Life Patterns Project
Adult Life:
Summary Report on the 2018 Survey

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PATHWAYS IN ADULT LIFE: SUMMARY REPORT ON THE 2018 SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS IN COHORT 2

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to provide you with this latest update on the Life Patterns research project in which you are a highly valued participant. This report presents the results of the survey you completed in 2018. The survey is part of an ongoing research project by the Youth Research Centre, at The University of Melbourne. It explores different areas of adult life, including your experiences in education, the workplace, your family and personal relationships, attitudes to life, and health and wellbeing. With your contribution, we are able to provide valuable insights that can inform governments and social institutions about your generation.
This report is based on the responses of 482 Cohort 2 participants aged 29-30 years from Victoria, Tasmania, the ACT and New South Wales. In 2018, the majority of participants were living in metropolitan centres (59.3%), 24.1% were living in regional cities, 14.7% in rural areas. Women were more likely to be married than men whereas men were more likely to be in a de facto relationship than women—see Figure 1.

**Figure 1 Marital status by gender**

Men were more likely than women to be living at home with their parents: 17.8% compared to 14.1%; and more likely to be living in a share house: 19.1% compared to 16.8%. Women were more likely than men to be living with a partner and children (19%) compared to 14.5%—see Table 1.

**Table 1 Living arrangements by gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living arrangements</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with parents</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in a shared household</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living on my own</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with my partner</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with my partner and child/children</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with my child/children as a single parent</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By 2018, 91.9% of participants had completed at least one post-school qualification. Seventy-seven per cent had completed at least one university-level qualification and 14.5% had completed at least one vocational education and training (VET) qualification. There were some differences according to gender: women were more likely than men to have completed a post-graduate qualification (30.2% compared to 21.3%)—see Figure 2.

**Figure 2 Education by gender**
EMPLOYMENT

Each year, we ask you about your current employment status and if you are employed, we ask you about the type of employment contract you have. In 2018, 77.9% of men and 72.8% of women were employed on permanent contracts; 13.9% of men and 15% of women were employed on either limited term or renewable contracts; and 6.6% of men and 10.5% of women were working on a casual basis. Men were more likely to work full-time than women (83.1% compared to 63.1%), and women were more likely to select home duties than men (12.8% compared to 2%)—see Figure 3.

There were also distinct gender differences in hours of paid employment—see Figure 4. Women were more likely than men to be employed for less than 40 hours per week. One quarter of men and 11% of women were working between 40 and 49 hours per week—see Figure 4.
Given these long hours of paid work and working non-standard hours, it is not surprising that almost half of participants (43.8%) were not able to spend as much time as they would like with their family.

Women were more likely than men to be working non-standard shifts with 32.5% working on weekends (compared to 26.8% of men); 28.6% working night/evening shifts (compared to 24.1% of men)- see Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Night/evening shifts</strong></td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekends</strong></td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public holidays</strong></td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other (eg. Split shifts)</strong></td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Differences in working non-standard shifts by gender
In 2018, one in five were parents. Three-quarters of parents had one child. Almost two-thirds of parents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to balance their parental duties and their work/social life. However, over half (56%) often felt tired, worn out, or exhausted from meeting the needs of their children.

Women were much more likely than men to agree or strongly agree that they did a larger share of parenting duties than their partner (56.5% to 4%)—see Figure 5.

One-third of female parents and 30.8% of male parents were struggling to balance paid work with their family commitments. Just one-third of parents were satisfied with the availability of quality/affordable childcare.

When we asked you to comment on parenting issues, many parents wrote about the positive effects that parenting has had on their lives. For example:

“Becoming a parent has been amazing with lots of support from my husband & family.” [Female customer service officer living in a rural area]

“…love being a parent, it is what I’m meant to do. It is completely fulfilling and enjoyable.” [Female parent living in a capital city]
On the other hand, some parents wrote about the challenges of parenting. For example:

“As a single parent, it has been extremely challenging to juggle working to pay bills, childcare and family time. My daughter’s father only does the bare minimum, so I am frequently exhausted.” [Female administration worker living in a capital city]

“As a single parent, it has been extremely challenging to juggle working to pay bills, childcare and family time. My daughter’s father only does the bare minimum, so I am frequently exhausted.” [Female administration worker living in a capital city]

“I had to give up a lot, e.g. study in order to work and support my family. We are lucky to have a lot of family support so don’t need to worry about much childcare.” [Female administration worker living in a capital city]

“For some, the challenges of parenting were overwhelming. For example:

“Have a 2yrs old and a second due any day. Super hard managing full time work, parenting, being a good wife & social life/health.” [Female operations manager living in a rural area]

“Things fall over very rapidly when there is no support around you from family or friends. I am only starting to find my feet now.” [Female copy writer living in a capital city]
The majority of you (88.2%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with your life overall. Women were slightly more likely than men to be satisfied or very satisfied with their lives overall. Those who were married/de facto were more likely than those who were single to be satisfied or very satisfied with their lives (93.6% compared to 82.8%). Of those living with a partner, men were more likely than women to report being satisfied with the way that household tasks were distributed: 84.1% compared to 67.2%- see Figure 6.

There was only a slight difference in the percentages of men and women reporting that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the way that paid work was distributed: 79.6% compared to 81.7% - see Figure 7.
When we asked you about the frequency of your social media use, the majority reported using social media several times each day. Only 11.2% use social media less than once a day. Men were more likely than women to report that they used social media many times each day: 45.1% compared to 29.8%. On the other hand, men were more likely than women to report that they used social media less than once per day: 21.2% compared to 6.5%—see Figure 8.

Three quarters of you either agreed or strongly agreed that the person you portray on social media is similar to the person that you actually are. Almost half (45.6%) of you feel connected to others when using social media. The majority of you (74.7%) reported using social media to procrastinate. Women were more likely than men to agree or strongly agree with this statement (81.5% compared to 60.7%)—see Figure 9.
Most of you (66%) appreciate the value of social media in enabling you to connect with like-minded people. Over half (55.2%) were not worried about being judged on social media. Over 40% either agreed or strongly agreed that you were more likely to post on social media when things were going well in your life. For more than half of you (51.2%) social media plays a big role in helping you organise your social life.

When we asked you to comment on what you use social media for and how important it is in your life, we received many comments about using social media to connect with families and friends. For example:

“I connected to a fb group with relatives in Italy, over 150 cousins on this page.” [Female project manager living in a capital city]

“I like the ease of coordinating friends & event invites.” [Female physiotherapist living in a capital city]

Many comments referred to the negative effects of social media. For example:

“I have a deep mistrust of social media companies. ‘If the product is free, then you are the product.’” [Male engineering geologist living in a capital city]

“Seeing others posting about their highlights of their lives is often very misleading due to the different circumstances in life. Even though I recognize this, I must admit sometimes do feel that I am lacking in adventure or am less interesting and that can bring about some temporary sadness.” [Male dentist living in a capital city]

“I felt the use of social media was a way of procrastinating and wasting time. I would rather share life experiences in a real-world sense and not try to cater to an online audience which has become increasingly less private.” [Male mechanical fitter living in a capital city]

“I have used it less and less in the last few years. I am barley on. This is a conscious choice.” [Male engineer living in a capital city]
We also received comments about how social media has become integrated in your daily lives. For example:

“I use social media all day every day for my work. I have also developed an interest in watching makeup tutorials on YouTube to relax. I find them strangely therapeutic after a long day of death and destruction.” [Female media manager living in a capital city]

“Connecting with other likeminded people on Instagram is both inspirational and enjoyable, especially in a creative field.” [Male maintenance worker living in a capital city]

“It’s a good platform to use so people don’t forget about you! Life is busy. It’s a reminder that you are still alive.” [Female nurse unit manager living in a regional city]
We appreciate and thank you for your contribution and we look forward to seeing how future years go for you and the group.

For more information on the Life Patterns Project visit our website:

Or follow us on Twitter:
@YRCunimelb