

Jaslyn Reader: Gender in Cultural Policy. 17th November Academic Congress

Title of the presentation.

- Understand Gender and Diversity in Global Cultural Policy: A Feminist Reading of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions

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Keywords: 5 words representative of the research topic.

- Gender, Diversity, Cultural & Creative Industries, Neoliberal governance, Postfeminism

Introduction and key concepts of the paper.

The creative/information economy has been largely celebrated for its plethora of social, economic and development benefits. However, two decades since the Cultural and Creative Industries' (CCI) rise to popularity in policy circles, complex and competing agendas have become apparent, posing challenges for cultural diversity and the representation and meaningful equality of women. UNESCO's role in streamlining and influencing cultural policy on an international level has received little attention in regards to gender. This leaves a gap for further research on how women are constructed and constituted in CCI policy in a rapidly globalising world, characterised by novel and affectual forces of neoliberalism and postfeminism. This thesis uses a feminist poststructuralist and International Relations lens, and the WPR approach (what is the problem represented to be) to examine the 2005 UNESCO Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions. By critically engaging with a pivotal piece of global cultural policy, this thesis endeavours to understand how women have been discursively and subjectively constructed, and how this enables or forecloses space for gender equality. By providing a meta-critical analysis, this thesis aims to

open up space for further research on how women's empowerment can be meaningfully addressed in policy that claims 'diversity' as its goal.

Research methodology.

Case Study:

- A qualitative analysis of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of a diversity of Cultural Expressions
 - UNESCO is widely accepted as a global leader on issues of Culture and authoritative on regulation of CCI policy.
 - The convention itself is widely regarded as a normative milestone and It is widely received as standard setting within global cultural policy
 - It is also widely regarded by scholars as demonstrating a marked shift in the CCI policy debate globally

Methodology:

- Carol Bacci's "What is the problem represented to be?"
 - This method was chosen over more traditional tools of policy analysis, as gendered relations and structures of power are often made invisible within the technocratic speak of policy
 - This method does not assume the existence of a problem, but rather works to understand how the problem has been represented,
 - enables us to politicize and deconstruct governmentality,

Main results and conclusions.

3 key findings could be identified and grouped

1. Diversity of Cultural Expressions constituted as tradable, instrument and public
 - a. Culture is characterized as expressive, productive, distributive and consumptive
 - i. This is made made possible by a shift in the wording from UNESCO's previously broader classification of the Cultural as cultural phenomenon, to Cultural Expressions, which is easier to quantify
 - ii. The change of wording and legal terminology to CE delineates culture in such a way to fit to international trade on cultural and creative goods and services,
 - iii. it reduces states to providing market-related services for culture, as opposed to culture's original key functions.

- iv. This Growing Prioritisation of economic rationale over often contradictory non-economic goals is clear as:
 - b. This fails to see the gendered divides deeply embedded within Creative economy
 - i. The CCI present as the postcard for the future of work, embedded in NL governance.
 - ii. This thus, creates greater reliance and retraditionalization on women's roles as un or underpaid carers
 - c. Secondly, this assumption of cultural expressions is problematic for the ways women can participate in the Cultural.
 - i. Under this framing women's participation in the cultural, which are often in traditional, and non-commodifiable ways, are rendered invisible.
 - ii. This leads to the assumption that they need help to participate in the cultural- as if they do not already, as if they haven't already been a part of cultural phenomenon, its creation, and its enjoyment for centuries
 - iii. And where they still are perceptible often the dichotomy of their gendered subtexts leaves them mostly devalued-
- 2. Cultural Expressions as empowerment: Finding 2 is concerned with Article 7 of the CDCE and the way it ties womens full production and consumption of their own CE to their empowerment-
 - a. The Assumption is that women can be empowered with the help of states to access and participate in cultural markets-
 - b. through this construction of women's empowerment a dual narrative emerges that is
 - i. women's/girls crisis- their special needs and circumstances,
 - ii. their perceived untapped potential as consumers and producers
 - c. It renders empowerment under the terms of NL governmentally which suits the needs of the creative economy and reinforces the construction of cultural expressions previously mentioned
 - d. This particular construction of empowerment or the empowered female results in problematic and contradictory cultural expressions for women and feminism as we see through what schoalrs term postfeminism
 - e. This reading of empowerment - which is reduced to an individualised process of owning, consuming and producing one's own cultural expressions equates women's empowerment to visibility
 - f. Where simply performing cultural expressions is the same thing as the political project of equality
 - g. This economy of visibility- as termed by Banet Weiser- is vastly different to the previous politics of visibility- which reduces visibility to an end goal, rather than a tool on the path towards social justice
 - h. And as such, this sort of empowerment promotes a flagrant performativity of (acceptable) individual identity construction

- i. These key (acceptable) sites of performance/expression for women are constituted as a focus on individuation, hyper-femininity, retraditionalisation, and (expressing) sexual autonomy in the body
- 3. Problematic Diversity in Diversity of cultural Expressions” The final finding is in regards to the main claim of the convention- diversity
 - a. The CDCE is primarily concerned with culture that is nation-state-centric, static and conservationist- that is seeking to preserve cultural expressions are they traditionally were or currently are
 - i. This construction of culture risks ignoring and further entrenching traditional social constructs, most of which rely on subversive gendered relations and stereotypes.
 - ii. women traditionally have a unique place as the reproductive site of national culture both biologically and as nurturers of intangible cultural and social value
 - iii. The CDCE’s framing of culture in this way thus constricts the potential for future imaginings which defy the current status quo or accepted national cultural narratives
 - iv. Diversity, especially in terms of culture and representation is a hybrid and ongoing process,
 - v. Thus - the CDCE’s vague and non-committal language for developmental aspects of culture in comparison to its strong and enforceable economic interests results in a policy incapable of the huge task of achieving cultural rights, meaningful diversity and social justice
 - b. Lastly, we look at the subjective construction within the documents, and how this facilitates or forecloses efforts for diversity
 - i. First we see the nation-state propping up gendered hierarchies, - as it is expected to adhere to behaviours of rationality, and the pursuit of wealth- in this case for cultural goods and services.
 - ii. The CDCE reflects these binaries as harder masculine policy goals of economic success, cultural security, copyright protection Are prioritised over softer feminised goals of education, civic participation and artistic freedom
 - c. The individual subject whom the CDCE seeks to govern is seen to be inherently male
 - i. as its characteristics are presumed to have the capital, freedom, access, modernity, upward mobility and level of responsibility of what is understand as masculine values and privileges
 - ii. This subjective framing has consequences for the ability and ease through which women and other minority groups can enter these cultural spaces
 - iii. However the contradiction lies once again in the neoliberal illusion of scientificity, where the individual is governed as a consumer- not citizen- structural inequalities become further invisible and problems of diversity become widely dispersed.

Conclusion:

- So why care?
- This research has shown the ways in which a lack of gender awareness, combined with growing neoliberal governance in cultural policy has led to profound effects for gender equality.
- This research, exposes three ways in which Neoliberal governance pervades cultural life
- Firstly, such policies often keep women from entering the cultural industries which are seen to be the posterchild of post industrial labour
- Secondly, it renders invisible structural inequalities, the cultural reproductive role and the increased responsabilization for women with the neoliberal illusion of scientificity
- Lastly, it hollows out, manipulates and even erases culture for women and minority groups which don't fit the narrow confines and the stringent needs of the creative economy.
- Without a feminist curiosity in Cultural policy, we see a tragic closing of space for women and efforts of meaningful diversity
- Cultural policy is unique and powerful in its potential to create new social imaginings and future possibilities
- There is great research potential in understanding the gendered impacts of cultural policy as it bleeds into so many areas of social, political, economic and creative life.