



DIMUN25

Dr. İlhami Tankut Anatolian High School Model United Nations
Conference

UNHRC

Agenda Item:

**Reinstating the representation of
race, gender, sexuality and social
class in modern international
media regarding toddlers and
young adults in relation to pop-
culture and history.**

Co-Under Secretary General: Kayra Duran

Co-Under Secretary General: Selin Esin

Table of Content

- 1) Letter From the Secretariat,
- 2) Letter From the Under Secretaries General,
- 3) Introduction to the Committee,
- 4) Introduction to the Agenda Item,
- 5) Representations of Race, Gender, Social Class and Sexuality in Modern Media;
 - 5.1) Current Trends and Challenges,
 - 5.2) The Role of Popular Culture,
- 6) The Rights and History of Alternative Representation,
- 7) Accessibility Restrictions to Toddlers and Young Adults;
 - 7.1) Governmental and International Legal Frameworks, Regulations and Policies,
 - 7.2) Parental Provision and Censorship,
- 8) Questions To Be Addressed (QTBA),
- 9) Bibliography.

1) Letter From the Secretariat

Greetings Esteemed Attendees,

As the secretary general of the conference. It is with great pleasure that I extend gracious hospitality and welcome you all, participants of DiMUN'25, which will be held in Antalya from June 27th to 29th.

As we gather for this Model United Nations conference, we look forward to thought-provoking debates, insightful dialogues, and meaningful opportunities for collaboration. The delegates of this conference may have enlightening discussions and foster their diplomatic skills. With committees exploring a wide array of historical topics, delegates are sure to be both challenged and inspired, cultivating their critical thinking and diplomacy throughout the experience.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the organizing team and academic team for their dedication and hard work in order to raise DiMUN'25 to the pinnacle!

Furthermore, it is important not to place undue pressure on yourself before or during the conference. All participants are here to enhance their personal and academic growth while engaging with new peers in that kind of conference, so please be reminded of that. Therefore, remember to enjoy the experience and make the most of your time. Stay tuned for an enriching and memorable event.

Sincerely,

Erdem Demirci

Secretary-General

DiMUN'25

2) Letter From the Under Secretaries General

Dear Delegates of UNHRC,

It is my utmost honour to welcome you all to this Committee. First of all, I would like to start my letter by thanking the most prestigious secretariat of DIMUN25 for giving me this opportunity to meet with you all. It might still be early in the progress of the conference while I am composing this letter however, I am most certain that it will be impeccable with the works of the wonderful Organisation team. My lovely delegates, it warms my soul to see your participation in this Committee. I wish for your attention to be directed towards the Committee when the time comes. I advise you to read this study guide carefully, be as it may, it might not be what you expect after all. Freedom of expression of opinion is an important topic in the field of Humanities. I decided to conduct this committee as I felt this is a topic that might benefit you in the future. Please come prepared to the Committee and do your work. You can always ask me any questions about anything on;

kayraduran@gmail.com

Yours Curelly,

Kayra Duran

Dear delegates,

esteemed Academic Team and Executive Team, My name is Selin Esin, and I am a student at Erüinal High School. I am honored to serve as the Under Secretary General for the UNHRC committee. I would like to take this opportunity to express my excitement and enthusiasm about the upcoming conference. I firmly believe that this committee will provide us with the platform to explore meaningful solutions to global issues and challenges. Moreover, I am looking forward to meeting and working with all of you, the dedicated delegates.

Thank you for your attention, and I am looking forward to a successful and inspiring conference.

Sincerely,

Selin Esin

Under Secretary General, UNHRC

3) Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a subordinate body within the United Nations system, responsible for promoting and protecting human rights around the world. Established in 2006, it replaces the former UN Commission on Human Rights and operates as a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly. The primary function of UNHRC is to address human rights violations, develop international standards, and provide recommendations to member states. It achieves this through investigations, special procedures, and diplomatic resolutions. Additionally, UNHRC appoints Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups to investigate specific human rights issues, including freedom of expression, gender equality, and the rights of marginalized communities.

In recent years, the UNHRC has played a crucial role in advocating for inclusivity and diversity in media representation, recognizing that media is a powerful tool in shaping public perception and reinforcing social narratives. The committee has addressed concerns related to stereotyping, discrimination, and underrepresentation of various social groups, particularly in content targeting children and young audiences.

As part of its mission, the UNHRC is committed to ensuring that media and popular culture uphold the principles of equality, dignity, and non-discrimination, making it a relevant platform for discussing the agenda item at hand. Through international cooperation and policy recommendations, the council strives to create a media landscape that is fair, inclusive,

and representative of all individuals, regardless of race, gender, social class, or other social identities.

4) Introduction to the Agenda Item

The representation of power structures and race, gender, sexuality and social class in the media are censored to a point in which we can only view cultural narratives with the perception of the white male. This has become a problem in the freedom of expression of opinion as it limits us, humans, to tell our story in an authentic way. Regulations, censorship and restrictions of authentic expression are being executed all around the world by the governments. However, The United Nations believe that all media should be free of restrictions so we can achieve true political and social democracy. The media we consume not only affects our information or entertainment, but it shapes us in a way that the mass producers are trying to mold us. In this agenda item, we will delve into governmental restrictions of censorship and parental provision, and how to achieve political and social freedom within the borders of the United Nations Human Rights Council. It is highly encouraged for the delegates of this committee to not only stick to this study guide as their primary source of information and do their research on their country's politics, social hierarchies and mass media regulators. Please keep in mind that this study guide mostly focuses its point to the western media as most east asian states have their own systems of media to a point that an American produced movie reaches nearly every country but a Chinese piece of media mostly only stays within the borders of the country. This debate on representation is based on the pieces of media consumed worldwide.

5) Representations of Race, Gender, Social Class and Sexuality in Modern Media

From the perspective of Cultural Studies as a field, the media is not just a reflection of society but a tool for discourse production, where dominant ideologies, tropes and narratives are constructed, contested, and reinforced. Media texts; television shows, films, advertisements, or, social media content operate within larger systems of power; shaping how race, gender, class, and sexuality are understood and reinforced in our everyday life. Methods like discourse analysis, textual analysis and rhetoric analysis allows us to examine how these representations naturalise inequalities, challenge hegemonic norms or form cultural narratives making them a powerful tool in shaping audiences' understanding of identity and belonging.

A Scholar in American Studies, Lynn Weber, who works on intersectionality and social systems of power in her work, argues that; race, gender, class, and sexuality must be analyzed as connected terms rather than separate categories of oppression. In media representation, this means we should recognise how narratives of inclusion or exclusion are shaped by multiple branches of power at once. For example, a character's racial identity is not just about race, it is about how the specified race interacts with gender, economic class, and cultural expectations while considering its commentaries on it within a given piece of text.

5.1) Current Trends and Challenges

The representation of marginalized and alternative identities in media is not only a matter of representation, it is about

- How these identities are framed within the power structures of the story,
- Who is given agency/control of the character,
- And what social meanings are being attached to them.

Even when diverse characters are included, they are often represented within a limit, working under stereotypical narratives that reinforce social hierarchies rather than breaking them.

Race

In the past, media branches have constructed race through differentiations and stereotype formation. Through the “model minority” myth for Asian-Americans, the criminalisation of Black characters, or the tokenism of Latinx or Indigenous figures, race is usually depicted in ways that uphold dominant racial hierarchies— and these hierarchies place the white man at the top norm. Even when racial diversity is present, producers usually fail to provide fully developed characters, creating tokenism and performative inclusivity. Most of these representations reflect the American opinion and discourses on the topic and often carry the political rhetoric of its time towards the represented racial group.

Gender

In the media, gender reflects broader societal distress about power and identity. Hegemonic masculinity dominates male representation, while female characters have historically been cast to roles as passive, domestic, or hypersexualised characters. Recent feminist movements

and commentaries have led to more diverse portrayals with time, but gender non-conforming and transgender identities are still highly underrepresented or misrepresented.

Social Class

Media representations of different social classes often reinforce hyper-capitalist ideologies, connecting wealth with success and poverty with personal failure. Working-class characters, if included, are frequently reduced to just comic relief or struggling victims, rather than portraying complex individuals with agency thus perpetuating a myth of meritocracy and obscures the systemic nature of economic inequality.

Sexuality

The discourse around queer representation has evolved from straight up exclusion to selective, sanitised inclusion. While there is greater visibility of these selected stereotypes, queer narratives are still centered around tragedy, struggle, or tokenism, rather than normalised, multi-dimensional human beings. In many cases, queer identities are included only when they align with heteronormative expectations while reinforcing the limits of mainstream acceptability.

5.2) The Role of Popular Culture

Media functions as both a mirror and a mold for cultural narratives. Reflecting societal values while also shaping them. Popular culture in particular is an area of cultural production where dominant narratives and ideologies of the producers are challenged, reshaped, or reinforced. Media can usually sustain existing hegemonic discourses or provide a space for counter-hegemonic narratives that challenge traditional power narratives. The increasing presence of POC creators, feminist producers, and queer media producers lead a shift toward

a more intersectional and subversive greater narrative. Also, young audiences engage with media as both passive consumers and active interpreters. While media representation influences identity formation for them, they also bring their own lived experiences to the media they consume. It is important to note that discursive representation in modern media is not neutral in its core. It is shaped by; historical power relations, economic interests, and cultural ideologies. While in the last century there has been a movement toward inclusivity, representation is often put there by corporate producers, state censorship, and popular narratives that “sell” over authentic storytelling.

6) The Rights and History of Alternative Representation

For much of history, mainstream media has been controlled by those in power, “producers” in a frankfurt school sense, deciding which stories get told and who gets to be seen. This has led to the exclusion or the misrepresentation of many groups, including people of color, women, queer individuals, and working-class communities. When these groups were to appear in media, they were often portrayed through stereotypes that supported social inequalities rather than challenging them. The fight for alternative representation was never just about being visible. It was about having the right to tell one’s own story in an authentic way.

While over the years, civil rights movements, feminist activism, and queer revolution have pushed for fairer representation, in some cases, legal policies and international agreements, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various media diversity regulations, have helped support these efforts. However, real progress was made with the works of marginalized creators and audiences demanding change. Independent filmmakers, writers,

and digital creators have used their platforms to challenge stereotypes in order to create new, more accurate narratives and despite these advances, media accuracy has not been reached yet. Large media companies and organisations still have the most control over which stories are told and financial issues make it difficult for independent creators to compete with. In some countries, governments regulate media in ways that limit alternative representation as well, either through censorship or by prioritising dominant cultural narratives.

7) Accessibility Restrictions to Toddlers and Young Adults

The media that toddlers and young adults consume plays a major role in shaping their world views on race, gender, social class, and identity and access to diverse representation is often controlled by government policies, international regulations, and parental censorship. While restrictions are often seen as necessary for protecting them, they can also be used to limit them from seeing alternative perspectives, dominant social and political ideologies. Over the years, the United Nations and United Nations Human Rights Council have taken steps to address these restrictions, but enforcement challenges and resistance from individual member states have limited progress.

7.1) Governmental and International Legal Frameworks, Regulations, and Policies

Governments regulate media access through censorship laws, rating systems, and broadcasting guidelines, often influenced by national values, political interests, and religious beliefs. While some policies aim to protect children from violent or inappropriate content,

others actively suppress representations of marginalized identities, reinforcing social inequalities.

China's State Censorship, 2017

Through the Cybersecurity Law, and other media regulations, China bans content related to queer identities, non-traditional family structures, and politically sensitive topics. Streaming platforms, social media, and films undergo strict government reviews, ensuring that only state-approved narratives reach young audiences.

Russia's "Gay Propaganda" Law, 2013

This law prohibits media that presents "non-traditional sexual relationships" to minors, effectively erasing queer representation from mainstream content. As a result, many characters from films and books have been edited out, removed, or banned altogether.

Saudi Arabia

Media regulations rooted in Islamic religious law prohibit portrayals of same-sex relationships, gender nonconformity, and content that challenges traditional social hierarchies. Western streaming platforms and global film studios often alter content to comply with these laws.

The United States

While the U.S. does not have direct government censorship, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and parental advisory groups influence accessibility. Queer themes and racial justice topics have historically been rated more harshly, limiting their exposure to younger audiences.

India

India's CBFC regulates films and television, often censoring or banning content related to caste, queer identities, and gender issues. In some cases, politically sensitive films have been completely blocked from release.

The United Nations

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Adopted by the UN General Assembly, the CRC guarantees children of member states the right to access information that supports their development. Article 17 states that children should have access to media from diverse sources, including content that promotes social and cultural awareness.

UNESCO's Internet Universality Indicators Initiative

This framework promotes unrestricted access to digital media and information, recognising that censorship limits young people's understanding of history, identity, and human rights. The initiative has been used to evaluate how different nations regulate media access around the world.

UNHRC Resolutions on Freedom of Expression

The UNHRC has passed multiple resolutions urging governments to avoid excessive censorship and to protect the free flow of information in the past. However, because these resolutions are not law binding, many governments continue to impose restrictions without facing direct consequences.

Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Expression

The UN has appointed independent experts to monitor media censorship worldwide. These experts publish reports and provide recommendations to the United Nations, but their influence is often limited by political resistance.

Despite these efforts, many UN-led initiatives lack enforcement power, meaning that governments are free to ignore recommendations without facing significant penalties. Corporate interests in global media markets have made it difficult to challenge censorship laws, as many producer companies prioritise profits over representation.

7.2 Parental Provision and Censorship

Beyond government restrictions, parental controls and societal norms deter what young people can access. Parents play a significant role in filtering consumed content, often based on personal, religious, or cultural beliefs. This is intended to protect children from harmful material, but can also reinforce prejudice and limited exposure to diverse narratives. In many countries, religious groups and conservative organisations actively try to save restrictions on media that promote gender equality, queer narratives, or racial justice. This leads to book bans, school curriculum restrictions, and pressure on media companies to limit diverse representation. Also, streaming services and social media platforms often self-censor to avoid controversy, limiting what young audiences see. Algorithms also play a crucial role. Some platforms restrict content related to race, gender, and social class due to management bias or pressure from sponsors.

8) Questions To Be Addressed (QTBA)

- 1) How can the committee strengthen its monitoring and reporting systems and regulation control?
- 2) How can the committee work with member states in order to establish media freedom as an institution bound by international law?
- 3) In what ways can the committee collaborate with media producer companies and work to support independent media producers?
- 4) In what ways can the past actions of the United Nations be strengthened to better suit current media standards?
- 5) How can the committee ensure the legitimacy and inclusivity of parental provision and school curriculums?

9) Bibliography

Official website for the Human Rights Council;

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/about-council>

Lynn Weber on race, class, gender, and sexuality as power constructs;

https://archive.org/details/understandingrac0000webe_h9e0

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception”; <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1944/culture-industry.htm>

Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

UNHRC resolution on freedom of expression of opinion;

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3985686?v=pdf>

American National Library of Medicine on Parental Provision;

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4598347/>