Book Reviews: Citizenship Rites: Feminist Soldiers and Feminist Antimilitarists by Ilene Rose Feinman; Gender and Immigration by Gregory Kelson and Debra L. DeLaet; Still Counting: Women in Politics Across Canada by Linda Trimble and Jane Arscott

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racy is a form of government only because it is a form of moral and spiritual association." Beyond the lack of trust, beyond utility, beyond democratic deficits, beyond competing conceptions of the good lies a foundational and pre-political consideration that emerges first from common, lived experiences of rationality, and from shared hopes for dignity. Within this frame democratic theory need not be sheltered from (or even hedged against) a priori considerations, but rather depends on moral and spiritual considerations that precede all political arrangements. All of the authors collected in these volumes point toward this truth, yet the work of democratic theory that fully avails itself of those considerations has not yet been written.

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These three diverse books ask interesting questions about the status of women internationally. Feinman examines a split in the feminist movement between feminist anti-militarists and liberal feminists who seek equal opportunities within the military. Kelson and DeLaet compile a fascinating collection of essays that analyze the experience of women from primarily developing countries who immigrate to the developed nations of Australia, Canada, Israel, and the United States.
Trimble and Arscott’s book is the most conventional Political Science text, with its focus on women in elected positions in the Canadian government and its empirical approach.

While very different in tone and approach, the books touch upon complementary themes. Feinman and the authors in the Kelson and DeLaet compilation examine how public policies—military and immigration—impact women differentially. Similarly Trimble and Arscott, and Feinman, explore how women may participate fully in the public spheres, either as elected or appointed government officials, or as “first class citizens” through military service. Finally, all three works draw upon feminist theory as a way in which to analyze the information presented.

This essay will review each of the books in turn, in the order in which they are listed above.

Ilene Rose Feinman’s *Citizenship Rites: Feminist Soldiers and Feminist Antimilitarists* is a book that over promises and subsequently falls short. Feinman discloses early in the book that she is a feminist antimilitarist who planned and participated in several acts of protest and civil disobedience in the 1980s and 1990s. Feinman sets out to explore the differences in philosophy between the feminist antimilitarists and women, some feminist, who aspire to military careers. She seeks to answer the question of why some women aspire to “first class citizenship” through military service. While Feinman addresses several issues related to antimilitarism and women soldiers, in the end she fails to answer the central question of her book.

One gets the impression that fueling Feinman’s investigation is her profound puzzlement that any women are interested in the quintessentially male organization of the military. As such, she seems to reduce women to the same generalizations of a century ago: that women are peace-loving because of their roles as bearers and nurturers of children. Wars, which kill mothers’ children, are antithetical to women’s values and are a violent, quintessentially masculine enterprise. Feinman has difficulty understanding how women might be attracted to and aspire to military careers.

Feinman’s discussion of women soldiers is the most valuable part of the book. She provides an excellent history of women’s military experience, and the recent policy changes that have led to an increasing per-
centage of women in active duty ranks. Feinman also reports valuable statistics on the demographics of women soldiers; for example they are disproportionately black, single parents and in the infantry, a branch of the military that requires fewer technical skills than other parts of the military.

Feinman also discusses how the military’s prohibitions against women serving in combat roles, and the military’s uneasiness with homosexuals, both discriminate against women and can limit their career prospects. Some of the stereotypes held by male military leaders are quite archaic. For example, Feinman quotes a 1990 naval memorandum that stated that lesbians could be identified by “their appearance as ‘hard working, career-oriented, willing to put in long hours in the job and [being] among the command’s top professionals’” (p. 165).

The analysis of feminist antimilitarists, however, is cursory and repetitive. She tends to make a statement about feminist antimilitarists, and then say, “[author] explores this idea in more depth,” without providing further elaboration. Feinman’s discussion of antimilitarists’ civil actions focus on two events in which she participated, the “Mothers and Others March” and the “Women’s Action Against the Pentagon.” Descriptions of other actions, or any discussion of how widespread this movement might be, are missing. In addition, she provides no discussion of how effective these actions were. Did they set the agenda, result in media coverage, or move public policy? These questions are not answered.

Another way in which Feinman overstates her case is in her analysis of film depictions of women soldiers. She chooses three films: Private Benjamin, Top Gun, and GI Jane. Her commentaries on each are short and none are rooted in any literature on film critique or political communication. Indeed, there is no discussion of how she chose these three films in particular, or how representative they are of the genre. Similarly, there is no discussion of whether Hollywood’s depiction is an accurate substitute for public opinion or the attitudes of military leadership. Indeed, a comprehensive analysis of cinematic representations of women in the military is a subject that goes far beyond Feinman’s book.

Much more satisfying is Gender and Immigration, which asks a narrower question and answers it in a nuanced, careful way. Since most
studies of immigration focus on the male worker, Kelson and DeLaet seek to understand how women experience immigration and are affected by immigration policies. The chapters in the compilation address women in widely differing social, cultural and economic circumstances. The case studies are moving, fascinating, diverse, and methodologically rigorous. I highly recommend it to scholars of immigration policy, gender, and comparative politics.

The case studies examine the experiences of women immigrating to El Paso, Texas from Mexico, to Israel from Russia, to Australia from Asia, to Canada from Sri Lanka and from several countries to either the European Union or the United States. Two case studies of immigrant women in the United States examine women with widely different levels of individual agency: women from developing nations who are university faculty and those who come as "mail order brides." Two case studies focus on immigrant women as business owners or partners. The Australian case focused on Asian immigrant women business owners, usually those who owned restaurants, ethnic groceries, or laundries. One U.S. case study examined the lives of women from India who participate in family-owned hotels/motel businesses.

The American myth holds that immigrants flocked to American shores in search of a better life. This is also assumed to be the reason for immigration to other developed countries: educational and economic opportunity and freedom from oppression and the effects of war. However, these essays paint quite a different picture of immigrant women’s lives. Instead, these essays document in numerous ways that the lives of immigrant women are difficult. These women are socially isolated, and often subject to the will and whims of their husbands. Immigrant women who were professionals in their country of origin usually lose professional status and income due to language barriers and difficulty transferring professional credentials. Immigrant women are subject to hard work; those involved in individually- or family-owned businesses described long hours of physical, demanding labor.

Sex is another source of oppression. Russian immigrant women to Israel were stereotyped as "loose." They often suffered sexual harassment at work and had to fend off sexual solicitation from males. Mail order brides are depicted as compliant and sexually adventurous. The literature targeted to prospective husbands claims that they will not be
as independent and troublesome as feminist American women. Tamil immigrants to Canada often suffer sexual abuse and violence at the hands of their male partners.

Compounding their situations, immigrant women have few legal protections, and access to few social services in their new homes. Again, language and cultural barriers, and complete dependence upon male partners, inhibits immigrant women from knowing that assistance may be available, and seeking out the assistance. Yet, even the most advantaged immigrant women, those working as faculty members in American universities, reported being confronted with racism, sexism, and nativism from students and colleagues alike.

The final work, *Still Counting: Women in Politics Across Canada* by Linda Trimble and Jane Arscott, is an in-depth examination of the status of women in Canadian government. This short, readable book is chock full of information about the status of women in Canadian national government and in provincial and territorial governments. As such the book provides a nice introduction to Canadian politics and its parliamentary system as well as a systematic analysis of women’s place in it. The authors also host a web site (http://stillcounting.athabascau.ca), which updates the data presented in the book.

Trimble and Arscott frame their analysis around two central concepts: half-of-a-half and the electoral glass ceiling. As in the United States, Canadian women appear to have leveled off at about 20% of the seats in national and sub-national parliaments. Therefore, women have reached less than half of the 50% representation that one would expect in a perfectly egalitarian society. The authors explore many reasons for this phenomenon. One is the electoral glass ceiling: the unwillingness of party leaders to allow women to run in winnable “ridings” (districts), inadequate support in campaigns and a sense of complacency. The latter derives from a sense that because Canada fares well in comparison to the U.S. and Great Britain, the problem of women’s representation is largely solved.

The electoral glass ceiling also extends to party leadership positions, which are the key to executive appointments in the Canadian system. Canada is one of the few countries in the world that has had a female Prime Minister, Kim Campbell (PC), who served for four
months in 1993. Yet Trimble and Arscott point out women are chosen to lead political parties when they are in crisis—factionalized, decimated, or moribund. When the women are unable to resurrect the parties, their failure is blamed upon inept leadership skills, rather than the hopeless situation the parties face.

Trimble and Arscott have compiled a great deal of information, including a complete catalog of all women who have served as party leaders or in national and sub-national parliaments. While they catalog the “firsts,” the authors also caution that focusing on “firsts” may lead one to ignore those who are more important, but came later. They also pepper their analysis with anecdotes about women’s experiences in Canadian government, which demonstrates that sexism continues to exist. I recommend this work to scholars and students of Canadian politics, legislatures and women’s studies.

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