

Bat wars

Can flying-fox human conflict be resolved through education and values theory?

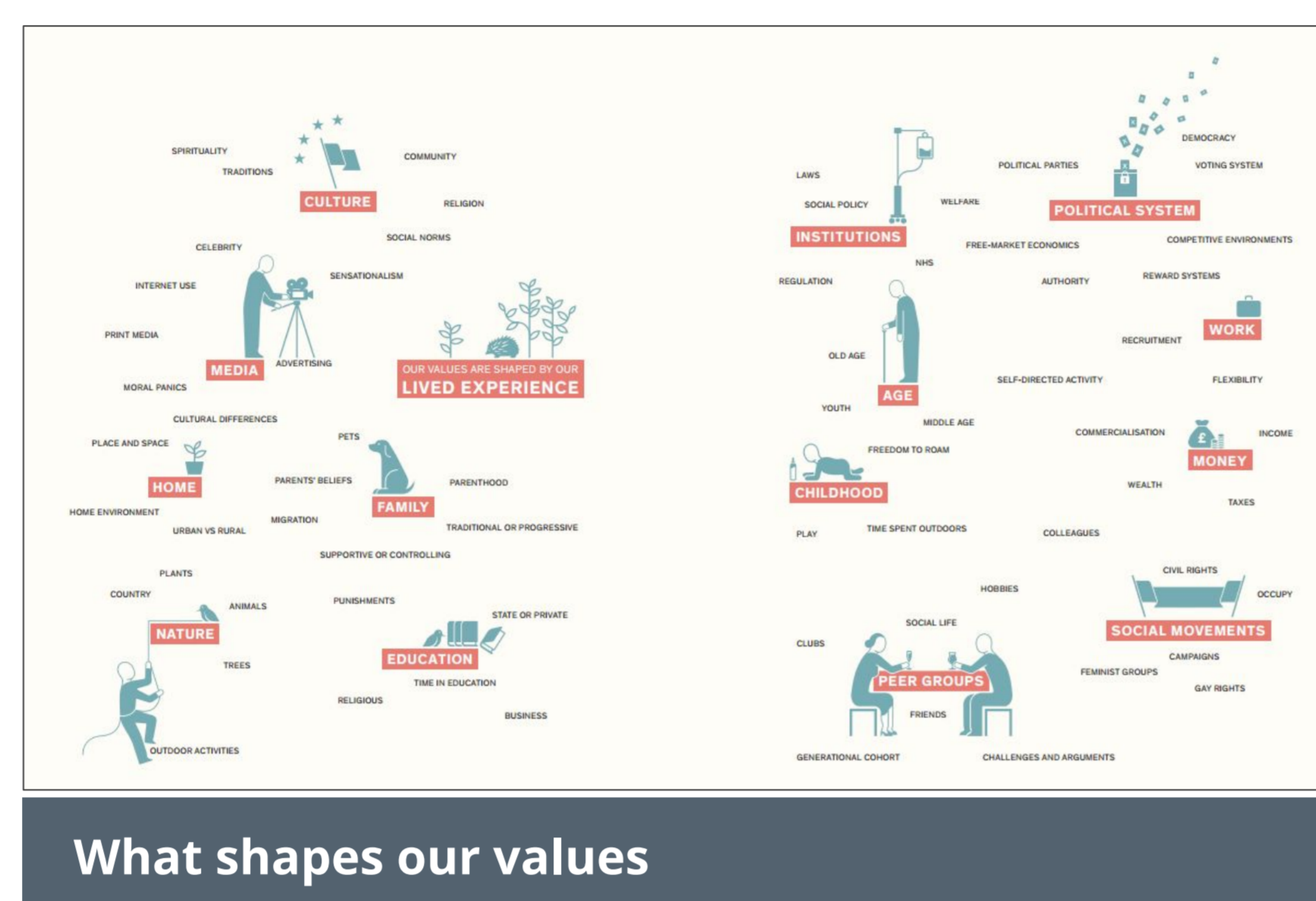
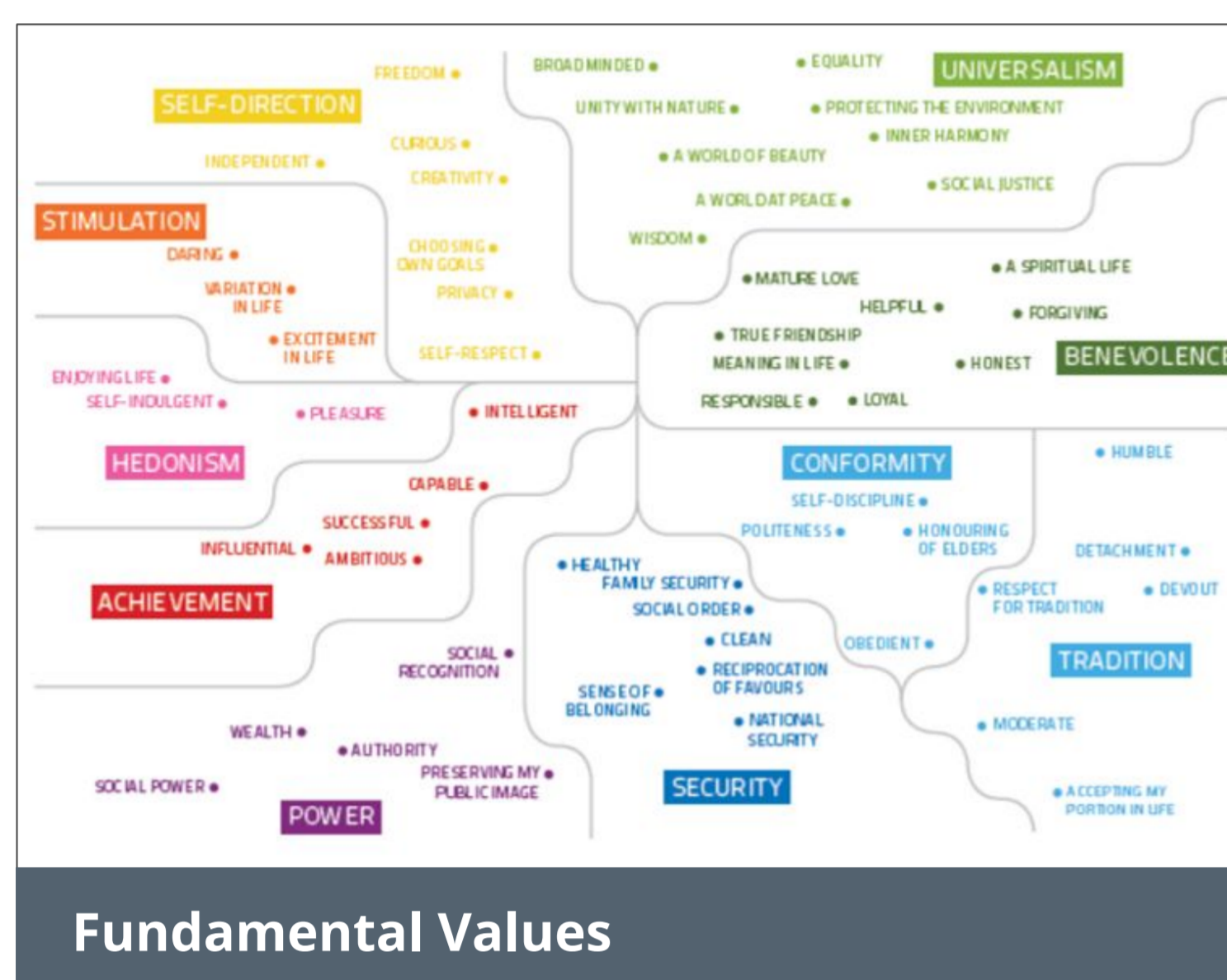
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Flying-fox - human conflict in Australia has existed since the first Europeans planted orchards. While education is essential in changing attitudes provision of ecological information alone will not resolve conflict. Our fundamental values to life guide our attitudes to wildlife. An understanding of values theory can assist with education strategies about flying-foxes.

Understanding values



Social scientists have identified 60 cross-cultural universal values, divided into ten major groups. Each of us holds every value but to varying degrees. These fundamental values guide our beliefs and attitudes including how we view wildlife. www.commoncause.org.au

Our values are shaped by our culture, social norms, and our lived experience. While values are slow to change and small in number, our beliefs and attitudes are more numerous, closer to our conscious thoughts and easier to change. Framing messages to engage particular values is important in achieving attitudinal change.

Anthropocentric / eco-centric
➤ Utititarian - wildlife as useful to humans
➤ Naturalistic – valuing wildlife as part of nature
➤ Ecologicist / Scientific – wildlife valued for own sake
➤ Aesthetic/Symbolic – valued for beauty and symbolic characteristics
➤ Humanistic – affection for animals
➤ Moralistic – duty to care for wildlife
➤ Dominionistic – right to control wildlife
➤ Negativistic – fear or indifference to wildlife

from Kellert 1996

Characteristic	Group	Likely effectiveness of education	Priority for education
Attitude towards flying-foxes	Positive	improve knowledge only	Low
	Ambivalent	Potential to change attitudes	High
	Negative	Limited	Medium
Potential for bat conservation influence	Decision makers- eg Government	Very important	High
	Influential – eg industry bodies, media	Important	High
	Directly impacted – eg orchardists and residents near camps	Important	High
	Not impacted – general public	Important to build support for bat conservation	Medium

adapted from Booth 2007 (unpubl)

Wildlife value orientations

Attitudes to wildlife may be influenced by engaging values of universalism or benevolence to create empathy. With deeply held views change may be generational, making it particularly important to educate children about flying-foxes.

Potential of education to change attitudes

Wildlife value orientations can be used to predict the effectiveness of education on different sectors of the community.

My research focuses on assessing the effectiveness of education and interpretive programs in influencing attitudes to flying-foxes and thus reducing conflict.

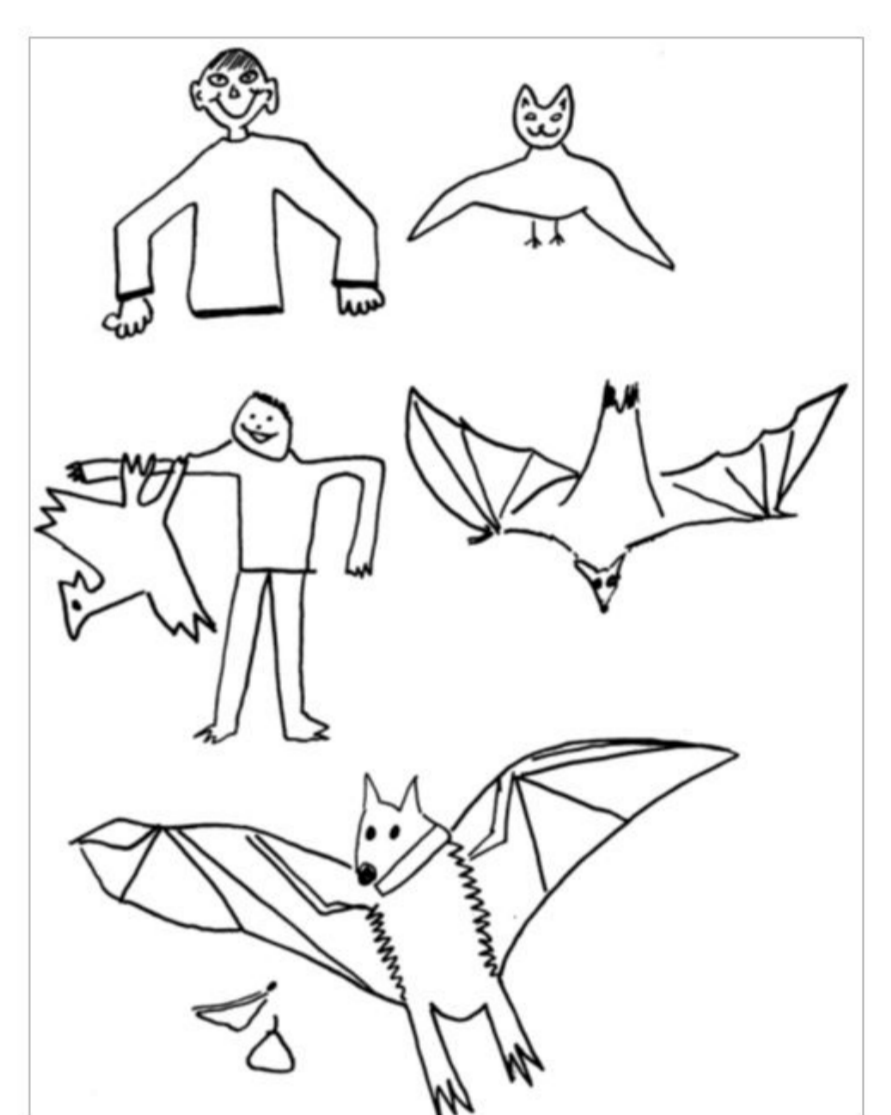
Education quasi-experiments

Before



From Ford 2002

After



Research questions

- How do people who live in or visit Australia value flying-foxes? (National survey)
- Which components of education plans influence attitudes (Quasi-experiments, survey, semi-structured interviews)
 - In formal education at schools?
 - Does pre-education influence attitudes and knowledge retention?
 - How does learning about flying-foxes in the school curriculum compare to a visit to schools by a bat group or an excursion to a wildlife park / flying-fox camp to see bats?
 - In public interpretation programs such as Australasian Bat Night?
 - In education strategies for communities living near flying-fox camps?
 - Does meeting a flying-fox up close affect attitudes?

