

## Globalization: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge

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This study of the concept of globalization started out as an effort to bring together several long-standing scholarly interests of mine: a set of projects on the development of U.S. institutions, particularly nonprofit organizations; and, because my study of nonprofits involved participating in creating a new multidisciplinary sub-field, a set of projects on the mechanics and dynamics of knowledge-building.

Trained as an American historian, I naturally had viewed the evolution of philanthropy, voluntary associations, nonprofit organizations, and related entities and activities as an American story. Over the years, however, I became increasingly and uncomfortably aware that American institutions and most of the social movements that gave rise only local manifestations of transnational phenomena. The Catholicism of the Spanish settlements of North America was part and parcel of a church that operated by the sixteenth century on a global scale. Likewise, the Protestantisms shared by the British, Dutch, and German colonists were offshoots of a worldwide revolution in religious sensibility. Among the earliest American secular voluntary associations, Freemasonry, was likewise part of a worldwide fellowship. There could be, it seemed, no more quintessentially American religious movement than the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century – but for the fact that the chief inspiration for Jonathan Edwards’s theology was British philosopher John Locke and that British preacher George Whitefield did as much as any American clergyman to disseminate Edwards’s ideas into a trans-Atlantic evangelical religious culture. And so it went -- the work of Boston Unitarians Channing and Tuckerman among Boston’s poor; the international anti-slavery movement of the ante bellum decades; the charities reform movement of the 1880s and 90s; the *fin de siecle* settlement house

movement – all enterprises not merely inspired by non-American models, but carried forward by men and women participating in trans-Atlantic communities of discourse, exchange, and migration. Inevitably, because of my interest in the social backgrounds of reformers and institution builders and in the sources of financial support for their efforts. I was well aware of the extent to which the fortunes of philanthropic families and institutional endowments derived from American participation in a global system of trade.

The problem was that I had no way of conceptualizing these larger systems. Historiography offered comparative approaches that enabled one to assess developments in one nation against those in others. But comparison only served to reaffirm the concept of nationhood and locality – whereas what I was looking for was a way of addressing these national institutions and activities as dynamically interrelated parts of transnational *systems*. Comparative approaches were problematic for other reasons as well: Scholars of U.S. history seldom had the knowledge or linguistic facility to venture competently beyond Anglo-America (see, for example, Rogers 1998); even if one did so, there was little or no audience for such work because history departments were organized to focus on national developments, as were the interests of book publishers and journal editors.

To write about nonprofit organizations – a domain still largely unrecognized by the academic mainstream – was to insure one's marginality. To study nonprofits from a transnational perspective would be to commit academic suicide!

### **Encountering Globalization**

When I arrived at Harvard two and a half years ago after almost three decades at Yale – moving from a divinity school to a school of public policy and management -- I suddenly found myself surrounded by people interested in globalization, globalism, and transnationality. I was immediately struck both by the ubiquity of its use and the multiplicity of meanings it carried (on this, see Beyer 2001 and Berger & Huntington, 2002). For KSG Dean Joe Nye and the other

high policy types, the terms connoted global economic and political westernization. For economist Amartya Sen, they meant something more multicentered and concerned with globally shared norms of equality and economic justice (Nye & Donahue 2000; Sen 2002a, 2002b). For my colleagues Dave Brown and Sanjeev Khagram, they involved NGOs, global social movements, and the creation of transnational civil society (Brown, Khagram & Moore 2000). For our visiting scholar Peggy Levitt, they involved transnational identities and migratory populations (Levitt 2001).

The ways in which the terms were being used and the variety of people using them resonated powerfully with my own memory of how quickly terms I had helped to invent – like “nonprofit sector” and “nonprofit organization” – had been almost unquestioningly embraced and indiscriminately used to mean pretty much whatever the user wanted them to mean. I sensed a neologism that was serving as a *projective category*: a language and set of concepts into which people dumped whatever intellectual baggage they happened to be carrying. But I also knew from my study of the evolution of academic interest in nonprofits that this kind of behavior was symptomatic of a process that had to be taken seriously.

### **Nonprofits as a Model of Knowledge Building**

The decades following the second World War were marked by an astounding proliferation of nonprofit organizations. In 1940, only about 13,000 were registered with the Internal Revenue Service; by 1950, nearly 50,000 had registered; by the mid-1960s, when the service started systematically keeping track of registrations, they numbered more than a quarter million; today (depending on how one defines a nonprofit organization), the nonprofit population is approaching two million. Social scientists and policy scholars began to evince interest in nonprofits just as their population began to reach a critical point and at a time when their increasingly central role in public life was becoming undeniable (on this, see Hall 1992). In 1969, Congress had acted to expand regulation and oversight of “foundations and other tax exempt entities” in a manner that highlighted how little anybody knew about them.

Originally begun as an industry-funded effort to produce academic knowledge that would be useful in informing the policy process in ways that would favor less burdensome regulation, the study of nonprofits – at least for those willing to ask uncomfortable questions – became a broader enquiry into the nature of the modern state. In conventional terms, the proliferation of nonprofits made no sense: Big Government was supposed to diminish the private sector, not expand it. And yet, in the post-war decades, as the federal government assumed vast powers and new responsibilities, the population of nominally private “nonprofit” entities of nearly every kind (except traditional voluntary membership associations) had exploded.

When Ronald Reagan was elected to the presidency in 1980, proposed to slash federal spending in order to free the private sectors – for-profit and nonprofit – from burdensome taxation and regulation, policy scientists Lester Salamon and Alan Abramson undertook a study of the likely impact of projected budget cuts on nonprofit organizations – which, until then, were largely conceived in Tocquevillean terms as voluntary, donative, non-governmental entities. In looking at the revenue sources of the nonprofits operating in major industries (arts and culture, education, health care, human services), they discovered that direct federal contributions ranged between 10 and 90 percent of their revenues (Salamon & Abramson 1982).

No one quite know what to make of these findings. Salamon himself would, a few years later, write an essay in which he articulated the extent of the challenge they offered both to our understanding of American government and the nonprofit sector. Asking why, in the face of obvious long-standing partnerships between government and the private sector, their significance had never been appreciated, Salamon wrote:

The partnership . . . has been overlooked, in my view, not because of its novelty or because of a lack of research but because of a weakness in theory. It is the role of theory, after all, to direct attention to the facts that are most relevant to a particular process. As Thomas Kuhn put it. . . . , “in

the absence of a paradigm [or theory]. . . all of the facts that could possibly pertain to the development of a given science are likely to seem equally relevant." Lacking a valid theory, crucial facts can therefore be overlooked or misperceived. "The facts do not speak for themselves," Stephen Jay Gould has observed, "they are read in the light of theory" (Salamon 1987, 32).

"Our failure to perceive the reality of extensive government-nonprofit ties is," Salamon concluded,

is in substantial part a product of the limitations of the conceptual lenses through which this reality is being perceived. Both the theory of the "welfare state" and the theory of the voluntary sector, moreover, have been at fault. Either leaves much conceptual room for a flourishing government-nonprofit partnership. To the contrary, both suggest quite strongly that such cooperation could not, and should not, exist. Equipped with such theories, it is no wonder that observers have tended to overlook such cooperation or question it when it appears (32-33).

Salamon and other political scientists, most notably Aaron Wildavsky (1986) and John Donahue (1989), would, by the 1990s develop new theories of the welfare state based on understandings of the way the federal government used tools of economic management – tax policy and its capacity to purchase, subsidize, and award grants and contracts – to influence the behavior of private sector actors. Rather than creating European-style bureaucratic central state, American policymakers had produced a hybrid which, while centralizing revenue gathering and policymaking capacities, allocated most tasks of implementing federal policies to state and local governments and to private sector actors. Devolution and privatization, rather than being inventions of the conservative revolution of the 1990s were, it appeared, intrinsic to the nature of the modern state (on this, see Hall 2000). Viewing from this perspective inevitably raised further questions about the adequacy of our understanding: did devolution and privatization represent a dismantling of Big Government, as its conservative avatars claimed -- or a vast expansion in its scope?

When scholars and policymakers encounter new phenomena, their capacity to understand them is limited by the fact that their “conceptual lenses” – their paradigms of what the world is and how it works – are necessarily derived from past experiences. Americans trying to understand nonprofits as they proliferated and moved into the center of public life in the 1960s couldn’t make sense of what was happening because their models of institutions did not have “conceptual room” to observe or analyze relationships between nonprofits and government. Nor, blindered by a Tocquevillean ideal typology that characterized nonprofits as voluntary membership associations supported by donations and devoted to charitable, educational, and religious purposes, could they see that the nonprofits of the post-War period were quasi-governmental entities supported by government grants and contracts, earned revenues, and the indirect subsidy of tax exemption and deductibility that drove individual, corporate, and foundation giving.

The issue was more than merely conceptual and linguistic, however. The architecture of the enterprise of knowledge itself – universities, scholarly associations, journals, book publishers – had been based on these concepts. Nonprofits themselves had a vested interest in maintaining and promoting policies and institutional practices based on concepts of sectoral and organizational independence. Indeed, their very legitimacy rested on the public’s belief in their trustworthiness as entities that promoted the public good rather than private interests, economic or political

To complicate matters further, most of the scholars attempting to understand nonprofits were inextricably entangled with what they were trying to study: most had received their education and build careers in nonprofit universities, belonged to nonprofit scholarly societies, and received research support from nonprofit grantmaking foundations.

What happened as the misalignment of language and concepts about nonprofits with reality became increasingly evident after the publication of

Salamon and Abramson's study? Rather than changing their ideas, the majority of self-identified nonprofits scholars continued to insist – both individually and institutionally – on the validity of the “independent sector” model, undoubtedly encouraged to do so by massive new foundation investments in nonprofits academic centers, research, and scholarly associations.

In the meantime, discipline based scholars began to study nonprofits from perspectives that emphasized their role in larger political, economic, and social systems. In the 1990s, important studies of associational activity began to appear – by Robert Putnam (1993, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2000), Theda Skocpol (1992, 1999), Michael Schudson (1998), and Sidney Verba and associates (1995) – thought well aware of its existence, ignored the substantial body of work produced by self-identified nonprofits scholars over the previous quarter century.

This oversight was easy enough to understand. Like the education scholarship criticized by Bernard Bailyn, soft-money subsidies and the conduct of research in "academic centers" rather than discipline-centered departments, nonprofits research, pursued in "an atmosphere of special professional purpose" grew in "almost total isolation from the major influences and shaping minds" of the social sciences:

its isolation proved to be self-intensifying; the more parochial the subject became, the less capable it was of attracting the kinds of scholars who could give it broad relevance and bring it back to the public domain. It soon displayed the exaggeration and weakness and extravagance of emphasis that are the typical results of sustained inbreeding (Bailyn 1960).

The work of Putnam, Skocpol, Verba, and other discipline-based scholars addressed such fundamental issues as the sources of civic engagement and political participation, the conditions determining the efficacy of governmental institutions, the character of social movements, the nature of citizenship, the evolution of social welfare policy, and the emergence of the welfare state -- topics that the nonprofits researchers with their collective commitment to demonstrating the independence and distinctiveness of the "sector" and its institutions from business and government were incapable of engaging. They

were further hobbled by theories -- public goods, market failure, and contract failure -- regarded as dubious in the disciplines that had assumed almost scriptural importance to nonprofits researchers because they so admirably served the nonprofit industries' legislative and judicial agendas.

Like the languages and concepts associated with globalization, those used to describe and frame nonprofits were – and continue to be – contested (on this, see Karl 1987). One scholarly faction emphasizes the differences between nonprofits and government, favors comparative research strategies, and uses the organization and organizational sector as basic units of analysis. The other emphasizes the embeddedness of nonprofits in the larger universe of organizations, focusing on interrelationships, overlaps, and interpenetrations of nonprofits, business, and government, and uses industries, organizational fields, and networks as basic units of analysis (on this, see Milofsky 1987; Perrow 1988; and DiMaggio & Powell 1989)..

### **Building Knowledge on Globalization: An Alternative Model?**

The parallels between the epistemological conflicts of nonprofits scholars and those of globalization researchers are striking, as are the political and moral claims associated with them. The global westernization scholars, like those who believe nonprofits to be part of an “independent sector,” use the nation state as the basic unit of analysis, favor comparative strategies, and favor policies based on the privileged claims of governments over peoples, that stress national sovereignty, and downplay global interdependence. Their opponents see globalization as multi-centered and systemic in character, focus on interdependency, and favor policies based on universal ideas about human rights, the environment, and economic justice that privilege the rights of individuals and peoples.

Both the similarities and differences between the development and contestation of concepts and languages about nonprofits and globalization are striking. As *Table 1* shows, the use of the terms “nonprofit and philanthropy” and

“globalization, globalism, and transnational” was essentially unknown before the 1970s – but gained rapid acceptance after 1980.

*Table 1: Doctoral dissertations using the terms “nonprofit” and “globalization”, “globalism,” or “transational,” by year, 1970-2000.*

YEAR	NONPROFITS	GLOBALIZATION
1970	2	
1975	3	4
1980	18	19
1985	21	16
1990	35	37
1995	40	121
2000		316

As with nonprofit terminology, globalization language originated in a handful of fields: with nonprofits, in economics, education, law, and sociology; with globalization, in political science, law, and sociology. However, as *Table 2* shows, while the number of fields contributing to the literature on nonprofits hardly grew after 1990, the number of fields contributing to the literature on globalization nearly tripled between 1980 and 1985 and nearly doubled between 1995 and 2000.

*Table 2: Number of academic fields represented in doctoral dissertations using the terms “nonprofit” and “globalization”, “globalism,” or “transational,” by year, 1970-2000*

YEAR	NONPROFIT	GLOBALIZATION
1975	3	3
1980	8	6
1985	8	17
1990	11	15
1995	12	25
2000	14	40

Source: field codes in UMI/Dissertation Abstracts

Particularly impressive was the breadth of academic interest in globalization compared to that in nonprofits, with globalization attracting researchers from the arts and humanities, social and policy sciences, and major professions, whereas

nonprofits drew narrowly from social and policy sciences (dissertations in fields like health sciences and theater were about management, not about healing or performing arts).

*Table 3: Academic fields producing dissertations using the terms “nonprofit” and “globalization”, “globalism,” or “transational,” 2000.*

NONPROFIT	GLOBALIZATION
ANTHROPOLOGY	AGRICULTURE
BUSINESS	AMERICAN STUDIES
ECONOMICS	ANTHROPOLOGY
EDUCATION	ARCHITECTURE
HEALTH SCIENCES	ART HISTORY
POLITICAL SCIENCE	BUSINESS
PSYCHOLOGY	BIOGRAPHY
SOCIAL WORK	CANADIAN STUDIES
SOCIOLOGY	CINEMA
SPEECH COMMUNICATION	DESIGN
THEATER	ECONOMICS
WOMEN'S STUDIES	EDUCATION
	ENERGY
	ENGINEERING
	ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
	FINE ARTS
	GEOGRAPHY
	HEALTH SCIENCES
	HISTORY
	INFORMATION SCIENCE
	JOURNALISM
	LANGUAGE
	LAW
	LIBRARY SCIENCE
	LITERATURE
	MASS COMMUNICATIONS
	MUSIC
	OPERATIONS RESEARCH
	PHILOSOPHY
	POLITICAL SCIENCE
	PSYCHOLOGY
	RECREATION
	RELIGION
	SOCIAL WORK
	SOCIOLOGY
	THEATER
	THEOLOGY
	URBAN PLANNING

Source: field codes in UMI/Dissertation Abstracts

The broad range of fields attracted to globalization suggests that interest in the issue, rather than being generated from the top-down through foundation subvention, was originating from the scholars themselves. This fact raises interesting questions about who the scholars were and where they were located institutionally.

### **Globalization Scholars in the United States: Who Are They? Where Do They Come From?**

I sought to answer these questions by analyzing dissertations written on globalization between 1970 and 2000. My data, drawn from Dissertation Abstracts, included title, author, advisor, institution, and field. At the outset of the study, I expected to find discernable patterns indicating clustering of dissertations in certain fields, institutions, and advisors – assuming that the processes of academic innovation and dissemination of ideas that I had found in studying the nonprofit field would also be evident in globalization.

My actual findings were quite different from what I expected. As *Table 4* shows, there was no noticeable clustering around particular institutions – and the institutions producing dissertations on globalization represented the broad spectrum of American higher education, from elite research universities like Harvard, Yale, and Stanford, to state universities large (Wisconsin-Madison, Berkeley) and small (University of Missouri at Kansas City), to small public and private institutions (Cleveland State; Walden). By 1990, however, an interesting pattern began to emerge: of the 34 institutions producing dissertations on globalization, 7 (21%) were non-us universities. They included Innsbruck (Austria), Sussex (UK), Wollongong (Australia) and three Canadian universities, McGill, Guelph, and Waterloo.

*Table 4: Number of globalization dissertations produced, number of institutions producing, and number of non-US institutions, 1970-79, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000.*

YEAR	# DISSERTATIONS	# INSTITUTIONS	# NON-US INSTITUTIONS
1970s	31	35	2
1980	18	18	
1985	16	16	1
1990	37	34	7
1995	121	72	20
2000	316	134	23

Source: UMI Dissertation Abstracts

These trends intensified in the 1990s. By 1995, 20 (28%) of the 72 universities producing globalization dissertations were non-US institutions – and these produced 38 (31%) of the 121 theses written in that year. The institutions included Lund (Sweden), Open University and Southampton (UK), Bielefeld (Germany), Brabant and Twente (Netherlands), and 12 Canadian university, which between them produced 32 of the globalization studies. Of U.S. universities, only two – the University of Chicago and Stanford – produced more than 2 globalization studies in 1995. Of the Canadian institutions, Carleton and Queen produced 5 each, the University of British Columbia and York produced 4, and Dalhousie, Toronto, Ottawa, Simon Fraser, and McGill produced 2 each. In 2000, 23 of the 134 institutions producing globalization theses were located outside the U.S., including universities located in Canada (17), Australia, the U.K., Spain, Sweden, and Finland. These produced 59 (19%) of the total number of globalization dissertations. By 2000, a handful of universities were emerging as unusually productive in this area: institutions producing 5 or more dissertations in that year included Rutgers (11), UC-Berkely (8), Texas-Austin (8), Wisconsin-Madison (8), UC-Santa Cruz (7), Minnesota (7), University of Washington (7), UCLA (7), Chicago (5), Ohio State (5), Purdue (5), Stanford (5) – and the Canadian universities Toronto (10), and Calgary (5).

Beyond indicating that interest in globalization was itself becoming globalized by the mid-1990s, it is not possible on the basis of these findings to

form definitive conclusions about these trends. Unfortunately, there is no international on-line resource comparable to UMI Dissertation Abstracts, so I have no clear sense of how broadly globalization was attracting graduate student interest outside the U.S. and Canada. However, the willingness of at least a handful of non-U.S. and Canadian dissertation writers to add their studies to this U.S. database suggests a trend towards the globalization of the academic labor market.

Perhaps the most notable trend – and one that came as a complete surprise to me – was the number of dissertations produced and/or advised by individuals whose names indicated non-U.S. nativity or ancestry. As *Table 5* shows, 10% of the globalization dissertations were written and/or or advised by individuals with complex ethnic identities; by 1995, this proportion had increased to 40% and by 2000 to 48%. (Undoubtedly this is an undercount. It is easier to identify an African, Latin American, or Asian name as “ethnic” than an Australian or Canadian one. Still, the ethnic presence is so powerful that it cannot be ignored).

*Table 5:* Total number of globalization dissertations and dissertations written or advised by individuals with names suggesting complex ethnicity.

YEAR	#DISSERTATIONS	#ETHNIC AUTHORS OR ADVISERS	% ETHNIC
1970s	31	3	10
1980	18	1	5
1985	16	7	43
1990	37	9	24
1995	121	48	39
2000	316	152	48

Source: UMI/Dissertation Abstracts

Interestingly, aggregate education statistics suggest that U.S. higher education was in the process of being integrated into a global institutional system and labor market during the 1990s. As *Table 6* shows, the percentage of doctorates awarded to individuals who were Asian, Hispanic, or non-resident aliens (foreign

students) doubled between 1980 and 2000 tripled during – with the largest increase in the non-resident alien category, which tripled in size during this twenty year period.

*Table 6: Number of doctorates awarded, 1980-2000, by ethnicity and citizenship.*

YEAR	TOTAL PhDs	# ASIAN	# HISPANIC	# NON-RESIDENT ALIEN	% ETHNIC
1980-81	32,839	877	456	4,203	17
1984-85	32,307	1,106	677	5,317	22
1990-91	38,547	1,459	732	9,715	31
1995-96	44,645	2,646	984	11,450	34
1999-2000	44,808	2,380	1,291	11,238	33

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred" surveys, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Completions" surveys.  
(This table was prepared August 2001.)

Without additional research – and the passage of time--, it is difficult to interpret these data. We don't know whether the non-resident aliens are aspiring to become U.S. citizens or to return to their native lands. Nor do we know how many U.S. citizens are studying abroad or serving as faculty in non-U.S. universities. Since the majority of dissertations were completed in the past five years, it is far too soon to know what kinds of careers their authors will pursue or where they will pursue them – indeed, we don't even know how many will become scholars, officials of national governments or international bodies, executives in transnational business firms or NGOs. In short, we don't know whether the increasing foreign presence among students in American universities represents a genuine multi-centered / transnational form of globalization – with graduate students and faculty participating in a genuinely global scholarly community -- or global westernization – with non-U.S. students and faculty acquiring credentials from U.S. universities in order to westernize institutions in their countries of origin.

What are we to make of the extraordinary overrepresentation of non-resident aliens and other ethnics among those writing or advising theses on

globalization? While, for the purposes of this study, it has not been possible to estimate the proportion of non-resident aliens and ethnics studying globalization as part of the whole population of dissertation writers, after 1985, they do appear to be over-represented among the whole population of global dissertation writers: in 1985, 43% of the globalization dissertations were written by non-resident aliens and ethnics while this group represented only 22% of students receiving doctorates in that year; by 2000, 48% of the globalization dissertations were by non-resident aliens and ethnics, while 22% of the dissertation writers overall were members of this group.

### **Insiders, Outsiders, and Transnational Identity**

This overrepresentation suggests that non-citizens studying in the U.S, immigrants, and members of certain racial groups (Asians and Africans in particular) may be drawn to the study of globalization as a way of negotiating their uncertain or complex national identities. This possibility is suggested by the work of migration scholars Ruben G. Rumbaut (1997, 1999), Herbert J. Gans (1997, 1999), and Robert K. Merton (1972). Merton first touched on the question of the ethnic origins of researchers as a factor in shaping scholarship in his important 1972 article, "Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge."

Drawing on the work of Michael Polanyi, who pointed out that "the growth of knowledge depends on complex sets of social relations based on a largely institutionalized reciprocity of trust among scholars and scientists," Merton – writing in the wake of the campus disorders of the 1960s – suggested that, "as cleavages deepen between groups, social strata, or collectivities of whatever kind, the social network of mutual reliance is at best strained and at worst broken" (10-11). This was particularly true, in his view, when these cleavages were carried into the institutions of science and scholarship, encouraging a "strain toward separatism" which advanced claims to "group-based truth" (11). Describing these groups as "alike in their objectives of achieving an intensified collective consciousness, a deepened solidarity and a new or renewed primary or total allegiance of their members to certain social

identities, statuses, groups, or collectivities” based on ascription rather than acquisition (11). He saw these groups claiming privileged access to knowledge – as “Insiders” – based on their ascribed racial, gender, or ethnic identities. “Outsiders,” by virtue of their ascribed characteristics, were viewed by Insiders as suffering a “structurally imposed incapacity to comprehend alien groups, statuses, cultures, and societies” (15). Having neither been socialized in the group nor shared its experiences, Outsiders could not have “the direct, intuitive sensitivity that alone makes empathetic understanding possible” (15). This, in turn, influences the problems they investigated as scholars and the ways in which they investigated them.

The Insider/Outsider polarity took root in a number of academic fields, among them the community of scholars who studied immigration – who divided into “assimilationists,” who regarded the abandonment of Old World identities as a desirable social goal, and “pluralists,” who believed in the value of immigrants maintaining ethnic identities. In 1997, sociologist Herbert Gans revisited Merton’s argument, suggesting that these polar positions failed to appreciate the differences between assimilation, acculturation, and ethnic retention (pluralism). Acculturation – the capacity to become “American culturally but not necessarily socially” – was a concept that, Gans believed, reconciled the assimilationist/pluralist polarity (Gans 1997, 876). “Ethnics,” Gans writes, “can acculturate on their own, but they cannot assimilate unless they are given permission to enter the ‘American’ group or institution” (878). By characterizing acculturation as a voluntary process, rather than one imposed on an ethnic group, the moral problem of assimilation was transformed into an empirical one.

In reflecting on the development of migration studies, Gans took into account – in a way that Merton did not – the transformation in the social composition of the scholarly community. “Most of the researchers who first studied the European immigrant,” he notes, “were predominantly WASPs” who, not surprisingly, “favored the Americanization of the immigrants. . . , reflecting both the conventional wisdom and the values of their era and their

class" (886). The next generation of migration researchers – the post-World War II cohort – came from "a variety of ethnic backgrounds and mainly from the second generation undertook empirical research, continuing the prewar outsider values" (886). More recent cohorts of scholars reflected the increasing ethnic and gender diversity of American academia and, not surprisingly, were more likely to write as Insiders (in Merton's terms) and to express concerns about the hazards of assimilation. In looking at the scholarly cohorts of the 1990s, Gans took note of the relation between the ethnicity of scholars and their research interests. "86 percent of the references in a 'Selected Bibliography on Korean-Americans,'" he observed, "bore Korean or other Southeast Asian names" (887). Of the 138 young researchers applying for grants from the Social Science Research Council's Migration Division in 1997, he stated, "53 percent were studying their own groups; 18 percent were looking at groups other than their own; and 29 percent were writing on general or comparative topics" (887).

Rubén Rambaut, a Michigan State migration researcher, took a closer look at the relation between ethnicity and scholarly focus in his 1999 essay, "Immigration Research in the United States: Social Origins and Future Orientations." Rambaut found that nearly half of migration scholars were of immigrant stock themselves – 30% foreign born and 18% U.S.-born children of immigrants. An additional 29% reported one or more foreign-born grandparents. Not surprisingly, the dramatic changes in gender, generation, and ethnicity among migration researchers had been "accompanied by a notable shift in research foci" (1292). "Particularly remarkable is the change in the proportion of scholars whose dissertation research was related to immigration," Rambaut notes.

Among scholars who earned their highest degrees before 1975 – during an era when immigration had not reemerged as a significant public issue – only about a fourth wrote immigration-related dissertations, especially in history; but among younger scholars who have earned their degrees since 1995, that proportion has tripled to 77%. . . . The proportion of ethnic scholars among immigration scholars [has increased} from 25% among the

older cohort with pre-1965 doctorates to about 40% among younger cohorts with post-1985 degrees (1292).

Although research on globalization, globalism, and transnationality and research on migration are not coextensive, the conceptual polarities and issues of identity and scholarly focus are similar (and, of course, the two areas of interest significantly overlap as well). The polarities in the understanding of globalization – between globalization as global westernization and globalization as a mult centered process parallel the polarities in migration studies between assimilation and pluralism/ethnic retention. Negotiating personal identity within the framework of globalization – however defined – differs in important ways from doing so within the framework of migration studies. From a genuinely pluralist/globalization perspective based on respect for the unique value of all ethnic traditions, identities, and values, no group can be more privileged than any other in terms of universal norms of economic, civil, or environmental justice. Here Gans's notion of acculturation is especially valuable. Historically, embracing a transnational identity – as a pre-Vatican II Catholic or a member of a scientific community – meant assimilation, socially and culturally, into a community of universal norms and standards. Within the framework of contemporary globalization, acculturation – which permits individuals to simultaneously embrace the universal while maintaining ethnic or national identities – eliminates the stark choice between assimilation and ethnic retention. To voluntarily concede the claims of universal rights and responsibilities of global citizenship does not require us to abandon our particular identities and loyalties.

### **Whither Globalization?**

The research on which this paper is based was undertaken in the hope of making sense of the multiple meanings of “globalization.” Its major finding – based on observations about the social composition of the scholarly communities studying the subject – is that the research enterprise differs significantly from other innovative academic initiatives of the past half century. Rather than being a top-down effort, initiated and sustained by foundation patronage, globalization

research appears to be a grassroots effort, initiated by individuals who have a significant personal stake in their work.

What is the nature of this personal stake? To answer this question, it is worth reflecting on Merton's essay on *Insiders, Outsiders, and the sociology of knowledge*. Written at a time when the largely white, male academic establishment felt besieged not only by events on their own campuses, but also by active social movements demanding social and economic justice for racial, gender, and ethnic minorities, Merton, in his eagerness to attack the forces he viewed as undermining it, failed to grasp the extent to which the academic order he sought to defend was itself an Insider Group whose claims to privileged knowledge were no less based on ascription. He and his contemporaries might have believed that the possession of certain kinds of academic credentials, ways of speaking, residence in certain neighborhoods, and so on were acquired or earned by virtue of intellectual merit. But this belief not only overlooked the extent to which certain people – by virtue of race, nationality, religion, or gender – were simply not eligible for admission to the institutions that issued the credentials, however meritorious they might be. (Let's not forget that the major Ivy League schools did not admit women until the 1970s and that quotas on the admission of Jews and Catholics persisted at institutions like Yale until the 1960s!). More seriously, Merton overlooked the issues of identity confronted by academic colleagues who, if not native American, Protestant or upper class in origin, had managed to "pass" as such by anglicizing their names, abandoning their families of origin, and marrying outside their faiths or national groups. Nor, as an elite educated WASP, could he imagine the personal toll that assimilation exacted from those who submitted to it.

The on-going globalization of the scholarly community – especially the impressive presence of ethnics as graduate students and faculty in American universities since the mid-1980s – suggests that the ultimate determination of the meaning of globalization may be in the hands of the researchers themselves, not the nation states or foundation patrons which have, for most of the twentieth century, shaped scholarship. While it is possible that, as with the women's

liberation and civil rights movements, that institutional subvention will succeed in “channeling” this social movement impulse into a tame academic pursuit (Jenkins & Eckert, 1986; Proietto 2000).

But it is no less possible, given the remarkably broad cross disciplinary and transnational recognition of the concept of globalization as a matter of interest, that globalization scholarship will succeed in resisting efforts to channel and coöpt the meaning of the term. The fact that this is not just an “academic question” – but a matter in which globalization scholars have such an evident personal stake – gives some reason to believe that, as they go forth as scholars and teachers, they will create literatures and curricula that reflect genuinely transnational values rather than merely aping western models (on this, see Marcus 1998 and Meyer 1999).

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** This paper is a preliminary and partial analysis of a large body of data on globalization scholarship. In addition to complete information on dissertations and these drawn from the UMI/Dissertation Abstracts database for the period 1970-2000, I also have comparable data from the Social Science Citation Index for the same period.

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