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MARKETS, REGIONS AND JOURNALISTIC QUALITY:

evaluation of the performance of print and digital media in Mexico during an electoral process



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ABSTRACT – The poor performance of the Mexican press is a frequent concern in the literature. However, this focus is on the capital, Mexico City. Thus, we comparatively measure performance between regions and physical and digital media, based on criteria of bias and mediated deliberation. We analyzed 281 news articles from 117 newspapers in 28 states about the 2021 federal elections. We found that performance is better in robust markets and worse in smaller ones, and it is more homogeneous in print media than in digital media. The latter seems to be independent of market factors, which could indicate clientelist relationships linked to the economic vulnerability of smaller markets. **Key words:** Digital journalism. Legacy media. Media performance. Regional press. Clientelism.

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**MERCADOS, REGIÕES E QUALIDADE JORNALÍSTICA:
avaliação do desempenho de veículos impressos e digitais no
México durante um processo eleitoral**

RESUMO – A preocupação com o desempenho deficiente da imprensa mexicana é um tema recorrente na literatura, mas tem se concentrado principalmente nos veículos impressos da Cidade do México. Assim, medimos comparativamente o desempenho entre regiões e suportes físicos e digitais, com base em critérios de viés e mediação deliberada. Analisamos 281 notícias de 117 jornais em 28 estados sobre as eleições federais de 2021. Descobrimos que o desempenho é melhor nos mercados robustos e pior nos pequenos, sendo mais homogêneo na imprensa impressa do que na digital. Esta última parece ser independente de fatores de mercado, o que poderia indicar relações clientelistas ligadas à vulnerabilidade econômica dos mercados pequenos.

Palavras-chave: Mídia digital. Imprensa tradicional. Desempenho de mídia. Imprensa regional. Patrocínio.

**MERCADOS, REGIONES Y CALIDAD PERIODÍSTICA:
evaluación del desempeño de medios impresos y digitales en
México durante un proceso electoral**

RESUMEN – La preocupación por el deficiente desempeño de la prensa en México ha sido un tema recurrente en la literatura, pero se ha centrado principalmente en los medios impresos de la Ciudad de México. Así, este estudio presenta un análisis comparativo del desempeño de los medios impresos y digitales, en diversas regiones y formatos, considerando sesgo partidista y deliberación mediada. Se examinaron 281 noticias de las elecciones federales de 2021 de 117 periódicos en 28 estados. Los resultados indican un mejor desempeño en mercados más grandes y una calidad de información más homogénea en medios impresos que digitales. Se sugiere la posibilidad de relaciones clientelares en medios digitales de mercados más pequeños, con una mayor vulnerabilidad económica.

Key words: Prensa digital. Prensa tradicional. Desempeño de medios. Prensa regional. Clientelismo.

1 Introduction

Like democracy itself, the performance of the press in covering elections is a subject of permanent scrutiny. Regarding the role of the informed citizen, the press has the function of providing retrospective knowledge – on how previous governments performed – and prospective knowledge – on what the political options are and what they offer – so that citizens can achieve an “enlightened understanding” that allows them to make a reasoned and conscious vote (Dahl, 2000). In Mexico, however, circumstances around the performance of the press involve at least four intertwining problems. First, there is a low level of journalistic professionalization concerning the quality

of the information produced, which translates into a lack of factual reporting, contextualization, and story follow-up (González, 2016; Reyna, 2014). Second, the old clientelistic relationships between governments, the main advertisers, and media owners, prevail, and these subordinate the editorial lines of publications to the wants of the bosses in power (Espino, 2016; Salazar, 2019). Third, the predominant form of journalism is passive, based on the reproduction of official bulletins and statements by officials, and focusing on political actors to the detriment of civil society, with little agency on the part of journalists in the configuration of the agenda or the making of the pieces (de León, 2012; Espino & Mendoza, 2015). Fourth, there is a marked partisan bias in the coverage of elections, which favors above all the parties in power (Andrade, 2012; Echeverría, 2017; Espino, 2016; Salazar, 2018a). These structural aspects provide the prior conditions for poor coverage in terms of information quality and require constant observation.

This article assesses the performance of the press in the coverage that media from different states of the country gave to the 2021 federal legislative elections in Mexico. Although such an exercise has been carried out to a limited extent in other works (González & Echeverría, 2017; Echeverría et al., 2021), we recognized two circumstances that had previously been ignored: first, that currently a good part of journalistic production and news consumption by Mexican audiences takes place on digital media (Gutiérrez-Rentería, 2022), which have been given very little attention by empirical research. Second, there is a variation in the performance of the media that depends on the context of where they are located, as the political and economic conditions of the place constrain their operation (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Although several works link local conditions with press performance (Andrade del Cid & Martínez Armengol, 2013; Larrosa-Fuentes & Paláu Cardona, 2013; Ojeda et al., 2018), we are not aware of any studies that compare performances based on distinct local markets within the country, that would then be able to establish certain patterns that are shared between several regions.

Our own description is made in terms of journalistic markets, that is, aggregations of states of the country whose market characteristics translate into a distinctive performance compared to others, that is susceptible to comparison. A comparative description is proposed between the performance of the traditional and the

digital press. The goal is to observe in which type of journalism, in terms of its physical support and business model, are there more performance problems.

We carry out our evaluation within the framework of certain deontological values of the functioning of journalism, and in particular the most relevant in the expectations of the Mexican State regarding journalism, which are expressed in various constitutional and regulatory provisions. However, we expanded these observation criteria towards the theoretical vein approach of mediated deliberation, as a second generation of normative evaluation, more demanding for the media.

For its part, our study scenario, the 2021 federal elections¹, covers elections that are considered second-order, since voters pay less attention to them than to the first-order presidential elections, and use them above all to express dissatisfaction with the government or to send a message to change the direction of their policies (O'Malley et al., 2013). This diminished public attention translates into less newsworthiness and, therefore, into little academic study, as confirmed by the meager works on the matter, whether impressionistic (Milstem, 2004) or systematic (González & Echeverría, 2017).

The innovative elements mentioned and the previous specifications will allow a nuanced portrait of the performance of the Mexican press concerning the proposed object of study and more complete knowledge of this important input into democracy.

2 Theoretical framework. Research object and normative perspective of analysis

Our theoretical framework is divided into three sections that shelter and justify the empirical research: the regional press as a problem for the Mexican case, the digitalization of the press as a scenario that influences media performance, and mediated deliberation as the normative lens through which both phenomena are observed.

2.1 Regionalization as a problem

One of the political and cultural features that have historically marked Mexico is the concentration and centralization of power (Sánchez Ruiz, 1987). A clear example of this is seen in the study of the media in the country since a large number of academic works are based on observing the “national” or “national circulation” written press, such as *Reforma*, *La Jornada*, *El Universal*, among others (see, as an example: García & Tejero, 2017; Martín, 2010; Rodelo & Muñiz, 2017). However, as several researchers have pointed out, these newspapers do not have national news coverage, nor a circulation that covers the entire national territory (García Rubio, 2013; Trejo Delarbre, 1995). These media are, at best, newspapers published in the country’s capital, which deal with issues of the federal government and some states, and that circulate in some Mexican cities.

Although research on the media in Mexico is very valuable, the concentration of investigative focus on newspapers in the capital has generated an incomplete and, in some cases, distorted image of the performance of the media in the country. In logical terms, this type of approach has fallen into an error called the fallacy of composition. This error occurs when a whole, that is, a composition, is defined from one of its sections or parts (Hanssen, 2020). In this case, it is judged that what is published in the newspapers based in Mexico City is representative of the entire country.

In recent times this deficiency in research on political communication, journalism, and media in Mexico has started to be remedied. This can be observed particularly in the field of journalism, where studies have been carried out on local and regional media and industries. In addition, some studies have compared the performance of newspapers in different states of the country (De León-Vázquez & García-Macías, 2022; Salazar, 2018b). Likewise, a group of researchers has worked, in recent years, on the thesis of an “asynchronous modernization” of the press, which explains that processes such as journalistic professionalization, as well as the deontological tenets behind it, have occurred in a differentiated way in the different cities and states of Mexico (González & Echeverría, 2017, 2018; Reyna et al., 2020). Finally, other studies show that local news outlets have been part of clientelist processes of purchasing and selling official advertising (Maldonado Pérez, 2018; Salazar, 2018a), due, among other things, to the economic vulnerability of the local media (Larrosa-Fuentes, 2018).

An approach that investigates the states, regions, or the Mexican subnational order, has not been implemented very much in studies relating to the performance of the media in electoral periods. In this regard, we can report on works in which the performance of the media is observed during elections at the local level, and that point out a clear difference between their productions and that of the so-called “national” media: the former is closer to the journalism of the authoritarian period and the latter to a more liberal press (see, for example, Andrade del Cid & Martínez Armengol, 2013; Larrosa-Fuentes & Paláu Cardona, 2013; Ojeda et al., 2018). This differentiated and sometimes contrasting performance implies, on the one hand, that the journalism produced in the regions has conditions of production very different from those of the capital, and on the other, that the particularities of each region might also be shared between several of them. However, there are no works that have made a comparison between different territories of the nation, that would adequately clarify the regional regularities that produce these differentiated performances.

2.2 Printed newspapers and digital media as an object of study

As a political institution of democratic systems, the press operates through various industries, media, and material supports, such as printed newspapers, radio, television, and digital media. In general, when seeking to study the political dimension of the press, as an institution, it is common to select printed media as the object of study. This is due to several reasons, among others, the fact that newspapers are media that historically have had a greater number of journalists dedicated to covering the public life of a community; also because the pages of newspapers tend to be a space for communication between political elites; and, finally, because what is published in print tends to be replicated in media such as radio and television.

The previous arguments explain why the present research is focused on studying the performance of printed newspapers in Mexico. However, journalism about the public life of a community, especially political journalism, also develops in hybrid and convergent media systems (Chadwick, 2017; Jensen, 2010), which include traditional media such as radio and television, as well as those media

organizations that operate exclusively on the internet. Therefore, in this research, we seek to compare the coverage of printed newspapers with what is published in digital media.

Digital media began to develop in Mexico early in the 21st century. The first group of these media was made up of newspapers that decided to open a website where they began to publish the same information that they circulated in their printed versions. Afterwards, little by little, newspapers differentiated their printed and digital content, up until today, when, although similar in editorial terms, both versions tend to be very different. In parallel, completely digital journalistic media that did not have a printed counterpart began to be set up (Crovi Druetta et al., 2006).

The differences between these types of media are many and are not limited exclusively to the medium in which they publish their information. Digital media tend to have smaller newsrooms than print media. Print media base most of their profits on advertising sales, while digital media tend to have much more diversified strategies. The audience for print is limited to those who can obtain a physical copy, while the audience for digital is potentially as wide as the number of people connected to the Internet (Anderson et al., 2012). Despite these differences, few studies focus their attention on evaluating the media performance of the Mexican digital press (Reyna, 2021) and, according to the literature review, there is only one study in which the performance of native digital media during the 2018 electoral campaign is assessed; the results of this study indicate that these media did not produce content that promoted democratic values and mediated deliberation (Andrade del Cid & Contreras, 2020).

2.3 Deliberative democracy and mediated deliberation as normative sources of performance assessment

The evaluation of the performance of the press is a task that, in many cases, is based on a normative theory. In this, the argumentative logic presents, first of all, an ideal state of affairs, which, in this case, translates as the ideal performance that the press should show in an electoral process. Then, in a second moment, how the press behaved is evaluated through empirical data, and this is contrasted with the normative approach. The present article adopts a perspective that is based on deliberative democracy.

Deliberative democracy, also called republican, is closely linked to how communication structures political processes (Althaus, 2012, p. 105). The core axiom of this type of democracy, which is eminently normative, is the possibility for citizens to freely deliberate on their common problems and from this communicative exchange reach agreements and come to political decisions (Bohman, 2006, p. 177). As can be seen, a central element of deliberative democracy is in the communicative practices of citizens. Deliberation, then, is a form of dialogue in which two or more people discuss to reach an agreement on a particular issue or problem (Habermas, 2006, p. 413). These communicative exchanges are useful for two reasons. The first is that deliberation helps people to identify which problems affect their community. The second refers to the fact that deliberation serves to build solutions to these problems.

Now, the theory of republican democracy, as well as the public-political communication models of deliberation, is easily observable in small communities. But how can these theories be usefully applied to societies composed of millions of people with hybrid media systems (Chadwick, 2017), that are highly stratified and fragmented (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008), or in processes as complex as a federal electoral process? In this regard, the concept of mediated deliberation has been coined.

Mediated deliberation, then, is a set of communicative practices of deliberation between political elites, which are conveyed by the media (Gastil, 2008). Thus, citizens can observe the deliberations between politicians, journalists, lobbyists, intellectuals, and other public actors, through the press, and learn about the rules of operation of the political system, and its values, as well as the various existing positions on controversial issues. Thus, we think that one way to investigate the performance of the press is to observe the journalistic coverage of an electoral process, through the theoretical glasses of mediated deliberation.

For mediated deliberation to occur, deliberation practices between political elites must meet certain characteristics, which we use as observables in this research: 1) Civility: communicative exchanges must be carried out within the framework of respect between participants, 2) Proposals: in the deliberation, proposals must be submitted for the solution of collective problems or, in this case, for the elaboration of government plans, 3) Reason giving: the participants must commit to offering arguments and reasoning to

convince the other of their ideas, and 4) Dialogism: participants must commit to listening to others, rationally analyzing their arguments and being open to reaching consensus based on the best idea.

2.4 The proposition of this work

Based on what has been expounded in the previous sections, this article offers two contributions to the literature on political communication and journalism in Mexico. The first is to put forward a view that, while evading the fallacy of composition and allowing the study of the behavior of the national press from the different regions of the country, and not just the center, returns to the concerns that link the breadth of media markets with journalistic performance. The central assumption is that good performance, in the normative theoretical terms described, requires a moderately robust market; and conversely, poor performance is often due to weak journalism markets. In the Mexican case, the robustness of markets is profoundly uneven throughout the national territory, which is why regional observations are required.

The second contribution is an attempt to specify the problems of performance according to the material support of the publications, printed or digital, which also yield different production conditions, that in the Mexican case are more precarious in the digital. In addition to expanding and deepening the study of this problem, both components aim to highlight the importance of the material conditions of journalistic production for its performance.

We condense the previously described aspects into the following research questions:

P1. What are the performance differences in the different Mexican media markets, in terms of liberal performance criteria and mediated deliberation?

P2. What are the differences in performance according to the material support of the media, printed or digital, within the different markets explored and according to the liberal and mediated deliberation criteria?

3 Methodological framework

Since the work sought a broad exploration of the printed and digital press, two complementary sample designs were used. For the first, we sought to obtain samples from the thirty-two states of the country, selecting the two most important newspapers of each entity (the sampling of national newspapers was given a particular treatment, see above). To obtain the list of existing newspapers and from there the most relevant ones, we resorted to the database of the Worlds of Journalism Round 3 project², which classifies the local importance of newspapers based on a judge validity process, where journalists and local experts were consulted for this purpose (five for each state).

We then turned to the Press Reader database³, which compiles digitally displayed print versions of the most important national and local newspapers. If the two newspapers indicated as most relevant were not available in said database, we selected the next one on the list (only in the case of the state of Nayarit did we not have access to the publications). For the sample of so-called national newspapers, we included the newspapers *Reforma*, *El Universal*, *La Jornada*, *Milenio*, and *Excélsior*, due to their presence, prestige, and weight in public opinion (García & Tejero, 2017; Martín, 2010; Rodelo & Muñiz, 2017).

Regarding the digital press, the World of Journalism 3 database did not give relevance to local media, so we resorted to traffic criteria to prioritize them. To do this, we used the Amazon Alexa database⁴, which contains digital traffic metrics for each listed medium, from which we determined the two most relevant per state. Due to the fleeting nature of the content of the digital press, the extraction was carried out *ex-post* through the automated capture of the publications' front pages with the BlipApp software (at 8 AM during all the days of the campaign), to later extract the days of the sample and the corresponding sampling units. In total, 117 journalistic organizations were analyzed.

The sampling unit was the informative note, excluding the formats that correspond to opinion journalism (editorials, articles, cartoons), as these contemplate evaluation criteria that do not match those of this project. Once the sampling frame was integrated, we compiled the notes through a systematic random sampling that included 14 dates within the official campaign period (April 9, 11, 14, 16, 19, 24 and 6 May, April 4, 8, 12, 16, 22, 28 and 31 May), that demonstrated

a satisfactory distribution of them throughout the analyzed period. The final sample was made up of 281 notes, 97 printed (35%) and 184 digital (65%), that reported on the federal elections for the renewal of the Chamber of Deputies (Congress) in 2021.

The code book is based on previously developed works (Echeverría et al., 2021) that correspond to two normative bodies of performance evaluation, that of the liberal theory of journalism and that of mediated deliberation, as previously explained. From there, six performance criteria and eight variables were determined.

We were able to measure the criterion of impartiality, in terms of partisan equity both in the editorial treatment variable (1) (favorable, unfavorable, neutral) and the visibility variable (number of pieces about each candidate), as well as measuring the substantial information base criterion, expressed in the variables of plural thematization (3) and presence of public policy proposals (4). Regarding the values of mediated deliberation, we include the criteria reason-giving (5), expressed in a variable that indicates whether the candidates' positions are argued in the pieces; plurality of voices (6), evident in the diversity of the actors who feature in the pieces; civility (7), manifest in the absence of derogatory expressions, and dialogism (8), expressed in the presence of opposing positions within the message. Except for the variables of impartiality, plural thematization, and plurality of voices, the others are dichotomous in nature, and verify whether the condition is met or not.

The intercoder reliability tests carried out on 10% of the sample were satisfactory for this type of exercise (0.75, Cohen's Kappa). However, it is necessary to warn of a decrease in reliability in the variables related to mediated deliberation, such as civility (0.65), dialogism (0.65), and reason-giving (0.31), which must be refined in further research.

To observe performance differences between media markets, and within them differences between the traditional and the digital press, we followed the following procedure. First, based on the printed media reported in the Worlds of Journalism database, we divided the total number of newspapers in the country (N=395) into quintiles (N=79 each), which allowed us to recognize the states of the country that make up each quintile and identify them as markets with differentiated robustness. Thus, for example, Mexico City and the State of Mexico constitute a single market (quintile 1) with 67 newspapers in total, while the thirteen states of Campeche, Nuevo

León, Morelos, Chihuahua, Aguascalientes, Sinaloa, Baja California Sur, Durango, Michoacán, Nayarit, Colima, Zacatecas and Tlaxcala together publish 79 printed media (quintile 5) and are rather modest markets compared to the previous ones (the number of states in each quintile decreases, 7 in IV, 6 in III and 4 in II)⁵. It should be noted that we excluded digital press data from these calculations, given that we noticed distortions that could indicate artificial inflation of these media at the time of integration of the database (for example, the state of Tamaulipas alone had 87 digital news media). The data were subjected to simple statistical treatments of frequencies and percentages, as well as Chi-square tests to associate performance variables with market quintiles.

4 Results

4.1 General findings

Regarding the observation of performance by regional markets, the data present a differentiated behavior between the printed and digital press. The first presents a general pattern, under which the greater the robustness of the markets, the less coverage there was of the federal election. The first quintile (2 states) published only 5 articles, 5.2% of the sample, while the quintile 5, with the same number of newspapers (13 states, ranging from 3 to 9 newspapers each state) published 40.2% of the pieces. This trend has a descending pattern in the rest of the quintiles (II, 13.4%, III, 16.5%, IV, 24.7%). It is in small markets, with apparently limited newspapers, that more information about this election was published.

The digital press, on the other hand, has a slightly less differentiated behavior. Although quintiles I (10.3%) and II (14.7%) continue to pale in comparison to the rest, they do not show such marked disparities (III, 27.1%, IV, 24.5%, V, 28.8%).

4.2 Covered actors and sources

Regarding performance indicators, the comparison between the quintiles of printed and digital media is difficult due to the low frequency of quintile I, with only 5 pieces, which is why the analysis will be carried out on the previous four quintiles.

For the print media, there is a concentration of coverage of the candidates, but this varies between markets (table 1). While in II (53.8%) and III (43.8%) candidates feature in around half of the pieces, in V (35.9%) and especially IV (25%) the proportion is much lower. In the case of the other relevant actors, the electoral authority is manifested in a quarter of the notes in market III (25%) and a fifth in market IV (20.8%), but in quintile V it is only in 15.4%. The coverage of the presidency of the Republic is similar in quintiles III (6.3%), IV (8.3%), and V (10.3%), although somewhat higher in quintiles II (15.4%).

The digital press, for its part, shares a general pattern of concentration on candidates, but with a very important emphasis on markets V (77.4%), IV (82.2%), and II (81.5%), where four-fifths of the articles are focused on candidates. The next most visible actors are party representatives or members, who exceed 10% in quintiles V (13.2%) and III (12.5%). On the contrary, in quintile I, coverage is distributed among three actors, the electoral authority (31.6%), the candidates (26.3%), and journalists and communicators (15.8%), this being the only quintile where there is another actor, additional to candidates, with superior visibility.

When observations are made by the information sources (not shown in tables for reasons of space), similar distribution patterns are evident in both media. For the printed press, quintile II continues to focus emphatically on candidates (53.8%), while in the other quintiles, the distribution is more homogeneous (III, 31.3%, IV, 29.2%, V, 30.8%). The electoral authority is the second most relevant source of visibility, with minor variations between markets (III, 25%, IV, 20.8%, II and V, 15.4%).

In the digital press, the patterns of concentration of coverage on candidates are replicated in most markets (V, 69.8, IV, 68.9%, III, 65% and II, 63%). It is a more politicized press, given that the second actor that acts as a source is a party representative or member, significantly in quintile IV (17.8%) and less in the rest of the quintiles (III, 15%, II, 11.1% and V, 9.4%). On the other hand, quintile I – Mexico City and the State of Mexico – behaves very differently. The candidates are represented in only 26.3% of the pieces, while the electoral authority is the subject that receives the most coverage (36.8%). Sources that are practically excluded are also visible in other quintiles, such as businessmen (10.5%), business chambers, communicators, and academics (5.3%, combined).

Table 1
Type of actor⁶

| Actor type | Quintile of press markets | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|---|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Printed N | % | Digital N | % | Printed N | % | Digital N | % | Printed N | % | Digital N | % | | | | | | | | |
| Candidate | 1 | 25% | 5 | 26% | 7 | 58% | 22 | 81% | 7 | 44% | 27 | 68% | 6 | 29% | 37 | 82% | 14 | 36% | 41 | 77% |
| Party representative or member | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 4% | 1 | 6% | 5 | 13% | 1 | 5% | 3 | 7% | 3 | 8% | 7 | 13% |
| Senators or deputies | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 5% | 2 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| electoral authority | 1 | 25% | 6 | 32% | 1 | 8% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 25% | 3 | 8% | 5 | 24% | 1 | 2% | 6 | 15% | 1 | 2% |
| Presidency of the Republic | 1 | 25% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 17% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 2 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 10% | 1 | 2% |
| Government cabinet member | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 2% | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% |
| local authority | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 13% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 2% |
| Journalists, communicators | 0 | 0% | 3 | 16% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 2% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Religious leaders | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 5% | 0 | 0% |
| Businessmen, bankers, investors | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 6% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| Academics, specialists, intellectuals | 1 | 25% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 2 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 2% |
| Others (less than 5%) | 0 | 0% | 2 | 11% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 2 | 4% | 4 | 10% | 1 | 2% |

Table 2
Political membership⁶

| Political memberships ⁵ | Quintile of press markets | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 1 | | | | 2 | | | | 3 | | | | 4 | | | | 5 | | | |
| | Printed N | Printed % | Digital N | Digital % | Printed N | Printed % | Digital N | Digital % | Printed N | Printed % | Digital N | Digital % | Printed N | Printed % | Digital N | Digital % | Printed N | Printed % | Digital N | Digital % |
| Candidate | 1 | 25% | 5 | 26% | 7 | 58% | 22 | 81% | 7 | 44% | 27 | 68% | 6 | 29% | 37 | 82% | 14 | 36% | 41 | 77% |
| Va x Mexico (PRI, PAN, PRD) | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 4% | 1 | 6% | 5 | 13% | 1 | 5% | 3 | 7% | 3 | 8% | 7 | 13% |
| Citizen movement | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 5% | 2 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| PRI | 0 | 25% | 6 | 32% | 1 | 8% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 25% | 3 | 8% | 5 | 24% | 1 | 2% | 6 | 15% | 1 | 2% |
| PAN | 0 | 25% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 17% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 2 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 10% | 1 | 2% |
| MORENA | 1 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 2% | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% |
| PT | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 13% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 2% |
| Green party | 1 | 0% | 3 | 16% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 2% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Fuerza x Mexico | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 5% | 0 | 0% |
| Progressive Social Networks | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 6% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| PES | 0 | 25% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 2 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 2% |
| Others (equal or less than 5%) | 0 | 0% | 2 | 11% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 2 | 4% | 4 | 10% | 1 | 2% |

4.3 Party bias

Regarding the parties visible in the printed media pieces, quintiles II and IV behave in a reasonably equitable manner, while III and V present marked inequalities. The first exhibits a balance between Movimiento Ciudadano (22%), PRI (22%), and MORENA (33%), while the second shows the same for Va x México, PRI (36.4% both) and MORENA (27.3%). In contrast, quintile V concentrates visibility between MORENA (36.8%) and Va x México (21.1%) and to a lesser extent PAN and Movimiento Ciudadano (15.8% each), while in quintile III MORENA (72.7%), relegates Va x México and Movimiento Ciudadano to a minority position (9.1%).

In the digital press, on the other hand, quintiles II, III, and V have preferential visibility for each party, MORENA (40%), Va x México (38.8%), and PAN (39.1%), respectively. For the other parties, visibility is limited in each market, to just 22.9% for Movimiento Ciudadano (quintile III), 17.4% (quintile II), and 16.3% (quintile V) for MORENA. Quintile IV on the other hand is somewhat more equitable, slightly inclined towards MORENA (27.5) although not so much as Va x México (22.5%), and PRI (20%).

When broken down by sources, the scarcity of articles in printed media makes it difficult to observe certain emphases. It is just possible to locate a certain overrepresentation for the PRI in quintile IV (41.7%) and for Va x México in quintile V (31.3%), although the amount is not very great. For the digital press, with a greater presence of partisan sources in its articles, overrepresentation is more feasible. In quintile V, the source of Va x México has a higher visibility (31.11%) than that of Movimiento Ciudadano (20%) and MORENA (17.8%) and this difference is reversed in quintile II with other parties such as PAN (38.1%) and Fuerza x México (19%). On the other hand, in quintiles III and especially IV, visibility is better distributed between several parties, MORENA (33.3%) and Movimiento Ciudadano (27.3%) for the first, and MORENA (25.6%), PRI (23.1%) and Va x Mexico (20.5%) in the second.

4.4 Coverage valence and themes

Regarding the treatment in terms of valence (table 2), positive bias is practically not present in the digital or printed press. In the latter, negative bias is notably homogeneous between regions (quintiles I, 20%, II, 23.1%, III, 25%, V, 20.5%), except in IV, where it is slightly lower (16.7%). There is also homogeneity in the negative bias of the digital press, which is seen in around 15% of the pieces (quintiles I, 15.8%, III, 17.5%, IV, 13.3%, V, 17%), except, notably, the quintile II, with only 3.7% of the pieces.

Regarding the plurality of topics (table 2), the different markets are focused on the campaigns themselves, with greater emphasis on quintile III (50%), followed by IV (41.7%) and V (41%), together with the topic "partisan politics" (31.3%, 20.8% and 28.2%, respectively). Quintile II has a differentiated behavior since it distributes its topics with greater plurality between the campaign (38.5%), partisan politics (15.4%), and public security (15.4%). In the case of the digital press, there are few differences in the concentration of coverage in the electoral campaign between quintiles II (66.7%), IV (59.1%), and V (67.3%). However, quintiles III and I differ somewhat. The first distributes the topics electoral campaign (47.5%), partisan politics (15%), and public administration (10%) a little more widely, while quintile I distributes the topics better compared to the others: partisan politics occupies the first place (36.8%), followed by citizen participation, electoral campaign (15.8% each) and gender issues (10.5%).

Table 3

Indicators of mediated deliberation, coverage valence, and thematization

| Quintiles of press markets | 1 | | | | 2 | | | | 3 | | | | 4 | | | | 5 | | | |
|---|---------|------|---------|-----|---------|------|---------|------|---------|-----|---------|------|---------|------|---------|-----|---------|------|---------|-----|
| | Printed | | Digital | | Printed | | Digital | | Printed | | Digital | | Printed | | Digital | | Printed | | Digital | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| MARKETS, REGIONS AND JOURNALISTIC QUALITY | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Proposal delivery | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 0 | 0% | 2 | 11% | 2 | 15% | 4 | 15% | 1 | 6% | 5 | 13% | 3 | 13% | 10 | 23% | 3 | 8% | 4 | 8% |
| No | 5 | 100% | 14 | 74% | 6 | 46% | 5 | 19% | 7 | 44% | 16 | 40% | 11 | 46% | 7 | 16% | 21 | 54% | 13 | 25% |
| Does not apply | 0 | 0% | 3 | 16% | 5 | 38% | 18 | 67% | 8 | 15% | 19 | 48% | 10 | 42% | 27 | 61% | 15 | 38% | 35 | 67% |
| Civility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 0 | 0% | 4 | 21% | 1 | 8% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 13% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 2% | 4 | 10% | 1 | 2% |
| No | 5 | 100% | 15 | 79% | 12 | 92% | 27 | 100% | 14 | 88% | 40 | 100% | 24 | 100% | 44 | 98% | 35 | 90% | 52 | 98% |
| Dialogism | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 1 | 20% | 6 | 32% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 19% | 3 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 3 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 6% |
| No | 4 | 80% | 13 | 68% | 13 | 100% | 27 | 100% | 13 | 81% | 37 | 93% | 23 | 96% | 42 | 93% | 39 | 100% | 50 | 94% |
| Reason-giving | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 1 | 20% | 13 | 68% | 5 | 38% | 13 | 48% | 5 | 31% | 23 | 58% | 5 | 21% | 18 | 40% | 12 | 31% | 20 | 38% |
| No | 3 | 60% | 6 | 32% | 6 | 46% | 12 | 44% | 10 | 63% | 16 | 40% | 15 | 63% | 24 | 53% | 24 | 62% | 28 | 53% |
| No source or position | 1 | 20% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 15% | 2 | 7% | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 4 | 17% | 3 | 7% | 3 | 8% | 5 | 9% |
| Frames | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Issue | 1 | 20% | 4 | 21% | 6 | 46% | 12 | 44% | 3 | 19% | 20 | 50% | 3 | 13% | 23 | 51% | 9 | 23% | 20 | 38% |
| Strategic | 2 | 40% | 5 | 26% | 3 | 23% | 8 | 30% | 9 | 56% | 15 | 38% | 11 | 46% | 15 | 33% | 11 | 28% | 22 | 42% |
| Does not apply | 2 | 40% | 10 | 53% | 4 | 31% | 7 | 26% | 4 | 25% | 5 | 13% | 10 | 42% | 7 | 16% | 19 | 49% | 11 | 21% |
| Valence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Positive | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 2% |
| Not positive | 3 | 60% | 12 | 63% | 10 | 77% | 21 | 78% | 11 | 69% | 37 | 93% | 12 | 50% | 42 | 93% | 25 | 64% | 50 | 94% |
| Does not apply | 2 | 40% | 7 | 37% | 3 | 23% | 4 | 15% | 5 | 31% | 3 | 8% | 12 | 50% | 3 | 7% | 14 | 36% | 2 | 4% |
| Negative | 1 | 20% | 3 | 16% | 3 | 23% | 1 | 4% | 4 | 25% | 7 | 18% | 4 | 17% | 6 | 13% | 8 | 21% | 9 | 17% |
| Not negative | 1 | 20% | 6 | 32% | 7 | 54% | 22 | 81% | 2 | 13% | 26 | 65% | 9 | 38% | 34 | 76% | 14 | 36% | 40 | 75% |
| Does not apply | 3 | 60% | 10 | 53% | 3 | 23% | 4 | 15% | 10 | 63% | 7 | 18% | 11 | 46% | 5 | 11% | 17 | 44% | 4 | 8% |
| Topics | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Economy | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 4% | 2 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Public security | 2 | 40% | 1 | 5% | 2 | 15% | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 5% | 3 | 13% | 0 | 0% | 5 | 13% | 0 | 0% |
| Citizen participation | 0 | 0% | 3 | 16% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 6% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 4% | 1 | 2% | 3 | 8% | 0 | 0% |
| Public administration | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 7% | 1 | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| Religion | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| Media | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 8% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Partisan politics | 2 | 40% | 7 | 37% | 2 | 15% | 0 | 0% | 5 | 31% | 6 | 15% | 5 | 21% | 2 | 5% | 11 | 28% | 5 | 10% |
| Corruption | 1 | 20% | 1 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 4% | 1 | 6% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Gender | 0 | 0% | 2 | 11% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 8% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 6% |
| Electoral campaign and debate | 0 | 0% | 3 | 16% | 5 | 38% | 18 | 67% | 8 | 50% | 19 | 48% | 10 | 42% | 26 | 59% | 16 | 41% | 35 | 67% |
| AMLO government | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 4% | 1 | 2% | 0 | 0% | 6 | 12% |
| Others (equal or less than 5%) | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 15% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 8% | 2 | 8% | 6 | 14% | 2 | 5% | 3 | 6% |

4.5 Mediated deliberation indicators

Regarding mediated deliberation (table 3), there are important differences between markets. Concerning the printed press, in the variable for proposal delivery, the frequencies are generally low, but they are even lower in quintiles III (6.3%) and V (7.7%) than in quintiles IV (12.5%) and II (15.4%). In the digital, the frequency in quintiles IV (22.7%) and II (14.8%) is relevant, in a pattern similar to the previous one.

Incivility in the printed press is a marginal trait, although it is somewhat frequent in quintiles III (12.5%) and V (10.3%). Except in quintile I (21.1%), this variable is practically not recorded in the digital system. Dialogism is only relevant in quintiles I (20%) and III (18.8%) in the printed press, while in the digital press, it is relevant in quintile I (31.6% by a considerable margin).

Reason-giving, for its part, varies in the printed press, and is most relevant in quintile II (38.5%), followed by quintiles III (31.3%) and V (30.8%), and later IV (20.8%) and I (20%). In digital media it is most prominent in quintile I (68.4%), followed by III (57.5%), II (48.1%), IV (40%), and V (37.7%).

In the same way, the presence of issue framing in contrast to the strategic has notable differences in the printed press. In quintiles II (66.7%) and V (45%) this is prominent, while in I (33%), III (25%), or IV (21.4%) it is considerably reduced. In the digital press it is relatively high in quintiles II (60%) and IV (60.5%), and lower in quintiles I (44.4%) and V (47.6%).

Finally, it is worth noting that the Chi-Square tests showed diametrically opposite results for the print and digital press. Regarding the first, no performance variable is associated with the types of markets (except Dialogism, $X^2(4, N=97) = 11.177, p = 0.25$), so the variables behave similarly in each market. Conversely, in the digital press, all the performance variables measured differ by market type (except Reason-giving, $X^2(8, N=184) = 9.534, p = 0.299$), which indicates statistically differentiated behaviors by region.

5 Discussion

As previously stated, the first observation concerns the small number of articles published about the campaign, only 281 from all 117 media included in the sample. If mid-term races are

second-order elections for public opinion, that is, instruments of sanction for the Executive branch, for the media they attract even less, almost marginal attention, despite its being the second most important power in the Republic. On the other hand, it should be noted that these elections are concurrent with local municipal and state elections at the executive and legislative level, which due to the greater attention they attract from citizens, possibly absorb the scarce resources of the media in their coverage.

Now, the performance of print and digital media exhibits differentiated patterns depending on the market in which they are located and their size. An indicator of this is the proportion of notes published by each quintile. It is paradoxical that quintile I, made up of Mexico City and the States of Mexico, two of the most populated territories in the country and where 20% of the population lives, have less coverage of the campaign compared to other quintiles and that, on the other hand, each quintile has a very different proportion of coverage from that of the others. This indicates that there is no homogeneity in the journalistic coverage; therefore, these results contribute to criticizing the fallacy of composition that has dominated a good part of the studies of the press in Mexico, which assume, in many cases, that the coverage generated from the country's capital (quintile I) and the so-called "national media" correctly represents what is happening at the national level.

On the other hand, a pattern in the data obtained is that the journalistic coverage of all markets was focused, first of all, on the candidates. In the print media, there is a high but more or less homogeneous concentration between markets, although this is a little less in smaller markets. After the candidates, the press focused on covering the National Electoral Institute (INE) – the organization in charge of organizing the elections. In the digital press, on the other hand, smaller markets predominantly reproduce candidate articles, even disproportionately in quintiles V, IV, and II.

The previous patterns account for important elements. The first of them is the tendency towards political personalization in the coverage of electoral campaigns focused on the candidates and not on the political parties – a trend that has been detected for years and in different countries around the world (Mazzoleni, 2014). The second element accounted for is that these patterns could indicate extra-commercial distortions in the functioning of each market, linked to factors such as the degree of professionalization and digitalization of

newsrooms, or to clientelist phenomena. For example, it is surprising that in three quintiles candidates are granted similarly high coverage, regardless of the differences in the structural conditions of each of them. Given this, a possible explanation is that the newsrooms in these markets could have passive newsmaking practices and are more dependent on the materials distributed by the campaigns.

Likewise, coverage is more partisan in the smaller markets (V) mainly around party members. On the other hand, in larger markets, sources are better distributed: for example, the most robust market (quintile I) balances between candidates and the electoral authority, and features sources excluded from other quintiles. This pattern is replicated in terms of plural thematization: although the five quintiles focus on the campaign, in the digital press of the most robust market (quintile I) more topics are covered.

Regarding bias, we found consistent patterns. On the one hand, geographical homogeneity is exhibited concerning a neutral treatment of the candidates, in what seems to be a widely spread feature in newsrooms throughout the country. A possible explanation regarding this pattern is related to the media monitoring that the institution in charge of organizing the elections has carried out since 1994. Media monitoring was born to make visible the inequalities in the media's electoral coverage and has led the media to generally offer neutral treatment in the stories.

On the other hand, it is striking that the visibility bias varies according to the size of the markets. In general, MORENA, which during this electoral cycle was the dominant party, leads in all of them (quintile III draws attention, where its visibility reaches 73%), but in some markets, certain opposition parties compete significantly with it. Thus, a link is observed between the visibility of local forces and their capacity to position themselves in the media, which is highly differentiated in the different markets. This is more accentuated in the digital press, where some parties operate their visibility better in certain markets that are more prone to bias than others, such as in market V – the smallest, where Va x México manages to position itself with an advantage or in market III, where the PAN does so.

Relative to mediated deliberation, there are pronounced differences between markets. Thus, the “proposal delivery” indicator is lower in smaller markets. Incivility, for its part, is greater in the more robust print market, while it is practically absent in the digital press. Dialogism is only relevant in the digital and printed quintile

I, the largest market, as is the reason giving in print. In the digital world, the presence of this indicator goes from the most affluent markets to the least, almost in a correlational way. Finally, in the issue frame, no consistent patterns linked to the size of the markets are noted. However, it is possible to affirm that performance regarding this dimension is better in the more robust market, in the digital press and especially in the printed press.

6 Conclusions

The research confirms previous intuitions regarding how the political economy and the structural features of the Mexican media system influence the performance of the press, understood as the observance of liberal and deliberative communication values by journalists. First, in a truly national sample and both print and digital formats, we confirm that the Mexican press focuses broadly on candidates and campaigns, not being very plural in terms of actors and topics, and excluding actors and topics from civil society. Furthermore, it is biased in terms of visibility, although not treatment, with tenuous indicators of mediated deliberation, which provide citizens with only a few elements to deliberate (Echeverría et al., 2021). This confirms previous findings from other investigations (Aceves, 2010; Andrade, 2012; Echeverría, 2017; Espino, 2016; Salazar, 2018b), although the size of our sample evades the aforementioned composition error (Hanssen, 2020) which gives our observation greater validity.

Based on this predominantly politicized and passive journalistic performance, and concerning a distributed observation in media markets, we note that the performance of the press is 1) superior in the most robust markets and inferior in the least, 2) within them, it is superior in the printed press and inferior in the digital press, in a hybrid system (Chadwick, 2017) that does not complement the two forms but is homogenized in its poor performance, 3) linked to the size of the markets where it is based, 4) with very homogeneous performances in the different print markets, where there could be similar standards of professionalization, and very heterogeneous in the digital ones, and 5) at least in some variables, such as the visibility of certain parties, driven by factors that do not correspond to market structures, such as the operational capacities of the parties or clientelistic relationships. The latter is linked to the

economic vulnerability of local media (Larrosa-Fuentes, 2018), an aspect corroborated by other empirical studies (Maldonado Pérez, 2018; Salazar, 2018a). The weakest link is, therefore, the digital press in less robust markets, whose coverage seems to exist only to give visibility to the candidates and parties.

The present study presents certain limitations related especially to the number of pieces, which prevents us from obtaining more solid findings. Further, the sample does not include two states of the Republic, so not all of the country's press is covered. From now on, it is desirable to increase the number of pieces covered in the analysis of presidential elections, which are much more newsworthy than legislative elections, as well as to integrate a more complete and more extensive sample. Nonetheless, we think that the present study contributes by laying the foundations for an investigation that will lead to understanding the way in which local variations and their structural conditions influence the differentiated performance of the media covering politics in different parts of the country, specifically, during electoral periods.

NOTES

- 1 Mexican federal elections take place every three years. There is a presidential election every six years, which also renews the Senate, and congressional elections every three years. Re-election is only possible for members of Congress.
- 2 Worlds of Journalism is a journalism research project carried out by a network of researchers from 120 countries, and based at the University of Hannover, Germany (<https://worldsofjournalism.org/>). One of the authors of this article is part of the Mexico research team for round 3 of this project (survey 2021-2023). As such, he participated in the validation by judges regarding the relevance of each journalistic medium included in the media census that was carried out for this project (see González et al., 2023, for more details on this methodology).
- 3 The newspapers included in the sample were selected in the Press Reader database search engine, and within them were placed the keywords "elections", "deputies", "congress" and "campaign" The pieces returned by the system were stored in a digital repository and verified by two collaborators to ensure that they did indeed

correspond to the campaign analyzed. The Press Reader database is available, with individual or institutional subscription, at the following address: www.pressreader.com

- 4 Alexa was a service for web traffic data, global rankings and other information on more than 30 million websites. Alexa estimated website traffic based on a sample of millions of Internet users who used browser extensions, as well as sites that had chosen to install a company script. As of 2020, its website was being visited by more than 400 million people every month, and its magnitude in Mexico was such that it was one of the 13 global digital companies registered in 2020 by the Ministry of Finance for the payment of federal taxes. In May 2022, the company disappeared to join Amazon's Alexa Web Information Service complex, under a paid scheme (<https://aws.amazon.com/es/awis/>).

- 5 A quintile is a way of dividing a data set into five equal parts or groups, so that each group contains approximately 20% of the data. This is done for the purpose of analyzing the distribution of a certain characteristic or variable in a population, understanding how that characteristic is distributed in different segments and, above all, how unequal it is. In the Mexican case, this division allowed us to observe a very unequal distribution, with a few states that concentrate many media and many states that have very few, that is, they have small media markets. The assumption of this division is that the robustness or precariousness of media markets is linked to a variation in the performance of the news media. For this exercise, the five quintiles and states of the Republic included within them are: I (Mexico City, State of Mexico), II (Veracruz, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Guanajuato), III (Puebla, San Luis Potosí, Chiapas, Tabasco, Quintana Roo, Yucatán), IV (Guerrero, Hidalgo, Sonora, Oaxaca, Jalisco, Baja California, Querétaro) and V (Campeche, Nuevo León, Morelos, Chihuahua, Aguascalientes, Sinaloa, Baja California Sur, Durango, Michoacán, Nayarit, Colima, Zacatecas, Tlaxcala).

- 6 The Mexican party system is made up of a dominant and relatively newly emerging party, MORENA, which occupies the Executive power and has majorities in the chamber of deputies and senators, as well as the three traditional parties of the democratic transition: the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI (center left), the National Action Party, PAN (right) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD (left). These have competed since 2021 under an opposition coalition called Va X México. Such parties coexist with other minority and niche parties,

such as the Green Party, the Labor Party (communist left), the Citizen Movement (social democrat), the Social Encounter Party (evangelical right) and Progressive Social Networks (left).

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