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## **The Effects of Hybridization and Glocalization on Cultural Identity**

The authors read this week explore notions of cultural identity in regards to hybridization and the efforts of maintaining individual local cultural identity in light of globalization. Each author presents a different scenario that discusses the effects of cultural hybridity and provides considerations and approaches for the sustaining and continual development of local culture. Based on the analysis provided by the authors Elizabeth Delacruz, Frank Vigneron, Ryan Shin, and David Ogega Nyaberi, I consider the effects of cultural hybridization and glocalization on the development of my personal cultural identity. Throughout the readings I became aware of effects and implications of globalization that will affect the future development of local cultural practices and traditions.

In his chapter, "'Parisianisme' and Local Cultures: Supra-national, National, and Infra-national Cultures," Frank Vigneron (2009) provides a succinct definition of cultural hybridization. He states, "hybridization is how cultures are shaped and constantly transformed" (p.39). Vigneron is referring to the blending of two different cultures into a unified culture. Author David Ogega Nyaberi (2009), in his chapter, "A Policy Analysis of Formal Education in Modern Multiethnic Kenya: A Case for Cultural Hybridization," further explains cultural hybridity as a blending of cultural practices such as ethnicity, religion, historical events, politics, environment, language etc. Nyaberi also speaks of intercultural orientation as the ability for local cultures to maintain their individual cultural identity within hybridization (p.79). Through each authors' discussion of cultural hybridization and personal analysis of their respective Parisian and Kenyan cultural backgrounds, I have begun to consider the development of my personal cultural identity. As an American, growing up in the Midwest and having the opportunities to study and live in various countries of the world, I have a better understanding of the blending of cultural practices that my family has adapted or adopted based on our cultural heritage,

local culture, and aspects such as education and socio-economic status that define my cultural identity.

Vigneron also presents a discussion of the *glocal* or *glocalization*, a term that embodies the awareness of local cultural identity as being individualized and differentiated in light of globalization (p.37). Glocalization is a way to secure and spread knowledge of unique local characteristics in the wake of the hegemonic forces of globalization. Through moving to a different region of the United States, my awareness of my regional and local cultural background has become noticeable and important to my self-identity. I am proud to be both a member of “the north” and especially from the Midwest; I take ownership of my cultural identity and differentiate my personality and cultural background from others that are natives of “the south.” It is interesting to me how I choose to hold on to my glocal culture and I am determined not to assimilate to certain southern cultural practices. I have a heightened awareness as to which southern practices or traditions I adapt to my personal identity and which practices I separate myself from. For example, I refuse to lower my standards and expectations of education and my work ethic, which there are noticeable differences in cultural practice from the north to the south, but I am quick to adopt the eating and cooking of such foods as fried green tomatoes and shrimp and grits to my culinary repertoire. Through the evaluation of glocalization and living in a different region from my birthplace, I have a heightened awareness and pride of my local cultural identity from Wisconsin and as a member of the Midwest.

Authors Elizabeth Delacruz and Ryan Shin discuss situations of being American and multicultural and the efforts and issues of maintaining *supra* and *infra* nationality in terms of race, ethnicity, and cultural history. In his chapter, “Promotion of Ethnic and Cultural Identity through Visual and Material Culture among Immigrant Koreans,” Shin describes an infra-national Korean culture living in Arizona that has created their own local Korean culture that exists among the greater supra-national culture of the United States. As a Korean-American, Shin explores how people of multicultural and multiethnic backgrounds develop a unique hybridized cultural identity. Elizabeth Delacruz (2009), in her article, *What Asian American artists teach us about the*

*complicated nature of 21st century Americans' multilayered, transcultural, and hybridized identities and art practices: Implications for an intercultural and social justice oriented approach to teaching art*, explores what it means to be American and multicultural and the issues that arise from having multiple and hybridized cultural identities. In today's global society, it is difficult to define such things as race, ethnicity, and cultural history, which are ways in which society attempts to determine significance in the development of a certain groups' culture (p.7). Through reading both Shin's and Delacruz's articles, I am able to reflect on my personal infra-national identity and the difficulties I have in maintaining and defining my racial, ethnic, and cultural history due to my supra-national identity.

I am what I consider an "American Mutt." I am a quarter Cherokee Indian, over a quarter Scottish, and the rest of my cultural heritage is comprised of Irish and German. My Native American family history is lost; I am unable to prove my genealogy. I identify myself as being Native American in terms of my cultural and personal identity, yet I am unable to place a check-mark next to *Native American* on a form that asks for my ethnicity because I cannot prove my historical background to become an official member of the Cherokee Roll. This seemingly insignificant situation has left me to categorize myself as, White/Caucasian, in which I also am, but I always feel in those situations that my race and ethnic background is completely misrepresented. In these moments I am aware of my multiculturalism and the impact of colonialism and globalization on my personal cultural identity. As both Shin and Delacruz discuss in their respective articles, it is through education that we can learn, "what it means for all of us to have multiple and hybridized cultural identities" (Delacruz, 2009, p.16).

Imagining it is five hundred years in the future and anthropologists are analyzing my family's traditions, they would see a perfect example of cultural hybridization at work. Together my parents have raised six children, and of the six only two married within their race. The O'Donnell side represents the Caucasian side of the story, although a few of us have Native American heritage (there are half-siblings in my family). The in-laws themselves are a diverse fusion; Chinese-Jamaican, Mexican, and Argentinian-Uruguayan. We are not the first generation of cultural hybridity on the supra-national platform, let alone the infra-national platform. There are seventeen grandchildren at this

point in time, and the family is still growing. Food is a big part of our family's traditions and at a family gathering the presentation of food will include traditional Midwestern casseroles laden with cheese and a roast, Jamaican patties, Chinese dumplings, homemade tortillas as well as freshly caught fish and seafood dishes (our parents live on the Gulf Coast in Florida). One of my sisters and I have also lived in Asia and have studied Asian languages, religions and cultures extensively, so this interest also is manifested in our family's cultural identity. Future anthropologists would find it difficult to sort through my family's traditions in search for continuity. Probably the only regional and local impact that future anthropologists would be able to identify when evaluating my family's traditions would be in regards to discipline and the importance of education. My parents were children of survivors of the Great Depression and passed on the importance of having a strong work ethic and achieving an outstanding education in order to be successful. We are a family of hard-workers and are naturally born and very determined leaders. Perhaps that comes from our Irish, German, or Scottish ancestry, or perhaps it is a product of glocalization. Whatever may be the force behind these family traditions, discipline and the importance of education are a major part of my family's cultural identity. In regards to future anthropologists analyzing my family, they will have to sift through many layers of cultural hybridization. In the end, I think they will discover that the most evident traditions are born from our local and regional culture of being from the Midwest.

## **Terms to Know:**

Vigneron, *glocal/ glocalization*: glocal or glocalization is a term that embodies the awareness of local cultural identity as being individualized and differentiated in light of globalization, as a way to secure and spread knowledge of unique local characteristics in the wake of the hegemonic forces of globalization. (p.37)

Vigneron, *supra-national culture and infra national culture*: describes the supra national to be a cultural identity that extends beyond borders, such as the Holy Roman Empire, the European Union and China. Within the supra national culture lies infra national cultures which may be better described as local cultures. Vigneron gives an example of how modern day citizens of Hong Kong are developing their own infra-national or local culture that is separate or against the British or Chinese supra-national cultural identities; it is unique and local. (p.38)

Vigneron, *hybridization*: "how cultures are shaped and constantly transformed" (p.39) in reference to the blending of two different cultures into a unified culture.

Nyaberi, *cultural hybridity*: refers to a blending of cultural practices such as ethnicity, religion, historical events, politics, environment, language etc. Nyaberi speaks of intercultural orientation as the ability for local cultures to maintain their individual cultural identity within hybridization. (p.79)

## **References:**

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