Digital Cosmopolitanism

Fergal Lenehan

Friedrich Schiller University of Jena

What is it?

Cosmopolitanism refers to a sense of world-opening. Digital cosmopolitanism theorizes and analyzes this idea in relation to the reality of ubiquitous digitality. It can be conceived as a type of normative critique – reimagining a different and more 'intercultural' internet; as a type of real and existing non-national solidarity and digital-based activism; and as a way to describe and analyze the everyday digital-material world of migrants and diaspora.

Who uses the concept?

Digital cosmopolitanism is used by political scientists, communication scholars, and social theorists in a normative critical manner in analyzing and re-imagining the Internet; by anthropologists and sociologists when investigating the everyday imaginaries of individuals, especially migrants and diaspora; and by social scientists and media scholars when analyzing various forms of solidarity.

Fit with intercultural dialogue?

One form of digital cosmopolitanism sees the concept as linked with a transformative sense, i.e., an opening to the wider world and an engagement with others in relation to issues of global importance, resulting in self-reflection and potentially self-transformation. This understanding of digital cosmopolitanism is essentially dialogic, in terms of engagement with both self and others.

What work remains?

Intercultural communication scholars who examine digital discourse have been relatively slow to engage with digital cosmopolitanism. The concept is malleable but inherently situates discourse in a wider cultural-political context. Scholars have also been slow to use digital cosmopolitanism – understood as a transformative discourse resulting in a change of self, due to connection with others – to conceptualize newer, international forms of digital far-right discourse, an avenue which could potentially be productive.

Resources

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