

WEEK 8

1. Civic Engagement

- **What It Is:** Civic engagement is citizens' active involvement in the community and government to improve society. It can be direct, like voting, or indirect, such as raising awareness.
- **Key Definitions:**
 - **Community Service:** Volunteering locally, either individually or in groups, to support and uplift the community. Examples include helping at a food bank or cleaning up public spaces.
 - **Collective Action:** Working together to address common societal challenges, like organizing campaigns to reduce pollution or improve healthcare access.
 - **Political Involvement:** Engaging with government processes, from voting to lobbying or participating in public debates. This emphasizes the civic duty of citizens to contribute to decision-making.
 - **Social Change:** Involves actions aimed at reshaping society to be fairer or more inclusive, such as advocating for equal rights or supporting policy changes.
- **Dimensions of Civic Engagement:**
 - Civic engagement can range from **informal acts** like helping neighbors to **formal political activities** like campaigning.
 - It spans various sectors beyond government, including nonprofits and social organizations, and can be either **paid or unpaid**.
- **Why It Matters:** Civic engagement fosters a sense of community, encourages trust, and can increase civic commitment, especially at the local level. It is also linked to better social cohesion and resilience, as people feel more invested in their surroundings and each other.

2. Civic Space

- **Definition:** Civic space is an open environment where people can interact freely with society and their government, discuss public issues, and participate in civic life.
- **Core Functions of Civic Space:**
 - **Information Access:** People can obtain information about policies, events, and decisions that affect their lives.
 - **Expression and Dialogue:** Enables free speech and discussions, where individuals and groups can share opinions, including dissenting views.
 - **Participation:** Provides the means to join others in public discussions, protests, or events to express collective views.
- **Importance of an Open Civic Space:**
 - An open civic space supports democracy by allowing freedom of expression, assembly, and association. These freedoms enable citizens to participate meaningfully and influence policies affecting them.

- **UN and OECD Guidelines** emphasize the need to protect civic space, advocate for human rights, support independent media, and provide a safe environment for activism.
- **Challenges in Civic Space:**
 - **Threats to Freedom:** Restrictions on speech or assembly can hinder civic participation.
 - **Digital Surveillance and Privacy:** The rise of digital tracking and data collection poses risks, potentially limiting citizens' willingness to participate openly.

3. Social Activism

- **Definition:** Social activism is the practice of promoting change in social, political, or environmental areas. It often involves public actions or advocacy to bring about reforms.
- **Types of Activism:**
 - **Oppositional Activism:** Involves protests, demonstrations, or strikes to challenge current policies or societal norms.
 - **Alternative Activism:** Focuses on building new, sustainable practices or institutions, like community cooperatives or centers promoting values such as equality and sustainability.
 - **Revolutionary Activism:** Aims for deeper structural changes, seeking to transform major societal institutions or values, often through large-scale or sustained movements.
- **Strategies and Tactics:**
 - **Petitions, Boycotts, Marches:** Common tactics to gather support and pressure institutions.
 - **Diffusion of Tactics:** If a tactic proves effective, it often spreads to other movements or regions, strengthening its impact.
 - **Innovation with Technology:** The rise of online and digital activism enables activists to mobilize quickly, spread messages widely, and engage diverse audiences.

4. Online Activism

- **Evolution:**
 - **Early Internet (1990s - Early 2000s):** Used mainly for information sharing via email and simple websites, which laid the groundwork for more interactive activism.
 - **Blogging and Forums (2000–2010):** As forums and blogs grew, people shared opinions and engaged in online discussions on various issues, forming communities.

- **Social Media (2010+):** Platforms like Facebook and Twitter became powerful tools for organizing campaigns and mobilizing supporters. Hashtags emerged as an organizing tool for movements (e.g., #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter).
- **Live Streaming and Crowdfunding:** In recent years, live videos and crowdfunding have allowed activists to share real-time updates and raise funds for causes efficiently.
- **Digital Activism Benefits:** new medium of pol communication
 - **Democratization of Information:** Social media gives voice to those often left out of traditional media, enabling broader participation and inclusivity.
 - **Mobilization and Organization:** Activists can quickly mobilize supporters, coordinate protests, and organize campaigns. increase reach
 - **Awareness and Education:** Social platforms spread awareness on various issues and encourage informed discussions.
- **Challenges of Online Activism:**
 - **Digital Divide:** Not everyone has equal access to technology, which can limit participation.
 - **Superficial Engagement:** “Clicktivism,” or low-effort online actions like sharing a post, may not translate into meaningful, sustained activism.
 - **Misinformation and Inequality:** Online platforms can spread misinformation, and powerful voices often dominate, marginalizing others.
trolling, rumors, fake news

Confirmation Bias : Echo chambers

with so many available views ppl tend to accept those which support their pre existing ideas even if they are wrong
social media causes this illusion using its algorithm to make ppl think evry1 thinks the same

it is the gap btw ppl with and without access
i) Access to devices
ii) Usage of device
iii) Quality of use