

Chapter 73

The Term “Global” in Cross–Cultural Studies: A Concordance Analysis

Bice Della Piana

University of Salerno, Italy

Mario Monteleone

University of Salerno, Italy

ABSTRACT

Globalization in its broadest sense is part of the strongest external environmental forces that affect organisations today (Daniels, Radebaugh, & Sullivan, 2011). Despite the “slogan” that globalization is likely to produce homogeneity in various cultures, different civilizations of the world will reassert themselves to preserve their cultural heritages. This means it is necessary to consider the dynamics of the continued interplay between various trends in world cultures and the process of globalization. Moving from these considerations, cross-cultural management research seems to be the natural framework for using the term globalization. Cross-cultural research has received considerable attention by management scholars. The purpose of this study is to understand the connotation of the term “global” used in the context of cross-cultural studies and the enrichment of his meaning in the last four decades. To achieve it, the authors use a computational linguistic tool, namely an automatic textual analysis software, by means of which they locate and extract specific linguistic expressions. This allows retrieval and location of a series of concepts that denote and connote the term “global” over the last four decades.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization in its broadest sense is part of the strongest external environmental forces that affect organisations today (Daniels, Radebaugh, & Sullivan, 2011). In the December, 2003 special

issue of the *Journal of International Management* (JIM), several authors debated the term of globalization, the related theory, their assumptions, and the impact of emerging global culture on national culture (Bird & Stevens, 2003; Clark & Knowles, 2003; Husted, 2003; Ricks, 2003; Rugman, 2003; Sobel, 2003). In subsequent years,

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the debate continued in the wake of the “Myth of Globalization” (Stevens & Bird, 2004; Rugman, 2005), and currently the focus has shifted more specifically on the interaction of different cultures. Despite the “slogan” that globalization is likely to produce homogeneity in various cultures, different civilizations of the world will reassert themselves to preserve their cultural heritages (Huntington, 1996). This means it is necessary to consider the dynamics of the continued interplay between various trends in world cultures and the process of globalization.

Kedia (2006, p. 242), in discussion on the influences of globalization on international management education, highlighted that “global managers of tomorrow should not only be concerned with competitiveness of their companies, but also with the knowledge that global corporations will perhaps function better when they are in tune with the cultural dynamics of the various parts of the globe.” Cross-cultural research appears to be the natural framework in which to use the term globalization. Cross-cultural research has developed rapidly during the 1990s and 2000s, and awareness has grown that cross-cultural research can allow management scholars not only to more accurately respond to increasingly international business contexts, but also to offer significant contributions to the overall field of management studies by deepening our understanding of fundamental management theories. This has led to an increasing number of cross-cultural studies, and to several attempts to map and take stock of this growing literature. Among these review studies, those by Schaffer and Riordan (2003), Gelfand et al (2007), and Tsui et al (2007) are especially noteworthy.

Moving from this consideration about the importance of the abovementioned area of research, the purpose of this study is to distinguish between a common meaning of the term globalization and a specific result from its use in cross-cultural studies (cross-cultural significance). The question to which our work intends to answer is: “what mean-

ing has the term globalization in cross-cultural management research?”

Therefore, our work is organised as follows. In Section 1, we provide an overview of the literature of globalization and cross-cultural research. In Section 2, we define the semantic and cognitive framework of our research, specifically based on some modern techniques of information retrieval. Particularly, we make an overview on Knowledge Conceptualization with reference to the creation of specific lexical ontologies. To this end, we explain the methods used to analyse the use of the term “globalization” in the cross-cultural studies selected over the last four decades. In Section 3, we list the most relevant patterns located by the automatic textual analysis software we used and give some linguistic considerations about our results. Section 4 shows the different use of the term “global” in the context of the cross-cultural studies and, consequently, the way in which his meaning was enriched in the last four decades (1970-2008). The final section presents the main conclusions about the located and extracted specific linguistic expressions and the future challenges of our work.

2. GLOBAL DEBATE AND CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

In his 2003 work titled, *Globalization and the role of the global corporation*, Ricks opens with this sentence: “Globalization has certainly become a popular word recently, but what exactly does it mean?” (p.355). Following this question is the story of the intense debate started on this topic in the special panel, “Globalization issues and international business Trends” at the 2002 AIB Southwest Conference and continued in a special issue of the JIM in 2003. All authors appear to agree that globalization is a more complex topic than is generally recognized. In particular, Clark and Knwoles highlight that the exact meaning and significance of globalization is still debated due to two factors: disciplinary isolation and a

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