Politics, Gender, and Concepts

A critique of concepts has been central to feminist scholarship since its inception. However, while gender scholars have identified the analytical gaps in existing social science concepts, few have systematically mapped out a gendered approach to issues in political analysis and theory development. This volume addresses this important gap in the literature by exploring the methodology of concept construction and critique, which is a crucial step to disciplined empirical analysis, research design, causal explanations, and testing hypotheses. Leading gender and politics scholars use a common framework to discuss methodological issues in some of the core concepts of feminist research in political science, including representation, democracy, welfare state governance, and political participation. This is an invaluable work for researchers and students in women’s studies and political science.

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Acknowledgments

This book is a collective effort on a variety of levels. It builds from a host of scholarly work on concept formation and gender and politics across a variety of sub-areas of political science. We hope we have fully recognized the scholars who have contributed to this body of work in the pages that follow. More specifically, we would like to recognize the collaborative spirit of all of the contributors, who respected the structure of the guidelines, followed the timeline of the project, and most importantly brought an incredibly rich and deep knowledge of their areas of expertise to the project. Without their dedication and cooperation this book would never have seen the light of day. Two panels cosponsored by the Women and Politics and Qualitative Methods Divisions of the American Political Science Association in 2005 and 2006 gave us the crucial forum to develop and fine-tune the book as a group.

Shirin Rai provided us with priceless advice throughout the entire project. We would also like to thank Karen Beckwith, Lisa Baldez, Mala Htun, David Collier, Joni Lovenduski, and Birgit Sauer for their input at various stages of the project. The comments of the anonymous reviewers also greatly strengthened the final manuscript. Our respective departments at Washington State University and Arizona State University furnished us with the all-important infrastructure and support for the completion of this book as well. It has been a distinct pleasure to work with John Haslam at Cambridge University Press, whose enthusiasm for the book made our jobs a delight from beginning to end.

December 1, 2007

Amy G. Mazur and Gary Goertz