

Our Lives Panel Data Guide

This guide is designed for use with the Our Lives panel datasets and with the accompanying data dictionary. Please ensure you are working with the latest versions of each of the following files:

- panel_w1_wide_v1.dta (Wave 1 panel dataset)
- panel_w2_wide_v1.dta (Wave 2 panel dataset)
- panel_w3_wide_v1.dta (Wave 3 panel dataset)
- panel_w4_wide_v1.dta (Wave 4 panel dataset)
- ourlives_wide_v1.dta (combined W1-W4 dataset, in “wide” format)
- Our Lives Data Dictionary W1-W4 (04.02.14).xlsx

Panel Naming Convention & Reshaping

A panel naming convention has been used to rename all variables for use in a panel dataset. In general, each variable name takes the following form:

- <wave-specific prefix(if applicable)> <stem> <item no.> <wave no.>
- Variables which remain unchanged in each wave of the survey have been assigned a name with a shared “stem” which allows Stata to identify these when using the “reshape” command. For example, the institutional trust measures have the stem “trust”, followed by the particular item and wave number the measure is from (e.g. *trusta1 = trust in school, wave 1; trusta2 = trust in school, wave 2; trust3d = trust in police, wave 3*).
- Where possible, variables which differ across waves also share a common “stem” if they are variations on a similar question (i.e. response categories or question wording has changed).
- Any variable which is unique to a particular wave (i.e. it has only appeared in one wave or it was modified after one wave) has been assigned a wave-specific prefix (a=wave 1; b=wave 2; c=wave 3; d=wave 4). This is necessary in order for Stata to distinguish these variables from others which have repeated observations over time (e.g. *mob1 & mob2 = same mobile phone ownership question in waves 1 and 2; c_mob3 = mobile phone ownership question asked differently in wave 3*).
- Use the reshape command to convert variables in the wide dataset to long format using the following command:

```
reshape long <varname>, i(surveyid) j(wave)
```

note: <varname> needs to be the panel variable name without its wave no.

e.g. *reshape long trustd mob c_mob, i(surveyid) j(wave)*

would combine variables in the following:

trustd1 trustd2 trustd3 trustd4 => trustd (variable containing individual observations for trust in police four waves 1-4)

mob1 mob2 => mob (variable containing individual observations for mobile phone ownership at waves 1 and 2)

c_mob => c_mob (variable containing individual observations for mobile ownership at wave 3 only)

- Other renaming conventions have been applied across each wave:
 - o Where possible a common shorthand is used to indicate variables with common themes (e.g. rel = religion; fut = future; pol = political; fam= family). A list of these rules is included in the data dictionary
 - o Measures which contain open-ended or verbatim responses (e.g. Other (please specify) end with “verb” e.g. c_polsupp_verb

Data Dictionary and Data Structure/Variable Order

The data dictionary catalogues all variables in the panel dataset and contains additional information about each variable, such as its original survey question number, its value labels, and source materials/documentation for the question. The dictionary also contains a number of separate sheets (see tabs at the bottom) which can be used to sort variables by wave or thematic area.

Due to the variations in structure between each survey, and the large variable count, variables have been organised into 7 different sections based on their common themes and functions. This ordering is reflected in both the dataset and the dictionary.

| Thematic area | Example measures |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Survey completion / identifiers | Participant ID, high school information, mode of survey completion, weighting variables |
| Background (original vars.) | Gender, language spoken at home, date of birth, country of birth, religion, mother’s and father’s educational and occupational information, home owned or rented, sexual orientation, marital status |
| Background (derived vars.) | Not asked in survey but created using external sources such as ABS coding schemes: schooling sector, school gender composition, geographic region / remoteness, ABS socio-economic advantage & disadvantage indices, parents ANU4 occupational prestige scores |
| The Future | Future expectations of mobility, marriage, divorce etc., future goals & job/educational aspirations, confidence in aspirations, plans for after school, fertility intentions & partner choice, perceived barriers to success |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Participation & Well-being | Time use, participation in curricular & extra-curricular activities, cultural consumption practices, self-rated life satisfaction, experiences of major life events, parental involvement, self-rated happiness, self-rated health, height/weight, cosmetic surgery intentions, piercings/tattoos |
| Politics & Society | Views on contentious social issues, attitudes to genetic technologies, attitudes to environmental practices, belief in climate change, attitudes to immigration, attitudes to gendered marital roles, self-rated class position, political party support, interest in politics, beliefs about voting age, political knowledge, participation in political behaviours, organisational affiliations, voting intentions |
| Technology | No. of computers at home, internet access, mobile phone access, frequency of use, time spent online, self-rated internet skill, internet knowledge, device ownership, communication behaviours, participation in various online activities, self-rated dependence on internet access |
| Citizenship, Trust & Networks | Family living arrangement, household composition measures (e.g. no. of siblings), dwelling type, confidence in various people, trust in various institutions, friendship networks, sources of social identity, prejudice towards various groups, sources of Australian identity, emotional attachment to Australia, proud of being Australian |
| Work & Study | Time spent at school, self-rated achievement, aptitude for various subjects, effort put into various subjects, smart scale, current employment, income, hours worked, barriers to employment, year 12 completion/achievement measures, current study & barriers to study |