**Background Information**:

In module 2 we discussed conceptualizing, which is the process of clearly defining the key concepts of our studies. In this module, we move from concepts to measures.**Operationalizing** is the process of creating/defining/recording an empirical measure of a concept. **Measurement** is the process of observing a phenomenon and then classifying/recording it as a number or category.

Many concepts in the social sciences are **latent variables**, which means that they are not directly observable (ex: legitimacy, trust, personality, democracy, wisdom). Instead, scholars measure one or several **indicators** – an observable measure that provides information about a concept -- of latent concepts. Democracy, for example, is a latent concept. Indicators of democracy include the presence of elections, the turnover of power, or political participation by the electorate.

Good measures are both **reliable**, which means the measure is consistent across similar conditions, and **valid** which means the measure or indicator accurately reflects the concepts we want to measure.

**Exercise:** In pairs, work through the following questions.

1. Define each of the concepts below. Be sure to note whether your definition of each concept is uni- or multi-dimensional and describe the dimensions. Then, identify 5 observable indicators of each:

Democracy

Civic Engagement

Political Polarization

Legitimacy

1. Identify two concepts you will use in your research project. Briefly define each concept and then list five indicators of each.