



# Resisting Citizenship: Feminist Essays on Politics, Community, and Democracy

By Martha A. Ackelsberg

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Political participation in America—supposedly the world’s strongest democracy—is startlingly low, and many of the civil rights and economic equity initiatives that were instituted in the 1960s and '70s have been abandoned, as significant proportions of the populace seem to believe that the civil rights battle has been won. However, rates of collective engagement, like community activism, are surprisingly high. In *Resisting Citizenship*, renowned feminist political scientist Martha Ackelsberg argues that community activism may hold important clues to reviving democracy in this time of growing bureaucratization and inequality.

This book brings together many of Ackelsberg’s writings over the past 25 years, combining her own field work and interviews with cutting edge research and theory on democracy and activism. She explores these efforts in order to draw lessons—and attempt to incorporate knowledge—about current notions of democracy from those who engage in "non-traditional" participation, those who have, in many respects, been relegated to the margins of political life in the United States.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"How might our understanding of democracy change if democratic politics entailed a serious commitment to eradicate the pervasive inequalities that structure citizens' lives? In *Resisting Citizenship*, Martha Ackelsberg envisions a mode of democratic practice that could transform communities and public policy in the United States and offers provocative insights about how to foster such transformative practices."

?Mary Hawkesworth, Rutgers University.

"Few scholars bring theory to bear on lived activist?and feminist?politics as lucidly as Ackelsberg does. *Resisting Citizenship* unpacks with extraordinary analytic clarity the complicated histories and problematic dichotomies surrounding the private and public, dependency and autonomy, individual and community. A superb book."

?Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, Cornell University

"Drawing on examples that span the globe and the era of modern democracy, Martha Ackelsberg deepens our appreciation for women's activism and thinking about power and community. From anarchism to electoral politics, from rural protest to urban community organizing, she highlights how ordinary people, too often ignored in political science, can create political change and alter the very meaning of democracy."

?Joan Tronto, Hunter College

"As this collection of extraordinary essays written over the last three decades demonstrates, Martha A. Ackelsberg has been a trailblazer in examining the interrelationships among feminism, grassroots activism, and democratic theory and practice. Ackelsberg uses the prism of gender to challenge us to rethink some of our most basic political concepts, including citizenship, community, participation, the public/private split, independence, and even politics itself."

?Susan J. Carroll, Rutgers University

"This compilation of essays is cause for celebration and sustained reflection by feminist scholars who are engaged with issues of political participation, mobilization, and democratization. Martha Ackelsberg's political-theoretical interventions into conventional and disciplinary tropes of the political, the public/private distinction, and citizenship, informed by her thoughtful attention to the practical knowledges and accomplishments of women activists, offer critical and productive insights into vital possibilities for contemporary research and theory."

?Christine Di Stefano, University of Washington

About the Author

**Martha Ackelsberg** is Five College Fortieth Anniversary Professor in the political science department at Smith College. Her research and teaching interests are in applied democratic theory, urban politics, and feminist theory.

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