

Media Society and Culture

Alternative Media

- Definition: Media delivering information that isn't covered by corporate media
- Challenging actual concentrations of media power. Opposition to "Culture Industry"
- Community media: Participatory media that allow local people to access communication technologies
- Democratizing the discourse and structure of modern communication outlet – Building local public sphere
- Encourage public discourse, empower citizens to act, discuss subjects ignored by mainstream

Public Sphere

- A historical change caused by a convergence of social and technical phenomenon:
 - Emergence of bourgeois capitalism;
 - New composite social class - mercantile class (backed by working class)
 - Knowledge (Science, Education and Encyclopedia)
 - Information: Mass circulation media (pamphlets and newspapers)
 - Discussion: Tea, Coffee, and Salon
- Facilitated a new form of political identity (Liberal, Egalitarian, Decentered...)
- Came into being in a particular historical situation and damaged by the same processes that facilitated it.
 - The rise of Fascism (Depression, National sentiment, Classification, Darwinism, Radio)
 - The age of culture industry (Mass consumption, entertainment, dramatized politics...)

Public Sphere

- New technologies seen as a means by which Public Sphere can be recovered, restored or revitalised.
- This happens as new communication technologies possess unique qualities not present in 'mass media' forms:
 - Interactivity;
 - User production of content;
 - Individualised consumption of media;
 - Peer-communication.
- These characteristics of new media means it challenges the 'monopolization' of media by corporate enterprises and state intervention.
- They allow new channels by which citizens are able to communicate and be 'political' outside of the the corporate and state world(s).
- BUT Neoliberalism + Globalization + New communication + multi-channel communication + more fragmented life + more consumption + less public activities + more public communication= what?

UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

- **IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM**

Article 1 – Cultural diversity: the common heritage of humanity

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.

Article 2 – From cultural diversity to cultural pluralism

In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life.

Article 3 – Cultural diversity as a factor in development

Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.

UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

- **CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Article 4 – Human rights as guarantees of cultural diversity

The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples. No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.

Article 5 – Cultural rights as an enabling environment for cultural diversity

Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights, which are universal, indivisible and interdependent. The flourishing of creative diversity requires the full implementation of cultural rights as defined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in Articles 13 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. All persons have therefore the right to express themselves and to create and disseminate their work in the language of their choice, and particularly in their mother tongue; all persons are entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity; and all persons have the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice and conduct their own cultural practices, subject to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 6 – Towards access for all to cultural diversity

While ensuring the free flow of ideas by word and image care should be exercised so that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known. Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity.

UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

- **CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY**

Article 7 – Cultural heritage as the wellspring of creativity

Creation draws on the roots of cultural tradition, but flourishes in contact with other cultures. For this reason, heritage in all its forms must be preserved, enhanced and handed on to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, so as to foster creativity in all its diversity and to inspire genuine dialogue among cultures.

Article 8 – Cultural goods and services: commodities of a unique kind

In the face of present-day economic and technological change, opening up vast prospects for creation and innovation, particular attention must be paid to the diversity of the supply of creative work, to due recognition of the rights of authors and artists and to the specificity of cultural goods and services which, as vectors of identity, values and meaning, must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods.

Article 9 – Cultural policies as catalysts of creativity

While ensuring the free circulation of ideas and works, cultural policies must create conditions conducive to the production and dissemination of diversified cultural goods and services through cultural industries that have the means to assert themselves at the local and global level. It is for each State, with due regard to its international obligations, to define its cultural policy and to implement it through the means it considers fit, whether by operational support or appropriate regulations.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Article 10 – Strengthening capacities for creation and dissemination worldwide

In the face of current imbalances in flows and exchanges of cultural goods at the global level, it is necessary to reinforce international cooperation and solidarity aimed at enabling all countries, especially developing countries and countries in transition, to establish cultural industries that are viable and competitive at national and international level.

Article 11 – Building partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and civil society

Market forces alone cannot guarantee the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity, which is the key to sustainable human development. From this perspective, the pre-eminence of public policy, in partnership with the private sector and civil society, must be reaffirmed.