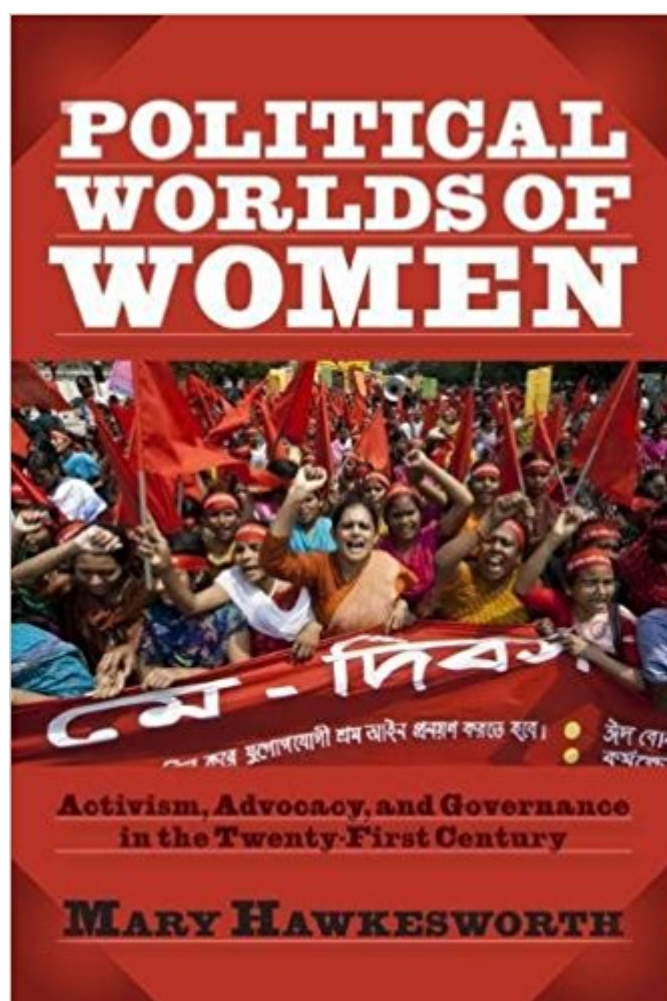


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Political Worlds Of Women: Activism, Advocacy, And Governance In The Twenty-First Century



Synopsis

Political Worlds of Women provides a comprehensive overview of women's political activism, comparing formal and informal channels of power from official institutions of state to grassroots mobilizations and Internet campaigns. Illuminating the politics of identity enmeshed in local, national, and global gender orders, this book explores women's creation of new political spaces and innovative political strategies to secure full citizenship and equal access to political power. Incorporating case studies from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas, Mary Hawkesworth analyzes critical issues such as immigration and citizenship, the politics of representation, sexual regulation, and gender mainstreaming in order to examine how women mobilize in this era of globalization. Political Worlds of Women deepens understandings of national and global citizenship and presents the formidable challenges facing racial and gender justice in the contemporary world. It is an essential resource for students and scholars of women's studies and gender politics.

Book Information

Paperback: 448 pages

Publisher: Westview Press; 1 edition (February 28, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813344956

ISBN-13: 978-0813344959

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.3 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #363,771 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #81 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Women in Politics](#) #283 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Elections & Political Process > Political Advocacy](#) #700 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Human Rights](#)

Customer Reviews

Praise for Political Worlds of Women by Mary Hawkesworth; Mary Hawkesworth has given us an amazing gift: a truly global exploration of women activists' thinking and strategizing that never slips into bland generalization. Political Worlds of Women shows us how densely rich and locally rooted feminist activist experience has been, from Nigeria to Pakistan, from the US to France. Here is a book we'll all be assigning to our students for years to come. — Cynthia Enloe,

author of *The Curious Feminist*; Broad in its scope, radical in its theory and careful in its scholarship, *Political Worlds of Women* offers a truly transformative synthesis of global gender politics. Hawkesworth's integrative vision encompasses both the conventional institutional narratives of political science and the most challenging insights of transnational feminism. She brilliantly rethinks familiar concepts like identity politics and embodied citizenship, challenges the divisions among comparative politics, international relations, and theory, and provides a wealth of empirical detail about women's raced-gendered realities around the world. This book offers insights to the seasoned feminist scholar no less than to students in their first course in gender and politics. — Myra Marx Ferree, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Mary Hawkesworth is professor of political science and women's and gender studies at Rutgers University. She is the author of numerous journal articles and published works, including *Globalization and Feminist Activism* and *Feminist Inquiry*; coauthor of *Women, Democracy and Globalization in North America*; and editor of many books, including *War and Terror: Feminist Perspectives*. She is also the editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.

I'm just not into this book. It has a great overview of feminism. My friends seem to like the book though.

I heard the author speak but couldn't afford the book. I checked on line and found it at an amazing price. thanks so much. i havent read it yet have to wait till school is out

She's got some serious views that are rather bold and forward, but I like the book. It works well with women's issues. I wish I had some page numbers for kindle though. That's turning into a pain in the butt.

I ordered this book for a course I teach on Women, Policy & Politics shortly after it was published. I only had about 30 minutes to skim the book before having to decide whether I'd assign it; as it paid special attention to issues facing women in the developing world - a particular passion of mine - I decided I'd go ahead and try it out this semester. BIG MISTAKE. Not only do my students universally hate it, I personally find it to be an awful-excuse for supposed feminist scholarship. Hawkesworth clearly is one of a variety of 'radical feminists' - but, if that was the only issue then it would be fine as I believe it's a good thing to expose students to an array of views on women's

issues in politics/feminism. Unfortunately, this book is so full of exaggerations, misinformation, lies-by-omission, logical inconsistencies, etc. as to be worthless and, even worse, COUNTERPRODUCTIVE in trying to teach undergraduates about the merits of equality policy and gender perspectives on politics. Hawkesworth is, if this book of pseudo-social scientific research is representative of her broader work, so radical in her positions that she is completely unwilling to accept any other viewpoint, let alone find merit in virtually any existing, or even realistic, policy approach towards any particular 'woman's issue.' While she makes many good points throughout the book, these are wholly undermined by her regular resort to extreme exaggerations, omission of relevant information, complete misunderstanding of particular issues (ESPECIALLY politics of international development) and her use of obscure, often singular studies (many published in her OWN personal academic journal) to justify broad points to which the studies used cannot speak to due to issues of external validity. In my opinion, this book is a clear example of what gives feminism a bad name; it is such a slanted, one-sided, uninformed, hyperbolic, angry text that anyone reading it, including the vast majority of Feminists, will find offensive and disavow as counterproductive to realistic, honest attempts to secure gender equality. Just a few examples of issues I had with this:

1. First and foremost, Hawkesworth seems to believe that EVERY SINGLE POLICY approach ever designed and implemented, and many which have only been suggested, to promote gender equity is somehow sexist. She often examines issues where Feminists disagree and where the societal norms are clearly anti-women, yet in these cases she seems to find EVERY SINGLE argument from each side to be sexist. I don't think you could present a policy approach to the promotion of gender equality that she wouldn't find fault with.
2. Hawkesworth LOVES to 'cherry-pick' facts and lie by omission to promote a radical viewpoint not representative of reality and which is, I believe, counterproductive as anyone knowledgeable about the topic under discussion will immediately recognize the bias and, as a result, not take her seriously even when she actually DOES make an honest, real point of importance.
3. The cherry-picking, lies-by-omission and general lack of academic integrity and honesty appears regularly in several forms: 1.) often times, she presents policies and issues on which a wide-consensus exists regarding how to best empower women in that context and then uses ONE study (and always just one) to somehow prove the broad consensus within the literature wrong. For example, in the SINGLE WORST CHAPTER OF ANY BOOK I'VE EVER ASSIGNED (Chapter 2: From Demography to Development), she notes very briefly, with no citations, that most people - including feminists - find Microfinance to be generally beneficial to women in development. Her discussion of this support uses religious terminology to essentially mock those who believe in this. She then goes on to cite a study on Microfinance in

Uganda that showed a number of questionable practices as an example before moving on into a more general discussion of all the supposedly HORRIBLE things microfinance does to women. However, upon closer examination you will find that all the 'general statements' use a single source - the CASE-STUDY on Uganda. In other words, she uses a case-study of a single country's microfinance programs as an example of what can go wrong and then goes on and talks about Microfinance GENERALLY while using the case-study as her ONLY source (a clear and inappropriate use of inductive reasoning). Yet, 95% of the literature out there suggests that although some of the problems Hawkesworth mentions are real, they are rare or insignificant and, by-and-large, women have benefited tremendously from Microfinance. What makes this even worse is the fact that not only does Hawkesworth use a SINGLE study of ONE COUNTRY misleadingly to talk about general microfinance practices, the study she uses is one by a rather unknown academic which was PUBLISHED IN HAWKESWORTH'S OWN ACADEMIC JOURNAL.⁴ In other cases, Hawkesworth omits information about how particular issues affect men, in particular, to make them seem more genderized and sexist than they are. Her discussion of migrant workers is a good example: she discusses how the number of female migrant workers moving from the developing world to better off countries in order to send remittances back home is rising. This, of course, is true. However, she goes on to talk about the horrible treatment and problems facing these female migrants and ultimately condemns the 'feminization' of migration. Yet, she COMPLETELY FAILS to mention that men still make up the majority, albeit a shrinking one, of migrant workers and that male migrants face just as horrendous of situations as female migrants - with the exception being sexual harassment and fear of being pushed into human/trafficking and the sex trade which she discusses separately. Thus, she characterizes the problems facing migrant workers as a gender issue - implying any good policy dealing with this will take a gendered view - yet, more than half of migrant workers are men and they face equally, if sometimes different, horrendous conditions. Thus, any policy solutions one develops from her argument will not actually address the issue as they will ignore the fact that MOST problems in this area are not, in-fact, gendered but rather they are a result of poverty and underdevelopment. To make things worse, she uses the treatment of Filipina workers as an example, over and over, once again undermining her own (more accurate) argument by relying on a single-case study and flawed inductive reasoning. Even better!?! She spends one paragraph on the problem of human trafficking and sex slavery - very clearly an honestly gendered and heinous problem - and she follows it with an equally long paragraph (indicating that the issue under discussion is just as serious as SEXUAL SLAVERY) discussing how female migration from poor countries to wealthier countries represents a 'redistribution of EMOTIONAL RESOURCES' that

leads to a loss of 'love' in the developing world - it is these types of arguments, and the placement of them on par with actual, legitimate, serious issues like human trafficking, that gives feminism a bad name.⁵ Hawkesworth oversimplifies counter-arguments in a way that makes them look ridiculous, failing to accurately depict them.⁶ Particularly awful is Hawkesworth's continual treatment of EVERY SINGLE POLICY EVER DEvised BY HUMANKIND, EVERY INSTITUTION, EVERY POLITICAL-ECONOMIC SYSTEM and EVEN THE WAY WE ACQUIRE STATISTICS FOR MEASURING ECONOMIC OUTPUT as being incredibly, unbelievably, EVILLY sexist. I don't think you could present a policy to Hawkesworth that she wouldn't construe as evil and sexist. One example, she calls the policy goal of integrating women into the formal economy in developed countries, as not only misguided and not conducive to development (in opposition to virtually every expert on development and development economist regardless of ideology), but as EVIL. Most Feminists (including Henderson & Jeydel who have written a MUCH, MUCH better text covering these same issues) ascribe to this evil, supposedly sexist viewpoint.^{6.B} To make 6 worse, it illustrates her regular lack of logical coherence as well. While she argues that development experts consider the integration of women into the formal sector to be a 'panacea' to end sexism (which is not misleading - it is an OUTRIGHT LIE as that has not been the position of even the most conservative development economist since at least the early 1980s) and then declares that viewpoint not only wrong but 'evil', she goes on to discuss how women face unfair, sexist treatment in the informal sector (which is the part of the economy that is not in the formal sector) and woes the fact that women are disproportionately employed in the informal sector and therefore denied the benefits available to those employed in the formal sector (seemingly implying that women SHOULD be employed in formal sectors which she already called 'evil'). She then goes on to talk about how women are exploited and forced to do back-breaking labor for up to 18 hours every day in the 'subsistence sector' (which is actually part of the informal sector, indicating her complete lack of education in development theory and economics) which is also 'sexist' (I agree here). Thus, employment in the informal or formal sector (ie. THE ENTIRE ECONOMY) is 'evil' and sexist. She also talks about the terrible process and problems of the 'feminization of the informal sector' and the 'feminization of the formal sector' (which implies that every aspect of the economy is feminizing, making the concept practically meaningless); along with the 'feminization of migration' (men still are more likely to be migrants than women), the 'feminization of the industrial sector' (which she earlier criticizes for employing TOO FEW WOMEN and being biased in favor of men), the 'feminization of the service sector' (which is more accurate, though fails to acknowledge that this is likely beneficial to women in the LONG-RUN), and the 'feminization of the agricultural sector' -- in

other words, the three sectors comprising the formal economy are ALL undergoing feminization? As is the only part of the economy that is informal? How is it that ALL sectors of the economy, and therefore ALL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, is being 'feminized.'? Doesn't this eradicate the analytical utility of this concept? No matter what, every single policy, process, etc. that she discusses she construes as being hateful, sexist and cruel - including many policies and processes that the vast majority of feminists support (who she also tends to deride as being too stupid to understand how evil policies are towards women). She even insults ALL development experts, not just economists and regardless of their ideology, as being anti-women and evil, and she insults political scientists generally and those studying comparative politics, particularly, for the same reasons - apparently these professional fields of study, despite being characterized by an array of ideologies and employing many feminists, are all cruel and evil. Her insults of every part of economic activity (and economic activity) clearly lacks coherence and is illogical, though she does come out at one point and provide a rationale for this: she believes that capitalism (in any form?) is evil and sexist, she also seems to believe that states are naturally sexist, that all government is sexist... going so far as to suggest that we should eradicate all states and all international governance in favor of a decentralized political system of... I s*** you not... COMMUNES where everyone shares all they make with each other and all people are full of love! I could go on, but I will refrain. Suffice it to say, this is the single worst, most hyperbolic, uninformative, misleading, lying book, article, etc. I've ever read, let alone assigned to my undergraduate students. The fact that even the most ardent feminists in my class find Hawkesworth to be a liar, unfair and sexist towards men speaks volumes. To conclude, DO NOT ASSIGN THIS BOOK TO YOUR STUDENTS and only read it if you want a good example of precisely how NOT to do academic research.⁶ I could go on and on, but you should get the gist of this now. I wanted my students to read a more radical feminist take on women's issues, particularly as they apply to developing countries, that they could contrast with mainstream FEMINIST views and more traditional views. Unfortunately, Hawkesworth isn't just radical, she's willing (consciously, I believe, though perhaps subconsciously in parts) to outright lie, lie by omission, exaggerate, over-simplify, etc in order to make her points. At times, she honestly comes off as sexist against men at times (and I don't level this charge lightly; I may be a male, but I am gay and a social democrat - I'm often much more of a feminist and far more liberal on women's issues than the majority of WOMEN taking my class - I rarely find any legitimacy in claims that identity politics arguments are 'reverse discrimination,' but in this case that is the only way to characterize this).

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