



# Measurement

Doing Political Research

# Introduction



- We have our theory, which is a set of relationships between concepts
- We have defined our concepts, ensuring that they are at the right level of abstraction
- Next, we need to *operationalise* our concepts, turning them into something we can measure



# Types of Measurement

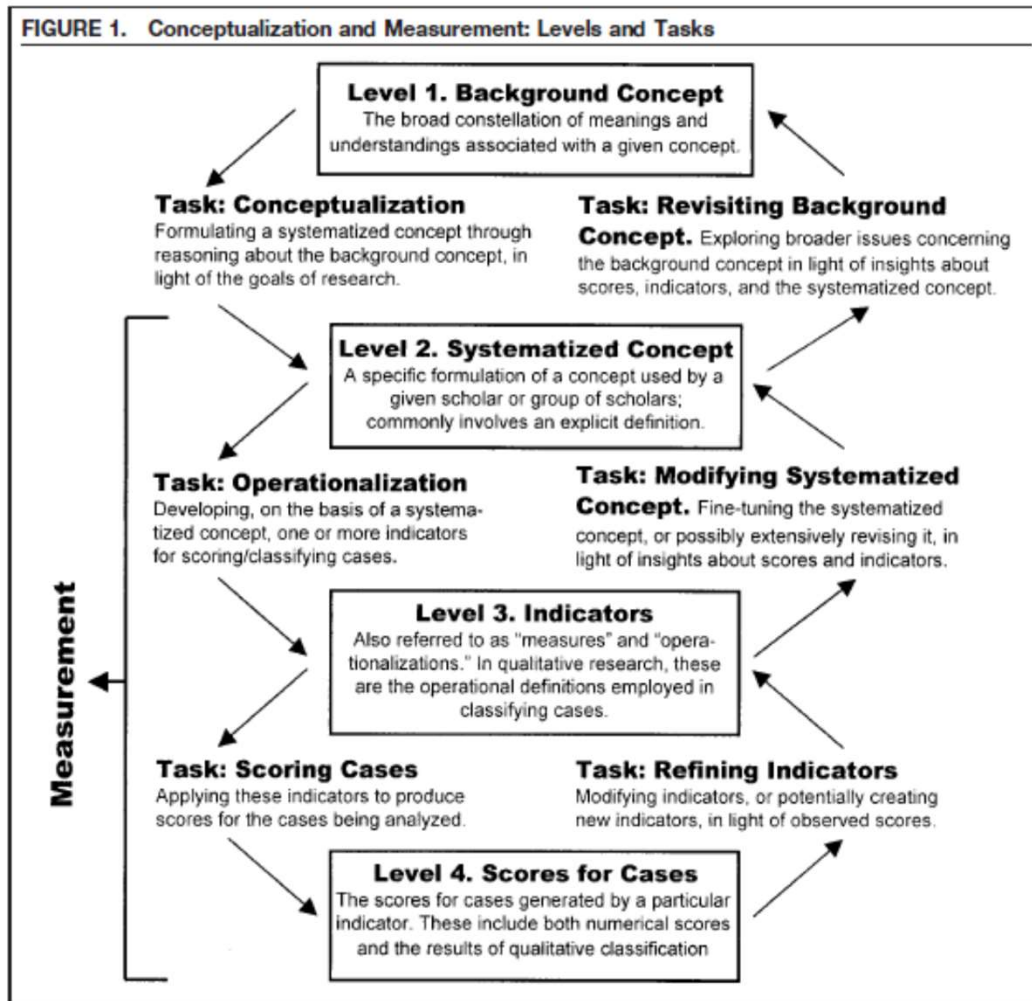
## Classification

- Associated with qualitative research
- Classifying empirical phenomena into categories
- For example, classifying democratic transitions as 'elite-led' or based on 'distributive conflict' (Haggard and Kaufman)

## Quantification

- Associated with quantitative research
  - Assigning numbers to empirical phenomena
  - For example, a survey measuring the percentage of people who support the death penalty
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FIGURE 1. Conceptualization and Measurement: Levels and Tasks



Conceptualisation  
(Adcock and  
Collier)

# How Do We Measure?

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- Political research uses many kinds of data and evidence, for example surveys, documents, interviews, experiments
- Type of data collection: Active vs Passive
- Level of measurement: Micro vs Macro



# Key Issues in Measurement

## Validity

- Accuracy of the measure
- Does the measure capture the concept?

## Reliability

- Consistency of the measure
  - Will the measure be the same if different people measure it?
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# Conclusion

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- Concepts can be operationalised in many different ways
- It is important to be clear how we do so, and so ensure our measurements are valid and reliable