

Glocalization and Population: An Asian American Perspective

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To understand who we are as individuals, we should strive to find connections in experiences that link local citizens to global forces. Education is no longer gained by merely reading books, attending schools, and absorbing information projected by teachers. In addition to experiences acquired through formal schooling, educators and learners must make use of information that is increasingly available through and acquired from other resources. Regardless of how information is acquired, people and cultures need to synthesize it carefully, with a critical eye on what is being shared, by whom, and how it might impact individual experiences, local connections, and global engagements. This review and reflection aims to link individual, community/local, and global resources that have impacted my understanding of glocalization through an Asian American perspective.

Individual Resources

Yossa (2005) discussed cultural wealth as capital and defined deficit thinking as taking the “position that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance” (p. 72) for two reasons: (a) lack of normative culture; and (b) devalued importance of education. As an immigrant Chinese American younger adult, I often viewed my minority life in deficit ways: financially poor, no-English poor, project-living-community poor, must-bring-unusual-Chinese-food-for-school-lunch poor, public-bus-riding-no-car poor, thrift-shop- ugly-shoes poor, socially-isolated-parents poor, etc. But, these deficits may be cultural capital, according to Yossa.

With aspirations to pursue higher education, I am not financially poor. By learning French (project living in Canada) and English, I have linguistic wealth. Side-by-side cooking lessons with my mother have become familial capital used in hosting annual dumpling-making Chinese New Year celebrations. Living in rural Sampson County, has resulted in social wealth when I volunteer in community services.

Community and Local Resources

In Sampson County, North Carolina 0.5% of citizens are Asian (2011-<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37163.html>); this is significantly less than the state rate of 2.3% and the national rate of 5% (2011-<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37000.html>). Having lived in larger cities with higher percentages of Asians, my transition to rural NC was difficult. When my husband and I moved to Clinton, Sampson County, we immediately connected with the owner of the local Chinese restaurant. We shared stories of our migrations from Asia, and how we have adapted to our new country. Our visual and material Asian culture (Shin, 2009) in Sampson County is miniscule, with only two Chinese restaurants and a couple of Japanese fast-food takeout options. Nonetheless, we have had individual and shared interests in promoting our Asian culture through community services, art, and education.

One joint effort involved several Asian Americans who collaborated with our local arts center¹ to host cultural events, such as August Moon Festival and Chinese New Year (http://www.clintonnc.com/view/full_story/1824444/article-Oriental-beginnings). We shared folk and family stories related to festivities, foods, music, and art. These cultural events were open and free to the public and participants of all ages.

After reading the perspectives on globalization and the role of museums presented by Riedler (2009), I reflected on how my community's arts center compares with North Carolina's art museum. The North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) is located in Raleigh. Asian persons in Raleigh is 4.3% (2010-<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/3755000.html>) and for Wake County (Raleigh) the percentage is 5.6 (2011-<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37183.html>). Given the higher-than state and national averages of Asian Americans in Wake County, I assumed that its culture would be represented in the state museum of art. A visit to the NCMA website reveals the museum's 'Collection Overview' (http://www.ncartmuseum.org/collection/collection_overview/) to include the following categories: African, American, Ancient American, Egyptian, Classical, European, Contemporary, Modern, Judaic, Rodin, Curators, Library, Search the Collection. As an

artist and art educator who relies on community resources to extend experiences beyond my studio and classroom, I am disappointed in NCMA's lack of Asian art. Upon the opening of its new West Building a couple of years ago, features of beauty, sustainability, and innovation (<http://goodnightraleigh.com/2010/04/north-carolinas-newest-wonder-the-ncma/>) did not fill the void left by this apparent neglect of Asian art. So, I casually asked front-desk and docent staff as to why; some staffers admitted to not recognizing the omission, and others guessed at the possibility of difficulties in acquisition. To date, I don't have a clear understanding of why NCMA lacks an Asian art collection: further inquiry would help in understanding what might be the forces behind acquisitions.

Riedler (2009) explored three perspectives regarding the role of museums in today's global art world: museum as cultural tourism in a utilitarian perspective; museum as a reflection of globalization in an oppositional perspective; and museum as a powerful democratic resource in a transformative perspective. Applying these perspectives to NCMA would presume that the museum consider the visitor and minority demographics of its community in how art might be acquired. Given the Research Triangle² location, NCMA would have much to gain in economic, educational, and commercial growth if Asian and Asian American perspectives were to be considered and included in its collection.

Global Resources

Riedler (2009) also highlighted the "paradoxes and ironies in relation to the homogenization and universalization of the display world" (p. 56) and explained that despite changes in how museums operate, challenges still remain in how voices are represented and what viewers absorb as a "frozen past and an elitist Euro-American view" (p. 56). Perhaps, Asians and Asian Americans could better focus their efforts in making global impacts within local venues by way of interactive and participatory education, such as cultural events, activities, and festivals?

Take for example the Weifang International Kite Festival highlighted by Wang (2009). In April, regional, national, and international enthusiasts flock to Weifang in northern China. Wang highlighted the importance of this festival for local citizens to share their Chinese history of and pride in kite-making. The local festivity has become a global celebration with participation of approximately half a million people in 2005. Wang noted that this sort of “international cultural expression and exchange... [is a] site for global cultural, artistic, recreational, and economic activity and exchange...local and global” (p. 44).

Conclusion

Asian perspectives in culture may be expressed and experienced through individual, local and community, and global resources. Information disseminated through events, big and small, local and global, have the power to build positive relationships and make significant connections such that information becomes purposeful knowledge and meaningful experiences. I have turned my cultural deficits into cultural wealth by applying knowledge and education in furthering relationships and experiences. Individual strengths are effective in expanding education and advocacy through community efforts. The Sampson Arts Council is a significant venue for community-based art education; despite its small-town purpose, it outshines the large lack of Asian art evident at NCMA in the bigger city of Raleigh. And, although individual and local efforts may not be as far-reaching as the Weifang International Kite Festival (Wang, 2009), my community has made connections with messages that are founded on global experiences of tradition, history, culture, and migration. Asian persons make up a small percentage of the citizens in Sampson County, but our population has great pride and strength in sharing its culture with a community that is open to learning.

Resources

Riedler, M. (2009). The nature and notion of museums in the age of globalization. In E. M. Delacruz, A. Arnold, M. Parsons, and A. Kuo, (Eds.), *Globalization, art, and education* (pp. 54-59). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.

Shin, R. (2009). Promotion of ethnic and cultural identity through the visual and material culture among immigrant Koreans. In E. M. Delacruz, A. Arnold, M. Parsons, and A. Kuo, (Eds.), *Globalization, art, and education* (pp. 47-53). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.

Wang, W. (2009). Sculpting the sky: The art and culture of Weifang International Kite Festival. In E. M. Delacruz, A. Arnold, M. Parsons, and A. Kuo, (Eds.), *Globalization, art, and education* (pp. 41-46). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A Critical Race Theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 8(1), 69–91.

Endnotes

¹Sampson Arts Council is venue for many community-based education opportunities. http://www.clintonnc.com/view/full_story/21391842/article-Greer-features-Native-American-portraits-in-Small-House-exhibit ; <http://sampsonarts.net/>

²The Research Triangle area is hub to over a dozen higher education institutions, with collegiate and professional sports, and corporate sites that support local and global commerce. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_Triangle