**Abstract**

Past studies, largely based on the United States, have argued that differential coverage of men and women candidates could explain the lack of women in elected political office. We investigate, first, whether a gender bias exists in coverage of candidates and, second, the possible mechanisms underlying any differences in the amount and tone of candidates’ news media coverage. Using data from the 2009 European Election Study Media Analysis, drawn from media coverage in 25 EU member states during the European Parliament election campaigns, we find that, similar to previous research, there is evidence of a gender gap in the amount of media coverage. Even for highly prominent and competitive candidates, the gender bias in media coverage remains. However, this bias in media coverage largely reflects the parties’ preselection of viable candidates and that where there are remedies in place to address the underrepresentation of women (i.e., quotas), women candidates actually have lower visibility in campaign coverage. We also find that, though women candidates are more often the subject of valence evaluations in news stories, male candidates are more negatively evaluated in news stories.