

her own. Her conclusions, in general, are quite persuasive. In addition, her book is also one of very few accounts of transnational feminist advocacy in Russia that carries the story well into the 2000s, when Russian feminist organizations were scrambling to adjust to new funding constraints.

Still, this reviewer would have preferred if Johnson had strayed a little more frequently from the heroic narrative of global feminism to consider more closely the workings of politics and power within these advocacy networks. One wonders, for example, how the disparity of resources between the local and transnational feminists, who were themselves constrained by the priorities of donors, may have preempted more indigenous debates about Russian women's economic plight. It would also have been useful had she considered in more detail the tensions within the Russian network against domestic violence, between the organizations in Moscow and those in the regions, or between those funded by outside donors and others funded by the state. Again, Johnson recognizes these issues but dispatches them quickly, even though they may help explain why the movement collapsed so quickly when funding ceased.

In sum, *Gender Violence in Russia* provides an excellent account of the trials and tribulations of global feminism in Russia during this last, difficult decade. For a more fine-grained analysis of the intersections between transnational feminism and Russian society, though, one should supplement a reading of this book with recent work by Julie Hemment (*Empowering Women in Russia: Activism, Aid and NGOs*, 2007) and Suvi Salmenniemi (*Democratization and Gender in Contemporary Russia*, 2008).

Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and Methodology.
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Brooke Ackerly
Vanderbilt University

Editors Gary Goertz and Amy Mazur define their book as filling a gap in the study of political science (pp. 3–4). Their solution is to set out a methodology for theorizing about concepts in the form of 10 guidelines,

followed by nine substantive chapters in which experts in a range of fields use (and resist) these guidelines in an effort to give a meaningful account of nine concepts that are of common usage in the study of politics and gender.

“Feminist political science” is political science that is informed by the vast theoretical and empirical work that has helped and can help rethink key concepts in social and political science. Some of these concepts relate explicitly to gender power dynamics, such as “gender ideology,” “intersectionality,” or “state feminism” (discussed in chapters by Georgia Duerst-Lahti, Laurel Weldon, and Amy Mazur and Dorothy McBride, respectively) and other concepts do not, such as “democracy,” “representation,” and “governance” (discussed by Pamela Paxton, Karen Celis, and Georgina Waylen, respectively). While most feminists would agree with the premise of the book, that there is not enough work on concepts, they (including the contributors) would disagree with the editors’ diagnosis that the gap is caused by scholars not knowing the importance of clear concepts for empirical research.

As the contributors show, concepts in political science are terrains of political debate. The 10 guidelines they explicate — context, traveling, causal relationships, naming, negation, zones, dimensions, necessity, interdependence, and operationalization — each have dimensions in which meaning might be or has been disputed; yet the editors encourage the follower of their guidelines to find ways to fix that meaning. Thus, it seems that the editors and at least some of the contributors are working with competing theories of “concepts” (see p. 12 and p. 15 n. 1). The second theory is more common in feminist empirical research and requires some corollaries to the Goertz and Mazur guidelines.

In positivist and neopositivist empirical research, concepts are the *building blocks of research*. We define our concepts and specify our variables for studying those concepts. In constructive, critical, and deconstructive empirical research, concepts are the building blocks of research in a more foundational sense: They are *the building blocks of our questions*. Social scientists working within this latter approach begin their inquiry with the study of the power dynamics that created these concepts before using them as the building blocks of research.

Both approaches incorporate empirical notions of concepts. However, Goertz and Mazur render the empirical questions of the second notion of concept invisible and, consequently, the *work* of some of the contributors to their volume — for example, Paxton’s work on the concept of democracy (“Women’s Suffrage in the Measurement of

Democracy: Problems of Operationalization,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35 [no. 3, 2000]: 92–111) and Laurel Weldon’s these two changes are necessary for parallelism on intersectionality (“The Structure of Intersectionality: A Comparative Politics of Gender,” *Politics & Gender* 2 [June 2006]: 235–48) – invisible. Further, after reflecting on the complexity at stake in the concepts they are studying, many scholars find it difficult to conceptualize in a way that can be operationalized and studied empirically, but they figure out ways to do so, often facing great challenges in finding the data they need to study their concept because their “concept” has not historically been politically important enough for data to have already been collected (for example, see Clair Apodaca, “Overcoming Obstacles in Quantitative Feminist Research,” *Politics & Gender* 5 [September 2009]: 419–26; Mary Caprioli, “Making Choices,” *Politics & Gender* 5 [September 2009]: 426–31; and Laura Parisi, “The Numbers Do(n’t) Always Add Up: Dilemmas in Using Quantitative Research Methods in Feminist IR Scholarship,” *Politics & Gender* 5 [September 2009]: 410–19).

To show others how to get clear about the concepts at stake in a research question, feminist political scientists want to teach how to work through debates. In the view of the editors, we can attend to the debates about a concept with a “unified methodological approach to concepts” (p. 14). From a perspective informed by feminists’ critical work in rethinking key concepts of social science inquiry, an attempt at a “unified methodological approach to concepts” would discipline our study of concepts in a way that risks obfuscating the scholarly (and political) import of the debates that we have had about these concepts. The oft-cited exchange between Ann Tickner and Bob Keohane about feminists’ work on concepts could be read as a debate in the mainstream journal of U.S.- based international relations about two understandings of concepts – as building blocks of research on questions already formed or as building blocks from which we might form our questions (Robert O. Keohane, “Beyond Dichotomy: Conversations between International Relations and Feminist Theory,” *International Studies Quarterly* 42 [no. 1, 1998]: 193–98; J. Ann Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements between Feminists and IR Theorists,” *International Studies Quarterly* 41 [no. 4 1997]: 611–32).

The 10 guidelines may be necessary or a good start, but they are only a part of a theory of concepts and only part of a methodology for defining our concepts. For example, if we study the “context” of the concept of

“concept,” we see that there are at least two competing theories of concepts: 1) that concepts need to be studied with a “unified approach” and 2) that the meaning of *concept* is itself a terrain of contestation often about the meaning of other concepts. The implication of these contested meanings of concepts for the methodology of the study of concepts is that we need to add a corollary guideline to the theory and methodology of concepts:

What are the dominant and less visible accounts of the concept? When the meaning of the concept became visibly less contested, what were the interests and questions that “lost” the contestation and what is the status of those concepts now? The “context” corollary is a contestation corollary; when we study a concept we need to take an interest in the theory, history, cultural, and geographic *contestations* of the concept.

This corollary recommends analogous corollaries to the other guidelines. A social scientist who sees the concept of concepts as contested needs to attend to that contestation in the construction of those guidelines that he or she will use to define the concepts of his or her research. There is nothing in the Goertz and Mazur guidelines that requires the researcher to explore 1) the implications of the *debates* about the concept of concepts for the study of his or her question and 2) the adequacy of the guidelines for studying a particular concept.

It is troubling that this work will be most useful to those who wish to do research on concepts in which gender is a principle dynamic but who lack the interest in doing their own conceptual work. If the book is used in courses, I recommend two assignments. First, assign each student a concept to define and invite students to derive their own guidelines or questions for studying and defining that concept. Second, invite the students to pretend that they are helping an author of this book write the chapter on governance or development, for example, and ask them to reflect on the ways in which the guidelines make it difficult for the contributors to reveal the key issues at stake in the conceptualization of the project.

The contributors to the volume draw attention to contestation in their discussions (e.g., Cellis), but ironically, this attention to contestation does not extend to the editors.