# CHAPTER 6 INDEXES & SCALES

- Why use composite measures?
  - Complex concepts can't be understood with a single indicator
    - 1. Example: age vs. views on abortion
  - 2. Efficient for data analysis

## Index versus Scale

- Commonalities
  - Both scales and indexes are ordinal measures of variables.

 Both scales and indexes are composite measures of variables – measurements based on more than one data item.

#### Differences

- Index A type of composite measure that summarizes and rank-orders several specific observations
- Scale A type of composite measure composed of several items that have a logical or empirical structure among them

# Logic of Indexes

#### Index-Construction Logic

Here are several types of political actions people may have taken. By and large, the different actions represent similar *degrees* of political activism.

To create an *index* of overall political activism, we might give people 1 point for each of the actions they've taken.

Wrote a letter to a public official Signed a political petition

Gave money to a political cause

Gave money to a political candidate Wrote a political letter to the editor

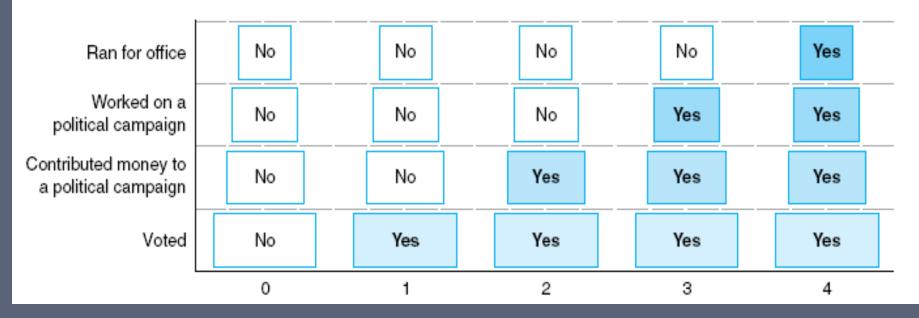
Persuaded someone to change her or his voting plans

# Logic of Scales

#### Scale-Construction Logic

Here are some political actions that represent very different degrees of activism: e.g., running for office represents a higher degree of activism than does simply voting. It seems likely, moreover, that anyone who has taken one of the more demanding actions would have taken all the easier ones as well.

To construct a scale of political activism, we might score people according to which of the following "ideal" patterns comes closest to describing them.



## Index Construction

- Item Selection
- Examination of Empirical Relationships
- Index Scoring
- Handling Missing Data
- Index Validation

#### Make an Index: Tradition

- Respondent's Traditional Index: GSS
- FEPRESH: Preschool kids suffer if mom works
  - Agree = 1 Disagree = 2
- FEFAM: Better man works, woman tends home
  - Agree = 1 Disagree = 2
- FEPOL: Women not suited for politics
  - Agree = 1 Disagree = 2
- Add answers
  - 3 = very traditional 6 = very nontraditional

# Three Types of Scales

- Bogardus Social Distance Scale
- Lickert Scale
- 3. Semantic Differential Scale

#### 1. Bogardus Social Distance Scale

- A measurement technique to determine the willingness of people to participate in social relations with other kinds of people.
- Example:
- Are you willing to let sex offenders live in your country?
- Are you willing to let sex offenders live in your community?
- Are you willing to let a sex offender live next door to you?
- 4. Would you let your child marry a sex offender?

#### 2. Likert Scale

- Best known for his item format:
- strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree
- Clarity key- not kind of agree, sort of, really agree....

## 3. Semantic Differential Scale

 A questionnaire format in which the respondent is asked to rate something in terms of two, opposite adjectives.

	very much	some- what	neither	some- what	very much	
enjoyable	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	boring
likeable	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	repulsive
uninteresting	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	fascinating
believable	[]	[]	[ ]	[]	[]	ridiculous