

authoritarian state, a decade of punitive sanctions, and the invasion and foreign military occupation since 2003. The evidence shows that most Iraqis felt socially and personally secure prior to the imposition of the sanctions, but whatever social and personal security they retained after the sanctions was then wholly quashed by the invasion and subsequent resistance.

Is there anything to criticize in this book? Unfortunately, it is marred by what seems to have been poor fact finding. The author refers twice to a 1995 Arab Human Development Report (pp. 69, 70), but the first AHDR appeared in 2001. There is a lengthy bibliography, but numerous studies are included that are not referred to in the text. Neither of these minor criticisms, however, should detract from what is an important study, well conceived and finely presented. Al-Jawaheri's book now joins a growing literature on women in Iraq, including studies by Nadje Al-Ali, Nicola Pratt, and Haifa Zangana. It should prove to be a model for other analyses of the gender impact of conflict, war, and sanctions.

Women for President: Media Bias in Eight Campaigns.

By Erika Falk. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2008. 192 pp. \$19.95 paper.

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On May 23, 2009, the feminist Women's Media Center launched a video entitled "Sexism Sells, But We're Not Buying It," garnering almost a quarter of a million views on YouTube alone. The disturbing compilation was cleverly edited to drive home to viewers the "pervasive nature of sexism in the media's coverage" (<http://www.womensmediacenter.com>). If the image of *Hardball* host Chris Matthews coyly encouraging fellow reporter Erin Burnett to get closer to the camera as he praises her "good looks" is not troubling enough, hearing Fox News refer to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as the "wicked witch of the west" should do it.

The Women's Media Center piece reminds us that although women have made significant strides in politics and other professions, obstacles still abound. There is a growing body of work by Kim Fridkin, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Dianne Bystrom, and other scholars that has provided us with

solid data to show that the media treat women candidates and public officials differently, and more negatively, than their male counterparts. The latest in this line of research is Erika Falk's well-researched book, *Women for President*, which systematically assesses the extent to which women have fared in print media coverage of their bids for the highest office. One of the book's strengths is that it covers a 132-year period — starting with Victoria Woodhull's run in 1872 and ending with Carol Moseley Braun's in 2004. The intervening years are filled by Belva Lockwood, Margart Chase Smith, Shirley Chisholm, Patricia Schroeder, Lenora Fulani, and Elizabeth Dole. Falk chose these women because they either had their party's nomination or made high-profile bids for them. Falk compares coverage of these women with a comparable male candidate and also evaluates how much progress women have made in the past century.

Overall, Falk's findings are disheartening for those who are eager to see women succeed in electoral politics. She shows that even after 130 years of women seeking the presidency, as compared to men, they are covered less by reporters, considered less viable, described as being better suited for the vice presidency, and presented as more likely to represent special interests. She also ably demonstrates the myriad incidences whereby the press questions the public's readiness for a woman president (despite public opinion polls to the contrary) and the extent to which her gender would influence her actions and interests.

The strongest moments of the book are when Falk pushes the theoretical and practical implications of her findings. For example, she shows how the press consistently marks women by their gender, referring to them as "lady senators" or "woman candidates" and noting their attempts to be the "first woman" to seek a particular nomination. She suggests that such marking has dual implications. On the one hand, she notes that "this practice gives light to the unspoken cultural understanding that politicians, senators, and candidates must be men" (p. 93). On the other hand, "the paper is publicizing the ability of women to operate (competently) in traditionally male spheres" (p. 95) by noting the historic nature of their candidacies. The complexity of gender marking is an important insight from the book although I would like to have seen it developed more and examined within the larger context of gender identity theory and politics.

A second and no less significant contribution is Falk's reminder of this vexing question: If women candidates can raise as much money as men and win as frequently as men, why are their numbers in office so low? In *It Takes A Candidate* (2008), Jennifer Lawless and Richar Fox demonstrate how personal and structural factors can diminish the desire

for women to run, but questions as to women's relatively low numbers still remain. Falk suggests, I think rightly so, that her research lends credence to the speculation that women are less likely to run because of the biased and negative treatment they receive from the press. Nonetheless, despite bad coverage, they still win when they run. But the media fail to report on women's viability, increasing the likelihood that they stay away from bids for elective office.

This book is suitable for courses in political science, women's studies, and communications. The text is rich with examples that support Falk's findings and rife with historical comparisons. It is accessible and clearly written, although it does suffer from a few minor problems. First, at times, it reads like a series of journal articles whereby the theory and conclusions are held off until the end of the chapters. Weaving the larger insights throughout the chapters would better showcase the implications and significance of her findings. In addition, there is too much literature review and a perplexing array of disparate bodies of work introduced here and there without enough cohesion. A more consistent pursuit of the central theoretical tensions referenced by the authors would strengthen the book and make it more appropriate for graduate-level classes.

Women for President is timely and will continue to be so as women move their way through the 18 millions cracks in the glass ceiling created by Hillary Rodham Clinton in her bid for the White House. With Clinton and Sarah Palin in the running in 2008, scholars will have no dearth of data to build on Falk's fine work.

Women Legislators in Central America: Politics, Democracy and Policy. By Michelle A. Saint-Germain and Cynthia Chavez Metoyer. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press. 2008. 338 pp. \$65.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

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Michelle Saint-Germain and Cynthia Metoyer have written the best comparative study available in English on the causes and impact of women's participation in Central America — and in Latin America as a