

# FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

## The near future – Social Inclusion & exclusion

Marshall Leaver, Lifetime Committee Member

### Syllabus Content

#### The near future (5 to 10 years)

Students are to:

- determine current trends and suggest probable future directions for the country studied in relation to social inclusion and exclusion
- evaluate the impact and implications for social inclusion and exclusion in the country studied of:
  - likely changes
  - probable continuities

### Related concepts

Social mobility, social class

- socioeconomic status
- life course
- race and ethnicity
- social differentiation
- equality
- human rights
- prejudice and discrimination

### Syllabus Outcomes

- H1 evaluates and effectively applies social and cultural concepts
- H3 analyses relationships and interactions within and between social and cultural groups
- H5 analyses continuity and change and their influence on personal and social futures

### Rationale

The following article focuses on using Scenario Writing for Inclusion & Exclusion, with a focus on the Yolgnu. It explores how to use STEEP factors to explore progressive and regressive change in imagining possible near futures for the group. In order to design probable scenarios students need to have a sound understanding of a range of current trends for their focus study. Follow up scenario planning with essay writing practice to apply their extrapolated scenarios.

*Poster of Gurrumul Yunupingu proudly displayed at Shepherdson College, Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island NT. Image source: J. Sillar*



# FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

**Change** is the alteration in patterns of culture, social structures and behaviour over time. No society can successfully prevent change, even though some try to do so... Is change the only constant? (Robertson, p507). Why is change so ever present in our lives? There are so many factors which can vary: the environmental, the technological, the cultural and social, the economic, the political, the spiritual and the personal aspects of our lives.

**Continuity** is much less obvious, as we seem to be obsessed by change. Heritage, tradition, way of life are equally dynamic elements of our lives. Acknowledging the traditional owners of the Land is about maintaining continuity. Whilst, we generally change readily when it comes to adopting technology, it is our values and beliefs which can typically take much longer to change. Consider the continuity in the Australian values regarding Gallipoli. Legacies and memories can linger longer than lifetimes.

Time is depicted as an arrow  $\Rightarrow$  in the Society and Culture course diagram. Like a sword, the arrowhead must have twin edges: one edge is change, the other is continuity.

## Scenario Writing

*"All tomorrow's flowers are seeds today." Syrian Proverb*

How can we really know the future? What are the possible futures for Australian Aboriginal peoples and for the Yolngu in particular? Scenario Writing is a technique for systematically considering a range of possible futures. But to do scenario writing well you need to get substantial background information, statistics, in fact, have access to expert advice of the current situation in the culture or group to which the process is being applied to.

For example:

- Historical background to in the culture or group from more than one perspective
- Religious and cultural values in the culture or group
- Economic, work and wealth information in the culture or group
- Political, government and authority structures in the culture or group

Specific detailed background information could include:

- Birth and death rates
- Workforce participation and welfare context
- Levels of work availability and general economic situation
- Cost and availability of daily items transported into community
- Housing and numbers of people living in each house
- Literacy and numeracy levels and engagement with education
- Extent of connection to traditional culture and ceremony, as well as impact of Westernisation
- Availability of information and communication technology
- Past, current and likely future Government policies
- Impact of the Intervention.

# FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

From your informed position, the possible range of S.T.E.E.P options are considered to decide which TWO factors are going to be the *major determinants* of the future of country you are studying.

S.T.E.E.P. stands for:

**Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political.**

The select pair from STEEP which are the major influences you have decided will shape the future of your country of study. Apply your knowledge to the possible futures that might occur if the influence of each of these varied from the positive and to the negative.

## Applying Futures Scenarios to Social Inclusion and Exclusion

1. **Determine current trends and suggest probable future directions in relation to social inclusion and exclusion**
2. **Evaluate the impact and implications for social inclusion and exclusion, considering likely changes and probable continuities?**

The Yolngu people of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory have experienced many changes from their traditional culture. They are traditionally a collectivist society who bases their society on Madayin, their own constitutional law. Over time, a definite change has been observed due to conflict and misunderstanding between the Yolngu and Balanda (traditional word for “whitefella”), often resulting in negative developments. More recently, a greater knowledge has developed about the Yolngu culture, with both Aboriginal’s and non-Aboriginal’s seeing the importance of preserving the culture. However, the future of Yolngu people depends on many variables, particularly technology and social changes.

For **Yolngu**: two possible major influences on their future:

1. **Technological**: specifically roll out of Fibre Optic Cable to bring broadband technology into remote communities.
2. **Social**: in relation to survival of culture and traditional values in relation to changing influences and context of westernisation and acculturation.

See [Scenario Diagram page 5](#)

The four possible scenarios outline what life for Yolngu will be like if either of these major influences improve or decline. The purpose of this process is to determine which future/s is preferred and then set about ensuring that actions are taking to work towards the preferred future being the likely one to happen and to avoid those considered inappropriate.

### In brief

The changes within technology and social aspects of the Yolngu culture, and whether they decline or improve, have the ability to produce four possible scenarios for the future. Positive improvements in both social and technological change (**Scenario 1**) would allow for the traditional culture to be sustained through awareness by new ideas and strategies for communication such as the Internet, social media.

The two scenarios which see the increase in technology (**Scenarios 1 & 2**) and the application of Moore’s Law (the exponential increase through the doubling of capacity of computer technology every 2 years) would be promoted through roll out of the Fibre-optic Cables via programs like the National Broadband Network (NBN) creating a dynamic positive variable for the future of the Yolngu.

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A decline in social change but an increase of technological change (**Scenario 2**) would cause traditional culture to shrink, due to the assimilation of the Western culture by causing a desire for consumer goods or possible problems such as online gambling.

**Scenario 3** identifies a future with a decline in both social situation and capacity to embrace new technology, causing isolation and a loss of culture.

Finally, **Scenario 4** would see a growth in social change but increase in technology, leading to a complete revival of traditional culture, however isolation from the wider world.

### In detail

**Scenario 1** would allow traditional culture to be sustained through a positive introduction to the internet via positive social context of engagements to support schools and promote education, as well as promoting health service with options for on-line diagnosis by doctors in major centres like Darwin. This would significantly reduce ongoing transport cost and allow Yolngu to stay connected to country and their traditional networks and lifestyle.

This can already be seen in practice, through the NGO Aboriginal Resource and Development Service (ARDS), who use the media such as radio and the internet to help educate the Yolngu on health issues. This is a significant issue as the Yolngu mortality rate is four times higher than the rest of the population. They also use technology such as the radio that is in Yolngu Matha, their traditional language in order to help understanding on key knowledge such as health, economics and politics. ARDS has already has a hugely positive response, demonstrating how important technology can be in helping issues in equality. Radio is cheap and accessible to remote areas and can be battery powered. The possibilities of using the same good lines of communication via net based resources are very significant and hold a key to a better future.

The introduction of a more accessible internet service to the rural communities of the Northern Territory could thus continue to have a positive impact. Many Yolngu struggle to understand health issues such as kidney problems due to diabetes and alcohol use and abuse. As it is not a traditional part of their life many Yolngu often will not take medication. The internet could be helpful here, as it could offer a chance for interactive games or information in Yolngu Matha, on the function of the kidney as an example. An initiative similar to this was taken out by the Royal Darwin Hospital, where they wrote a book in the traditional language using simple diagrams that were easy to understand. By doing the same thing on the internet it would be more accessible and cheaper.



The Yolngu culture, such as their art, music and language also could be supported by Balanda through advancements in technology. Local artist or bands could use the Internet to promote their work, which could result in both national and global recognition. It can be seen in the past that popular culture, such as the films *Ten Canoes*, and *Charlie's Country* or the band Yothu Yindi the dance group has helped bring understanding and celebration of the culture. The Yolngu group, Chooky Dancers are a YouTube sensation and a testament to the successful application of ITC to awareness of Indigenous culture. The Chooky Dancers now travel the world performing at festivals and their success has been greatly enabled by the Internet.

*A member of Yothu Yindi perform onstage with didgeridoo at the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony. Source: Wikimedia Commons*

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*Medical Centre at Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island NT. Image source: J. Sillar*

**Scenario 2** would cause a loss of Yolngu traditional culture due to an interest in the Western culture and its emphasis on individualism. Yolngu traditionally are a collectivist society, which work for the greater good, where Western cultures typical promote the independence of each person with a focus on materialism. In this future, the availability of the Internet could cause this generation to begin to desire consumer items and a disinterest in the traditional values of Yolngu. Teenagers especially feel the pull between being traditional or assimilating into Western values, especially if they have been socialised with an emphasis on materialism. If the Internet did cause this change, the traditional Yolngu culture would eventually die out or become homogenised due the loss of information and interest. The issues of access on the Internet also have the possibility to impact negatively on the future. The availability of online gambling could be extremely problematic, with a high rate of Yolngu people already having addictions. This could lead to high issues of debt and the establishment of new Government policies, such as the Basics Card. The Basics Card was in response to the belief welfare money was not being spent on necessities, but instead feeding addictions. The Basics Card allows people to only buy food, clothes etc however, it has been received negatively with 85% of women believing it has not changed what they are buying. Reporter Norrie says, *“it isolates and stigmatizes people, who use the card. It’s a kind of apartheid system”*. This example shows that more initiatives by the Government could take place if debt from online gambling took place, and cause a more tension between the Yolngu and Balanda.

The most positive option for the Yolngu is **Scenario 1**, where both technology and social changes take place. In order for this future to be a real possibility, a greater understanding and cooperation needs to develop between the Yolngu and the Balanda. If positive initiatives such as ARDS, which demonstrate the importance of two-way communication take place, the ability for the Yolngu culture to thrive is a true possibility.

[See following page for Scenario Diagram version.](#)

# FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

## Social Change +

### Scenario 4: Traditional Culture survives in return to past era:

- Limited impact of information technology
- Traditional values and practice maintained due to cultural revival and leadership by Yolngu Elders
- No new opportunities for on line health or education opportunities
- Regressive change with return to traditional lands and ceremony
- Increased use of bush foods and medicines , but some conditions like kidney disease go undiagnosed and Yolngu mortality still significant issue.

### Scenario 1: Traditional Culture thrives in Information Superhighway:

- Positive revival of traditional culture through awareness of strength of Yolngu culture via social media and www
- Online technology supports health care and effective diagnosis and treatment, living and health conditions improve
- Culture is acknowledged and rewarded with online connections to work through art, music, film, healing, study of Yolngu culture by Balanda.
- Promotion of eco tourism and cultural tours bring employment and validates traditional culture
- Youth interested and engaged

## Technological

## Technological

## Change –

## Change +

### Scenario 3: Traditional Culture eroded in Isolation:

- No new technologies but no revival in Yolngu way of life.
- Stuck in a under resourced world with welfare dependency and limited ways of breaking this cycle
- Limited education options
- Health diagnosis reliant on local clinics with limited staff who travel around the region
- No interaction with other Aboriginal groups.

### Scenario 2: Traditional Culture shrinks due to impact of Information Superhighway:

- Impact of Western culture and desire for consumer items creates disinterest in trad values in young Yolngu
- On line gambling erodes social cohesion
- Traditional art and customs not passed on to next generation due to interest in new technology and there being no links to past ways of living
- Fascination with Balanda pastimes, drinking, football, shopping online.
- Debt burden becomes a real issue for Yolngu to improve way of life.

## Social Change –