

WILL LEARNING SOCIAL INCLUSION ASSIST RURAL NETWORKS?

Jillian Marchant

James Cook University

jillian.marchant@my.jcu.edu.au

ABSTRACT

Current research on social networks in some rural communities reports continuing demise despite efforts to build resilient communities. Several factors are identified as contributing to social decline including globalisation and rural social characteristics. Particular rural social characteristics, such as strong social bonds among members of rural communities may not extend to those deemed as "outsiders": thus restricting the information and skills afforded by extended social networks. It is predicted that rural communities may fail unless they are able to renew existing social structures to more socially inclusion arrangements. It is proposed that better social inclusion of individuals will supply novel solutions to innovate rural communities.

Globalisation intensifies the demands on social networks, leading to the rearrangement of social institutions in rural communities. Rapid rearrangement of rural institutions impacts the wellbeing of rural people and threatens rural futures. The viability goals of rural communities are proposed to be linked to social concepts, such as liveability and sustainability. It is anticipated that viability challenges may be partly met through social strategies, such as social inclusion, which expand the social networks of rural communities.

Australian government initiatives such as the National Social Inclusion Principles are intended to curb growing inequity between people and regions. Contemporary social inclusion initiatives focussed on social participation are discussed. Somewhat in contrast to a social participation focus, education is forwarded as reliably associated with a range of positive social outcomes. Literacy education is argued to be the basis of positive outcomes in both self-realisation and social achievement. Suggestions are made for the role of further research involving contributions from adult rural literacy students. It is anticipated that this outlook will allow an examination of social strategies, which benefit individuals and community networks.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

This paper will explore an understanding of social networks in Australian rural areas. The influence of social policy on these social networks is significant for both individuals and their communities. Understanding the salience of government social inclusion policy on rural social networks is reliant on an appreciation of the social institutions and social characteristics of rural communities. This review will include an account of the impact of global economic and social changes on traditional rural social institutions, the influence and benefits a rural community has in relation to society, a review of current social policy, and the possibilities in adult education to meet contemporary social challenges. More specifically, the review will examine the opportunities for social inclusion afforded by adult education. To begin with, there is a discussion of social inclusion and social exclusion philosophies. The following explanation of theoretical concepts intends to offer a way of understanding the social structures, which contribute to the social experience of individuals.

Figueroa (2000), Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker (2006) and Neal and Neal (2010) claim that social inclusion in current policies, arises from traditional European philosophical ideas about a society based on liberty and equality. Figueroa (2000) and Neal and Neal (2010) maintain that at the foundation of a society instituted in these European liberal democratic principles is the promotion of individual interests and will through voluntary interactions. Lowndes et al. (2006), Casey (2008), Bevir (1999), Figueroa (2000) and Neal and Neal (2010) assert that voluntary interactions among individuals form complex socially networked activities or social institutions.

Foa (2008), Lowndes et al. (2006) and Macadam, Drinan, Inall, and McKenzie (2004) claim that social institutions are a mechanism of social order, which shape new social interactions according to existing social arrangements. Foa (2008), Lowndes et al. (2006) and Macadam et al. (2004) propose that social institutions have a social purpose and permanence with clear boundary rules that transcend the lives and intentions of individuals. Foa (2008) and Lowndes et al. (2006) conclude that social institutions make the rules that govern cooperative human behaviour in social networks.

Foa (2008) and Lowndes et al. (2006) categorise social institutions as either formal, or informal social institutions. Macadam et al. (2004), Gray and Lawrence (2001b) and Worthington and Dollery (2008) describe a range of formal social institutions, including monitoring and regulatory bodies at local, state, national or international levels and societal organisations. Societal organisations may include government, private sector companies, education facilities and third sector representations such as non-profit organisations. Community organisations, which represent formal social institutions, may thus be local business, service, and sporting, educational and cultural organisations.

Harriss (2002) argues that complex interactions between individuals and formal social institutions create a set of social rules, termed informal social institutions. Researchers such as Ostrom and Ahn (2003), Macadam et al. (2004), Lowndes et al. (2006) and Wenger (2000) state that informal social institutions are generated in ways that are shaped by local mindsets and values. Ostrom and Ahn (2003), Macadam et al. (2004), Lowndes et al. (2006) and Wenger (2000) assert that informal social institutions may be also known as the social customs of a community. They propose that informal social institutions underpin social interactions, perpetuating current social arrangements in communities.

PRECURSORS TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Casey (2008), Bevir (1999), Figueroa (2000) and Neal and Neal (2010) argue that voluntary social interactions may include an exchange of resources among individuals to maintain or advance their social position. Figueroa (2000) and Neal and Neal (2010) claim that exchanges may endow individuals with differing amounts of assets. Figueroa (2000) and Neal and Neal (2010) assert in a liberal democratic society, differing assets between individuals or economic inequity powers social inequity. They conclude that economic inequity compromises the cultural and political resources of an individual and can lead to social disadvantage.

Terms such as “socially disadvantaged” and suffering “social inequity” or “poverty” are currently discussed as “socially exclusion”. The Australian Government (2009b), Pierson (2001) and Beall and Piron (2005) state that the concept of social exclusion, intends to encompass the multidimensional forces that contribute to social inequity. The Australian Government (2008b), Headey (2006), Figueroa (2000) and Laidlaw Foundation (2002) claim that the causative forces of social exclusion may be divided into social, political and economic constituents. Australian Government (2008b), Headey (2006), Figueroa (2000) and Laidlaw Foundation (2002) assert that a combination of exclusion forces vigorously restricts the ability of an individual to respond to opportunities. Figure 1 displays the dynamic relationship between social, political or economic contributors to social exclusion as reported by Australian Government (2009b), Suckling, Ryan, and Dent (2009), Wilson (2005) and Beall and Piron (2005).

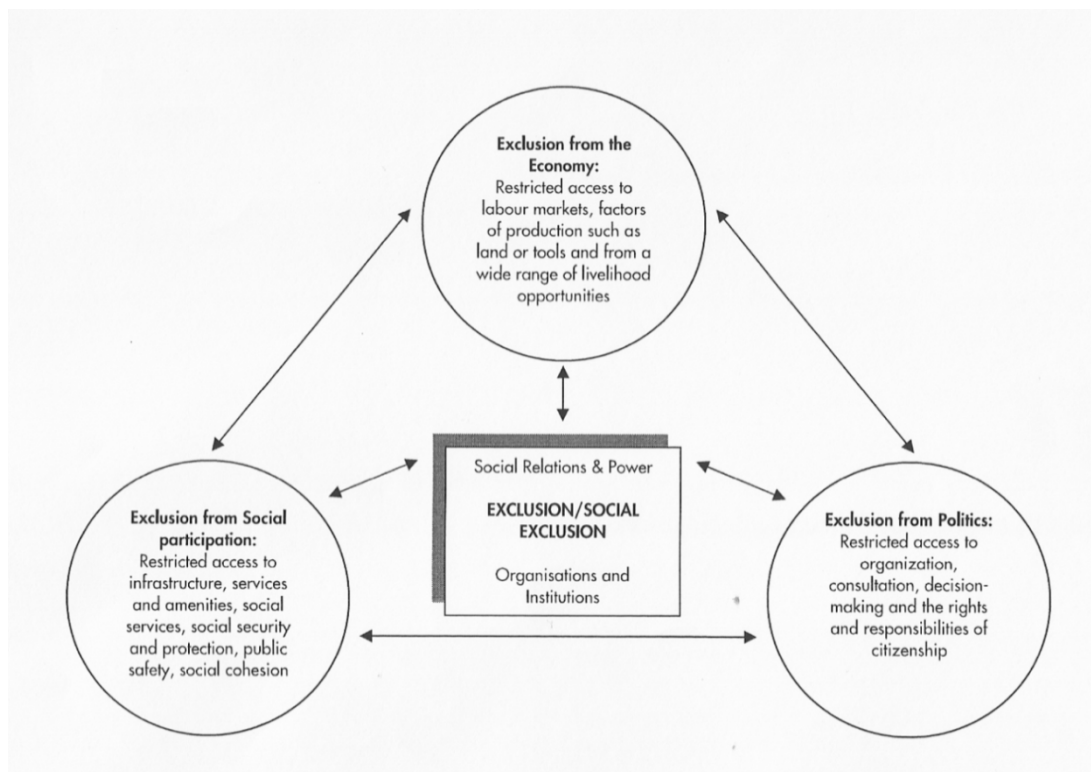


Figure 1: Dynamics of Social Exclusion

Note: Reprinted from, DFID Social Exclusion Review, Beall, J., & Piron, L. (2005). London, UK: Department for International Development. Reprinted with permission.

The Australian Government (2009b) and Good Gingrich (2008) acknowledges that the forces contributing to social exclusion are primarily a consequence of low-income, attributed to unemployment or low paid employment. The Australian Government (2009b) and Good Gingrich (2008) consequently argue that other recognisable exclusion forces include illiteracy and low levels of education or qualifications; poor health; discrimination; social isolation; alienation from political participation and; localities that are marked by extreme social disadvantage. Walter and Siggers (2007) and Crossley (2003) show that social exclusion also impacts aspects of living not easily named or measured, such as quality of life, social cohesion, family, autonomy and opportunities for future prosperity.

Edwards, Armstrong, and Miller (2001) asserts that the primary perceived benefit of using social exclusion theory is the acknowledgement of dynamics that contribute to future exclusion events. Accordingly, social exclusion explains the proposition by - Australian Government (2009b), Suckling et al. (2009) and Wilson (2005), that social exclusion is pervasive; permeating current life circumstances and continuing on to the next generation. Edwards et al. (2001) caution that despite its usefulness in identifying causes, social exclusion theory may not encapsulate the complex nature of deprivation that leads to social inequity. Edwards et al. (2001) argue that social exclusion theory is nonetheless useful in explaining the persistence of deprived living conditions of some individuals and groups.

This explanation shows how a foundation of voluntary interactions gives rise to social institutions. Social institutions of a formal and informal nature, govern socially networked activities in a manner, which reproduces similar existing social arrangements. Resource exchanges within social networks may allow resource inequity thereby perpetuating social inequity. Economic inequity contributes to dynamic cultural and political restrictions, leading to the social exclusion of individuals. Social exclusion theory recognises a combination of causative forces impedes the response of individuals to opportunities. This explanation is a beginning to make sense of the social arrangements that lead to social exclusion.

RURAL SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

An explanation of social arrangements found across rural areas provides a framework for understanding some social characteristics found within rural communities. It also leads to an understanding of how social arrangements are generated and perpetuated in rural areas. Social similarities contributing to social arrangement in rural areas include access to social benefits and the structure of social capital. Exploring these social characteristics offers a way of understanding the social experiences of rural inhabitants.

Ashwood (2010), Halfacree (1993), Langille et al. (2008), Mormont, Marsden, Lowe, and Whatmore (1990) and Woods (2005) propose that the term "rural" encompasses the concepts associated with a social system located outside of Australian capital cities. Pruitt (2009), Jessop, Brenner, and Jones (2008) and Mormont et al. (1990) distinguish that "rural" may therefore include isolation - distance from metropolitan areas, space between individuals, and smaller community populations. Lawson (2007) conclude that the term "rural" may therefore be a descriptor of the social implications of combining a social system with geographical elements.

Bell (2008), Halfacree (1993), Holdsworth and Hartman (2009), Jones (1995) and Pruitt (2009) propose that social features are unique to each rural community: however, some broad social characteristics of rural communities may be similar. Alexander (2005), Brooks (2008), Onyx and Bullen (2000) and Gray and Lawrence (2001a) argue that similar social characteristics across rural areas are isolation and smaller populations, providing fewer people to inform decisions or initiate actions. Onyx and Bullen (2000) and Gray and Lawrence (2001a) assert that this circumstance prompts greater interactions between people to sustain a community and results in higher amounts of social involvement by individuals.

Onyx and Bullen (2000) and Stone and Hughes (2001) show that fewer inhabitants maintaining a community builds more trust, or bonding social capital, between community members. Onyx and Bullen (2000) and Stone and Hughes (2001) state that a community based on this type of bounded solidarity is at the expense of bridging social capital or trust of "outsiders". They argue that the consequence is a disproportionate amount of bonding social capital in relation to bridging social capital in rural communities.

Alexander (2005), Gray and Lawrence (2001a), Pini (2006), Stone and Hughes (2001) and Onyx and Bullen (2000) argue that more bonding social capital does not necessarily lead to more inclusion of social diversity within a community. In contrast, more bonding social capital supports long held community norms by tolerating less individual agency in social arrangements (Onyx & Bullen, 2000; Pini, 2006; Stone & Hughes, 2001). Onyx and Bullen (2000) and Stone and Hughes (2001) propose that strong bonding social capital assists the perpetuation of community social arrangements.

Alexander (2005), Derkzen, Bock, and Wiskerke (2009), Gray and Lawrence (2001a) and Pini (2006) argue that there is the possibility of considerable social inequity, despite strong ties among individuals in a rural community. Alexander (2005), Bourdieu (1986), Casey (2008), Loxton (2005), Gray and Lawrence (2001a) and Wilson (2005) assert that inequity in a rural community is established by, and persists through a range of social features such as length of family tenure and the standing attached to a family name, or family wealth.

Alexander (2005), Derkzen et al. (2009), Gray and Lawrence (2001a) and Pini (2006) argue that the privileged or elite in a rural community determine the entitlement, allocation, and timing of resources. They reveal that the community members who influence and benefit most from community decisions are therefore more likely to be privileged. Lowndes et al. (2006), Onyx, Edwards, and Bullen (2007), Ostrom (2000) and Wilson (2005) claim that by limiting access to resources, this arrangement restricts the social involvement of less powerful individuals in Australian rural communities.

Onyx and Bullen (2000), Stone and Hughes (2001) and Brooks (2007) propose that social arrangements leading to social exclusion of community members are detrimental to rural development. They argue that a lack of acceptance and inclusion of social diversity severely restricts innovative rural development. Furthermore, it is claimed that the viable development of rural communities is

dependent on innovative resources from social arrangements. Onyx and Bullen (2000), Stone and Hughes (2001), Brooks (2007), Cheshire and Lawrence (2005), Derkzen et al. (2009), Herbert-Cheshire (2000) and Gray and Lawrence (2001a) argue that without the enhancements provided by inclusive social arrangements, a community cannot be sustained or developed. In a dire warning, Gray and Lawrence (2001a) predict that rural communities will fail unless they can revitalise social arrangements.

This framework acknowledges that a combination of geographic and social elements contributes to a particular set of social characteristics found across the rural areas of Australia. The social arrangements in rural areas maintain the social isolation of community from outside influences alongside the social exclusion of less privileged community members. Social exclusion may be prolonged through privileged control of community decisions, resources and benefits. A lack of inclusion of residents and “outsiders” is argued to ill-prepare communities for development by restricting innovation to meet development challenges. This section contributes to an understanding of how informal social arrangements contribute to social exclusion. An understanding of social aspects of communities in rural areas suggests a more socially inclusive approach may be of assistance in securing rural futures.

CONTEMPORARY RURAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In attempts to secure community viability, Australian rural areas require assistance to face contemporary challenges. Integral to these challenges are the associated concerns raised by globalisation including social, cultural, political and economic concerns. An explanation of the consequences of the global movement for rural areas provides an understanding of how entire communities may become excluded from society. This understanding anticipates increasing awareness of the significance of social aspirations for the future of rural areas. To begin with, viability challenges and opportunities in rural areas are presented.

Alston (2002), Bellamy and Brown (2009) and Gray and Lawrence (2001a) claim that the current viability challenges in rural communities are to remain economically productive, be socially feasible, and practice ecologically sustainable production. Bellamy and Brown (2009), Ling, Hanna, and Dale (2009) and Lockie, Lawrence, and Cheshire (2006) argue that there is an opportunity to meet viability challenges by exploring processes leading to successful integration of two interrelated concepts: liveability and sustainability. Bellamy and Brown (2009), Brook Lyndhurst Ltd (2004) and Ling et al. (2009) propose that these concepts are both strongly linked to social processes.

First, according to Bellamy and Brown (2009), Brook Lyndhurst Ltd (2004) and Lockie et al. (2006) is liveability, encompassing a wide range of issues such as “quality of life”, “wellbeing” and “life satisfaction”. Bellamy and Brown (2009) and Lockie et al. (2006) claim that liveability is an integral component of sustainability, consisting of the economic, social and health needs of the entire community. Second, according to Brook Lyndhurst Ltd (2004), Morrison and Lane (2006) and Wild River (2005) is community sustainability emphasising the interconnectedness of environmental, economic and social dimensions, which need urgent address, presently and in provision for the future. They conclude that viability in rural communities is reliant on seeking social strategies, which will enhance liveability and sustainability.

Tonts (2000) proposes that many rural communities are using social resources – such as local knowledge, skills and ingenuity, to meet development challenges. Amin (1999) and Smith, Moran, and Seemann (2008) assert that the benefits of this imaginative local development will be brief, unless communities become resilient to changing external circumstances. Furthermore, Amin (1999) claims that truly viable settlements achieve resilience to outside changes through a wide connection with other regions. Amin (1999) maintains that the connection between the regions of Australia remains the responsibility of government.

Beer, Clower, Houghtow, and Maude (2005), Argent (2005), Herbert-Cheshire (2000) and Simpson, Wood, and Daws (2003) state that the Australia Government has foregone responsibility for connection of the regions, instead embracing governing at a distance to achieve rural growth.

Governing at a distance, according to Beer et al. (2005), Argent (2005), Herbert-Cheshire (2000) and Simpson et al. (2003) devolves the responsibilities of development to local communities.

Marsh (2005), Worthington and Dollery (2008) Argent (2005) and Herbert-Cheshire (2000) argue a capricious turn of events to test governing at a distance, is globalisation. Bell, Lloyd, and Vatovec (2010), Gray and Lawrence (2001a), McCarthy (2007) and Woods (2007) claim that globalisation includes an increase in connectedness of people across the world, reduction in importance of nation states, and a global marketplace. Bohle (2006), Gray and Lawrence (2001a) and Tonts (2000) argue that globalisation accelerates economic, political and social development influencing reorganisation at national, regional and local levels.

Gray and Lawrence (2001a) and Sklair (2007) state that the new economic strategy to provide a medium for globalised exchanges is transnational capital. Gray and Lawrence (2001a) and Sklair (2007) describe transnational capital as a rising reliance on market forces as the pre-eminent form of global transactions. The almost universal adoption of transnational capital according to Gray and Lawrence (2001a) and Sklair (2007), is to compete in a globalised market. They argue that a globalised market also creates pressure on nation states to adopt extensive internal policies embedded in market ideals. Alston (2002), Bellamy and Brown (2009), Gray and Lawrence (2001a), Langille et al. (2008) and Marsh (2005) identify that the result is that many contemporary Australian policies are now grounded in market principles.

Alston (2002), Bellamy and Brown (2009), Gray and Lawrence (2001a), Langille et al. (2008) and Marsh (2005) assert that an ideological perspective that supports minimal state involvement in market forces is termed neoliberalism. Pritchard (2005) extrapolate that neoliberalism utilises market forces as the most appropriate guiding principle for resource allocation and coordination of products and services. Researchers such as Balfour, Mitchell, and Moletsane (2008), Bell et al. (2010), Bellamy and Brown (2009), Cloke, Marsden, and Mooney (2006), Halfacree (1993), Lawson (2007), McIntyre-Mills (2006), Pruitt (2009) and Woods (2007) propose there are wide-ranging consequences of neoliberalism, particularly for rural communities and their members.

Good Gingrich (2008) and Averis (2008) claim that neoliberalism has created two distinctive economies across the globe based on geographical determinations. First, in rural areas are productivist economies, which are based on manual labour, and second, in metropolitan locales, are knowledge economies, which produce technological development as an economic means (Averis, 2008 ; Good Gingrich, 2008). This split into divided production economies across the globe, according to Good Gingrich (2008) and Averis (2008) has inspired income polarisation resulting in poor rural and rich metropolitan areas. They propose this split in economies has contributed to poverty and exclusion of rural areas.

In specific terms for communities in rural Australia, Pritchard (2005), Alston (2002), Bellamy and Brown (2009) and Gray and Lawrence (2001a) claim that neoliberalism has instigated a shift away from mechanisms that compensate rural inhabitants for the inherent inequities associated with rural living. They propose that these mechanisms previously strived to better equity between metropolitan and rural areas. Tonts (2000), Australian Government (2008b), Alston (2004) and Pritchard and McManus (2000) argue that neoliberalism has heralded a significant reduction in compensation for inherent inequities, leading to social demise and deterioration of rural communities.

Research since the mid-1990s by Gray and Lawrence (2001b), Hoggart and Paniagua (2001), Woods (2007) and McCarthy (2007) argue that Australian rural communities continue to undergo momentous changes. They propose that these changes have been instigated by rural areas being repositioned from a sense of isolation from the world, to part of the global countryside. Gray and Lawrence (2001a) assert that the repositioning effects of globalisation profoundly affect local development strategies. They further propose that development strategies to keep pace need to be wide-ranging to cover the demand for accelerated development and innovative reorganisation of rural institutions. Alston (2002), Gray (2004), Gray and Lawrence (2001a), Marsh (2005) and McCarthy (2007) claim that most rural areas and institutions have been ill equipped to formulate strategies to withstand the enormity and rapidity associated with globalisation and have thus fallen into a state of disorder.

Alston (2002), Australian Government (2008b), Australian Government (2009c) and Edwards et al. (2001) assert that large amounts of Australians in rural areas live in deprived conditions and are restricted in their opportunities to be engaged in practices enjoyed by the majority of society. Alston (2002), Alston (2005), Costello (2007), Langille et al. (2008), Lowndes et al. (2006), Macadam et al. (2004), Cavaye (2001), Eversole and Martin (2006) and Woods (2007) claim that the restriction of rural Australians' access to practices confines rural representation in decisions that influence the wellbeing of rural areas. Alston (2002), Alston (2005), Langille et al. (2008), Lowndes et al. (2006), Macadam et al. (2004) and Ostrom (2000) propose that the restriction of opportunities for rural representatives also restricts their input on choices in decision-making structures. They claim that this restriction perpetuates metro-centric decision-making structures and furthering rural exclusion from decisions. Alston (2005) and Costello (2007) argue that social exclusion is thus a useful concept to describe the growing numbers of rural Australians locked out of social processes valued by other members of society.

Alston (2002), Cheshire and Lawrence (2005), Gray (2004) and Tonts (2000) comparison of Australian metropolitan and rural areas show that the exclusion of rural areas from society has led to a crisis in rural communities. Alston (2002), Brooks (2008), Gray and Lawrence (2001a), Onyx and Bullen (2000), Patulny and Svendsen (2007), McIntosh et al. (2008) and Pini (2006) assert that during a community crisis or decline, social processes are activated that intensify community resilience. Pelling and High (2005), Besser (2009), Agnitsch, Flora, and Ryan (2006), Hegney et al. (2007) and Platje (2008) contend that part of the resilience response is the prioritisation of bonding social capital against bridging social capital.

Ambrosio-Albalá and Bastiaensen (2010), Onyx and Bullen (2000), Besser, Recker, and Agnitsch (2008) and Hawkins and Maurer (2010) also contend that another strong component of community resilience, is power remaining in the hands of those most privileged. Alston (2002), Ambrosio-Albalá and Bastiaensen (2010), Besser et al. (2008), Gray (2004), Onyx and Bullen (2000) and Pelling and High (2005) conclude that building resilience during a community crisis is by social exclusion of some community members and "outsiders". Therefore, the practice of social exclusion is at the foundation of community resilience during a crisis (Ambrosio-Albalá & Bastiaensen, 2010; Australian Government, 2009a; Averis, 2008; Gray & Lawrence, 2001a).

It would appear that without a state initiated strategy of regional inclusion, rural areas in crisis might become more excluded from practices and processes enjoyed by others in Australia society. The explanation of the considerable trials facing rural areas, due to global changes, highlights the difficulties in the governing at a distance program. Foremost, the problems for rural areas are the development of inequity both within communities and between regions. Furthermore, once the social exclusion of community members, or the exclusion of communities is established to the point of crisis it is possible that social exclusion will self-perpetuate. Ongoing rural deterioration suggests a renewed national solution is required to assist the revitalisation of rural areas. In answer to growing inequity within and between regions, the Australian Government has initiated a social inclusion approach.

SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY

An outline of the Australian national, and South Australian social inclusion approaches explains the inclusion strategy for South Australian rural areas and their residents. An understanding of the government's social inclusion approach is intended to reveal the role of social participation in promoting inclusion of individuals and communities.

The Australian Government (2008b) notates that government social inclusion programs currently have an international appeal. Edwards et al. (2001), Jeannotte et al. (2002) and Foa (2008) claim that the almost universal charm of social inclusion policies is sustained by the promises of social benefits from achieving social inclusion goals. Edwards et al. (2001) and Jeannotte et al. (2002) state that social policy agendas, based on a social inclusion approach, continue to be developed across the globe. They further claim that social inclusion agendas have become more important to national states as inequities between individuals and regions evolve.

Berman and Phillips (2000) argue that a social inclusion approach in policy is not the opposite of social exclusion, it is more than that. Cornwall and Gaventa (2000), Ranson (2000), Gidley, Hampson, Wheeler, and Bereded-Samuel (2011) and Shortall (2008) assert that social inclusion is the position from where someone both has influence on, and benefits from, the full range of opportunities available to all members of society. Berman and Phillips (2000) and Putnam (1995) propose that achieving more socially inclusion for individuals also has benefits for society.

The Laidlaw Foundation (2002) and Australian Government (2008a) propose the goal of social inclusion refers to a condition whereby people are included in relationships, activities and community organisations. The Laidlaw Foundation (2002) has attempted to capture the complexity of facilitating social inclusion. They have represented social inclusion as conditions divided into dimensions, which comprise of elements. Table 1, demonstrates the Laidlaw Foundation (2002) understanding of the features of social inclusion, detailing the spaces, social relationships, personal attributes, and abilities of the individual. The table is expanded to include what is known of rural social characteristics as they influence the Laidlaw Foundation (2002) understanding of social inclusion.

Dimensions	Elements		Rural Social Characteristics
Spatial	Public spaces Private spaces Physical location	Geographic proximity/distance Economic proximity/distance	Isolation & more space between individuals Neoliberalism
Relational	Social proximity/distance Emotional connectedness	Recognition Solidarity	Familiarity between community members Good bonding social capital Poor bridging social capital
Functional	Capabilities Developmental Capacities	Assists/liabilities Talents/potential Human Capital	Successful factors of rural social institutions are currently unknown
Agential	Social Engagement/ Empowerment Agency/Freedom	Empowerment/power	Inequitable - need to be able to influence and benefit from community and society. Involvement in decisions as well as about structures of decision-making

Table 1: Laidlaw Foundation Social Inclusion Framework

Note: Adapted from *The Laidlaw Foundation's Perspective on Social Inclusion*, by The Laidlaw Foundation, 2002, Toronto, Canada: The Laidlaw Foundation. Adapted with permission.

According to Jeannotte et al. (2002), due to the added complexity of social dynamics and the timing of social processes in inclusion, the framework provided Laidlaw Foundation (2002) cannot be strictly argued as addressing all the conditions of social inclusion. Jeannotte et al. (2002) maintain however, that the Laidlaw Foundation (2002) does provide a guide to the complexity of provisioning communities of individuals with opportunities for social inclusion.

The Australian Government (2008a) states that the overall aim of the social inclusion approach is to remove barriers for people and areas that experience a combination of problems. The Australian Government (2009e) proposes that achieving social inclusion means building a nation in which all Australians have the opportunity and support they need to participate fully in the nation's economic and community life, develop their own potential, and be treated with dignity and respect. In an effort to initiate a more socially inclusive Australian society the Australian Government (2008a) has adopted the Social Inclusion Principles.

According to Social Inclusion Principles statement, the current items hindering social inclusion of individuals are poverty and low income, lack of access to the job market, limited social supports and networks, the effect of the local neighbourhood, and exclusion from education, childcare, health and transport services (Australian Government, 2011). The Australian Government (2008a) states that the

strategies for full participation in society includes having a voice so that individuals can influence decisions that affect them; engage by connecting with people and using their local communities' resources; learn by participating in education and training; work by participating in employment and in voluntary work and; incorporate activities associated with family and caring.

The Australian Government (2008a) declares in the Social Inclusion Principles that achieving a vision of a socially inclusive society means that all Australians will have the resources, opportunities and capability to fully participate in society. In concurrence with the Australian Social Inclusion Principles, The South Australian Social Inclusion Initiative is claimed by the Australian Government to focus on the promotion of individual participation as a strong method for increasing social equity (Commissioner for Social Inclusion, 2010). In alignment with national social inclusion objectives, the South Australian Social Inclusion Initiative aims to promote social inclusion by promoting the creation of a society where all people feel valued, with differences respected, and with basic needs met (Commissioner for Social Inclusion, 2010; Newman, Biedrzycki, Patterson, & Baum, 2007; Wilson, 2009).

It is shown by the Commissioner for Social Inclusion (2010), Newman et al. (2007) and Wilson (2009) that the South Australian Initiative differs slightly from the National Principles. Differences in the Initiative according to Commissioner for Social Inclusion (2010), Newman et al. (2007) and Wilson (2009), are social inclusion strategies without a strong emphasis on voice, the connection of individuals and individual utilisation of community resources. Social participation therefore, is the national and local strategy to achieve social inclusion.

In the context of rural communities in South Australia therefore, there is a strong emphasis on community members' social participation. Social participation by individuals in a community is presumably intended to promote more inclusive practices within communities. It may appear that inclusive community practices are then hoped to extend to including rural communities in society. The proposed achievement of the state based inclusion approach is that rural inhabitants, through more social participation, will enjoy the influence and benefit of social arrangements the majority of Australians enjoy. The social participation approach of the National Social Inclusion Principles and the South Australian Social Inclusion Initiative remains the fundamental strategy to achieve goals of individual and community inclusion.

ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGIES

An explanation of the contemporary context of social policy within Australia is given. This explanation provides a description of some obstacles in the development of social inclusion strategies. This account is intended to assist in the consideration of alternative strategies, which show promise of assisting excluded people to be able to respond to social opportunities. To begin with, an explanation of the neoliberal influence on the structure of social institutions is explored.

Shils (1991) claims that a nation state, such as Australia, comprises of three social institutions that combine to make a liberal democratic society. Shils (1991) and Good Gingrich (2008) assert the three social institutions in such a society are the nation state or government, the market or business and civil society or the common interests of the people. Bohle (2006), Bristow, Entwistle, Hines, and Martin (2008), Davies (2007) and Good Gingrich (2008) convincingly argue that contemporary social policy efforts that emphasise social participation are grounded in neoliberal ideology. They further propose that social policy is currently delivered through a neoliberal fusion of market, nation state and community organisations.

Bohle (2006), Bristow et al. (2008), Davies (2007) and Good Gingrich (2008) assert that the fusion of previously separated social institutions has important social consequences. They propose that the foremost concern due to the creation of this institution is the formation of a powerful social structure. Good Gingrich (2008) asserts that this powerful uniform social structure is instrumental in perpetuating social exclusion due to its neoliberal undertones. Good Gingrich (2008) claims that solitary individuals, acting as social agents, are relied upon to sustain the social diversity previously supplied through separate market, nation state, and social institutions. In Figure 3, the results of

neoliberal fusion are depicted. This figure displays the creation of market nation state social institutions that contrast to social agents.

Market Institutions Business	Nation State Institutions Government	Civil Society Community Institutions & Social Agents
Neoliberal Fusion of Social Institutions		
Market Nation State Community Institutions		Civil Society Social Agents

Figure 3: Creation of Market Nation State Community Institutions

Note: Adapted from “Reproduction to Transformation” N. Crossley, 2003, *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20(6), p. 43 and “Management of Lone State Mothers in the Market-State Social Field, L. Good Gingrich, 2008, *Social Policy and Administration*, 42(40), p. 379. Adapted with permission.

Newman et al. (2007), Wilson (2009) and Good Gingrich (2008) state that equipping individuals to become social agents is met through social empowerment objectives. Newman et al. (2007), Wilson (2009) and Good Gingrich (2008) propose that a good social inclusion strategy incorporates the fundamental need for those who are most excluded to be socially empowered. Marsh (2005) and Harriss (2002) concur that a good design for social interventions such as social inclusion strategies formulates a good pattern of engagement to renew agency. They also argue due to the formation of neoliberal institutions that social inclusion of individuals is best provided by direct rather than through representative forms of democracy.

Ranson (2000) accentuates that social inclusion is about opportunities for individuals to re-engage with society to reformulate a pattern of social success. The Australian Government (2009d) also alludes to individual empowerment, stating that the heart of the social inclusion approach is an opportunity for those who are most excluded to attain power to influence decisions of all kinds. Ranson (2000), Good Gingrich (2008) and Gidley et al. (2011) argue that it is not enough for those who are most excluded to have the greatest opportunities to make independent choices within the current decision-making structures. They persuasively argue that those who are most excluded must also have opportunities to make their own choices to alter the structures of decision-making. They conclude that individuals who are most excluded need to have opportunities to make choices about decision-making structures to terminate the forces of exclusion.

In a discussion of the shortfall in state policy to terminate exclusion, Figueroa (2000) argues that the reliance of social inclusion approach on social participation, or more simply participation, is also reliant on participation providing a measured reward for the individual. Shortall (2008) suggests that as people often participate for a reward or out of extreme motivation; participation may be considered an unnatural rather than natural social activity. Shortall (2008) suggests that social participation is therefore difficult to instigate in individuals through external forces such as policy initiatives.

Davies (2007), Farrington and Farrington (2005) and Shortall (2008) suggest that socially empowered individuals have access to a broader range of social strategies that are important forces in their social inclusion. Shortall (2008) asserts that ‘civic engagement’ differs from social participation and may be understood to be individual or collective action, which is not entirely motivated by benefit making for the individual. Shortall (2008) maintains that civic engagement is most likely to produce benefits for communities and society. Farrington and Farrington (2005) differentiates that ‘abstention’ is social strategy by individuals and groups who demonstrate a choice not to engage with a range of social activities. Farrington and Farrington (2005) argues that abstention differs from social exclusion, as it is a social action based in the power of the individual or group. Davies (2007), Farrington and Farrington (2005) and Shortall (2008) argue that the choice not to engage in a social activity may also be a successful social strategy benefitting individuals or communities: particularly, when the returns from investing time in the social activity are justly perceived to be poor.

Foremost, in the literature about social inclusion is the need for social empowerment of individuals. Social empowerment is purported to allow excluded individuals to alter the structures of decision-making rather than individuals being altered to fit the structure. State based social inclusion

approaches are focussed on individual social participation efforts seemingly in the hope of socially empowering individuals. However, it can be demonstrated that many different social strategies apart from participation can be employed by individuals to improve their circumstances of themselves and their communities. It is pertinent to look to possibilities, which allows social re-engagement to the benefit of individuals and communities.

LEARNING SOCIAL INCLUSION

Education has a reliable traditional as a positive biographical process for individuals. It is also argued that this positive process is extended to include the relationship between the individual and society. Communities are also shown to benefit from the education of their members, as education contains the effects of geographical disadvantage.

The possibilities of social inclusion outcomes through education have made social outcomes a current priority in education research. Some difficulties of social inclusion research are presented which leads to a recommendation of an approach that intends to sensitively deepen social inclusion for research contributors. Initially, a discussion of the importance of education in social outcomes is provided.

Castells (2000), Bansel (2007) and Berman and Phillips (2000) claim that education is important for individual self-realisation and enhances the quality of lives. Johnson, Thompson, and Naugle (2009), A. Black, Duff, Saggars, and Baines (2000) and Flecha (2011) propose that education is also pivotal to an individuals' healthy social engagement throughout the life course. La Due Lake and Huckfeldt (1998), Casey (2008) and Fennessy, Billett, and Ovens (2007) claim that education also assists in forming a positive relationship between students and social institutions. Balatti, Black, and Falk (2006) asserts that the influence of education therefore extends past individual human capital results and produces positive results in social outcomes. Balatti et al. (2006) and Suckling et al. (2009) claim that there are other substantial ramifications of education that require investigation.

Alison, Gorringer, and Lacy (2006) and Harell, Stolle, and Quintelier (2007) argue that education may promote the acceptance of individuals who are socially diverse, creating a more broad social network. McIntosh et al. (2008), Wild River (2005) and Johnson et al. (2009) argue that individual adults attending an education facility also benefit their communities. They propose that the social connection provided through education produces a varied knowledge for the benefit of the community. A. Black et al. (2000) and Babacan (2007) assert that adult education is therefore an important source of social benefits for both individuals and their communities.

A. Black et al. (2000) and Kearns (2009) propose that education, as a method of inclusion, encourages the distribution of social equity across all geographical areas. Alston (2002), Australian Government (2009c), Woodhouse (2006) and Foa (2008) state that diverse sources of information arising from education are especially important in rural areas. Australian Government (2009c) and Babacan (2007) concur, stating that there is a consistent association between education and the containment of social exclusion forces due to location. A. Black et al. (2000) and Booth and Richard (1998) assert that in rural areas education develops capacities for rural members to respond to changing external conditions. A. Black et al. (2000) and Babacan (2007) argue that education therefore, is a source of information that assists communities to remain viable.

The National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (2011) and Armstrong, Armstrong, and Spandagou (2011) state that there needs to be an understanding the role of education in social inclusion outcomes. The National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (2011) argue that social inclusion outcomes are now a current research priority due to emerging national social inclusion approaches. Townsend and Delves (2009) propose that research into these outcomes is especially pertinent for Australian regional communities. Newman (2007) and Cheers and O'Toole (2003) argue that the factors in successful rural communities are currently unknown, making social inclusion research especially salient.

A. Black et al. (2000) and Australian Government (2009d) state however, that it may be challenging to find suitable candidates to inform social inclusion research, as high rates of Australian adults in rural

areas have a very basic education. Ranson (2000), S. Black and Yasukawa (2010) and Balatti et al. (2006) argue that a basic education such as literacy is the core capability, which socially empowers people, potentially increasing their responses to social opportunities. Morse (2004), Ranson (2000), Hayes (2010), Balatti et al. (2006) and Coffé and Geys (2007) propose that adult course attendees in literacy may provide a fertile ground to understand social inclusion outcomes provided by education.

Laidlaw Foundation (2002), A. Black et al. (2000) and Onyx et al. (2007) propose that understanding social inclusion through research in rural areas presents some difficulties. Cheers and O'Toole (2003), Labonte (2004) and Wilson (2005) observe that social strategies of individuals in rural communities may have results that may benefit an individual or community but contradict social participation. However, as Good Gingrich (2008) and Ranson (2000) state, the social inclusion experience is about social empowerment in order to re-engage with society and respond to social opportunities. Therefore, observing a diverse range of social strategies which supports this empowerment is also in the arena of social inclusion research.

Shortall (2008), Davies (2007) and Farrington and Farrington (2005) propose that the social strategies and responses of individuals to reach inclusion are considerably varied. Labonte (2004) and Jenson (1998) state that evidence of diverse social strategies according to location suggests that social inclusion research may be best undertaken within the social context of the individual. Baumann (2000), Figueroa (2000), Wilson (2005), Mormont et al. (1990) and Onyx et al. (2007) assert that the nature and value of social practices for inclusion in rural areas can thus be best understood by enlisting individuals willing to report their social experiences.

Brooks (2005) proposes that the potential for research interventions to violate the sovereignty of individuals reporting social experiences indicates caution with investigation is required. Strega (2005), Gidley et al. (2011) and Gewirtz (2001) promotes that there is significant potential for social inclusion research to emphasise dissimilarities among individuals and thus exacerbate social exclusion. They also advocate that research should be conducted in a sensitive manner, which enhances the social welfare of individuals. They argue that research should therefore serve the research but also assists the contributors. Good Gingrich (2008) concludes that good social inclusion research should sensitively deepen the social wellbeing of individuals.

The positive association between education and social outcomes suggests a space for social inclusion research. The difficulties of social inclusion research however, are not to be underestimated. Social outcomes in rural areas are difficult to research as an outsider, and the recommendation from other research on social outcomes in rural areas is to enlist the support of local contributors. It is argued that localised contributor knowledge of social inclusion experiences can best further the expansion of social inclusion understandings. Whilst gathering the social inclusion experiences of individuals it is of the utmost importance that they benefit from this contribution by becoming aware of the social strategies available to enhance their lives.

CONCLUSION

In attempting to answer the question "will learning social inclusion assist rural networks?" several suggestions are apparent. Difficulties in teaching social inclusion are particularly evident when considering communities that are not thriving but operate social exclusion systems to ensure their survival. Education however, has a valid role to play in promoting social goods, particularly in disadvantage localities or cases of individual deprivation. In a socially excluded rural setting education potentially benefits the students and the community. The benefits would be especially salient for individuals if an awareness of inclusive social strategies could be assisted by further research. In approaching social inclusion, it is apparent there may be many lessons that can be learnt from the reflections of adult rural students on the social strategies afforded to them by education. It is anticipated that this approach will positively influence individual awareness of strategies for social inclusion and ultimately work towards a hope for better inclusion of rural communities into the network of society.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Agnitsch, K., Flora, J., & Ryan, V. (2006). Bonding and Bridging Social Capital: The Interactive Effects on Community Action. *Community Development*, 37(1), 36-51.
- Alexander, M. L. (2005, 14-17 August). *Social Inclusion, Social Exclusion and Social Closure: What can we learn From Studying the Social Capital of Social Elites?* Paper presented at the International Conference on Engaging Communities, Brisbane, Australia.
- Alison, J., Gorringer, S., & Lacy, J. (2006). Building Learning Communities: Partnerships, Social Capital and VET Performance. Adelaide, Australia: NCVET.
- Alston, M. (2002). From Local to Global: Making Social Policy more Effective for Rural Community Capacity Building. *Australian Social Work*, 55(3), 214-226.
- Alston, M. (2004). 'You don't want to be a Check-out Chick all Your Life': The Out-migration of Young People from Australia's Small Rural Towns. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 39(3), 299-366.
- Alston, M. (2005). Social Exclusion in Rural Australia. In C. Cocklin & J. Dibden (Eds.), *Sustainability and Change in Rural Australia* (pp. 157-170). Sydney, Australia: UNSW Press.
- Ambrosio-Albalá, M., & Bastiaensen, J. (2010). The New Territorial Paradigm of Rural Development: Theoretical Foundations from Systems and Institutional Theories. Antwerp, Belgium: Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp.
- International journal of urban and regional research*, 23(2), 365-378.
- Argent, N. (2005). The Neoliberal Seduction: Governing-at-a-Distance, Community Development and the Battle over Financial Services Provision in Australia. *Geographical Research*, 43(1), 29-39.
- Armstrong, D., Armstrong, A. C., & Spandagou, I. (2011). Inclusion: By Choice or By Chance? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15(1), 29-39.
- Ashwood, L. (2010). Without Categories and Classifications: 'Rural' as a Social Expression. *Research in Rural Sociology and Development*, 16, 113-125.
- Australian Government. (2008a). Principles for Social Inclusion: Everyone's Job. Canberra, Australia: Social Inclusion Group.
- Australian Government. (2008b). Social Inclusion: Origins, Concepts and Key Themes. Canberra, Australia: Social Inclusion Group.
- Australian Government. (2009a). Building Inclusive and Resilient Communities. Canberra, Australia: Social Inclusion Group.
- Australian Government. (2009b). A Compendium of Social Inclusion Indicators. Canberra, Australia: Social Inclusion Group.
- Australian Government. (2009c). Markedly Socially Disadvantaged Localities in Australia: Their Nature and Possible Remediation. Canberra, Australia: Social Inclusion Group.
- Australian Government. (2009d). The Origins, Meaning, Definition and Economic Implications of the Concept of Social Inclusion/Exclusion. Canberra, Australia: Social Inclusion Group.
- Australian Government. (2009e). A Stronger, Fairer Australia. Canberra, Australia: Social Inclusion Group.
- Australian Government. (2011). Breaking Cycles of Disadvantage. Canberra, Australia: Social Inclusion Group.
- Averis, R. A. (2008). *Averting the Crisis-or Avoiding the Compromise? A Regulation Approach to Social Inclusion Policies and Practices in the Australian Context*. (PhD), University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia.
- Babacan, H. (2007). Education and Social Cohesion. In J. Jupp, J. P. Nieuwenhuysen & E. Dawson (Eds.), *Social Cohesion in Australia* (pp. 142-157). New York, USA: Cambridge University Press.

- Balatti, J., Black, S., & Falk, I. (2006). Reframing Adult Literacy and Numeracy Course Outcomes: A Social Capital Perspective. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER.
- Balfour, R. J., Mitchell, C., & Moletsane, R. (2008). Troubling Contexts: Toward a Generative Theory of Rurality as Education Research. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 3(3), 95-107.
- Bansel, P. (2007). Subjects of Choice and Lifelong Learning. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 20(3), 283-300.
- Baumann, P. (2000). Sustainable Livelihoods and Political Capital: Arguments and Evidence from Decentralisation and Natural Resource Management in India. London, UK: Overseas Development Institute.
- Beall, J., & Piron, L. (2005). DFID Social Exclusion Review. London, UK: Department for International Development.
- Beer, A., Clower, T., Haughtow, G., & Maude, A. (2005). Neoliberalism and the Institutions for Regional Development in Australia. *Geographical Research*, 43(1), 49-58.
- Bell, M. (2008, 28 March). *Mobilizing the Countryside: Rural Power and the Power of the Rural*. Paper presented at the Agrarian Studies Seminar, New Haven, USA.
- Bell, M., Lloyd, S. E., & Vatovec, C. (2010). Activating the Countryside: Rural Power, the Power of the Rural and the Making of Rural Politics. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 50(3), 205-224.
- Bellamy, J., & Brown, A. J. (2009, 12-17 July). *Regional Governance in Rural Australia: An Emergent Phenomenon of the Quest for Liveability and Sustainability?* Paper presented at the Making Liveable, Sustainable Systems Unremarkable: 53rd Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Systems Sciences, Brisbane, Australia.
- Berman, Y., & Phillips, D. (2000). Indicators of Social Quality and Social Exclusion at National and Community Level. *Social Indicators Research*, 50(3), 329-350.
- Besser, T. L. (2009). Changes in Small Town Social Capital and Civic Engagement. *Journal of rural studies*, 25(2), 185-193.
- Besser, T. L., Recker, N., & Agnitsch, K. (2008). The Impact of Economic Shocks on Quality of Life and Social Capital in Small Towns. *Rural Sociology*, 73(4), 580-604.
- Bevir, M. (1999). Foucault, Power, and Institutions. *Political Studies*, 47(2), 345-359.
- Black, A., Duff, J., Sagers, S., & Baines, P. (2000). Rural Communities and Rural Social Issues: Priorities for Research. Barton, Australia: Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.
- Black, S., & Yasukawa, K. (2010). Time for National Renewal: Australian Adult Literacy and Numeracy as 'Foundation Skills'. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies*, 18(2), 43.
- Bohle, D. (2006). Neoliberal Hegemony, Transnational Capital and the Terms of the EU's Eastward Expansion. *Capital & Class*, 30(1), 57.
- Booth, J. A., & Richard, P. B. (1998). Civil Society, Political Capital, and Democratization in Central America. *The Journal of Politics*, 60(3), 780-800.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). *The Forms of Capital*. New York, USA: Greenwood Press.
- Bristow, G., Entwistle, T., Hines, F., & Martin, S. (2008). New Spaces for Inclusion? Lessons from the 'Three Thirds' Partnerships in Wales. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 32(4), 903-921.
- Brook Lyndhurst Ltd. (2004). *New Horizons 2004: Liveability & Sustainable Development: Bad Habits & Hard Choices*. Skipton, UK: Brook Lyndhurst Ltd.
- Brooks, K. (2005, 14-17 August). *Re-Interpreting Social Capital – A Political Hijack or Useful Structural Concept in Community Regeneration?* Paper presented at the International Conference on Engaging Communities, Brisbane, Australia.

- Brooks, K. (2007). Social capital: Analysing the Effect of a Political Perspective on the Perceived Role of Government in Community Prosperity. *Rural Society*, 17(3), 231-247.
- Brooks, K. (2008). *Rural Resilience and Prosperity: The Relevance of Government and Community Networks*. (PhD), The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
- Casey, K. (2008). Defining Political Capital: A Reconsideration of Bourdieu's Interconvertibility Theory. St Louis, USA: Lab for Integrated Learning and Technology: University of Missouri.
- Castells, M. (2000). End of Millennium. *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, 3.
- Cavaye, J. (2001). Rural Community Development: New Challenges and Enduring Dilemmas. *Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy*, 31(2), 109-124.
- Cheers, B., & O'Toole, K. (2003, 20-23 March). *Untangling the Mess: Community Strength in Rural Australia*. Paper presented at the Riding the Rapids of Change: Skills and Values for Developing Cohesive, Just and Vibrant Communities: Eighth Biennial National Local Government Community Development Conference, Perth, Australia.
- Cheshire, L., & Lawrence, G. (2005). Neoliberalism, Individualisation and Community: Regional Restructuring in Australia. *Social Identities*, 11(5), 435-445.
- Cloke, P. J., Marsden, T., & Mooney, P. H. (2006). *Handbook of Rural Studies*. California, USA: Sage Publications.
- Coffé, H., & Geys, B. (2007). Participation in Bridging and Bonding Associations and Civic Attitudes: Evidence from Flanders. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 18(4), 385-406.
- Commissioner for Social Inclusion. (2010). Our State of Inclusion - Outcomes from South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative 2002-2010. Adelaide, South Australia: Social Inclusion Unit, Government of South Australia.
- Cornwall, A., & Gaventa, J. (2000). From Users and Choosers to Makers and Shapers Repositioning Participation in Social Policy. *IDS Bulletin*, 31(4), 50-62.
- Costello, D. I. (2007). *A Substantive Examination of Rural Community Resilience and Transition A Social Justice Perspective of a Civil Society*. (PhD), Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia.
- Crossley, N. (2003). From Reproduction to Transformation. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20(6), 43.
- Davies, J. S. (2007). The Limits of Partnership: An Exit Action Strategy for Local Democratic Inclusion. *Political Studies*, 55(4), 779-800.
- Derkzen, P., Bock, B., & Wiskerke, J. (2009). Integrated Rural Policy in Context: A Case Study on the Meaning of 'Integration' and the Politics of 'Sectoring'. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, 11(2), 143-163.
- Edwards, R., Armstrong, P., & Miller, N. (2001). Include me out: Critical Readings of Social Exclusion, Social Inclusion and Lifelong Learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20(5), 417 - 428.
- Eversole, R., & Martin, J. (2006). Jobs in the Bush: Global Industries and Inclusive Rural Development. *Social Policy & Administration*, 40(6), 692-704.
- Farrington, J., & Farrington, C. (2005). Rural Accessibility, Social Inclusion and Social Justice: Towards Conceptualisation. *Journal of Transport geography*, 13(1), 1-12.
- Fennessy, K. M., Billett, S., & Ovens, C. A. (2007). Learning in and Through Social Partnerships'. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 54(4), 308-328.
- Figuroa, A. (2000). Social Exclusion and Rural Underdevelopment. In O. N. Feinstein & R. Picciotto (Eds.), *Evaluation and Poverty Reduction: Proceedings from a World Bank Conference* (pp. 329-337). Washington, USA: World Bank Publications.
- Flecha, R. (2011). The Dialogic Sociology of Education. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 21(1), 7-20.

- Foa, R. (2008). *Social Institutions and Human Development*. Washington, USA: Social Development Department of the Sustainable Development Network of the World Bank.
- Gewirtz, S. (2001). Rethinking Social Justice: A Conceptual Analysis. In J. Demaine (Ed.), *Sociology of Education Today* (pp. 49-64). New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gidley, J., Hampson, G., Wheeler, L., & Bereded-Samuel, E. (2011). Social Inclusion: Context, Theory and Practice. *The Australasian Journal of University-Community Engagement*, 5(1), 6-36.
- Good Gingrich, L. (2008). Social Exclusion and Double Jeopardy: The Management of Lone Mothers in the Market-State Social Field. *Social Policy and Administration*, 42(4), 379-395.
- Gray, I. (2004). What is Regionalism? In W. Hudson & A. J. Brown (Eds.), *Restructuring Australia: Regionalism, Republicanism and Reform of the Nation-State* (pp. 16-27). Sydney, Australia: Federation Press.
- Gray, I., & Lawrence, G. (2001a). *A Future for Regional Australia: Escaping Global Misfortune*. North Ryde, Australia: Cambridge University Press.
- Gray, I., & Lawrence, G. (2001b). Neoliberalism, Individualism and Prospects for Regional Renewal. *Rural Society*, 11(3), 283-298.
- Halfacree, K. H. (1993). Locality and Social Representation: Space, Discourse and Alternative Definitions of the Rural. *Journal of rural studies*, 9(1), 23-37.
- Harell, A., Stolle, D., & Quintelier, E. (2007, 5-9 August). *Network Diversity and Political Participation: A Complication or an Asset?* Paper presented at the Fourth ECPR General Conference: European Consortium for Political Research Annual Meet Pisa, Italy.
- Harriss, J. (2002). *Depoliticizing Development: The World Bank and Social Capital*. London, UK: Anthem Press.
- Hawkins, R. L., & Maurer, K. (2010). Bonding, Bridging and Linking: How Social Capital Operated in New Orleans Following Hurricane Katrina. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(6), 1777.
- Hayes, B. (2010, 19 October). *Social Capital: A Framework for Literacy Policy and Advocacy*. Paper presented at the Spotlight on Learning 2010, Ontario, Canada.
- Headey, B. (2006). *A Framework for Assessing Poverty, Disadvantage and Low Capabilities in Australia*. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research
- Hegney, D. G., Buikstra, E., Baker, P., Rogers-Clark, C., Pearce, S., Ross, H., . . . Watson-Luke, A. (2007). Individual Resilience in Rural People: A Queensland Study, Australia. *Rural and Remote Health*, 7(14), 1-13.
- Herbert-Cheshire, L. (2000). Contemporary Strategies for Rural Community Development in Australia: A Governmentality Perspective. *Journal of rural studies*, 16(2), 203-215.
- Hoggart, K., & Paniagua, A. (2001). What Rural Restructuring? *Journal of rural studies*, 17(1), 41-62.
- Holdsworth, L., & Hartman, Y. (2009). Indicators of Community Cohesion in an Australian Country Town. *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, (2), 76-97.
- Jeannotte, M. S., Stanley, D., Pendakur, R., Jamieson, B., Williams, M., Aizlewood, A., & Planning, S. (2002). *Buying in or Dropping out: the Public Policy Implications of Social Cohesion Research*. Ottawa, Canada: Strategic Research and Analysis (SRA), Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination, Department of Canadian Heritage.
- Jenson, J. (1998). *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research*. Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc.
- Jessop, B., Brenner, N., & Jones, M. (2008). Theorizing Sociospatial Relations. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26(3), 389-401.

- Johnson, J., Thompson, A., & Naugle, K. (2009). Place-Conscious Capacity-Building: A Systemic Model for the Revitalisation and Renewal of Rural Schools and Communities through University-Based Regional Stewardship. *Rural Society*, 19(2), 178-188.
- Jones, O. (1995). Lay Discourses of the Rural: Developments and Implications for Rural Studies. *Journal of rural studies*, 11(1), 35-49.
- Kearns, P. (2009). VET and Social Capital: A Paper on the Contribution of the VET Sector to Social Capital in Communities. Adelaide, Australia: NCVET.
- La Due Lake, R., & Huckfeldt, R. (1998). Social Capital, Social Networks, and Political Participation. *Political Psychology*, 19(3), 567-584.
- Labonte, R. (2004). Social Inclusion/Exclusion: Dancing the Dialectic. *Health Promotion International*, 19(1), 115.
- Laidlaw Foundation. (2002). The Laidlaw Foundation's Perspective on Social Inclusion. Toronto, Canada: The Laidlaw Foundation.
- Langille, L., Munro, I., Romanow, P., Lyons, R., Bull, A., & Williams, P. (2008). Building Collaborative Capacity for Research and Influencing Policy: The Rural Communities Impacting Policy Project. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 3(3), 23-55.
- Lawson, S. (2007). The Post Justice City? Spatial Targeting, Social Disadvantage and Rescaling Urban Governance in Australia. *Governance*, 8, 1-18.
- Ling, C., Hanna, K., & Dale, A. (2009). A Template for Integrated Community Sustainability Planning. *Environmental Management*, 44(2), 228-242.
- Lockie, S., Lawrence, G., & Cheshire, L. (2006). Reconfiguring Rural Resource Governance: The Legacy of Neoliberalism in Australia. In P. Cloke, T. Marsden & P. Mooney (Eds.), *Handbook of Rural Studies* (pp. 29-43). California, USA: Sage Publications.
- Lowndes, V., Pratchett, L., & Stoker, G. (2006). Local Political Participation: The Impact of Rules-in-Use. *Public administration*, 84(3), 539-561.
- Loxton, D. (2005, 10-13 March). *From the Smallness of the Community, Comes the Strength of the Community: Sole Mothering in Rural and Remote Australia*. Paper presented at the Central to Health - Sustaining Wellbeing in Remote and Rural Australia: Eighth National Rural Health Conference, Alice Springs, Australia.
- Macadam, R., Drinan, J., Inall, N., & McKenzie, B. (2004). Growing the Capital of Rural Australia. Canberra, Australia: Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.
- Marsh, I. (2005). Neo liberalism and the Decline of Democratic Governance in Australia: A Problem of Institutional Design? *Political Studies*, 53(1), 22-42.
- McCarthy, J. (2007). Rural Geography: Globalizing the Countryside. *Progress in Human Geography*.
- McIntosh, A., Stayner, R., Carrington, K., Rolley, F., Scott, J., & Sorensen, T. (2008). *Resilience in Rural Communities: Literature Review*. Armidale, Australia: University of New England - Centre for Applied Research in Social Science.
- McIntyre-Mills, J. (2006). *Systemic Governance and Accountability: Working and Re-working the Conceptual and Spatial Boundaries*. New York, USA: Springer Science+ Business Media.
- Mormont, M., Marsden, T., Lowe, P., & Whatmore, S. (1990). Who is Rural? Or, How to be Rural: Towards a Sociology of The Rural. In T. Marsden, P. Lowe & S. Whatmore (Eds.), *Rural Restructuring: Global Processes and Their Responses* (pp. 21-44). London, UK: David Fulton Publishers Ltd.
- Morrison, T., & Lane, M. (2006). The Convergence of Regional Governance Discourses in Rural Australia: Enduring Challenges and Constructive Suggestions. *Rural Society*, 16(3), 341-357.

- Morse, R. S. (2004). *Community Learning: Process, Structure, and Renewal*. (PhD), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia, USA.
- National Centre for Vocational Education and Research. (2011). The Five National Research Priorities Retrieved 3rd May, 2011, from http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/research2/five_priorities.html
- Neal, J. W., & Neal, Z. P. (2010). Power as a Structural Phenomenon. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 1-11. doi: 10.1007/s10464-010-9356-3
- Newman, L. (2007). The Virtuous Cycle: Incremental Changes and a Process-Based Sustainable Development. *Sustainable Development*, 15(4), 267-274.
- Newman, L., Biedrzycki, K., Patterson, J., & Baum, F. (2007). A Rapid Appraisal Case Study of South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative A report prepared for the Social Exclusion Knowledge Network of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (established by the World Health Organisation). Adelaide, Australia: Social Inclusion Unit.
- Onyx, J., & Bullen, P. (2000). Measuring Social Capital in Five Communities. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 36(1), 23-42.
- Onyx, J., Edwards, M., & Bullen, P. (2007). The Intersection of Social Capital and Power: An Application to Rural Communities. *Rural Society*, 17(3), 215-230.
- Ostrom, E. (2000). Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14(3), 137-158.
- Ostrom, E., & Ahn, T. K. (2003). A Social Science Perspective on Social Capital: Social Capital and Collective Action. *Revista Mexicana De Sociologia*, 65(1), 155-233.
- Patulny, R. V., & Svendsen, G. L. H. (2007). Exploring the Social Capital Grid: Bonding, Bridging, Qualitative, Quantitative. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 27(1/2), 32-51.
- Pelling, M., & High, C. (2005). Understanding Adaptation: What can Social Capital offer Assessments of Adaptive Capacity? *Global Environmental Change Part A*, 15(4), 308-319.
- Pierson, J. (2001). *Tackling Social Exclusion*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Pini, B. (2006). A Critique of 'New' Rural Local Governance: The Case of Gender in a Rural Australian Setting. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22(4), 396-408.
- Platje, J. (2008). "Institutional Capital" as a Factor of Sustainable Development—The Importance of an Institutional Equilibrium. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 14(2), 144-150.
- Pritchard, B. (2005). Unpacking the Neoliberal Approach to Regional Policy: a Close Reading of John Freebairn's 'Economic Policy for Rural and Regional Australia'. *Geographical Research*, 43(1), 103-112.
- Pritchard, B., & McManus, P. (2000). *Land of Discontent: The Dynamics of Change in Rural and Regional Australia*. Sydney, Australia: UNSW Press.
- Pruitt, L. R. (2009). Gender, Geography & Rural Justice. *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice*, 23, 338-389.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of democracy*, 6(1), 65-78.
- Ranson, S. (2000). Recognizing the Pedagogy of Voice in a Learning Community. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 28(3), 263.
- Shils, E. (1991). The Virtue of Civil Society. *Government and Opposition*, 26(1), 3-20. doi: 10.1111/j.1477-7053.1991.tb01120.x
- Shortall, S. (2008). Are Rural Development Programmes Socially Inclusive? Social Inclusion, Civic Engagement, Participation, and Social Capital: Exploring the Differences. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24(4), 450-457.

- Simpson, L., Wood, L., & Daws, L. (2003). Community Capacity Building: Starting with People not Projects. *Community Development Journal*, 38(4), 277.
- Sklair, L. (2007). A Transnational Framework for Theory and Research in the Study of Globalization. In I. Rossi (Ed.), *Frontiers of Globalization Research* (pp. 93-108). New York, USA: Springer US.
- Smith, M. S., Moran, M., & Seemann, K. (2008). The 'Viability' and Resilience of Communities and Settlements in Desert Australia. *The Rangeland Journal*, 30(1), 123-135.
- Stone, W., & Hughes, J. (2001, 10-12 September). *Sustaining Communities: An Empirical Investigation of Social Capital in Regional Australia*. Paper presented at the Fifth National Conference Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia, Townsville, Australia.
- Strega, S. (2005). The View From the Poststructural Margins. In L. Brown & S. Strega (Eds.), *Research as resistance* (pp. 199). Toronto, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Suckling, S., Ryan, P., & Dent, M. (2009). Beliefs, Barriers and Control: A Model for Research into Social Exclusion. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 22(5), 423-431.
- Tonts, M. (2000). The Restructuring of Australia's Rural Communities. In B. Pritchard & P. McManus (Eds.), *Land of Discontent: The Dynamics of Change in Rural and Regional Australia* (pp. 52-72). Sydney, Australia: UNSW Press.
- Townsend, R., & Delves, M. (2009). Tree Changes or Wholesale Changes: The Role of Adult Education in Transitions in Regional Life. *Rural Society*, 19(2), 96-105.
- Walter, M. M., & Siggers, S. (2007). Poverty and Social Class. In B. Carson, T. Dunbar, R. D. Chenhaile & R. Bailie (Eds.), *Social Determinants of Indigenous Health* (pp. 87-104). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen and Unwin.
- Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of Practice. *Harvard Business Review*, (January - February), 139-145.
- Wild River, S. (2005). Enhancing the Sustainability Efforts of Local Governments. *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development*, 1(1), 46-64.
- Wilson, L. (2005, 27 October). *Social Exclusion and Social Capital in Northern Adelaide: The Role of Social Networks in Reproducing Social Inequity*. Paper presented at the Social Change in the 21st Century Conference, Carseldine, Australia.
- Wilson, L. (2009). Social Inclusion. In J. Spoehr (Ed.), *State of South Australia: From Crisis to Prosperity?* (pp. 344-354). Kent Town, Australia: Wakefield Press.
- Woodhouse, A. (2006). Social Capital and Economic Development in Regional Australia: A Case Study. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22(1), 83-94.
- Woods, M. (2005). *Rural Geography: Processes, Responses and Experiences in Rural Restructuring*. London, UK: Sage publications.
- Woods, M. (2007). Engaging the Global Countryside: Globalization, Hybridity and the Reconstitution of Rural Place. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(4), 485-507.
- Worthington, A. C., & Dollery, B. E. (2008). Can Australian Local Government Play a Meaningful Role in the Development of Social Capital in Disadvantaged Rural Communities?