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Chapter 1

Introduction

This book explores questions about feminist political analysis. What does it mean to do political analysis from a gender perspective? Why and how to do it? By *political analysis* – borrowing from Colin Hay (2002) – we mean the diversity of analytical strategies developed around 'the political'. Since the political has to do with the 'distribution, exercise, and consequences of power', political analysis focuses on the analysis of 'power relations' (Hay 2002: 3). Power itself is a contested concept that is theorized and studied in a variety of ways with variety of methods (Lukes 2005). Thus, the conceptualization of the political is inextricably connected to distinct interpretations of power.

For those who conceive power as conflictual, 'the political' is a space of 'antagonism' and contestation 'constitutive of human societies' that 'politics' tries to organize through institutions and practices (Mouffe 2005: 9). Those, by contrast, who are inspired by a more consensual notion of power such as Hannah Arendt (1970: 52), for whom power arises 'whenever people get together and act in concert', see the political as a site of collective empowerment through public deliberation and coordinated action to achieve a common goal.

Feminist theorists often prefer a definition of power as the 'interplay between domination and empowerment, between power and counterpower' (Allen 1999: 18) and see the political as a space where unequal relations are continuously produced and transformed and where the public sphere is just as important as the private (Pateman 1983). For scholars taking a poststructuralist approach inspired by Michel Foucault (1978), power is an omnipresent relation that produces subjects through practices and discourses, and the political is the result of an ongoing process of discursive construction between social actors that define what is important and what is to be challenged (Onuf 1989; Bacchi 1999; Rönnblom 2009). This is just a brief account of the many different conceptualizations of the political that have been proposed.

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Our aim in this book is to provide ways to navigate through these various definitions of the political and power from different feminist perspectives. The book will explore the contribution that gender approaches offer to the analysis of political phenomena and concepts. Since any political science perspective offers only a partial and partisan analysis of political and social reality, we will also discuss some of the limitations of each approach for doing political analysis. Our intention is to explore questions of feminist political analysis with a self-conscious and reflexive openness, which involves not only making explicit our own analytical and contextual origins but also recognizing the variety of gender and politics approaches as something valuable in itself.

The field of politics has created its own canons and hierarchies, which do not always make it easy for different approaches to enter the mainstream of political science and be legitimately recognized and adopted despite their analytical purchase. In other words, dominant approaches in political science today still tend to consider gender and politics a marginal field of political science, and influence the type of feminist approaches that are more accepted within the mainstream of the discipline. Let's take an example from what is, in our view, a text on political analysis that is more open to analytical pluralism. In his mapping of the mainstream of political science, Colin Hay (2002: 7–29) argues that rational choice theory, behaviouralism and new institutionalism are considered the main approaches in mainstream political science. Hay's textbook includes a broad definition of the political that covers both public and private issues and welcomes the emergence of alternative analytical approaches to political analysis.

Considering this openness to analytical pluralism, two points are worth noting to situate today's approaches to political analysis: first, feminist approaches, despite being mentioned as a challenge to 'malestream political analysis', are not given much relevance for doing political analysis. Indeed, gender and sexuality do not even appear in the index of Hay's book and the term 'queer' is not used once (Smith and Lee 2015: 53). Second, while constructivist and postmodern approaches are discussed more extensively, Hay states that the inclusion of constructivism and postmodernism in the mainstream is 'more contentious' (Hay 2002: 14). Despite its 'inexorable rise', constructivism supposedly 'still has much to prove – *not least its scientific status and its substantive contribution to the understanding of world politics*' (Hay 2002: 14, our emphasis). Postmodernism is even less potentially part of the mainstream because it is a 'challenge to the very notion of a mainstream' (Hay 2002: 16).

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This mapping of approaches to political analysis, coming from a scholar who welcomes analytical pluralism, is interesting for the purpose of our endeavour because it informs what approaches are more legitimate and 'canonical' in the discipline of politics today and what are still considered more controversial. It also speaks of absences in the mainstream, which do not come as a surprise but nevertheless need to be made visible: feminist approaches do not appear in this mapping. Gender scholars have criticized political science textbooks for their inaccurate account of gender and politics concepts. This is, for instance, the case with Andrew Heywood's introductory *Politics* textbook (2013, 4th edition) that has received a protest letter from the gender and politics standing groups of US, UK and European political science associations with regard to its inaccurate treatment of the concept of descriptive representation.

The protest letter challenged Heywood's claim that the concept of descriptive representation, especially through electoral quotas, would be dangerous to democracy because supposedly only women could represent women and only members of minority groups could represent the interests of that group, a claim which the gender and politics literature does not make at all (PSA Women & Politics Specialist Group 2016). The letter clarified that what women and politics research actually claims is: that the argument for descriptive representation was developed to promote the participation of historically underrepresented citizens, and that therefore methods for correcting women's exclusion from elected bodies can foster democracy rather than undermine it.

This is not to say that all political science ignores gender theory. The follow-up of the protest letter of the Women and Politics Specialist Group was a positive response on the part of both the author of the *Politics* textbook and Palgrave Macmillan, assuring that in the next edition of the volume they would address the concept of descriptive representation in light of the received comments. Another example of increasing concern for gender issues in political studies is the American Political Science Association's recommendation, in 'The Wahlke Report', to mainstream gender into politics courses (Wahlke 1991). Textbooks that mainstream gender into political science are growing (see, for example, Goertz and Mazur 2008; Abels and Mushaben 2012; Lois and Alonso 2014; Abels and MacRae 2016), and articles on the mainstreaming of gender into political science research and teaching helpfully provide a state of the art and practical recommendations for gendering the discipline (see the special issues by Mügge, Evans and Engeli 2016, by Ackerly and Mügge 2016, and by Lovenduski 1998; Siim 2004; Tolleson-Rinehart

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and Carroll 2006; Dahlerup 2010; Eerzel and Mügge 2016; Mazur 2016). Drawing on the rich and diverse gender and politics research, the argument of our book is precisely that feminist approaches have much to contribute to political analysis and political science in general, since they offer important insights 'for the understanding of politics as a whole' (Mügge, Evans and Engeli 2016: 2).

Feminist political analysis: a link between theory and praxis

What is distinctive about feminist political analysis? What can gender analysis contribute to understanding and explaining politics? Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True (2011: 63) suggest that 'gender analysis opens up a whole landscape of new research questions as well as giving us tools to rethink old research questions'. They continue to explain how 'gender as an analytic category can illuminate new areas of inquiry, frame research questions or puzzles in need of exploration and "provide concepts, definitions and hypothesis to guide research"' (Hawkesworth 2005: 141). In other words, gender requires political analysis to rethink research questions, what is studied and how it is done, the concepts, theories and methods.

Our book is very much about these analytical concepts and the thematic issues that feminist approaches require political analysis to rethink. Hence in the substantive chapters we focus not only on 'gender' but on the key concepts of political analysis – power, agency and institutions – and the key issues in political analysis – polity, politics and policy. While this is not a book about methods, the concepts are closely tied to broader methodological questions (Ackerly and True 2011).

We approach political analysis as the analytical strategy that helps the researcher to move from theory to practice and back again. A fundamental tenet of feminism is that 'theory is always coextensive with practice' (Hirsch and Fox Keller 1990: 2). We suggest that, in the field of politics, it is political analysis that does this job and that gender analysis is particularly apt for linking the two (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 *Political analysis as the link between theory and praxis*

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One can also argue that politics as a discipline is in special need of connecting theory and praxis. We are living in times of austerity politics adopted in response to the ongoing economic crisis, war at the borders of the European Union, the rise of nationalisms, refugee crises, xenophobic and populist parties in Europe, processes of de-democratization, and at a global level the consequences of climate change, among other challenges. To be able to make sense of these political developments, their effects and gendered, classed or racialized significance, we need to establish a connection between theory and praxis, between what we theorize and what we practice. Some would say this connection is also needed if we wish to contribute to making this world a more just and equal place. To reiterate, political analysis in general, and feminist political analysis in particular, can be understood as attempts to maintain this link between theory and praxis.

Feminist analyses contribute to link theory and praxis for a number of reasons. First, they talk about equality between people, addressing both the theory of equality and how to put equality into practice. They deal with problems of increasingly diverse societies and complex intersections between class, gender, race and sexuality inequalities. The search for more sophisticated political analyses is aimed at making policies that are more inclusive of people's diverse concerns. Since dealing with equality and diversity in practice is at the core of feminist analyses, it has made the discipline more open to continuous contestations of unequal norms and practices within the discipline itself. Theorizing equality, then, is not detached from what is going on in the real world but rather engaged with it, questioning power hierarchies and looking for ways to put equality into everyday practice. As Carole Pateman would say: 'Democratic ideals and politics have to be put into practice in the kitchen, the nursery, and the bedroom' (Pateman 1995: 222).

Second, feminist analyses have expanded the borders of 'the political' to include gender relations and issues formerly considered private. The famous feminist slogan 'the personal is political' is a good example of the link between theory and praxis. Feminist scholars have demonstrated that power relations are not abstract but rather embodied in gendered subjects. Two main consequences for conceptualizing 'the political' follow from this: the first is that power relations and values are considered gendered, as well as racialized, classed or sexualized, because they reproduce gender norms and biases against women; the second is that the political includes both public and private/personal issues, which means that care, violence against women or sexual and reproductive rights are political issues as important as finance,

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agriculture or defence (Pateman 1983; Okin 1989; Benhabib 1992; Hawkesworth 1994; Fraser 1997). In other words, feminist analyses consider issues formerly defined as personal – or that are still de facto marginalized in politics in spite of their inclusion in existing legislation – such as sexual violence or childcare, as highly political.

Third, feminist political analysis is particularly apt to link theory and praxis because of its normative component. This component, on the one hand has made feminist political analysis vulnerable to critiques of being ideological in the eyes of mainstream political science. On the other hand, however, the normative aspect of the feminist project is a distinctive character that adds to the strength of the feminist project for explaining, understanding and changing the real world through political analysis. Feminism implies activism because it is a commitment to change relations of male domination of women and promote gender equality (Ferree 2006; Ewig and Ferree 2013). It is also possible to do gender and political analysis without subscribing to the feminist project of societal change (see Chapter 2 on the use of gender as a variable; see also Ackerly and True 2011), though in this case the link between feminist theory and praxis is weak or absent, depending on the studies considered.

Rather than simply aiming at describing and explaining 'the political', feminist political analyses, then, seek to promote gender equality, difference or diversity (Squires 1999, 2007) in social relations. This interest in transformative political practice marks feminist political analysis as both an empirical and a normative project. Feminist political analyses on the one hand study how gender power relations are constituted, reproduced and counteracted by political actors in a variety of political processes, institutional settings and policy-making; and on the other assess how these institutions, processes and policies could be changed to contribute to a more gender-equal world. This normative element that is present in political theory is extremely relevant for the praxis too, because as Wendy Brown reminds us, political theory is speculative work that provokes thinking and imagination through the 'production of a new representation' of the world (Brown 2002: 574). Political praxis needs to be fed by theory to envision what to do. Feminist scholars often link theory and practice – engaging in activism – in their daily work as political scientists studying inequalities and striving for social transformation towards greater gender equality in their home, their work and their social and political community (Celis et al. 2013).

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If political analysis is an attempt to keep the link between theory and praxis alive, and feminist analyses of the political contribute to this endeavour for the reasons we have discussed so far, gender and political analysis are also beneficial to political science as it exists today (Ackerly and Mügge 2016; Erzeel and Mügge 2016; Mügge, Evans and Engeli 2016). As Wendy Brown (2002) argues, connecting theory and political praxis is, indeed, needed to prevent debates within increasingly professionalized disciplines such as political science, from becoming self-referential and thus narrow their analytical and imaginative capacities. Brown's critique is that US political science has become a professionalized discipline that is accountable only to itself, where political scientists are their own audience and judges, and whose existence is justified by peer-reviewed journals, conferences and prizes (Brown 2002: 565). According to Breny Mendoza (2012: 47), 'this has led to a political theorization that is more preoccupied with electoral systems, political parties, governance, polls, and only marginally with political cultures and disenchantment with liberal democracy'. Electoral and party issues are indeed important objects of political analysis, also from a gender perspective.

What Mendoza criticizes is that due to this electoral focus 'issues of gender, race, and sexuality are painfully absent from political science curricula' (Mendoza 2012: 47). Since most countries have US political science as the referent, argues Mendoza (2012: 35) from the Latin American context, the question is how can political science and 'how can political theory be decolonized?'. Addressing issues of equality and diversity that directly affect people's lives, as feminist political analyses do, is one way to reconnect political science to social reality. But to what extent is 'feminist political analysis' a recognized field within political science?

Feminist political analysis within political science

Political science and International Relations (IR) are an important context for the development of studies on feminist political analysis. Dominant approaches in the disciplines of politics and world politics affect the recognition of gender studies in the field and influence the emergence and marginalization of particular feminist approaches to political analysis. Liza Mügge, Elizabeth Evans and Isabelle Engeli (2016: 2) argue that 'Gender scholarship is gradually becoming part of mainstream political science, while retaining its distinct identity'.

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Indicators of this are the fact that gender and politics publications are increasingly present in political science journals that do not specialize in gender; new gender-specialized political science book series have been created; and gender and politics research is now embedded in the work of national and international political science associations.

At the same time, many studies have illustrated how teaching gender is marginalized or non-existent in most UK and US political science departments (Childs and Krook 2006; Foster et al. 2013: 13; Ackerly and Mügge 2016; Mügge, Evans and Engeli 2016: 2). In their study of citational practices in political science, titled 'What's Queer About Political Science?', Nicola Smith and Donna Lee (2015: 50) write:

> Far from being the broad and inclusive discipline it purports to be in modern textbooks, today's political science is consciously marginalising issues of gender and sexuality and hardly doing justice to the political analysis of social relations that queer theorists have been successfully doing for quite some time.

They argue that there is a sharp discrepancy in this sense between political science, on the one hand, and other social sciences and humanities, on the other, suggesting that the policing of disciplinary boundaries, epistemologies and analytical approaches is stronger in politics than in other disciplines (Smith and Lee 2015: 50).

The marginalization of gender and politics approaches in political science, despite their recent gradual integration into the discipline, argue Celis et al. (2013), still exists because men are overrepresented in the field, and because the discipline reproduces androcentric biases. Concerning the first point Tolleson-Rinehart and Carroll (2006: 512) write that:

> women are underrepresented at virtually every level of the discipline, from graduate school to APSA [American Political Science Association] leadership, and they continue to face gender-related obstacles in their professional lives. Moreover, women and politics scholarship remains somewhat marginalized in the discipline. (also see Lovenduski 1998; Bates and Savigny 2015)

In the European context, Drude Dahlerup (2010) relates the progressive institutionalization of gender and politics within the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), through the creation of a standing group and a specialized conference on politics and gender.

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At the same time she reports 'resistance and even anger' on the part of 'male oligarchs' in the ECPR as gender studies developed and women demanded more leadership positions in the organization, because according to Dahlerup (2010: 91–92), this:

> represented an attack on the fundamental self-perception of academia as being free from any bias and being strictly based on merit as its selection criteria. The university seems to be the last institution in society to recognize that gender is a structuring factor in all institutions, even in academia.

Feminist scholars make similar diagnoses on the lack of integration of gender in the discipline of political science for a variety of different contexts such as the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Spain and Finland (Elizondo 2015; Kantola 2015b; Abels 2016; Alonso and Lombardo 2016; Bonjour, Mügge and Roggeband 2016; Evans and Amery 2016; Sauer 2016).

Regarding the second point that Celis et al. (2013) make, feminist political theorists and epistemologists have shown that knowledge and science have been constructed on the basis of androcentric biases that have privileged the questions, issues and methods relevant to hegemonic men (Hekman 1990; Harding 1991). Political science is not an exception in this respect. The theory of political science has been developed within a line of thinking that, from Aristotle to Machiavelli, Locke and the contractualists, has justified the right of men to rule over women and public affairs and the subordinate position of women and their association with the private domestic sphere. Although feminist scholars have exposed and challenged the gender stereotypes present in male-dominated classics of political science (Okin 1991ab; Shanley and Pateman 1991; Pateman 1995), 'the notion of a separation of the public and private spheres persists today' (Celis et al. 2013: 7), with the symbolic association of women with the private and men with the public sphere of politics. The very concepts of politics, power, citizenship and the state have been conceptualized in androcentric ways, reflecting the experience, interests and values of embodied dominant male subjects (Brown 1988; Lister 1998; Pateman 1988). 'These ideas have again affected what has been deemed suitable subject matter for the academic discipline of politics' (Celis et al. 2013: 7).

What approaches are deemed most 'suitable' for political analysis, then? From an epistemological perspective, positivism is still quite predominant in mainstream political science, a discipline in which

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objective, not value-driven but facts-driven research is recognized as a suitable approach to knowledge of political reality, though in more nuanced forms than it was in the historical beginnings of the discipline. Empiricism and quantitative methods are valued and recognized in the field. While adopting positivist perspectives too, gender studies have pioneered development of social constructivist approaches, with an extensive corpus of studies following Simone de Beauvoir's argument in *The Second Sex* (1949) that gender roles are constructed through social and institutional practices, and formal and informal norms that are not fixed once and for all but rather can be changed. Yet constructivism did not enter political science from gender studies but rather from influential sociological studies of the social construction of reality such as Berger and Luckmann (1967) and developments in IR (Wendt 1999). And it still has not reached the mainstream of political science. Today, despite developments in constructivist approaches both in European integration theory (Rosamond 2000; Christiansen et al. 2001; Risse 2004; Schmidt and Radaelli 2004) and discursive institutionalism (Schmidt 2010, 2011), constructivist approaches in political science must continue to prove they constitute scientific knowledge (Hay 2002: 14).

Feminist analyses in politics have contributed to challenge marginalizations and build bridges between different approaches in political science. According to Birte Siim (2004: 97), they have done so by adopting a 'methodological pluralism' that has challenged the 'methodological split in political science between different schools, for example between "rationalists" and "social constructivists"'. Siim recognizes the existence of a dialogue within feminist political research between empirical studies, comparative context-aware analyses and discourse analysis inspired by post-structuralism (2004: 97). She traces the emergence of interdisciplinary 'conversations' in feminist political research between 'political theorists, gender theorists and comparativists, as well as between neo-institutionalists and social constructivists' that did not generate methodological splits but rather 'productive tensions between different positions' (2004: 98). These dialogues have contributed to building an agenda around three main elements: 'the contested and constructed nature of key concepts; the principle of diversity and differences among women; the inter-relation between discourse, agency and institutions' (Siim 2004: 99). In this way, feminist political research has shown political science the 'potential strength of methodological pluralism' (Siim 2004: 98).

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While we agree with Siim that feminist approaches have much to contribute to political science on the basis of their experience with dialogic and pluralist approaches, we also think that feminist approaches, while struggling to enter this androcentric field, can be co-opted by the dominant approaches in political science. This can in turn create marginalizations inside the feminist approaches to political analysis, so that some approaches obtain greater recognition and resources in the field of political science than others in terms of publications in political science journals that do not specialize in gender and in top-ranked gender and politics journals, or in terms of political science prizes. For example, some of the studies adopting a women approach (for instance studies on gender quotas) or a gender approach (for example feminist new institutionalism or gender mainstreaming research) are more recognized in the existing political science panorama. Yet prospects of greater recognition for constructivist – not to mention for postdeconstructivist – approaches as 'scientific' within the field of political science seem curtailed in this era of neoliberal demand for 'applicable and marketable' (Brown 2002: 573) knowledge. The value and contribution of feminist approaches to political analysis lies precisely in their diversity, because each of them is able to capture aspects of political reality that another perspective overlooks.

Diversity of approaches to feminist political analysis

In this book we discuss the diversity of feminist approaches to political analysis under five headings: (i) women, (ii) gender, (iii) deconstruction, (iv) intersectionality and (v) postdeconstruction. Following Nina Lykke's explanation for selecting the theories discussed in her book *Feminist Theory: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing*, we see our selection not as representing a 'canon' that is the very core of the field of gender and politics but rather as situated nodal points: 'as temporary crystallizations in ongoing feminist negotiations of located theory making' (Lykke 2010: 49). The essence of feminist political analysis lies in the various definitions of gender that one can adopt and that later guide the analytical steps taken by the researcher in choosing her concepts, theories and methods for studying political realities. Our key aim in this book is to discuss and pay tribute to this very diversity of feminist approaches, discern the implications of each for political analysis, and pave way for new explorations.

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A few clarifications are needed to understand why 'gender' is present at the same time in the title of the book – 'Gender and Political Analysis' – and as the name of one of the five approaches. We have decided to employ the term 'gender' in the title because this is the term most often used to name the subdiscipline of 'gender and politics' within political science studies. However, to avoid confusions between the general perspective of the book and one of the five approaches for doing political analysis that we adopt in this volume, we will talk of 'feminist' political analysis when we refer to the general approach. While not all gender analysis is feminist in the sense that it is not necessarily committed to changing society towards greater gender equality, most of the research we discuss in this book is indeed committed to a feminist project of societal change. We will therefore refer to 'gender and political analysis' when we speak of one of the five sub-approaches employed in the articulation of our argument, and to 'feminist political analysis' when we refer to the general approach for doing political analysis that we propose in this book.

We will now briefly introduce the five approaches for doing feminist political analysis included in this book. First, *women and political analysis* focuses on women's presence, roles, action, interests, needs, rights and voices. The approach establishes women and men as coherent subjects of political analysis. It treats women and men as unitary categories whose interests, needs and beliefs can be identified objectively in research. In terms of political analysis, the women approach challenges the exclusion of women from analytical concepts such as power, agency and institutions, and from what is analysed, polity, politics and policy. Illustrative of this approach is its tendency to take mainstream political science theories, concepts and institutions as a starting point. Because of the still relatively precarious position of gender and politics within the discipline of politics, discussed above, 'women' retain considerable importance, as indicated by the titles of some recent key volumes such as *Women, Gender, and Politics* (Krook and Childs 2010) and *Women, Politics and Power* (Paxton and Hughes 2007). As Mügge, Evans and Engeli (2016: 283) put it: 'although we speak of gendered analysis and gender studies, the ongoing attachment to women and women's experiences remains central to understanding politics'.

Second, *gender and political analysis* calls for an understanding of the wider societal structures that reproduce the continuing patterns of domination and inequality. Gender is a contested concept that has been interpreted in many different ways (see Hawkesworth 2013). Despite

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their great variety and long history of debates, gender approaches to the study of politics include, in our view: (i) the need to understand gender always in relation to wider societal structures in order to comprehend domination and inequalities that are by definition structural, (ii) analytically, the need to study gender as a complex socially constructed relation between masculinities and femininities, and (iii) epistemologically, approaching gender from a 'critical realist' perspective, which means that deep gender structures are socially constructed and at the same time are considered real, and science and language are believed to be capable of describing the reality of these social structures and of providing access to them.

As noted above, constructivist and poststructuralist perspectives are not yet well established in political science. When discussing the third approach, *deconstruction and political analysis,* we explore the ways in which gender is theorized as a discourse and a practice that is continuously contested and constructed in political debates. In deconstruction, gender is deemed to have no fixed meaning, but rather to assume different normative meanings in the conceptual disputes that policy actors engage with (Bacchi 1999; Verloo 2007). This approach has contributed to show that a problem such as gender inequality can be represented in many different ways, with many different solutions, and that a particular diagnosis of the problem of gender inequality is at the same time silencing other alternative representations of the problem (Bacchi 1999). Deconstruction, therefore, makes it possible to understand how some solutions are favoured over others and how gender can be silenced in political disputes, stretched to include other equality dimensions apart from gender, or bent to other goals that have nothing to do with gender equality (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009). Some of the ideas put forward by the deconstruction approach – including the need to study ideas and frames – have been adopted in gender and politics research more widely, but the approach remains more contested within the field of gender and politics and its scientific status is disputed (Mazur 2011).

Fourth, *intersectionality and political analysis* perspectives explore the intersection of gender with other inequalities. Intersectionality has become a key approach in gender studies over the past decade, and gender and politics scholarship is also promoting its centrality to political analysis. Intersectional analyses study the inequalities, marginalizations and dominations that the interactions of gender, race, class and other systems of inequality produce. While the concept of 'intersectionality' may be a novelty, its key ideas have been articulated decades ago in Black,

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lesbian and postcolonial feminist theorizing that exposed the limitations of women-only and gender-only analyses (hooks 1981; Lorde 1984; Hill Collins 2000; Mohanty 2003; Hill Collins and Chepp 2013). Kimberlé Crenshaw's coining of the term 'intersectionality' gave it new analytical purchase this approach. Elaborating the concepts of structural and political intersectionality, Crenshaw (1991) studied how the intersection of inequalities of gender, race and class have consequences for people's opportunities in life, in areas such as employment and gender violence, and how different political and social movements' strategies focusing on one inequality are not neutral to other inequalities.

Fifthly, one of our key contributions with this volume is to pave the way for a postdeconstructivist approach to political analysis. *Postdeconstruction and political analysis* is used here to signal a diverse set of debates on feminist new materialism, corporealism and affect theory that come analytically (not chronologically, Lykke 2010: 106) 'after' reflections on the deconstruction of gender. We have suggested above that the deconstruction has received less legitimacy and popularity within gender and political analysis than the other approaches. Not surprisingly, then, the postdeconstruction that is so widely debated in feminist theory, gender studies and cultural studies is yet to emerge as an analytical strategy in gender and political analysis. It is not included in the most widely-used gender and politics handbooks or in theory and methodology books (see e.g. Squires 1999, 2007; Mazur and Goetz 2008; Ackerly and True 2011; Celis et al. 2013), nor is it mentioned in overview articles (Mackay 2004; Mügge, Evans and Engeli 2016).

We use the term postdeconstruction to signal approaches that are interested in understanding what affects, emotions and bodily material do in gender and politics. From the new materialist point of view, significant social change cannot be achieved solely by deconstructing subjectivities, discourses and identities. Rather, there is a need to understand and alter the very real socioeconomic conditions and the interests that these serve (Coole and Frost 2010: 25). In political analysis, this places emphasis on economic and political processes and their materiality and impact on bodies (see e.g. Wilcox 2015). Affects and emotions shape individual and collective bodies, cement sexed and raced relations of domination, and provide the local investments necessary to counter those relations (e.g. Spivak 1993, Bhabha 1994ab, Hemmings 2005). Importantly for political analysis, affects are not about individuals: they are deeply social and political formations (Ahmed 2004ab; Hemmings 2005: 565). In affective economies, affects align individuals with communities through the very intensity of their attachments (Skeggs and Wood 2012: 159).

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We elaborate on the analytical purchase of these different approaches more extensively in Chapter 2. In the chapters that follow, we then apply the fivefold framework to the discussions of power, agency and institutions, and polity, politics and policy. Our contribution in this book is to differentiate the notion of 'feminist political analysis'. Feminist analytical approaches to the political are a prism which gives rise to different research questions, concepts and methodologies. Each of the five approaches provides a very different take on, for example, studying the current economic crisis (Kantola and Lombardo 2017a and b). Analysing the economic crisis, we might ask different questions depending on the approach: what are the economic, social and political implications of the austerity politics on women and men (*women*)? Why is the crisis gendered (*gender*)? How is the crisis discursively constructed and with what effects, and how is the crisis gendering (*deconstruction*)? How are different groups at different intersections of inequalities, including race and class, affected by the crisis (*intersectionality*)? How do emotions and affects work through the crisis to entrench inequalities and how does the crisis work on different bodies (*postdeconstruction*)? Answering these questions requires different concepts, theories and methodologies and, as importantly, reveals different aspects of the crisis. For example, without postdeconstruction we might fail to understand how the crisis is emotionally laden and sustained through fear, hate, anger, empathy and sympathy for others (Kantola 2015a).

At the same time, the five approaches that we discuss in this book are by no means exclusive – for example, we ourselves carry out work that often adopts gender, deconstruction and intersectionality approaches. In the concluding chapter to this book, we explore the ways in which the approaches are and can be combined and what this reveals about the discipline of gender and politics.

The five approaches are not exhaustive either. We could have included, for example, queer theory as a separate approach to political analysis instead of, as now, subsuming it under deconstruction. We are aware that this may reinforce positioning it 'on the constitutive outside of the discipline' (Smith and Lee 2015). At the same time, we hope that the overall thrust of the book towards inclusive approaches that take into account diversities, intersectionality, normativities, constructions, bodies and affects paves the way for a whole range of analytical approaches to which we do not do justice here.

But before delving into the diversity of gender approaches to political analysis, we wish to make explicit some elements of the context from which we speak. Our understanding of the field of 'gender and politics'

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is based on our location in European debates that are also strongly informed by Anglo-American gender and political science writing. These debates are well represented in the biannual European Conference on Politics and Gender (ECPG) that has taken place since 2009, and in other mainstream politics conferences such as those of the APSA, ECPR and International Political Science Association (IPSA); in journals like *International Feminist Journal of Politics* and *Politics & Gender*, and mainstream politics journals. The context in which we work influences our perception of what are the most relevant scholarly debates and, for this reason, we do not pretend to be exhaustive and to do justice to the great variety of existing scholarly works. We simply wish to recognize the limitations and opportunities that come from our situated knowledge. In this we draw inspiration from Breny Mendoza's (2012) critique about the epistemic violence of Anglo-American political science on Latin American disciplines of gender and politics, in which many women and politics scholars in the West and the North take part.

Our knowledge is also informed by the approaches on which our own work mostly centres, which are those of gender, deconstruction and intersectionality. Making explicit some of the features of our own situated knowledge as political analysts has helped us to stay alert and open to the understanding of approaches we are less familiar with, but has certainly not prevented our own interpretations emerging in the discussion of the different approaches. We believe that self-reflections are much needed when doing political analysis. Reflexivity, Bacchi (2009) reminds us, can make us academics aware of the biases that shape our own thinking. This awareness in turn can moderate the possibility of unreflexively applying our normative assumptions to political analysis and open our mind to different approaches.

Feminist political analyses, though relatively open to linking theory with praxis, contain their own limitations too. These can stem both from taking mainstream political science concepts and theories as a starting point, or from feminist debates themselves. We think that dominant approaches in political science influence the emergence and marginalization of particular gender approaches to political analysis, but feminist theorizing in gender and politics when striving for recognition within mainstream political science also reproduces its own hegemonies and marginalizations. The question for political analysts is how to create new knowledge – at times like these in which economic crisis, war and xenophobia are shaking societies and politics in Europe – when you sit comfortably within your own approach.

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Outline of the book

The chapters that follow are divided into two parts. First, we develop some key conceptual tools – gender, power, agency and institutions – for doing political analysis; and second, we address some key substantive issues in political analysis – polity, politics and policy. We have chosen to focus on power, institutions and agency not only because they are so often taken as the key conceptual tools in mainstream political analysis (see e.g. Hay 2002); they are also the concepts where feminists and the different analytical gender approaches that we discuss in this book make important contributions. Polity, politics and policies, in turn, are classic substantive areas of study in political science that are important to analyse from feminist perspectives. In each chapter we ask how the analytical concept or the issue at hand changes when we shift our feminist approach and what is to be gained and lost in the process.

Chapter 2, 'Feminist Political Analysis', develops our framework of the five approaches to political analysis that stem from gender and politics research. We discern the contributions, shortcomings and remaining challenges of the women, gender, deconstruction, intersectionality and postdeconstruction approaches to political analysis. We delve more deeply into the questions of which approaches are favoured over others and why, as well as and what we might gain and lose as a result of these choices. We also discuss the thorny relationship between feminist analysis and gender analysis, pointing out that to an increasing extent different forms of gender analysis are not necessarily feminist.

After the introductory and the theoretical chapters, the book is divided in two parts: Part I (Chapters 3–5) articulates the key political concepts that feminist political analysis contributes to, namely power, agency and institutions. Part II (Chapters 6–8) discusses key substantive issues that gender and politics research has explored through both theoretical and empirical debates. These can be classified, in our view, into: polity, politics and policy. Both sets of concepts and issues are analysed through the lens of the five approaches for doing feminist political analysis.

Chapter 3 begins the first part of the book with the discussion of 'Power', the key concept in political analysis and in the subfield of gender and politics: if politics and the political are defined by power it clearly matters greatly to our very definitions of the field how we approach power. Not only politics but also gender studies, feminism and queer theory are about normative power relations. Looking at power through the prism of women, gender, deconstruction, intersectionality and postdeconstruction changes what is analysed as political.

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Chapter 4 shifts the perspective to the concept of 'Agency'. Again, agency stems not only from political analysis but is also fundamental to feminism as a form of theory and practice. Women approaches have analysed both women's individual and collective agency. A gender approach to agency places emphasis on the constraining gendered structures, and a deconstruction approach focuses on gendered discourses as constraining, to the extent that both the approaches of gender and deconstruction have promoted an intense debate about the dwindling of women's agency. Intersectionality challenges the feminist agency debate through its analysis of classed, raced and sexualized agencies; and post-deconstruction questions what we normally term agentic and gives the power of agency to elements such as affects and materiality.

Chapter 5, 'Institutions', reflects the dominance of institutional approaches to political analysis and also their centrality in feminist debates. Feminist new institutional analysis has resulted in an ongoing debate and theoretical and conceptual developments through the women, gender, deconstruction and intersectionality approaches. Our framework enables an exploration of what came before the term institutions, what are the contributions of feminist new institutionalism and where to go next, including postdeconstructivist approaches.

In the second part of the book, we shift the focus to the key substantive political issues where feminist analytical perspectives are being applied. We start in Chapter 6 with 'Polity', arguably the key place where political analysis directs its gaze to, which is also under transformation. Here we explore what kind of polity – whether state, nation, democracy or autocracy – each feminist perspective foregrounds and analyses. Feminist analyses in their different approaches theorize polities as powerful constructs where gender and other inequalities occupy a central position. Scholarly debates address the inclusion and role of women in democracies, autocracies, states and nations, the genderedness of formal and informal institutions within polities, the heterogeneity of institutions and their different discourses, the ways in which intersecting inequalities are played out within polities, and the material gendered, racialized and sexualized effects on people of emotions that are mobilized in nationalist projects.

In Chapter 7, we focus on 'Politics' and on the very different definitions of the term that the varied perspectives result in. We analyse politics as process, which means studying the dynamics of politics in action and their equality dimensions, differently expressed in the women, gender, deconstruction, intersectional and postdeconstruction approaches adopted in this book. Studying politics as process prompts

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us to explore the dynamics that are expressed in political processes such as policymaking, democratization, European integration, constitution making, decentralization, regime changes, judicial litigation and economization, as well as to consider issues of political leadership and political behaviour. The analysis of politics from the five feminist approaches contributes to expose power inequalities embedded in political processes that would otherwise remain unseen.

Chapter 8 analyses 'Policy', covering the multiple aspects of the policymaking process from the five perspectives, and including implementation, a topic that has recently attracted a great deal of scholarly attention in gender and politics. The application of the five approaches for doing feminist political analysis to the object of policy allows analysts to scrutinize the gender and intersectional biases of public policies and of their own assumptions when they are analysing, making, implementing or evaluating policies. Feminist approaches discuss the impact policies have on women and that women have on policies, the gender and intersectional dimensions of policies, the discourses that public policies produce and their gendering effects on women and men. The chapter also points at the contribution of new materialist perspectives, recognizing the challenge of applying them to policy analysis from gender and intersectionality approaches.

Chapter 9 concludes the book and discusses a number of important questions. Having tested the fivefold framework of women, gender, deconstruction, intersectionality and postdeconstruction on key concepts and issues of political analysis, what can we conclude about the approaches, their contributions and shortcomings? Which approaches are more dominant in the subdiscipline of gender and politics? Which are currently more marginalized and why? In the book, we have made an analytical distinction between the approaches but, in this concluding chapter, we ask to what extent the different approaches are compatible. The assessment of the fivefold framework for doing feminist political analysis allows us to draw out its implications for the subfield of gender and politics and, more generally, for political analysis and the discipline of political science.

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