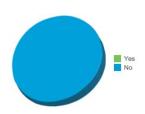
VARIABLES

- 1 Definitions
- 2 Issues
- 3 Recoding
- 4 Practice



Definitional issues

Mathematical foundations

- Random variables: numbers assigned to states
- Continuous variables: ranges of values
- Discrete variables: sets of values

Dimensions and types

- Continuous: infinite/large number of possible values
- Categorical: finite/small number of possible values
- Ordinal: meaningful ordering of the values

Issues

Measurement

- Availability of the data
- **Accuracy** of the measurement
- Meaningfulness of the unit

Coding

- Values: -1 0.7 9 (numeric), "UK" (string), . (missing)
- Variable labels: "Fertility rate"
- Value labels: 1 "White" 2 "Black" 3 "Hispanic" ...

Recoding

Rationale

- Create groups, e.g. age cohorts, social classes
- Create dummies, i.e. binary (0/1), true/false indicators
- Change encoding for missing values

Stata commands

- Create variables: gen, tab, gen(), clonevar, ...
- Recode values: recode, irecode, replace, ...
- Assign labels: la var, la def, la val, ...

Practice: WVS dataset

"[The government] should implement only the laws of the sharia."

- Measured on a 5-point scale of agreement
- Measured in 9 African and Asian countries
- Measured between 1999 and 2004

Data:

- World Values Survey (WVS)
- Sample: resident populations aged 15+



Practice ssession

Class

* Get the do-file for this week. srgm fetch week3.do

* Open to read and replicate.

doedit code/week3

Coursework

- Finish the do-file and read all comments at home.
- Follow instructions on top of the code.
- Form a group and write a common draft do-file.

Exercises

Ex 3.1. European Social Survey 2008

- 1 Load the data.
- 2 Find the variable measuring left/right political positioning.
- 3 How continuous is the measurement?

Ex. 3.2. Quality of Government 2011

- Load the data.
- 2 Find all variables on democracy.
- 3 Which measure seems most reliable?