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Project Australia

Measuring Ideals in a Nation¹

Late in 1978 the Australian Government commissioned this research into "the state of the nation." The then conservative government was concerned that the national economy was slipping back into the crisis that had affected the world in 1975-76 and that the nation was still divided by the near constitutional crisis that had led the Governor General to dismiss a reform government in late 1975. Their interest was not just in a snapshot such as a typical survey yields. Essentially, the question they posed was, "What ways, if any, exist to unite this nation to pull together and become 'a clever country'?" The term "a clever country" was not to come into general use until the next decade, but it was presaged by the phrase "the pride Australians take in their work, skills and achievements."

Right at the earliest stages of considering this project, the doubt emerged as to whether a straightforward approach to raising Australian consciousness of, and pride in, their achievements might not backfire in the face of the traditional national attitude.

The traditional attitude was that work should be viewed as a necessary evil: only the lucky few could expect to find dignity or a sense of satisfaction in the workforce. Two surveys of the national workforce (Emery and Phillips, 1976/ Vol. III; Layton, 1978) had established that these were realistic expectations and hence only a minority (about 25 percent) expressed real satisfaction with their job. An intense debate about these issues had been going on throughout the 1970s and many field experiments tried out. Even in 1978 the practical results were too minuscule to be reflected in national sample surveys.

Our first response was to consider how a national sample survey might be designed to reveal emerging values. This seemed to call for a major innovation in survey interview techniques and a process of pre-testing that was quite incompatible with the urgency of the project. The need for innovation was obvious from our knowledge of the results of the regular national surveys and the

¹ Abstracted from *Project Australia: Its Chances*. Canberra: Centre for Continuing Education Australian National University, 1979.

first two federal government *Social Indicator* publications (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1976; 1978). These shared the dismerit of barely showing the tips of the icebergs that, in the area of public debate, were clearly grinding and crashing into each other. It seemed that it was the debates we should be sampling, not the individuals. By sampling individuals, or the behaviors of individuals, as in the publications on Social Indicators, we were allowing the dead weight of the past to bury from sight the emerging trends (Emery, 1977/ Vol. III). This phenomenon had already been observed in many different contexts where the so-called Delphi technique had been used to forecast futures. It also relied on individual judgments given in private.

An alternative emerged. Over the past five years we, and other teams in Australia, had conducted more than 150 "Search Conferences" (M. Emery, 1993; Vol. III). These conferences were concerned with identifying new organizational, community or national strategies. They were, therefore, very future-looking but not insensitive to what strengths or weaknesses they had inherited from their pasts. Most contain a session where the continuity of history or character is evaluated, e.g., what are the characteristics of our town that we wish to keep and which do we want done away with, or replaced? (See M. Emery, Vol.III for description of Search Conferences.)

Given this unique body of data from the Australian people, and given that there was, in the time available, no way we could make the required innovations in survey technique and no way we could lay on sufficient searches dedicated to the purposes of this project, we decided to analyze the existing records of Search Conferences. We did this knowing that the data from searches had advantages over surveys and the Delphi and that, because of the way in which these conferences are recorded, many written reports would be available.

Theory and Methodology

Apart from recovering the data, we faced two problems: converting the data from its qualitative form into a form where it could be analyzed quantitatively and, beyond that, identifying patterns in any changes.

The quantification problem was solved by categorization. In the opening perspectives phase of a Search Conference, people are defining social futures in terms of the decisions that will or will not be open to people to make. If greater affluence is perceived as a probable future trend, then it is implied that people will be better placed to choose more goods and services; if a doomsday scenario is thought probable, then it implies that even the choice of survival is lost and so on for other scenarios.

Because all futures scenarios are about changes in freedom to choose, we

have here a clue to classifying—and hence analyzing—what is common and what is different in the 94 Search Conference reports. The first task confronting any analysis was to find a *logical basis* for classifying the contents. The usual practice in “content analysis” is to count the number of mentions under commonly used headings such as “greater unemployment,” “zero population growth,” “World War III.” There is no logical relation between such headings. Hence generalizing from the data is usually limited to grouping up as “pessimistic” or “optimistic.” Any arithmetic operation is suspect because there are no grounds for assuming that one response excludes another, e.g., can a mention of World War III be assumed also to imply no unemployment or ZPG? Lastly, this sort of counting freehand gives us no clear idea of what was not said—what were the blind spots.

To overcome these shortcomings, the classification needs to be based on a set of categories that are mutually exclusive and logically exhaustive. Between 1967 and 1977 such a set of categories was gradually created (Table 1). These categories, like the Search Conference itself, were consciously evolved to identify the futures people *could* choose in a Type IV, turbulent social environment.

These categories logically exhaust what it is possible for people to choose about. Thus, if people are identifying futures which have any relevance to mankind, then those futures must be a statement about changes, or nonchanges, in one or more of the parameters of choice (or, to like effect, in one or more of

TABLE 1 The Classificatory Scheme and Its Roots*

<i>Parameters of open systems (1)</i>	<i>Parameters of choice (2)</i>	<i>Possible scenarios</i>		
		<i>Adaptive (3)</i>	<i>Maladaptive</i>	
			<i>Passive</i>	<i>Active (4)</i>
L_{11}	Probability of choice	Homonomy	Segmentation	Law and order
L_{12}	Probable effectiveness	Nurturance	Dissociation	Evangelicism
L_{21}	Probability of outcome	Humanity	Doomsday	Eugenics
L_{22}	Relative intention	Beauty	Superficiality	Synoptic idealism

* 1. Emery and Trist, 1965/Vol. III. 2. Ackoff and Emery, 1972. 3. Emery, 1976. 4. Crombie, 1973/Vol. III. Some of the terms used to describe possible scenarios are not in common usage as the distinctions they make have not been commonly made. They are presented in more detail in the text.

TABLE 2 Percentage Mentions of Major Social System Dimensions

<i>Year</i>	<i>Probable choice</i>	<i>Probable effect</i>	<i>Probable outcome</i>	<i>Relative intention</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
1973/74	30	30	21	19	100
75	25	30	20	25	100
76	21	30	19	30	100
77	23	33	19	25	100
78	24	26	26	24	100
Total (%)	23	31	19	27	

the parameters of open systems) (Emery, 1977: 81-85). If some categories are not used, the fact is obvious and open to interpretation. Interpretation is possible because the categories are logically defined parts of a single logical set. The individual categories are mutually exclusive, and hence arithmetic operations can legitimately be made on counts done within these categories.

The level of abstraction can be a bother with such a system of classification. To get closer to the data, we have accepted sub-classifications that more closely reflect the concerns of the conference participants. We have been careful in the following analysis to follow a method of successive approximation. By the time we handle the subclassified details, the main findings are already established.

Some of the terms used to describe possible scenarios are not in common usage as the distinctions they make have not been commonly made. They are presented in more detail below.

A simple practical test of a set of classificatory categories is whether they provide the desired level of discrimination. If significant parts of the set make no contribution, then one has to consider whether there is something unreal built into the logic of the classification or whether some unique constraints are operating on the source of data. Table 2, compiled from all 94 conferences, suggests that the categories work well as a set.

Search Conferences doing their job properly would be expected to explore how each of the four parameters of choice would be affected by future developments. Taken collectively, these conferences seem to have done just this. The relative lack of attention to the third category, probable outcome, is probably no more than a reflection of provincialism.

The Data Base

For the years 1973 to 1978 we collected 94 reports of 114 Search Conferences.² In some cases, series of searches had been conducted and collated into a single report. These necessarily had to be analyzed as one unit of data. Working from lists of participants and knowledge of conferences conducted, we estimate that these reports provide a sample of 3,000+ of the Australian population covering all states and both territories.

After content analysis of each report in terms of the categories described, the results were recorded four times using the following classification: year of conference, age and sex of participants and focus of interest. This provided a set of data which could be used to test the homogeneity of the Australian population across basic dimensions and, if significant differences were found, allowed a more detailed analysis of special groups to be performed. In this way, we could make maximum use of the database and ensure that the pictures which emerged were comprehensive.

As the contents of each report were entered into the matrix for its year, they were also entered into a matrix for age group. Each set of participants was classified as follows:

- young: 25 or younger,
- older: 26 or more,
- mixed: containing participants of both groups.

Only two Search Conferences were found where participants were all young, and these have subsequently been merged with the mixed age matrix. Similarly, each group of participants was classified as all male, all female or mixed sex; only one was all female.

Finally, each report was entered into a matrix which described the major focus of concern of the conference. "Urban" was used to describe urban-based groups working toward their own local concerns or concerns which could apply only in urban areas. "Rural" was used similarly and includes some fringe suburbs of cities where the population specifically perceives itself as pursuing a rural rather than a suburban lifestyle. "National" was used in two separate but related senses. It describes groups coming together from across the nation to work on national issues and also covers groups which were not nationally constituted in terms of state, but whose purpose was one of national interest and concern. An example of the latter can be found in the series of searches conducted with the Registered Clubs of New South Wales whose theme essentially is the development of responsible self-managing communities. The re-

²In the short time available, we were not able to contact all those we knew to have conducted Search Conferences. The only detectable bias in the sample was that conference managers with school children were more likely to be absent on summer vacations.

TABLE 3 Search Conference Structure

	1973-76	1977-78
Older male		
Urban	3	1
Rural	0	0
National	5	3
Older mixed		
Urban	0	5
Rural	0	0
National	7	10
Mixed male		
Urban	0	0
Rural	0	3
National	0	3
Mixed, mixed		
Urban	19	13
Rural	4	10
National	1	7
Total	39	55

$\chi^2 = 18.71$; d.f. = 11; n.s. at $p < 0.05$.

sults of these searches are applicable to any evolving community. Table 3 shows the distribution of these classifications.

There is some variability in this distribution between the two blocks of years but it does not reach a sufficient level of significance for us to conclude that any differences found between 1973-76 and 1977-78 can be accounted for by different emphases in those periods, i.e., emphases with regard to sex, age or focus of concern.

This division by years conforms, approximately, to the years before and during, and the years after, the constitutional crisis referred to in the introductory paragraph. This constitutional crisis had no observable effect when the data were analyzed in terms of age and sex of the participants or the focus of concern. We tried to narrow the search for such an effect by looking at conferences that could reasonably be expected to be dominated by persons who traditionally vote for the reform party.

From the sample we have also selected a "traditional Aussie" working- to lower-middle-class group. Eighteen reports were found that by their location and by the nature of the participants could afford a reasonably pure profile of the "traditional Aussie." This sample was analyzed for differences between the

years 1973–76 and 1977–78 as in Table 3 and no significant difference between the two blocks of years was found ($\chi^2 = 2.88$).

Analysis

The purpose of the following analysis is to identify where Australians think they are going and where they are most concerned about not going. *If a new element is to be introduced into the thinking of Australians about their future, then it is most important that it be in accord with where they want to go and does not reinforce their direst expectations.*

Once each of the matrices had been compiled, it was necessary to correlate the observations recorded in the categories. For this the Geisser index of concomitance was adopted. It resolved the problems associated with data that is in the form: *A*, *not-A* and *B*, *not-B* and the co-occurrence of *not-A* and *not-B* does not necessarily mean anything (Geisser, 1958).

Each matrix of correlation was then subjected to a hierarchical linkage analysis (Emery and Phillips, 1976/Emery, Vol. III). As the figures in each cell of the matrix give us a measure of the tendency of two items to hang together in the minds of the participants, so the hierarchical linkage analysis enables us to determine whether there was any core set of items that hung together more closely than the rest.

The emergence of a core set would provide two sets of information. First, it would enable us to identify the major hopes and fears of Australians for their future, thus providing guidelines for future-oriented programs. Second, given that there was a patterned core of items, we would be able to specify points of entry into such programs that would only increase the probability of direct resistance or of arousing deep-seated national fears.

DESCRIPTION OF CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

Following the choice of an agreed on theoretical framework for the content analysis, the Search Conference reports were inspected to ensure that the data provided by these Australian people were covered by the theoretical framework. The conference data were found to fall into 19 groups of items, each of which is clearly identified as a dimension of one of the major social system categories, as above. This grouping is illustrated by Table 4.

Reports did vary in the richness of their perceptions and in their emphasis on particular scenarios; they vary little, however, in expression of these perceptions. The following descriptions use as far as possible the language used by Australians when they worked together on these concepts. The selection of

TABLE 4 Categories and Scenarios

1. <i>Doomsday</i>		
2. Segmentation	→	The scenario is that of <i>Passive Maladaptation</i>
3. Superficiality		
4. Dissociation		
5. Synoptic idealism	→	The scenario is that of <i>Active Maladaptation</i>
6. Evangelicism		
7. Neo-fascism, Law and order		
8. <i>Homonomy</i> —National level	→	These four dimensions describe the necessary and sufficient conditions for the <i>Active Adaptive Scenario</i>
9. <i>Homonomy</i> —Community, Local level		
10. <i>Nurturance</i> —death of the expert		
11. " —egalitarianism		
12. " —physical environment		
19. " —continuing education "learning to learn"		
13. <i>Humanity</i> —quality of work life		
14. " —individual liberation		
15. " —choice of lifestyle		
16. " —nonracial society multiculturalism		
17. " —technology and economics for people		
18. <i>Beauty</i>		

Definitions of these categories are given in this Volume: F. Emery, "Passive Maladaptive Strategies" and "Active Adaptation: the Emergence of Ideal-Seeking Systems"; A. Crombie, "Active Maladaptive Strategies."

items listed under each heading are, in the main, verbatim from the reports. Some categories contain more selected items for review than others. This does not reflect their incidence in the national pattern but rather the diverse ways in which Australian people had noticed their occurrence. The listings, then, provide more of a feel for the culture than a scientific appraisal of the probability of any particular scenario.

There were, of course, a few items of data which were unclassifiable in terms of the scenario or subcategory system. These consisted of sentiments, either generally hopeful (things will change for the better) or assertive (things must change).

Classification was performed independently by two analysts. The coefficient

of agreement ranged from .87 to .95, over the separate conference reports, which was accepted as satisfactory.

EVIDENCE OF SOME VALUE CHANGES

In Table 2, we showed that the basic four categories were all well used by the Search Conferences over each of the yearly periods, and very consistently so. This was important in judging the practical value of this set of categories as a badly skewed usage (e.g., one or two categories attracting the great majority of responses) would have greatly reduced the information that could be extracted. This factual demonstration is also important in showing that the Search Conferences did, at least on the annual averages, get to explore all of the key parameters of their social system. However, one fact emerges from that Table that is not just of methodological significance. The category centered around the ideal of Humanity, and its related *maladaptive* modes, was consistently less well attended to than the other three categories.

It is well worth considering why this category about Humanity should have ranked low in the considerations of the Search Conferences over this whole period. It is particularly worthwhile because the linchpin of Project Australia—quality of work—lies firmly in this category. The systems dimension to which this category refers is that relating to the L_{21} environmental impact, and probable outcome, i.e., system survival (Emery, 1977/Vol. III, “Active Adaptation”). Australia’s survival as a social system has hardly ever seemed to be *our* problem; hardly ever a matter depending on our social choices. The exceptional time was in 1942. Now, after the U.S. withdrawal from the Western Pacific, there is, in the following data, some evidence that this might now be *our* problem.

Analysis of the other value changes will involve disaggregation of the data presented in Table 2 to detect the relative role of subcategories, changes over time and differences between major groupings of Search Conferences, e.g., rural and urban.

As a first step, we will consider in turn the three logical subcategories of ideals, passive maladaptive strategies and active maladaptive strategies. It should be borne in mind that the *active* maladaptive strategies are those open to people who can influence or order changes in social arrangements and the *passive* maladaptive strategies are what people can try to do to adjust to situations that are not of their making.

As a first step, let us look at the consideration given to the four ideals that are each components of the four categories (Table 5).

We have just previously noted the low level of concern with the category of “system survival” of which Humanity is the ideal component. Table 5 shows,

TABLE 5 Consideration of the Ideals
(relative role as measured by co-occurrence with all other
mentions of other categories)

<i>Ideals</i>	<i>Observed co- occurrences (O)</i>	<i>Expected (E)</i>	<i>Chi-square (O-E)²/E</i>
Beauty	566	801	(-) 17
Homonomy	690	801	(-) 4
Nurturance	1071	801	(+) 23
Humanity	876	801	(+) 2
Total	3203		

TABLE 6 Relative Emphasis on Negative Scenarios
(percent of each category for each year)

<i>Category</i>	<i>1973-74</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1976</i>	<i>1977</i>	<i>1978</i>	<i>1973-78</i>
I	37	28	37	50	29	38
II	26	36	46	47	46	44
III	0	6	27	14	5	13
IV	41	55	63	65	67	63

however, that the references to the ideal of Humanity, as compared to the other ideals, were about on a par with statistical expectations. It was the ideal of Beauty that was significantly undermentioned and Nurturance that dominated future scenarios.

The low level of reference to the category of "system survival" was entirely due to the absence of references to negative scenarios about survival (Table 6). The few entries against category III (system survival) are all due to doomsday scenarios such as overpopulation, nuclear holocaust and end of resources. These had a brief flurry in 1976 and then disappeared from Search Conferences as quickly as they had emerged.

Active maladaptive scenarios in this category would be those that sought to improve survival not by humanization, the realization of human potential, but by engineering species improvement, e.g., euthanasia, genetic engineering or

massive selective migration. Nothing like this appeared in the period 1973–78 in any of the reports.

This has important implications for Project Australia. This project's objectives necessarily entail realization of the human potential for concern for quality in their products. Approaching this within category III means that, unlike any approach that might be made through the other categories, there is precious little in the way of preexisting pessimism, skepticism, cynicism or fear. There is still the possibility that economic or political events on the international scene might lead to another flare-up of doomsday scenarios, with the accompanying feeling of "what's the good of trying to realize our potentialities." Obviously, that possibility does not justify doing nothing.

The absence of active maladaptive scenarios implies that people do not really fear that any governing powers would seek to exploit their aspirations for humanization or, at least, that they have not experienced anything that warns them of the possibility. We think it is the former. If Project Australia was seen as government inspired and was projected into the areas covered by the other three categories then a high level of suspicion would be aroused because of the prevalence of existing beliefs about the proneness of present governments to evangelicism, law-and-order campaigns and synoptic idealism (planning from above).

These findings are based on observed frequencies and are statistically significant. An extensive program of analysis was carried out to see if there were significant differences between subgroups of conferences in terms of age, sex and focus of concern.

Each of these comparisons was tested at every level of abstraction of the data:

- The percentage contribution of positive and negative scenarios to the total frequency.
- The percentage contribution of passive and active maladaptation to the negative scenario frequency.
- The percentage contribution of the four ideals to the positive active adaptive scenarios.
- The percentage contribution of the individual items to their relevant positive and negative scenarios.

The result of this testing is as follows:

- No significant differences were found on percentages attributed to the total positive or negative scenarios.
- There was a slight tendency, strictly not significant ($\chi^2 = 3.03$, d.f. = 1, $p < 0.10$), for males as compared with mixed groups to perceive more active than passive maladaptation.
- There was a tendency as above ($\chi^2 = 3.11$, d.f. = 1, $p < 0.10$) for rural

people to perceive more dissociation than urban people. Similarly, there was a tendency ($\chi^2 = 3.65$, d.f. = 1, $p < 0.10$) for urban people to perceive more synoptic idealism than nationally constituted groups.

- There was a significant difference between all male and mixed groups ($\chi^2 = 4.02$, d.f. = 1, $p < .05$) on the frequency of perception of the law-and-order dimension of the active maladaptive scenario. This was more frequent in the all-male groups.
- No significant differences were found on any of the dimensions of the positive active adaptive scenarios.

The striking result was the absence of such differences. Australia is a homogeneous nation in these terms.

On average, all subgroups managed to come up with much the same variety and number of “building bricks”—ideas. What differed were the structures they built with those “bricks.” To identify these structures we followed the hierarchical linkage method outlined above. To provide as much detail as possible the structures were elucidated at the level of the subcategories ($N = 19$).

It should be noted that in the following pattern, and all that are presented thereafter, the relations between each and every variable have been tested and found to be statistically significant. The index of correlation we used, the Geisser index, does not, to our knowledge, yet have published tables of significance, so we used the chi-square technique to test for statistical significance.

The first step is to subdivide the sample so that any possible effects of time might be detected. Since 1972, there have been quite striking changes, internationally as well as nationally, that could be expected to cloud over some visions of the future and brighten up others. As we saw in tracing the references to doomsday scenarios, the Search Conferences can be sensitive to short-term influences.

Subdivision of the sample enables us to be more precise, but only at the expense of being more unreliable (each subsample necessarily provides a smaller data base). To retain as much reliability as possible we have split the temporal series between 1973–76 and 1977–78, giving subsamples of 39 and 55, respectively (Figures 1 and 2). This division maximizes reliability but does reduce discrimination between the periods before and after the constitutional crisis. Differences that do appear, and they can by no means be traced simply to national changes, will be the more significant for this lower level of discrimination.

The core items in the patterns are those joined by the double lines. It will be seen that 9 and 14 persist as the core in both periods. These variables are Homonomy-Community and Humanity-Individual. As in the overall picture, Quality of Work Life (QWL), 13, links up with the core through these variables. By 1977–78, QWL has moved one step farther away from the core and is now

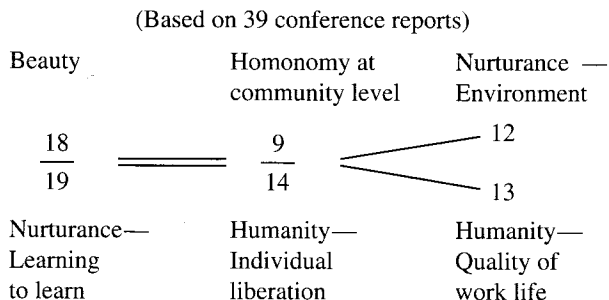


Figure 1. 1973–76 most probable futures, based on 39 conference reports.

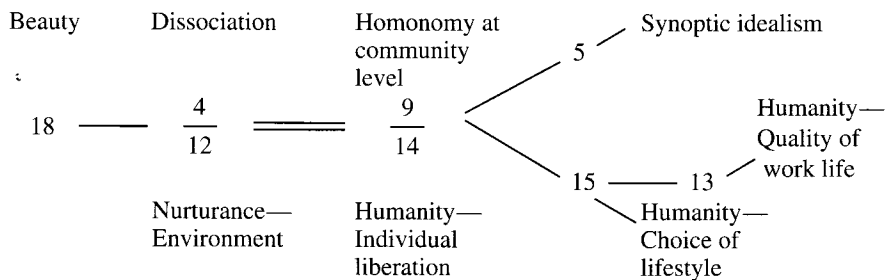


Figure 2. 1977–78 most probable futures, based on 55 conference reports.

mediated via 15, Humanity Lifestyle. This suggests that QWL is coming to be seen as allowing personal expression in work rather than just being treated as an individual.

Of the other changes, 19, Nurturance/Education, has dropped out of the core and 12, Nurturance/Environment, has moved from the boundary to the core. Beauty, 18, has moved from the core to the boundary.

There is one further significant change. *In the 1973–76 patterns there were no negative scenarios. By 1977–78, clouds had gathered to the point where 4, Dissociation, was in the central core and 5, Synoptic Idealism, was on the boundary.* We had argued in 1976 that it was inevitable that dissociation would become more central if television continued to play such a major role in our leisure and sport (Emery and Emery, 1977). We mention this because in that book we spelled out strong reasons for regarding this as a serious trend which is not likely to reverse of its own accord. It would be unwise to think of it as a flash in the pan like doomsday scenarios were in 1976.

Of course, Project Australia is all about countering dissociation and creating

a new sense of responsibility throughout Australia. These findings further stress the need for the project and its urgency. It does uncover difficulties that would not have been found to anything like the same extent had Project Australia—or something like it—been launched in the 1973–76 period. The difficulty is this: any attempt to draw on the positive aspects of the core scenario is likely to arouse the counter challenge of dissociation, e.g., “that’s a good idea and I would certainly like that, but what’s the use, the others won’t pitch in.”

The appearance of Synoptic Idealism, 5, on the boundary is only slightly less disconcerting. The specter of “manipulation from above” is already well above the horizon and has become linked to Humanity-Individual, 14. As yet it is not linked with Humanity-QWL, 13.

One further lead was sought from analysis of the Search Conference reports. Thirty-six of the reports were about conferences that were called to discuss issues of national—not just local or sectional—concern. Very many of those attending these national conferences could properly be described as “influentials”: people who would expect to go out of their way to influence others to get things done.

Project Australia is a national project and, if it is to succeed, it would need to gear in with where these influentials think Australia can and should go. These 36 reports were analyzed in the same way as the other subgroups and their picture of Australia’s most probable futures identified.

Two thirds of these conferences were held in 1977–78 so the most appropriate comparison is with the 1977–78 picture (Figure 3). There is very little difference. They see a growth in National Homonomy, 8, but drop out 18, Beauty. Idealism, 5, and Humanity-Life Styles, 15—move from the boundary to the center of the picture. QWL, 13, is more closely related to the core. This only reconfirms the above discussion on Figures 2 and 3.

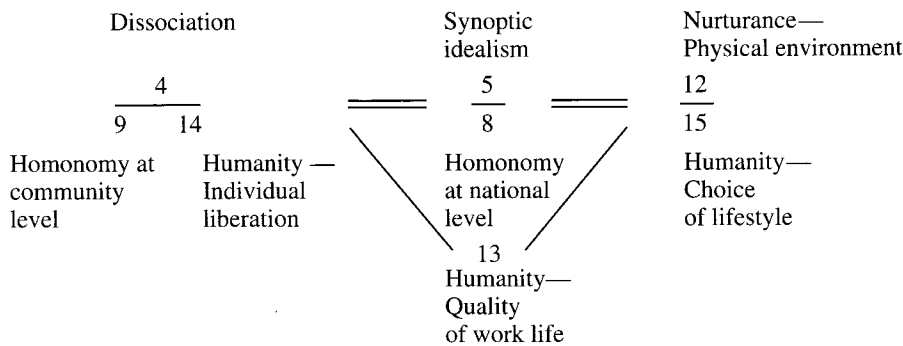


Figure 3. Most probable futures of the “influentials” (n = 36).

Leadership Perceptions of "Most Probable Futures"

Success of Project Australia is more likely if national leaders are in agreement with its objectives and agree about its urgency. Some evidence of such agreement has already been presented to us. Further quite direct evidence exists in reports of four Search Conferences involving leaders of industry—not just influentials but people occupying leadership positions in industry, trade unions and government departments dealing with industry's need. These were

- February 1973 Industrial Relations Search, Canberra
- mid-1975 Jackson Committee, Bateman's Bay
- mid-1976 National Search on QWL, Sun City, Western Australia
- December 1976 Worker Participation and Industrial Relations, Canberra

The core of the Jackson Committee search appears in their report (Jackson et al., 1975). The Committee was a group of industrial leaders commissioned by the national government to study and report on the future of the Australian manufacturing industry. Several of these leaders had participated in the 1973 industrial relations search.

We cannot analyze such a small sample in a statistical fashion so we will treat them as individual cases illustrating the development of a sense of national unity about the need and the possibility of transforming the traditional.

The first conference took our Centre for Continuing Education about 14 months to organize because some of the leaders felt that it was not done to get cloistered away with the "class enemies." Others felt there could not be enough common ground to justify the trouble. As it happened, so much common ground emerged when looking at probable and desirable futures for Australia that it was difficult after just 24 hours to work out which camp a speaker was from.

There was clear agreement in this first such conference that the traditional concept of work had to be changed by changing the actual relations on the shop floor. The managerial need for quality was noted, and also the extent to which "irresponsibility and carelessness" were rooted in the "traditional authoritarian job designs."

This level of agreement was reaffirmed and reenforced by the Jackson Committee and the two subsequent Search Conferences in 1976 (despite 1976 being Australia's year for doomsday scenarios).

In September 1977 this development—and, of course, other influences—started to bear fruit in national, public commitments. In that month, the Australian Council of Trade Unions adopted its policy to work with employers on changing traditional work roles and creating greater personal involvement at the workplace.

The Federal Minister for Productivity came down with a compatible govern-

ment policy in June, 1978, and Premier Don Dunstan, shortly thereafter, revised his South Australian policy to bring it in line. Before this, the West Australian Parliament had commanded its government to set up a unit to assist employers and employees in this regard and the New South Wales Liberal Government had set up a similar unit.

These developments would suggest that Project Australia has a very powerful umbrella of public commitments under which it can operate. Using this umbrella, it should not be difficult to counter the threat aroused by increasing public fear of synoptic idealistic solutions (government manipulation). They do nothing to dispel the threat posed by increasing concern that dissociation is a very probable part of our future.

Two matters need to be clarified. We have been closely associated in Australia with the QWL developments. It could easily be assumed that this has given us a too narrow view of the objectives of Project Australia. Project Australia's objectives must be centrally concerned with humanization of work or else we will not achieve quality standards, and all else is evangelicism whose effects will evaporate as soon as the promotional pressure is off. Our concern over the years (from 1952 for Fred Emery, internationally) has been with a subclass of the humanization of work problems, namely democratization of the workplace (Emery and Thorsrud, 1970/1976). That is a difficult task involving much deeper-rooted changes in traditions than Project Australia. Japanese industry has proven that involvement in quality is a much easier task—a first step, as it were, that most managements and most workers can contemplate. (We have been in touch with these developments since 1973 through Professor Takagawa's membership of the International Council for Quality of Working Life, of which Fred Emery was founding chairman and is a continuing member.) We think the broad acceptability of this as a first step is well illustrated by the willingness of General Motors (U.S.) to be seen publicly as pursuing the Japanese example of grassroots "quality circles" in its workplaces.

The other matter concerns television. We might be seen as dogmatically opposed to a TV promotional campaign because of the position we took in our report to Telecom. Australia—*A Choice of Futures* (1977). Our attitude is—and was long before that particular report—that, unless there are real changes in behaviors and relationships, changes in expressed attitudes are but froth. With respect to Project Australia, we think there is no option but to challenge—via television—the dissociated, who are glued to their sets, to test their cynicism against the realities of their workplace or their supermarket. For those who are in a position to make decisions, other channels of influence will have to be used. The kinds of personalities most likely to get into managerial positions are not likely to be contacted via TV—they watch much less and, if in front of a live screen, try to do everything but attend.

Summary

From what has been spelt out in the preceding pages it would seem that Project Australia *cannot* build on traditional values about work. Here we refer to traditional *Australian* values and certainly not to the much-vaunted "work ethic." Work in Australia has traditionally been seen as something human beings share with draft animals and machines. A new perception has emerged, internationally as well as in Australia, that views work, under appropriate conditions, as a realization of human potential. This new perception has become embodied in the national policies of the leading elements in Australian society.

Concern about pursuit of the ideal of Humanity ranks high in Australian society, for good historical reasons. We could expect that it ranks high with the great majority of those who have immigrated to this country. Project Australia is in a position to build on this tradition but not on the traditions concerning work.

The gravest obstacle is the emerging belief that we are becoming a dissociated society. The most serious tactical problem in the project is the use of TV when TV is one of the most potent contributors to dissociation.

The committee that commissioned this research was chaired by the then Deputy Prime Minister and included corporate CEOs and top civil servants. The Prime Minister decided, contrary to the advice of the committee, to go with a television campaign. A television campaign followed. We had access to the results of the surveys done to follow up this campaign. The results? A high but temporary recognition by viewers of the slogans used in the campaign, then oblivion (M. Emery, 1979).

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