

PSC 202

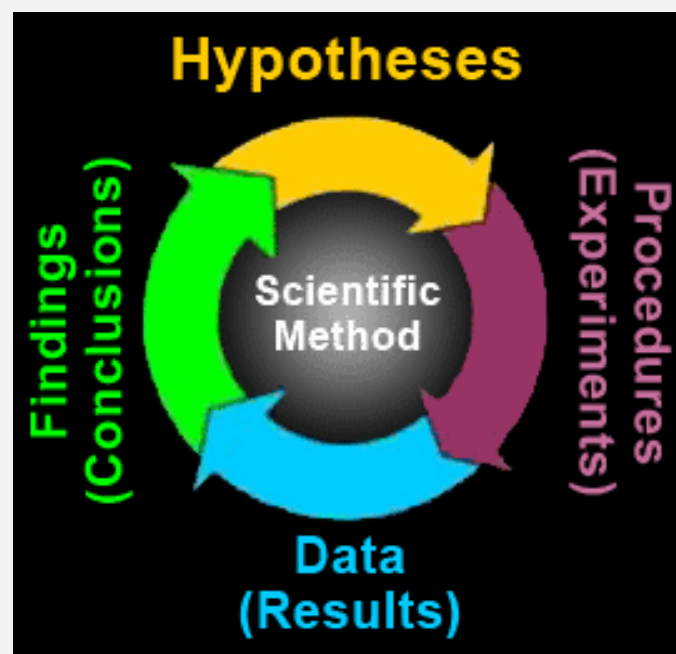
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

# **INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

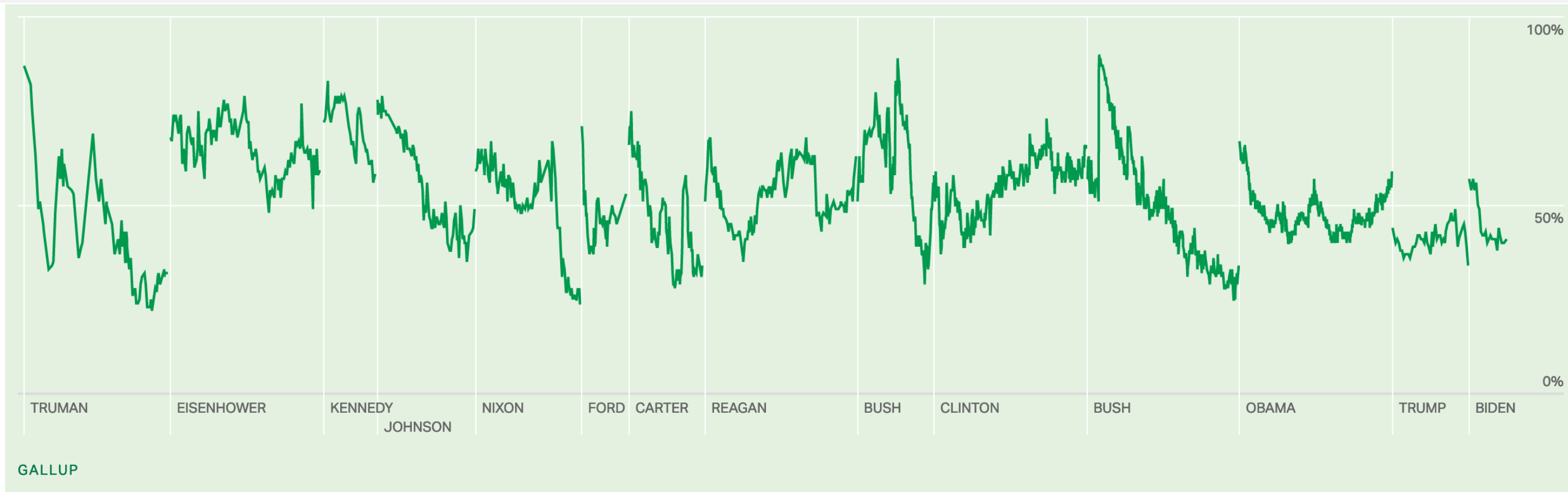
## **CONCEPTS AND MEASUREMENTS**

# RECAP

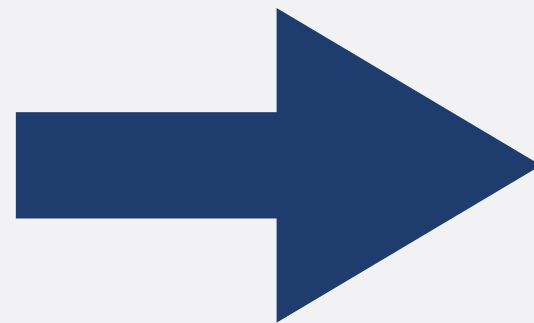
- Formulate research question
- Propose explanation/theory, hypotheses
- Data collection process
- Use data to evaluate hypotheses
- Reassess explanation



# RECAP



**Performance of  
economy**



**Presidential  
Approval Rating**

- **What is the effect of economic performance on Presidential approval rating?**

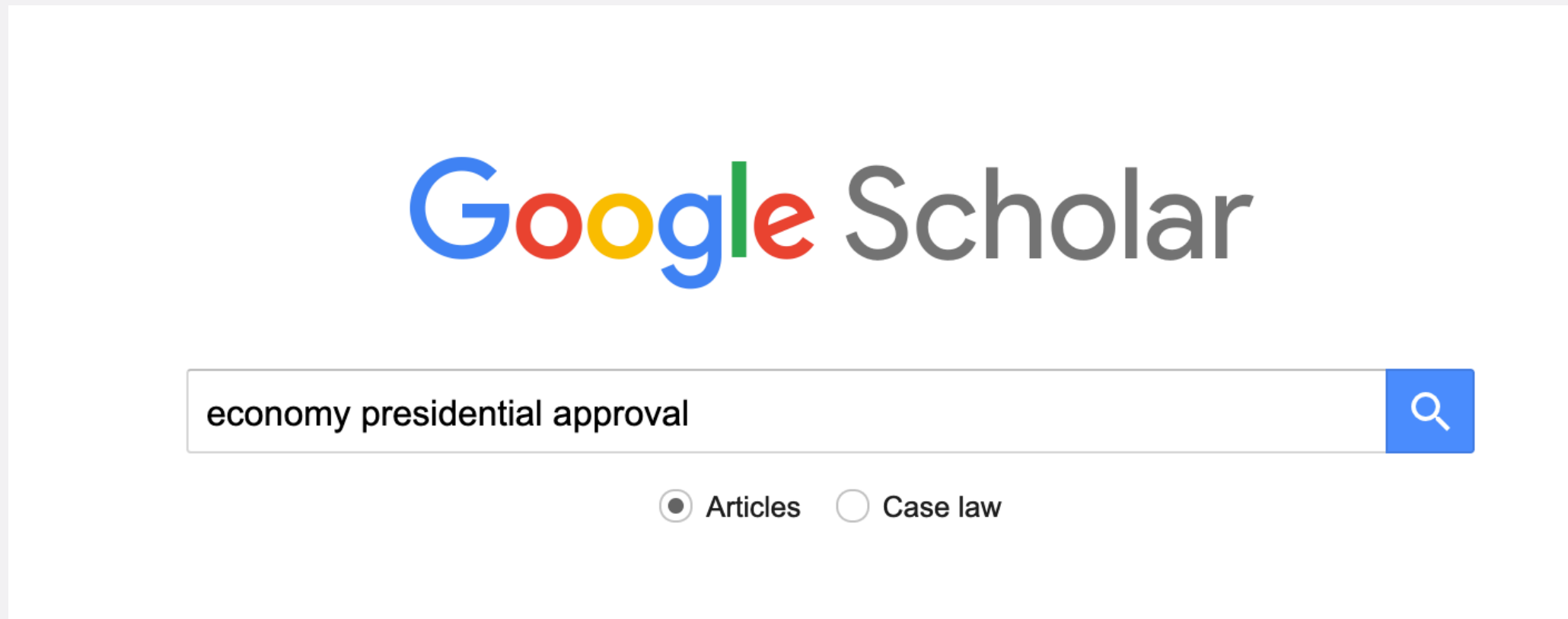
# RECAP

- **Good theory**
  - **clarifies causal relationship between what does the explaining and what is to be explained**
  - **concretely specifies the concepts it invokes**
  - **is falsifiable**

# GOOD THEORIES

- ***Good theory builds on existing theory***
  - **Grounded in prior literature**
  - **Your theory needs to be consistent with what prior literature has already shown to be true**

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economy presidential approval



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... and inflation on **presidential** popularity, the others do not. Additional **economic** issues have

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The international **economy** and **presidential approval**

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... We start by presenting what may be considered a standard, or baseline, **presidential approval**

model to which measures of the international **economy** will later be added. This baseline ...

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... **economic** experts flow through the news media to the mass public, then influencing **presidential**

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# SEARCH TIPS

## The economic determinants of U.S. presidential approval: A survey

Michael Berlemann<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Sören Enkelmann<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Economics & Social Sciences, Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg, Holstenhofweg 85, 22043 Hamburg, Germany

<sup>b</sup> CESifo, Munich, Germany

<sup>c</sup> Department of Economics, Leuphana University Lüneburg, Scharnhorststraße 1, 21335 Lüneburg, Germany

### A B S T R A C T

Even after four decades of research it remains unclear, whether presidential popularity depends on the state of the economy. While about half of all studies for the United States find a significant effect of unemployment and inflation on presidential popularity, the others do not. Additional economic issues have rarely been studied. In this survey article we study the likely causes for the inconclusive findings. While various factors have an influence on the results, especially the choice of the sample period is of crucial importance. While in the very long run we find unemployment and inflation to have a robust effect on presidential approval, this holds not true for shorter sub-periods. This result might indicate that the popularity function is instable over time. However, the findings might also be taken as an indication that the most often employed linear estimation approach is inadequate. Further research on these issues is necessary.

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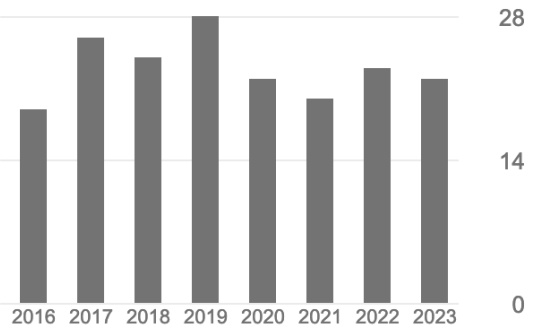
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Co-authors

- Michael Berlemann  
Professor für Volkswirtschaftslehre
- Markus Leibrecht  
Shanghai Ocean University Coll

# GOOD THEORIES

- ***Good theory leads to testable hypotheses***
  - **Specifies what we would expect to observe *in our data* if the theory is an accurate generalization about how the world works**
  - **Will discuss this in detail in a couple of weeks**

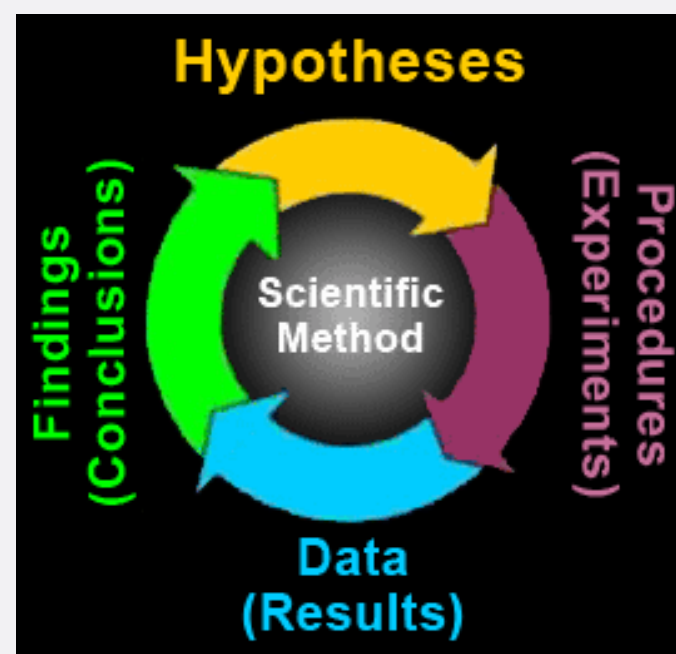
# SUMMARY

- **Good theory**
  - clarifies causal relationship between what does the explaining and what is to be explained
  - concretely specifies the concepts it invokes
  - is falsifiable
  - builds on existing theory
  - leads to testable hypotheses



# TODAY

- Formulate research question
- Propose explanation/theory, hypotheses
- Data collection process
- Use data to evaluate hypotheses
- Reassess explanation



TODAY

*How Stable Are Democracies? 'Warning Signs Are Flashing Red'*

Across the Globe, a Growing Disillusionment With Democracy

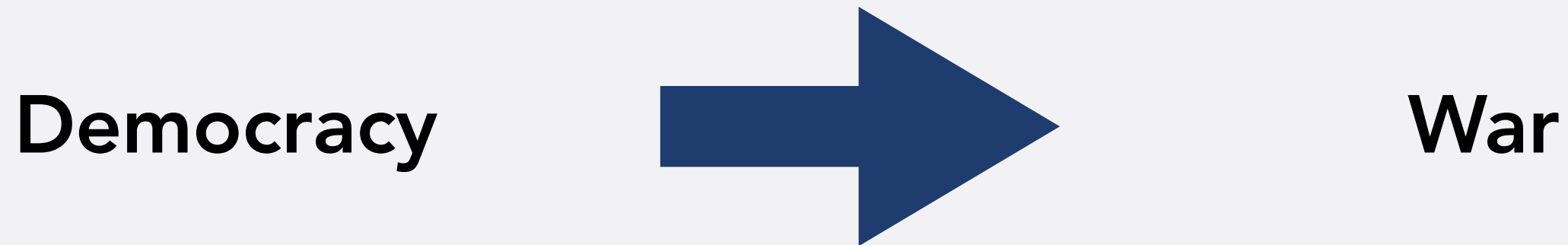
Yes, people really are turning away from democracy

No, people really aren't turning away from democracy

# TODAY

- **When is a country a democracy?**
- **How can we measure this?**

# EXAMPLE THEORY



- **“Democratic peace theory”**: Democracies are less likely to fight wars against each other than non-democracies

# TODAY

- Countries are more or less democratic
- Want to study this empirically
  - “I know it when I see it” definition is not enough
- Democracy is a *concept*, we need to measure it
  - What does it mean to be more or less democratic?
  - How can we measure it?
  - What can go wrong in measuring it?

# TODAY

- Concepts
- **Measurement Process**
- **Measurement Issues**

# CONCEPTS

- **Mental constructs to represent real-world phenomena**
  - **Names for ideas, things, and feelings**
- **Identifying the relationship between concepts is at the core of social science**
  - **Need to have a clear definition of the concept**
  - **Then: How can we measure the concept in the real world?**

# OTHER CONCEPTS

How Liberal Colleges Breed  
Conservative Firebrands

Conservatives and Health Care

Liberals and Soda Taxes

**Liberals and conservatives even  
have their own dating apps**

**Study: Liberals and conservatives sniff  
out like-minded mates by body odor**



# OTHER CONCEPTS

*Brazilian Corruption Case Ensnarers Ex-Presidents da Silva and Rousseff*

**Brazil's Federal Police Accuse  
President Temer of Corruption**

**Corruption Battle Roils Ukraine**

# OTHER CONCEPTS

**Florida Law Aims To Protect Religious Expression In Public Schools**

America's Changing Religious Identity

**More than half in UK are non-religious, suggests survey**

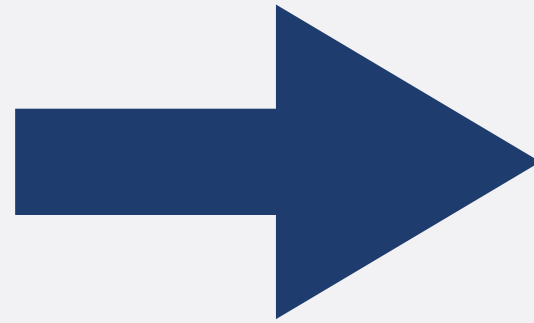
**Religion is on the decline – yet our society is underpinned by faith**

One in three scientists are religious

**More Americans now say they're spiritual but not religious**

# THEORY

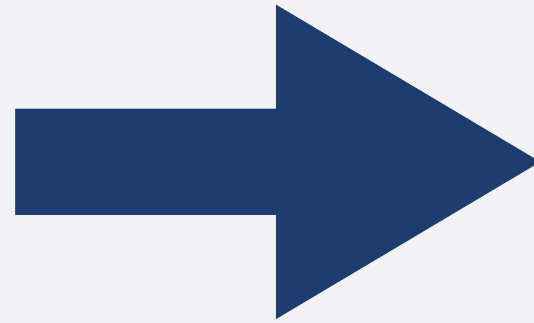
**Independent variable**  
(concept)



**Dependent variable**  
(concept)

# THEORY

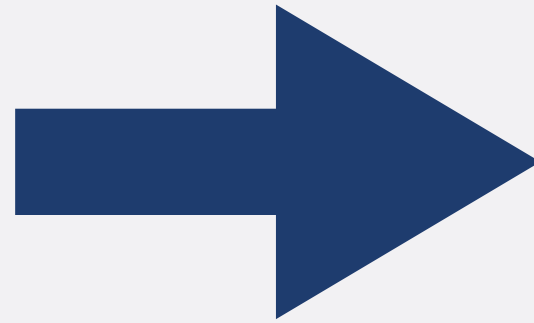
**Democracy**  
(concept)



**War**  
(concept)

# THEORY

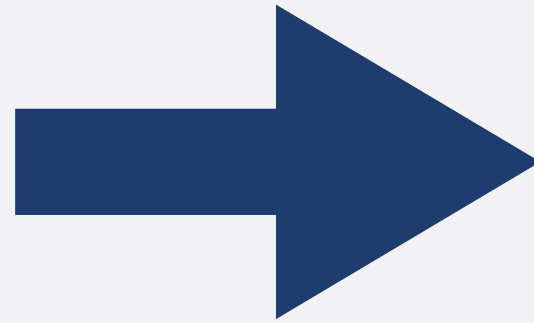
**Independent variable**  
(concept)



**Dependent variable**  
(concept)

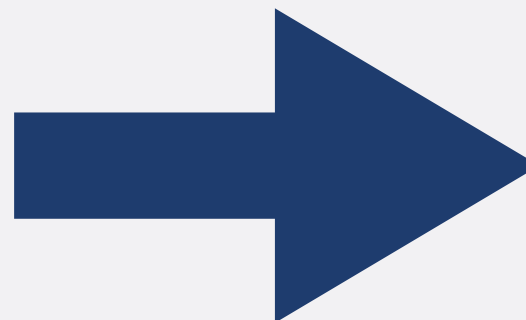
# MEASUREMENT

**Independent variable**  
(concept)



**Dependent variable**  
(concept)

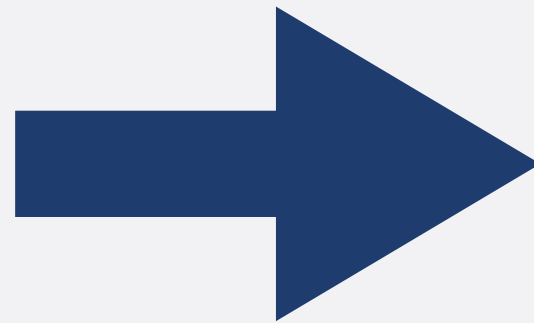
**Independent variable**  
(measured)



**Dependent variable**  
(measured)

# MEASUREMENT

**Independent variable**  
(concept)

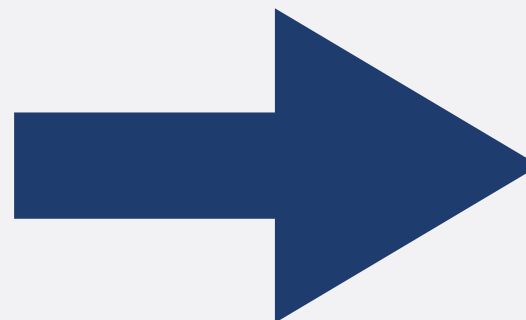


**Dependent variable**  
(concept)

(Operationalization,  
measurement process)



**Independent variable**  
(measured)

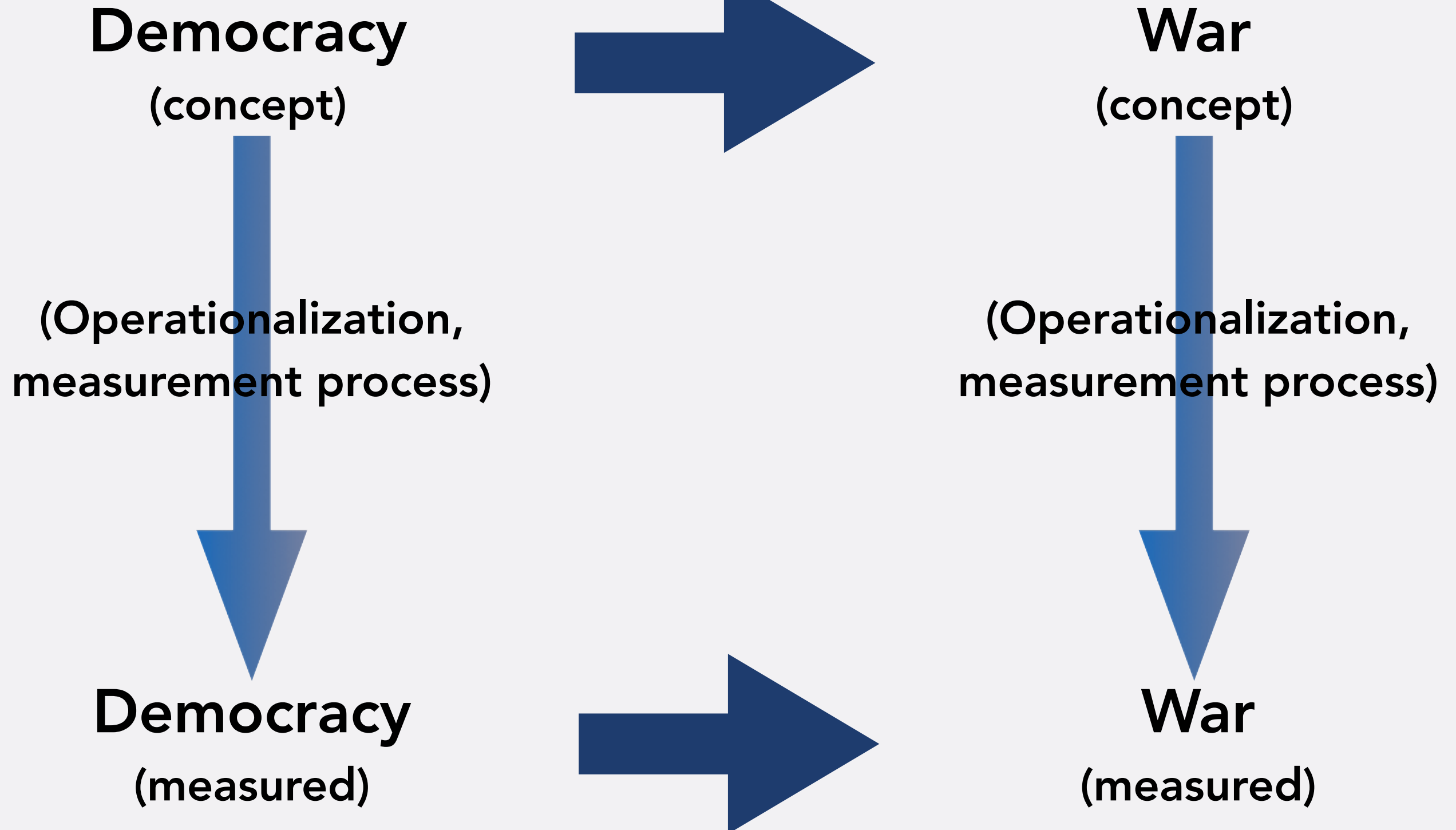


(Operationalization,  
measurement process)



**Dependent variable**  
(measured)

# MEASUREMENT



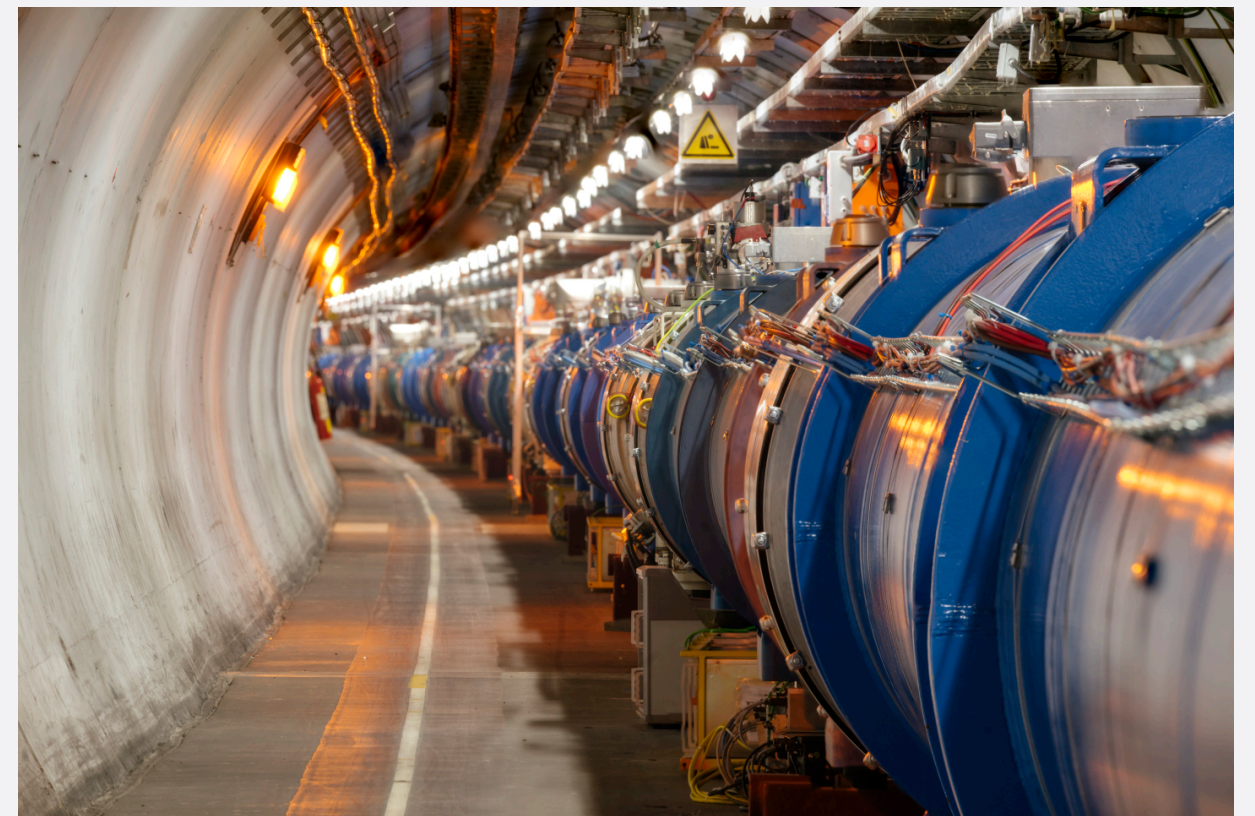
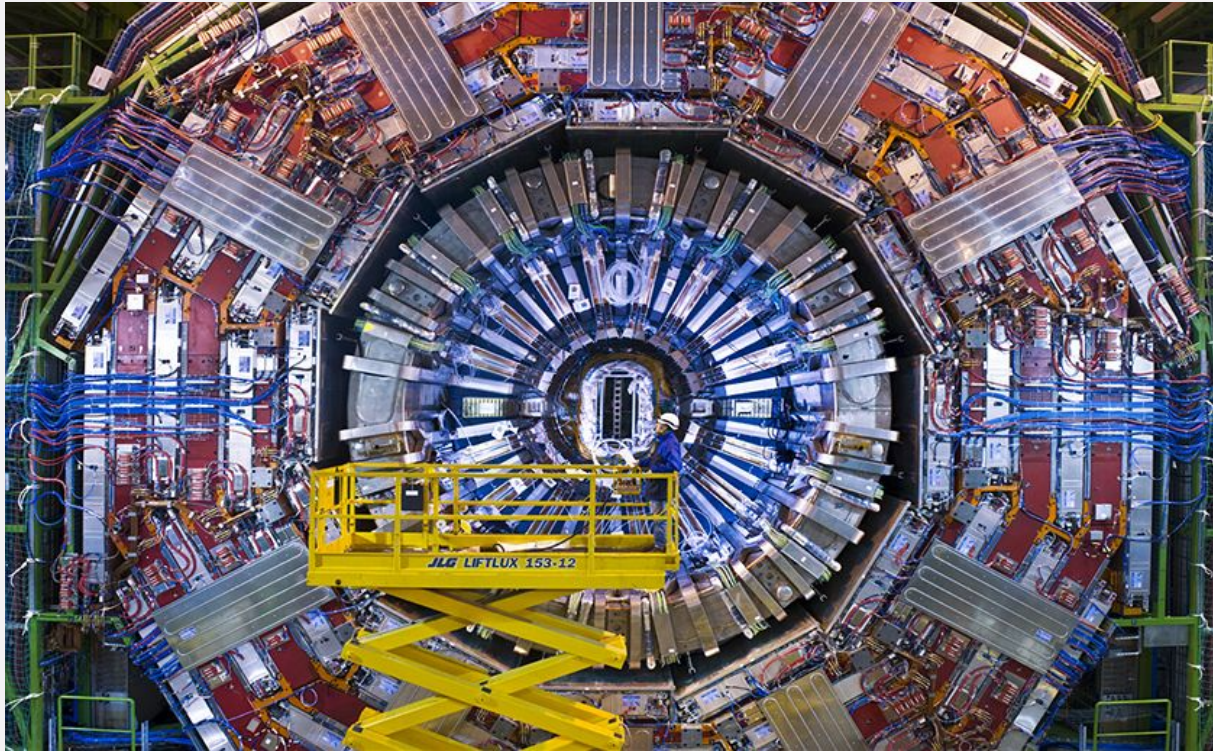


# TODAY

- **Concepts**
- **Measurement Process**
- **Measurement Issues**



# MEASUREMENT



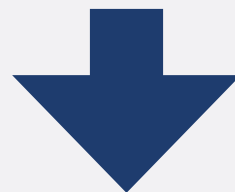


# MEASUREMENT PROCESS

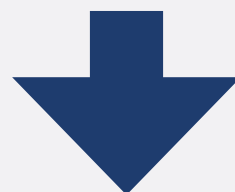
**Concept**



**Precise Definition of Concept  
(Conceptual Definition)**



**Measurement Strategy  
(Operational Definition)**



**Variable**

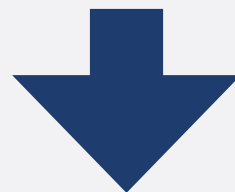
- **Also called “operationalization”**

# MEASUREMENT PROCESS

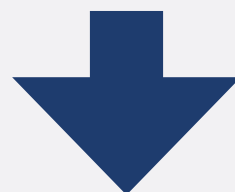
Concept



**Precise Definition of Concept  
(Conceptual Definition)**



**Measurement Strategy  
(Operational Definition)**



**Variable**

- **Example: Democracy**

# MEASUREMENT PROCESS

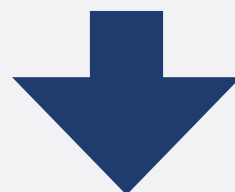
**Concept**



**Precise Definition of Concept**  
**(Conceptual Definition)**



**Measurement Strategy**  
**(Operational Definition)**



**Variable**

# CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

- The concept of \_\_\_\_\_ is defined as the extent to which \_\_\_\_\_ exhibit the characteristic of \_\_\_\_\_

# CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

- The concept of democracy is defined as the extent to which \_\_\_\_\_ exhibit the characteristic of \_\_\_\_\_

# CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

- The concept of democracy is defined as the extent to which countries exhibit the characteristic of \_\_\_\_\_



# UNIT OF ANALYSIS

- Entity we want to describe and analyze: "unit of analysis"
  - We want to study how democratic \_\_\_\_\_ are
  - We want to study how conservative \_\_\_\_\_ are
  - We want to study how much crime there is across \_\_\_\_\_

# UNIT OF ANALYSIS

- Entity we want to describe and analyze: “unit of analysis”
  - We want to study how democratic **countries** are
  - We want to study how conservative **individuals/ states/countries (etc.)** are
  - We want to study how much crime there is across **neighborhoods/cities/states/countries**

# UNIT OF ANALYSIS

- **Different unit of analysis imply different theory and different measurement**
  - **It's very different whether we study criminal behavior among individuals; differences in crime between cities; or differences in crime between countries**
- **Important to be clear about your unit of analysis**

# CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

- The concept of democracy is defined as the extent to which countries exhibit the characteristic of \_\_\_\_\_

# CLARIFYING A CONCEPT

Democratic Country	Non-Democratic/Authoritarian Country

# CLARIFYING A CONCEPT

Democratic Country	Non-Democratic/Authoritarian Country
How ruler is selected is regulated	Ruler becomes ruler through force/ seizing power
Rulers are selected through competitive elections	Rulers are selected through heredity succession or designation
Most people have (in principle) the opportunity to try to become ruler	Only some people have opportunity to become ruler (e.g. son of current ruler)
There are constraints on what the ruler can do	Ruler has unlimited authority ("above the law")

# CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

- The concept of democracy is defined as the extent to which countries exhibit the characteristic of \_\_\_\_\_

# CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

- The concept of democracy is defined as the extent to which countries exhibit the characteristic of having open and competitive contests to decide leadership

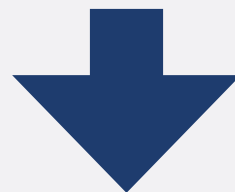


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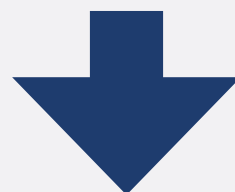
**Concept**



**Precise Definition of Concept  
(Conceptual Definition)**



**Measurement Strategy  
(Operational Definition)**



**Variable**

# OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

- **How can we measure whether countries have open and competitive contests to decide leadership?**

# OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

- **A good operational definition**
  - **"Recipe"**
  - **Provides answers to:**
    - **What procedure is used to collect the data?**
    - **How will the concept be measured?**
    - **What "metric" will be employed?**

# OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

- **How can we measure whether countries have open and competitive contests to decide leadership?**