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Under the Southern Cross

Ian L Ball takes a ‘good hard look’ at Australia

Part I: Our way of life

We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other, and fight to defend our rights and liberties.

Peter Lalor, Ballarat, 30 November 1854

Think about Australia dreaming
It’s the heart of me ...
Can you hear me? Can you feel me?
There, you’re alive and well
Living under a southern sky ...

Paul Norton, ‘Southern Sky’

One of the first tasks of the newly-formed Psychological Type Research Unit in 1995 was the establishment of a data bank of MBTI scores. This objective was linked to the agreement to the ‘dissemination of research findings regarding applications of psychological type.’

These objectives have been fulfilled through the Australian Journal of Psychological Type and the Australian Psychological Type Review, and through the proceedings of AusAPT’s national conferences. We have also reached wider audiences through articles and reports in other journals and conferences. A list of PTRU publications is provided in the box on page 38.

Thanks to the many MBTI practitioners who have donated or loaned data sets for inclusion in the MBTI Australian Data Archive Project. Without your donations and the cooperation of donors from all States, our work would not have been possible. They have been acknowledged from time to time in reports published in AusAPT’s journals and newsletters.

Some of the data sets included in the Archive were sourced from earlier Australian publications.

In practically all cases it is reported type that features in this database: that is, the scores from the various instruments which indicate psychological type. The two main sources of data are Forms G and M. For ease of working, the results from Form G are separated from those for Form M, as quite different numbers of items are represented.

Gender and occupational data is coded, but, in line with Deakin University’s ethics policy, no personally-identifying data is recorded.

The type distributions in the Australian MBTI Data Archive Project are presented in Tables 1 and 2 (over). Some questions of interest are:

- Why collect ‘Australian’ data? Why not simply apply USA data from the various manuals to Australian groups?
- Are there Australian characteristics that render us ‘different’ from other groups?

I trust that this and the subsequent parts of this series will make the answers to such questions very evident.

The Australian ethos

Many studies, both academic and frivolous, have tried to pinpoint ‘what makes an Australian.’

Consider, for example, Chris O’Regan’s ‘Australian Culture Test: How to tell if you’re Australian.’ O’Regan is a student at the University of Queensland. His test has 79 items; here are a few to give you the flavour:

If you’re Australian …

- You’re familiar with Neighbours, Home and Away, Playschool, A Country Practice ...
- Whether you are male or female, you watch a lot of sport! ... the cricket ... your footy team ... you don’t know much about basketball, netball, hockey, baseball, etc, even if the national team are the world champions.
- You can’t remember the second line of the national anthem, let alone the second verse ...

Ian L Ball (ISTJ) is the Manager of the Psychological Type Research Unit at Deakin University.
Robert Spillane’s research on Australian managers (2002) attempts to answer the question of national differences in areas such as individualism, belief in free will, analytical thinking, universalism before the law, and the societal importance of achievement. These were the values that Spillane found in the post-Protestant countries, compared to the historically Catholic countries.

For the first four of those values, Spillane found that American and Australian managers held similar views. The fifth value was where they diverged: Americans were clearly more achievement-oriented, strong believers in performance, and in rewarding people who perform and penalising those who don’t. Spillane found that managers in Australia believe performance should be balanced by other factors:

...it seems to be tied up with the Australian character that Geoffrey Blainey, Manning Clark and others have talked about: a boorish, understated, laid-back, heroically-determined by quiet-achieving, approach.

Spillane theorises that these ‘Australian’ values come from our Irish ancestry, and are evident in icons such as Sir Donald Bradman, Betty Cuthbert, Weary Dunlop and Steve Waugh. In his article on the likely type of Steve Waugh, Philip Kerr (2002) concludes that he is probably an INTJ, quoting Tim Lane’s description of Waugh as ‘quite possibly Australia’s most defiant, most determined, most blood-minded, toughest-ever cricketer.’

Perhaps there is also an element that we are suspicious of success. The ‘tall poppy’ syndrome – a tendency to cut down people we feel are too successful – is well known. This is often allied with having less respect for authority, in particular for politicians.

Perhaps this has been going on for a long time. Ronald Conway (1984) quotes Hancock’s warning from back in 1930:

Australian idealism has put too many of its eggs into the political basket. When some of the eggs go bad, their unpleasant odour penetrates into every corner of the national life and infects it with a faint disgust. (p 27)

Soutphommansane and Ng (2002) invoke the concepts of mimesis and catharsis to describe the Australian sense of nationhood. They believe there is too much mimesis (imitation and comparisons with others) and not enough catharsis (transformation of the internal self). We have become locked in this mode of comparing ourselves with others: other peoples, other nations, other cultures.

They explain that is why competitive sport and so many of our icons are such indelible features of the life of the Australian nation. Sporting achievement has been the conduit for the release of a frustrated nationhood. It is cricketer Don Bradman, rather than a politician like Alfred Denkin or a scientist like Howard Florey, who is regarded as the national hero. The achievements of people such as Dawn Fraser and Ian Thorpe have come to represent superiority above others, and to reflect national pride.

Conventional wisdom says that the events at Anzac Cove remain the definitive statement of the resilient mateship that lies at the heart of the Australian character. However, Soutphommansane and Ng construe the Anzac legacy more in terms of a spirit of defiance. What resonates most about Anzac, they say, is an peculiarly Australian defiance: against the odds of battle, against authority, against imperial military folly.

Further, writing about Australia halfway between Hecqy Lawson and Manning Clark, Hancock felt that Australians ‘have never been compelled to shoulder the responsibilities and withstand the pressures which are part of the normal life of older peoples’:

They have, in fact, even when they imagined they were casting down mighty barriers, followed the line of least resistance. The exuberant, egotistical, idealistic nationalism a generation ago was a sign, not that they, the Australians, had already become a nation, but that they wished to become one. For nationality consists not merely in political unity, but in spiritual achievement.

Regarded from this point of view, the Australian people have not yet come of age.

(p 284)
Anzac did not create the defiance embodied in the national psyche all on its own. The authors point to the tradition encapsulated in the Eureka Stockade, in the idealised Ned Kelly, and in the bush literature of Henry Lawson. It appears to these writers that Australian egalitarianism is, at its best, a material value, rather than a humanist one.

With the hindsight of 150 years we have still much to learn from reading the views from those on the spot at Eureka. According to David Miller (1994), it is not only the labour movement which has sought inspiration from the Eureka story:

> It was a story with a rich mix of colourful characters and political persuasions - Irish patriots, foreign republicans, British loyalists, revolutionaries and Chartists, Catholic priests, and those, very likely in the majority, who held no particular political views - it was a fertile ground for almost any group seeking inspiration and affirmation in challenging the prevailing economic or political order of the day. It therefore seems inevitable that often when groups of people have gathered in protest, they have done so under the Eureka flag. (p 30)

On Bakery Hill on Thursday, 30 November 1854, Peter Lalor proclaimed: ‘We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other, and fight to defend our rights and liberties.’ ‘Amen!’ came loudly from the 500 (Maloney 1984, p 138). This was the first oath on Australian soil made to a flag that was not British.

David Tacey (1999) reports that a Sydney psychiatrist thought there is a new religion of his patients, a lot of their psychological illness is to do with the fact that Australia as a society lacks meaning, spiritual direction. The spiritual theme is reflected in Jung’s work. As Tacey recalls, Jung says that

> we have two senses of psychic being in our lives, one the ego and the other the soul. In a sense life is a balance between the demands of the ego in terms of everyday functioning, and the soul, which is concerned with larger forces to do with meaning, depth, purpose and all the things very much lacking in today’s society.

This theme was also explored by Conway (1985) who felt that Australia had become ‘a more self absorbed and fragmented society.’ Drawing on Freud and Jung, Conway maintained that

> a brief reference to the view on masculine and feminine polarities in the human psyche is important for later discussion of the relationship between men and women in Australia. (p 60)

This is an issue I shall take up in Part 3, in the discussion of gender differences in the type distribution in Australia.

### Conway on identification

In his 1985 book *The Great Australian Stupor,* Ronald Conway identifies four basic identifications with persons and lifestyles, relating these to both Jung’s and Freud’s ideas. Conway draws on Taylor’s (1958) schema for explaining historical and social change in terms of family attachments and psychological identification.

Identification is seen as the principal means by which the emerging personality learns to cope with its immediate world. Social behaviour and cultural, intellectual and political institutions are seen as by-products of identification, with either paternal or maternal or other characteristics.

In Taylor’s view, patriism and matrism represent the two poles. According to Conway, these correspond to a relative dominance of masculine or feminine patterns of thought and behaviour. Taylor found it necessary to insert an intermediate pattern of identification to resolve an oversimplification. Conway develops this into a four-fold model. Figure 1 (over) is an approximation to his table.

What is interesting about Conway’s ideas is that he tries to define what an Australian is like, and clearly sees a multiplicity of profiles. He makes a case for masculine and feminine versions of his four primary identifications. It follows that we must not be seduced into typifying or stereotyping what Australians are like, or what makes us different from other English-speaking peoples.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type distribution:</th>
<th>Australian females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISTJ</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISFJ</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFJ</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTJ</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISTP</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISFP</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFP</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENTP</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8.6%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ESTJ</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESFJ</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENFJ</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENFJ</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian MBTI Data Archive Project, adult females, Form G and Form K, n = 8456.
Patrist - Authoritarian

This person is driven by power and money. They would be expected to be inhibited in behaviour, and hold a mechanical worldview. They stress industry and restrict pleasure.

An extrovert-thinking type, E_T_, would hold authoritarian moralistic attitudes, believe that physical sciences are the key to knowledge, and suspect humanities as useless studies. May be involved with puritan, Calvinist and evangelical religious groups. In socio-political terms would favour despotic oligarchy or rule by party machine.

Main influence periods in Australia were 1788-1847 (the penal era) and 1870-1890 (the era of urban expansion).

Females of this type would be expected to be submissive to male supremacist type of authority—"wait until your father comes home" attitudes to children. They could be expected to enforce masculine stereotypes at home and in society: 'boys would be encouraged to be aggressive, and girls to be ladylike.'

Patrist - Conservative

(or approximately balanced identifications)

This person would be disciplined but have flexible behaviour, and would tend to enjoy pleasure as a reward for effort.

An extrovert-intuitive type, EN, whose chief drives are likely to be love attachments and meaningful existence. Moral judgments are likely to be subjected to spiritual insights and intuitions, with a stress in inner integrity. In educational terms, would be expected to preserve a tradition of broad 'liberal' education. Respect social diversity, but are likely to hold constitutional-monarchist, conservative political views.

No period of dominance in Australia, but traces of influence between 1840-1851 and 1900-1914.

Females tend to see themselves as complementary to males, deferring to the male's strengths, but taking charge when he is weak. Socially assertive when the cause is important.

Matrist – Indulgent

This person shows spontaneous, impulsive behaviour, and sees pleasure as an end in itself. Their chief drives are pleasure and external liberty.

An introvert-feeling type I_F, who tends to have a 'hippie' group outlook. Their outlook could be agnostic or humanism. Tend towards the humanities and social sciences, and like novel and easy ways of instruction. Republican, anti-traditional in political outlook, could be liberal-secular or moderate socialist.

Periods of influence include 1920-1930 and post World War 2.

Females have a manipulative, seductive (sometimes unconscious) mode of dealing with males, indulging men but also binding them like the 'oedipal' mother.

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Fraternalist – Anarchic

This person is ambivalent towards pleasure, and tolerates originality only when approved by the group. Believes in the majority as the source of ethical views and has a tendency towards atheism. 'Mateship' is the source of authority.

An extrovert-sensing type, ES, whose chief drives are security and belonging. Educationally they demand the same opportunities for all, and resent elites. See qualifications in terms of material reward. May have anarchist-revolutionary politics, but will revert to patrist authoritarian attitudes when in power.

Periods of influence in Australia 1850-1862 (the gold era), 1890-1900 (the era of labour struggles) and 1930-1939 (the depression).

The aggressive 'new woman', liking feminist confrontation and competitive rivalry with males. The female is likely to reject motherhood, and be antagonistic to marriage and domestic conventions.
How Australia compares

Ian L. Ball

References

www.abs.gov.au


In part 2, in the next issue:

Ian L. Ball (ISTJ) has had a long involvement with psychology and education. He is a fellow of the Australian Psychological Society and a chartered member of the Australian Human Resources Institute. Ian manages the Psychological Type Research Unit at Deakin University, conducts school reviews, and contributes to consultancy projects. At the recent Eureka 2004 conference, Ian was awarded life membership of AusAPT.

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Australians scored:

- 73% (well above the mean of 48%) for 'greater respect for authority'
- 69% (compared to the mean of 65%) for 'less emphasis on money'
- 33% (compared to the mean of 29%) for 'decrease in importance of work'
- 95% (compared to the mean of 90%) for 'more emphasis on family life.'

Tiffen and Gittins think it surprising that Australia tops the list for those professing membership of voluntary organisations. Sporting and recreational organisations are the most popular. The authors suggest that social capital has been a key factor in explaining the vibrancy of communities and the resilience of societies and democratic politics. They think that participation in voluntary organisations may reflect civic engagement and one's feeling of efficacy as an indicator of social capital.

The above presentation, and other data from Tiffen and Gittins, say much about the nature of Australians at the start of the 21st century, and how we value aspects of our way of life. The data provide some insights into the nature of Australian society and its distinctive characteristics.

Whether these social and cultural factors are reflected in type tables, and the extent to which they influence personality differences, are questions I will take up in parts 2 and 3 of this series.

This article is adapted from 'The MBTI data archive: What have we learned? a paper presented at Eureka 2004, the 7th national conference of the Australian Association of Psychological Type Inc, Ballarat, 17 September 2004.'

Australian Psychological Type Review Vol 6 No. 3 November 2004
Inviting your contributions to the Australian MBTI Data Archive

The Australian MBTI Data Archive is a national repository of type data, used to identify national trends and patterns of type distribution.

Your contributions of completed MBTI forms are invited, subject to the following conditions:

- Confidentiality. It is a condition of Deakin University's Institutional Ethics Committee that answer sheets are submitted anonymously: i.e. without names of respondents. It is a simple matter to white them out, blacken them, or cut them out of the answer sheet.

- Consent. It is expected that respondents will have given informed consent for their data to be entered into the Data Archive. Submission of answer sheets implies consent to take part in the research.

- Demographic data. Inclusion of demographic data (age, gender, occupation, education and State of residence) would be appreciated.

- Labelling. Please provide the nature of the group data being submitted, and the reason for the typology of individuals (e.g., MBTI taken as part of a professional development course, career guidance, job application, training, psychological profile, etc.).

Your material for the Australian MBTI Data Archive may be directed to:

Ian Ball
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Nunawading VIC 3131
mgpe@bigpond.net.au

Publications and presentations by members of the Psychological Type Research Unit (1995-2004)


Ball, I. L. (2001) Gender differences in the distribution of types in Australia: Men are from Marble Bar; women are from Venus Bay. Australian Psychological Type Review, 3, 1.


Ball, I. L. & Geyer, P. (1999) US patterns are not replicated in Australian data! Conference XII: Association for Psychological Type, Arizona, (display and discussion paper).


