

Danette Marie Albino

Globalization, Art and Education

Globalization and Me

February 22, 2015

Diaspora and Globalization

Throughout this course, I found myself thinking a great deal about how globalization impacts youth belonging to diasporas. In the beginning of the course, I connected the readings to mostly immigrant youth and then transitioned to connecting this course to the descendants of immigrants. Through globalization, the experiences of living in a diaspora today are not the same experiences of living in a diaspora prior to the 21st century. As globalization makes our world smaller and provides opportunities to connect around the world without much effort, those in diasporas have stronger ties to their homelands. As a member of the Latino Diaspora, specifically the Puerto Rican Diaspora, globalization has played a significant role in my life by being the source of my migration and the tool to stay connected to my homeland.

Diasporas Before the 21st Century

The term “diaspora”, rooted in the Greek language meaning “to scatter”, refers to scattered communities that share the same origin or homeland that includes both migrants and their descendants that actively stay connected to their homelands (International Diaspora Engagement Alliance, 2012). Traditionally, the term was used to describe the dispersion of Jewish people; the term eventually included Black Americans, Armenian, and Greek people whom were displaced from their homelands through violence, war, and

slave trading (International Diaspora Engagement Alliance, 2012). During the 1980s-1990s, “diaspora” has expanded to include more communities of dispersed people. Many diasporas are created through a major event that ties a people together despite dispersion (Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, 2014).

Diasporas in the 21st Century

The demographics of countries have dramatically shifted for the past couple of decades, especially that of the United States. Diaspora populations have significantly increased and diversified; discussing facts about immigration today, Garcia reports facts about the shifting populations of immigrants, such as...

Between 2000 and 2012, there was a 31.2 percent increase in the foreign-born population. During this period, the immigrant population grew from 31.1 million to 40.8 million people... The immigrant population was 5.4 percent of the total U.S. population in 1960. By 2012, immigrants made up 13 percent of the total U.S. population... In 1960, a full 75 percent of the foreign-born population that resided in the United States came from Europe, while in 2012, only 11.8 percent of the immigrant population emigrated from Europe. In 2012, 11.6 million foreign-born residents—28 percent of the foreign-born population—came from Mexico; 2.3 million immigrants came from China; 2 million came from India; 1.9 million came from the Philippines; 1.3 million came from both Vietnam and El Salvador; and 1.1 million came from both Cuba and Korea. (2013)

Of the diverse groups of diaspora members, the fastest and largest growing diaspora groups are the Asian and Latino Diasporas, with the children of immigrants making up a significant percentage of Latino population growth (Garcia, 2013). With increased

populations of minorities, businesses and politicians have been searching for ways to reach these diaspora members. Businesses work to figure which immigrant is the “right” immigrant to market to: assimilators, those that quickly embrace their host country and its customs, and biculturals, those that maintain identities for both their homelands and host countries, are seen as the “right” immigrants to market to as they are more likely to purchase American brands, while marginals, those that migrated under extreme circumstances, and ethnic affirmers, those that hold on to their homeland’s culture as much as possible, are seen as the “wrong” immigrants to market to as they are the least likely to purchase American brands (Kumar & Steenkamp, 2013). Even with the “right” diaspora members, companies still must decide if marketing to diaspora members is the “right” choice, asking themselves questions such as whether the brand has universal appeal or not, if the targeted diaspora is large enough, if it will allow their brand to expand nationally, and if the targeted diaspora’s socioeconomic status helps their brand (Kumar & Steenkamp, 2013).

Prior to the 21st century, losing close ties to the homeland and loved ones was highly likely for a typical diaspora member. However, globalization, specifically more affordable travel and advanced communication technology, has allowed diaspora members of today to keep close ties and use their ties to influence the politics and cultures of their host countries and homelands. Diaspora-focused associations lobby for or against certain policies in their homeland governments; provide financial support and resources to political parties and social movements in their host countries and homelands; partake in mass protests in issues affecting their homelands and/or their diasporas (Vertovec, 2005).

Diaspora Artists

There are several artists belonging to diasporas that utilize their identities, cultures, and experiences for their art, such as Dignidad Rebelde. Dignidad Rebelde are Melanie Cervantes and Jesus Barraza, a pair of California-based Xicano artists and activists that focus on empowering marginalized communities. They create graphic arts, mainly utilizing screen printing, that explore decolonization, self-determination, and solidarity within their own culture and diaspora and across many other cultures and diasporas. With their bold colors and direct phrases such as “Keep Our Families Together”, Dignidad Rebelde’s prints have become associated with the undocumented immigrant rights movement, along with other diaspora-related and socioeconomic movements.

References

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