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NLSY79 Round 20 Main, Work History, and Geocode Data Releases

The combined main file and work history data release and the separate geocode data release for round 20 of the NLSY79 are now available for distribution to researchers. This latest survey collected information from 7,724 members of the NLSY79 cohort, or almost 78 percent of the eligible respondents. The round 20 release includes data from the year 2002 interview and all public data collected during the previous 19 interviews of the cohort conducted since 1979. Since 1994, NLSY79 respondents have been interviewed every other year.

The work history data are a special set of created variables tracking respondents' employment status from January 1, 1978, through the most recent interview date. Data include each respondent's labor force status (including any military experience) during each week since January 1, 1978, the usual number of hours worked each week at all jobs, and additional identifiers that track respondents who worked for more than one employer simultaneously in any week. The data file also includes start and stop dates for the jobs and usual hours worked for each of up to five employers for whom the respondent worked during the survey period. Data on rate of pay, occupation, industry, and class of worker also are included. Dates of active military service and variables detailing gaps in employment are provided.

In addition, the data set includes constructed variables summarizing various aspects of the respondents' labor force participation. These include number of weeks spent working, unemployed, or out of the labor force and number of hours worked, both during the previous calendar

year and during the period since the last interview. In addition, variables that summarize the respondent's lifetime experiences in the labor force, such as the number of jobs ever held, are created. Formerly separate from the main data file, the work history data are now included with the other data and identified by their own area of interest.

The geocode data set includes all of the main file variables and adds more detailed geographic information. Due to confidentiality restrictions, access to the geocode data is limited; interested researchers should contact the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for more information. (Contact information may be found on the back page of this newsletter.)

Round 20 questionnaire content

The round 20 questionnaire was similar to the instruments used in previous rounds. It asked each NLSY79 respondent about various areas of interest, including labor force behavior, educational attainment, training investments, income, health conditions, insurance coverage, and marital and fertility histories. However, the 2002 questionnaire did include some changes, which are outlined below.

In the household interview section, survey administrators deleted questions asked of respondents living on a farm about the farm and the income generated from it. As part of an experiment, a handful of new questions asked about the respondent's income and his or her spouse's or partner's income. These questions were administered to cooperative respondents from round 19 using 1 of 3 experimental methods for the possible answers: unfolding brackets, rounded figure, or a self-reported range. In the unfolding brackets option, respondents reported ranges and approximate income amounts to the nearest

\$10,000. Survey administrators designed this experiment in order to look at ways in which to increase response rates on income questions that initially receive 'don't know' responses or refusals.

In the family background section, survey administrators deleted three questions that gathered data about the religion in which each respondent was raised, the respondent's current religion, and the respondent's attendance at religious services. Conforming to the current OMB-sanctioned method, a couple of questions soliciting ethnic identification were added.

Changes to the marital history section of the questionnaire included the collection of additional data on respondents' nonmarital cohabitation history. The questionnaire did not contain questions on premarital cohabitation and partner cohabitation that were asked separately in earlier surveys. Rather, it incorporated these questions into the new cohabitation history series.

The "on jobs" section included several changes in 2002. Deleted was a question that asked whether a respondent had worked for one or more than one client during a month on the job. Added in the on jobs section were questions aimed at establishing a respondent's employer type. These questions are designed to verify the respondent's type of employment, if predetermined from previous interview information, or to ascertain whether the job has characteristics of self-employment, regular employment, or nontraditional employment. By nontraditional employment, administrators mean work as a consultant, an independent contractor, or a temporary employee, or work at an assignment made by an employment agency or as a "leased" employee.

In 2002, the employer supplement saw several changes regarding questions on

regular employment situations. Questions deleted include those that asked about the number of employees at locations of the employer other than the one at which the respondent worked; whether the employer is considered a regular or odd job employer; whether the respondent's job responsibilities have increased, decreased, or stayed the same; how work shifts are determined, for all but the most recent or current job; and how respondents went about a job search to find the job. Also deleted were questions on multiple types of performance-based pay (except for cash bonuses, on which questions were expanded slightly) and questions on pension plan details. Pension plan questions, however, were not completely eliminated. New questions added in 2002 asked about pension plan disposition for job leavers. Also added in 2002 were questions on Social Security exemption, in the case of respondent employers, and changes in hours worked since start of employment, in the case of new employers. Finally, a new set of questions identified teachers paid on a 10- or 12-month contract and collected information on their earnings more accurately.

In round 20, survey administrators adapted the traditional employer supplement to specifically address self-employment and nontraditional employment situations, based on the job classification established in the "on jobs" section. In addition to many of the substantive questions contained in the traditional employer supplement in earlier surveys, questions specifically aimed at these types of employment situations were included. Questions cover topics such as tenure, leaving employment, maternity leave, hours worked, earnings, benefits, and job satisfaction.

Deleted from the training section of the 2002 questionnaire were a couple of questions on the time required with an employer before being offered training and on informal training with coworkers and/or supervisors.

Survey administrators made changes to the fertility section in 2002, largely involving the consolidation and streamlining of processes by which information is verified or corrected. A few items were eliminated for 2002. These included detailed questions on the parent and the residential status of nonbiological children, and a set of questions asked of fathers about

their relationship with their oldest and (if applicable) youngest child.

The childcare section of the 2002 questionnaire was similar to that in previous questionnaires. A series of statements allowing respondents to rate the quality of their neighborhood as a place for raising children and on selected types of neighborhood problems was deleted.

The health section saw the deletion of questions about physical activity on the job and physical activity in general, although activity questions remained as part of a new series on general health behaviors. Questions about work-related injuries were eliminated, as was a set of questions about experiences with pain in the health module addressed to respondents aged 40 and older. Questions about health insurance coverage contained updates asking about "any time not covered" instead of "any months not covered" as in previous surveys. An expanded series of questions replaced previously administered single questions regarding respondents' spouse's, partner's, and children's health insurance. Finally, added in 2002 was a short set of questions on alcohol use and, in the 40-and-older health module, two additional Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD) items on loneliness.

The last section to which changes were made is that on income and reciprocity. Questions deleted from this section were those on joint ownership of a farm or business; detailed child support; targeted cash or noncash assistance for things such as training, clothes, transportation, and the like; and assets and debts. Questions on assets and debts are now being asked every two rounds and will be included again in round 21. Information on receipt of veteran's benefits, disability, and Social Security was obtained via separate questions in 2002, rather than from a single question. A somewhat expanded series of questions on inheritance, estates, trusts, and life insurance settlements also was added.

NLSY79 data and documentation

The NLSY79 main file and work history data are available, free of charge, via download from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/nls>. Researchers interested in acquiring the data through this method should select the "Ordering Data" link on the Web page. Much of the supporting documentation also is

available for download from this Web site, including the *NLSY79 User's Guide*. This guide explains the selection of the NLSY79 sample, describes the content of the data set, and provides helpful information for researchers using the data.

The data are available on CD-ROM for a \$20 fee. Users interested in purchasing the data CD-ROM, or those with questions, should contact NLS User Services. (See the back of this newsletter for contact information.)

The online and CD-ROM versions of the data are the same and contain data collected from each of the 20 rounds of the survey, as well as a number of created variables. The inclusion of data from all rounds allows researchers to easily examine the longitudinal record of a respondent.

Because of the confidentiality issues surrounding the geocode data set, these data are available on CD-ROM only to researchers who successfully complete the Bureau of Labor Statistics confidentiality agreement. Interested researchers should contact BLS for more information. (Contact information may be found on the back page of this newsletter.) □

Schooling questions in the NLSY97

This article briefly outlines the schooling information available in the first five rounds of the NLSY97.

Educational status and attainment

The survey collected information on NLSY97 respondents' educational experiences in all of the first five rounds. Questions on this topic remained generally the same in all rounds. Respondents first answered a series of questions designed to determine their enrollment status. Respondents who were no longer attending a regular school reported on their reason for leaving and the date on which this separation occurred.

Regardless of enrollment status, all respondents indicated, across all survey rounds, whether they had ever been suspended from school and the grade level(s) at which this had occurred. For each grade, the surveys also asked the respondent to report the total number of days for which he or she had been suspended.

For rounds 2 through 5, respondents reported gaps in enrollment of 4 weeks or

more, other than suspensions. Specifically, they identified gaps since the last interview and the reason for each gap, such as illness or summer vacation.

After collecting enrollment information, the questionnaire asked respondents about their educational attainment. In all rounds, respondents stated the highest grade level that they had attended and the highest grade level completed. Each respondent also reported the date on which he or she expected to graduate from high school. Finally, respondents answered a question asking about the highest degree they had received.

Respondents reporting that they had earned a General Education Development (GED) certificate indicated when they had earned it and whether they had attended any training program to prepare for the GED examination.

School experience

The NLSY97 surveys gathered detailed data about the respondent's experiences in high school and college.

High school experiences. Respondents who reported attending the 9th or a higher grade provided information on their course of study in high school and on the types of math, science, and other (such as computer programming, word processing, home economics) courses they had taken in the 7th through the 12th grades. In round 1 of the survey, respondents reported on whether each math or science class was an honors course. Respondents also reported whether they had been enrolled in any remedial or special education classes.

In addition to the above information, respondents answered a question on the course of study in which they were enrolled. Possible answers included: General program; college preparatory, academic, or specialized academic; vocational technical or business and career; combination academic and vocational program; special education/learning disabled; alternative program; GED; or other.

College experiences. Respondents who were enrolled in college were asked a number of questions about college experiences. Some questions asked about the college itself, such as whether it was public or private, the grading scale used,

and whether its school year was divided into semesters, trimesters, or quarters.

Other questions targeted topics that are more tailored to each respondent, such as the type of diploma, degree, or certificate the respondent hoped to earn; the number of total credits earned at a particular college; the number of credits earned from sources outside the college; the number of credits taken and earned each term; and the number of credits required to graduate. Respondents reported on their major (information is collected on up to two majors), grade-point average, tuition, the number of hours they spend in class, their status as a full- or part-time student, and their living arrangements while in school (in a dormitory, and so forth). Several questions regarding financial aid issues also are asked.

Achievement tests

Achievement test information has been collected in each round. Respondents are asked about the SAT and the ACT. Questions include those about which test(s) the respondent took, what grade the respondent was in when he or she took the test(s), the highest score earned on the ACT (if taken), and the highest scores earned on both the SAT math and verbal sections (if taken). In addition, respondents reported which Advanced Placement (AP) tests they had taken (for example, biology, history, economics). They also stated the grade level(s) at which they took the tests and the highest score received.

School-based learning

Any respondent enrolled in a secondary school during the reference period reported on whether the school has a day on which adults come to talk about their jobs. Respondents were asked about their participation in any school-based learning programs, such as apprenticeships or mentoring. Questions were asked about the characteristics of the most recent program, including the type of program, the number of days or weeks spent at a worksite, and the number of hours per day or week spent at the worksite. If the respondent received payment for participating in the program, he or she gave the rate of pay. Other questions ask whether the respondent took any classes at the worksite and whether the employer wrote an evaluation of him or her.

Transcript survey

In winter 1999-2000, the NLSY97 transcript survey sought specific educational information directly from high schools about all NLSY97 respondents who had graduated from high school or who were aged 18 or older and no longer enrolled.

Transcript request packets were mailed to each school at which an NLSY97 youth had received his or her high school diploma, or to the last school that the nonenrolled youth had attended. The packet contained informational materials about the NLSY97, a description of the NLSY97 transcript survey, and documentation of administrative permission from districts to contact schools. The packet also included a cover letter addressed to the school principal, a one-page cover sheet questionnaire designed to collect information on school-specific grading and transcript policies, a student request list identifying the sampled students in the school, and the signed permission forms for these students.

Using course catalogs, transcript data, and clarification calls to school administrators, survey staff constructed histories of courses taken and term enrollment calendars for each of the sample youths. The resulting data files include any available information on absences, instances of tardiness, dates of enrollment, and high school graduation status, as well as indicators of participation in special education classes, gifted/talented programs, or bilingual education. If the source materials included scores on achievement tests, such as the ACT, PSAT, SAT, SAT II, or AP tests, those scores are reported.

Transcript survey data are available in the NLSY97 event history data set, which may be downloaded, along with the main data set, from the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/nls>.

For more information

Researchers interested in further details about the schooling data should consult the *NLSY97 User's Guide* and examine the questionnaires to review exact question wording and universe information for variables of interest. Data and accompanying documentation for the NLSY97 are available for download from the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/nls>. □

Corrections Made to Occupation and Industry Codes in the NLS of Mature Women and NLS of Young Women

During the process of assigning the 2000 occupation and industry codes for the NLS of mature women and the NLS of young women surveys, staff at the U.S. Census Bureau discovered that some of the 1990 occupation and industry codes had been assigned incorrectly. The problem occurred in the 1997 survey, and affected the data for respondents and their husbands/partners who had more than one job coded in that particular year. Rather than trying to identify the cases in which there may have been a mismatch between the occupation and industry codes and the employer's name and taking the chance of overlooking potential errors, survey administrators decided to rematch all cases in which there may have been a problem. Because the same code is carried forward for years in which there are no job changes, the 1997 problem potentially affected the 1990 occupation and industry codes in all subsequent years.

In 1997, there were 1,169 cases with possible mismatched codes divided between the respondent and her husband or partner. There was the possibility that mismatched codes were assigned for 869 respondents' jobs and 300 husbands/partners' jobs. Of these 1,169 cases, there was the possibility of 866 mismatches in 1999 (respondents accounted for 642 and husbands/partners accounted for 224). In 2001, there was the possibility of 686 mismatched codes with respondents accounting for 523 and husbands/partners accounting for 163.

The corrections made are now available to the public on a separate data file. They will be added to the 2003 data release. Researchers needing the corrected data in the interim should contact User Services. (Contact information may be found on the back page of this newsletter.) □

Frequently Asked Questions

NLS User Services encourages researchers to contact them with questions and problems they have encountered while accessing and using NLS data and/or documentation. Every effort is made to an-

swer these inquiries. Some recently asked questions that may be of general interest to NLS users are listed below with their answers.

Q1: In the NLSY79, is there any variable indicating which job a person considers as the primary job? For example, if a person has two jobs at the time of the interview—one primary job and a secondary/supplemental job (which might not provide health insurance, benefits, and so forth)—can I distinguish between the two jobs? Also, so far as I understand, the five hourly wage variables for each year are applicable only if the person was paid by the hour and not if he or she received a salary or pay in another form. Is this correct?

A1: If the respondent is currently working at two jobs, they are to report on the job at which they are employed for the most hours. This is the primary job. Hourly rates of pay have been created per job, for all respondents reporting that job. For an example, see R70057.00 [HRP1] HOURLY RATE OF PAY JOB # 1 in the 2000 data set. Respondents are asked to report amount paid and the time unit for which the pay is received. They are allowed to report by various time units: per hour, per day, per week, per year, per piece, and so forth. The NLS software then takes into account usual hours worked and creates an hourly rate of pay, regardless of whether the respondent reported something other than an hourly amount. See the NLSY79 User's Guide, section 4.39, on Wages. Included in this section is the code that created hourly rate of pay.

Q2: Suppose that the child is on summer vacation when surveyed. How does the NLSY take care of that situation? Is there a strict definition of what grade a child is in when he/she is on summer vacation? For example, assume that I am interviewed in July, and have just finished 11th grade in June, and I am going to be in 12th grade in the upcoming fall. Do I answer that I am in 11th grade or 12th grade when I am asked: Y10121.00 [Q4-2] YEAR OF SCHOOL/ GRADE R IS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN?

A2: Here is what interviewers are instructed to do in the summer months: "Rs on summer vacation are considered enrolled. In ambiguous cases, consider R to be enrolled if s/he intends to return to school (has not

dropped out or formally left). In these cases, code the grade that R will be enrolled in." This is done because, once you have completed a grade, such as 11th, you are considered to be a 12th grader.

Q3: I am looking at the cohort of mature women aged 30 to 44 in 1967 and the cohort of young women aged 14 to 24 in 1968. I am interested in getting a measure of field of study in college for all respondents. Is there a summary measure of field of study or is that something I will need to create? If I will need to create it, do I need to extract the field of study variable (three colleges) for each year to create a person's educational history?

A3: You will need to compute your own measure for field of study because there is not a cumulative/summary measure for it, as there is for highest grade completed. The interview gathers information on field of study during the time of enrollment or during the next interview after the respondent finishes her education. You will need to think how you want to define the period—for example, the last reported field of study (if no degree received) vs. field of study at the time the person received the degree. This is important because, after receiving a degree, a respondent may return to college for a class that may or may not be related to the degree. It might be helpful to look at appendix 42 (in Investigator, go to the Contents window, then look under Documents, click on 'Other NLSW Documentation'), which contains the code to needed to create the measure for highest grade completed. This approach might suggest a way to create a "field of study" measure. See the User Guide section on Educational Status and Attainment (section 4.8, in Investigator). Also, search the NLS bibliography (www.nlsbibliography.org) for previous research using field of study. □

Completed NLS Research

The following is a listing of recent research based on data from the NLS cohorts that has not appeared in its current form in a previous issue of the *NLS News*. See the *NLS Annotated Bibliography* at <http://www.nlsbibliography.org> for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research.

- Anderson, Patricia M.; Butcher, Kristin F.; and Levine, Phillip B. "Economic Perspectives on Childhood Obesity." *Economic Perspectives*, 27, 3 (Third Quarter 2003): 30-49. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]
- Argys, Laura M. and Peters, H. Elizabeth. "Can Adequate Child Support Be Legislated? Responses to Guidelines and Enforcement." *Economic Inquiry*, 41, 3 (July 2003): 463-480. [NLSY79]
- Artis, Julie E. and Pavalko, Eliza K. "Explaining The Decline In Women's Household Labor: Individual Change and Cohort Differences." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 65, 3 (August 2003): 746-762. [Mature Women, Young Women]
- Baum, Charles L, II. "The Effects of Maternity Leave Legislation on Mothers' Labor Supply after Childbirth." *Southern Economic Journal*, 69, 4 (April 2003): 772-800. [NLSY79]
- Budig, Michelle Jean. "Are Women's Employment and Fertility Histories Interdependent? An Examination of Causal Order Using Event History Analysis." *Social Science Research*, 32, 3 (September 2003): 376-402. [NLSY79]
- Cawley, John and Simon, Kosali I. "The Impact of Macroeconomic Conditions on the Health Insurance Coverage of Americans." *Frontiers in Health Policy Research*, 6, 1 (January 2003): 87-115. [NLSY79]
- Chang, Tracy F.H. "A Social Psychological Model of Women's Gender-Typed Occupational Mobility." *Career Development International*, 8, 1 (February 19, 2003): 27-30. [Young Women]
- Christie-Mizell, C. Andre; Steelman, Lala Carr; and Stewart, Jennifer. "Seeing Their Surroundings: The Effects of Neighborhood Setting and Race on Maternal Distress." *Social Science Research*, 32, 3 (September 2003): 402-429. [NLSY79]
- Christie-Mizell, C. Andre. "Bullying: The Consequences of Interparental Discord and Child's Self-Concept." *Family Process*, 42, 2 (Summer 2003): 237-251. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]
- Christie-Mizell, C. Andre. "Racial Variation in the Effects of Sons versus Daughters on the Disruption of the First Marriage." *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 38, 3-4 (2003): 41-60. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]
- Currie, Janet and Reagan, Patricia B. "Distance to Hospital and Children's Use of Preventive Care: Is Being Closer Better, and for Whom?" *Economic Inquiry*, 41, 3 (July 2003): 378-392. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]
- Davies, Scott and Tanner, Julian. "The Long Arm of the Law: Effects of Labeling on Employment." *Sociological Quarterly*, 44, 3 (Summer 2003): 385-405. [NLSY79]
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- Dubow, Eric F. and Ippolito, Maria F. "Effects of Poverty and Quality of the Home Environment on Changes in the Academic and Behavioral Adjustment of Elementary School-Age Children." *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 23 (1994): 401-412. [Children of the NLSY79]
- Geddes, Lori Ann and Heywood, John S. "Gender and Piece Rates, Commissions, and Bonuses." *Industrial Relations*, 42, 3 (July 2003): 419-445. [NLSY79]
- Grant, Darren. "The Effect of Implicit Contracts on the Movement of Wages over the Business Cycle: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Surveys." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 56, 3 (April 2003): 393-409. [NLSY79, NLSY97, Mature Women, Young Women, Older Men, Young Men]
- Hannon, Lance. "Poverty, Delinquency, and Educational Attainment: Cumulative Disadvantage or Disadvantage Saturation?" *Sociological Inquiry*, 73, 4 (November 2003): 575-595. [NLSY79]
- Kenkel, Donald S.; Lillard, Dean R. and Mathios, Alan. "Smoke Or Fog? The Usefulness of Retrospectively Reported Information About Smoking." *Addiction*, 98, 9 (September 2003): 1307-1314. [Mature Women, NLSY79, Older Men]
- Kletzer, Lori G. and Fairlie, Robert W. "The Long-Term Costs of Job Displacement for Young Adults Workers." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 56, 4 (July 2003): 682-699. [NLSY79]
- Kugler, Adriana D. "Employee Referrals and Efficiency Wages." *Labour Economics*, 10, 5 (October 2003): 531-557. [NLSY79]
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