 72.7% men). In turn, it was on the radio where women had a greater role in the news framing, being protagonists and main sources of news, rather than in the written press and on television. This is mostly because they were radio interviews where women were protagonists, showing that radio is a space

that allows more time and extension in terms of content, compared to television and written press (Radakovich, Escuder, Morales, & Ponce, 2013).

DISCUSSION

The content analysis shows that men occupy a larger and more important space in the Uruguayan media agenda. Persistently, the media coverage that female senators receive is proportionally less than the space they actually occupy in the Senate. This raises the relevance of the media framing of women in the Legislative Power, both in the written press and on radio and television.

The news frames, as stated by Lucas and Gómez (2015), privilege the role of men dealing with political issues widely, more than women. In the period analyzed, female senators did not occupy even a fifth of the total coverage on male senators and female senators, despite representing a third of the House. It means there is a dynamic of double exclusion: they are underrepresented in the Legislative Power and more invisible in traditional media coverage.

Following what was stated by the authors who have previously studied this subject (Chaher, Martínez Gómez and Lucas, Johnson, Panke and Amado), once again the invisibility of women is seen in places traditionally occupied by men.

This research is of great relevance due to the current situation and the actual role that women play in political systems, as well as in the coverage of the media. Female senators occupy an unequal space in the media and the question that arises for reference research in this field is whether this is a cause or a consequence.

In this regard, this work does not solve the main issue: Why does this situation occur? The literature has advanced extensively on the coverage of political women in the media in Latin America (Panke, 2014; Amado, 2015, etc.), so this study only provides information regarding the Uruguayan case, which could be added to other exercises by putting emphasis on the Legislative Power in terms of invisibility and reproduction of traditional gender roles. The image generated and reproduced in the media about political women, associated with behaviors and ways of thinking traditionally imposed on women, accounts for a symbolic violence that forms a basis for other forms of gender violence. The legitimacy of inequalities in the treatment of men and women is reinforced in the social imaginary through the reproduction of gender roles, socially constructed and naturalized in the media narrative forms.

Problematizing the scope and results of this research, it is worth asking whether is media inequality a cause or a consequence in terms of gender inequality? The answer to this question has as many alternatives as theoretical approaches.

In turn, this study has certain limitations, such as the extension of the sample that only integrates the female senators and that should integrate other women legislators and in comparison with other areas of government: national government, departmental government, among others. These limitations constitute an opportunity to project the scope of this research towards other political women, as well as to deepen into other views compared with a similar methodology with other political systems in the world.

NOTES

1. Segments refers to the parts of television and radio programs that constitute a unit of thematic sense. Only the pieces in which the searched keyword was named were studied, without analyzing the entire program.

2. The weekly newspapers Brecha and Búsqueda are included only in the quantitative analysis, because the information they provide to the MiPaís platform is limited.

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