CLS Cohort Studies

Data Note 5

Partnership Histories in
NCDS5 and NCDS6

Constantinos Kallis
Centre for Multilevel Modelling

Centre for Longitudinal Studies

Centre for Longitudinal Studies
Bedford Group for Lifecourse and
Statistical Studies
Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL
Tel: 020 7612 6860
Fax: 020 7612 6880
Email cls@cls.ioe.ac.uk
Web http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk

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Constantinos Kallis, Centre for Multilevel Modelling, Bedford Group for Lifecourse and Statistical Studies, Institute of Education

Introduction

This Data Note is concerned with preparation of continuous partnership histories for female members of the National Child Development Study (NCDS) between ages 16-42, using data collected at 23 (NCDS4), 33 (NCDS5) and 42 (NCDS6). It is based on the linkage of the consolidated NCDS4 and NCDS5 dataset (Di Salvo 1995) and the NCDS6 deposited data. The resulting dataset with cohort members with at least one partnership in either NCDS5 or NCDS6 has been used for the analysis of the link between partnership and childbearing processes (Steele et al. 2005a and Steele et al. 2005b).

Further information about NCDS is available at: http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/ncds

There is a corresponding CLS Cohort Studies Data Note 4 (Kallis 2005), which is concerned with preparation of comparable continuous partnership histories for female members of the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) between ages 16-30 using data collected at age 30.

For the purposes of the following analysis, partnership is defined as a continuous period spent living with the same partner. A partnership episode is the period of time spent continuously with the same partner in the same state (cohabitation or marriage).

National Child Development Study

NCDS started life as the Perinatal Mortality Survey and examined the social and obstetric factors associated with stillbirth and infant mortality among over 17,000 babies born in Britain between 3 and 9 March 1958. Between that time and 2005 the whole cohort were surveyed on six other occasions in order to monitor their health, education, social and economic circumstances. These surveys were carried out in 1965 (age 7), 1969 (age 11), 1974 (age 16), 1981 (age 23), 1991 (age 33), and 2000 (age 42).

From its original focus on the circumstances and outcomes of birth, NCDS has broadened in scope to map all aspects of health, education and social development of its subjects as they passed through childhood and adolescence. In latter sweeps, the information collected has covered their transitions into adult life, including leaving full-time education, entering the labour market, setting up independent homes, forming partnerships and becoming parents.

Preliminary linkage

Initially, partnership histories derived from data gathered during NCDS5 (Di Salvo 1995) were merged, namely:

- Data for the first 4 partnerships to age 33 (partners.por)
- Data for those who had more than 4 partnerships at age 33 (part58.por)

Subsequently, this merged NCDS5 dataset was linked with the NCDS6 dataset, and a flag created to identify whether the cohort member was asked about their partnership history at age 33 and/or age 42.

Next, a common date format was created for the (partnership?) episodes recorded at age 33 and 42. The century month code (cmc) is a common way of combining the year and the month of an event. The following formula was applied:

$$cmc=12*year+month, year=number of years since 1900$$

At this stage, it was also necessary to identify entries where an irregular century month code was derived. For instance, in NCDS5 dataset, a missing year or month of the beginning or the ending of a partnership episode has been replaced by codes 98 or 99. In this case, the computed cmc has been replaced by the default system missing code.

Episode start and end dates

After defining the partnership start and end dates, the next step was to compute the episode starting and ending century month codes. Due to the difference in the recording of partnership variables between NCDS5 and NCDS6, it was necessary to devise different procedures for creating the episodes' start and end dates.

NCDS5
Specifically, in NCDS5 each cohort member was asked to recollect information about the first partnership since the age of 16 and subsequently about the partnership after the end of the first (if any). On the other hand, in NCDS6 each cohort member was asked to recall partnerships in reverse chronological order.

A number of variables from Di Salvo (1995) were used to define the partnership state for each time period of the partnership and the type of transition at the end of each episode in the partnership. For each of the possible 8 partnerships allowed for on the 'Your Life' questionnaire, the variables mentioned above are the following (with # denoting partner number):

> statpar#: married to partner # ?
> 1: Yes
> 2: No
>
> cohmar#: ever married partner # ?
> 1: Yes
> 2: No

wthpart#: still living with partner # ?
1: Yes
2: No

In NCDS5, if a woman did not live with a partner who was reported at the time of the interview, she was subsequently asked whether the couple separated or the partner died. The variables that contain the answer to the question are included in the deposited version of the data. They are coded in the following way:

1: couple separated
2: partner died

The rules applied to create NCDS5 episode states and transitions using the variables mentioned above are presented in the following table:

Statpar#	Cohmar#	Wthpar#	Separate or partner died	Event sequence within partnership
1	-	1	-	Started as married couple, still married at age 33
2	2	1	-	Started as cohabiting couple, still cohabiting at age 33
2	1	1	-	Started as cohabiting couple, married, still married at age 33
2	2	2	1	Started as cohabiting couple, never married, separated
2	2	2	2	Started as cohabiting couple, never married, partner died
2	1	2	1	Started as cohabiting couple, married, separated
2	1	2	2	Started as cohabiting couple, married, partner died
1	-	2	1	Started as married couple, separated
1	-	2	2	Started as married couple, partner died

A transition indicator was created with the following coding:

0: if episode censored
1: if partnership ended in separation
2: if partner died
3: if cohabitation was converted to marriage with the same partner

NCDS6
In NCDS6, the corresponding variables for creating episode state and transition indicators for ex-partnerships are the following:

expartf#: Were you and (name of ex-partner) married when you moved in together?

1: married
2 living as a couple

expartg#: Did you get married to (name of ex-partner)?

1: Yes
2: No

expartl#: Can I just check, how did this relationship end?

1: couple separated
2: partner died

The table below shows the rules applied to create partnership episodes using variables related to ex-partnerships:

Expartf	Expartg	Epxartl	Event history within partnership
1	-	1	Started as married couple, separated
1	-	2	Started as married couple, partner died
2	1	1	Started with cohabitation, married, separated
2	1	2	Started with cohabitation, married, partner died
2	2	1	Started with cohabitation, never married, separated
2	2	2	Started with cohabitation, never married, partner died

For the partnership with the current partner at age 42, the following variables are used:

dmsppart: whether cm has current partner in household

1: yes
2: no

marstat2: legal marital status

1: single, never married
2: married, 1st & only marriage
3: remarried - 2nd or later married
4: legally separated
5: divorced
6: widowed
8: don't know
9: not answered

curpartb: did cm and current partner live together before they married
1: yes, lived as a couple
2: never cohabited before marriage

The procedure followed to create partnership episodes with the variables described above is summarised in the following table:

Dmsppart	Marstat2	Curpartb	Event history within partnership
1	1 or 4 or 5 or 6	-	Started cohabiting, never married
1	2 or 3	1	Started cohabiting, married
1	2 or 3	2	Started as married couple

Inconsistencies

Based on the definition of partnership and episode, the following inconsistencies have been identified:

1. Overlapping episodes when the start of an episode is before the end of the preceding episodes. These cohort members have been removed from the partnership event history sample.

2. End date of episodes before the start of the same episode when the ending is not the interview date (censored). These cases were excluded from the sample prepared for analysis..

3. No cohabitation period reported and start of marriage different from beginning of the partnership. If a negative premarital duration was identified (marriage began before the start of partnership), only a marital episode was assumed and the marriage date was regarded as the partnership beginning date. On the other hand, if a premarital duration period was found, then it was assumed that this corresponds to a cohabitation period preceding marriage with the same partner.

4. Cohort members with at least one partner of the same sex in either NCDS5 or NCDS6. These individuals have been removed from the sample prepared for analysis.

5. Where the presence or absence of marital episode could not be verified in NCDS6, the cohort members have been excluded from the sample prepared for analysis.

Additionally, some differences have been identified between the dates reported at age 33 and at age 42. The start date at age 33 has been used as the likelihood of recall error is increased after longer periods of time since the occurrence of the event.

The cohort members with at least one year missing have been removed from further analysis. If the year is not missing and the month is missing, the century month code has been imputed within a sensible time interval. For example, if partnership 1 started in month X and partnership 2 started in month Y, then the missing century month code for the end of partnership 1 is imputed within the interval [X+1, Y-1]. Imputation has been used also when the NCDS5 interview month was missing or the value entered was smaller than 1 or bigger than 12.

Final corrections

For a small number of cohort members, it was necessary to implement rules specific to the particular inconsistency at hand. After additional checks, it was possible to identify disparities within and across sweeps 5 and 6 of the NCDS. As the partnership histories have been subsequently combined with the childbearing histories, we tried to retain as much of the reported information as possible.

It is not possible to check whether the same partner was present in both sweeps at different periods of time. Within sweeps, it is possible to identify revived partnerships.

Data

The dataset derived as indicated above is available containing the following for each episode:

serial	NCDS serial number
b	episode beginning
e	episode end
s	partnership state
t	episode transition indicator
alt	alteration of at least an episode of cohort member
imp	imputation of at least an episode of cohort member

See the Appendix for more information.

See also Appendix 2 to CLS Cohort Studies Data Note 4 (Kallis, 2005), which shows the algorithm used in the case of BCS70, in the form of STATA syntax.

Queries

Queries about this Data note or accompanying dataset should de addressed to: cls@cls.ioe.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

References

Di Salvo, P. 1995. NCDS5 Partnership Histories. Data Note 2. Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education, London.

Steele, F., C. Kallis, H. Goldstein and H. Joshi. 2005a. "The Relationship between Childbearing and Transitions from Marriage and Cohabitation in Britain." (accepted for publication in Demography, Volume 42)

Steele, F., H. Joshi, C. Kallis and H. Goldstein. 2005b. "Changes in the Relationship between the Outcomes of Cohabiting Partnerships and Fertility among Young British Women: Evidence from the 1958 and 1970 Birth Cohort Studies." Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Population Association of America, Philadelphia.

Kallis, C. 2005. BCS70 Partnership Histories, CLS Cohort Studies Data Note 4.

Appendix

Variables in file ncds56ph.dta

```
  obs:          10,680
 vars:               7
 size:         373,800
-----------------------------------------------------------------------
            storage  display      value
variable name  type   format      label      variable label
-----------------------------------------------------------------------
serial         str7   %7s                     NCDS serial number
b              float  %9.0g                   episode beginning
e              float  %9.0g                   episode end
s              float  %12.0g       sc         partnership state
t              float  %16.0g       tc         episode transition indicator
alt            float  %9.0g        altc       alteration of at least an
                                                episode of cohort member
imp            float  %9.0g        impc       imputation of at least an
                                                episode of cohort member
-----------------------------------------------------------------------
Sorted by:   serial  b  e  s  t
```

alt
1 if there is alteration of at least an episode of cohort member
0 no alteration

imp
1 if there is imputation of at least an episode of cohort member
0 no alteration

b
beginning century month code of episode

s
partnership state for an episode
1: cohabitation
2: marriage

e
end century month of episode

t
transition indicator of an episode
0 no transition
1 separation from either cohabitation or marriage
2 death of partner
3 marriage after cohabitation with same partner