The NLSY

Using Secondary Data for Analysis of Marriage and Family
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Overview

• What is the NLSY?
  – The NLSY79
  – The NLS79 Children and Young Adults
  – The NLSY97

• What makes the NLSY unique?

• Research illustrations/New Data

• Accessing a wealth of information
Early Cohorts*

• Mature Men 45-59 in 1966 – to study shrinking LFP of prime-aged men (discontinued in 1990)
• Women 30-44 in 1967 – to study the return of women to the labor force as children grew up (discontinued in 2003)
• Young Women 14-24 in 1968– We were gathering data on young men, but as the Women’s Bureau said, why were we ignoring young women? (discontinued in 2003)

* NLS focuses on people, not households
The NLSY today

• The NLSY79 (main youth)

• The NLSY79 child and young adults (all children born to NLSY79 main youth women)

• The NLSY97
NLSY79 Sample

1979: Start: 12,686 men and women 14 to 21 as of 12/31/1978
Sample included all household members in age range
in each HH sampled
Oversamples: Blacks, Hispanics, poor whites and military

1984-1985: Loss of most military oversample cases
1990-1991: Loss of poor white oversample cases
1994: Last annual interview, biennial from then on
2006: Interviewed 7749 respondents, over 80% of actively
fielded sample
  • 23 survey points covering ~100% of female childbearing
  • Age in 2008: 43-51
Child Study

- NLSY79 collected extensive data on fertility, child health & child care – funded by NICHD
- In 1986 the Child Study began, assessing the children of the female respondents every other year to age 14.
Types & modes of assessments

Two types of assessments:
1. Established scales
2. Other indicators of child wellbeing – some scaled, some individual items

Three modes of data collection:
1. Interviewer-administrated to child (in Child Supplement)
2. Mother report (in Mother Supplement)
3. Interviewer observation
The assessment domains: What do they measure?

- Cognitive – memory; math & reading achievement, word reception & recognition
- Socioemotional – developmental milestones; temperament; perceived self-competence
- Behavioral – prosocial; behavior problems; peer conflicts; risk taking
- Physical Health & Development – hgt & wgt measurements; self-reports
Cognitive: Interviewer-administered

- Memory - Wechsler Digit Span

- Achievement/Ability:
  - PIAT Math
  - PIAT Reading

- Vocabulary recognition/retention: PPVT-R
Cognitive assessments for little kids

- Short-term memory:
  - McCarthy Verbal Memory
  - Memory for Location
- Receptive vocabulary:
  - Body Parts
Socioemotional Assessments

• Motor & Social Development (MSD) – from NHIS

• Temperament (What My Child is Like) – from Rothbart, Campos, and Kagan

• Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC) – Harter scales
Other socioemotional measures

• Child moods: Child 10-14 in Child Self-Administered Supplement

• Risk aversion scales: Child 10-14 report in CSAS

• Shyness: Interviewer-report in Child Supplement

• Psych referral: Mother-report
Behavioral, Mother Report

Behavior Problems Index (BPI)

- Measures incidence and severity of child behavior problems
- Global Measure & subscales:
  1. antisocial
  2. anxious or depressed
  3. hyperactive
  4. headstrong
  5. dependent
  6. peer conflicts
The HOME-SF Mother Report

Mother Report

– emotional and verbal responsiveness
– maternal acceptance of and involvement with her child
– organization of the environment
– presence of materials for learning
– variety of stimulation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Age</th>
<th>All Ethnicities</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Non-Black, Non-Hispanic</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 Year</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>4 Years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>5 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>97</td>
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<td>6 Years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>7 Years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>146</td>
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<td>8 Years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>9 Years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>441</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Black, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>242</td>
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## Pooling Samples

<table>
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<th>Pooled Age Groups 1986-2004</th>
<th>Possible n</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<td>0 year olds</td>
<td>2,661</td>
<td>1389</td>
<td>1272</td>
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<td>1 year olds</td>
<td>3,027</td>
<td>1538</td>
<td>1489</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 year olds</td>
<td>3,220</td>
<td>1624</td>
<td>1596</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 year olds</td>
<td>3,444</td>
<td>1738</td>
<td>1706</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 year olds</td>
<td>3,569</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>1759</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 year olds</td>
<td>3,665</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>1790</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 year olds</td>
<td>3,657</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>1792</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 year olds</td>
<td>3,697</td>
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<td>8 year olds</td>
<td>3,630</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>1811</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 year olds</td>
<td>3,546</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>1744</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 year olds</td>
<td>3,453</td>
<td>1739</td>
<td>1714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 year olds</td>
<td>3,295</td>
<td>1685</td>
<td>1610</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 year olds</td>
<td>3,063</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>1507</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 year olds</td>
<td>2,880</td>
<td>1469</td>
<td>1411</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 year olds</td>
<td>1,609</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>804</td>
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</table>
Young Adults are NLSY79 Children – only older

- Those children who turn 15 or are older in the survey year get an interview much like the one their mothers received in 1979. This is funded by NICHD through the BLS contract to CHRR and NORC.

- When the “children” turn 21, beginning in 2000, their surveys have been funded by a grant from NICHD.
NLSY79 Young Adults

• Biennial surveys 1994-2008
• Age in 2008: 14 (will be 15 by end of calendar year) – 37 (1 respondent)
• N in 2008: 6313 and #s growing!

• Age of mothers of these young adults
Young Adult Age at 2006 Interview by Age of Mother at Birth of Young Adult and by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of YA</th>
<th>11-13</th>
<th>14-16</th>
<th>17-19</th>
<th>20-22</th>
<th>23-25</th>
<th>26-29</th>
<th>30+</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>1381</td>
<td>27.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>28.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1528</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>1332</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1479</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>5844</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Young Adults
Young Adult Survey Content

• Questions parallel to the current NLSY79 and NLSY97 – for example
  – Household Record
  – Employer Supplements, Military Service and Gaps
  – Fertility
  – Income (less assets)
  – Training
  – Assessments e.g. Rosenberg Self-Esteem, and CESD
Young Adult Survey Content

• Continued or Parallel questions from the Child Survey
  – Health (routine checks, accidents and injuries)
  – Dating
  – Relationship with parents
  – Some parent/child interaction
  – Risk Taking
  – School Experience and Satisfaction
  – Computer Use
Young Adult Survey Content

• Tailored questions for this age group
  – Information about fathers, especially non-residential ones
  – Timing of and Reasons for leaving home
  – Contact with parents as YAs leave home
  – Marriage and Cohabitation History
  – High School and College experiences
  – Transition into the world of work
  – Current childcare usage and cost
  – Greater detail on non-normative activity such as substance use and criminal behavior
  – Greater detail on sexual activity
Changes to Young Adult Survey

• Major redesign for the 2000 survey
  – Switch to telephone as primary mode
  – Questions with complex answer choices broken down into multiple questions
  – Key questions from Self-Report Booklet converted into CATI/CAPI instrument
  – New areas added:
    • Closeness to Parents
    • Greater migration sequence
    • Movement into and out of parent’s home
    • Ever homeless
    • Monetary contributions to noncoresidential children added to fertility
    • Parenting Attitudes added to fertility
Changes to Young Adult Survey

• Major redesign for the 2000 survey (continued...)
  – New areas added:
    • Modified HOME questions asked about youngest child of respondent in the household
    • Total family income and financial strain
    • Addiction to and workplace use of marijuana
    • Amphetamine usage as a separate series for the first time
Changes to Young Adult Survey

• Redesign for the 2002 survey
  – New questions in Military to find out whether/when reservists had been called into active duty
  – Questions about part-time, irregular employment added for younger YAs parallel to those asked in CSAS
Changes to Young Adult Survey

- Redesign for the 2004 survey included:
  - Household Record redesigned to reduce interviewer error
  - Marriage history of spouse/partners asked
  - Children from other relationships of spouse/partners asked
  - Monetary contributions of nonresidential parents asked for each biological child
  - Home Items revised and asked of all children in the HH tied to the YA
  - Questions about household division of labor and economic enmeshment added for YAs with spouse/partners
  - Questions about serious but not cohabiting relationships added
  - Asthma series added
Changes to Young Adult Survey

- Redesign for the 2006 survey includes:
  - Catastrophic events series added
  - Questions on assets and debts expanded
  - Series on financial help with living expenses added
  - Ten-Item Personality Inventory added
  - Family conflict series added
  - Series of political questions added
.... And for 2008

- Only interview biennially through age 30 then every approx. 4 years
- Action in combat zones
- Where biological children lived at birth
- 6 item anger scale
- Healthy activities
- Relationship and dating activities from qualitative data
- Political questions
Research Possibilities

- Early and Middle Childhood
- Later Childhood
- Adulthood
Child – Young Adult Connections

- Child obesity $\rightarrow$ YA health & employment outcomes
- Child school & achievement $\rightarrow$ YA educational attainment & labor force participation
- YA consequences of Child substance use
- Transmission of Attitudes, Behaviors and Beliefs over time
- Deviance across time and across generations: Child BPI & delinquent behavior $\rightarrow$ YA delinquency & crime
Cross-Generational Research Possibilities

Maternal Background & Experience → Early and Middle Childhood → Later Childhood → Adulthood
NLSY97

- 12-17 in 1997
- Annual surveys 1997-08
- Most recent available data: 2006/07 (R10)
- Age in R10: 21-26
- Round 11 due out in August 2009
## Following Youth through Later Adolescence/Early Adulthood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Start Year</th>
<th>End Year</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NLSY79</td>
<td>14-16 (1979)</td>
<td>24-26 (1989)</td>
<td>10 surveys</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Why NLS Data on Marriage are Valuable

Key Features:

• timing of marriage and other events in respondents’ lives
• repeated observations
• ability to merge in geographic information
Topics for which NLS Marriage Data have been Used:

- Marriage and child-bearing
- Marital search and marriage
- Marriage and labor market outcomes
- Effect of marriage on child outcomes
- Marital disruptions and remarriage
- Marriage and health
- Marriage and alcohol/drug use
- Marriage and Income
# Listings in NLS Bibliography on Unions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyword</th>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Disruption</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Dissolution</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Instability</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>414</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>307</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cohabitation</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>177</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
NLSY79

- Current marital status - asked in all years
- Two created variables specifying marital status at interview date
  a. More complete (NEVER MARRIED, MARRIED, SEPARATED, DIVORCED, REMARRIED, WIDOWED)
  b. Collapsed (NEVER MARRIED, MARRIED, SPOUSE PRESENT, OTHER)
Marital History—How data are collected

From 1980 on, data on marital changes are collected in an event history format

1. At each interview, respondents are reminded of their marital status at the date of the last interview and marital status at last interview is verified.

2. Asked, whether they had a change in marital status. If yes, the respondent is asked to report the type of the first change (marriage, divorce, etc.) and the date of that change in marital status.
Marital History—How data are collected

3. Asked if any other changes. If yes, asked to report the second change and the date of that change. This continues until respondent reports that there were no other changes.
Marriage Variables Created from Event History Data

Created variables indicating the beginning and ending dates (month and year) of marriages

- Start dates for up to 3 marriages
- End dates for up to 2 marriages
- Age at 1\textsuperscript{st} marriage
- Number of months between first marriage and first birth
Number of Cohabiting Households in the United States

- 1970 - 1 million
- 1990 - 3 million
- 1998 - 5 million
- 2005 - 10 million
Cohabitation Data

• In all years, indicator of whether respondent is living with an opposite sex partner (comes from hh roster)

• 1990 and 1992 onwards
  • Month and year when respondent began living with opposite sex partner
  • Whether respondent lived with spouse before marriage
  • Month and year when respondent and spouse began living together
Cohabitation History

• Beginning in the 2002 survey, during any period of at least 3 months in which the respondent was unmarried, we collect spells of cohabitation that are at least 3 months in duration—including start and stop dates.
Cohabitation/Relationship History-Created Variables

Based on the information in the household rosters

Two variables have been created for each year

1. NUMSPPTR—provides the id number of the current/most recent spouse or partner (takes values of 0 to 9)
2. RELSPPTR—provides the relationship of r to current spouse or partner

- 999: Never reported a spouse/partner
- 0: No current spouse/partner
- 1: Spouse
- 33: Partner
- 36: Other
Cohabitation/Relationship History- Created Variables

Caveats:

Cannot tell whether these individuals were in the respondent’s hh between rounds

Will have missed partners who were present for a short time between rounds
• 1979 and 1997 marriage and cohabitation data
NLSY97

• Unlike the 1979 cohort which is now primarily a phone interview, and the Young Adult 21 and over which has always collected information by phone, 1997 is mostly in person.
The NLSY97 marriage section builds off of what was learned from the NLSY79 marriage section—but faces new challenges.

1. Important to know cohabitation as well as legal marital status.
2. Cohabitation dates may be more difficult for respondents to report. **Cohabitation may be a gradual process.**
3. Marriage implies two people of opposite sex, but cohabitation does not.
4. Marriage does not always mean cohabitation. In at least 10 cases in the NLSY97, the respondent had never lived with their spouse between marriage and subsequent interview.
Structure of NLSY97 Marriage and Cohabitation Section

The section in the NLSY97 is set up differently from that of the NLSY79.

- Concentrates on tracking cohabitation spells and captures marital transitions obliquely—asks whether married when began cohabitation and asks about changes in marital status within cohabitation
- Starts by defining cohabitation as “a sexual relationship in which partners of the opposite sex establish one household and live together.”
- Then explicitly checks respondents marriage/cohab status at last interview
- It tries to roster any opposite-sex partner with whom the respondent lives and then record all changes in legal marital status for each relationship.
Marital Status

- Martial status at the time of the survey is collected.
- Created variables that provide current marital and cohabitation status are available.
Partner Roster

• At each survey respondents are asked to list each opposite-sex partner with whom the respondent had a sexual relationship and lived for at least one month

• For each partner on the list, the respondent is asked when s/he started and stopped living with this person
Partner Roster (continued)

- If partner is not in youth’s current household, additional information is collected characteristics at time they started living together:
  1. age
  2. race and ethnicity
  3. highest grade
  4. whether employed
  5. whether receiving government assistance

- Survey goes back through list of partners and collects dates at which changes in marital status occurred in relationship with each partner
Figure 1a: Years with biological father present

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
Figure 1b: Years with biological father present: single at birth
Figure 1c: Years with biological father present: cohabiting at birth
Figure 1d: Years with biological father present: married at birth
So what is unique?

- Many rounds of the NLSY79 with broad range of data and amazing retention rates
- Ability to do intergenerational research by linking children/young adults to their mothers
- Ability to follow children from birth through early adulthood
- Ability to do cross-generational research by comparing NLSY79 and NLSY97 cohorts
- Think creatively comparing NLSY79 young adults with NLSY97 – Young adults have many years of data collected contemporaneously, NLSY97 are nationally representative.
- Geocoded data
Kinship data – Siblings & Cousins

Kinship information allows user to separate family household effects from individual characteristics.

### Siblings

- Sample sizes: > 6000 full siblings; > 2000 half-siblings
- Fraternal & identical twins: >125 pairs as of 2000

### Cousins - How are they identified?

- Children of NLSY79 main Youth mothers who are sisters (cousins)
- Children of NLSY79 main Youth mothers who are half-sisters (half cousins)
- Children of NLSY79 main Youth mothers who are themselves cousins (quarter-cousins)
Accessing the data

- Always check the user’s guide
- Always check years questions are asked
- Always check ages questions are asked
- Always check the universe for whom questions are pertinent