

# Cultural Capital and the Politics of a Changing World

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# Outline of presentation

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- Definitions of cultural capital
  - Major effects of cultural capital
  - Why cultural capital matters for public policy
  - How cultural capital is changing
  - Implications for policy
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# Definitions of cultural capital

- **Cultural capital** - the “disposal of taste” or “consumption of specific cultural forms that mark people as members of specific classes” (Bourdieu)
- **Tangible cultural capital** – “an asset that embodies a store of cultural value, such as heritage buildings or artifacts” (Throsby)
- **Intangible cultural capital** – “ideas, traditions and customs shared by a group of people”, including intellectual capital such as language, literature, music, etc. (Throsby)

# Major effects of cultural capital

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- Personal empowerment
- Cultural participation
- Cultural development and quality of life
- Cultural sustainability

# Why cultural capital matters for public policy

- Tangible cultural capital – “cultural landscapes”, sites, monuments and artifacts - symbolic devices for nation-building
- Intangible cultural capital – “the collective imagination” as a tool for nation-building and economic growth

# How cultural capital is changing

- Tangible cultural capital – growing diversity and commercialization of public space leading to contested public sites and public history
- Intangible cultural capital – growth of “brands” and commercialization of content, coupled with growing diversity and individualism – leading to challenges to “official culture”

# Cultural capital – changes in time

- Personal empowerment – growing individualism, diversity, gender-equity affecting the type of cultural capital people value
- Cultural participation – time pressures, new technologies, new forms of cultural capital are changing consumption patterns, leading to disengagement from “official culture”

# Cultural capital – changes in space

- Cultural development and quality of life – spaces of commemoration morphing into spaces of consumption
- Cultural sustainability – commodification of lifestyles and “glocalization” privileging the transnational, the local and “sub-cultural” capital

# Implications of changes in cultural capital for policy

- Cultural policy – national policies becoming less relevant as value shifts to cultural capital at the global and local level
- Citizenship policy – creation of collective citizenship becoming more challenging as individual consumerism and transnational identities grow

# Time, space and policy

- Recognition that both time and space are in constant mutation
- Cultural capital is changing rapidly
- Cultural and citizenship policy should focus on:
  - flows, rather than products
  - connections, rather than nodes