Gov 62 Section 2

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Review

- Theory - general statements that describe and explain the causes or effects of classes of phenomena
  - Composed of hypotheses, explanations, and antecedent conditions
- Hypothesis - a conjectured relationship between two phenomena

Example: Enos (2016)

Theory: Racial Threat

- ▶ Broad: The geographic presence of an outgroup (African Americans) affects the political behavior of an ingroup (whites) (Key 1949).
- ▶ More specific: Proximity to an outgroup increases the ingroup's voter turnout and probability of voting conservative.

Hypotheses:

- ▶ "After the demolition of the projects, turnout should decline for white voters close to the projects relative to the rest of the city."
- ▶ "The treatment effect should decline as the white voters are farther away from a project and as the population of a project represents a smaller portion of the local outgroup population."
- ▶ "After the demolition of the projects, white voters close to the former projects should experience a decline in racially conservative voting relative to the rest of the city."

Example: Lerman and Weaver (2014)

Theory: "Through criminal justice contact, custodial citizens learn that government is not about distributing benefits...Instead, government's primary purpose is keeping people in line...[Criminal justice] transforms citizens' relationships to the polity."

Hypotheses:

► Criminal justice contact diminishes belief in equality of citizenship.

► Custodial citizens voice lower levels of political trust.

► Custodial citizens participate in politics at lower rates than those who have not had criminal justice contact.

Concepts in Political Science

What is a concept?

- ▶ "Concepts are abstractions and summarize characteristics of a phenomenon that are not directly observable and thus need to be inferred from observable evidence" (Kreuzer 2019).
- ▶ Key assessment of a concept: how well it captures these characteristics - validity!

Concepts in Political Science

Why do concepts matter?
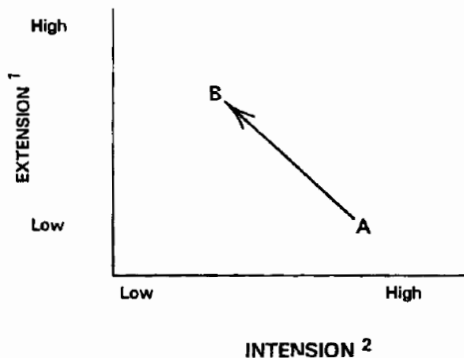"The failure to explain is caused by a failure to describe." - Benoit Mandelbrot, mathematician (from Kreuzer 2019)

"Concept formation stands prior to quantification" (Sartori 1970).

Sartori (1970): Ladder of Abstraction

Levels of Abstraction	Major Comparative Scope and Purpose	Logical and Empirical Properties of Concepts
HL: *High Level Categories* Universal conceptualiza- tions	Cross-area comparisons among heterogeneous contexts (global theory)	Maximal extension Minimal intension Definition by negation
ML: *Medium Level Categories* General conceptualiza- tions and taxonomies	Intra-area comparisons among relatively homogeneous con- texts (middle range theory)	Balance of denotation with con- notation Definition by analysis, i.e. per genus et differentiam
LL: *Low Level Categories* Configurative concep- tualizations	Country by country analysis (narrow-gauge theory)	Maximal intension Minimal extension Contextual definition

Collier and Mahon (1993)

FIGURE 1

The Ladder of Generality

A = Initial category
B = Category adapted to more cases

1 Range of cases
2 Number of defining attributes

Collier and Mahon (1993)

- Sartori framework assumes clear boundaries and defining attributes - classical categories
- Family resemblance categories - violate this assumption, there may be no single attribute all category members share, or share to varying degrees
- Radial categories - central subcategory has a bundle of traits learned/understood together, noncentral subcategories are variants that do not necessarily share defining attributes with each other but only with the central subcategory

Family Resemblance Categories

FIGURE 2

An Iterated Generalization: The Case of Family Resemblance

Cases	True Distribution of Attributes*						Cases Included in Generalization (Extension)						Attributes Included in Generalization (Intension)				
A	1	2	3	4	5		A						1	2	3	4	5
B	1	2	3	4		6	A	B					1	2	3	4	
C	1	2	3		5	6	A	B	C				1	2	3		
D	1	2		4	5	6	A	B	C	D			1	2			
E	1		3	4	5	6	A	B	C	D	E		1				
F		2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C	D	E	F					

* All cases have five of the six attributes, and each of the six cases is missing a different attribute.

Radial Categories

Classical Category: Authoritarianism

Category	Components			
Primary Category				
Authoritarianism	A	B		
Secondary Categories				
Populist Authoritarianism	A	B	C	
Bureaucratic Authoritarianism	A	B		D

Note: Differentiating characteristics of secondary categories are *in addition to* those of the primary category.

A = Limited pluralism*
B = Distinctive mentalities, not guiding ideology*
C = Substantial mobilization of working class and/or middle class
D = Alliance of military, technocrats, and transnational capital against previously mobilized popular classes

Radial Categories

Radial Category: Democracy

Category	Components		
Primary Category			
Democracy	A	B	C
Secondary Categories			
Participatory democracy	A		
Liberal democracy	A	B	
Popular democracy	A		C

Note: Differentiating characteristics of secondary categories are *contained within* the primary category.

A = Effective political participation
B = Limitation of state power
C = Social and economic outcomes of relative equity

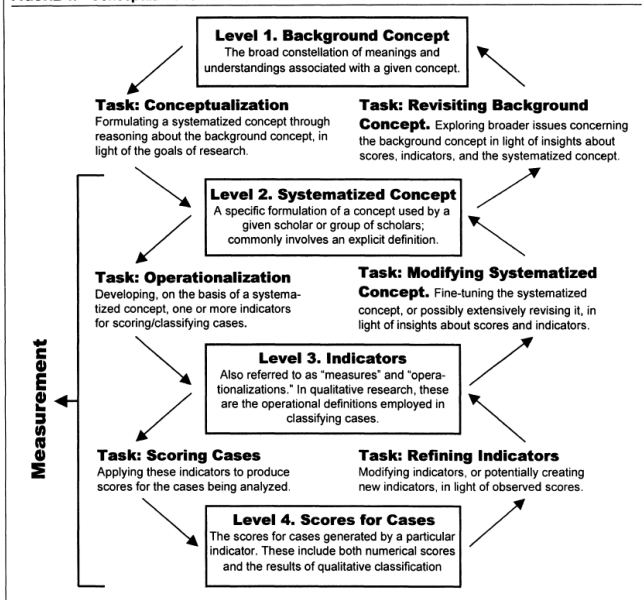* The definition of authoritarianism employs two elements used by Linz (1975).

Adcock and Collier (2001)

Measurement validity - "whether operationalization and the scoring of cases adequately reflect the concept the researcher seeks to measure"

Adcock and Collier (2001)

FIGURE 1. Conceptualization and Measurement: Levels and Tasks

Level 1. Background Concept
The broad constellation of meanings and understandings associated with a given concept.

Task: Conceptualization
Formulating a systematized concept through reasoning about the background concept, in light of the goals of research.

Task: Revisiting Background Concept. Exploring broader issues concerning the background concept in light of insights about scores, indicators, and the systematized concept.

Level 2. Systematized Concept
A specific formulation of a concept used by a given scholar or group of scholars; commonly involves an explicit definition.

Task: Operationalization
Developing, on the basis of a systematized concept, one or more indicators for scoring/classifying cases.

Task: Modifying Systematized Concept. Fine-tuning the systematized concept, or possibly extensively revising it, in light of insights about scores and indicators.

Level 3. Indicators
Also referred to as "measures" and "operationalizations." In qualitative research, these are the operational definitions employed in classifying cases.

Task: Scoring Cases
Applying these indicators to produce scores for the cases being analyzed.

Task: Refining Indicators
Modifying indicators, or potentially creating new indicators, in light of observed scores.

Level 4. Scores for Cases
The scores for cases generated by a particular indicator. These include both numerical scores and the results of qualitative classification

Measurement

Middle-Range Theory - Ziblatt (2006)

▶ Defined substantive focus, grounded in specific empirical puzzles

▶ Emphasis on scope conditions, limits of theory

▶ Careful and systematic conceptualization

Why Middle-Range Theory? - Ziblatt (2006)

- ▶ Offers a strategy of building general theory that is not unrealistically universal.
- ▶ Offers a way of engaging the complexity of empirical reality that is simply avoided with universal claims.

Case Study 1: *Making Democracy Work*

1. What are the concepts Putnam examines? How does he measure each one?
2. To what extent are you convinced by Putnam's concepts? His measurement strategies?
3. Is Putman's theory of social capital a "middle-range" theory? Why or why not?