Occupational Analysis – Issues and Examples

Grid Enabled Occupational Data Environment
GEODE Project workshop, 16th January 2007

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The Youth Cohort Study of England and Wales

Concentrate on one social survey

Youth Cohort Survey of England and Wales (YCS)

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The Youth Cohort Study of England and Wales

* Major Longitudinal Study

* Began in the Mid 1980s

* Designed to monitor behaviour of young people as they
reach the minimum school leaving age and either stay
on in education of enter the labour market

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The Youth Cohort Study of England and Wales

* UK Government survey

* Originally Department of Education and Science – then inherited by various successors

* Overall the survey is a monitoring instrument for Government – but has obvious social science potential

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The UK's Missing Birth Cohorts

The YCS is particularly important as a source of [nationally] representative information on young people

Helps to fill the data gap left by not having new cohorts of large-scale birth cohort data in the UK

(Gayle 2005)

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General Structure of the YCS

* Postal Survey

* Study contacts a sample from an academic year group (cohort) in the spring following completion of compulsory education

* The sample is designed to be representative of all Year 11 pupils in England & Wales

* Originally sample are tracked for 3 waves (called sweeps) of data collection

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YCS – Sampling

* Sample was multi-stage cluster until wave 5

* Simplified sample (approx 10%)

* Documentation states SRS but Systematic Sample of days in the month of birth (e.g. 5th, 15th etc.)

* YCS3 (1987) +16K young people

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YCS – Change and Stability

* The questionnaire designed to be broadly comparable

* External changes and shifts in policy interests have brought about changes

* Changes – Major and Minor!

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YCS – Change and Stability

Cohorts	YEARS									
	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94
1	1	2	3							
2		1	2	3						
3			1	2	3					4
4					1	2	3			
5							1	2	3	
6								1	2	3,4(a)

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YCS – Change and Stability

Cohort	Years										
	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04
7	1		2								
8			1		2		3(a)				
9					1	2	3,4(a)				
10							1,2(a)		3		
11									1	2	3

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YCS – Complexity

* Less in terms of sampling and individual survey design

* More in terms of comparing cohorts

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Social Class and Education

* The relationships between family background (social class) and education have been a policy for over 100 year in Britain (e.g. Foster Act 1870)

* "In the past education has been fairly extensively analysed in terms of social class" (Reid 1998 p.157)

* Research on social background typically measures social class as some function of parental (historically father's) occupation - Examples are legion
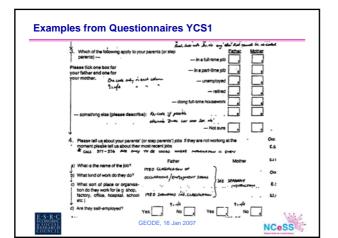
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Problems Relating to Occupational Information in YCS

* Generic problems to collecting, coding and translating occupational information in surveys

 * Some specific to the YCS

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Examples from Questionnaires

* Parental information is collected

* Although the exact information collected has changed

* Usually information on job title and self-employment

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Examples from Questionnaires

* Remember that this is a postal questionnaire survey

* Asking a 16/17 year old about their parent's job

YCS 1 apprx 6130 Dads working full-time
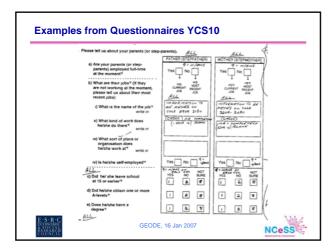   apprx 5524 occupational codes (apprx 10% missing)

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Examples from Questionnaires

* Documentation is very poor especially in the older cohorts – usually handwritten annotation on questionnaires (pdf)

* Compare this with the BHPS for example

Examples from Questionnaires YCS1

Examples from Questionnaires YCS10

Examples of Analyses

* Drew *et al.* (1992) analyses earlier data constructed a measure (Professional; Intermediate; Manual)

* Gayle *et al.* (2000 & 2002) analysis of YCS 3 constructed a measure of family social class (highest - father or mother) using Registrar General

* Raffe et al. (2006) undertaking cross-cohort analyses harmonised a variable based on NS-SEC (Managerial/Professional; Intermediate; Manual)

* Connolly (2006) analysing YCS 9 & 10 relied on a modified version of Registrar General deposited with the data and a version of SEC for YCS11

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What is there?

* Some early cohorts often code parental occupations using C080

* Later cohorts use SOC90

* Some cohorts do not included detail occupational codes

* Generally there is self-employment information - but not detailed employment status information (e.g. Employers; Managers; Supervisors etc).

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What is there?

•Some cohorts include a SEG measure (e.g. standard 16 categories in YCS 7 – but there is no clear information on how these are derived)

* Cohort 9 reports SEG but in practice this is a modified version of the Registrar General Schema with (Class I and Class II merged)

* Parental occupation is normally asked in sweep 1 – YCS3 asks in sweep 2 and there is apprx. 24% sample attrition

* Later YCS cohorts – more thought into collection of appropriate data but data coding (and therefore translation) is still problematic

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What is the problem?

* Varying quality of occupational information

* Compared to some other surveys little attempt to sort out occupational information

* Raffe *et al.* tried to work up a 'time-series' data set with a harmonised family social class measure – see also team member Croxford (2004)

Can Geode help?

* In principle yes – overall task of harmonisation

* Definitely for YCS data depositors!

* In practice Gayle *et al.* could have been helped directly in the construction of their family RG Social Class measure

* In the talk only mentioned family social class – but there is also occupational information on young workers

* In principle the GEODE idea could extend to qualifications – harmonising qualification is equally problematic in the YCS