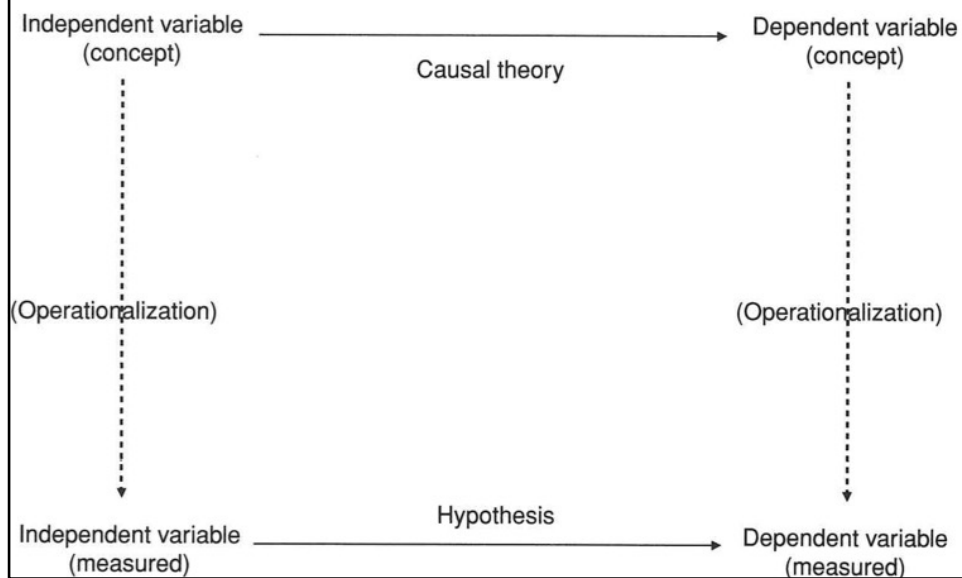


## The plan for today

- Measuring variables
  - Moving from theory to the real world data
  - Does measurement matter?
  
- How to write a thesis
  - What is a BA thesis?
  - How to find my topic
  - How to write

1

## From theory to hypothesis



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- Operationalization = movement from an abstract conceptual level to the “real” measurement level
  - Most concepts are impossible to observe empirically just like that
- Important properties of any measurement
  - Reliability
  - Validity

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- Measurement reliability
  - = the extent to which it is repeatable and consistent
  - Example: coding of text documents, classifying countries as democratic/authoritarian, ...
  - Measurement bias
    - Not a big problem for theory testing
- Measurement validity
  - = the measure accurately represents the concept that it is supposed to measure
  - Example: measuring racism

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## Types of variables

- 1) Categorical (nominal)
  - Values cannot be ordered or ranked
  - Examples: country or residence, marital status, religious denomination
- 2) Ordinal
  - Can be ordered or ranked
  - Examples:  
Is membership in the EU a good thing/neither good or bad/ bad thing?;  
Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree with a certain statement

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## Types of variables, continued.

- 3) Interval (continuous)
  - Can be ordered
  - Equal-unit differences
    - One-unit increase will always mean the same thing
  - Examples: age in years, income in \$, percentage of votes gained in elections,...

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## Does measurement matter?

- Deiwiks C, Cederman L-E, Gleditsch KS. 2012. Inequality and conflict in federations. Journal of Peace Research.
  1. What is the topic? (the research question)
  2. What does the existing literature say?
  3. What do the authors argue?

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## How to write a BA thesis

- What is a BA thesis?
  - <https://irep.fss.muni.cz/bachelor/current-students/bachelor-thesis>
- Thesis types (genres)?
  - Research paper
  - Literature review
  - Policy paper
  - Extended position paper

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## How do I come up with my topic?

- What are you interested in?
- Check the IS for topics
- Read about it (academic literature)
  - look for gaps (things that haven't been done)
  - Review articles are a good place to start (e.g. Annual Reviews in Political Science)
- Browse through available data
  - and consider own data collection
- Talk to people, brainstorm
  - colleagues, professors,
- Timeline:
  - Best begin thinking now, latest late summer after 4<sup>th</sup> semester.

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## What are YOU interested in?

- From your homework assignment for this week:
  1. Share in groups of 2 or 3:
    - What are you interested in?
    - Why?
  2. Brainstorm together:
    - Is there a thesis topic there?
    - In what direction should you take your topic of interest?
  3. Be ready to share with class
    - Your interests + what you learned from the brainstorming

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## How to write

- How long is a BA thesis?
  - 8,500 and 10,000 words
- Who is little/a lot scared of writing a text of 8,500+ words?
  - Who does not like writing?
- How do you feel about writing?
  - Negative emotions related to writing?
  - Positive emotions related to writing?
    - First think about it on your own for 2 mins
    - Then share in your groups of 2-3

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## Recommendations for successful writing

- **Write (!)**
  - 15 minutes every day (or every weekday)
- **Make writing social**
  - Start a writing group
  - Share your work. Early. Get feedback.

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## Successful writers get feedback

- Homework for today:
  - What article did you choose?
  - How many individuals are thanked in your chosen article for giving feedback on an earlier draft of the manuscript?

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## Recommendations for successful writing

- **Write (!)**
  - 15 minutes every day (or every weekday)
- **Make writing social**
  - Start a writing group
  - Share your work. Early. Get feedback.
- Persist despite rejections
  - Applies more to academia or publishing
- Pursue your passions
- Use a “tomato timer”
  - <https://tomato-timer.com/>
    - go to the FAQ for details

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