

**Amber Lemser**

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## **Identities: A Global Issue**

### **Introduction**

When thinking about globalization and its issues there are vast majorities that could be pointed out. A strong issues that sticks out on its own is identity. This issue has plagued people, cultures, families, and society for decades. How do we create an identity, how do we identify with others, and how do we figure out what shapes our identity? These are questions that come with the issue of identity.

### **Creating an Identity in a Globalized World**

In the United States there are multiple identities such as cultures, age, race, language, and others just to name a few. Through a language survey collected in 2007 by the United States Census Bureau (2010), they established that there are five language identities spoken in the U.S.A. Those languages were English, Spanish, Asian/ Pacific Islander, and Indigenous others. The census also found that many of its citizens of different cultural backgrounds spoke another language at home. With this mix of cultural identities in the United States. It's exhausting finding one's own identity that's also incorporated into one's culture or family ties.

At a young age, children start to establish who they are as a person: what they believe, what they like, what they don't like, and how they're similar/ different from others. Others being people of race, age, gender, or community. Children's identities are shaped by their culture of peers or artifacts and practices created by adults as explored in Christine M. Thompson's research (2009). The research showed the effects of popular culture around them, and what their

peers are exploring. With the fast growing globalized markets, it has started a trend of overlapping cultures, languages, ideas, customs, and beliefs in children's marketing goods. Society's children today are trapped by adult ideas. They lack the peer culture they need to create their own identities.

With the globalized markets knocking down barriers. It has created a whole new avenue for the development of one's identity. Now people can be known/criticized locally and globally. We have seen a pattern of issues and strides in the last decade made with new global media, such as the Internet and a variety of online gismos and gadgets in multiple hands across the world. With these tools in hand, the mass media attacks against different individuals, groups, and communities through cyberbullying and viruses that infect societies locally/globally has gotten stronger. There are strides with the new media age of globalization identity as well, though. People with the same interest, ideas, and crafts are coming together to create communities and identities of their own. An example of this stride was through fan art as noted by the author Marjorie Manifold in her (2009) research done on fan art and Anime. Another example of this was the Santa Fe Folk Art Market that is hosted every year in New Mexico. One could find on the market's online resources site "International Folk Art Alliance", information on a specific culture /person's identity and history as tied to their artwork. Through this wonderful event/organization people can connect to other cultures, and see how they are influenced from the support of the event (International Folk Art Alliance, 2014).

With all of this new globalized information, our youngsters have got a lot on their plate. They not only struggle with globalized mass media effects but issues that have plagued our world for days, months, years, and decades. Those issues are race, gender, religion, culture, and ideas about identity.

## **An Artist Affect**

Many young contemporary artists have brought these identity issues to light through their artwork. Allowing viewers to get a glimpse into what life is really like for individuals, and how they are similar and different. An artist that points out an issue with religious identities was the French Street artist named JR featured in a (2011) Ted Talks. JR showed his *Face2Face* project that used massive portrait photographs of people from the same place, but with different religious backgrounds. Then he pasted these photographs all over the local area, and ask people what they thought about the photographs. He ask them questions like who the images of are, or what is their religion or their native background? Thus, showing society an example of how we may not have the same beliefs, but we are all similar on the outside. Another artist who focuses on gender identity in their artwork is/was the young Indian artist Bharti Kerr. She uses the popular Bindi eyes used by married women in India to symbolize the third eye as pieces in her works of art. She often covers a whole artwork with Bindi's to recognize the importance of one's soul or identity as a woman or human (Hauser & Wirth, n.d).

## **Shaping Up**

So, how are our future global citizens going to create their own identities in this mass media, crazy hybrid of a local and global world we live in? The simple answer is through every one of us on this planet. Especially through the educator. It's an educator's job to be globally aware for our young entities and for ourselves. I am not saying that we can go out and find their identities for them, but we can help them in their inquiries about their identities. We can aid them searching their identities out, establish ideas about who they are, where they have come from, and who their identities will be in the future.

The identity issue will always be a global issue. There will always be difference and similarities among people. There will never be a world of just one color. We as educators need to strive to support our students. We can establish avenues for our students to explore. May that exploration be through their family or cultural backgrounds, their ideas about popular culture, understanding issues on bullying/race/gender/ religion, or we can open discussions about everyday life. Yes! Some of these topics are painful, and eye opening! But without this knowledge, our future's identities will be drones to what popular culture and society makes them. We must as educators step up, and help create better identities for our future world leaders.

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