

International Electoral Observation: and the Inter-American Democratic Charter Towards a New Paradigm

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Organization of
American States

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Agenda

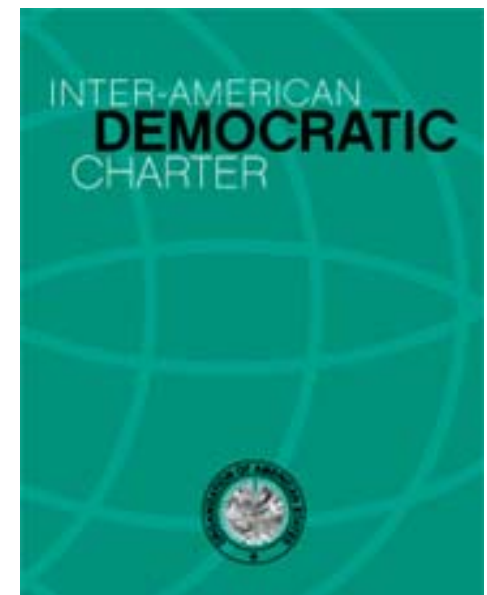
- I. Inter-American Democratic Charter and Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs)
- II. How does the OAS Define an Electoral Observation Mission (EOM)?
- III. Key Facts on OAS Electoral Observation Missions (OAS/EOMs)
- IV. Standardization of Observation Methodologies: the case of the OAS Gender Methodology
- V. Final Remarks



I. The Inter-American Democratic Charter and Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs)

There are 3 articles in Chapter V (23 24 and 25) that relate to OAS Observation work:

- Member states are responsible for free and fair electoral processes
- Required invitation by Member State
- Agreement establishing scope of EOM
- Member state must guarantee full cooperation with the EOM
- EOMs must be independent, objective, impartial and transparent
- Report from EOM must be presented to the PC
- Advise the Permanent Council if necessary conditions for free and fair elections do not exist





II. How does the OAS define an International Electoral Observation Mission?

A process whereby:

An organized group of individuals from **outside** the host country systematically carries out a series of actions and activities to observe an electoral process in a **direct, complete, and precise manner**.

The subject of the observation is the process.



EOM in Nicaragua, 1990



II. How does the OAS define an International Electoral Observation Mission?

<p>Inclusive Elections</p> <p>Are all citizens effectively enabled to express their preferences in elections?</p>	<p>Clean Elections</p> <p>Are voters' preferences respected and faithfully recorded?</p>	<p>Competitive Elections</p> <p>Is the electorate offered an unbiased choice among candidates?</p>	<p>Elective Public Offices</p> <p>Are the main political offices filled through regular elections?</p>
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Based on **three basic Inter-American legal instruments**:

1. American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (1948)
2. American Convention on Human Rights (1969)
3. Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001).



III. Key facts on the OAS Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs):

What do OAS/EOMs observe?

Pre-electoral period:

Voter registration; candidate nomination; electoral campaign; implementation of standardized methodologies.

Election day:

Voting, vote-tallying, transmission of results and implementation of standardized methodologies.

Post-electoral period:

Final count, legal procedures, acceptance of results





III. Key facts on the OAS Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs):

In the past 51 years, the OAS has deployed:

- 200+ EOMs
- In 26 out of 34 Member States.

OAS/EOMs:

- Last between 8 days to 1 year
- Have focused historically on “E Day”.

Since 2006, EOMs are conducted and developed by DECO:

- Standardization of observation methodologies
- Opening the lens beyond “E Day”:

**Methodology to mainstream observation of
Gender Participation in its EOMs.**



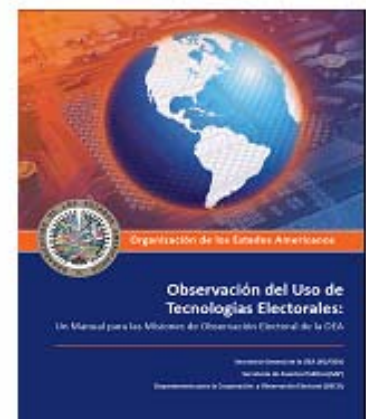


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IV. Standardization and Professionalization of Observation Methodologies

Since 2006, efforts to standardize and systematize methodology for electoral observation, while broadening scope:

1. Methods for Electoral Observation
2. Manual for OAS Observation Missions
3. Methodology for the Observation of Political Financing systems
4. Methodology for Media Observation
5. Methodology for the Observation of the Use of Electoral Technologies.
6. Methodology for the Incorporation of the Gender Perspective in OAS/EOMs





Why incorporate a gender perspective into electoral observation?

- **OAS/EOMs reports in recent years:** most issues are not related to “E-Day” but rather to “equity in the competition:” political financing, media coverage, gender equality in the electoral process.
- **Since 2010:** development of technical tools to observe these issues



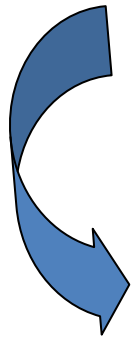
Why incorporate a gender perspective into electoral observation?

- **A “Methodology to Incorporate a Gender Perspective into OAS Electoral Observation Missions”**
- Gender equity in all aspects of the electoral process and the full exercise of political rights by all citizens is a precondition for a democratic election and therefore should be an integral focus of an EOM.
- OAS/EOMs as tools for analyzing and exposing barriers to the equal participation of women in public life.
- OAS/EOMs as mechanisms to verify member state compliance with international legal instruments to promote women’s rights.



Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001):

Art. 28



States shall promote the full and equal participation of women in the political structures of their countries as a fundamental element in the promotion and exercise of democracy.



International legal instruments:

- Proclaim **equality** between women and men;
- Underscore the need to **create conditions** for the **full and equitable exercise** of **political rights**;
- Link that **exercise** with the **quality of democracy**.

Nevertheless...



Why incorporate a gender perspective into electoral observation?

Political Rights: universal and Inter-American legal structure signed by member states guarantees equality in exercise of political rights (political citizenship) without discrimination based on sex → CEDAW



In Practice: women face inequalities in the exercise of their political rights (right to elect/vote, right to be elected, right to participate in political affairs)



Observation of female participation in the electoral process as a tool to:

- ✓ Observe whether a GAP exists between norms and practice
- ✓ Determine the extent of this gap
- ✓ Identify possible causes and make recommendations.



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Sixth Summit of the Americas - 2012



How to: OAS Gender Methodology



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EQUITY

Substantive Characteristic Principle



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Inclusive



**Men and Women as
voters**

Competitive



**Men and Women as
candidates**

Clean



**Men and Women in
electoral
administration**

Elective office



**Men and Women
effectively occupying
elected positions**

INCLUSIVITY

Men and Women as voters



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Indicator	Variables
Registration process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification documents• Voter registration
Access to polling place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conditions of access• Accessibility for pregnant women and/or women with children
Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sex-disaggregated participation• Abstentionism (causes)• Cases of intimidation, identity fraud, or “family voting”
Public policies or programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public policies or programs to promote the right to vote

COMPETITIVITY

Men and Women in electoral competition



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Indicator	Variables
In political parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal rules• Composition (membership and leadership)
In the electoral system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Type of electoral system (majoritarian/PR)• Size of districts, type of list (rules and practices)
Candidate nomination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quotas• Affirmative action measures• Rank-order rules or alternation
In the financing system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directed public financing, direct and indirect
Media access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access for campaigns• Coverage of gender issues• Presence of stereotypes

CLEANLINESS

Men and Women in electoral administration



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Indicator	Variables
Integrity of women's preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constraints on free and secret ballot• External pressures (violence of any type)
Gender equity in electoral bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Composition of electoral body• Internal policies or departments
Gender equity in polling stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Composition of poll workers
Gender equity in supervision of the vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Composition of party representatives• Membership composition of national observation groups

ELECTIVE OFFICE

Men and Women effectively exercising elected office



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Indicator	Variables
Gender equity in elective public office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reserved seats• Composition of elective offices
Irreversability of electoral results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post-election fraud• Political harassment of elected women



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From theory to practice: Findings from the Implementation of the Gender Methodology

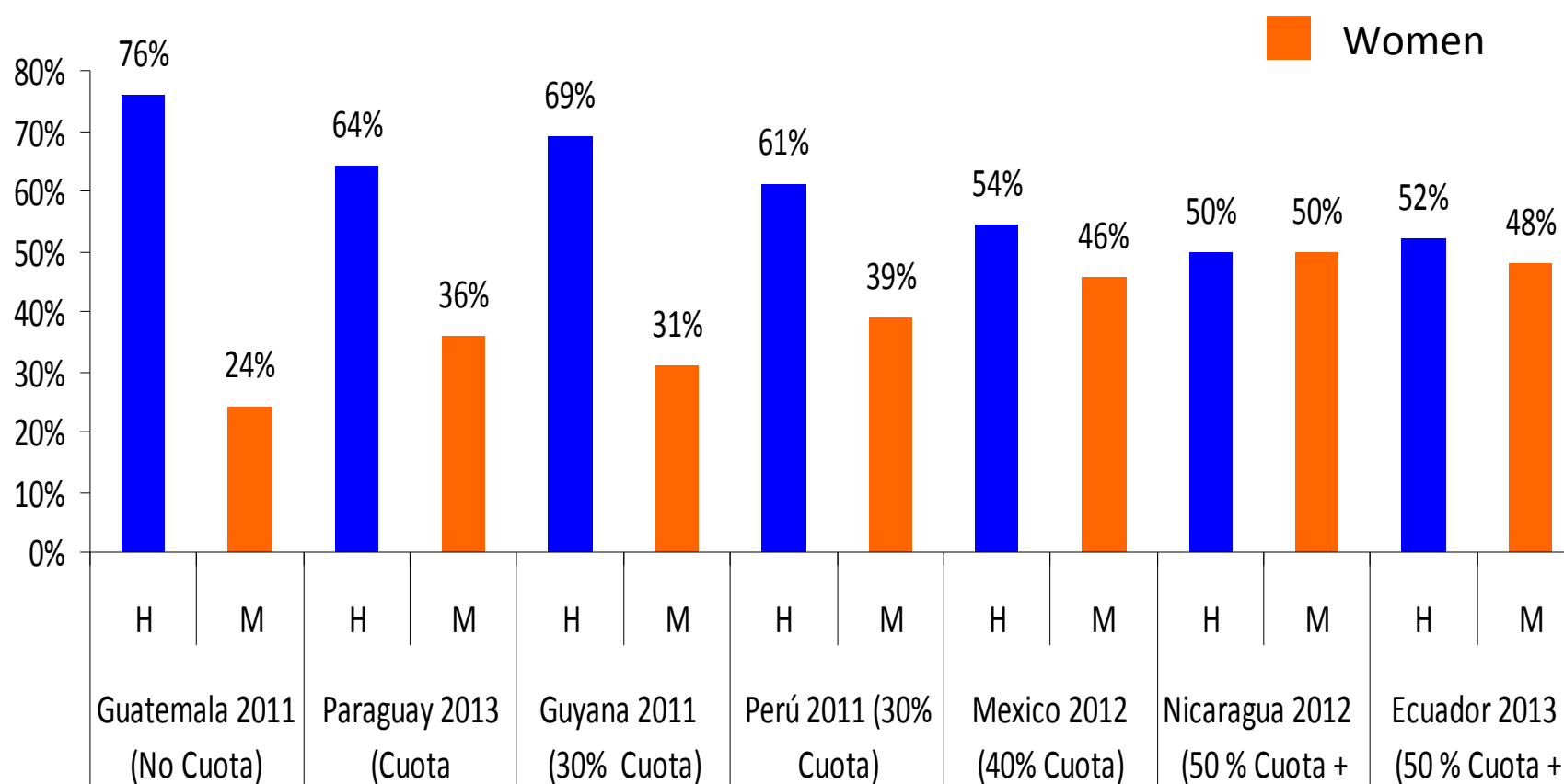


1. Effect of quotas on the political participation of women



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Female candidacies and quotas:



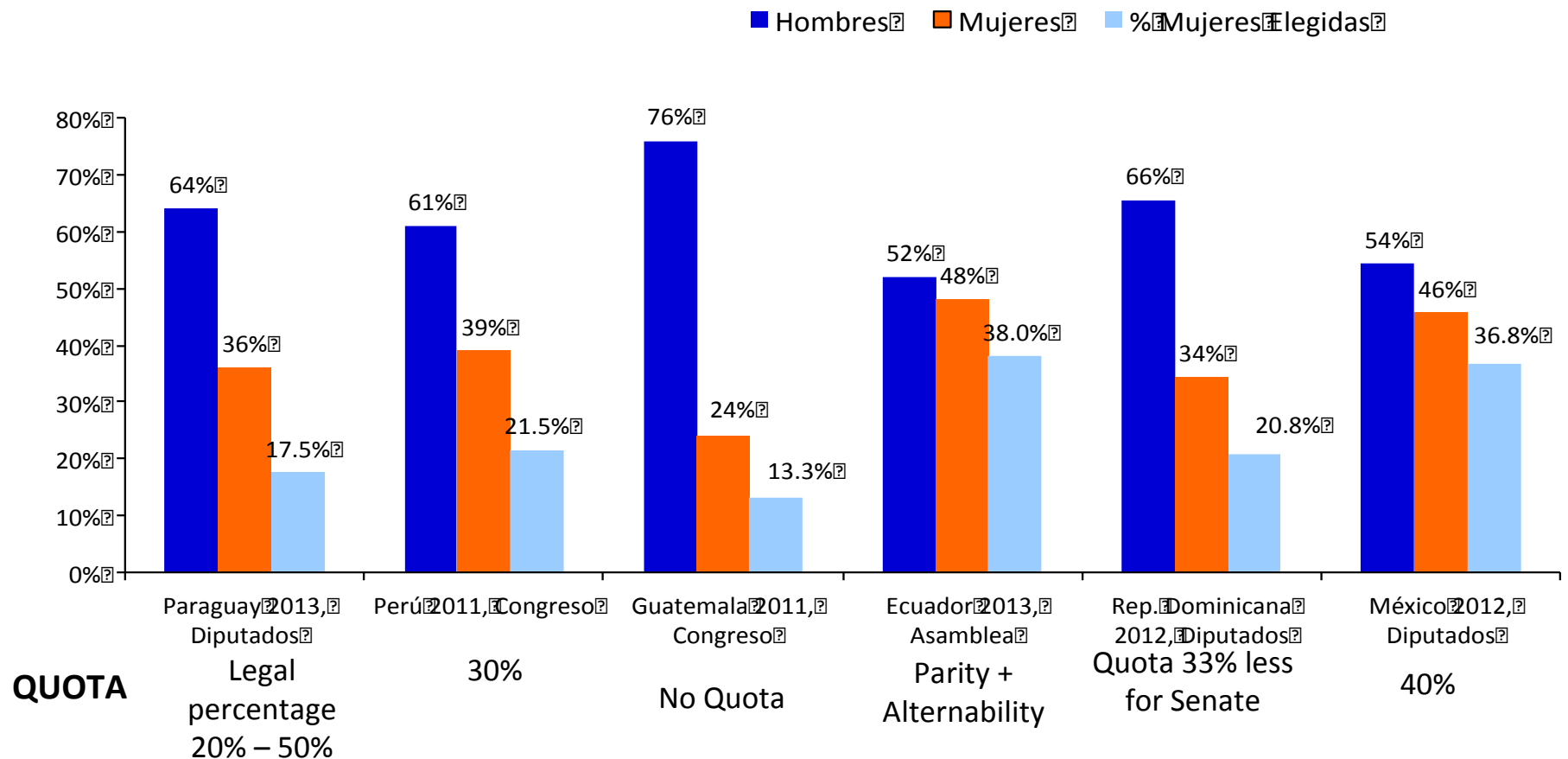
Source: Reports on implementation of gender methodology 2011-2013. DECO-OAS

2. Quota design affects participation of women as candidates and their chances of election



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% Women elected correlated with quota:



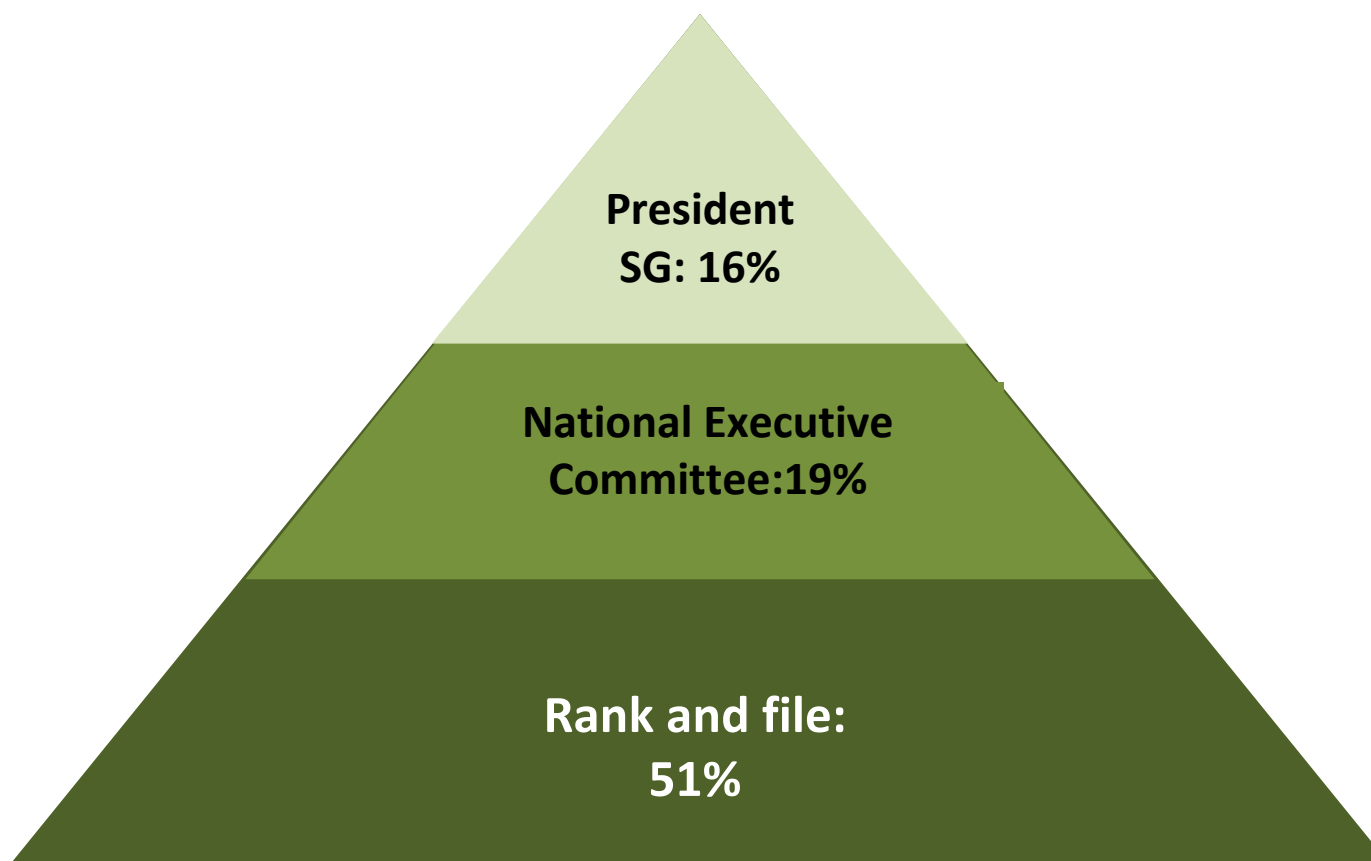
Source: Reports on implementation of gender methodology 2011-2013. DECO-OAS

3. Participation in political parties



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Membership of Women in Political Parties (Regional Averages):



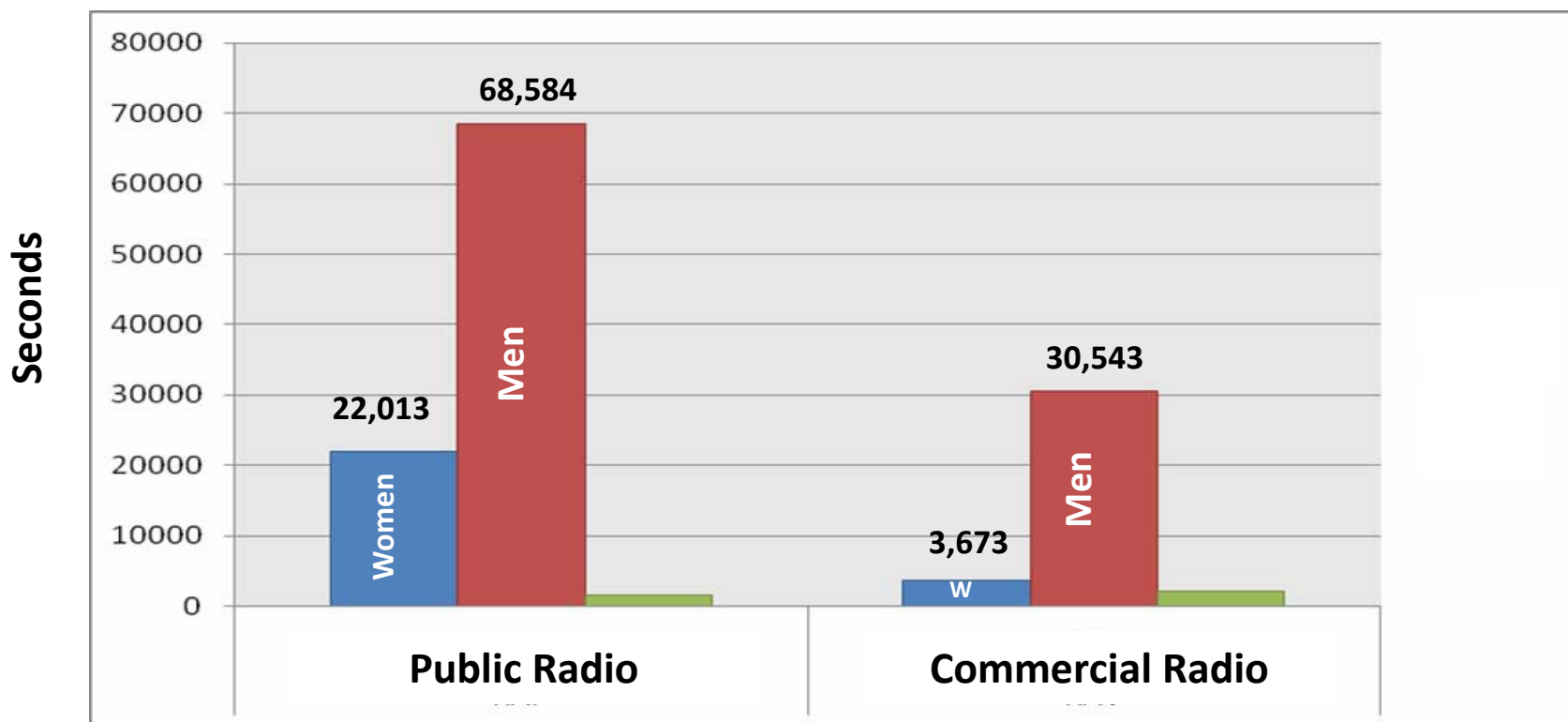
Source: International IDEA – IDB “Gender and Political Parties: Far from Parity” 2010.

4. Media Coverage



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Radio Coverage by Sex: Legislative Elections - Ecuador, February 2013.



Source: Methodology for Media Observation During Elections –OAS Mission, Ecuador 2013

5. Unequal access to financing



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- Limited campaign resources within political parties
- Preference to give resources to male candidates.
- Limited capacity of female candidates to attract their own funds.
- No public financing for campaigns of female candidates
- Limited public financing for women for “training” (MEX-PAN-CR).





Can EOMs contribute to promote women's political rights?

Indeed, they can, and they do. EOMs contribute to:

- Expose women's political underrepresentation based on rigorous data
- Analysis to identify specify obstacles to the full exercise of political participation by women
- Position the underrepresentation of women as an important topic related to the electoral process: getting media coverage and in the reports and Chief of Mission's public statements.
- Specific recommendations to increase female participation



Toward a new paradigm for electoral observation?



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- Professionalization of electoral observation with an approach that evaluates equity and inclusiveness in the electoral competition are evaluated. **More Inclusive Elections = Better Democracies.**
- Mainstreaming of the gender perspective beyond election day and the role of the voter. **Toward a comprehensive view of the electoral cycle and the role of women.**
- Change in the evaluation of substantive aspects of an election with systematic, robust tools. **Expose obstacles to the full political participation of women with hard data and in-depth analysis.**
- Reports that function as political advocacy in observed countries and as catalysts for change. **Place the issue of women's political participation on the political agenda.**



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The promotion of gender equality is essential for democracies: “democracy without women is only half a democracy.”

José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the OAS