Dr Florian Reiche
F.Reiche@warwick.ac.uk

1 | Disclaimer

I do not usually provide answers to these questions, as I am expecting you to either attend the seminar, or – in case you cannot make it – to contact me for advice or to share notes with another student. But I have nonetheless put this document together, so that you get an idea about my expectation horizon for answering these. Please bear this in mind in weeks to come.

2 | Answers

1. How should you decide which attributes to include in your conceptualization of a concept during a research project?
   - Align with Research Objectives
     - Ask: "What am I trying to understand or measure?"
     - Include only attributes that are directly relevant to your research questions or hypotheses.
     - Avoid including extraneous or unrelated attributes.
   - Ground in Theoretical Framework
     - Use existing literature and theories to guide which attributes are essential.
     - Check how scholars have previously defined and operationalised the concept.
   - Contextual Relevance
     - Consider the cultural, social, and situational context of the study.
     - Attributes may vary in relevance depending on the setting
   - Maintain Conceptual Clarity
     - Almost all social science concepts are multidimensional, and so multiple attributes will be required almost by default
     - Each attribute must relate to the concept
   - Ensure Measurability
     - Choose attributes that can be observed, measured, or data can be collected on.
     - Check data availability

2. Give an example of a systematized concept. State its explicit definition and identify the attributes it contains.
   - Polity V Democracy Scale
     - Competitiveness of participation
     - Regulation of participation
     - Competitiveness of executive recruitment
     - Openness of executive recruitment
     - Constraints on executive
3. Why should you not be concerned with independent and dependent variables during conceptualization?
   - Because an independent variable helps us predict the values of a dependent variable. The latter is statistically dependent on the former. When we conceptualise and measure, we are not concerned with any statistical dependency. We are concerned with the question "What is ?".
4. Why is it important to ensure validity and reliability within your research?
   - Validity ensures that you measure what you want to measure. Without this, you would not be able to test the hypothesis/theory, and thus be unable to provide an answer to your research question.
   - Reliability ensures consistency of your results. It increases the quality of your research.
5. Give an example of a situation where you would have to do a conceptualization within a conceptualization.
   - Euroscepticim
     - Soft Euroscepticism
       * Support for EU membership but criticism of specific policies
         · Measure
       * Desire for reform of the EU rather than withdrawal
         · Measure
       * Preference for a looser or more flexible union
         · Measure
       * etc.
     - Hard Euroscepticism
       * Complete opposition to EU membership
         · Measure
       * Rejection of further European integration
         · Measure
       * Perception of EU as a threat to national sovereignty
         · Measure
       * etc.