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VALUE ORIENTATIONS:

AUSTRALIAN STUDIES

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Eckermann (1973) noted that -

As early as 1938 Elkin, discussing traditional Aboriginal society, maintained that Aborigines are orientated collectively, or place high value on the extended kin group (Barwick, 1964; Becket, 1964; Fink, 1964), see themselves as existing in harmony with nature and have no conception of time in the European sense, but live only for the present and remember the past as an integral part of the present. Most anthropologists tend to agree with such propositions. (p.288)

But, are these same values held by non-tribal Aborigines in contemporary Australia? Certainly conventional wisdom suggests that they are (Eckermann, 1973, p.470). Similarly, there is widespread acceptance of non-Aboriginal Australians as individualistic, future oriented, preferring 'doing' to 'being', and placing emphasis on mastery over nature (Binnion, 1976, p.34). Is this so?

The purpose of this paper is to examine these questions by looking at the results of studies of the value orientations of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians during the last twelve years (Peak, 1966; Hausfeld, 1969; Dawson, 1970; Watts, 1970; Eckermann, 1973; Massey, 1974; Kearney and Fitzpatrick, 1976; Hohn and McConnochie, 1977).

Value orientations were defined by Kluckhohn (1961) as -

...complex and definitely patterned (rank ordered) principles resulting from the transactional inter-play of three analytically distinguishable elements of the evaluative process, the cognitive, the affective, and the directive elements - which give order and direction to the ever-flowing stream of human problems. (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961, p.4.)

She identified five common human problems for which all people at all times must find solutions, and saw a limited number of solutions to each problem. Further, she posited that all variations of the solutions, with varying degree of emphasis, are present in all societies at all times. The five value orientations related to these problems and their solutions are -

1. HUMAN-NATURE ORIENTATION

- a) Evil - E
Man is seen as innately evil.
- b) Good and Evil - GE
Man seen as a mixture of good and evil.
- c) Good - G
Man seen as innately good.

2. MAN-NATURE ORIENTATION

- a) Subjugation to Nature - S
A fatalism and acceptance of the inevitable.
- b) Harmony with Nature - H
No real separation of man, nature and supernature.
- c) Mastery over Nature - M
Man's duty is to overcome natural forces and put them to use.

3. TIME ORIENTATION

- a) Future - F
Emphasis on a realizable future.
- b) Present - Pr
Emphasis on a timeless, traditionless, future-ignoring present.
- c) Past - P
Emphasis on the traditions of the past.

4. ACTIVITY ORIENTATION

- a) Doing - D
Demand for activity which results in accomplishments measurable by standards external to the individual

- b) Being-in-becoming - Bb
Preference for being self-contained and controlling oneself through meditation and detachment that bring understanding.
- c) Being - B
Preference for activity which is a spontaneous expression of what is "given" in human personality.

5. RELATIONAL ORIENTATION

- a) Individualism - I
Individual goals have primacy and the individual has autonomy.
- b) Collaterality - C
Goals and welfare of the laterally extended group have primacy.
- c) Lineality - L
Group goals have primacy.

All of the studies to be presented were based on the theoretical framework of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, though most modified the instruments used by them in various ways. The most thorough analyses were conducted by Hausfeld (1969), Watts (1970) and Eckermann (1973), though all of the researchers investigated one or more of the value orientations identified by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961). None of them used the Human-Nature orientation.

Peak (1966), in a comparative study of the achievement orientations of Aborigines and whites in New South Wales found that Aboriginal adolescents and lower and middle-class adolescent whites were all 'doing' oriented. He also found that Aborigines and lower-class whites were collaterally oriented and showed no clear preference between the present and the future. Middle-class whites, though, were found to be future oriented. Unfortunately Peak was not able to include a sample of middle-class Aborigines in his study. His findings, however, suggest that value orientations may be a function of social class rather than ethnic group membership.

Hausfeld (1969) studied the value orientations of Aborigines over the age of 15 in two Aboriginal communities in New South Wales. For comparative purposes he included in his sample two non-Aboriginal groups; one a group of college students who were said to be representative of middle-class youth and the other a group of persons

living in a commune situation. The commune members were also middle-class though they were recognized as dropping out of the system in a socially divergent way. Thus there were four samples in his study: the Coast-town Aborigines; the Forestville Aborigines; the College group and the Commune group. There were 717 persons over the age of 15 in the Coast-town sample; 196 over the age of 15 in the Forestville sample; 18 (mean age 22) in the College sample and 20 (mean age 20) in the Commune sample.

Hausfeld concluded that -

...the value orientations of the four groups are basically the same if one thinks only in terms of ranking preferences; for example, all four groups fit the ranking $F > Pr > Past$. However, the strength with which they hold that ordering is distinctly different. Forestville is weakly positive on the future scale whereas College is strongly positive. (p.235)

Similarly, on the Relational orientation, the College group is strongly individualistic, whereas the Coast-town Aborigines are weakly so, although the Coast-town, Forestville and College groups all prefer the ranking $I > C > L$. The commune group preferred the ranking $C > I > L$.

On the Activity orientation, the Commune members showed a definite preference for 'being' over 'doing' and the College group a slight preference for 'being' over 'doing'. Both Aboriginal groups showed a definite preference for 'doing' over 'being'.

Hausfeld also found that in both Aboriginal communities it was the young, the males and the non-settlement dwellers whose values were closer to those of the non-Aboriginal Australians, rather than the old, the females and the settlement dwellers. He noted that this finding made sense in view of the fact that 1) the males are economically and spatially more involved with non-Aboriginal Australians than the females, and 2) the females have, as children, less freedom and independence from their homes. Further, he pointed out that-

the non-settlement dwellers are either attracted to ordinary Australian life or move away from settlement life because they are dissatisfied with it.

(Hausfeld, 1969, p.258)

Watts (1970) investigated the achievement related characteristics of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal adolescent girls and their mothers. Her sample consisted of a group of urban, middle-class,

non-Aboriginal mothers and adolescent daughters; a rural, mixed class, non-Aboriginal group; and groups of Aboriginal mothers and their daughters from two Aboriginal communities.

The value orientation profiles for the two age groups in each of the four communities were as follows:

Table 1
Value Orientations of Mothers and Daughters
in Four Communities

Community	Value Orientation							
	Relational		Man-Nature		Time		Activity	
	Mothers	Dtrs	Mothers	Dtrs	Mothers	Dtrs	Mthrs	Dtrs
Urban white	I>C>L	I>C>L	D>S>H	H>D>S	F>Pr>P	F>Pr>P	B>D	B>D
Rural white	I>C>L	I>C>L	S>D=H	H=D>S	F>Pr>P	F>Pr>P	D>B	D>B
Aboriginal Group 1	I>C=L	I>C>L	H>D>S	H>S>D	F>Pr>P	F>Pr>P	D>B	D>B
Aboriginal Group 2	I>L>C	I>C>L	H>D>S	H>D>S	F>Pr>P	F>Pr>P	D>B	D>B

On the basis of these results Watts concluded that -

the Aboriginal mothers are less oriented towards Individuality than the white mothers. On the other three values, however, the distinction seems to be a rural-urban, rather than an ethnic one. The white, rural mothers and the Aboriginal mothers, when compared with the white, urban mothers, are less oriented to Dominance-over-Nature and the Future and they place a greater emphasis on Doing as against Being. (Watts, 1970, p.543)

With respect to the daughters she concluded that -

Ethnic similarities are greater than ethnic differences. . . There are no between-group differences

in preference for Individuality or Dominance-over-Nature. The girls in one of the Aboriginal groups are less oriented towards the Future than the urban white girls. The only ethnic difference occurs on the Activity orientation; the Aboriginal girls show a stronger preference for the Doing position than the white girls. (Watts, 1970, p.547)

Watts also found that there was a greater degree of consensus among the white than among the Aboriginal mothers and daughters, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Consensus within the Four Communities

Community	% of respondents whose own first choice corresponds to most frequent first choice in community.	
	Mothers	Daughters
White urban	63.75	58.26
White rural	61.56	57.58
Aboriginal Group 1	31.86	41.46
Aboriginal Group 2	43.22	33.26

The mothers in Aboriginal Group 1 and the girls in Aboriginal Group 2, in particular, show low value consensus.

Dawson (1970) studied the importance two Aboriginal groups, one rural and the other urban, ascribed to 'traditional' and 'western' values. He related these to the Aboriginals' attitudes to education and integration, and found that the urban group had significantly more favourable attitudes to 'western' values and to education than the rural group. The urban group, relative to the rural group, was also better off in material, educational, and occupational conditions.

Eckermann (1973) studied the value orientations amongst Aboriginals from three different socio-geographic areas: urban, rural and Settlement. For comparative purposes, she also included an urban white community and a rural white community.

Her results show that the orientation patterns of the urban and rural whites are very similar. Also, they indicate that Aboriginal people from all three socio-geographic areas have value orientation patterns which are similar to the urban and rural whites. For example, on the Relational orientation all five groups prefer the pattern I>C>L; on the Time orientation all groups prefer the pattern F>Pr>P; and on the Man-Nature orientation, although responses to the total Man-Nature area do not show consensus in all groups, clear patterns of preferred responses emerge within the area.

Eckermann concluded that although the values of Aboriginals in all three groups did not differ significantly from those of the whites, the whites tended to adhere more strongly to the major orientations. She suggested that the Aboriginals' life style and relations with the majority prevents them from putting their ideals into practice and thus influences their *strength* of orientation.

Another pertinent finding was that -

while Aboriginal people are able to correctly identify European orientations, whites consistently interpret Aboriginal orientations incorrectly. The kind of picture Europeans have of the minority seems to be closely allied with popular stereotypes as well as patterns people believe to be 'traditionally' Aboriginal.
(Eckermann, 1973, 470)

Massey (1974) administered a value orientation schedule to samples of low and high contact, 10 and 11 year old Aboriginal children, and to lower middle-class and middle-class, urban, non-Aboriginal 10 and 11 year olds. He found that there were no significant differences among the four groups on the Man-Nature and Activity value orientations. On the Time orientation the Aboriginal samples differed significantly from the non-Aboriginal samples, though the four groups were all future oriented, with the middle-class white sample most strongly so, followed by the lower middle-class white sample.

The results on the Relational orientation showed that the high contact Aboriginal sample differed significantly from the other three samples, being more individualistic though not strongly so.

Kearney and Fitzpatrick (1976), in a study of the characteristics which differentiated a high and a low acculturated Aboriginal group, found that the high-acculturated group was more future oriented than the low-acculturated group. The high-acculturated group consisted of Aboriginals who lived in a large country town, whilst the

low-acculturated group consisted of persons who lived in adjacent rural areas.

Holm and McConnochie (1977) compared Time orientations between three Aboriginal communities with differing degrees of contact with white Australian culture. All three communities scored low on an index of contact. In each community the Future time perspective was dominant, with the community with the least contact with Australian culture showing the strongest future perspective.

On the basis of the evidence presented it is concluded that there are no marked differences in value orientations, as defined by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. Even though, in many cases, the evidence shows that Aboriginals do not adhere to the major orientations as strongly as the non-Aboriginals, in other cases there is evidence to show that the Aboriginals have value orientations 'thought' to be more characteristic of non-Aboriginals. For example Watts (1970) found that her Aboriginal adolescent girls were 'doing' oriented, whereas the two non-Aboriginal groups were ambivalent between 'being and 'doing'; and Massey (1974) found his sample of high contact Aboriginals to be more individualistic than the other three groups.

To say that there are no significant differences in values between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians is not to suggest that there is not considerable variability within both groups. Watts' (1970) evidence on the low consensus in her Aboriginal samples, and Hausfeld's (1969) finding that the young male, non-settlement dwellers held values more similar to those of the non-Aboriginal samples, attest to the variability within Aboriginal populations. There is also evidence to show that there is considerable variability in values among non-Aboriginals. For example, the Commune group in Hausfeld's study differed significantly from the College group on some values, and, for that matter, from the two Aboriginal groups; and Peak (1966) found his lower-class non-Aboriginal sample differed significantly from his middle-class sample. Perhaps future studies which select more heterogeneous samples, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, will further highlight this variability.

Variables thought to be significant in accounting for the variability in value orientations have been identified by some of the researchers. Peak (1966) and Eckermann (1973) suggested social class as a major explanatory variable; Watts (1970) and Dawson (1970) mentioned urban-rural differences; Hausfeld (1969) focused on age, sex and socio-economic-geographic factors, and Massey (1974) related value orientations to locus of control, with internals being more

future and activity oriented. Certainly, according to the evidence presented, ethnicity alone does not appear to be a useful predictor of an individual's value orientations.

Eckermann (1973), however, presents evidence to show that non-Aboriginals do, in fact, attribute orientations to others on the basis of their ethnicity, as mentioned on page 16. The extant evidence shows, I suggest, that such reactions are unwarranted. Perhaps it is time to challenge some of the 'Caucasian Myths - Ancient and Modern' (Spalding, 1973), such as the view that all Aboriginals are collectively oriented, live in harmony with nature, prefer 'being' over 'doing', and have no future time perspective.

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