

Preprint version. Later published as The Australian Enigma. In J.S. Chhokar, F.C. Brodbeck & R. J. House (Eds.), Culture and leadership across the world: A GLOBE report of in-depth studies of the cultures of 25 countries (pp. 299-333). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

The Australian Enigma

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1. ABSTRACT

This chapter provides an analysis of Australian culture and leadership at societal and industry levels. The chapter is based on the results of the author's participation in the GLOBE project (cf. House et al., 2004), but interpretations are supplemented by reference to the extant historical and anthropological literature and interviews with key experts in these fields. The analysis of leadership was supplemented with analysis of text-based media. Results present Australian culture and leadership as an enigma, full of contradiction and change. For instance, Australians have traditionally valued egalitarianism, "mateship", and "a fair go", but have a history of discrimination that belies this image; and Australians see themselves as egalitarian, but seem also to value individual rewards. The GLOBE results support this view, but also indicate that Australian national culture is strongly performance oriented. Australian leaders reflect the enigma, supporting the GLOBE hypothesis that leadership is derived from implicit theories derived from societal culture. Thus, effective Australian leaders must be inspirational, but at the same time must not be seen to be too charismatic. They must be performance oriented, but still must be "one of the boys".

2. The Australian Enigma

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Australian culture and leadership provides a fascinating study, full of contradictions and change. In this chapter, I provide an overview of culture and leadership in Australian society, together with a closer look at culture and leadership in two Australian industries: telecommunications and finance.

Using anthropological, historical, and industrial literature, I discuss prominent themes in Australian societal and industry cultural development in the context of the Australian results from the GLOBE study, supplemented with other relevant data.

This chapter deals first with societal-level analysis, and then with the industry-level data. In addition, the two foci of the GLOBE study, culture and leadership, are discussed separately, although I recognize that the two processes are inextricably linked. Leadership is born out of and plays a part in maintaining culture (Schein, 1992). The links between culture and leadership are therefore highlighted where possible. The first section describes the Australian society, beginning with an outline of Australian history, economy, and society. The nine cultural dimensions of the GLOBE project are then discussed, together with interview data from experts in the field of anthropology and economic history. The next section, dealing with societal leadership, begins with a review of recent Australian research on leadership, followed by an analysis of two notable Australian Prime Ministers: Sir Robert Menzies and Robert Hawke. This section ends with a discussion of the results

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of the GLOBE survey in the context of data obtained from a national media analysis. Discussion of industry-level results for the Australian telecommunications and finance industries completes the chapter.

3. Societal culture

When presenting an overview of Australian society, one cannot help but be struck by the apparent contradictions that riddle Australian culture. The most sparsely populated inhabited continent on Earth, yet one of the most urbanized societies; a pluralist nation, but with a history of restrictive immigration; a humane, democratic developed country, but with a history of persecution of its Aboriginal people; an island physically distanced from its British and Irish heritage, but historically distinct from its Pacific neighbors. The short but filled history of Australia since European settlement in 1788 appears as complex and conflicting as the current diversity of its society. The Australian national identity is a complex entity, and different aspects of it have been expressed throughout its modern life (see Melleuish, 1996).

One of the most recurring themes of Australian culture, and of the present chapter, is the concept of egalitarianism, which has been proposed by Thompson (1994) as fundamental to the self-concept of Australians. According to Thompson, Australian egalitarianism has at least two components: sameness and equality. The notion of sameness rests upon the

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belief that Australians are racially and culturally homogeneous. This has had the dual effect of engendering simultaneously a suspicion of differences and promotion of an illusion of tolerance and acceptance. Once people have been deemed “Australian”, they are “one of us” (see national media analysis).

Equality refers to a belief in equality of access for all Australians. For example, the belief that anyone can have their own home is very important to Australians, although Thompson, in her book on the phenomena of egalitarianism and all its contradictions in Australian society, proposes that this belief is changing from an expectation to an aspiration in contemporary Australia. Reflecting the “enigma”, however, Thompson notes that Australian egalitarian values are balanced by the widespread use of individual rewards across most sectors of the Australian economy.

Australian Pre- and Early-Settlement History¹

The indigenous population of Australia, arguably the oldest continent in the world geologically, is the Aborigines. It is estimated that human habitation in Australia commenced some forty to sixty thousand years before British

¹ This section was largely based on interviews with key figures in the anthropology and history disciplines. Where appropriate, data have been sourced from the Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia, 1996, World English Edition.

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settlement, although the current Aboriginal race appears to have migrated to Australia between twenty and sixty thousand years ago. They eventually came to inhabit every part of the (mostly arid) continent, and lived a technologically and economically simple, but socially complex, life. At the time of European settlement, there were somewhere between 300,000 and one million Aborigines living in Australia.

On January 26, 1788, the First Fleet landed at Port Jackson, bringing the first transportation of British and Irish convicts. This event marked the beginning of European settlement of Australia and the start of its modern history.

January 26 is celebrated as Australia's National Day.² It is also marked as the beginning of a disastrous period for the Aborigines, culminating in their virtual extermination from the island state of Tasmania and the south east of the mainland. The introduction of diseases and policies further reduced the Aboriginal population (see Stone, 1974). Since the 1950s, the Aboriginal population has recovered to near the number at settlement, although most Aborigines today are of mixed race.

Transportation of convicts continued until the mid-19th century. During this time, the free settlers and emancipated convicts did not settle easily together. This was exacerbated when the colonial governor of the time, Lachlan

² This is despite the fact that Australian federation actually took place on January 1, 1901.

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Macquarie, began to appoint ex-convicts to positions of authority. The disquiet surrounding these appointments had a profound effect on the society, but is cited as a source of the non-deferential egalitarianism, which characterizes modern Australia. These appointments meant an individual's past and familial heritage were effectively to be forgotten (Thompson, 1994). Other emancipists were given land grants that had the effect of gradually expanding the colonies. During this period, there were also rapid changes that set the foundations for Australia's development: the colonies, later to become States, achieved distinct identities; large-scale grazing was expanded into the interior; and gold and other minerals were discovered.

In summary, the scene was set for the Australian Enigma the earliest days of European settlement. On one hand, Australia's indigenous inhabitants were subject to discrimination and near-extinction; on the other, convicts and free settlers from Britain and Ireland forged a spirit of egalitarianism out of the necessity to survive in a harsh and remote environment.

Government and Politics

The federation of Australia, marking the uniting of the six original colonies under a national flag, was achieved in 1901. The culmination of several decades of change and political maturity, the process was nevertheless peaceful and gradual. The 1901 Constitution, which underpins modern

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Australia, is based on British parliamentary traditions, but also contains elements of the United States system.³ In particular, a Senate ensures state representation. Australia is now a federal parliamentary democracy with six independent self-governing States and two Territories. It is currently a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and has British Sovereign as Head of State. Despite strong moves to achieve republican status, it appears unlikely that Australia will become a republic in the near future.⁴

The political parties in contemporary Australia are the descendants of those that were formed soon after federation (Graetz & McAllister, 1994). The Australian Labour Party (ALP) has dominated the political left, while the conservative side of politics has been represented by a variety of parties, consisting, since the 1940s, of a coalition of the city-based Liberal Party⁵ and the rural-based National Party. The social class basis underlying the

³ The Australian constitution has proved remarkably difficult to amend, requiring both a majority of the voting population and a majority of the six states. One of the more notable changes to the constitution was in 1967, when it was amended to give recognition to the Aboriginal population (Clarke, 1992).

⁴ Following a constitutional convention in February, 1998, a referendum on a republican model was conducted, and was defeated.

⁵ Despite its name, the Australian Liberal Party, founded by conservative leader Robert Menzies after the Second World War, is inherently in the mould of the British Tories.

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distinction between the two arms of the political system in Australia is similar to that of Britain: Labour's base of support issuing from the working class; and the Coalition's from a coalition of city-based middle class and country-based graziers and farmers. In particular, support from Australia's strong trade union movement has contributed to the ALP being the dominant party for much of the century. Since the Second World War (WWII), however, the two main parties have been steadily becoming less distinct, which, combined with a national trait of distrust of politics and politicians, has rendered contemporary Australia an essentially cohesive, but conservative, society in which control of wealth is the driving force of politics (Graetz & McAllister). The media analysis conducted as a part of the present study (see below), however, indicates that there are feelings that a more fundamental political philosophy may be needed in Australia to guide it through into the 21st century.

Economy⁶

Although an industrialized nation with a high standard of living, Australia's trade profile –Australia predominantly exports primary products and imports manufactured goods – in many respects resembles that of a developing nation.

⁶ Source: *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 1996. World English Edition.

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The economy is therefore particularly vulnerable to inflation and commodity price fluctuations (see Jones, 1990). Nevertheless, the make-up of the Australian domestic economy has changed substantially since WWII.

Agriculture and mining now play a less central role, and have been largely displaced by manufacturing and, more recently, service industries. Financial services rival the extractive industries as the most important economic sector, while tourism and education have flourished since the 1980s. Strangely, while Australia is an archetypal industrial/urbanized nation, the image of Australians as tough and silent farmers is still widely maintained and promulgated (Warwick & Scales, 1996).

Australia as a Pluralist Society

Australia is now widely regarded as a multicultural, tolerant, and pluralist society (Jupp, 1996), despite the fact that, for most of the time since federation, the history of Australian immigration has been actively biased against non-Europeans. A discriminatory “White Australia” policy was effective until 1966, and the multicultural aspect of modern Australia has not been easily achieved (Jupp, 1996).

The drive for immigration in Australia has consistently followed the need to expand Australia’s relatively small population, with the admonition “populate or perish”. Transportation of convicts from Britain and Ireland remained the

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main source of immigration for the first fifty years of European settlement until free settlers gradually achieved majority status. The gold rush of the 1850s saw the arrival of the first significant wave of non-British/Irish immigrants. In general, however, these newly arrived cultural groups were similar in background to the original settlers, so that ethnic conflicts, although present, were not significant. A notable exception, however, was resentment towards the Chinese, which would at times erupt into violence on the gold fields in the late 1800s, and with whom distinctions were almost certainly made based on race (Thompson, 1994). Seemingly in contradiction to these first incidents of racism, nonetheless, the gold rush had the impact of ensuring wide accessibility to wealth across the small population, and thereby acted simultaneously to reinforce the egalitarian side of Australian society (Serle, 1963; Thompson, 1994)

Despite these periods of population growth, Australia continued to experience labor shortages. Consequently, from the mid-late 19th century, assisted immigration schemes were put in place, which were still bringing British immigrants a hundred years later. Concern about non-European immigration directed most of Australia's immigration policies: most notoriously with the introduction of the White Australia Policy through the Immigration Restriction Act at federation. This policy explicitly aimed to assist and to encourage British settlement; to discourage other Europeans; and to exclude all non-

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whites (Jupp, 1996). A shift in policy after WWII, fuelled by the need to expand the population and a view that insufficient numbers of immigrants were arriving from the preferred British Isles, retained the exclusion on non-whites but did mark the first significant number of non-English speaking immigrants. This process accelerated with the repatriation of large numbers of European refugees from WWII (Jupp, 1996).

The White Australia Policy was finally lifted in 1966, and non-white immigration began in earnest in the 1970s. The make-up of contemporary Australia was then established. In particular, Asian immigration increased rapidly, and Asians now represent a significant portion of the Australian population. Statistics from the 1991 census show that Australia's population of 18 million represents people from over 160 countries (Costa, 1996), 21 per cent born overseas, and over 50 per cent of non-British backgrounds.⁷ The ramifications of these shifts in immigration reflected a generation that was coming to terms with its racial past. Notably, there has been a recent awareness of the validity of Aboriginal culture and concerns and, like other countries with a history of colonization, for the Government to address past treatment (NAC/UNESCO, 1973). In particular, critical High Court judgments

⁷ Source: Australian Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research. (1996). *Overseas born*. Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service.

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in 1992 and 1996 have finally recognized Aboriginal land rights.⁸ There has been a recent backlash against Asian immigration and Aboriginal welfare by vocal sectors of the society.⁹

Relationships with Other Countries

Despite the early evolution of a distinct national culture, and governmental moves to foster national development, Australians have traditionally tended to relate closely to their colonial identity and to focus on their geographically distant British and Irish heritage. This has left Australia culturally detached, even estranged, from its Asian neighbors.

The British connection prompted Australia's early entry into two world wars. In WWI Australia suffered per capita casualty rates higher than that of most

⁸ The High Court is Australia's Constitutional Court. In 1992, the "Mabo" decision established for the first time the legitimacy of Aboriginal land rights

⁹ Although there have been other advocates for reduced immigration, one of the most talked about politicians at the time of writing was Pauline Hanson, the leader of the One Nation Party, which launched the nation into a divided debate on immigration and Aboriginal welfare. Originally, a member of the Liberal party, Pauline Hanson was expelled from the party in 1996 and won her seat as an independent candidate. She then formed the One Nation Party, which was briefly the third most popular party in the country and the leading minor party (Bulletin, July 29, 1997). The party's policies on reducing immigration and welfare benefits distributed on race have provoked criticism internationally (Reuters, July 21, 1997) and bitter disputes and rallies nationally.

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other countries, but gained an enduring image of national identity with the heroism of the “ANZACs”.¹⁰ At this time, the British heritage was still the driving force of Australia’s international relations and the attachment between the countries was strong. WWII had different ramifications however. The absence of British aid during the Pacific War and the threat of Japanese invasion saw Australia establish an important alliance with America. The post-war era saw maintenance of a sentimental attachment to Britain, although international relations began to be more oriented towards the Pacific and America, culminating in participation in the Vietnam War as an American ally, and Prime Minister Holt’s proclamation in 1969 of “All the way with LBJ!”

Today, there is more awareness of Australia as a nation. It is seen to be emerging from the time when the political, social, and economic development

¹⁰ *The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps*. During WWI, these soldiers suffered immense casualties at Gallipoli, Turkey and their heroism is marked by a national memorial day. Accompanying the image of bravery is that of soldiers who refused to give deference to (often British) officers unless they had earned it, a symbol of the egalitarian nation (Thompson, 1994). Today, people of all ages join the parades and attend dawn services across the country on the public holiday devoted to the remembrance of the ANZACs landing at Gallipoli, Turkey, on April 25, 1915. Contemporary celebrations of ANZAC Day, however, which saw resurgence in the early 1990s, have more to do with a desire to recognize Australia’s heritage and identity than to remember Gallipoli (Mackay, 1993).

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of the country was closely tied to that of Britain and America, to one where national events and achievements are given more prominence (Mackay, 1993). In its newfound independence, Australia is finally turning towards neighboring Asia for its economic development (Mackay). In this respect, Australia has been significantly affected by the Asian economic downturn of 1997.

Nonetheless, Australians continue to value their colonial identity and to see their political origins in geographically distant Britain and Ireland. This trend continues, despite the ongoing evolution of a distinct national culture, and governmental moves to foster a unique national perspective. For instance, Australians in 1999 rejected a referendum on a republican model that would have cut their last constitutional links with Britain. This has had the effect of further isolating Australia culturally from its Asian neighbors.

In summary, Australia is a nation with a relatively short history as a modern civilization, and continues to be in a state of flux. An egalitarian spirit characterizes the country, although this is contrasted against a history of active discrimination. Australia, by the beginning of the Second Millennium however, has become a pluralist society, and this trend can be expected to continue once Australia finally cuts its constitutional ties with Britain.

Australian Culture: Quantitative Results from the GLOBE

Study

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The societal level results for Australia from the GLOBE study are presented in Table 1. These results include Australia’s ranking on each of the three assessments and the difference between these measures. Following presentation of these results is a discussion and interpretation of findings, based on interviews with three experts in Australian society, from the areas of economic history, commerce, and culture.¹¹ These interviews involved presenting the quantitative results from the project to each interviewee, and asking for their views and theories to provide a context for interpretation of the GLOBE data. There was considerable overlap in the information obtained, so that the views presented here represent an integration of the interviews.

TABLE 1: Australian Societal Culture Scores and Rankings for the Nine Cultural Dimensions

Dimension	"As is"		"Should be"		Difference Score ^c
	Score ^a	Rank ^b	Score ^a	Rank ^b	
<i>Performance Orientation</i>	4.36	16	5.89	38	1.53
<i>Uncertainty Avoidance</i>	4.39	19	3.98	51	-0.41
<i>Future Orientation</i>	4.09	19	5.15	49	1.06
<i>Humane Orientation</i>	4.28	21	5.58	19	1.30
<i>Institutional Collectivism</i>	4.29	28	4.40	42	0.11
<i>In-group Collectivism</i>	4.17	52	5.75	26	1.58

¹¹ Two of the three experts are Australian by birth, with Anglo-Saxon backgrounds. The third arrived in Australia three years ago from Germany and has specialized in German-Australian cross-cultural business.

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<i>Gender Egalitarianism</i>	3.40	30	5.02	8	1.62
<i>Assertiveness</i>	4.28	22	3.81	25	-0.47
<i>Power Distance</i>	4.74	53	2.78	25	-1.96

Note.

N = 144

^a Items were rated on a Likert type scale from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high).

^b Ranks are out of the 61 countries that participated in the GLOBE study and have results available for these dimensions.

^c Difference is "Should be"-score minus "As is"-score.

PERFORMANCE ORIENTATION

The quantitative results indicate that compared to other countries, Australia rates high in the GLOBE study on this dimension. Further, Australians aspire to even higher levels of performance, although not so much as many of the other countries in the GLOBE study.

The Performance Orientation of Australians can be understood from a historical perspective. Despite the image of Australia as an egalitarian nation, there is nonetheless considerable evidence that a coexisting class system, based on wealth and reward, has existed in Australian society throughout its history (Thompson, 1994). Performance Orientation, as expressed by wealth and material gain, is therefore well established.

Most recently, there has been another development of the performance orientation of Australia. Emerging Australian nationalism has led to an increased awareness of a need to achieve, and to contribute to, the success of

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Australia as a nation (Mackay, 1993). Economic structures have been put in place to reward individuals more for high achievement. For example, Australia has become a strong advocate for removing international trade barriers, and has significantly reduced its own tariffs, many of them in place since federation. This is illustrative of confidence in the ability of Australians to compete successfully in the world market.

Although high on present Performance Orientation, Australians do not seem to want this level to increase as much as many other countries. This may be viewed as an interaction of the idealism of the country and its belief in fair play (see below), with a history which has kept away some of the harsher realities of economy. Australians live on an isolated island continent, and are used to wealth and a high standard of living, largely generated from the land. This is quite different from the reality that ninety-seven percent of Australians live in large cities. The majority of the population therefore, may not feel the more dire warnings about the vulnerability of the Australian economy, especially to international commodity price fluctuations. It seems that the mentality of the “lucky country” (Horne, 1965) persists (see Mackay, 1993).

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

The results of the GLOBE study indicate that Australians feel that their society ought to take more risks. This result may reflect the present recognition that

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Australia needs to change to achieve more as a nation although, historically, Australia has preferred a risk-averse strategy (White, 1992). Notable agendas for Australia have been to imbue the society with security both from other countries (e.g., restriction of immigration from specific cultures and protection against imports through tariffs) and within the nation itself (e.g., minimum wages, welfare, and other mechanisms designed to control volatility and reduce dissatisfaction). Similarly, as Mackay (1993; see also Karpin, 1995) notes, business sectors of Australian society have a history of not being prepared to invest in risky or innovative ventures. Consequently, innovative ideas generated in Australia often need to be exported for the realization of their potential. With the move towards service sectors and the need to compete internationally, however, it may well be that the previous complacency of Australia needs to change.

FUTURE ORIENTATION

Australia's Future Orientation results show a similar pattern to its Performance Orientation. Australians would like to see more Future Orientation than is currently happening, but this discrepancy does not indicate too much dissatisfaction with the present state. The level of Future Orientation is lower than that of Performance Orientation, despite the similar rankings of these results compared to other countries.

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These results indicate that the traditional emphasis placed by Australians on future planning is not as strong as it has been historically. In the past, Australia has had a political agenda based on preparing for the future, with policies focusing on protection against perceived threats of invasion, protection against internal disturbances through minimum wages, and a goal of increasing growth through tariffs. Such “nation building” has been an identifiable policy since the turn of the century, especially since WWII (Clarke, 1992).

With the changing nature of Australian society and its place in the international arena, however, these policies have largely been overturned. The current move has seen a push to remove the infrastructure previously so enthusiastically embraced. Instead, the traditional “planning” mechanisms are now seen as obstacles to a nation that is open to global market forces. On an individual level, Mackay (1993) has argued that Australians have lost their strong future orientation in their preoccupation with coping with all the myriad changes in the present society. These changes include a redefinition of gender roles, a high divorce rate, high unemployment, high retail credit, a shrinking middle class, and multiculturalism. They are so endemic, claims Mackay, that there is hardly an institution or a convention of Australian life which has not been subject to revolutionary change in the past two decades.

HUMANE ORIENTATION

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Australia's moderate results on Humane Orientation may represent another manifestation of the Australian enigma; interplay between historical and recent trends of two extremes of Humane Orientation. One aspect of the Australian heritage is the egalitarian fair nation; the other is the history of exclusion and inhumane treatment of certain sections of society. Similar contradictions have emerged in contemporary history. Thus, while general affluence may promote a Humane Orientation, the recent backlash against welfare and immigration suggests another orientation. According to Mackay (1993; see also Horne, 1965), Australians have traditionally been self-congratulatory over their Humane Orientation. The societal safety nets protecting the under-privileged, such as the welfare role of the Government, have been enforced by policies and have largely been successful. For instance, it is rare to encounter a beggar in Australia, even in the large cities. Australian vernacular contains prevalent references to this cultural dimension; to be "un-Australian" has connotations of not giving others "a fair go" (Mackay).

There is another side to the story, however. First, as noted earlier, a perennial blight on the history and development of Australia has been its treatment of Aborigines (see Healey, 1998). There is popular condemnation of the current Prime Minister's refusal to issue a national apology to the Aboriginal people for their turbulent past and, in particular, for the "stolen generation" of the 1920s to 1950s (the practice of removing children from their natural parents

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for a “better life” with non-indigenous foster parents). At the same time, many people support the view that reparation is not necessary. Anti-immigration/anti-Aboriginal Welfare movements, and moves to be less liberal with welfare, reflect the feeling that Australia may be too humane as a society, to the detriment of the greater good of the majority. More recently, this view has been reinforced in Australia’s treatment of Middle-East asylum seekers. Refused entry to the country, they are shipped for status assessment to the tiny Pacific nation of Naru.

Nevertheless, many Australians, particularly professionals and managers (representative of GLOBE respondents), do appear to want their society to be more humane than it is at present.¹² Mackay (1993) has noted that the 1990s have presented a time of unprecedented change in Australian history, and that there is a need now for integrity and caring from our political leaders.

INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTIVISM

¹² ¹² Like many developed countries around the world, Australia has become a destination for asylum-seekers. The Australian Government in 2001, however, instituted a policy of not admitting asylum seekers until after they had obtained refugee status. Letters to the Editor in Australia’s newspapers in 2001 were heavily in favor of admitting the asylum seekers, in contrast to talk-back radio callers, who supported the Government’s stand in an election year (see *The Weekend Australian*, September 29-30, 2001 for an analysis of election issues.)

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Australia's score on this dimension indicates that the country places a moderate level of emphasis on Collectivism, and that, in practice, is fairly close to national values on this dimension. This is in contrast to scores on the In-group Collectivism dimension (see below), where Australians score relatively low in relation to other countries. These scores would appear to reflect the relatively high levels of social welfare in Australia (see Mackay, 1993).

IN-GROUP COLLECTIVISM

The GLOBE data indicates a low score on the In-group Collectivism dimension. Like other secular Western nations, Australia has seen a recent trend towards individuals making decisions that focus less on the family unit. For example, decisions not to have children, to marry later, to work from an office rather than home, all have the effect of decreasing the importance of the family in Australian society. Australia has a well-developed welfare system and therefore may be seen to disdain the need to be a collectivist society in order for individuals to survive and thrive (see Jones, 1996).

The data also indicate that Australia has a relatively wide discrepancy between As Is and Should Be scores on this dimension. This may reflect popular disquiet about the effect of an individualistic society and an acknowledgment that it carries disadvantages. The divorce rate is higher today than at any other

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point in Australian history, and unstable marriages mean unstable families (Mackay, 1993). In his analysis of Australian society, Mackay reports that even people in favor of easier divorces find it hard to approve of the instability of family life, and there is widespread community concern about the long-term effect of divorces on children. It appears then that the image of Australia as an ideal country in which to raise a family is now at risk. Moreover, of course, at the other end of the generations, the Australian family unit has never specifically included the extended family members, a situation which is compounded by the increasing mobility of the population and segregation of families through divorce. These factors all contribute to less contact between family members who do not co-habit (Mackay).

The high difference score for Australia on this dimension may be attributed to a wish to revert to the collectivist underpinnings of egalitarianism that is being lost in the drive towards the individual success of a developed country.

Australian's egalitarianism rests upon a collectivist approach. Government institutions have traditionally been used to achieve equality for Australians, as manifested by the welfare system, in contrast to the individualistic commitment to equality of opportunity that characterizes America (Thompson, 1994). With recent Australian governmental moves to reduce welfare and encourage small businesses, the still pervasive collectivist notion of

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egalitarianism may have contributed to the discrepancy between the actual and ideal scores on this dimension.

GENDER EGALITARIANISM

Despite the popular conception of Australia as a male-orientated culture, the results obtained in the GLOBE study indicate that Australia does not particularly emphasize male roles in society, although, as with almost all other nations, there would ideally be an equal stress placed on male and female roles.

On the surface, these results are surprising. Australian language highlights the stereotypes of male “ockers” who once talked about women as “Shielas” and still like to be “one of the boys”. Certainly, the tough, male image of rugged farmers is a familiar Australian stereotype (Warwick & Scales, 1996). This image, however, may not be truly representative of contemporary Australian society, or even historically true. Australia, for example, was the second country (after New Zealand) to introduce universal suffrage for women.

This apparent contradiction may be associated with the stereotypical image of Australia as an essentially rural society. In fact, while Australia still relies on primary industry for much of its wealth, it is also one of the most urbanized

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societies in the world,¹³ 90 percent of the population lives in only three percent of the land area, especially in the major cities along the eastern seaboard. The rural based masculine stereotypes therefore bear little resemblance to the everyday life of the large majority of Australians.

The trend for an ideally less sexist society is noticeable in Australia, but maybe no more so than in other Western societies. The ideology of successful Western democracies places equal stress on male and female roles, and the results indicate that Australians are following the general trend in this area. For example, since 1990, two women have already achieved the office of State Premier.

ASSERTIVENESS

Results in respect of Assertiveness show one of the rare instances of a negative difference between As Is and Should Be scores. Australians rank relatively high in terms of As Is scores on this dimension, but they do not aspire to more Assertiveness, as represented by the Should Be scores. This finding is consistent with the Australian cultural mores discussed earlier, where Assertiveness is seen to be “showing off” or putting oneself ahead of others.

¹³ Source: *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia*, 1996. World English Edition.

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POWER DISTANCE

Relative to other countries, Australia is low on Power Distance. The relatively large negative difference score shows, however, that more stratification exists in society than Australians may consider ideal. Again, there are contradictions evident in the Australian attitudes toward Power Distance. On the one hand, there is the perception of Australia as an egalitarian society, evident in colloquial language, such as the use of the term “mate” as a form of address; and themes and folk heroes in the national literature. Historians believe that “mateship” may be related to the harsh conditions of life for early male settlers which are assumed to have reinforced a complex mixture of collectivist and egalitarian values, manifest in actions such as loyalty to one’s mates, support during crises, sharing, and companionship (Feather, 1986). More recently, Ashkanasy and O’Connor (1997) identified “mateship” as a uniquely Australian dimension of organizational culture.

On the other hand, there is evidence that, in practice, Australian organizations tend to be stratified and hierarchical in structure (Dunphy & Stace, 1990).

Given the evidence that Australian society is characterized by a class system based on wealth and materialism (Galvin & West, 1988; Mackay, 1993), this may not be very surprising.

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CONCLUSION

Results from the GLOBE study in respect of societal culture indicate that Australians see themselves as performance and future orientated, humane, and risk adverse; and also somewhat collectivist and gender egalitarian. The results also reveal that Australians do not see themselves as living in either a highly stratified or a collectivist society in the sense of In-group Collectivism. Nevertheless, Australians would ideally like to see a trend towards less stratification, more Gender Egalitarianism, more Performance Orientation, and more In-group Collectivism. Several themes emerge when discussing these results. Notably, the pervasive impact of the egalitarian myth in Australia seems to be often at odds with the reality as revealed in the GLOBE results. Overall, Australians are aware of the need for Australia to adapt to changing economic, cultural and social environments. Australia appears to be at the brink of change in many of these dimensions, and will need leaders and leadership to make this transition. In the following section, I discuss Australian leadership in the context of the GLOBE results.

4. Leadership

Current Australian research in leadership has been motivated by the realization that the country is poised to make some important choices about the future, both politically and economically. In 1995, the Australian Government

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sponsored a major report on leadership and management skills in Australian industry, led by industrialist David Karpin. The resulting report, officially entitled “The Report of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills”, is known colloquially as the “Karpin Report”. Although subsequently shelved by the Government, the report has nevertheless been described by Clegg and Gray (1996) as probably the world’s most comprehensive and recent analysis of leadership and management needs. Central to the report, and the research upon which it is based, is the message that Australia needs leaders with a vision for the future to give it an edge in the competition for the world’s market share (Sarros, Butchatsky, & Santora, 1996).

Contemporary Australian studies in leadership have identified both transformational and transactional leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978) as necessary elements in successful organizational development (see Irurita, 1996; Parry, 1996; Parry & Sarros, 1996). Nevertheless, the need for transformational leaders has received particular weight (Dunphy & Stace, 1990; Lewis, 1996), reflecting Karpin’s (1995) call for vision and future orientation. A few studies have indicated distinctive features of transformational leadership in Australia. For example, Sarros *et al.*, (1996) described a related concept, which they termed “breakthrough leadership”. This concept stresses innovation and vision, and was developed based on

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extensive interviews with Australia's top business leaders. The authors noted similarities between Australian executives and their peers in America, Britain, Asia, and Europe, but stressed key differences from the Asian approach to leadership.

Other research has specifically addressed the issue of intercultural differences in transformational leadership between Australian and other cultures. These include studies by Ashkanasy (1997), Parry and Sarros (1996), and Sarros (1992). This work has suggested that transformational leadership in Australia may be distinct from its American counterpart, based on the ubiquitous value placed on equality by Australians (Feather, 1994a, b). Ashkanasy, for example, concluded that, compared to Canadians, Australian leaders are achievement oriented and individualistic, but also value equality.

Studies discussing the distinctive elements of Australian transformational leadership are in the minority. The trend of most Australian studies is to retain variables that are prominent in international research, such as credibility, vision, charisma, communication, decisiveness, role modelling, team building, and collaboration (Parry, 1996). Much of the focus of this research has been on application in the Australian context of internationally grounded research, such as feminization (Clegg & Gray, 1996) and relational models of leadership (e.g., Ashkanasy & Weierter, 1996; Carless, Mann & Wearing, 1996; Gardiner, Callan & Terry, 1996).

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Outside the area of transformational leadership, Australian research has more strongly emphasized the unique aspects of Australian society relevant to perceptions and development of Australian leaders. Particularly important is the contribution of social psychologist Norman Feather's (1986, 1993, 1994a, b) work on Australian social phenomena, including the notion of the "tall poppy syndrome", defined as a propensity to denigrate high achievers in society. Feather's results suggest that the tall poppy syndrome is prevalent in Australian society, but is dependent on a number of contingency variables.

These include the leader's status (Feather, 1994a), perceived deservingness of the leader's achievements (Feather, 1994b, 1993; Feather, Volkmer & McKee, 1991), responsibility for the leader's fall (Feather, 1993, 1994a, b), and the personal characteristics of those making judgments (Feather, 1994a, b; Feather *et al.*, 1991).

Reflecting the pluralistic aspect of Australia, which features so prominently in current discussions on Australian society, Clegg and Gray (1996) challenge the translation of a strong organizational culture to a unified culture. They suggest instead that Australian leaders need to be able to capitalize on the diversity they have at hand, and that this will lead to innovation. In this case, Australia may have a unique opportunity to utilize its diversity to achieve the type of innovative leadership identified by Karpin (1995) as necessary for the success of Australian industry in the next century.

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Another theme in Australian leadership literature has been the perceived need for development of leadership skills. Karpin's report (1995) detailed education and training issues for managers and leaders. Other studies have looked at the role of self-learning and continuous learning in the development and maintenance of leadership skills (e.g., Dickinson, 1996). It has been noted that the degree of reform and change in public administration in Australia renders it essential that leaders continue to learn and update their skills and knowledge. The results of the national media analysis (see below) indicate that the need for reform is pervasive across Australian society.

In conclusion, while Australian leaders have been shown to exhibit some unique characteristics, especially a belief in equality, it is recognized that there is a need for visionary leadership if the nation is to make its way in the global arena (Karpin, 1995). One result of this has been the Australian interest in research based on American models of transformational leadership. A second stream of research has attempted to identify the uniquely Australian aspects of leadership. In particular, the opportunity available to Australian leaders to capitalize on the diversity of the society and to incorporate distinctive aspects of Australian culture, such as the need for equality, presents the key challenge for the future.

Two Eminent Leaders in Australian Society

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To illustrate some of the characteristics of leadership in the Australian context, I discuss below two post-WWII political leaders. These brief vignettes illustrate both the nature of Australian attitudes to leadership and, especially, present another example of the Australian Enigma.

Australia's history has several heroic figures, but not in the sense that other countries have heroes (Galvin & West, 1988). This is a part of the Australian enigma. The strong levelling tendency among Australians based on their egalitarian and meritocratic heritage has promoted a cynicism about promoting personalities to the status of heroes. Those who have become representative of this national identity, such as Ned Kelly and Peter Lalor,¹⁴ tended to be reviled during their lifetime and seen as anti-heroes. The exception lies in sporting heroes, such as Donald Bradman,¹⁵ for whom nationalism is allowed to surface.

Nonetheless, Australia's general reluctance to elevate individuals to heroic status is particularly manifested in the political arena. The cynicism

¹⁴ Kelly was a bandit ("bushranger") who achieved national hero status before his hanging in 1880. Lalor, the leader of the "Eureka Stockade" of 1854, Australia's only armed insurgency, later became a respected legislator.

¹⁵ Donald Bradman (1908-2001) was Australia's greatest cricketer during a playing career that stretched from 1929 to 1953. His batting average of 99.94 is considered so famous that "PO Box 9994" is the official post-office box number of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation!

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surrounding Australian politics has meant there are no recognizable presidential-style heroes and the most well-known politicians invariably invoke different feelings from different individuals. Politicians are nevertheless among the most influential leaders in Australian society and politics is the area of Australian life most replete with figures of national standing. Throughout Australian history, politics has been the arena for the conversion of statesmen to leaders (Galvin & West, 1988), and the party leader is now an integral part of the political system (Graetz & McAllister, 1994).

Two politicians who achieved close to heroic status in Australian history are Sir Robert Menzies and Robert (Bob) Hawke. Together, these leaders capture some of the anomalies that I argue underlie Australian society and they therefore make interesting study.

Sir Robert Menzies, (Prime Minister 1939-1941; 1949-1966) was Australia's longest serving leader. A self-made lawyer and political leader, he promoted nationalism and the collective use of the State for economic purposes (Thompson, 1994), and delivered prosperity and stability to Australia (Clarke, 1992). He was also an anglophile who loved luxury and leisure and was dedicated to the British Royal Family. His nationalism revolved around Australia as a colony and he was a fierce defender of its place in the British Commonwealth, rather than a man with great vision for its national future. He

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was a great orator, and sometimes managed to overturn the traditional two-party rivalry of the Australian system and persuade his opponents that his policies had merit (Galvin & West, 1988)

While Menzies preferred the “old school tie network” to being “one of the boys” (Thompson, 1994), Bob Hawke was the archetypal Australian male. Australia’s second longest serving Prime Minister (1983-1988), he promoted his drinking prowess,¹⁶ male chauvinism, sporting preferences, and union allegiances in a personification of Australian-ness. A populist throughout his term, he gained widespread personal support even while his policies and party were unpopular, and his contemporary popularity eclipses those of most leading figures in Australian history (Galvin & West, 1988). In contrast to Menzies, he had authoritarian tendencies and would often ignore the sensitivities of his party and embark on actions without consultation. How can one country have had two leaders so disparate and both have captured the public’s imagination and support (Thompson, 1994)? I see this as yet another indicator of the Australian Enigma; a manifestation of the fundamental contradictions in the “egalitarian” nation which values wealth, but has a disdain for deference and recognizes the need for every individual to find his or her own place in the world.

¹⁶ Hawke was listed for many years in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the world record holder for downing a “Yard” (2.5 pints) of beer.

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Australian Leadership: National Media Analysis

As a part of the process of understanding Australian leadership, an analysis was carried out of media reports on leadership during 1996 and 1997. The results of the media analysis are used to aid interpretation of the quantitative results from the GLOBE study as well as revealing other issues discussed here.

The content analyses are proposed to represent espoused values, an assumption supported by recent study of text analysis research (Kabanoff & Holt, 1996; Kabanoff, Waldersee & Cohen, 1995). An advantage of content analyses is it allows qualitative, indirect observations of organizational values to be combined with the quantification of the data (Kabanoff, 1993), maintaining the multi-method approach of the GLOBE project.

METHODOLOGY

Three collection periods were selected for the national media analysis - May 1996, October 1996, and May 1997. During each period, four print media sources were analyzed for articles pertaining to leadership. These were the national Australian newspaper (The Australian), the national financial newspaper (The Australian Financial Review), the most popular daily

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newspaper in the state of Queensland (*The Courier Mail*),¹⁷ and a major business magazine (*Business Review Weekly*). Leaders or leadership did not have to be explicitly labelled in the article, but direct reference of the article to either a person or general characteristic of Australian leadership was necessary. To ensure Australian leadership only was the subject of discussion in the articles, world news, other articles focusing on international events or character, and articles from foreign correspondents were excluded from the analysis. In total, 273 text extracts were selected. During the third collection period, two international raters also scanned the media for leadership references to obtain a measure of validity for the selection of articles.

Presented with the same newspapers, their inter-rater reliability was 84 per cent.

The words or phrases in the selected text extracts that pertained to leaders or leadership were Q-sorted by the two Australian researchers involved in the GLOBE project. A reference could be coded under more than one category if this was appropriate. Codings were then crosschecked by the two researchers to optimize validity. These codings were sorted initially into 17 GLOBE leadership dimensions. The remaining extracts were separately categorized

¹⁷ The author is based in Queensland.

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into dimensions of uniquely Australian leadership. In effect, these Australian dimensions emerged after controlling for the GLOBE categories.

The GLOBE leadership and Australian leadership models and coding for the text references were then entered into the Nud•ist® program for analysis.

This allows for the iterative building and expanding of models during the three separate collection periods. The program also has the capacity to include text selections, referenced at numerous nodes at once, which allows detailed analyses of content in subsequent research.

RESULTS OF THE MEDIA ANALYSIS

The results of the media analysis are presented in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 shows the frequency of references in respect of the seventeen GLOBE dimensions current at the time of the study.¹⁸ Table 3 lists the frequency of

¹⁸ Results are presented here in terms of the 17 leadership factors (or dimensions) that were current at the time of the media analysis. The final GLOBE publications refer, however, to 21 leadership factors. As the media analysis reported in this chapter was structured around the original 17-dimension model, I have retained this structure in this chapter. The differences between the 17 and 21-dimensions models make no difference to the conclusions that I reach. For reference, the final 21-dimension model differs from the 17-dimension model in a number of ways. Firstly, the “Malevolent”, “Conflict Inducer”, “Non-participative” dimensions have been added. Secondly “Procedural” has been replaced by “Administratively Competent”,

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reference according to the uniquely Australian dimensions (after removing the references based on the GLOBE dimensions). Discussion of these results is incorporated into the dimension-by-dimension results based on the qualitative GLOBE results.

Table 2: Leadership Results Comparing Rankings From Globe Survey And National Media Analysis

Leadership Dimension	Frequency of Coding^b	GLOBE Score	Within country Ranking^c	GLOBE Ranking^d
<i>Decisive</i>	73	6.02	5	18
<i>Performance Orientation</i>	58	6.35	3	10
<i>Diplomatic</i>	57	5.56	6	30
<i>Collaborative Team Oriented</i>	56	5.52	7	30
<i>Inspirational</i>	51	6.40	1	7
<i>Integrity</i>	46	6.36	2	12
<i>Visionary</i>	41	6.24	4	14
<i>Autocratic</i>	28	2.28	16	49
<i>Modesty</i>	25	5.09	11	29
<i>Humane</i>	25	5.12	10	15
<i>Face Saver</i>	24	2.67	15	36
<i>Autonomous</i>	23	3.95	12	25
<i>Procedural</i>	20	3.56	14	44
<i>Self-centered</i>	15	1.91	17	49

“Individualism” has been replaced by “Autonomous”, “Equanimity” has been replaced by “Modesty”, “Face Saving” has been replaced by “Face Saver”, “Humane Orientation” has been replaced by “Humane”, “Bureaucratic” has been replaced by “Procedural” and “Charismatic” has been replaced by “Self-Sacrificial”. Lastly, “Collective” has been split in to two dimensions “Collaborative Team-Oriented” and “Team Integrator”.

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<i>Self-sacrificial</i>	14	5.14	9	20
<i>Administratively Competent</i>	12	5.41	8	53
<i>Status-conscious</i>	8	3.82	13	44

Note.

^a Based on 17-factor model (see Footnote 18).

^b Frequency of coding in media analysis indicates that this dimension either exists or should exist.

^c Rank order of GLOBE variables within the Australian sample.

^d Rank position within the sample of 61 GLOBE countries.

Table 3: Uniquely Australian Leadership Dimensions from the National Media Analysis

Dimension	Frequency of Coding
<i>Game Metaphor</i>	12
<i>Mateship</i>	10
<i>Work Ethic</i>	7
<i>Caution</i>	5
<i>Adversarial</i>	5
<i>One of Us</i>	5
<i>Tall Poppy</i>	4
<i>Underdog</i>	4
<i>Pragmatic</i>	2

Australian Leadership: GLOBE Dimensions

The national-level results for perceptions of leadership in Australia from the GLOBE study are presented in Table 2, with the results of the media analysis

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in Column 2. The dimensions are presented in descending order of frequency of coding in the media analysis. The GLOBE survey Mean scores are given in the third column, with the order of each variable within the GLOBE dimensions listed in Column 4. This permits a direct comparison of the two sets of results. The final column in Table 2 shows Australia's ranking on each dimension relative to other countries involved in the GLOBE study. The results of the media analysis were used to aid interpretation of the quantitative results from the GLOBE study as well as to reveal other issues warranting discussion.

The national-level GLOBE results for leadership dimensions indicate that effective Australian leaders are seen to be inspirational, of high integrity and vision, as well as being decisive and performance oriented. They are not, however, seen to be self-centered, autocratic, procedural, or face saving. Compared to the scores across the other countries in the GLOBE study, Australian leaders rank high on inspiration, performance orientation, integrity, vision and humanity. They rank low on being autocratic, procedural, self-centered, administratively competent, and status-conscious. On the surface, this profile appears to be entirely consistent with the portraits of Australian leaders presented earlier, especially with the notion of Australia as a society that values egalitarianism. These characteristics were largely supported in the media analysis, which characterized Australian leaders as decisive,

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performance orientated, diplomatic, collaborative team-oriented, and inspirational. The media analysis also showed that Australian leaders are rarely described as procedural, self-centered, self-sacrificing, administratively competent, or status conscious.

There were some contradictory results evident in the media analyses that provide further insights into the Australian enigma. These are in respect to the dimensions of face-saving, autocratic leadership, and self-sacrificial. Face-saving and autocratic leadership scored low in the GLOBE survey results, but appeared as influential dimensions in the media analysis. By contrast, self-sacrifice scored high in the GLOBE results, but ranked low in the media analysis. An explanation for these contrary findings may once again be found in the enigmatic nature of Australian leaders. It is clear from the earlier discussion that Australians, consistent with their egalitarian image of “mateship”, try to avoid criticism and confrontation, and seek to downplay personal qualities. The stories presented in the media typically involve reports of these sorts of antagonistic situations. In this case, it is likely that Australian leaders represented in the media are displaying characteristics that they usually try to avoid. This was also clear from the anecdotal evidence provided in the interviews, where it was suggested that Australian leaders could become tough and aggressive if confrontation does occur. The high scores on decisiveness in both the GLOBE results and the media analysis also bear relevance here, as

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does the media analysis identification of a tendency towards male characteristics in leaders.

Another characteristic of Australian leaders was also apparent from a qualitative analysis of the media experts. This was a perception that, while many Australian leaders are visionary and inspirational, others seem to have reached their positions of eminence despite a lack of vision and inspirational qualities. One explanation for this result is that the vision of many Australian leaders may be focused on specific problems, rather than on long-term strategic issues. This was especially apparent in the interviews conducted for the present project, where there was agreement that Australian leaders often display vision and inspiration, but usually only do so in respect to short- to medium-term issues. This observation is given credence by Australia's impressive track record in research and development innovations, coupled with a failure in many instances to convert the new technologies into manufacturing success (Mackay, 1993). Similarly, the anecdotal evidence relates examples of leadership distinguished by innovative and often successful solutions to crises, rather than strategic thinking and prediction of future situations that would avoid the crises. Indeed, successful short-term remedies serve to reinforce the idea that leadership involves a focus on short- to medium-term solutions. This idea also links with the historically maintained

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characterization of Australia as a “lucky country” (Horne, 1965), where the notion of “she’ll be right” replaces long-term strategic vision.

In summary, the results of the GLOBE analysis supported by the national-level media analysis, present effective Australian leaders as people of integrity and vision, who are decisive with a strong performance orientation. They tend not to be status conscious, procedural, or self-centered. Some anomalies between the GLOBE results and the media analysis, however, suggest that Australian leaders can become more aggressive and face-saving in confrontational and crisis situations. Overall, Australian leadership appears to be consistent with the picture presented earlier of a society which values egalitarianism and “a fair go” for all, but that lacks a truly long-term future orientation. These themes are taken further in the following analysis of the uniquely Australian dimensions that emerged from the media analysis.

Uniquely Australian Dimensions of Leadership from the Media Analysis

The media analysis revealed nine dimensions of Australian leadership that could not be categorized using the GLOBE dimensions (Table 3). Although the frequencies of the Australian dimensions are not as high as the GLOBE dimensions, they indicate distinctly Australian aspects of leadership that are pervasive and referred to in the national media. For example, the four

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distinctive references to “tall poppies” are over and above those that relate to the syndrome, but can be categorized under the GLOBE dimension of modesty, such as equanimity and lack of pomposity.

The uniquely Australian dimensions break down into three categories: (1) dimensions linked with the traditional Australian concepts of ‘mateship’ and egalitarianism; (2) dimensions linked with leadership and the new work ethic; and (3) dimensions which have surfaced in response to contemporary issues in Australian political leadership.

TRADITIONAL AUSTRALIAN THEMES

Four of the unique characteristics can be linked back to the underlying theme of egalitarianism in Australian society: “mateship”, “one of us”, “tall poppies”, and leaders as “underdogs”.

This dimension can be conceived as the quintessential expression of egalitarianism (Ashkanasy & O’Connor, 1997; Thompson, 1994), and has already been discussed as an underlying characteristic of Australian societal culture.

This dimension is a more general phrase for the more traditional symbol of Australian culture “just one of the boys”, first used in Capper’s (1853) (cited in Thompson, 1994). Its importance to modern leaders is highlighted by Thompson (p. 2): “It has such potency that some of those in positions of

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enormous economic or political power still affect its trappings, drawing on a wellspring of legitimacy not usually available to them”. Bob Hawke’s leadership was an outstanding example of this trait. Some examples of the phrases in the media analysis database are as follows:

- *People are soothed by her (a noted female public figure) limitations, reassured by her inability to articulate. Not for her, the language used by a Prime Minister at the dispatch box. She speaks, instead, from the laundry, the kitchen, the barbecue.*
- *The boy (another well known public figure) ... is the man credited with what one colleague describes as “an uncanny sense of what the punters think.*

The extracts coded as indicative of the tall poppy syndrome reflect the deeply rooted nature of this phenomenon, identified by Feather (1994a) and other researchers. The syndrome is often moderated by other Australian characteristics, and reinforces the enigma of Australian leadership. Mackay (1993), for example, has noted that Australians do not necessarily dislike success, and only demonstrate the “tall poppy” syndrome when success is accompanied by arrogance and any inherent implication of superiority. Finally, Australians have had a traditional tendency to support the weaker party, especially when that party represents their own position and aspirations (Thompson, 1994). Leaders of the “underdogs” are traditionally seen to

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display the characteristics of integrity and forbearance that Australians admire and respect (Mackay, 1993).

WORK ETHIC

Since the 1970's, unemployment has been a perennial problem in the Australian economy. The unemployed are reviled in the press as "dole bludgers".¹⁹ This negative attitude has become further reinforced with the ongoing breakdown of family life and redefinition of gender roles, so that work has become more important to most people (Mackay, 1993).

Nevertheless, the harsh reality of structural unemployment has also meant that the traditional source of identity, dignity, structure and purpose for many people's lives has been taken away. Against this background, leaders are seen to have a special responsibility to address the issue of work (or the lack of it). The specific references in the media excerpts make it clear that this is now an important role of Australian leaders.

CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN LEADERSHIP

¹⁹ The term "dole bludger" is derived from "dole", a reference to the doling out of welfare payments; and "bludger", a Cockney term for "pimp".

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Finally, and tied together as a group, are themes in Australian leadership that are related to contemporary political life. These include the concepts of pragmatic, cautious, and adversarial leadership, and political “game-playing”. These aspects of Australian leadership have received media attention under the general rubric of public disenchantment with the lack of distinguishable political philosophies in recent years (Mackay, 1993). In particular, the pragmatic nature of Australian politics appears to have overtaken an ideological basis to such an extent that Mackay, in his analysis of Australian society, coined this “the era of pragmatics politics”. It is an era where leadership has more to do with management and reaction to events than with vision, conviction, or deeply rooted philosophies. In addition, pragmatic politics appears often to be an end attained through political game-playing by Australia’s leaders. In the media analysis, these features of Australian leadership appeared over and above the GLOBE dimensions. Examples of text excerpts from the media analysis are:

- *The pendulum has swung late and decisively from radical reform to (a) blend of clever caution, but the pragmatic politics of the Prime Minister’s tariff plan are nonetheless positive.*
- *Closely connected to pragmatic politics is gamesmanship and game playing, expressed as game metaphors in the national and regional press.*

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A further dimension emergent from the media analysis was the adversarial nature of Australian leadership, expressed in public verbal abuse, and the aggressive nature of interpersonal relationships. This behavior is distinct from the GLOBE dimension of decisiveness, which was identifiable in references to terms such as “tough stand” and “fortitude”. The adversarial nature of Australian leadership was evident in terms like “attack”, “fight”, and “vicious tirade”.

A caveat to this interpretation is that these comments resulted from a general awakening that politics ought to be more than game playing and pragmatism. Australians are instead expressing the need for debate about ideals, convictions and policies, hoping that this will reflect real emotional and intellectual resources in the leaders who are going to lead Australia at this time of rapid and widespread change (Mackay, 1993). While there is an admission that the adversarial nature of politics is born of the two-party system, the blurring of the parties’ political philosophies has removed this legitimacy, so that Australians appear now to attribute aggressive leadership to the personality of the individual leaders, rather than to the system itself.

This need for more vision and integrity from Australia’s leaders is not a mass movement (Mackay, 1993), and the quantitative results from the GLOBE study on dimensions such as future orientation indicate that many respondents are equivocal. Nevertheless, the national media analysis, through the definition

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of the Australian leadership dimensions of caution, pragmatism, game metaphor, and adversarial, attests to the earlier discussion of a lack of long-term vision and conviction within Australian society. Fortunately, the results also reflect the Australian enigma. They attest to a general recognition that Australian leaders are still capable of vision and integrity. The issue is whether they will use these qualities in guiding the nation in this age of change.

5. Industry Level Analysis

The two Australian industries involved in the project were telecommunications and finance. Both these industries are integral to the Australian economy: finance is the single largest sector in the Australian economy and telecommunications is one of the fastest growing sectors.²⁰ Moreover, both industries provide services upon which so much of business in general depends, and they are interdependent. For example, the financial sector is heavily reliant on an efficient, sophisticated telecommunications network. The importance of these industry sectors to Australian business is one reason why they are particularly worthy of study. In addition, they were ideal for inclusion in the GLOBE project because both have undergone substantial and fundamental changes in the last decade, and their response to

²⁰ Source: *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia*, 1996. World English Edition.

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these changes provide insights into contemporary Australian culture. Both industries have also been through substantial restructuring in the latter part of the twentieth century, sometimes led by powerful expatriate Chief Executive Officers (see Blount, Joss & Mair, 1999).

Discussion of the backgrounds of the industries, and the results obtained both through the GLOBE study and subsequent explanatory research appears in the following sections. As with the societal analysis, the two foci of the GLOBE study, culture and leadership, are discussed separately, supplemented by the data from interviews with industry experts and an analysis of industry text media.

Telecommunications Industry

For decades, telecommunications services in Australia have been provided by a government monopoly. Although telecommunications had seen significant changes, such as the separation of telecommunications and postal activities in 1975, it is only in the 1990s that the industry has seen truly fundamental changes. Firstly, in 1989, the regulatory power was taken away from the telecommunications carrier (then Telecom, now named Telstra) and given to an independent body, the Australian Telecommunications Authority. In 1991, Telecom and the Australian international carrier, OTC, merged. Then, in 1992, the monopoly held by Telstra in its various forms since the beginning of the

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century was broken, and Optus, an Australian-American-British consortium became a new competitor in the field. Deregulation was fully realized in 1998 with the entry of more competitors. There is, however, general optimism regarding the future of Telstra and its new competitors, especially regarding the role of Australia as the leading telecommunications center in the Asia-Pacific region.²¹

Although no longer the sole national provider, Telstra is still currently Australia's only full service telecommunications provider. Traditionally tied to the government, and operating in many ways like a public service, Telstra has undergone a series of transitions to render it more similar to a private enterprise organization (see Blount *et al.*, 1999). Large-scale restructuring to centralize the organization and to downsize has, however, led to much unease within the organization. The downsizing is expected to pare down the corporation to half its 1996 administrative staff complement of 26,000 (Bromby, 1996). In its present state, Telstra is a corporation with an independent board and has recently been privatized and listed as a public company with a highly successful 30 per cent sell off.²² Since then, Telstra shares have sagged after two public share floats, but Telstra management remains optimistic about its long-term future (Telstra, 2000).

²¹ It should be noted, however, that the present analysis was carried out in 1996-1997.

²² The present study was conducted one year before the share market listing and sell-off.

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As part of the deregulation of the industry, Telstra is operating under competition policies put in place and monitored through a regulatory body, the Australian Communications Authority. The justification for these regulations has centered on the need to identify the level of competition needed for the industry and how this can be achieved or maintained (Fels, 1997). Fels has noted that, in many ways, Telstra is much further ahead than other industries in Australia, offering full access, while others do not even have laws pertaining to such access.

Despite the new competitors, Telstra is generally expected to remain the major telecommunications carrier in Australia (Bromby, 1995; Chow, 1997).

Currently, Telstra is the largest integrated telecommunications carrier in the Asia Pacific, and is already Australia's largest listed company. Telstra has expressed the goal of being a major driving force in regional and global telecommunications and is eager to leverage the multi-cultural make-up of modern Australia to help achieve that goal.

The second telecommunications carrier in Australia, founded in 1992, is Optus. Optus has introduced several major technological innovations and has had considerable impact in the areas of pay TV and the international call market (Bromby, 1995). Optus, and other operators such as AAPT, have only recently entered the local call market.

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There are good indications that Australia's telecommunications industry will continue to expand its influence as a dynamic sector of the economy. First, Australia's expertise in designing, implementing, and managing telecommunications networks in the Asia Pacific region have made it a significant telecommunications center. Second, Australia offers leading-edge technology coupled with a sophisticated domestic market and a broad range of engineering skills. It has a very strong base in communications and Information Technology (IT) support firms, with the second largest IT market in the region, seven times larger than either Singapore's or Hong Kong's (Chow, 1997). It can be expected, therefore, that there will be considerable interest from potential international competitors who wish to enter a strong market. Such transformations, however, are bound to affect the state and culture of the telecommunications industry.

Results

The above discussion provides a context within which the quantitative results from the GLOBE project can be viewed for the Australian telecommunications industry. The telecommunications industry culture results appear in Table 4. These results were interpreted with the aid of key individuals from the telecommunications industry. Two experts from the industry were presented with the results and asked to discuss each of the dimensions separately. The

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focus of this section is on Telstra because this was the primary area of expertise for the interviewers and, given the size and dominance of Telstra, the Australian industry is still critically tied to the fortunes of the national carrier (Eason, 1995).

Table 4: Telecommunications Industry Results For The Nine Cultural Dimensions With Rankings For Australia Compared To The Scores Of 29 Countries

Dimension	“As is”		“Should be”		Difference Score ^c
	Score ^a	Rank ^b	Score ^a	Rank ^b	
<i>Performance Orientation</i>	4.04	22	6.42	5	2.38
<i>Uncertainty Avoidance</i>	3.76	23	3.64	23	-0.12
<i>Future Orientation</i>	4.18	22	5.52	17	1.34
<i>Humane Orientation</i>	4.08	24	5.17	12	1.09
<i>Institutional Collectivism</i>	3.97	24	4.53	26	0.56
<i>In-group Collectivism</i>	4.10	26	5.81	16	1.71
<i>Gender Egalitarianism</i>	2.77	21	5.34	4	2.57
<i>Assertiveness</i>	3.86	18	3.80	21	-0.06
<i>Power Distance</i>	4.52	7	3.25	23	1.27

Note.

N = 4 organisations

^a Items were rated on a Likert type scale from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high).

^b Ranks are out of the 30 countries that provided data for the telecommunications industry in the GLOBE study.

^c Difference is “Should be”-score minus “As is”-score.

The industry level culture results for the Australian telecommunications industry from the GLOBE study appear in Table 4. These results include

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Australia's ranking on each of the three assessments: "As Is", "Should Be", and the difference between these measures. Table 5 describes the telecommunications industry leadership results in conjunction with results from a media analysis of the 1996 Annual Reports from the four telecommunications organizations included in the study. Kabanoff (1993) has shown that Annual Reports provide an appropriate source for measuring the espoused organizational values, although only some sections of the reports were relevant for the present study of leadership. These results have therefore been presented together with the measures of perceived leadership in the telecommunications industry obtained by GLOBE. Researchers coded 102 relevant text extractions.

Table 5: Globe Study Leadership And Media Analysis Results For Telecommunications Industry ^A

Leadership Dimension	Percentage of Coding ^b	GLOBE Score	Variable Ranking ^c	GLOBE Ranking ^d
<i>Performance Orientation</i>	28	6.31	3	=6
<i>Visionary</i>	15	6.29	4	6
<i>Collaborative Team-Oriented</i>	10	5.64	6	=10
<i>Decisive</i>	10	5.96	5	=11
<i>Administratively Competent</i>	7	5.42	8	24
<i>Integrity</i>	7	6.54	1	3
<i>Humane</i>	5	5.22	10	7
<i>Autocratic</i>	5	2.11	16	24
<i>Diplomatic</i>	4	5.57	7	=14
<i>Inspirational</i>	4	6.43	2	2
<i>Procedural</i>	1	3.39	14	22

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<i>Autonomous</i>	1	3.99	12	=14
<i>Modesty</i>	1	5.27	9	11
<i>Face Saver</i>	1	2.43	15	24
<i>Self-centered</i>	1	1.75	17	=27
<i>Status-conscious</i>	0	3.46	13	25
<i>Self-sacrificial</i>	0	4.86	11	=23

Note.

^a Based on 17-factor model (see Footnote 18).

^b Frequency of coding in media analysis indicates that this dimension either exists or should exist.

^c Rank order of GLOBE variables within the Australian sample.

^d Rank position within the sample of 30 GLOBE countries that provided data for the telecommunications industry.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY CULTURE

The GLOBE results show that the Australian telecommunications industry respondents value a performance orientation, but see it as not being achieved at the current time. These results need to be taken in the context of the massive restructuring of the primary telecommunications corporation, Telstra, and the consequent job insecurity of many employees. Further, most workers in the telecommunications industry have continually changing portfolios, and are working long hours. As a result, they feel unable to place a high priority on performance orientation.

The industry experts commented that this effect might also be a result of complacency. In particular, Telstra is expected to profit from deregulation in the long term (Bromby, 1996). Thus, a short-term effect of deregulation has been to enable Telstra to exploit the new flexibility in the industry, and to

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dominate at all quarters. Such dominance does little to promote a need to perform beyond current levels.

The rating of both the existing and the desired measures of uncertainty avoidance are low in the Australian telecommunications industry. Indeed, there seems general satisfaction with the levels of uncertainty avoidance. This may in part reflect the limitations under which the primary telecommunications carrier is operating. Regulatory bodies also restrict the room for risk taking in the current telecommunications industry in Australia, and any business dealings are constrained by the rules of fair competition (see Standing Committee on Industry, Science, and Technology, 1997). The distinction between regulated and non-regulated aspects requires that these components remain segregated and further reduce potential for change.

The restraint may be in some respect alleviated with the deregulation of the industry and privatization of Telstra. So long as Telstra's shares remained 100 per cent government-owned, the leeway for the organization to take risks with uncertain outcomes remained limited.

The telecommunications industry in Australia is largely event driven, with little implementation of planning in areas other than finance or marketing.

This lack of planning is evident in GLOBE results for current future orientation and the desire expressed for more future orientation. The recent introduction of competition to the market has encouraged more "product

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planning” and business plans stretch into the next year. Despite this, size, politics, and novelty of the present industry environment all contribute to render planning less effective than might otherwise be expected. The high perceived levels for future orientation might be recognition of the very real prospects for capitalizing upon an ever-changing market and technology. In particular, the convergence of technologies (combination of computers, telecommunications, and broadcasting) and broadband services indicates that Australia could be following the example of America and European countries and developing strategic approaches to capture the potential of this market (Wilson, 1995). In addition, the likelihood is that deregulation of the industry will see considerable international competition from international alliances and mergers which will need to be met with anticipation by Australian carriers (Eason, 1995). Indeed, part of the rationale for deregulation itself lies in the need for future orientation; that is, that telecommunications reform was necessary to prepare the national industry for participation in increasingly competitive global markets.

While the pattern of humane orientation is behind what is felt to be ideal, it is still relatively high. This result contradicts the generally expressed belief in the industry that competition has had the effect of substituting a community focus with economic considerations. Telstra started to centralize its operations before deregulation (Blount et al., 1999), and the result has been increasing

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distance between head office and the places where the work is carried out. Cost cutting was the stated rationale for centralization, but it may well have resulted in the marginalization of consumer interests (Goggin, 1995). Wilson (1995) has suggested that the competitive nature of the current regulations is reducing the community basis of the industry. He cites the need for better service to country areas, and for affordability measures to assist people on low incomes.

Given the strong union culture of the telecommunications industry (see Blount et al., 1999), it is somewhat surprising that Australia does not rank higher on this dimension. A possible explanation may be that, through the process of constant structural change that has taken place in the telecommunications industry over the past twenty years, members no longer see societal collective values as important (see also Wilson, 1995). Remembering that the GLOBE respondents were middle managers, these values are likely to be reinforced. Telecommunications employees believe that their organizations ought to be more loyal than they are currently. As with many industries, telecommunications firms appear to espouse team values (see media analysis), but direct the majority of their performance reward mechanisms to performance at the individual level. The atmosphere of change and large scale restructuring may also have fostered an “individual-over-team” focus. This

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may therefore have undermined group loyalty because of the number of individual jobs under threat.

With regard to the industry and the community, there are two opposing views.

One is that the corporatization of the industry has removed the community focus of Telstra. A second, however, is that competition will, or at least should, serve to increase efficiency and the sharing of these savings between the producers of the service and the Australian consumers (Lee, 1995; Wilkinson, 1995). The Australian telecommunications industry has traditionally been a male dominated culture, with a strong engineering, technical background. The results from the quantitative GLOBE study indicate that respondents see the need for more gender equality. While women's career progression is recognized in the industry, the culture remains based on assertive, tough behavior. Indeed, the anecdotal evidence from the industry experts interviewed suggests that female leaders in the industry need to be tougher, and even more aggressive, than their male counterparts to succeed. This reliance on tough and assertive behavior therefore appears to be continually reinforced, with the current leader role models fitting the industry's traditional roles.

Consistent with the society-level results, Australians view their Assertiveness levels to be close to their ideal. The telecommunications industry is broadly representative of this. Interestingly, Australians in this industry score

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relatively highly in comparison to other countries on “As Is”, but much lower than the others in terms of “Should Be”. This result, however, may be what one could expect, given the highly unionized nature of the industry (especially at the time this analysis was done), where Australian values of “mateship” and “one of the boys” is especially evident (see Blount et al., 1999).

The perceived stratification in the telecommunications industry is high, and is seen to be higher than desirable. It seems that restructuring may not only be affecting collectivism but also power distance. This is particularly so in view of the difference between those with knowledge of impending changes and those without. In addition, the threat to the jobs of executive employees may render the imbalance even more accented; fear may induce managers to demand more of those who work underneath them.

LEADERSHIP IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

It is clear from the GLOBE survey results that leadership in the telecommunications industry is a derivative of societal-level attitudes. Effective leaders are seen to be inspirational, of high integrity and vision, decisive, and performance oriented. Effective leaders in the telecommunications industry, on the other hand, are not seen to be self-centered, autocratic, procedural, or face saving. These findings are reflected in the media analysis, although the inspirational dimension is notable for its low

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ranking. Overall, the leadership results for the telecommunications industry reflect the cultural emphasis on achievement discussed earlier.

As noted above, inspirational leadership ranks incongruously low in the media analysis. Further, the dimension of self-sacrifice ranked low in the GLOBE survey results and did not rate a mention in the media analysis. This is consistent with the national media analysis, and reinforces the view of the traditional Australian value of egalitarianism. Thus, while approval of self-sacrifice is evident at the societal level (self-sacrifice scored relatively high in the societal-level GLOBE results), it appears this leadership trait is not valued at the organizational level.

Conclusion

The picture emergent from the analysis of the Australian telecommunications industry is consistent with the analysis of societal culture values reported earlier in this chapter, and reflects the underlying themes of Australian culture. In particular, the results reinforce the inherent contradictions within the culture. The telecommunications industry is undergoing an intense and seemingly unending process of change, which is reflected in a short-term future orientation and an emphasis on achievement. As a result, effective leaders in the telecommunications industry are seen to be performance oriented and decisive (e.g., see Blount et al., 1999). At the same time,

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however, they need to be diplomatic rather than self-sacrificing. In effect, they need to be inspirational, without being seen to put themselves ahead of their fellow employees.

Finance Industry

The finance system in Australia is largely accounted for by the banking system, incorporating government-owned and private commercial banks, savings banks, and special-purpose banking institutions. Building societies, trustee companies, credit unions, insurance companies, and merchant banks represent other sections of the finance system.

Before 1980, the finance industry had been relatively stable, with the notable exception of the successful fight against nationalization of the banking system after WWII (Singh, 1991). In the last fifteen years, however, there have been considerable changes implemented which have altered forever the face of the Australian finance industry. First, in 1983, amidst an environment inclined towards deregulation, the AUD was floated. In 1985, there were four main banks, operating under the supervision and regulation of the Reserve Bank of Australia. Then, corresponding with deregulation in the total finance industry, the Federal Government issued 16 banking licenses, instead of the expected six. Consequently, the late 1980s saw a huge growth in employment and

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competition, riding the wave of an economic boom accompanied by rising inflation.

In the retail market, the effect of the competition rendered banks more competitive. Recently, the trend has been for building societies to convert to banks and the market share of non-bank institutions is becoming smaller. The four main banks (the “four pillars”, see Willetts, 1999) continue to dominate the market and have actually prospered from deregulation (Singh, 1991). The international banks which have attempted to establish retail arms in Australia have generally had limited success. In wholesale banking, new entrants had a notable and lasting impact, especially in corporate lending, in money markets, and in foreign exchange operations.²³ Today, the wholesale banking industry in Australia is sophisticated and competitive despite the relatively small size of the Australian market.

The late 1980s and early 1990s, however, was a generally difficult period for the finance industry. All banks suffered especially because of large loans issued to entrepreneurs and their ventures, which frequently failed during the recession. In response, the finance industry has downsized strenuously (Singh, 1991). In recent years, the Australian economy has recovered and stabilized, yet the finance industry remains very competitive. Margins have continued to

²³ Source: 1996 Annual Report of the National Australia Bank

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fall, new entrants have kept competition fierce, and the trend has been for greater investment in technology rather than people.

Results

The industry level culture results for the Australian finance industry, as measured by the GLOBE survey, appear in Table 6. Following is an interpretation of these results based on interviews with two experts from the Australian finance industry. These experts from financial institutions were presented with the results by dimensions and asked to discuss their interpretations of the figures, given their knowledge of the industry, for each dimension in turn. In addition, the researchers used information from the interviews conducted by Singh (1991) in his book: The finance industry leadership results (Table 7) appear together with information gathered through a media analysis of the annual reports from key finance industries.

Table 6: Finance Industry Results For The Nine Cultural Dimensions With Rankings For Australia Compared To The Scores Of 52 Countries

Dimension	“As is”		“Should be”		Difference Score ^c
	Score ^a	Rank ^b	Score ^a	Rank ^b	
<i>Performance Orientation</i>	4.59	26	6.23	16	1.64
<i>Uncertainty Avoidance</i>	4.03	39	4.49	29	0.46
<i>Future Orientation</i>	4.54	33	5.76	21	1.22
<i>Humane Orientation</i>	4.71	14	4.91	27	0.20
<i>Institutional Collectivism</i>	4.41	12	4.57	41	0.16

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<i>In-group Collectivism</i>	4.36	44	5.75	30	1.39
<i>Gender Egalitarianism</i>	3.28	26	5.03	10	1.75
<i>Assertiveness</i>	3.92	29	3.84	28	-0.08
<i>Power Distance</i>	4.20	19	3.45	34	-0.75

Note.

N = 14 organisations

^a Items were rated on a Likert type scale from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high).

^b Ranks are out of the 53 countries that provided data for the finance industry in the GLOBE study.

Table 7: Globe Study Leadership And Media Analysis Results For The Australian Finance Industry ^A

Leadership Dimension	Percentage of Coding ^b	GLOBE Score	Variable Ranking ^c	GLOBE Ranking ^d
<i>Collaborative Team Oriented</i>	26	5.49	7	=25
<i>Performance Orientation</i>	16	6.28	3	=13
<i>Diplomatic</i>	13	5.48	8	27
<i>Administratively Competent</i>	10	5.54	6	39
<i>Integrity</i>	9	6.30	2	=18
<i>Humane</i>	8	5.17	9	11
<i>Visionary</i>	6	6.13	4	=26
<i>Inspirational</i>	5	6.35	1	18
<i>Procedural</i>	4	3.83	13	43
<i>Status-conscious</i>	1	4.07	12	32
<i>Autonomous</i>	1	3.71	14	36
<i>Autocratic</i>	1	2.19	16	=41
<i>Decisive</i>	0	5.91	5	=28
<i>Modesty</i>	0	5.09	10	27
<i>Self-sacrificial</i>	0	4.88	11	33
<i>Face Saver</i>	0	2.59	15	33
<i>Self-centered</i>	0	2.02	17	=28

Note.

^a Based on 17-factor model (see Footnote 18).

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^b Frequency of coding in media analysis indicates that this dimension either exists or should exist.

^c Rank order of GLOBE variables within the Australian sample.

^d Rank position within the sample of 53 GLOBE countries that provided data for the telecommunications industry.

The media analysis was conducted by analyzing the 1996 Annual Reports of ten finance companies for references to leadership. Represented in the analyses are the four main national banks, smaller banks, insurance bodies and building societies. As was the case for the telecommunications industry analysis, the reports largely focused on descriptions of contributions made by various employees or board members to the companies, the codes of conduct expected of the board and leaders, and details of leadership schemes being undertaken. There were only limited sections of the annual reports that were relevant for study. Again, however, I argue that Annual Reports provide a useful index of espoused values, and has been shown to be applicable in the specific instance of the banking industry (see Kabanoff, 1993). These results have been presented together with the measures of perceived leadership in the finance industry obtained by GLOBE. Table 7 shows the results from this analysis. The researchers made 129 codings.

FINANCE INDUSTRY CULTURE

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The GLOBE survey results indicate that the Australian finance industry is achievement oriented, but would like to be considerably more so. Part of the explanation for such an emphasis on performance may lie in the nature of the finance discipline: profit oriented and capitalistic in ideology, the structure of the finance industry clearly necessitates a performance orientation.

The competitive nature of the finance industry may also contribute to its perceived performance orientation. With so many of the features of financial institutions, such as interest rates, being tightly controlled and regulated, the scope for attracting customers is necessarily limited and must rest on individuals performing optimally in their work capacity. Performance of individuals may thus be the only way to differentiate between financial institutions that cannot offer substantially different corporate performance. Finally, the extent of finance industry regulation may also serve to explain why an even higher level of performance is desired. Controls would tend to limit the scope for high performance of individuals within institutions, and employees may feel dissatisfaction with this restriction on their aspirations. The results on uncertainty avoidance for the Australian finance industry are particularly interesting. The pattern here contrasts with that of telecommunications industry and society; finance industry respondents expressed a desire for a more conservative environment. This may reflect the national perception that banking should be a safe industry. This perception in

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turn is reinforced by the general practice of Australian banks, differing from international trends, to profit from the interest and fees transactions generate rather than to speculate on the market. When the State Bank of Victoria collapsed in 1990, indicating that banks are not guaranteed to be safe, the effect was felt throughout the smaller banks, with customers migrating to the “four pillars”. Risk-taking is therefore not a part of the banking culture in Australia, nor is risk-taking perceived to be desired (see also Singh, 1991). The finance industry results indicate that the future orientation of this industry is perceived to be higher than either that of the Australian telecommunications industry or of society in general. The ideal ratings for future orientation maintain this pattern.

One distinctive feature of the finance industry is that, at an industry level, it is constrained by the economic cycle; there is always the fear that the next financial downturn will lead to organizational failure. Future orientation therefore is an inevitable and necessary component of the industry.

Another factor affecting future orientation in the finance industry is the increasing emphasis placed on technology, rather than personnel. The experts interviewed expressed the commonly held industry belief that the future of finance lies in optimizing technology.

The humane orientation results from GLOBE indicate that the present level is perceived to be similar to the desired level of humane orientation. Historically,

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the finance sector in Australia has had a very public, caring face (Mackay, 1993). The network has an unusual rural penetration, born from its growth during the goldfields in the 1850s and the opening of wheat lands in the 1860s (Singh, 1991). The rural focus gave banks a service orientation towards the Australian community similar to that recounted by Telstra employees. One effect of the competitive environment of deregulation, however, has been to make personal relationships between institutions and customers less important in the name of survival. With deregulation, the caring face of banks is less evident than is the drive for service and more market share. Customers of Australian banks envision a future with fewer big banks, becoming increasingly centralized and less personal, with a developing market for the small and medium sized banks to establish personal relationships and service (Mackay).

Rather surprisingly, Australians in the finance sector score relatively highly on this dimension. This is compensated for, however, by the finding that the “As Is” score is almost the same as the “Should Be” score. As I have argued previously, this variable is consistent with the union-based nature of Australian industry and the strong element of welfarism in the Australian economy (see Mackay, 1993). In the banking sector, the union element remains relatively strong, despite restructuring (see Blount et al., 1999; Singh, 1991).

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The finance industry appears to be replicating the pattern of the telecommunications and societal results for in-group collectivism. More collectivist than individualistic at present, the ideal appears nonetheless to be that the industry becomes more collectivist in orientation.

The qualitative results indicate that the finance industry operates predominantly on a team basis, both within and between institutions. The latter is particularly distinctive for the finance industry, because banks can own other banks, and the larger banks often support building societies.

Furthermore, the introduction of technology has tended to increase collaboration between banks irrespective of competition, because of the need to use the same technological infrastructure (Singh, 1991). The needs of the industry therefore can override achievements of individual enterprises.

Contrary to this impetus for a group orientation, however, are two matters already discussed. The first of these is the reward for individual performance within the institutions. The second is the effect of deregulation and competition, which is acting to de-emphasize relationships in the banking world. As Singh (1991, p. 76) relates, banks are “competing for business rather than following old loyalties; once the corporates [sic] learnt to play the game equally well, they would go for where they got the best price and the best service”. This conflict may in part explain the perceived wish for more collectivism than is presently practiced. A 1992 report on the Australian

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banking market concluded that, as a direct result of deregulation, Australians view their banking system as aggressive and commercial, in marked contrast to the community view which survived through the mid-80s (Mackay, 1993)

The gender egalitarianism results from GLOBE suggest that the finance industry is characterized by a medium level of emphasis on stereotypically male characteristics, but would like to see much more gender equality.

Although the industry is largely male dominated in the upper echelons of management, it is probable that the pervasive impact of technology would have contributed to mute a strong male emphasis. Technology has brought an increased emphasis on collaboration and communication, especially within the information technology area itself (Clegg & Gray, 1996).

As was the case for the telecommunications industry, the assertiveness result mirrors the societal culture results, in that the finance respondents are generally happy with their level of assertiveness, although it appears that assertiveness is valued slightly more in this industry sector. Consistent with Singh's (1991) observations, finance industry respondents in Australia take a generally aggressive approach, more so than in other industries.

The finance industry is traditionally replete with hierarchical institutions, so it is not surprising that the GLOBE results show a perception that Power Distance is higher than it should be. This ties in with the predominance of references to The Board and executives in the annual reports used in the media

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analysis. It is also notable that the level of reported ideal power distance is higher than in the telecommunications industry, and the societal results. Possibly, the high level of regulation necessitates, to some degree, a hierarchical management structure, and this is therefore seen as more appropriate than in other sections of Australian society. As automation becomes increasingly a part of banking, it appears that banks will centralize and the authority and power of local branches decrease (Mackay, 1993).

LEADERSHIP IN THE FINANCE INDUSTRY

The results in respect of leadership in the finance sector, as for the telecommunications industry, reflect the societal results. Effective leaders are seen to be inspirational, of high integrity and vision, decisive, and performance oriented (see Blount et al., 1999). Effective leaders, on the other hand, are not seen to be self-centered, autocratic, autonomous, or face-saving. These findings are reflected in the media analysis, with the exception that the Annual Reports place the most emphasis on collaborative team orientation, reflecting the values discussed above. In this respect, the finance industry in Australia appears to be following the trends, discussed earlier, towards a participatory team approach to management.

An interesting aspect of the finance industry leadership results is the relatively low ranking of the Australian scores compared to other countries participating

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in the GLOBE study, with the possible exception of performance orientation, humane, integrity and inspiration. This is consistent with the results from the telecommunications industry, where the Australian scores on dimensions such as integrity and inspirational were among the highest. This consistency with the telecommunications industry is further supported in respect of the self-sacrificial dimension, which ranked low in the GLOBE survey results and did not rate a mention in the finance media analysis. This provides additional evidence that overtly expressed self-sacrifice is not a desirable trait in Australian leaders.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the analysis that the finance industry is somewhat different from the telecommunications industry, and provides an interesting contrast. The organizational cultures expressed in the two industries reflect this difference. Employees in both industry sectors are experiencing a continuing high rate of change, but there appears to be a much higher level of acceptance of the status quo in the finance industry. The evidence from observers such as Singh (1991) suggests that this may arise from the high level of regulation in the industry, which lowers aspirations. Another factor is that the finance industry is subject to the vagaries of the economic cycle, which promotes a lower level of risk-taking.

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Finally, the leadership results reflect once more the underlying cultural characteristics of Australians, but at the same time suggest that the current trend toward higher levels of collectivism are having an effect. This was particularly evident in the finance industry media analysis, where, in contrast to the telecommunications industry results, collaborative team-oriented views appeared in more than a quarter of the text excerpts.

Summary of industry results

One of the primary hypotheses of the GLOBE project is that leadership is reflected in implicit theories, which are embedded in national culture. My analysis of the Australian telecommunications and finance industries provides support for this proposition. The patterns of cultural practices and beliefs that were evident from the analysis of societal culture and leadership were evident in the industry studies. This is despite the differences between the two industry sectors, which are subject to markedly different environmental pressures (see Blount et al., 1999).

The results also reinforce the underlying themes of Australian culture, discussed earlier in this chapter. In particular, Australian leaders need to be performance oriented in a society which values achievement, but at the same time need to do so in a manner which does not set them too far apart from their fellow organizational members. Being seen to stand out from peers, for

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example, was consistently ranked one of the least desirable characteristics of Australian industry leaders. It seems that the need for leaders to “perform” is at odds with the need for them to appear to be “one of the boys”.²⁴ In particular, leaders who are seen to over perform are likely to find themselves in the position of the “tall poppy”, ready to be cut down.

Finally, the industry level results reinforce the idea of an “Australian enigma”. Australian leaders must aim high, but not be “seen” to do so. They must be inspirational, but not too self-sacrificial. They must be humane, but still prepared to make the hard decisions if required. They must be recognized as leaders, but still be seen to be “one of us”. Overall, it seems that successful leadership in Australia is far from easy to achieve.

6. Conclusions

The title of this chapter is *The Australian Enigma*. This was deemed appropriate because Australia turns out to be a land of contradiction and paradox. It is a vast and mostly empty land, where most of the population lives in a small number of large urban centers. It is a country with a catch cry of “a

²⁴ I have deliberately used “boys” here. The evidence from interviews with industry experts was consistent in making the point that, to be successful, female leaders needed also to be seen as “one of the boys”.

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fair go”, but with a record of discrimination and exclusion that is anything but fair. Australians see themselves as the embodiment of the egalitarian society, but at the same time, according to social commentators such as Mackay (1993), they crave wealth and success. Australians are proud of their egalitarian culture, but at the same time also value rewards for high achievers. Its leaders are expected to inspire high levels of performance, but must do so without giving the impression of self-sacrifice or of not being anything more than “one of the boys”. Australians are inventive and expect their leaders to show visionary qualities, but seem to have little conception of anything more than a short- to medium-term future.

In this chapter, I have presented evidence for these seemingly contradictory qualities, and attempted to provide some understanding of their origins.

Australia is a young country, but with an eventful history. Many of the reasons for the enigmatic qualities can be traced in Australian history, starting with the original convict settlements. In particular, Australia has been influenced by successive waves of immigrants who have shaped a diverse society, which is only now beginning to deal with many of its more fundamental issues, including relationships with its aboriginal population, its British/Irish heritage, its role as a political refuge, and its place in the Asia/Pacific region.

Nevertheless, Australia is an advanced industrialized nation, with a well-entrenched work ethic.

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Results from the GLOBE survey have shown that Australians value performance orientation, future orientation, a humane orientation, and uncertainty avoidance, but would like their society to be less stratified and collective. Australians also see their leaders as being achievement orientated, visionary, and inspirational.

Some of the more interesting results of the present study were produced in the national media analysis. While most characteristics of Australian leaders matched the GLOBE dimensions, some anomalies provided additional insights into Australian leadership. In particular, a number of uniquely Australian leadership qualities appeared. Some of these are related to contemporary events and the new work ethic, but others appeared to relate to the underlying Australian value of egalitarianism. I called these traits “mateship”, “one of us”, “tall poppy”, and “underdog”. These traits also appeared to underpin many of the findings of the industry-based part of the present study. These findings offer interesting potential for future research. Indeed, Meng, Ashkanasy, and Härtel (2003) found, in a follow-up study, that “tall poppy” attitudes directly affect the application of American value-based leadership theory in Australia. Additional research along these lines holds potential to understand further the role of unique cultural values and attitudes on leadership and management in Australia.

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Finally, I note that this research has some important limitations. The sample of respondents was limited, only two industries were surveyed, and the research was done as a cross-sectional study. Indeed, the world, and Australia in particular, is experiencing a state of rapid change, so that the conclusions presented in this chapter must be taken in the context of the world as it was in the late 1990's – prior to the Asian financial crisis, the “Tech Wreck” of the later 1990's, the events that followed September 2001, and the subsequent political and economic upheavals. Nonetheless, the consistencies of the industry representative interviews and the media analysis with the results of the survey data, give confidence that the results are broadly representative of Australian cultural values and leadership.

To conclude, it appears that effective leadership within the context of the Australian culture may be especially difficult. The principal implication for managerial practice emerging from the study is that Australian leaders must balance the competing demands of egalitarianism and achievement, and at the same time appear to be “one of the boys”. In addition, and as Parry (2001) has also noted, Australian leaders emphasize integrity and consideration for followers while at the same time rejecting American-style grand charisma. The further primary concern for Australian managers is a need to develop a truly long-term future orientation; in a changing world where Australia is yet to find its place, this may yet prove to be the most difficult challenge.

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