Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination

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Anxieties of the Global

Globalization is certainly a source of anxiety in the U.S. academic world. And the sources of this anxiety are many: Social scientists (especially economists) worry about whether markets and deregulation produce greater wealth at the price of increased inequality. Political scientists worry that their field might vanish along with their favorite object, the nation-state, if globalization truly creates a "world without borders." Cultural theorists, especially cultural Marxists, worry that in spite of its conformity with everything they already knew about capital, there may be some embarrassing new possibilities for equity hidden in its workings. Historians, ever worried about the problem of the new, realize that globalization may not be a member of the familiar archive of large-scale historical shifts. And everyone in the academy is anxious to avoid seeming to be a mere publicist of the gigantic corporate machineries that celebrate globalization. Product differentiation is as important for (and within) the academy as it is for the corporations academics love to hate.

Outside the academy there are quite different worries about globalization that include such questions as: What does globalization mean for labor markets and

fair wages? How will it affect chances for real jobs and reliable rewards? What does it mean for the ability of nations to determine the economic futures of their populations? What is the hidden dowry of globalization? Christianity? Cyber-proletarianization? New forms of structural adjustment? Americanization disguised as human rights or as MTV? Such anxieties are to be found in many national public spheres (including that of the United States) and also in the academic debates of scholars in the poorer countries.

Among the poor and their advocates the anxieties are even more specific: What are the great global agencies of aid and development up to? Is the World Bank really committed to incorporating social and cultural values into its developmental agenda? Does Northern aid really allow local communities to set their own agendas? Can large banking interests be trusted to support microcredit? Which parts of the national state are protectors of stakeholding communities and which parts are direct affiliates of global capital? Can the media ever be turned to the interests of the poor?

In the public spheres of many societies there is concern that policy debates occurring around world trade, copyright, environment, science, and technology set the stage for life-and-death decisions for ordinary farmers, vendors, slum-dwellers, merchants, and urban populations. And running through these debates is the sense that social exclusion is ever more tied to epistemological exclusion and concern that the discourses of expertise that are setting the rules for global transactions, even in the progressive parts of the international system, have left ordinary people outside and behind. The discourse of globalization is itself growing dangerously dispersed, with the language of epistemic communities, the discourse of states and inter-state fora, and the everyday understanding of global forces by the poor growing steadily apart.

There is thus a double apartheid evolving. The academy (especially in the United States) has found in globalization an object around which to conduct its special internal quarrels about such issues as representation, recognition, the "end" of history, the spectres of capital (and of comparison), and a host of others. These debates, which still set the standard of value for the global professoriate, nevertheless have an increasingly parochial quality.

Thus the first form of this apartheid is the growing divorce between these debates and those that characterise vernacular discourses about the global, worldwide, that are typically concerned with how to plausibly protect cultural

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autonomy and economic survival in some local, national, or regional sphere in the era of "reform" and "openness." The second form of apartheid is that the poor and their advocates find themselves as far from the anxieties of their own national discourses about globalization as they do from the intricacies of the debates in global fora and policy discourses surrounding trade, labor, environment, disease, and warfare.

But a series of social forms has emerged to contest, interrogate, and reverse these developments and to create forms of knowledge transfer and social mobilization that proceed independently of the actions of corporate capital and the nation-state system (and its international affiliates and guarantors). These social forms rely on strategies, visions, and horizons for globalization on behalf of the poor that can be characterised as "grassroots globalization" or, put in a slightly different way, as "globalization from below." This essay is an argument for the significance of this kind of globalization, which strives for a democratic and autonomous standing in respect to the various forms by which global power further seeks to extend its dominion. The idea of an international civil society will have no future outside of the success of these efforts to globalize from below. And in the study of these forms lies an obligation for academic research that, if honored, might make its deliberations more consequential for the poorer 80 percent of the population of the world (now totalling 6 billion) who are socially and fiscally at risk.

To take up this challenge to American academic thought about globalization, this essay moves through three arguments. The first is about the peculiar optical challenges posed by the global. The second is about area studies—the largest institutional epistemology through which the academy in the United States has apprehended much of the world in the last fifty years. The third concerns the very ground from which academics typically and unwittingly speak—the category of "research" itself. These three steps bring me to a conclusion about the relations between pedagogy, activism, and research in the era of globalization.

The Optics of Globalization

Globalization is inextricably linked to the current workings of capital on a global basis; in this regard it extends the earlier logics of empire, trade, and political dominion in many parts of the world. Its most striking feature is the runaway quality of global finance, which appears remarkably independent of traditional constraints of information transfer, national regulation, industrial productivity, or "real" wealth in any particular society, country, or region. The worrisome impli-

cations of this chaotic, high velocity, promiscuous movement of financial (especially speculative) capital have been noted by several astute critics (Greider 1997; Rodrik 1997; Soros 1998, among others) so I will not dwell on them here. I am among those analysts who are inclined to see globalization as a definite marker of a new crisis for the sovereignty of nation-states, even if there is no consensus on the core of this crisis or its generality and finality (Appadurai 1996; Rosenau 1997; Ruggie 1993; Sassen 1996).

My concern here is with the conditions of possibility for the democratization of research about globalization in the context of certain dominant forms of critical knowledge, especially as these forms have come to be organised by the social sciences in the West. Here we need to observe some optical peculiarities. The first is that there is a growing disjuncture between the globalization of knowledge and the knowledge of globalization. The second is that there is an inherent temporal lag between the processes of globalization and our efforts to contain them conceptually. The third is that globalization as an uneven economic process creates a fragmented and uneven distribution of just those resources for learning, teaching, and cultural criticism that are most vital for the formation of democratic research communities that could produce a global view of globalization. That is, globalization resists the possibility of just those forms of collaboration that might make it easier to understand or criticise.

In an earlier, more confident epoch in the history of social science—notably in the 1950s and 1960s during the zenith of modernization theory—such epistemological diffidence would have been quickly dismissed, since that was a period when there was a more secure sense of the social in the relationship between theory, method, and scholarly location. Theory and method were seen as naturally metropolitan, modern, and Western. The rest of the world was seen in the idiom of cases, events, examples, and test sites in relation to this stable location for the production or revision of theory. Most varieties of Marxist theory, though sharply critical of the capitalist project behind modernization theory, nevertheless were equally "realist," both in their picture of the architecture of the world system and in their understanding of the relationship between theory and cases. Thus much excellent work in the Marxist tradition had no special interest in problems of voice, perspective, or location in the study of global capitalism. In short, a muscular objectivism united much social science in the three decades after World War II, whatever the politics of the practitioners.

Today, one does not have to be a postmodernist, relativist, or deconstructionist (key words in the culture wars of the Western academic world) to admit that political subjects are not mechanical products of their objective circumstances, that the

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link between events significantly separated in space and proximate in time is often hard to explain, that the kinds of comparison of social units that relied on their empirical separability cannot be secure, and that the more marginal regions of the world are not simply producers of data for the theory mills of the North.

Flows and Disjunctures

It has now become something of a truism that we are functioning in a world fundamentally characterised by objects in motion. These objects include ideas and ideologies, people and goods, images and messages, technologies and techniques. This is a world of flows (Appadurai 1996). It is also, of course, a world of structures, organisations, and other stable social forms. But the apparent stabilities that we see are, under close examination, usually our devices for handling objects characterised by motion. The greatest of these apparently stable objects is the nation-state, which is today frequently characterised by floating populations, transnational politics within national borders, and mobile configurations of technology and expertise.

But to say that globalization is about a world of things in motion somewhat understates the point. The various flows we see—of objects, persons, images, and discourses—are not coeval, convergent, isomorphic, or spatially consistent. They are in what I have elsewhere called relations of disjuncture. By this I mean that the paths or vectors taken by these kinds of things have different speeds, axes, points of origin and termination, and varied relationships to institutional structures in different regions, nations, or societies. Further, these disjunctures themselves precipitate various kinds of problems and frictions in different local situations. Indeed, it is the disjunctures between the various vectors characterising this world-in-motion that produce fundamental problems of livelihood, equity, suffering, justice, and governance.

Examples of such disjunctures are phenomena such as the following: Media flows across national boundaries that produce images of well-being that cannot be satisfied by national standards of living and consumer capabilities; flows of discourses of human rights that generate demands from workforces that are repressed by state violence which is itself backed by global arms flows; ideas about gender and modernity that circulate to create large female workforces at the same time that cross-national ideologies of "culture," "authenticity," and national honor put increasing pressure on various communities to morally discipline just these working women who are vital to emerging markets and manufacturing sites. Such examples could be multiplied. What they have in common is

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the fact that globalization—in this perspective a cover term for a world of disjunctive flows—produces problems that manifest themselves in intensely local forms but have contexts that are anything but local.

If globalization is characterised by disjunctive flows that generate acute problems of social well-being, one positive force that encourages an emancipatory politics of globalization is the role of the imagination in social life (Appadurai 1996). The imagination is no longer a matter of individual genius, escapism from ordinary life, or just a dimension of aesthetics. It is a faculty that informs the daily lives of ordinary people in myriad ways: It allows people to consider migration, resist state violence, seek social redress, and design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across national boundaries. This view of the role of the imagination as a popular, social, collective fact in the era of globalization recognises its split character. On the one hand, it is in and through the imagination that modern citizens are disciplined and controlled—by states, markets, and other powerful interests. But is it is also the faculty through which collective patterns of dissent and new designs for collective life emerge. As the imagination as a social force itself works across national lines to produce locality as a spatial fact and as a sensibility (Appadurai 1996), we see the beginnings of social forms without either the predatory mobility of unregulated capital or the predatory stability of many states. Such social forms have barely been named by current social science, and even when named their dynamic qualities are frequently lost. Thus terms like "international civil society" do not entirely capture the mobility and malleability of those creative forms of social life that are localised transit points for mobile global forms of civic and civil life.

One task of a newly alert social science is to name and analyse these mobile civil forms and to rethink the meaning of research styles and networks appropriate to this mobility. In this effort, it is important to recall that one variety of the imagination as a force in social life—the academic imagination—is part of a wider geography of knowledge created in the dialogue between social science and area studies, particularly as it developed in the United States after World War II. This geography of knowledge invites us to rethink our picture of what "regions" are and to reflect on how research itself is a special practice of the academic imagination. These two tasks are taken up below.

Regional Worlds and Area Studies

As scholars concerned with localities, circulation, and comparison, we need to make a decisive shift away from what we may call "trait" geographies to what we

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could call "process" geographies. Much traditional thinking about "areas" has been driven by conceptions of geographical, civilisational, and cultural coherence that rely on some sort of trait list—of values, languages, material practices, ecological adaptations, marriage patterns, and the like. However sophisticated these approaches, they all tend to see "areas" as relatively immobile aggregates of traits, with more or less durable historical boundaries and with a unity composed of more or less enduring properties. These assumptions have often been further telescoped backward through the lens of contemporary U.S. security-driven images of the world and, to a lesser extent, through colonial and postcolonial conceptions of national and regional identity.

In contrast, we need an architecture for area studies that is based on process geographies and sees significant areas of human organization as precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction, and motion—trade, travel, pilgrimage, warfare, proselytisation, colonisation, exile, and the like. These geographies are necessarily large scale and shifting, and their changes highlight variable congeries of language, history, and material life. Put more simply, the large regions that dominate our current maps for area studies are not permanent geographical facts. They are problematic heuristic devices for the study of global geographic and cultural processes. Regions are best viewed as initial contexts for themes that generate variable geographies, rather than as fixed geographies marked by pregiven themes. These themes are equally "real," equally coherent, but are results of our interests and not their causes.

The trouble with much of the paradigm of area studies as it now exists is that it has tended to mistake a particular configuration of apparent stabilities for permanent associations between space, territory, and cultural organisation. These apparent stabilities are themselves largely artifacts of the specific trait-based idea of "culture" areas, a recent Western cartography of large civilisational landmasses associated with different relationships to "Europe" (itself a complex historical and cultural emergent), and a Cold War–based geography of fear and competition in which the study of world languages and regions in the United States was legislatively configured for security purposes into a reified map of geographical regions. As happens so often in academic inquiry, the heuristic impulse behind many of these cartographies and the contingent form of many of these spatial configurations was soon forgotten and the current maps of "areas" in "area studies" were enshrined as permanent.

One key to a new architecture for area studies is to recognise that the capability to imagine regions and worlds is now itself a globalized phenomenon. That is, due to the activities of migrants, media, capital, tourism, and so forth the means

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for imagining areas is now itself globally widely distributed. So, as far as possible, we need to find out how others, in what we still take to be certain areas as we define them, see the rest of the world in regional terms. In short, how does the world look—as a congeries of areas—from other locations (social, cultural, national)?

For example, the Pacific Rim is certainly a better way of thinking about a certain region today, rather than splitting up East Asia and the Western coast of North America. But a further question is: How do people in Taiwan, Korea, or Japan think about the Pacific Rim, if they think in those terms at all? What is their topology of Pacific traffic?

To seriously build an architecture for area studies around the idea that all "areas" also conceive or produce their own "areas," we need to recognise the centrality of this sort of recursive refraction. In fact this perspective could be infinitely regressive. But we do not have to follow it out indefinitely: One or two moves of this type would lead us a long way from the U.S. Cold War architecture with which we substantially still operate.

Following this principle has a major entailment for understanding the apparatus through which areal worlds are globally produced. This production happens substantially in the public spheres of many societies, and includes many kinds of intellectuals and "symbolic analysts" (including artists, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and others) as well as academics. In some cases, academics may be only a small part of this world-generating optic. We need to attend to this varied set of public spheres, and the intellectuals who constitute them, to create partnerships in teaching and research so that our picture of areas does not stay confined to our own first-order, necessarily parochial, world pictures. The potential payoff is a critical dialogue between world pictures, a sort of dialectic of areas and regions, built on the axiom that areas are not facts but artifacts of our interests and our fantasies as well as of our needs to know, to remember, and to forget.

But this critical dialogue between world pictures cannot emerge without one more critical act of optical reversal. We need to ask ourselves what it means to internationalize any sort of research before we can apply our understandings to the geography of areas and regions. In essence, this requires a closer look at research as a practice of the imagination.

The Idea of Research

In much recent discussion about the internationalization of research, the problem term is taken to be "internationalization." I propose that we focus first on

research, before we worry about its global portability, its funding, and about training people to do it better. The questions I wish to raise here are: What do we mean when we speak today of research? Is the research ethic, whatever it may be, essentially the same thing in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities? By whatever definition, is there a sufficiently clear understanding of the research ethic in the academic world of North America and Western Europe to justify its central role in current discussions of the internationalization of academic practices?

Such a deliberately naive, anthropological reflection upon the idea of research is difficult. Like other cultural keywords, it is so much part of the ground on which we stand and the air we breathe that it resists conscious scrutiny. In the case of the idea of research, there are two additional problems. First, research is virtually synonymous with our sense of what it means to be scholars and members of the academy, and thus it has the invisibility of the obvious. Second, since research is the optic through which we typically find out about something as scholars today, it is especially hard to use research to understand research.

Partly because of this ubiquitous, taken-for-granted, and axiomatic quality of research, it may be useful to look at it not only historically—as we might be inclined to do—but anthropologically, as a strange and wonderful practice that transformed Western intellectual life perhaps more completely than any other single procedural idea since the Renaissance. What are the cultural presumptions of this idea and thus of its ethic? What does it seem to assume and imply? What special demands does it make upon those who buy into it?

Today, every branch of the university system in the West, but also many branches of government, law, medicine, journalism, marketing, and even the writing of some kinds of fiction and the work of the armed forces must demonstrate their foundation in research in order to command serious public attention or funds. To write the history of this huge transformation of our fundamental protocols about the production of reliable new knowledge is a massive undertaking, better suited to another occasion. For now, let us ask simply what this transformation in our understanding of new knowledge seems to assume and imply.

Consider a naive definition. Research may be defined as the systematic pursuit of the not-yet-known. It is usually taken for granted that the machine that produces new knowledge is research. But the research ethic is obviously not about just any kind of new knowledge. It is about new knowledge that meets certain criteria. It has to plausibly emerge from some reasonably clear grasp of relevant prior knowledge. The question of whether someone has produced new knowledge, in this sense, requires a community of assessment, usually preexistent, voca-

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tional, and specialised. This community is held to be competent to assess not just whether a piece of knowledge is actually new but whether its producer has complied with the protocols of pedigree: the review of the literature, the strategic citation, the delineation of the appropriate universe—neither shapelessly large nor myopically small—of prior, usually disciplinary, knowledge. In addition, legitimate new knowledge must somehow strike its primary audience as interesting. That is, it has to strike them not only as adding something recognisably new to some predefined stock of knowledge but, ideally, as adding something interesting. Of course, boring new knowledge is widely acknowledged to be a legitimate product of research, but the search for the new-and-interesting is always present in professional systems of assessment.

Reliable new knowledge, in this dispensation, cannot come directly out of intuition, revelation, rumor, or mimicry. It has to be a product of some sort of systematic procedure. This is the nub of the strangeness of the research ethic. In the history of many world traditions (including the Western one) of reflection, speculation, argumentation, and ratiocination, there has always been a place for new ideas. In several world traditions (although this is a matter of continuing debate) there has always been a place for discovery, and even for discovery grounded in empirical observations of the world. Even in those classical traditions of intellectual work, such as those of ancient India, where there is some question about whether empirical observation of the natural world was much valued, it is recognised that a high value was placed on careful observation and recording of human activity. Thus, the great grammatical works of Panini (the father of Sanskrit grammar) are filled with observations about good and bad usage that are clearly drawn from the empirical life of speech communities. Still, it would be odd to say that Panini was conducting research on Sanskrit grammar, any more than that Augustine was conducting research on the workings of the will, or Plato on tyranny, or even Aristotle on biological structures or politics. Yet these great thinkers certainly changed the way their readers thought, and their works continue to change the way we think about these important issues. They certainly produced new knowledge and they were even systematic in the way they did it. What makes it seem anachronistic to call them researchers?

The answer lies partly in the link between new knowledge, systematicity, and an organised professional community of criticism. What these great thinkers did not do was to produce new knowledge in relation to a prior citational world and an imagined world of specialised professional readers and researchers. But there is another important difference. The great thinkers, observers, discoverers,

inventors, and innovators of the pre-research era invariably had moral, religious, political, or social projects, and their exercises in the production of new knowledge were therefore, by definition, virtuoso exercises. Their protocols could not be replicated, not only for technical reasons but because their questions and frameworks were shot through with their political projects and their moral signatures. Once the age of research (and its specific modern ethic) arrives, these thinkers become necessarily confined to the protohistory of the main disciplines that now claim them or to the footnotes of the histories of the fields into which they are seen as having trespassed. But in no case are they seen as part of the history of research, as such. This is another way to view the much discussed growth of specialised fields of inquiry in the modern research university in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

These considerations bring us close to the core of the modern research ethic, to something that underpins the concern with systematicity, prior citational contexts, and specialised modes of inquiry. This is the issue of replicability, or, in the aphoristic comment of my colleague George Stocking, the fact that what is involved here is *not search but re-search*. There is of course a vast technical literature in the history and philosophy of science about verifiability, replicability, falsifiability, and the transparency of research protocols. All of these criteria are intended to eliminate the virtuoso technique, the random flash, the generalist's epiphany, and other private sources of confidence. All confidence in this more restricted ethic of new knowledge reposes (at least in principle) in the idea that results can be repeated, sources can be checked, citations can be verified, calculations can be confirmed by one or many other researchers. Given the vested interest in showing their peers wrong, these other researchers are a sure check against bad protocols or lazy inferences. The fact that such direct cross-checking is relatively rare in the social sciences and the humanities is testimony to the abstract moral sanctions associated with the idea of replicability.

This norm of replicability gives hidden moral force to the idea, famously associated with Max Weber, of the importance of value-free research, especially in the social sciences. Once the norm of value-free research successfully moves from the natural sciences into the social and human sciences (no earlier than the late nineteenth century), we have a sharp line not just between such "ancients" as Aristotle, Plato, and Augustine on the one hand and modern researchers on the other, but also a line between researchers in the strict academic sense and such modern thinkers as Goethe, Kant, and Locke. The importance of value-free research in the modern research ethic assumes its full force with the subtraction of the idea of moral voice or vision and the addition of the idea of replicability. It

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is not difficult to see the link of these developments to the steady secularisation of academic life after the seventeenth century.

Given these characteristics, it follows that there can be no such thing as individual research, in the strict sense, in the modern research ethic, though of course individuals may and do conduct research. Research in the modern, Western sense, is through and through a collective activity, in which new knowledge emerges from a professionally defined field of prior knowledge and is directed toward evaluation by a specialised, usually technical, body of readers and judges who are the first sieve through which any claim to new knowledge must ideally pass. This fact has important implications for the work of "public" intellectuals, especially outside the West, who routinely address nonprofessional publics. I will address this question below. Being first and last defined by specific communities of reference (both prior and prospective), new knowledge in the modern research ethic has one other crucial characteristic that has rarely been explicitly discussed.

For most researchers, the trick is how to choose theories, define frameworks, ask questions, and design methods that are most likely to produce research with a plausible shelf life. Too grand a framework or too large a set of questions and the research is likely not be funded, much less to produce the ideal shelf life. Too myopic a framework, too detailed a set of questions, and the research is likely to be dismissed by funders as trivial, and even when it is funded, to sink without a bubble in the ocean of professional citations. The most elusive characteristic of the research ethos is this peculiar shelf life of any piece of reliable new knowledge. How is it to be produced? More important, how can we produce institutions that can produce this sort of new knowledge predictably, even routinely? How do you train scholars in developing this faculty for the lifelong production of pieces of new knowledge that function briskly but not for too long? Can such training be internationalized?

I have already suggested that there are few walks of modern life, both in the West and in some other advanced industrial societies, in which research is not a more or less explicit requirement of plausible policy or credible argumentation, whether the matter is child abuse or global warming, punctuated equilibrium or consumer debt, lung cancer or affirmative action. Research-produced knowledge is everywhere, doing battle with other kinds of knowledge (produced by personal testimony, opinion, revelation, or rumor) and with other pieces of research-produced knowledge.

Though there are numerous debates and differences about research style among natural scientists, policy makers, social scientists, and humanists, there is also a discernible area of consensus. This consensus is built around the view that

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the most serious problems are not those to be found at the level of theories or models but those involving method: data gathering, sampling bias, reliability of large numerical data sets, comparability of categories across national data archives, survey design, problems of testimony and recall, and the like. To some extent, this emphasis on method is a reaction to widespread unease about the multiplication of theoretical paradigms and normative visions, especially in the social sciences. Furthermore, in this perspective, method, translated into research design, is taken to be a reliable machine for producing ideas with the appropriate shelf life. This implicit consensus and the differences it seeks to manage take on special importance for any effort to internationalize social science research.

Democracy, Globalization, and Pedagogy

We can return now to a deeper consideration of the relationship between the knowledge of globalization and the globalization of knowledge. I have proposed that globalization is not simply the name for a new epoch in the history of capital or in the biography of the nation-state. It is marked by a new role for the imagination in social life. This role has many contexts: I have focused here on the sphere of knowledge production, especially knowledge associated with systematic academic inquiry. I have suggested that the principal challenge that faces the study of regions and areas is that actors in different regions now have elaborate interests and capabilities in constructing world pictures whose very interaction affects global processes. Thus the world may consist of regions (seen processually), but regions also imagine their own worlds. Area studies must deliberate upon this aspect of the relationship between regions, as must any discipline that takes subjectivity and ideology as something more than ephemera in the saga of capital and empire. Such deliberation is a vital prerequisite for internationalizing academic research, especially when the objects of research themselves have acquired international, transnational, or global dimensions of vital interest to the human sciences.

One aspect of such deliberation involves a recognition of the constitutive peculiarities of the idea of research, which itself has a rather unusual set of cultural diacritics. This ethic, as I have suggested, assumes a commitment to the routinised production of certain kinds of new knowledge, a special sense of the systematics for the production of such knowledge, a quite particular idea of the shelf life of good research results, a definite sense of the specialised community of experts who precede and follow any specific piece of research, and a distinct pos-

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itive valuation of the need to detach morality and political interest from properly scholarly research.

Such a deparochialisation of the research ethic—of the idea of research itself—will require asking the following sorts of questions. Is there a principled way to close the gap between many U.S. scholars, who are suspicious of any form of applied or policy-driven research, and scholars from many other parts of the world who see themselves as profoundly involved in the social transformations sweeping their own societies? Can we retain the methodological rigor of modern social science while restoring some of the prestige and energy of earlier visions of scholarship in which moral and political concerns were central? Can we find ways to legitimately engage scholarship by public intellectuals here and overseas whose work is not primarily conditioned by professional criteria of criticism and dissemination? What are the implications of the growing gap, in many societies, between institutions for technical training in the social sciences and broader traditions of social criticism and debate? Are we prepared to move beyond a model of internationalizing academic research that is mainly concerned with improving how others practice our precepts? Is there something for us to learn from colleagues in other national and cultural settings whose work is not characterised by a sharp line between social scientific and humanistic styles of inquiry? Asking such questions with an open mind is not just a matter of ecumenism or goodwill. It is a way of enriching the answers to questions that increasingly affect the relationship between academic research and its various constituencies here in the United States as well.

If we are serious about building a genuinely international and democratic community of researchers—especially on matters that involve cross-cultural variation and intersocietal comparison—then we have two choices. One is to take the elements that constitute the hidden armature of our research ethic as given and unquestionable and proceed to look around for those who wish to join us. This is what may be called "weak internationalization." The other is to imagine and invite a conversation about research in which, by asking the sorts of questions I have just described, the very elements of this ethic could be subjects of debate. Scholars from other societies and traditions of inquiry could bring to this debate their own ideas about what counts as new knowledge and what communities of judgement and accountability they might judge to be central in the pursuit of such knowledge. This latter option—which might be called strong internationalization—might be more laborious, even contentious. But it is the surer way to create communities and conventions of research in which membership does not require unquestioned prior adherence to a quite specific research

ethic. In the end, the elements I have identified as belonging to our research ethic may well emerge from this dialogue all the more robust for having been exposed to a critical internationalism. In this sense, Western scholarship has nothing to fear and much to gain from principled internationalization.

It may be objected that this line of reasoning fails to recognise that all research occurs in a wider world of relations characterised by growing disparities between rich and poor countries, by increased violence and terror, by domino economic crises, and by runaway traffic in drugs, arms, and toxins. In a world of such overwhelming material dependencies and distortions, can any new way of envisioning research collaboration make a difference?

Globalization from Below

While global capital and the system of nation-states negotiate the terms of the emergent world order, a worldwide order of institutions has emerged that bears witness to what we may call "grassroots globalization," or "globalization from below." The most easily recognisable of these institutions are NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) concerned with mobilizing highly specific local, national, and regional groups on matters of equity, access, justice, and redistribution. These organizations have complex relations with the state, with the official public sphere, with international civil society initiatives, and with local communities. Sometimes they are uncomfortably complicit with the policies of the nation-state and sometimes they are violently opposed to these policies. Sometimes they have grown wealthy and powerful enough to constitute major political forces in their own right and sometimes they are weak in everything except their transparency and local legitimacy. NGOs have their roots in the progressive movements of the last two centuries in the areas of labor, suffrage, and civil rights. They sometimes have historical links to the socialist internationalism of an earlier era. Some of these NGOs are self-consciously global in their concerns and their strategies, and this subgroup has recently been labelled transnational advocacy networks (hereafter, TANs), whose role in transnational politics has only recently become the object of serious study (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Although the sociology of these emergent social forms—part movements, part networks, part organizations—has yet to be developed, there is a considerable progressive consensus that these forms are the crucibles and institutional instruments of most serious efforts to globalize from below.

There is also a growing consensus on what such grassroots efforts to globalize are up against. Globalization (understood as a particular, contemporary con-

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figuration in the relationship between capital and the nation-state) is demonstrably creating increased inequalities both within and across societies, spiraling processes of ecological degradation and crisis, and unviable relations between finance and manufacturing capital, as well as between goods and the wealth required to purchase them. The single most forceful account of this process is to be found in the work of William Greider (1997), though his alarming prognostications have not gone unchallenged (Krugman 1998; Rodrik 1997). Nevertheless, in implying that economic globalization is today a runaway horse without a rider, Greider has many distinguished allies (Garten 1997; Soros 1998). This view opens the prospect that successful TANs might offset the most volatile effects of runaway capital.

Global capital in its contemporary form is characterised by strategies of predatory mobility (across both time and space) that have vastly compromised the capacities of actors in single locations even to understand, much less to anticipate or resist, these strategies. Though states (and what we may call "state fractions") vary in how and whether they are mere instruments of global capital, they have certainly eroded as sites of political, economic, and cultural sovereignty. This sense of compromised sovereignty—to which I referred earlier—is the subject of intense debate among political theorists and analysts, but a significant number of these theorists concede that momentous changes in the meaning of state sovereignty are underway (Keohane 1995; Rosenau 1997; Ruggie 1993, 1998; Sassen 1998). These changes suggest that successful transnational advocacy networks might be useful players in any new architecture of global governance.

But—and here is the challenge to the academy—most TANs suffer from their inability to counter global capital precisely in its global dimensions. They often lack the assets, the vision, the planning, and the brute energy of capital to globalize through the capture of markets, the hijacking of public resources, the erosion of state sovereignties, and the control of media. The current geographical mobility of capital is unique in its own history and unmatched by other political projects or interests. Again, there is some debate about whether globalization (as measured by the ratio of international trade to GDP) has really increased over the last century (see Sassen, in this issue), but a significant number of observers agree that the scale, penetration, and velocity of global capital have all grown significantly in the last few decades of this century (Castells 1996; Giddens 1996; Held 1995), especially when new information technologies are factored in as measures of integration and interconnectivity.

Thus it is no surprise that most transnational advocacy networks have thus far had only limited success in self-globalization, since there is a tendency for stake-holder organizations concerned with bread-and-butter issues to oppose local interests against global alliances. Thus, their greatest comparative advantage with respect to corporations—that they do not need to compete with each other—is underutilized. There are many reasons for this underutilization, ranging from political obstacles and state concerns about sovereignty to lack of informa-tion and resources for networking. While the number of nonstate actors has grown monumentally in the last three decades, especially in the areas of human rights and environmental activism (Keck and Sikkink 1998), there is much more confusion about their relative successes in competing with the organized global strategies of states and corporate interests (Matthews 1997).

But one problem stands out. One of the biggest disadvantages faced by activists working for the poor in fora such as the World Bank, the U.N. system, the WTO, NAFTA, and GATT is their alienation from the vocabulary used by the university-policy nexus (and, in a different way, by corporate ideologues and strategists) to describe global problems, projects, and policies. A strong effort to compare, describe and theorize "globalization from below" could help to close this gap. The single greatest obstacle to grassroots globalization—in relation to the global power of capital—is the lack of a clear picture among their key actors of the political, economic, and pedagogic advantages of counterglobalization. Grassroots organizations that seek to create transnational networks to advance their interests have not yet seen that such counterglobalization might generate the sorts of locational, informational, and political flexibility currently monopolized by global corporations and their national-civic allies.

By providing a complex picture of the relationship between globalization from above (as defined by corporations, major multilateral agencies, policy experts, and national governments) and below, collaborative research on globalization could contribute to new forms of pedagogy (in the sense of Freire 1987) that could level the theoretical playing field for grassroots activists in international fora.

Such an account would belong to a broader effort to understand the variety of projects that fall under the rubric of globalization, and it would also recognise that the word *globalization*, and words like *freedom*, *choice*, and *justice*, are not inevitably the property of the state-capital nexus. To take up this sort of study involves, for the social sciences, a serious commitment to the study of globaliza-tion from below, its institutions, its horizons, and its vocabularies. For those more concerned with the work of culture, it means stepping back from those obses-sions and abstractions that constitute our own professional practice to seriously

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consider the problems of the global everyday. In this exercise, the many existing forms of Marxist critique are a valuable starting point, but they too must be willing to suspend their inner certainty about understanding world histories in advance. In all these instances, academics from the privileged institutions of the West (and the North) must be prepared to reconsider, in the manner I have pointed to, their conventions about world knowledge and about the protocols of inquiry ("research") that they too often take for granted.

There are two grounds for supposing that this sort of exercise is neither idle nor frivolous. The first is that all forms of critique, including the most arcane and abstract, have the potential for changing the world: Surely Marx must have believed this during his many hours in the British Museum doing "research." The second argument concerns collaboration. I have already argued that those critical voices who speak for the poor, the vulnerable, the dispossessed, and the marginalised in the international fora in which global policies are made lack the means to produce a systematic grasp of the complexities of globalization. A new architecture for producing and sharing knowledge about globalization could provide the foundations of a pedagogy that closes this gap and helps to democratise the flow of knowledge about globalization itself. Such a pedagogy would create new forms of dialogue between academics, public intellectuals, activists, and policy-makers in different societies. The principles of this pedagogy will require significant innovations. This vision of global collaborative teaching and learning about globalization may not resolve the great antinomies of power that characterise this world, but it might help to even the playing field.

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