

(Download) Women for President: Media Bias in Eight Campaigns

Women for President: Media Bias in Eight Campaigns

Erika Falk

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"A must read for political operatives and voters across America."
—Donna Brazile, campaign manager, Gore-Lieberman 2000



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Erika Falk : Women for President: Media Bias in Eight Campaigns before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Women for President: Media Bias in Eight Campaigns:

When Hillary Clinton announced her 2008 bid for president she was the Democratic front-runner. Despite this, she received less coverage than Barack Obama, who trailed her in the polls. Such a disparity is indicative of the gender bias the media has demonstrated in covering women candidates since the first woman ran for Americas highest office

in 1872. Tracing the campaigns of eight women who ran for president through 2004--Victoria Woodhull, Belva Lockwood, Margaret Chase Smith, Shirley Chisholm, Patricia Schroeder, Lenora Fulani, Elizabeth Dole, and Carol Moseley Braun--Erika Falk finds little progress in the fair treatment of women candidates. A thorough comparison of the women's campaigns to those of their male opponents reveals a worrisome trend of sexism in press coverage--a trend that still persists today. While women have been elected to the highest offices in countries such as England, Germany, and India, the idea that a woman could be president of the United States provokes scoffs and ridicule. The press portrays female candidates as unviable, unnatural, and incompetent, and often ignores or belittles women instead of reporting their ideas and intent. Since voters learn most details about presidential candidates through media outlets, Falk asserts that this prevailing bias calls into question the modern democratic assumption that men and women have comparable access to positions of power.

From Publishers Weekly
With Hillary Clinton a serious contender for the Democratic Party presidential nomination, Falk's book is timely, but with a definition of media narrowly limited to a few newspapers, it is also problematic. Johns Hopkins communications professor Falk may have missed an opportunity to press an interesting issue she fails to address whether newspapers staffed with women editors and reporters in key positions show less bias than newspapers run by men but her book is still of value. After reviewing the presidential campaigns of eight women starting with Victoria Claflin Woodhull in 1872, Falk posits that journalists and editorialists frequently treat women candidates differently than they do men. Women presidential candidates receive less media coverage than their male counterparts and are often portrayed as unnatural, incapable and unviable. As Falk also observes, women's images are more readily emphasized and thereby tarnished; homemaking skills (or the lack thereof) and physical appearances receive more attention than their political strengths. Such media coverage has short- and long-term consequences, according to Falk, the most deleterious being that this allegedly biased media coverage may discourage women from attempting to win electoral office at any level. (Feb.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "This timely book convincingly warns of gender bias."--International Journal of Press/Politics