

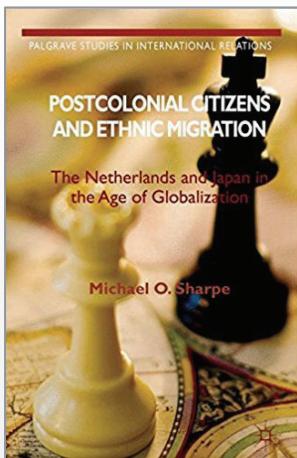


## Alumni Profile

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**Michael Sharpe** is an Associate Professor of Political Science at York College, and graduated from the GC Political Science Program in Spring 2008.

*By Matthew Thomas*



**Matt:** Please describe the nature, themes and findings of your research at the GC.

**Professor Sharpe:** My research at the Graduate Center looked comparatively at globalization, immigrant political incorporation, and political transnationalism. My dissertation and later book focused on the political incorporation of Dutch Antillean and Aruban Dutch citizens in the Netherlands and Latin American Nikkeijin (Japanese descendants) in Japan. My hypothesis was that if political incorporation is difficult for advantaged legal immigrants, it is likely even more daunting for others. Indeed, I found that the simple possession of shared citizenship does not necessarily lead to immigrant political incorporation. Factors that hinder incorporation include limited political opportunities and difficulties of small group

size, language, and a "myth of return" surrounding the immigrants. Moreover, home country dependency on migrant remittances, electoral rules and practices that complicate overseas voting, and a dearth of active host country ethnic advocacy organizations limits the emergence of political transnationalism.

**M:** What research projects are you currently working on? Given that it's been some time since you graduated, how have your research interests evolved thus far in your professional career?

**S:** My research projects continue to focus on globalization and the postcolonial citizen, ethnic immigrant political incorporation and political transnationalism in the Netherlands and Japan. I revised my dissertation and published it as a book entitled *Postcolonial Citizens and Ethnic Migration: the Netherlands and Japan in the Age of Globalization* ([Palgrave Macmillan](#), 2014). My research agenda has broadened to include the politics of international migration and comparative immigration politics around the world. I have taken a special interest in remigration policies or paid voluntary return for immigrants and their descendants to return to their countries of origin and what this mean for liberal democracies. Other current projects include research on Japan as an "emerging migration state" as well as the questions of sovereignty, autonomy, and freedom of movement in the non-sovereign Dutch Caribbean and other parts of the European Union's Overseas Countries and Territories that are constitutionally tied to an EU member state but not formally part of the European Union.

**M:** What was the job market like for you? Did you secure your position while still working on your dissertation or was there a gap between graduation and landing the job?

**S:** I was very fortunate to secure a tenure track position while finishing my dissertation. It was important that I defended by the end of the spring semester of 2008 so that I could begin my job at the rank of assistant professor that fall. With the guidance and cooperation of my outstanding dissertation committee, Professor Markovitz (Sponsor), the late Professor Gittell (Reader), and Professor Mollenkopf, I was able to successfully defend on time. I am so grateful to my very distinguished dissertation committee and the many other wonderful professors and mentors I had at the Graduate Center. There is no doubt that I could not be where I am today without them.

**M:** What advice do you have for current students about to enter the job market?

**S:** My advice is to behave like a professional academic before you get on the market. An optimal tenure track position candidate should have an active research and publication agenda, presentations, teaching, and service. A preferred position is to have at least one published article in a reputable peer reviewed journal. If you cannot get something published in a peer-reviewed journal on time, begin publishing short pieces in encyclopedias and/or short chapters in books. Teach some core bread and butter courses in and outside of your subfields. Start or continue to perform some form of community service. Present your research at major international or regional political science conferences at least once a year. Remain open to both academic and non-academic positions.



**Dr. Michael Sharpe**  
York College, CUNY

