Working with Concepts

David Collier is an influential thinker on conceptualization, which is foundational to social science inquiry. A prominent political scientist, he specializes in mixed methods and comparative politics. *Working with Concepts* brings together Collier's most influential research on concepts and measurement, refined and reframed, to offer a systematic approach to concept analysis. Edited by Zachary Elkins, the book serves as a reference book for both students and seasoned scholars grappling with concepts. Collier's essays are accompanied by commentaries by fifteen scholars who connect his contributions to ongoing innovation in the field. The commentaries open up new lines of research and provoke ongoing scholarly reaction and debate. Tightly organized with the aim of moving the discussion forward, this collection of essays explores some of the contours of the field and its milestones to show how careful work with concepts is a foundation of good methodology. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

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Note on the front cover. The interplay between well-bounded concepts and gradations is a basic theme in this volume. This theme is reflected in the eagles and African antelopes (elands) on the cover, images inspired by Escher. One might separate out the well-defined images at the top and the bottom as the only real representation of eagles and elands – in parallel to discussion of the only real democracies. Alternatively, the focus could be on gradations among all the images – in parallel to gradations of democracy. These depictions likewise reflect two other basic themes: part–whole relationships and the complex intertwining of concepts. The front cover images were designed by Yellin Yuye Lin.

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Foundational Essays by David Collier, with Research Notes on Innovation in the Field

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