2 The Contemporary Adjective *Global* I: Popular & Free and Disputedly Undisputed

> [G]lobal means global.
> GEORGE W. BUSH'S SPOKESWOMAN (BUSH 2001)

> The simplest words for the lexicographer are the not very common [words] with just one clear meaning, like *jabber*, *jackal*, *jackass*, *jackdaw* and *jacuzzi*.
> COLLINS COBUILD ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY (1987: XVIII)

The adjective *global* has become *de rigueur* in discourses worldwide. Yet, despite its quasi omnipresence, *global* attracts little critical attention. It has somewhat remained off the radar of concern. President Bush's spokeswoman's above quoted insight "global means global" is often as far as reflections on the word go.

The aim of Chapter 2 and the subsequent Chapter 3 is to set the ground for taking the contemporary adjective *global* seriously. This is a warranted move, given that the adjective *global* is more often than not treated as if it was clear and 'innocent'. Using Raymond Williams' (1976: 21) words, the aim of Chapters 2 and 3 is to add an "extra edge of consciousness" to the word *global*. My aim is to make the contemporary *global* 'strange', to put the spotlight on it and to lift the 'veil of invisibility', under which it exists.

In this present chapter, I do this by highlighting two of three noteworthy aspects that constitute the contemporary *global*. The first aspect is that the adjective *global* is extraordinary popular and 'free', with which I mean that it is semantically open. The second aspect is that it has – somewhat paradoxically – a 'disputedly undisputed' existence. I present these two aspects grounded in an empirical exploration of how the adjective *global* is used these days in public, political and academic contexts. I use quotes from various sources to illustrate and support my points. In the course of my discus-

sion, I engage with a theory of language and meaning, according to which language and meaning are not natural and referential but conventional and 'productive'. This theory will be taken up again in later parts of this book.

In the subsequent Chapter 3, I focus on the third aspect that constitutes the contemporary adjective *global*. This is its enmeshment with what I understand as the 'globalisation'-discourse. Given the relevance and the complexity of this third aspect, I dedicate a whole chapter to developing it.

POPULAR & FREE

There is no question, the adjective *global* is popular these days. As of 1 January 2015, US President Obama had used the word at least once in 18.5% of his Public Papers.[1] By comparison, none of the first 31 US Presidents (George Washington to Herbert Hoover) applied the adjective *global* even once in publicly recorded contexts. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first to use the word publicly on 7 September 1942,[2] and eventually applied it at least once in 2.6% of his Public Papers. While neither the Universal Declaration of Human Rights nor the United Nations Charter contain the word *global,* contemporary UN-related documents are unimaginable without this adjective. Alone in the *Human Development Report* 2014 (URL) it is applied 513 times over 239 pages; and in the *World Development Report* 2014 (URL), one of the flagship publications of the World Bank Group, we find *global* 278 times in the main body of the text that comprises 286 pages.[3] Former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown (2008a) uses the adjective 47 times in a single speech, and the annual number of articles in *The New York Times,* in which the adjective *global* is used at least once, increased between 1980 and 2015 more than fifteenfold (from 476 in 1980 to 7,375 in 2015).

These examples are not isolated cases but mirror a broader trend in the British and American English language. Both the COBUILD American and

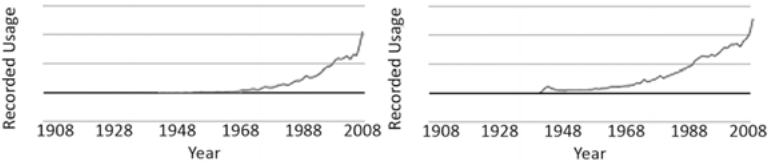
1 Here and in the following when I refer to US Presidential Public Papers I use the collection of documents that is provided by *The American Presidency Project* (URL). The 'Public Papers' of the US Presidents include all public messages, statements, speeches, and news conference remarks, as well as documents such as proclamations, executive orders, and similar documents that are published in the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations, as required by law (see *The American Presidency Project* [URL]).

2 "The Nation must have more money to run the war. People must stop spending for luxuries. Our country needs a far greater share of our incomes. For this is a *global* war, and it will cost this Nation nearly $100,000,000,000 in 1943" (Roosevelt 1942; emphasis added).

3 These numbers exclude the use of *global* in the table of content, the bibliographic references, within names such as 'World Bank Global Findex', and in the appendix.

the COBUILD British English corpora show the steady rise in the (written) use of the adjective *global* over the past 100 years (Figure 1).[4] And in their 2010 *A Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary American English* Mark Davies and Dee Gardner (2010: 74) list *global* as number 1,223 in the list of the 5,000 most frequently used words in American English with a raw frequency of 31,793 and a relatively good dispersion score of 0.89. In comparison, the adjective does not feature in prominent predecessors of Davies and Gardner's dictionary, such as Edward L. Thorndike's 1921 *Teacher's Word Book* (Thorndike 1921), which lists 10,000 English words and their frequency, its revised and extended version, *The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words* from 1944 (Thorndike and Lorge 1944), or in Michael West's 1953 *A general service list of English words* (West 1953).

Figure 1: Written use of the adjective global *in the COBUILD British English corpus (left) and COBUILD American English corpus (URL) (right)*



But the adjective *global* is not just popular these days, it also seems to be perceived as expressing the *zeitgeist.* Global is *chic*, it is 'in', it is the adjective to use. As Duncan Bell (2013: 254) puts it, the contemporary adjective *global* has "an almost shamanic aura" surrounding it. The contemporary naming strategy of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) illustrates this point. The database of the Union of International Associations (URL) reveals that the number of new NGOs with *global* in their name has increased dramatically over the past 15 years. Even more intriguing is that there are existing organisations that have *global*-ised their names: for instance, the *Evangelical Missionary Alliance* founded in 1958 changed its name to *Global Connections* in 2000 (URL); the *Australian Baptist Foreign Mission* of 1913 became *Australian Baptist Missionary Society* in 1959 and *Global Inter-Action* (URL) in 2002; *Global Impact* (URL) was founded as *International Service Agencies* in 1956; *Citizens for Global Solutions* started off in 1975 as *Campaign for UN Reform*; and the *International Association on the Political Use of Psychiatry*, which was founded in 1980, was renamed *Global Initiative on Psychiatry* (URL) in 1991 (see also Selchow 2008: 229).

4 In Chapter 3, I will reflect on the peak that we can see in the American English corpus in the 1940s.

Still looking at the *zeitgeist*-nature of the adjective *global*, consider also the curious case of the Social Sciences Citation Index database of Thomson Reuters' Web of Science (URL). The Web of Science, which is a popular source in scientific research, covers content from over 12,000 journals, which reach back to 1900. When one searches for articles that contain *global* in their titles, the database provides a large number of entries. Of these, 48 fall into the period of 1900-1915. So, what kind of academic articles where published between 1900-1915 with the word *global* in their titles? The database displays article entries such as "The global Problem" by Isaac Loos, published in *Amercian Journal of Sociology* in 1915, "Canada. National Economy Principles and Global Economic Relations" from the *American Economic Review*, published in 1914, and "Geography of Global Commerce and Global Traffic" from a 1914 edition of the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society of New York*. The issue becomes curious if one looks at the original (digitised) texts behind the 1900-1915 list of articles that, according to the Web of Science database, have the word *global* in their titles. It is readily apparent that none of these texts actually contain the word *global,* either in their titles or in their text bodies. It turns out that the respective articles are English language reviews of books entitled *Le problème mondial* (Torres 1913), *Kanada: Volkswirtschaftliche Grundlagen und weltwirtschaftliche Beziehungen* (Fleck 1911), and *Geographie des Welthandels und Weltverkehrs* (Friedrich 1911). Each of these book titles (in their original language) is used as the title for the respective review article. Given that none of these book titles contains the word *global*, none of the titles of the review articles actually contains this adjective. Yet, the word appears in the *database entry* for each article. These database entries are English translations of the titles of the articles. What becomes obvious, then, is that it was the Web of Science database editor's decision to translate the French word *mondial* and the German word *Welt* into the English word *global,* and to use this adjective in the name of the database entries for the three review articles. Hence, for instance, the database entry for the article with the title "Kanada: Volkswirtschaftliche Grundlagen und weltwirtschaftliche Beziehungen" is "Canada. National Economy Principles and Global Economic Relations". If the aim of the wording of the database entry is to best capture what the authors of the reviewed books referred to in their use of the words *mondial* and *Welt,* one would expect the English word *world* to be used for the database entries (i.e. 'Geography of *World* Commerce and *World* Traffic', instead of 'global commerce' and 'global traffic'). In the case of the German titles this is not least because, in contrast to the word *global, Welt* is not an adjective that modifies a noun – it is a noun itself. In the case of Friedrich's book, the word *Welt* (world) is used to form a new word in combination with the word *Handel* (trade): *Welthandel.* One can assume that the Web of Science database editor, who creates the names of the database entries by translating the non-English titles of the respective articles, is familiar with the foreign languages they translate. Hence, the use of

the adjective *global* must have been a conscious choice and not one made out of ignorance. It seems to have been a conscious decision to translate the respective book titles for the database entry not only from French and German into English but into a language that the translator seems to have perceived as being adequate, maybe in the sense of 'contemporary', i.e. a language in which the word *world* is naturally replaced by *global*. *Global* seems to be *the* word to use these days.

The above examples illustrate two points. The adjective *global* is more popular these days than ever and it seems to be perceived as capturing the *zeitgeist*.

Furthermore, the contemporary *global* is also used in increasingly *diverse contexts*. There is hardly anything these days that is not saddled with the word *global* in one context or another. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, late Pope John Paul II is lauded as the "first truly global Pope" (Sells 2014) – in fact, so is one of his successors, Pope Francis I (Franco 2013). For Sam Sifton (2004) the menu of a New York restaurant is "post-global".[5] University College London (URL) calls itself "London's Global University", an Arts Council England-funded project called *Global Local* is all about the "hottest Global music", and Campbell's Foodservices (URL) provides a "global soup collection". For Patrick Diamond, Anthony Giddens and Roger Liddle (2006) "Europe" is (worth being called) *global*, Ulrich Beck, Nathan Sznaider and Rainer Winter (2003) have discovered "global America", and Scott Lash, Michael Keith, Jakob Arnoldi and Tyler Rooker (2010) look at "global China". Lucy Williams (2010) studies "global marriage", Dennis Altman (2002) has discovered "global sex", Jean-Francois Bayart (2007) investigates "global subjects", Saskia Sassen (1991) the "global city", and Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russel Hochschild (2003) the "global woman". For many, the recent crisis in the financial sector is most accurately labelled *global;* and the adjective is frequently used to modify the nouns *warming, economy, change, system, market, climate, issue, network, trade, community, positioning, environment*, and is applied in combination with the words *economic*, *environmental, local, regional, international, financial, increasingly, truly,* all of which Davies and Gardner (2010: 74) identify as the top current collocates of the adjective. There is also "the global North" (e.g. Zincone and Agnew 2000), "the global South" (e.g. United Nations URL) and, in fact, "the global world" (e.g. Greenaway 2012).

So, the contemporary *global* is used *more often* than ever and also used *more widely*. But this is still not all there is to *global*: on top of things, the adjective is today also applied with an array of *different meanings* attached to it.

5 It is especially the "warm salad of curried chicken, with tiny dumplings flecked with coriander and lemony yogurt sauce" that Sifton finds "post-global".

A look at the context of the just provided examples illustrates this point. For instance, Heather Sells (2014) explains her assessment of John Paul II as the "first truly global Pope" with the fact that "[h]e visited more than 120 countries – the most ever for a pope – and held audiences with more than 17 million people." For Massimo Franco (2013: 71), Pope Francis I is the "first global Pope" because through his election

"[t]he Americas have moved from the periphery to the very heart of the Catholic world. Eurocentrism is no more. The creation of a council of eight cardinals taken from all five continents as global advisers […] confirms his intention to fundamentally reshape the government of the Church."

Whereas Sells uses the adjective *global* in a geographical sense to refer to the worldwide outreach of Pope John Paul II, for Franco *global* means 'not European' or 'not Eurocentric'. We see two uses of the adjective *global* in similar contexts but with different meanings: first, 'geographically far reaching' and, second, 'not Eurocentric'. Or take the following two reactions to the communiqué of the 2009 G20 London Summit (URL) and especially to its clause: "[a] global crisis requires a global solution". US economist Joseph Stiglitz (2009) bemoans that "[t]his global crisis requires a global response, but, unfortunately, responsibility for responding remains at the national level". Former Caribbean diplomat Sir Ronald Sanders (2009) is similarly critical about the communiqué and its announcement that "[a] global crisis requires a global solution". He writes:

"There was not a word of admission that the global crisis was caused by the financial establishment in the G7 countries. […] Instead there was the sanctimonious line: 'A global crisis requires a global solution'. Well, if that is so, why weren't countries represented at the meeting in a global way?"

Again, we see two uses of the adjective *global* in the same context but with different meanings. Stiglitz uses the adjective *global* in the sense of 'not national', whereas Sanders understands it in the sense of 'inclusive of countries from beyond the boundaries of the club of G20 countries'.

And there are many more meanings of the adjective *global* than these four. Sometimes *global* is used to refer to worldwide, sometimes to 'the North', sometimes to 'the West', sometimes to 'everybody', sometimes to 'universal', sometimes to 'including developing countries', sometimes to 'the developed world', sometimes it is used as a synonym for the word *international,* sometimes it means 'transnational', sometimes "international and ethnic inspired", as in the above mentioned case of Campbell's "global soup collection" (Campbell's Foodservice URL). And, sometimes, the adjective *global* refers to 'including tourists from Western countries', 'unprecedented' and 'exceptional', like when UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (2004) called the consequences of the 2004 Boxing Day earthquake in the

Indian Ocean and its subsequent tsunami a "global catastrophe" that requires a "global response".

As highly specialised geo-scientific studies suggest, the 2004-seaquake in the Indian Ocean made the entire planet vibrate (e.g. Lay 2005). Hence, in this context the adjective *global* could meaningfully refer to 'affecting the entire planet'. Yet, Annan's decision to call the event a "global catastrophe", and International Crisis Group's Gareth Evans' (2005) decision to speak in the same context of a "real global momentum", do not seem to have been motivated by and refer to the actual planetary impact of the seaquake – they seem to carry a different meaning. After all, the geological insight that the quake actually affected the entire planet was not yet known at the point in time when these two public statements were made.

A look at the context, in which the word was applied, suggests that it was a complex web of perceptions and interpretations, and, prominently, a notion of 'unprecedentedness' and 'exceptionality' that accounted for the consequences of the tsunami being attributed with the adjective *global*. It appears these perceptions were due to the degree of the impact of the quake: the tsunami affected 11 countries and, even more significantly, it not only hit locals but also an unusual high number of citizens of Western countries, who spent their holidays in the region. These 'Westerners', in turn, used their mobile phones and digital cameras to spread first-hand accounts and pictures all over the world, bringing "the wave of death: chaos in paradise" (*The Mirror* 2004), almost 'live and in colour' into the living-rooms around the globe with an unprecedented immediacy. This, in turn, facilitated and amplified the extraordinary media coverage that accompanied and simultaneously 'made' the event. Hence, in the case of the 2004-tsunami the adjective *global* seems to have been applied because of the high number of victims who were from Europe, Australia and the US, and the subsequent worldwide media attention to which the catastrophe was subject. This interpretation is supported in view of the reactions to other major earthquakes, such as the one that struck China in 2008 and affected more people than any other earthquake between 1980-2008, namely a total of 46 million people (CRED 2010), or the one that struck South Asia in October 2005 and affected some four million people only a few months after the 2004-tsunami. Neither of these were labelled '*global* catastrophes' or perceived as demanding 'a *global* response'. For instance, Annan's official reaction to the 2005 South Asia disaster was his assurance that it left him "deeply saddened" (Annan 2005).

If we take all of the above together, we notice two things. First, the contemporary word *global* is like a chameleon that adapts apparently effortlessly to any context in which it appears. Second, and moving on from here, the many different meanings, with which the word is accorded these days, have often not much to do with those that are provided in English language dictionaries, such as the latest *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, edited

by Stevenson and Waite (2011: 605; emphasis in the original). *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines *global* as

"adj. 1 relating to the whole world; worldwide. 2 relating to or embracing the whole of something, or of a group of things. *Computing* operating or applying through the whole of a file or program. DERIVATIVES **globalist** n. & adj. **globally** adj."

The 2011 edition of the *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* is of course not the only dictionary that features the adjective *global*. For instance, the 2006 edition of *The Concise Oxford American Dictionary* (2006: 381) defines the word *global* as 1. "of or relating to the whole world; worldwide"; 2. "of or relating to the entire earth as a planet"; 3. "relating to or embracing the whole of something, or of a group of things"; 4. "Comput. operating or applying through the whole of a file, program". And in the 1998 edition of *The Chambers Dictionary* (1998: 681; emphasis in the original), the adjective *global* is listed with the meanings:

"spherical; worldwide; affecting, or taking into consideration, the whole world or all peoples; (of products or companies) having a name that is recognized throughout the world (*marketing*); comprehensive; involving a whole file of data (*comput*.)."

Looking through the array of existing English dictionaries over time, we see that *global* has had a relatively long 'dictionary life'; though, admittedly, it did neither appear in what is often seen as the first monolingual English dictionary, namely Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabeticall of Hard Usual English Words* from 1604 (Cawdrey 1966[1604]), nor in Samuel Johnson's 1755 *A Dictionary of the English Language* (Johnson 1983[1755]). Both publications feature the word *globe*, which Cawdrey (1966[1604]: 61) defines as "any thing, very round". Johnson further lists the adjectives *globated, globular* and *globulous*. *Globated* is defined as "*adj*. [from *globe*.] Formed in the shape of a globe; spherical; spheroidical", *globular* as "*adj*. [...] In form of a small sphere; round; spherical", and *globulous* as "*adj*. [...] In form of a small sphere; round" (Johnson 1983[1755]: 428; emphasis in the original). Yet, although not listed in these two famous historical dictionaries, *global* already appeared in 1901 in the influential *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles.* This dictionary is influential because it is the foundation of what is now called the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles global* is listed as deriving from the noun *globe;* the meaning that is provided for it is "spherical; globular" (as seen in the 1933 reprint, *The Oxford English Dictionary* 1933: 223). In the 1933 Supplement to the *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* a second meaning of *global* is added, namely, "pertaining to or embracing the totality of a group of items, categories, or the like" (*The Oxford English Dictionary* 1933a: 417). And, some forty year later, in the 1972 *A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* (1972), which was edited by

R. W. Burchfield and served to replace the 1933 *Supplement*, the meaning that was added in 1933 was extended to: "pertaining to or embracing the totality of a number of items, categories, etc.; comprehensive, all-inclusive, unified; total; *spec*. pertaining to or involving the whole world; world-wide; universal" (*A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* 1972: 1240; emphasis in the original). In comparison, in the 1964 edition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English,* edited by McIntosh, we find the adjective *global* listed under the noun *globe.* It is listed both as an adjective with the meaning "world-wide; embracing the totality of a group of items, categories, etc.", and as a verb, meaning: "Make (usu. in pass.), or become globular" (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* 1964: 521-2). In the 1976 edition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English,* edited by John B. Skyes, *global* is explained as being an adjective with one meaning, namely "[w]orld-wide; pertaining to or embracing the whole of a group of items etc.; total." Here, it has its own entry, separate from the noun *globe* (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* 1976: 453).

This brief look at various dictionaries shows us three things. First, the adjective *global* has a relatively long dictionary-life, starting at least in 1901. Second, there are different dictionary meanings of *global*. Finally, as already mentioned, it shows us that the many different meanings, which the contemporary chameleon *global* has in different contexts today, such as 'non-Eurocentric' or 'affecting a high number of Westerners', are not only diverse but also do not necessarily overlap with the meanings we find in dictionaries.

This 'mismatch' between the myriad of uses of *global* and the dictionary meanings does, of course, not suggest that the word is used in incorrect ways, or, alternatively, that there is something wrong with past or current dictionaries. Rather, it makes us aware that the contemporary adjective *global* is a word that is shaped by a high degree of semantic openness. Arguably, a high degree of semantic openness reduces the precision of a word and the effectiveness of those communicative exchanges, in which the word is used. As such, the fact that the contemporary *global* is used to convey a vast number of different meanings could well be perceived as problematic. Yet, it would be misguided to say that there was something *wrong* with its polysemic use.

Meanings are arbitrary, in the sense that there is no meaning naturally attached to a linguistic sign. Which meaning is linked to a linguistic sign is subject to social ratification rather than natural pre-determination. Meanings and, more broadly, language are in constant flux and arise in the context of their actualisation, that is, in the context of the use of them.

"Words can lose or gain meanings relatively easily, due to [their] elasticity; and they do not have to lose an earlier sense to gain a new one",

explains April McMahon (1994: 176).

"Thirty years ago, who would have thought that we would be 'surfing' in our own homes, or that 'chips' would be good things to have inside our equipment, or that we would be excited 'to google this' and 'to google that'." (Davies and Gardner 2010: 1)

And did you know that "in the thirteenth century, 'girl' could mean a child of either sex, a 'youth' or a 'maiden', and because of this ambiguity, a boy was usually referred to as a 'knave girl'" (Room 1986: 127)? Clearly, meanings of words change.

Before having a closer look at the institution of the dictionary, I want to stay with the issue of meaning for a moment. I want to substantiate the claim that meaning is arbitrary and language is flexible. The way to do this is to start with Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's structural language philosophy and to end with poststructuralist revisions of this theory.

With his structural language philosophy, de Saussure developed one of the central language philosophical traditions.[6] In this philosophy, de Saussure (2000[1916]) demonstrates that meanings are not naturally inherent in linguistic signs. He uses the metaphor of the chess game in order to illustrate this point and to support his distinct idea about how meaning emanates in language. For de Saussure, the chess pieces (the linguistic signs) do not have an inherent role (meaning). The roles (meanings) of the chess pieces (linguistic signs) evolve from their position within the chess game (system of language). More precisely, in de Saussure's imagination, roles (meanings) emanate from within their relation to other chess pieces (linguistic signs) within the structure, which holds them together. Consequently, de Saussure argues for a synchronic or static perspective on language and not, as was common for linguists up to his time, for a diachronic or historical approach to language (de Saussure 2000[1916]: 81). His 'structural linguistics' investigates language as a structured system of signs that is stable and fixed at any given moment.[7]

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6 The other important tradition is the pragmatic language philosophy that Ludwig Wittgenstein (1952) established. It will play a role in Chapter 6.

7 In comparison, in developing his pragmatic language philosophy, Wittgenstein (1953), too, argues that meaning is not attached to a linguistic sign. Yet, while sharing this premise with de Saussure, he develops a theory that is different from de Saussure's. Like de Saussure, Wittgenstein compares language to a chess game. He understands meaning as the outcome of moves within a language, i.e. within this chess game. The individual chess piece (the linguistic sign) within this (language) game does not have an inherently fixed role (meaning). Yet, the game is based on fixed rules, according to which each chess piece can be moved (linguistic sign can be used). These rules are known to each player (to each language user). The role of the chess piece (the meaning of the linguistic sign) evolves from within the moving process (through the use of the linguistic sign), an act, which can be called communicative action. Hence, in Wittgensetin's imagination, it is from within the process of moving of the chess pieces (the use of

The basic premises of de Saussure's synchronic understanding of language and his notion of linguistic signs and meanings can be summarised as follows: de Saussure distinguishes between 'language', which is the system of signs, 'language faculty' (original in French *langage*), which is the general ability to speak, and 'speech', which is the individual executive act of using language (original in French *parole*) (see de Saussure 2000[1916]: 8-17). Since speech depends on the existence of the system of signs, de Saussure argues, it is this system that needs to be of primary interest to linguists. Elaborating on the nature of signs as the components of this language system, he stresses that there is nothing referential about signs; signs are conventional. He draws a clear distinction between a sign (such as the word *wall*) and an external referent (such as an actual cement construction), and argues that signs do not get their meanings from their relation to an external reality. Rather, meanings evolve from within the language system, that is, they evolve in contrast to other signs.

This understanding is grounded in how de Saussure envisages the nature of linguistic signs. He argues, a sign consists of two components: the 'signal' (signifier) and what he calls the 'signification' (signified). The signal is to be understood as "the hearer's psychological impression of a sound, as given to him by the evidence of his sense" (ibid. 66), like the spoken word *wall*. The signification is the abstract concept that is associated with a specific signal; in other words, it is the meaning of the word, in the sense that it is the mind image (not the actual thing in empirical reality) of a cement construction. Central for de Saussure's theory is that the two sides of a sign are to be imagined as the two sides of a piece of paper, which cannot be separated from each other. He stresses that the "two elements are intimately linked and each triggers the other" (ibid.). Nevertheless, the relationship between signal and signification is purely arbitrary. There is nothing inherent or natural about the link between a specific signifier (such as the word *wall*) and a specific signified (such as the mind image of a cement construction). The fact that there are different languages with different signifiers for the 'same' signified supports his point well: the signified that is linked to the signifier 'wall' in English is linked to the signifier 'Mauer' in German – clearly, it is a matter of convention, which signifier is linked to which signified.

Flowing from this insight, de Saussure concludes that meanings are best understood as not being inherent in a sign but as evolving from within the

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the linguistic signs), based on pre-determined rules that the chess pieces (the linguistic signs) get their role (their meaning). Above and beyond and more generally, according to this philosophical tradition linguistic signs become meaningful based on the knowledge of the extra-linguistic context, such as the situation of the user of the sign, the historical context etc. In short, Wittgenstein (1953: 43) postulates: "the meaning of a word is its use in the language"; hence his language philosophy runs under the label pragmatic language philosophy.

process of differentiation from other signs within the stable system of language. In his words,

> "a language is a system in which all elements fit together, and in which the value of any one element depends on the simultaneous coexistence of all the others." (de Saussure 2000[1916]: 113)

Signs are defined negatively in difference to other signs within the language system.

The above theoretically grounds and substantiates two important points: First, it substantiates that linguistic signs and their meanings are not referential, in the sense that they do not arise from a natural relationship with a referent in empirical reality. Rather, meanings evolve from differences to other meanings. Second, the above supports the point that the link between a signifier and a meaning is arbitrary; it is the product of conventions.

Both of these two points are intriguing and foundational. Yet, de Saussure's linguistic insights do not go far enough in grasping the complexity and flexibility of language and meaning. There is more to language and meaning than de Saussure's structural, that is, synchronic conception of language captures. Thinkers, who are commonly labelled poststructuralists, such as Jacques Derrida (1976, 1981) and his conception of 'deconstruction', elaborate on this argument. By engaging with and by rewriting de Saussure's initial theory, they develop a much more complex idea of meaning. Along with this more complex idea of meaning comes a less stable notion of language.

To put it in a nutshell, while poststructuralists agree with de Saussure's basic argument that meanings evolve from difference not from (unconventional, that is, natural) reference, they focus on the question of where this process of differentiation possibly starts and ends within a supposedly closed system of signs – to remind us, de Saussure imagines language as a closed system, in which meaning is generated from within difference. The implications of taking the process of differentiation seriously are that, in order to bring the process of negative definition to an end, there would have to be something over and above the closed and stable sign system, which could serve as a fixed starting point – a meta-sign at which the process of differentiation starts and ends. But what would that be? Given that the idea of a transcendental point of reference is not beyond dispute, de Saussure's notion of language as a closed and stable system of signs is problematic. This, in turn, questions the notion of his synchronic perspective and brings history (back) in.

Poststructuralists start with the above problem and somewhat radicalise, or, one could say, 'de-essentialise' de Saussure's theory of structural linguistics. They do this by questioning the idea of structure as an essence, and, as it is for instance elaborated in much detail in Belsey (2002), Culler (2008), Campbell (2007), Eagleton (1983) and Hall (1997), by critically en-

gaging with de Saussure's dualistic concept of signs. They challenge the notion that the two sides of a sign are inseparably linked to each other ('like a piece of paper', as de Saussure imagines it). According to poststructuralists, a specific signified (in other words mind image or meaning) is not interlinked with one specific signifier. Furthermore, the meaning of a sign cannot be understood as evolving neatly from a signifier's difference to one other signifier. Rather, meaning evolves from the differentiation between an indefinite number of signifiers. The signifier 'wall' does not get its meaning by distinction from one signifier (let's say 'fence'), but it gets its meaning also from its distinction from, for instance, 'house' or 'door'. These signifiers themselves get their meanings from within a web of differences in an infinite regress. As literary theorist Terry Eagleton (1983: 127) puts it,

"meaning is the spin-off of a potentially endless play of signifiers, rather than a concept tied firmly to the tail of a particular signifier."

Thus, a sign must not be conceptualised as if it was carrying one fixed signified in it (in other words: one fixed mind image or meaning), which could be 'discovered' in its difference from another sign. As Derrida (1976: 7) stresses,

"there is not a single signifier that escapes, even if recaptured, the play of signifying references that constitutes language."

In this light, meaning evolves from within an unlimited and constantly changing constellation of signs, whose meanings refer to each other. Each signifier is constituted by the difference between itself and other signifiers, which themselves are constituted by the difference between themselves and other signifiers, which themselves are constituted by the difference between themselves and other signifiers …. *ad infinitum*. Accordingly, meaning can never be fully grasped. It is a "constant flickering of presence and absence together" (Eagleton 1983: 128), filtering through language like a web-like shadow. As Derrida (1981: 85) stresses, it is structurally impossible to close this web, to bring the process of interlinkages to an end, to draw a border and 'put on hold' (the endless re-production of) meaning.[8]

8 These poststructuralist premises serve as the ground for Derrida's philosophical programme of deconstructing the binary oppositions, which he and all other poststructuralist thinkers detect as the fundamental structure of (Western) thinking. Jacob Torfing (2005: 11) puts this point as follows: "Derrida argues that Western thinking tends to organize the world in terms of binary hierarchies between the privileged essential inside and an excluded, inferior, and accidental outside […]. He shows that the outside is not merely posing a corruptive and ruinous threat to the inside, but is actually required for the definition of the inside. The inside is

As such, poststructuralist premises make us aware that language and meaning are less stable than de Saussure's theory suggests. Thus, poststructuralist theories, in general, and Derrida's theory of 'deconstruction', in particular, constitute a turning away from, in Eagleton's words (1983: 131), the

"belief in some ultimate 'word', presence, essence, truth or reality, which will act as the foundation of all our thought, language and experience."

Accordingly, a transcendental 'ultimate' reality cannot exist; more precisely, it cannot be thought of and treated as independently and naturally existing because there is nothing that is not constituted through differences.[9] Conse-

marked by a constitutive lack that the outside helps to fill." For instance, in the context of International Relations, this binary opposition is most prominently the opposition between 'sovereign' and 'anarchic' which, in turn, as for instance Michael Shapiro (1989) comprehensively dismantles, automatically constructs the state as the quasi-natural point of reference in political thinking and action. See also David Campbell's seminal work on security (Campbell 1998[1992]) and, of course, the work of IR theorist R. B. J. Walker (1993).

9 Ultimately, for Derrida (1973: 147), this means that presence can "no longer [be understood] as the absolutely matrical form of being but rather as a 'determination' and 'effect'. [It] is a determination and effect within a system which is no longer that of presence but that of differance." The term *différance* is a term created by Derrida. He takes the French word *difference* and changes one letter; this change of one letter transforms the whole meaning of the word. The change of meaning, however, is only visible in the written word *différance*, since the pronunciation of *difference* and *différance* is the same. This is linked to Derrida's elaborations on 'writing' versus 'speech', which is one of the major aspects of his theory. He explains 'difference' as follows: "First, *différance* refers to the (active and passive) movement that consists in deferring by means of delay, delegation, reprieve, referral, detour, postponement, reserving. In this sense, differance is not preceded by the original and indivisible unity of a present possibility that could reserve, like an expenditure that would put off calculatedly for reasons of economy. What defers presence, on the contrary, is the very basis on which presence is announced or desired in what represents it, its sign, its trace […]. Second, the movement of *différance*, as that which produces different things, that which differentiates, is the common root of all the oppositional concepts that mark our language. […] Third, *différance* is also the product, if it still can be put this way, of these differences, of the diacriticity that the linguistics generated by Saussure, and all the structural sciences modelled upon it, have recalled is the condition for any signification and any structure." (Derrida 1981a: 9; for Derrida's discussion of the relationship between 'writing' versus 'speech' see further Derrida 1976, 1978).

quently, there is nothing that could stand beyond dispute and social negotiation – and beyond power.[10]

If we consider just these few theoretical elaborations, language and meaning and the adjective *global* become intriguing indeed. Thanks to de Saussure's conception of language we see that meaning is the product of language rather than something that is inherent in something that pre-exists externally and then gets picked up in language. Thanks to the poststructuralist revision of de Saussure's language theory, we become aware that meaning is more like a moving 'shadow' than something stable and fixed. Meaning is something that evolves from within the interplay of signifiers, which themselves are interplays of signifiers. Hence, meanings are like complex texts, which refer to other texts and constitute a network of changing relationships (in other words, a web of intertextuality). They change constantly, even if only slightly, from context to context, and from moment to moment – they are never exactly the same but are essentially blurred and ambiguous. Meaning is a web-like shadow that filters through language.

This is how the theory goes. Yet, if we look at the reality of language (use) we realise that language and meaning are, of course, not entirely arbitrary and individual after all. This is aptly captured in Lewis Carroll's (2001: 223) exchange between Alice and Humpty Dumpty:[11]

> "'[…] and that shows that there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents –'
> 'Certainly,' said Alice.
> 'And only one for birthday presents, you know. There's glory for you!'
> 'I don't know what you mean by 'glory',' Alice said.
> Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. 'Of course you don't – till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you!''
> 'But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument',' Alice objected.
> 'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.'
> 'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'
> 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master – that's all.'"

Humpty Dumpty is, in principle, correct when he suggests that "the question [of meaning] is which is to be master", that is, who is in the position to 'tame' the endless play of meanings. Yet, Humpty Dumpty's individual use of language is simply not successful in that he does not follow the socially ratified use of language. The way Humpty Dumpty uses the word *glory* does not enable him to communicate with Alice. Instead, he is forced to translate for Alice what he means when he uses the word *glory*. Although, in princi-

10 I come back to the issue of 'power' in Chapters 4 and 6.

11 Catherine Belsey (2002: 1-2) points this out.

ple, meanings are arbitrary and floating, only what is communicated in a way that is connected and adapted to general, socially ratified perceptions of the world is 'successful', in the sense that it gets understood. As the earlier mentioned word *conventional* suggests, there is a social dimension to meaning. Although, in theory, they are anything but stable and fixed, linguistic signs appear as if they carried a clear and 'natural' meaning – otherwise we would not be able to communicate.

This draws our attention to the obvious but important point that, although signifiers are in principle arbitrary, conventions and rules 'suggest' and 'restrict' which (shadow) of a meaning is (to be) associated with which signifier. While the use of signs is individual and while a person (or Humpty Dumpty), who uses a sign, has an individual idea of which mind image (in other words, meaning) they would like to be or assume will be associated with the used sign, the production of meaning is a social phenomenon which takes place within and against the backdrop of socially ratified, collective understandings of meanings.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the concept 'discourse' and, with that, come back to the issue of the social nature of language and the 'taming' of meanings. For now, we take from the above an understanding of the inherent flexibility of language and meaning. This brings me back to the institution of the dictionary and to the phenomenon of lexical meanings, which I already touched on above when I pointed out that the actual uses of the adjective *global* often do not correspond with the meanings that we find in dictionaries.

Linguists distinguish between codified lexical meanings and actual meanings. The latter are meanings of words that are activated in actual discourse, like the many different meanings of the adjective *global* that we saw at the beginning of this chapter. The codified lexical meanings, in comparison, are always only the "context-free, speaker-free, non-referential meanings" of a word (Wavell 1986: 29). These are the meanings that dictionaries provide, like the various meanings of the adjective *global* in *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* and in the successors of this seminal dictionary.

The above sketched insights into the theory of language and meaning make it apparent that it is impossible for lexicographers to capture in a dictionary the breadth of actual existing meanings, which – following the above – only ever exist as a shadow that runs through language. At the same time, it makes obvious that every 'taming' of a meaning of a word in a dictionary is a practice that intervenes in the "constant flickering of presence and absence" (Eagleton 1983: 128) that is meaning. This makes dictionaries, on the one hand, "mines whose word-gems encapsulates centuries of language, history and cultural traditions; they are store-houses of meanings and uses" (Facchinetti 2012: 1). On the other hand, however, it makes dictionaries publications that are "out of date as soon as they are published" (Gramley and Pätzold 2004: 26), because the language has 'moved on'. Furthermore, and fundamentally, it makes obvious that dictionaries need to be taken as

edited books that only ever provide an *assembled picture* of a language. Dictionaries are the product of "persistent and inevitable filtering processes", explains John Willinsky (1994: 13). Given that they never capture the entirety of a language, i.e. given that they only ever provide *selected* lexical meanings, dictionaries are not simply neutral mirrors of a language and of the changes of meanings in this language. On the contrary, they play a central role in the *establishment* and, in fact, production of this language.

For instance, looking at the production and reproduction of Standard English and the extraordinary role of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) in this respect, Michael Stubbs (1996: 64-66) finds that what has come to be considered as Standard English is the product of the work of a distinct social group and, in fact, of distinct individuals and their personal decisions. He finds that

> "there is no doubt that the definitions found in dictionaries display the bases of the particular social group who constructed them." (ibid. 65)

Willinsky (1994: 13) goes further by pointing to the self-referential character of the entries in the OED:

> "It is still easy to mistake what we find in the dictionary for the entirety of the English language, to imagine that the definitions provided in its pages are carefully lifted, via the citation, directly out of the language. To consider the idea is to realize that we know better, not only as print is only one code in the use of an English language that has a long history of authority and resistance, but as the print record of the *OED* forms its own record of the language's past and present."

As the practice of establishing dictionaries goes, the selected picture of a language that dictionaries, such as, in the case of English, most prominently and powerfully the OED, provide is constructed on the basis of both past and, importantly, *written* occurrences of words. The lexical meanings of the words are determined by these occurrences. These selected past and written occurrences are usually listed as 'citations' or 'quotations'.

This makes it apparent then that, for better or worse, dictionaries inevitably reproduce the 'tamed' meanings they provide from within a distinct, arguably, elitist historical canon (of written work). Just consider that the most frequently quoted work in the current Second Edition of the OED from 1989 is the Bible and the most frequently quoted single author is William Shakespeare, with around 33,300 quotations (OED Dictionary Facts URL).

The origin of the OED is the already mentioned *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles; Founded Mainly on the Materials Collected by the Philological Society* that was originally edited by James A. H. Murray and published as a serial magazine over 44 years, between 1884 and 1928. The aim of the *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* was to

"present in alphabetical series the words that have formed the English vocabulary from the time of the earliest records down to the present day, with all the relevant facts concerning their form, sense-history, pronounciation, and etymology." (The Oxford English Dictionary 1933b: v)

The original dictionary contains more than 400,000 words illustrated through around 2 million quotations, which were selected from a pool of "some five million excerpts from English literature of every period amassed by an army of voluntary readers and the editorial staff" (Murray quoted in Wells 1973: 29). In 1933 *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* was reprinted, with a Supplement of around 850 pages. It was published under the title *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). Further Supplements followed, such as the above mentioned one in 1972, and a Second Edition of the OED was published in 1989. Currently, in 2015, a completely reworked version of the OED is in progress, and it is only now that for "the first time material written by Murray and the early editors has been changed since they finished in 1928" (History of the OED ULR). Given the flexibility and historical nature of language, this is remarkable. As this indicates, the construction and promotion of current Standard English through the OED is done by relying on and utilising what Willinsky (2004: 13) calls a "nineteenth century artefact". He argues:

"This dictionary, in all of its magnificence, could reasonably be considered as the last powerful outreach of an imperial age; it is an icon of learnedness that continues to shape the modern understanding of the word on a global scale. We need to appreciate how the *OED* has fashioned the English language out of classical allusion and poetic metaphor, scientific discovery and scholarly research, while filling it out with the prose of a working press and publishing trade." (ibid.)

I reflect on the nature of dictionaries and the distinction between lexical and actual meanings in some detail here because ever so often – and, as we will see later, including in the scholarly literature on 'globalisation' – dictionaries are treated (by scholars in political studies and IR) as the unquestionable authority on a particular language and its meanings. As linguist Ernest Weekly (1924) observes,

"almost the only individual to approach the sacred book [dictionary] in the spirit of a doubter is the lexicographer himself."

Taken together, the above elaborations make us aware that there is something problematic about relying on a dictionary for a supposedly authorative meaning, i.e. for *the* meaning of a word, such as the adjective *global*. To look at a dictionary means to look at decisions of those who were and are in a position to, first, determine which words are to be taken up in a dictionary, and, second, which (written) sources are to be used as the basis for the de-

tection of what would enter a dictionary as the lexical meanings of these selected words. To look at a dictionary, then, is not to look at an a-historical source but to look at a highly self-referential, edited book, in which an endless web of references is 'tamed' into distinct lexical meanings.

I come back to these insights into the nature of meanings and dictionaries in Chapters 3 and 6. For now, I want to return to the contemporary word *global.*

It is clear now that the above observation that *global* is used with a vast number of meanings, which are not only at times contradictory in themselves but also often differ from the codified lexical meanings that are provided in current dictionaries, does not indicate incorrect uses of the word nor shortcomings in the dictionaries. It is a manifestation of the fact that *global* is shaped by a relatively high degree of semantic openness. In the "Introduction" to his 2004 *New Words* dictionary Orin Hargraves (2004: vii) explains

> "a new word's appearance in a dictionary is the beginning of the end of its freedom: while lexicography pays these novel formations the respect of recognizing them as worthy additions to the language, it does so for a price, and that price is the suggestion, if not the insistence, that the new words settle down somewhat in form and meanings and stop flailing about."

As we saw in the short overview of the 'dictionary life' of *global,* the adjective has been accredited with "the respect of being recognised as a worthy addition to the language" already for a while now – at least since 1901 and the *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. Yet, the word remains extraordinarily 'free' and continues to 'flail about' today. Indeed, as the various examples of its usage, which I provided in this chapter, show, perhaps *global* is today even freer and more prone to 'flailing about' than ever. It seems there is a self-reinforcing development in place: the more the adjective *global* is used, the freer it becomes because an inflation of meanings and patterns of use makes it harder to pin it down and 'tame' it. "The simplest words for the lexicographer are the not very common [words] with just one clear meaning, like *jabber*, *jackal*, *jackass*, *jackdaw* and *jacuzzi*", explains John Sinclair, editor-in-chief of the 1987 edition of the *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary* (1987: xviii). As we have seen above, *global* is anything but simple.

To conclude, the first noteworthy aspect of the contemporary adjective *global* is that it is popular and free. Above and beyond this, we saw in this section that language and meanings are not natural and referential but flexible and conventional, that there is a difference between lexical and actual meanings, and that dictionaries are exciting historical documents but not the bearer of *the* meaning of a word – language is too alive to be tamed in a book.

DISPUTEDLY UNDISPUTED

The second aspect that constitutes the contemporary adjective *global* is that there is something paradoxical in how it is used and how it is treated. To reflect this point, I call the contemporary *global* 'disputedly undisputed'. I suggest, this 'disputedly undisputed' existence of the adjective is due to two – for a lack of a better word – 'extreme' treatments.

On the one side, as we saw above, *global* is not only widely used but widely used without critical reflection. If we look at the adjective's application across discourses, including the social scientific scholarship, we notice that *global* is often simply overlooked as a word that might require reflection and explanation. *Global* seems to be 'invisible'. It is off the radar of scholarly concern.

On the other side, however, *global* and its current popularity is very clearly 'visible' to commentators. This is evident in the fact that, not infrequently, (the use of) the adjective is dismissed as a fad and rejected as a linguistic manifestation of the discourses of 'globality' and 'globalisation'.

In the following, I illustrate each of these two points in turn.

Global, the undisputed

We saw above that the contemporary word *global* is shaped by a high degree of semantic openness. We saw that it is used in many different senses. This is most obvious when applied in the same context, such as in the assessment of which Pope is / was the first 'global' Pope, or in the debate about a 'global' response to the financial crisis. Yet, despite this striking ambiguity, the adjective *global* is, more often than not, treated as if there was no doubt about what it meant. This is manifest in two different ways.

First, there is the predominant practice of using the adjective without problematising it. The case of the journalist from the beginning of this chapter, who problematised the use of *global* in a statement of President Bush's spokeswoman, is an exception. Just scroll through any of the countless publications that contain the adjective in their title – chances are that the word is applied but not explained. Or, look into recent reference books that aim to capture "the new language of international politics" (Morris URL) and to engage with "terms, concepts, jargon, acronyms and abbreviations used in" the contemporary political debate (Saunier and Meganck 2007), such as *Globalization: The Key Concepts* (Mooney and Evans 2007), *A Dictionary of Globalization* (Wunderlich and Warrier 2007), Roland Robertson and Jan Aart Scholte's four-volume-comprising *Encyclopedia of Globalization* (2007), and the *Dictionary and Introduction to Global Environmental Governance* (Saunier and Meganck 2007). While these publications feature an array of fixed and semi-fixed phrases that *contain* the adjective *global*, such as 'global cities', 'global civil society', 'global commons', 'global consciousness', 'global culture', 'global division of labour', and 'global financial crises', the adjective in and of itself is not subject to problematisation. It

is not explicitly discussed, let alone has it its own individual entry. As this indicates, *global* is perceived to be a useful adjective to apply, it is spread throughout these books but it is clearly not perceived and treated as sufficiently problematic to provoke explicit reflections.[12]

The earlier mentioned *World Development Report* 2014 (ULR) with its 278 *global*s on 286 pages does not only constitute another example for this phenomenon – none of the 278 applications of the word is subject to explicit reflection – it is also an example for another, related phenomenon, which illustrates that *global* is taken as 'undisputed'. This is the predominant use of the adjective as a pre-modifier.

Adjectives are words that are used to modify a noun. They can be applied as pre-modifiers, such as in the case of 'the global market', or as post-modifiers, such as in the phrase 'the market is global'. In the case of 'the market is global', the adjective is explicitly part of the proposition about 'the market'. In contrast, in its use as a *pre*-modifier, i.e. 'the global market', as it is the case in 275 out of 278 uses of the adjective *global* in the *World Development Report* 2014, *global* 'is there' and 'does' something to the noun it is applied to, but partially disappears in its co-existence with the noun. In contrast to 'the market is global', in the phrase 'the global market' the adjective does not invite disputation. It is normalised and taken for granted, as if it was clear.

The second manifestation of my observation that the adjective *global* is taken as if it was straightforward is its 'invisibility' in academic discourses, such as the political studies and IR scholarship. In this body of scholarly work, *global* is simply not considered worth studying. Of course, as I acknowledged in the Introduction to this book (see also Selchow 2016), the study of distinct linguistic signs, such as the word *global*, is normally not at the core of the disciplines of political studies and IR. Yet, even in the subpart of the scholarship that takes (the use of) language and distinct words seriously the adjective *global* has not been subject to meaningful express exploration. In fact, *global* is sometimes even positively overlooked. We can see this, for instance, in the debate about the 'global war on terror/ism' (GWOT), i.e. the narrative that has shaped political discourses since the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, DC in September 2001.

The GWOT has triggered a considerable number of public discussions about, assessments of and scholarly engagements with the language that constitutes and makes it. The metaphor 'war' has been discussed at length, as well as the words *terrorism*, *terror* and *terrorist.*[13] These discussions even

12 As an exception see *Neoliberalism: The Key Concepts* by Matthew Eagleton-Pierce (2016).

13 The 'war'-metaphor came under critical scrutiny right from the beginning. Benjamin B. Ferencz (2001), former prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial, was one of the first who argued that the 9/11-attack needs to be understood and treated as a "crime against humanity" rather than as a "declaration of war". In

led to the Obama-Administration publicly announcing in 2009 that it would no longer use the phrase 'war on terror/ism' (Los Angeles Times 2009).[14] Yet, surprisingly, the word *global* has not attracted critical attention in this context. Indeed, it has not even been acknowledged as a noteworthy component of the 'global war on terror/ism' narrative in the first place. This is despite the fact that it is clearly a constitutive part of it.[15]

For instance, Jeffrey Record (2004: 2) examines the features of the 'global war on terrorism' for the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) and argues that there are "two issues that continue to impede understanding of the GWOT: its incomplete characterisation as a war, and the absence of an agreed upon definition of terrorism" – omitting 'the issue' of the adjective *global* as the third issue that 'impedes understanding of the GWOT'. Richard Jackson (2005) does the same in his study, which expressly aims to provide an analysis of, as he puts it, the "public language" of the 'war on terror/ism' by investigating how language has been deployed in order to justify

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critical security studies, various voices criticise the application of the term *war* on the basis that it constitutes a speech act that brings war into being in the first place and that 'securitises' terrorism, which means that it frames terrorism as an existential threat, and, consequently, leads to the justification of the suspension of normal politics (see Fierke 2005: 53-55). More generally, it has been widely pointed out that the idea of 'war' is faulty in that it implies perceptions of victory, defeat, as well as peace; as even noticed by US President Bush (see Borger 2004), these orthodox perceptions are actually untenable in the case of the 'war against terrorism' – so is the clear line between 'we' and 'them', the enemy, which is implicitly invoked by the 'war'-metaphor (see Fierke 2005: 54; also Beck 2003). George Soros (2006) calls the 'war' metaphor a "false metaphor", and Robert Higgs (2005) brings the linguistic critique to the point when he states: "'War on terror' made no sense: you can't drop a bomb on an emotion."

14 In actual fact, although the Obama administration made an explicit point in publicly rejecting the expression 'global war on terror/ism', it already came under official criticism before. In July 2005 Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld (2005) started to replace the metaphor 'global war on terror/ism' with the phrase "global struggle against violent extremism"; and in March 2007 US Democratic staff director Erin Conaton wrote a memo in which she advised her colleagues in charge of the preparation of the US defence authorisation bill to "'avoid using colloquialisms,' such as the 'war on terrorism' or the 'long war,' and not to use the term 'global war on terrorism'" (International Herald Tribune 2007).

15 This is for instance evident in the fact that it is part of the acronym 'GWOT'. The acronym GWOT appeared in official documents for the first time in a 2002 fact sheet of the US Department of State (URL). See William Safire (2002) for a witty commentary on the acronym, highlighting its inappropriateness for that it can be "pronounced with a rising inflection as 'Gee-what?' The image it projects is of a brass hat scratching his head."

and normalise a "global campaign of counter-terrorism". He, too, overlooks the adjective *global*.

If we take the above together, *global* is everywhere but somewhat 'invisible'. It is (apparently) 'undisputed' and treated as if it was innocent, straightforward and self-evident.

Global, the disputed

Curiously, just as much as the adjective *global* is 'undisputed' and treated as if it was innocent and clear, that is, just as much as the word disappears under a 'cloak of invisibility', the (phenomenon of its) *general popularity* ever so often causes express irritation. *Global* and its rising popularity are like climate change and income tax – hardly anyone is blasé about it, when asked for their view. At a recent visit of the library at *The University of Melbourne* a librarian guided me to the library's dictionary section and asked what I was working on. I explained I was interested in the word *global*, which triggered an immediate outburst of

"uugghh – global?! That's a new word. It used to be international. But today everything is global ... I don't like this word."

There are two grounds on which the adjective *global* is dismissed. First, it is precisely the extensive and unreflective use of the word that causes irritation. As is obvious in the above quoted librarian's reaction, *global* (due to its popularity) seems to be perceived – and rejected – as a fad.

Second, a look across commentaries suggests that *global* causes irritation and aversion based on the argument that it is part of 'globe-talk' (e.g. McGrew 1992a: 470), 'global babble' (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1991: 131) or 'globaloney' (e.g. Veseth 2005). Here, commentators usually mean to suggest one of two things: First, they suggest that the adjective *global* is a linguistic ingredient in the discourse of 'the global' and 'globality'. Second, they suggest that the adjective *global* is part of the talk about 'globalisation'.

The irritation about the adjective, which each assumption causes, is grounded in the perception that the discourses of 'the global' and 'globality' and, in particular, the talk about 'globalisation' are Northern hegemonic and / or neoliberal discourses. Consequently, the adjective *global* and its omnipresence are seen as an instance in the reproduction of the hegemonic dominance of the North and / or of an 'untamed' capitalism. Such an understanding of and aversion to *global* is apparent in Indian activist Vandana Shiva's following quote:

"The notion of 'global' facilitates this skewed view of a common future. The construction of the global environment narrows the South's options while increasing the North's." (Shiva 1998: 233)

Taking the above together, there is something paradoxical about the contemporary adjective *global.* On the one hand, it is used happily without much meta-reflection and is overlooked by even critical scholars who are generally aware of the relevance of language – *global* is covered by a 'cloak of invisibility' as if it was clear and innocent. On the other side, its omnipresence provokes irritation. Here, *global* gets dismissed as a fad, and is met with suspicion as a supposed linguistic manifestation of the discourse of 'the global' and 'globality', and the talk about 'globalisation'. It is this mix of approaches to *global* that leads me to label the contemporary adjective *global* 'disputedly undisputed'.

CONCLUSION

This chapter constitutes the first of two steps, in which I introduce the adjective *global* and make it 'strange' in order to add an 'extra edge of consciousness' to our approach to it. With this aim in mind, I presented in this chapter two noteworthy aspects that I identify as constituting the contemporary *global*. First, *global* is popular and free, the latter in the sense of semantically open. Second, *global* leads a 'disputedly undisputed' existence.

Together these two aspects form a seeming paradox between a colourful use of the word and a widening of its meanings, on the one side, and a striking easiness, with which it is taken as if it was obvious, on the other side. Both sides of this paradox account for the discomfort that the word regularly triggers in public and scholarly discourses, where its popularity and diverse uses are perceived – and dismissed – as a meaningless fad or as a symbolic confirmation and reproduction of hegemonic ('Northern') discourses. At the same time, however, these concerns have not led to a heightened sensibility for or a commitment to a more reflective use of the adjective. Nor have they led to an increased curiosity towards, scholarly suspicion of or systematic approach to the adjective *global*. The contemporary *global* seems to be everywhere and, yet, it is 'invisible'. It is causing irritation but no systematic and dedicated critical reflection.

I want to conclude this chapter by giving a taster for that a systematic and critical look at the word *global* holds the potential of revealing interesting insights into the 'world making'-practice, which is the use of language. I want to do this by having a look at the GWOT-discourse. In particular, I want to have a look at how the adjective *global* is used in the Public Papers of one of the main 'authors' of the GWOT-narrative, namely US President George W. Bush. I explicitly choose the GWOT-discourse for my brief exploration of the adjective *global* 'in use' because, as we saw above, the adjective *global* is usually overlooked in this particular discourse, even by those above mentioned scholars, who set out to study the use of language in the context of the GWOT. This, my brief analysis shows, is unfortunate because a close look at the use of *global* in Bush's rhetoric provides the sense

that the adjective is more than a casually applied pre-modifier. It appears to be strategically deployed in a distinct 'making' of the world.[16]

The 'global war on terror'-narrative captured the US political discourse and shaped discourses around the world after the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001 (9/11). It was 'written' by US President George W. Bush (2001a), proceeding from his assessment that, with the terrorist attack, an "act of war was declared on the United States of America."

If one takes a systematic look at the use of the adjective *global* in President Bush's post-9/11 public communication by determining the words that the adjective *global* most frequently pre-modifies, something intriguing becomes apparent. The 'global war on terror' was initially not (called) 'global', at least not in the rhetoric of the US Commander in Chief. It was a 'war' on global *terror* or global *terrorism,* which Bush launched after 9/11, not a 'global *war'* on terror / terrorism. This is readily apparent in the list of most frequent co-occurrences of the adjective *global,* which I generated from all of President Bush's 813 Public Papers between 30 January 2001 and 31 December 2006 that contain the word *global* at least once.[17] As Table 1 and the following selected quotes illustrate, it is the words *terrorism*, *terrorists* and *terror,* as well as the noun *reach* that are pre-modified with the adjective *global* after 11 September 2001, not the noun *war*:

"Today I am pleased to issue the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. This strategy outlines the effort our Nation is making to win the war against *global* terror." (Bush 2003a; emphasis added)

"America will not rest; we will not tire until every terrorist group of *global* reach has been found, has been stopped, and has been defeated." (Bush 2002b; emphasis added)

"[…] our Nation is just beginning in a great objective, which is to eliminate those terrorist organizations of *global* reach." (Bush 2002c; emphasis added)

Interestingly, the species 'global *terrorist'* and the phenomenon 'global *terrorism'* did not exist in the public communication of the US Presidents before 9/11. Both were given birth to by President Bush on 11 September 2001. This is apparent if one looks beyond Bush's Public Papers at the public communication of his Presidential predecessors, such as President Clinton. Neither the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on 7 August 1998, nor the attack on the USS Cole on 12 October 2000 in Yemen

16 For the following see also Selchow (2008: 238-241).

17 I constructed my dataset from the database of US Presidential Public Papers that is provided by *The American Presidency Project* (URL) (see fn1 in this chapter). Furthermore, I used the freeware *AntConc* for my analysis. I will come back to *AntConc* in Chapter 6.

were considered to be attacks by 'global terrorists' or to be instances of 'global terrorism', although they were committed by the same terrorist network as the attack on 11 September 2001. As a matter of fact, before September 2001 the word *terrorist* was pre-modified with the adjective *global* by any US President only once and *terrorism* only four times, namely in Clinton's communication (1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1998b, and 1999a). With the 9/11-incident, however, the nouns *terrorist* and *terrorism* co-occurred most frequently with *global* in the President's communication, replacing the noun *economy,* which had been the top co-occurrence until then. Again, this trend is illustrated below in Table 1, which shows us co-occurrences with *global* in the Public Papers of President George W. Bush before and after 11 September 2001.

Table 1: The four words most frequently pre-modified with the adjective global *in US President George W. Bush's Public Papers*

	2001 (pre-9/11)	**2002**	**2004**	**2006**
1	global economy	global terror	global test	global war
2	global trade	global terrorism	global war	global economy
3	global climate	global coalition	global economy	global poverty
4	global warming	global reach	global campaign	global world

Table 1 also indicates that the 'birth' of the 'global *war'* on terror, as opposed to the war on 'global *terror'*, took place sometime between 2002 and 2006. There is a notable shift in the words that were most frequently pre-modified by the adjective *global* between 2002 and 2006, from *terror*, via *test*, to *war*. So, when and why did this shift take place?

A closer investigation of Bush's Public Papers provides an answer to this question. In fact, the linguistic shift can be tracked down to a precise date: the 30 September 2004, which was the day when President Bush entered an election campaign discussion with Democrat John F. Kerry in Coral Gables, Florida (Bush-Kerry 2004). It was on this day that Bush's practice of applying the adjective *global* mainly to pre-modify the nouns *terror* and *terrorism* shifted towards pre-modifying the noun *war*. What exactly happened?

On close analysis it becomes clear that the shift in Bush's use of the adjective *global* was prompted by an answer that John F. Kerry gives during the Presidential Debate to moderator Jim Lehrer's question:

"What is your position on the whole concept of preemptive war?" (ibid.)

Kerry explains:

"The president always has the right, and always has had the right, for preemptive strike. […] But if and when you do it, Jim, you have to do it in a way that passes the test, that passes the global test where your countrymen, your people understand fully why you're doing what you're doing and you can prove to the world that you did it for legitimate reasons." (ibid.)

Asked for his position, President Bush responds:

"Let me – I'm not exactly sure what you mean, 'passes the *global test*,' you take preemptive action if you pass a *global test*. My attitude is you take preemptive action in order to protect the American people, that you act in order to make this country secure." (ibid.; emphasis added)

As a systematic analysis of the deployment of the adjective *global* shows, from then on, Senator Kerry's expression 'global test' was taken up by President Bush in a total of 62 of his campaign speeches, as well as in two of the President's Radio Addresses between 1 October and the election day of 2 November 2004. It was also taken up by Vice President Dick Cheney in the Vice Presidential Debate with Senator John Edwards (Cheney-Edwards 2004). 'Global test' turned into a key linguistic tool and point of reference in Bush's effort to distinguish himself from Kerry. As the following quote allows us to assume, the intention of taking up the expression 'global test' was to present Senator Kerry as a weak leader who would let America's security get out of his hands:

"As part of his foreign policy, Senator Kerry has talked about applying a 'global test.' […] As far as I can tell, it comes down to this: Before we act to defend ourselves, he thinks we need permission from foreign capitals. […] Senator Kerry's 'global test' is nothing more than an excuse to constrain the actions of our own country in a dangerous world. I believe in strong alliances. I believe in respecting other countries and working with them and seeking their advice. But I will never submit our national security decisions to a veto of a foreign government." (Bush 2004d)

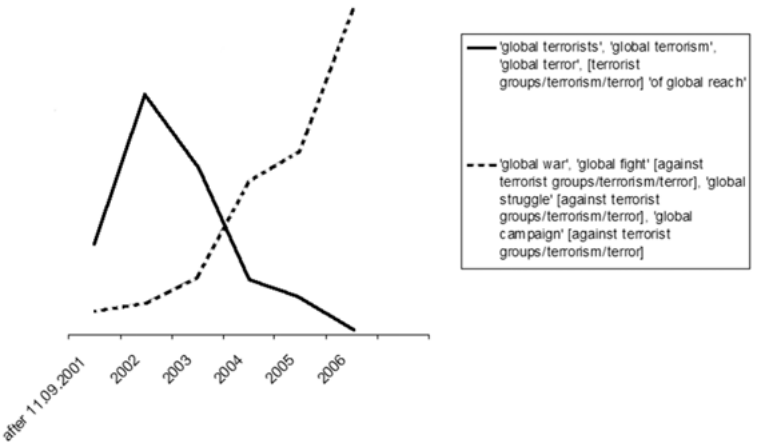
It was in this context then that Bush's public use of the adjective *global* shifted from mainly pre-modifying the nouns *terror* and *terrorism* to eventually mainly attributing the adjective *global* to the noun *war.* According to Bush's post-September-2004-rhetoric the US were not fighting anymore a 'war against global *terrorism'* but a 'global *war* against terror' (see Figure 2).

This shift in the use of *global* means that, suddenly, it was not the 'threat' that was attributed with the adjective *global* but the American action, namely 'war':

"And so long as I'm sitting here in this Oval Office, I will never forget the lessons of September the 11th, and that is that we're in a *global war* against coldblooded killers." (Bush 2005c; emphasis added)

"[W]e are now waging a *global war* on terror – from the mountains of Afghanistan to the border regions of Pakistan, to the Horn of Africa, to the islands of the Philippines, to the plains of Iraq." (Bush 2005a; emphasis added)

Figure 2: Insights into the use of the adjective global *in US President George W. Bush's Public Papers between 11 September 2001 and 31 December 2006*



At first sight, this may appear to be a minor rhetorical shift. However, given that the word *global* is used by President Bush with the meaning 'worldwide' and 'everywhere around the globe', the shift in the application of the adjective can be read as indicating a significant shift of perspective and attitude. It can be seen as a distinct symbolic construction of the security environment and the US in it. The notable shift from a perceived 'global' *threat* to a perceived 'global' *action*, where 'action' refers to war and the adjective *global* means 'worldwide' and 'everywhere', stands for and symbolically supports an offensive, proactive and even preemptive position following the attitude that

"[i]n our time, terrible dangers can arise on a short moment anywhere in the world, and we must be prepared to oppose these dangers everywhere in the world." (Bush 2005b)

In one of his election campaign speeches Bush explains:

"We are now nearing the first Presidential election since September the 11th, 2001. People of the United States will choose the leader of the free world in the middle of a global war. The choice is not only between two candidates; it's between two directions in the conduct of the war on terror." (Bush 2004c)

Following from the above, these "two directions in the conduct of the war on terror", of which Bush speaks, are the ones that he constructs through the shift in the use of the adjective *global*: the first one is about defending the US against a 'global' *threat* and the second one is about fighting a 'global' *war* wherever a threat to the US can be found.[18]

I return to the word *global* in US Presidential Public Papers in Chapter 7. For the time being, my brief analysis is meant to conclude this chapter by supporting the simple point that it is worth taking the adjective *global* seriously. *Global* is not only widespread, polysemic, complex, and 'disputedly undisputed' – it also matters as it is obviously used by political actors to symbolically construct a distinct world. In the above sketched case of US President George W. Bush, this is a world, in which a preemptive approach to secure 'US national security' is 'justified'.

18 This supports analyses in security studies, which point out and study the preemptive turn in national security practices (e.g. de Goede 2008; Stockdale 2013).