

8 Conclusion

Uncertain times demand an unconventional analysis.

DAVID CAMPBELL (1998[1992]: IX)

I argued in this book that the (quasi) omnipresence of the contemporary adjective *global* is more than a linguistic curiosity. It is a political phenomenon and, as such, a valuable, albeit 'unconventional' object of study for scholars outside the linguistics discourse. I argued that the omnipresence of the contemporary adjective *global* constitutes the discursive re-production of a web of meanings that is best labelled 'new world'. As such, it constitutes a distinct dimension of the enduring contestation over the meaning of the world. Given the word's current popularity and unscrutinised existence, and given the nature of the web of meanings 'new world' that it brings out, this dimension is not just a minor matter but plays an important, hence, research-worthy role in the contemporary symbolic struggle over the meaning of the world.

This book presented my exploration of what was behind the curious omnipresence of the adjective *global* in contemporary public, political and academic discourses. It sketched a research endeavour that is not 'conventional'. At home in the political studies and IR discourse, my curiosity for the adjective *global* forced me to start on a blank field, without being able to set an anchor into a predefined research environment and without being able to talk to a clearly confined audience. This was because my exploration of the omnipresence of the adjective *global* could not start conventionally on a pre-set idea of what the word *global* means, without contributing to the very phenomenon that I set out to explore. This, meant that my exploration of the omnipresence of *global* was a risky endeavour. At the outset, I did not only not know what I would find, as probably should always be the case in academic knowledge production, but I also did not know whether or not the exploration of the omnipresence of *global* would bring out insights that would be valuable for the political studies and IR scholarship to begin with.

In this sense, the study presented in this book does not only provide insights into the curious omnipresence of the contemporary adjective *global*.

It also constitutes a contribution to the 'unconventional' scholarship at the margins of the political studies and IR discourse. It contributes to this scholarship in that it is a case of an exploration of an 'unconventional unconventional' path.

"Uncertain times demand an unconventional analysis," this is the suggestion with which David Campbell ([1992]1998: ix) opens his seminal 'unconventional' study of US foreign policy, identity and danger, threats and security. Indeed, more and more scholars in political studies, IR and beyond position themselves at the margins of their disciplines and express the need to find new ways of dismantling and grasping the complexity of contemporary times – like sociologist Ulrich Beck (2006: 74), who calls "for new thinkers outside the academic guild", who extend the "rails on which standard academic [...] inquiry runs into new regions". What strikes me as a fruitful step in regard to explorations of 'new regions' is not only to find and apply 'unconventional' approaches to pre-existing problems and objects of study but to follow an 'unconventional unconventional' path and take the risk of searching for 'new' (politically loaded) objects of study. An example of such an object is the omnipresence of the adjective *global*, which I brought to life in this book as a political phenomenon, the study of which enables novel scholarly interventions into "conventional understandings or established practices" (Campbell 2007: 219).