THE 'GLOBAL DIMENSION' OF CONTEMPORARY POLITICS
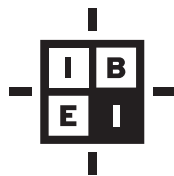## An Argument for Taking 'Global' Seriously

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THE 'GLOBAL DIMENSION' OF CONTEMPORARY POLITICS: AN ARGUMENT FOR TAKING 'GLOBAL' SERIOUSLY

Sabine Selchow

Abstract: Recent years have seen a striking proliferation of the term 'global' in public and political discourse. The popularity of the term is a manifestation of the fact that there is a widespread notion that contemporary social reality is 'global'. The acknowledgment of this notion has important political implications and raises questions about the role played by the idea of the 'global' in policy making. These questions, in turn, expose even more fundamental issues about whether the term 'global' indicates a difference in kind, even an ontological shift, and, if so, how to approach it. This paper argues that the notion of 'global', in other words the 'global dimension', is a significant aspect of contemporary politics that needs to be investigated. The paper argues that in the globalization discourse of International Studies 'global' is 'naturalized', which means that it is taken for granted and assumed to be self-evident. The term 'global' is used mainly in a descriptive way and subsumed under the rubric of 'globalization'. 'Global' tends to be equated with transnational and/or world-wide; hence, it addresses quantitative differences in degree but not (alleged) differences in kind. In order to advance our understanding of contemporary politics, 'global' needs to be taken seriously. This means, firstly, to understand and to conceptualize 'global' as a social category; and, secondly, to uncover 'global' as a 'naturalized' concept in the Political and International Studies strand of the globalization discourse in order to rescue it for innovative new approaches in the investigation of contemporary politics. In order to do so, the paper suggests adopting a strong linguistic approach starting with the analysis of the word 'global'. Based on insights from post-structuralism as well as cognitive and general constructivist perspectives it argues that a frame-based corpus linguistic analysis offers the possibility of investigating the collective/social meaning(s) of global in order to operationalize them for the analysis of the 'global dimension' of contemporary politics.

Key words: global dimension of politics; globalization; International Studies; methodology; collective knowledge; post-structuralism; corpus linguistics.

1. Introduction

Contemporary socio-political reality is 'complicated'. It is 'complicated' because the parameters of social interactions are fundamentally changing. Processes which are generally subsumed under the label 'globalization' bring along a complex set of horizontal and vertical interrelations; state borders are becoming less significant in respect to an accelerating flow of capital, ideas, symbols, and patterns of consumption, but their importance seems to grow when it comes to the flow of people labeled as 'migrants'; the idea and vulnerability of humankind as a single fate-community becomes more obvious than ever in the face of global warming and its diverse consequences, but at the same time particularistic ideas, nationalism and identity politics seem to be appealing to a growing number of people; the outcome of national elections, such as the presidential elections in the US, potentially have a crucial impact on issues that affect humans world-wide, e.g. climate change, yet only a small slice of humans world-wide have a say in these elections; political authority becomes more decentred, multilayered and embedded in a wide net of international norms and institutions, and yet (nation)states continue to be the crucial political actors with domestic political delegates having to sign conventions and ratify treaties; the US 'military autonomy is decidedly compromised by the web of military commitments and arrangements in which it has become entangled.' (Held et al 2003:144), but, as the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq suggests, this compromise does not seem to restrict US foreign policy *practice*; yet, even though the US-led invasion of Iraq appears to be 'un-global' in the sense that the (alleged) 'web of military commitments and arrangements in which it has become entangled' did not seem to play a significant role in the decision making, right from the beginning it has been embedded within a 'global' rhetoric: it is the *global* war on terror in which Iraq has become 'the central front' (Bush 2005), it is the fight against '*global* terrorism' and/or '*global* extremism', it is a war about '*global* values' (Blair 2006).

But it is not the alleged contradictions of contemporary times and processes of 'global transformations', of 'time-space distanciation', of the impact of 'action at a distance' and the fundamental transformation of political authority alone and as such that make contemporary socio-political reality 'complicated'. Rather, contemporary socio-political reality is 'complicated' because established parameters and concepts of social sciences in general and Political and International Studies in particular are not entirely suitable anymore for investigating it. Certainly, Robert W. Cox' famous plea for a critical International Studies theory that 'continually adjust[s] its concepts to the changing object it seeks to understand and explain' (Cox 1981:126) is today as relevant and crucial as ever. Yet, today any critical approach faces the fundamental challenge and dilemma that contemporary 'objects' seem to ask for essentially 'different' concepts. Our 'global' times seem to be different in kind, representative of an ontological shift, of a 'brave new world' (Bartelson 2000:192); there seems to be 'a shared sense that the human condition is presently undergoing deep, enduring, and profound transformations in all of its aspects' (Rosenau 1996:248). In this sense, in International Studies it is not only the major conceptual frame of the 'great divide' that is questionable in contemporary transforming times (Clark 1999:15-33), but, rather, core scientific concepts, such as 'state', 'democracy', 'society', 'political community', 'sovereignty', 'economy', need to be re-thought and questioned if they are still able to capture the (noticeably unfamiliar) character of social reality. As Jens Bartelson points out,

the concept of globalization has had a destabilizing impact upon the entire array of sociopolitical concepts that together constitute the main template of political modernity making their meanings contestable and dissolving the distinctions upon which their coherent usage hitherto has rested (2000:192)

In addition to the change of socio-political reality and the challenges that this change gives to its scientific understanding comes a third aspect which makes socio-political reality 'complicated'. This third aspect is the world-wide *collective belief* that contemporary socio-political reality is changing due to 'globalization processes' and 'global transformations'. There seems to be a widespread belief that contemporary times are 'global' times. This belief, in turn, is constitutive of socio-political reality and vise-versa: 'nothing changes the world like the collective belief that it is changing' (Bartelson 2000:180). The perception of contemporary times as 'global' times is manifest in the striking and discourse-transcending proliferation of the term 'global' which oscillates between referring to world-wide, universal humankind, cosmopolitanism, everybody, global capitalism, Western hegemony and simply being a fashionable term.

So, what can we do about this 'complicated' time? How may we approach a socio-political reality which is potentially different in kind? Which ideas are associated with 'global'? How 'global' is our 'global' time in the first place? And how may we *find out* how 'global' it actually 'is' if orthodox concepts do not seem to be suitable anymore and if it is hard to imagine to be able to step outside the discourse in order to analyze it?

This paper provides an overview over the guiding frame of a broader research project which investigates the role of the social category 'global' played in foreign policy making. The research project was born out of a concern about the above outlined 'complicatedness' of contemporary times, out of the astonishment at the omnipresence of the concept of 'globalization' in Political and International Studies and out of the dissatisfaction with the marginalization and naturalization of the term and concept 'global' within the Political and International Studies discourse. Based on the assumption that 'global' has become a significant social category in contemporary times and that it potentially indicates something different in kind which challenges the use of orthodox concepts and approaches, the project investigates how far and if at all an analysis of the role of 'global', in other words the 'global dimension', can help us to shed new light on the understanding of contemporary foreign policy making. In order to do so, the research project argues that 'global' needs to be taken seriously. This means two things: (a) 'global' needs to be addressed as a discrete research project. It needs to be acknowledged as a significant social category rather than treated as if it was an innocent descriptive attribute. Accordingly, it needs to be acknowledged that 'global' in itself is a construction; as such it asks for investigation in itself.

The challenge, however, lies in how to go about an investigation like this. Here, the research takes place at an interesting academic juncture. The contemporary Political and particularly the International Studies discourse seems to be in an interim stage. While there is a significant amount of sophisticated theoretical material on the parameters of post-positivist theory, empirical studies have not yet systematically and entirely caught up with this theoretical agenda and have not yet gone far enough to cash-in the theoretical premises. In general, it appears that methodological concerns fall short in International Studies and existing (discourse analytical) approaches run into difficulty when it comes to an investigation of the 'global dimension' of politics as mentioned above. Based on this shortcoming, the research suggests that (b) 'global' needs to be taken seriously as a *term* and consequently approached from a linguistic perspective. Given the alleged qualitative difference in contemporary times, an approach to the 'global dimension' of politics which uses the definition of 'global' generated from within a discourse coined by this qualitative difference appears to be problematic and self-defeating. Established concepts and pre-determined definitions of 'global' from the 'old world' seem to be neither helpful nor applicable to this 'new global' reality; yet, there is of course no vacuum in which essentially 'new' concepts could be developed Consequently, it seems necessary to somehow find out what 'global' 'means' from first principles, free from existing baggage associated with the term within

the context of a specific discourse. In other words, what is the *collective belief* of 'global', does it actually indicate a perception of the world as different in kind and is there a 'global' meaning of 'global' in the first place? It is this belief or beliefs rather than a predetermined definition that needs to be operationalized and put in place as the basis for further (discursive) analyses. In order to do this, the research project suggests taking seriously post-structuralist ideas of signs and meanings and looking over the border of the Political and International Studies discourse to borrow the method of a frame-based corpus linguistic analysis from linguistics. It is this methodological strategy that provides a way of approaching 'global' from 'first principles' and that adds value to contemporary globalization studies discourse and to the analysis of foreign policy by operationalizing 'global' based on its perception as a social category and collective belief. In this sense, the wider research project then investigates the meaning(s) of 'global' within Germany and the US. It compares these meanings/believes in order to find out if there is, indeed, a 'global' idea of 'global' and takes them as the basis for an analysis of their role within the policy discourses surrounding the war in Iraq in 2003 in order to determine the 'global dimension'.

This paper gives an overview over the guiding frame of this broader research by elaborating on the two basic arguments that (a) 'global' needs to be taken seriously as a social category / subject of research and that (b) it needs to be approached as a linguistic sign.

2. Taking 'Global' Seriously I – The 'Global Dimension' of Contemporary Politics

In Political and International Studies, the above mentioned complex transformations of socio-political reality have been addressed with and accompanied by a proliferation of the label 'globalization'.[1] As 'a talismatic term, a seemingly unavoidable reference point for discussions about our contemporary situation' (Low and Barnett 2000:54), 'globalization' 'has come from nowhere to be almost everywhere' (Giddens 2002:7). But not only has it come to be everywhere, it has also caught the imagination of and is used equally by scientists with fundamentally diverse research agendas. Regardless of which perspective is chosen, which methodological approach is followed and which specific aspect of the (transforming) socio-political reality is at the centre of investigation, 'globalization' appears to be the term to use.

The striking proliferation of 'globalization' and its diverse usage trigger, on the one hand, suspicion. Indeed, it is easy to agree with the claim that 'globalization' is 'both a popular idea and a concept lacking specificity' (Jenson and de Sousa Santos quoted in Kumar 1999:91), or, more straightforwardly, that it is used for 'whatever strikes our fancy' (Scholte 2005). On the other side, however, it is interesting that even though there are various different ideas of 'globalization' co-existing in the Political and International Studies discourse, all works clearly share a sense that the use of the term 'globalization' suits contemporary times as well as, more profoundly, a 'certainty about the factuality of the globalization process itself' (Bartelson 2000:191).[2] Further, it is striking that there is hardly any academic text on 'globalization' which does *not* start by commenting on the fact that the

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[1] This certainly applies to other academic discourses and disciplines too and the body of literature is wide-ranging; however, this paper focuses explicitly on the Political and International Studies discourse.
[2] Only recently there have been a few discursive approaches to 'globalization'; see e.g. Rosamond 1999; Hay 2002.

term 'globalization' *is* used excessively and that there *are* many different understandings and meanings associated with it. Yet, regardless this common and almost obligatory acknowledgment of the existing diversity of understandings of 'globalization', only few studies actually critically *reflect* on the detail that these understandings peacefully co-exist rather than being the subject of reflexive discussion about the concept and term as such. In fact, one must realize that what is often called the 'globalization debate' (e.g. Held and McGrew 2003) is no *debate* - at least no debate about 'globalization'. Looking, for instance, at the contributions in David Held's *Debating Globalization* (2005) it becomes clear that the debate presented is about the state of contemporary times rather than about 'globalization' because the contributors clearly use the term 'globalization' for fundamentally diverse things, even based on essentially different theoretical premises – and without reflecting on it.

Pointing out the lack of meta-theoretical reflection and debate about the term and the concept 'globalization', however, must not be dismissed as hair-splitting. Rather, it points to an interesting fact in itself because it exposes 'globalization' as anything but a descriptive term, as well as making it plain that this very fact lacks systematic consideration within Political and International Studies. 'Globalization' must be understood as a political concept, in the sense that, like all political concepts, it is ''loaded' with value judgments and ideological implications of which [its] users may be unaware' (Heywood 2000:4). From a slightly different perspective it can be understood as an 'abstract term', which means a term that does not refer to a concrete perceptible object of reference but which refers to a collective ideal construct, which in turn constructs reality (Fraas 1998, 2000). The popularity of the term suggests that it is widely perceived as appropriate for approaching the 'real social world' and this perception, in turn, must be understood as an indicator of the fact that the contemporary socio-political reality 'is' coined by 'globalization'.

Consequently, the popularity and the omnipresence of the term 'globalization' together with the fact that there is a diversity of ideas associated with it says at least as much about the contemporary socio-political reality as do the actual political scientific studies which use the term as a means to understand that reality. It is, in fact, as worthy considering what the 'globalization studies' in the form of their very existence tell us about contemporary society as it is to investigate contemporary society with the help of the term and/or concept 'globalization'. In this respect, we can follow James N. Rosenau who not only recognizes that 'globalization' has become a buzz word but who also reflects that the proliferation of the term can actually be read as an important stage in the process of adjusting (concepts) to social reality. Rather than denouncing the vagueness that characterizes the application(s) of 'globalization', he concludes that:

> '[t]he proliferation of diverse and loose definitions of globalization, as well as the readiness to use a variety of seemingly comparable labels, are not so much a reflection of evasive confusion as they are an early stage in a profound ontological shift, a restless search for new ways of understanding unfamiliar phenomena. The very lack of precise formulations may suggest the presence of buzz words for the inexplicable, but a more convincing interpretation is that such words are voiced in so many different contexts because of a shared sense that the human condition is presently undergoing deep, enduring, and profound transformations in all of its aspects.' (Rosenau 1996:248)

In his analysis of social scientific discourses of 'globalization' Jens Bartelson (2000) supports Rosenau's evaluation that the contemporary discussion about 'globalization' indicates 'an early state in a profound ontological shift' (181). He distinguishes between three concepts of 'globalization', namely 'globalization as transference' understood as referring to an 'intensified transference or exchange of things between preconstituted units' (184), 'globalization as transformations', understood as referring

to 'a process of transformation that occurs at the systems level' (186) and 'globalization as transcendence', understood as referring to 'the transcendence of those distinctions that together condition unit, system and dimension identity. Globalization is neither inside out nor outside in but rather a process that dissolves the divide between inside and outside.' (189)

The common base of these concepts is, as Bartelson points out, their 'focus on globalization as a process of indeterminate change' (2000: 191) as well as ''*the global*' as a common point of reference and an object of inquiry' (2000: 181). Bartelson's analysis and categorization is helpful because it highlights the challenges for the social scientific practice that come along with the concept and idea of 'globalization'.

Looking at the contemporary Political and International Studies discourse, however, it becomes clear that only few studies actually fully adopt and apply a concept of 'globalization' understood as transference.[3] Most of the studies apply Bartelson's first and second concept. Furthermore, it is questionable how far existing globalization studies in Political and International Studies actually take 'the global' not only as a 'common point of reference' but also as an 'object of inquiry' (2000: 181). Rather, a majority of existing, especially empirical studies hardly reflect on 'the global' at all. It can, of course, rightly be argued that ontological elaborations fall outside the discursive boundaries of Political and International Studies, however, reflecting on 'global' entails not only reflecting on a meta-theoretical level on an (alleged) ontological shift; it can and must, very practically, entail reflecting on the (actually existing) idea(s) of 'global' and their implications for contemporary socio-political reality in general and for the study of politics in particular. This does not mean that studies of globalization and of the 'global transformations' of contemporary times lack references to 'global'; very obviously, the contrary is the case - the term 'global' has become common-place in academic writing. One can, in fact, speak of a 'global'-ization of academic concepts which is amply illustrated by concepts such as 'global public sphere', 'global civil society', 'global governance', 'global capital' 'global economy', 'global Europe' (Diamond et al 2006) and in general, 'global politics'. While this 'global'-ization of concepts seems to be a reaction to the above mentioned dilemma that the idea of 'global' / the idea of a 'global world' seems to essentially challenge established social and political science concepts, in Political and International Studies practice, it has mainly entailed only a re-labeling of them. Despite the increasingly self-confident proliferation of these 'global' concepts, it is not automatically clear what makes these concepts, and, on a different level, the phenomena to which they refer, 'global'. This is because 'global' is strangely taken for granted rather than being the object of discussion and analysis. The opening sentence of Peter Berger's study on 'global civil society' and religion is exemplary in this regard: 'Let us assume that we are reasonable clear about what is meant by 'global' and by 'religion'. But what about 'civil society'?' (2005:11)

In a majority of works which focus on 'globalization' within the Political and International Studies discourse, 'global' automatically comes hand in hand with the idea of 'globalization': it is (the process) 'globalization' that is the object of discussion and investigation but not (the state of) 'global'. Borrowing from Roland Barthes (1973), it is important to acknowledge that 'global' has become 'naturalized' through its practice, which makes it, consequently, slip off the radar screen of critical investigation.

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[3] But see for instance Jan Aart Scholte's concept of supraterritoriality (2005).

Generally speaking, in addition to Bartelson's theoretical concepts, we can distinguish two patterns which structure studies of 'globalization' in Political and International Studies. The first pattern is that 'globalization' is understood as the 'widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness' (Held et al 1999:14) which has both quantitative and qualitative consequences for social relations. This is something that can be measured empirically and that entails a complex net of (analytical) dimensions for the researchers. The second pattern is that 'globalization' is associated with an increasing 'global consciousness'. Based on Roland Robertson's writing (1999), this is understood to be an increasing awareness of the 'world as a whole'.

Implicitly with these two patterns come along two understandings of 'global'. Namely, 'global' understood as 'world-wide', hence, associated with a spatial dimension, and 'global', in a normative sense, associated with the 'world as a whole', with a general idea of humankind, and with cosmopolitanism. Studies which build on this first pattern of globalization and which associate the idea of 'global' with world-wide often lack differentiation from concepts such as 'transnational' and 'international'; and studies which follow the second pattern and which associate 'global' with a general idea of humankind often do not acknowledge sufficiently the normative dimension of it. Both approaches 'naturalize' 'global' and block the view on a third perspective.

This third perspective takes 'global' as a social category which coins contemporary socio-political reality in general and cotemporary 'global' politics in particular. While this appears on first sight like a general claim for an investigation of one of many non-material factors, it is in fact more than that because 'global' is highly peculiar; it can be argued that 'global' is not just *any* idea.

Recent decades have seen a striking proliferation of the word 'global' in public and political discourse. The quantitative dimension of the 'global'-ization of contemporary public and political discourses, the increase of what Robert Holton (1998:1) coined 'globe talk' has been noted since the 1990s; Martin Albrow, for instance, even uses this observation as one of his arguments to illustrate the birth of a new age, the 'global age' (1996:80). The use of the term 'global' experienced a more than tenfold rise in *The New York Times* between 1980 and today. In the US Presidents' public papers[4] its use increased from 369 times during the Reagan era to 526 in George Bush's papers to 1,914 in Bill Clinton's ones. George W. Bush used the word 778 times so far.[5] In fact, although 'global' found its way into languages much earlier, for instance into the English language in the mid-17th Century, it was one of the 2,000 'new' words featured in the *Oxford Dictionary of New Words* in 1991.[6] Today, there is hardly anything anymore that is not labeled 'global' in one or other context. Contemporary mass media provides ample illustration. A randomly chosen edition of *The Guardian*[7] speaks about the 'global 'war on drugs'' (O'Hara 2005), about the 'global collapse' of 'global civilisation' (Evans 2005), about Renault's 'global motorsport programme' (Henry 2005), about a consultancy called 'Global Insight' (Tran 2005) and an NGO called 'Global Witness' (More O'Ferral 2005), about the need to teach 'Britain's global history' (Katwala 2005), the 'global positioning system developed by the US Department of Defence' (Liesle 2005), the 'damaged global confidence' in the Tokyo Stock Exchange (McCurry 2005), 'football's global village' (Glendenning and Ingle 2005), and, in three different articles, about 'global

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[4] The Public Papers of the Presidents contain most of the President's public messages, statements, speeches, and news conference remarks. 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 at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php
[5] 'So far' means as of 14 May 2006.
[6] As 'one of 2000 high-profile words and phrases which have been in the news during the paste decade' (Tulloch 1991:v)
[7] Online edition of 21 December 2005.
[8] 'On September 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country.' (Bush 2001)

warming' (Adam 2005; Milton 2005; Vidal 2005). More generally, expressions like 'global player', 'global responsibility', 'global music' and 'global capitalism' have become commonplace in public and political discourse; the former Malaysian Prime Minister speaks of the 'global century', the German Chancellor seeks 'to help manage global change', the former U.N. Secretary-General called the consequences of the 2004 Boxing Day earthquake in the Indian Ocean and its tsunami a 'global catastrophe' that asks for a 'global response' (Annan 2004), and the U.S. President announced the 'global war on terror'.

This randomly compiled list of examples is, first of all, meant to bring to mind that the term 'global' is everywhere. Further, the examples help to highlight three relevant aspects. To start with, they illustrate that in public and political discourse, as in the academy as outlined above, 'global' is naturalized and taken for granted rather than being the subject of critical reflection. The 'global war on terror' can serve as a clear example. The 'global war on terror'-narrative, which proceeded from the assessment of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks as a 'declaration of war' (Bush 2001)[8], was able to arise and to persist because the interpretation of this event was coined by an extraordinary public consensus which resulted in a powerful orthodoxy.[9] In general, this powerful orthodoxy allowed only limited space for interpretations that significantly diverged from the dominant reading of the event and, consequently, for significantly different reactions to and narratives arising from it.[10] Nevertheless, the interpretation of the terrorist attacks as an 'act of *war*' and the all-encompassing '*war* rhetoric' that followed, quickly became subject of extensive discussions[11] - in the academy, in newspaper editorials and recently even among U.S. officials, when former Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld in July 2005 started to replace 'global war on terror' with the phrase 'global struggle against violent extremism' (2005), and when US General Myers announced that he had 'objected to the use of the term 'war on terrorism' before, because if you call it a war, then you think of people in uniform as being the solution' (quoted in Schmitt and Shanker 2005),[12] while President Bush, some weeks later, brought back in 'the war' by warning: 'Make no mistake about it, we are at war. We're at war with an enemy that attacked us on September the 11th, 2001' (2005).[13] So, while the term 'war' attracted attention and caused wide criticism, the use of the term 'global' was not reflected and questioned at all. This is surprising given that the above examples show that it is actually everything but clear what 'global' means.

The taking for granted of 'global' in political and public discourse seems to be related to the dominance of the idea of 'global' as world-wide. However, if we have a closer look at all the above mentioned uses of 'global', which have come to be so familiar by now, it is obvious that the reference of 'world-wide' does not hold – at least not in a literal sense. In fact, it is obvious that it is hard to figure out what the adjective 'global' exactly refers to, that is, what are the commonalities between the above listed expressions that justify the application of 'global'. Taking the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of 'global'

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[9] The consensus went that 'this was a monumental and singular tragedy, unparalleled and unprecedented, an act of war, against all of the USA, perhaps even western civilization as we know it, by Muslim terrorists, primitive and violent, intolerant and women hating, who despise us and our way of life, who will stop at nothing to impose their religious beliefs on the whole world. But the US will 'triumph' militarily, economically, politically and emotinally. The cowardly act of these barbarians cannot, the slogans boldly proclaimed, 'defeat our spirit'.' (Steinert 2003:653).

[10] Steinert points out in regard to the power of the public consensus and the intellectuals' responses to the 'populist event' of '9/11', 'there was no room for 'originality' or creative license. […] To remain credible, intellectuals had to espouse, more or less, gracefully, a much narrower band of accepted orthodoxies and platitudes than usual.' (2003:653). This left only a few to offer radically different interpretations, such as Susan Sontag (2001).

[11] For instance, Benjamin B. Ferencz, former prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial, was one of the first who argued that the '9/11'-attacks need to be understood and treated as a 'crime against humanity' rather than as a 'war' (Ferencz 2001). Michael Ignatieff (2001) argues that the terrorist attacks need to be understood as an act of 'apocalyptic nihilism'. He goes on de-politicising them by arguing that '[t]he nihilism of [the terrorists'] means - the indifference to human costs - takes their actions not only out of the realm of politics, but even out of the realm of war itself.' See also Michael Howard, who describes Colin Powell's declaration that the U.S. was 'at war' as 'a very natural but terrible and irrevocable error' (2002:8). See also the various perspectives offered in Boyne, German, Pillar and Owens (2005). Further, for a linguistic analysis of the 'war' rhetoric see Lakoff 2006. Higgs (2005) brings the linguistic critique wittily to the point when he states that: ''War on terror' made no sense: you can't drop a bomb on an emotion.'

[12] For commentaries on the (supposed) rhetorical shift from 'war' to 'struggle' and its (potential) empirical consequences see, for instance, Lakoff (2006), Schmitt and Shanker (2005), Davis (2005), and also Stevenson (2005).

[13] President Bush's emphasis on 'war' became recently clear again in his reaction to the thwarted terrorist plot in London in August 2006, which he interpreted as 'a stark reminder that this nation is at war with Islamic fascists' (2006a).

as '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' (OED) it becomes clear that none of the above examples is essentially 'global'.[14] This is not to say that the use of the term 'global' is 'inappropriate' but it is to say that there needs to be an awareness for the obvious, yet neglected fact that the meaning(s) associated with 'global' are not self-evident and that nothing is essentially and naturally 'global' but that phenomena are *made* 'global'. Nothing comes into our lives in an undefined way; and the concepts and words that are used to 'describe' the world, in fact, construct it and affect what is seen and how it is seen.[15] Hence 'any "description" of [a phenomenon as 'global'] is part of the struggle to fix its meanings and thus is a political act' (Diez 2001:91), which highlights the political aspect of 'global'. The political aspect of 'global' becomes, for instance, very obvious in Shalini Randeria's text on globalization and gender which shows that many Indian non-governmental organizations (NGO) name 'the West' as the epitome of '*global* hegemony', whereas NGOs from Bangladesh and Nepal call India as the centre of '*global* hegemony' (1998:18), and it becomes also clear in the example of the above mentioned 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. Considering geo-scientific studies, the 2004 earthquake in the Indian Ocean *was* literally 'global' in that it made the entire planet vibrate (Lay et al 2005). Yet, this actual physical 'global' impact was hardly meant when former UN Secretary-General Annan spoke of a 'global catastrophe' that asks for a '*global* response' or when the Chief Executive of the International Crisis Group, Gareth Evans (2005), saw in the tsunami a 'real global momentum' – it was not meant, simply because it was not known at that point when these statements were made. The fact that the tsunami was without further questioning labeled 'global' and was considered as being worth a 'global response', while, for instance, the earthquake that struck South Asia and affected some four million people in October 2005 was 'only' considered as a 'deeply saddened' one (Annan 2005) highlights the political dimension of the label 'global' and gives reason to assume that it was rather a perception and feeling of unprecendentedness that made the tsunami (be called) 'global'. This 'unprecedentedness' was clearly not only about mere geoscientific facts (Lay et al 2005).[16] Rather, it can be argued that the event was (perceived as being) 'unprecedented', overwhelming and subsequently 'global', because of a complex interplay of factors. First of all, the tsunami affected 11 countries; it not only hit locals but also an unusual high number of Westerners who spent their holidays in the region; these Westerners, at the same time, used their mobile phones and digital cameras to spread first-hand accounts and pictures all over the world, bringing the disaster with an 'unprecedented' immediacy into the living-rooms around the globe. The overall media coverage of the disaster was 'unprecedented' in kind: within the first six weeks after it struck, the tsunami got more media attention than ten of what Jones (2005) calls 'forgotten emergencies'[17] together during the whole year of 2004. Finally, the Boxing Day catastrophe lead to an 'unprecedented' response of a wave of world-wide sympathy with the affected regions that became manifest in public and private donations of an 'unprecedented' amount; for the first time in history international private donations initially exceeded public monetary support. Yet, of course, it can be argued that this was both a reaction to the 'fact' that the tsunami was a 'global' event as well as a contribution to the perception that it was a 'global' event. So,

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[14] See further Selchow 2008.

[15] The 'power' and the political impact of words are most obvious when it comes to the application (or avoidance) of terms that are associated with (international) law. For example, in 1956 then British Prime Minister Anthony Eden told the House of Commons '[w]e are not at war with Egypt. We are in an armed conflict' (Eden 1956). It is further evidenced in the persistent official US use of the term 'unlawful combatants', as opposed to 'prisoners of war', for the detainees at Guantanamo Bay; and in the debate about the (by-passing of the) use of the term 'genocide' for the mass killings in Darfur. The decision to choose one term over another is often very clearly a political act rather than an 'innocent' linguistic choice. The same applies to the naming and framing of disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. Calling and, with that, constructing it as a 'natural disaster' implies fundamentally different policy implications than perceiving and naming it as a 'man-made disaster'. While the first category implies a dimension of fatalism, the latter leaves space for action and gives the opportunity, for instance, to look for those to be responsible or to argue for the necessity of fundamental (e.g. structural) changes.

[16] The earthquake was 'the largest seismic event on Earth in more than 40 years' (Lay et al 2005:1127), which, with more than 50 minutes, had 'the longest known earthquake rupture' (1131) and 'produced the most devastating tsunami in recorded history' (1127) and was 'unprecedented' in regard to the very amount of countries that were affected by this single natural disaster.

[17] These are according to Jones (2005): 'Sudan War', 'Northern Uganda', 'West Africa', 'DRC Conflict', 'Chechnya', 'Haiti', 'HIV/AIDS', 'Nepal', 'Colombia' and 'Infectious Diseases'.

clearly 'global' is not a self-evident term – yet, it is striking that it is taken for granted; it seems to fit outspokenly and is hardly disputed which triggers questions such as is there, indeed, a 'global' (in the sense of universal) idea of 'global'? When is something perceived as 'global'?

In the face of the above examples we can conclude that 'global' is peculiar in a variety of respects: The proliferation of the term 'global' is a world-wide phenomenon; 'global' is more than the dictionary suggests and is, in fact, a highly political term, yet it is taken for granted and naturalized; the term 'global' appears across discourses, hence it is not an elitist idea that is at home only in the academy. In this sense, the examples illustrate that 'global' has become a significant social category in all parts of life across the planet which in turn indicates that, in fact, there is a widespread perception of the world as being 'global'. As Martin Albrow writes 'the prominence of 'global' in public discourse compels us to acknowledge a change in the social construction of reality' (1996:80). In order to grasp this change in the social construction of reality 'global' needs to be de-naturalized. It needs to be acknowledged that 'global' is a *social category* which is in itself constructed. While this opens a can of worms and appears to complicate things unnecessarily, it is an essential perspective in order to avoid generalisations of 'global' and in order to try to approach it from 'first principle'. 'Global' is not only a linguistic sign that gets attached to social phenomena and with that shapes social reality. Rather, acknowledging the importance of 'global' has to mean to acknowledge it as a complex set of social knowledge in itself which does not unfold in elitist discourses, such as the academy, but which stretches across discourses. It is the investigation of these complex sets of social knowledge within politics that can help to shed new light on policy making in a 'global' time and that actually allows to investigate the 'global dimension', namely the question how 'global' the contemporary world in general and politics in particular are and what this implies. The naturalization of 'global' in the Political and International Studies strand of the globalization studies discourses has dominated and marginalized this dimension so far. Yet, it is of high importance. Accordingly, it is about time to take 'global' seriously and acknowledge it as a discrete subject of research in Political and International Studies in general and in the field of foreign policy analysis in particular.

Starting from the premise of the importance of the 'global dimension' of politics as it is understood above brings into view innovative research areas in Political and International Studies in general and in regard to foreign policy analysis in particular: Which role, if any, does the idea of 'global' play? How 'global' is the 'global war on terror'? Was the German decision not to support the 2003 invasion of Iraq more 'global' than the British decision to support it? Is there a universal idea of 'global'? What does 'global' mean to whom?

Though, of course it is easier to *claim* that the investigation of the 'global dimension' in general and of the above questions in particular add value to attempts to understand contemporary politics than to actually investigate them properly. In fact, by claiming these issues as valuable concerns the problem starts because short-comings on the empirical side of contemporary International Studies become obvious. Clearly, the investigation of 'ideas' and, more broadly, of non-material factors is nothing new in International Studies discourse but has come to constitute an established endeavor which attracts both positivist and post-positivist approaches. However, while the importance of non-material factors is well acknowledged and manifest in a vast amount of theoretical discussions, strategies of *how* to approach them empirically based on post-positivist assumptions are less well established and developed. In fact, in regard to so-called post-positivist studies there is a gap between a field of highly sophisticated theory and the discussion of methodological strategies in International Studies more generally. With regard to the investigation of the 'global dimension' of contemporary politics, a half-heartedness in International Studies concerning the treatment of language causes problems. Since discourse analytical strategies, as they are usually applied in contemporary

International Studies run difficulty when it comes to the 'global dimension' because they are restricted to make discourse-internal assumptions about 'global', the claim to take 'global' seriously does not only mean to acknowledge it as a proper and important object of research; it also means to take 'global' seriously in a literal sense, namely to approach it via the linguistic sign 'global'. This, in turn, requires approaching 'global' from a more radical and open perspective by looking over the border of the Political and International Studies discourse to linguistics. Concretely, this means enriching existing discourse analytical strategies through theoretical premises of post-structuralism as well as, and even more importantly, through methods used in corpus linguistics because the first step in analyzing the 'global dimension' of contemporary politics means to find out what 'global' actually 'means', if there is a universal idea of 'global' and how to operationalize 'global'.

3. Taking 'Global' Seriously II – A Linguistic Approach

To investigate 'global' as a social category in order to analyze the 'global dimension' of contemporary politics Claudia Fraas' deceptively simple insight that, since knowledge is 'transmitted' through language, more precisely through signs which are embedded in texts, it must be possible, in turn, to 'extract' meanings through analyzing language, more precisely signs and their embeddedness in texts (2000: 9), is highly valuable as an empirical guidance. It underlines the need to look at the linguistic sign 'global' in order to find out the idea(s) of 'global'. The project of looking at terms in order to learn about socio-political reality is nothing new in the study of politics. The analysis of rhetoric, for instance, is well established; here the *use* of terms is the focus and interest of analysis and strategic applications of words and patterns of rhetorical justifications can be revealed. But although a focus on rhetoric addresses interesting issues it is clear that a rhetorical approach is not appropriate for the investigation of 'global' as a social category.[18]

Another prominent approach is provided by the methodological genre of 'Begriffsgeschichte' and genealogy. Despite significant differences between particular strategies of the methodological genre of 'Begriffsgeschichte', such as Koselleck's 'Begriffsgeschichte' ('conceptual history'), Reichhardt's 'Historische Semantik' ('historical semantics'), the so-called 'Cambridge School' around Quentin Skinner and John G. Pocock and the work of their American colleague Terence Ball, they all start from the assumption that the historical development of terms, especially of what they consider as 'central terms' such as 'nation', 'state', 'democracy', reflects history. Hence, the aim of 'Begriffsgeschichte'-approaches is to trace these historical conceptual developments. However, they do not assist in the project of investigating the 'global dimension' of contemporary politics because they are functionally limited to an elite idea of the term they seek to analyse. It is not a collective idea that is 'traced' in 'Begriffsgeschichte' but conceptual changes within elite texts, such as academic texts. But, as mentioned above, 'global' must be approached on the basis that it is a social category which spreads around the world and transcends discursive borders; as was discussed above, 'global' is ubiquitous and colors the perception of the contemporary 'real social world' – hence, a broader and deeper approach is needed. This approach should start with a post-structuralist look at the relationship between meanings(/ideas) and signs(/language). So, while Fraas' above mentioned instruction to look for meanings in signs and their embeddedness within texts appears to be straight-forward and logical, it actually turns out to be a rather difficult task – especially when we take seriously radical post-structuralist insights about how meanings evolve.

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[18] For an analysis of US President George W. Bush's use of the term 'global' see Selchow 2008.

Radical post-structuralist ideas of signs and meanings in general, and especially Jacques Derrida's 'deconstruction' can be regarded as a revision and as a radicalization of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theory. In his *Course in General Linguistics* ([1916] 2000) de Saussure sets the foundation of modern structural linguistics in particular and structuralism in general. Two of his points shall be stressed here: Firstly, de Saussure understands language as being a system of signs which is stable and fixed at any moment in time. He states that, although '[a]t any given time, [language] is an institution in the present and a product of the past' (2000:9), it needs to be approached from a synchronic or static perspective and not solely, as it was common up to his time, from a diachronic or historical perspective (ibid. 81). With his stress of 'synchronic linguistics' (ibid. 99-139), he advocates an approach to language which understands it as a structured system of signs which is to be investigated as stable and fixed at any given moment (ibid. 14). Secondly, de Saussure argues that signs are dual in nature. He argues that there is nothing referential about signs and he draws a clear distinction between a sign and an external referent. Consequently he states that signs do not get their meanings from their relation to an external reality, rather, meanings evolve within the language system in contrast to other signs. This is based on a specific idea of the nature of signs according to which 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). 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). De Saussure compares the two sides of a sign with 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. 66). Nevertheless, he argues that the relation between 'signal' and 'signification' is purely arbitrary. There is nothing inherent or natural about the link between a specific signifier and a specific signified. Flowing from this insight, de Saussure concludes that meanings are not inherent in a sign but evolve from within the 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' (ibid. 113). Signs are defined negatively in difference to other signs within the language system.

Post-structuralist thinkers, such as Jacques Derrida, start from this point. While they agree with de Saussure's fundamental argument that meanings evolve from difference not from reference, they focus on the question of where this process of difference possibly starts or stops within a closed system of signs. The implications of taking the process of difference 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 kind of fixed starting point - a meta-sign at which the process of differentiation starts and ends. The idea of a transcendental point of reference is, however, disputable - particularly from a postmodern point of view. Hence, de Saussure's idea of language as a closed and stable system of signs is problematic. This problem is taken up and the idea of a structural linguistics is somewhat radicalized for instance in Derrida's idea of deconstruction. Although he takes up de Saussure's dualistic concept of signs, he questions the notion that the two sides of a sign are inseparable linked to each other. According to Derrida (1976; 1981) a specific signified/mind image/meaning is not interlinked to a specific signifier and the meaning of a sign does not evolve from a signifier's difference to *one* single other signifier. Rather, meaning evolves from the differentiation between an indefinite number of signifiers. These signifiers themselves get their meanings from within a net of differences in an infinite regress. As literary theorist Terry Eagleton put 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' (1983:127). Thus, a sign must not be conceptualized as if it were carrying one fixed signified/mind image/meaning in it which could be 'discovered' in its difference from another sign.

Rather, 'there is not a single signifier that escapes, even if recaptured, the play of signifying references that constitutes language' (Derrida 1976:7). This means that meaning evolves within an unlimited and constantly changing constellation of signs which all refer to each other. Each sign is constituted by the difference between itself and other signs, which themselves are constituted by the difference between themselves and other signs .... ad infinitum. Accordingly, meaning can never be fully grasped: it is a 'constant flickering of presence and absence together' (Eagleton 1983:128) which goes through language like a net. Hence, language and meaning is less stable than de Saussure's theory and many contemporary approaches to language in International Studies suggest. At the same time, there is nothing outside language and outside the net of differences. If meaning is produced within the system of signs, it is impossible to think and, in fact, to live 'outside' this net, outside language. Consequently, 'it is not that I can have a pure, unblemished meaning, intention or experience which then gets distorted and refracted by the flawed medium of language: because language is the very air I breathe, I can never have a pure, unblemished meaning or experience at all' (Eagleton 1983:130). Thus, post-structural theories in general, and Derrida's theoretical contribution in particular, constitute a criticism of a 'belief in some ultimate 'word', presence, essence, truth or reality which will act as the foundation of all our thought, language and experience' (ibid. 1983:131), and a turning away from realism, essentialism and the idea of a rational and unified subject, and, with that, in one way or the other reflect some of the general premises of some of the constructivist approaches in contemporary International Studies. Yet, in addition to illustrating that there is no essential and undisputed natural basis which could serve as the fundament for the hierarchy of meanings that exist in each society - or, more accurately - for the hierarchy of meanings that *is* reality, the outlined post-structuralist premises bring about for the investigation of the idea/meaning of 'global' that meanings can never be fully grasped since they are rather a shadow than something stable and fixed. Meaning is something that evolves from 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, a net of intertextuality. They change constantly, even if only slightly, from context to context, and from moment to moment - they are never exactly the same. This makes meaning and language appear blurry and ambiguous, yet, obviously, we *do* communicate through language, and we *do* 'know' what Kofi Annan 'means' when he speaks of a 'global catastrophe that asks for a global response' - at least somehow. Although theoretically they are everything but stable and fixed, signs appear as if they carried a clear meaning. Otherwise we wouldn't be able to communicate. This brings this text back to the notion of 'social category'. As it has been outlined above, meanings are products of differentiation per se; they evolve from within an intertextual net of references between signs. There are two dimensions to 'global': an individual, cognitive one, on the one side, and a collective, constructivist one on the other. The individual, cognitive dimension of 'global' results from the fact that 'global' is a mental unit of organization. This means that the meaning of 'global' is, first of all, a production in a person's individual mind which helps to make sense of the world.[19] Since there is not *one* fixed meaning in the term 'global', it is clear that this 'production' is, in fact, a construction that is based on subjective perceptions. So, this first dimension of 'global' is the product of a 'subjective' cognitive process. However, this subjective process of construction is embedded in a framework of patterns which constitute each individual as a human being and a member of a particular community and language group etc (Fraas 2003:6); which means that the process of construction is actually less than completely 'subjective'. This hints to the second dimension of 'global' which is the collective, social and constructivist one. With Maurice Halbwachs (1939), who developed the well-known concept of

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[19] For the following see Fraas 2003.

'collective memory', it can be stated that knowledge/meanings do not only exist in the minds of individuals but are made manifest in a collective dimension. In this sense, Halbwachs' 'collective memory' points to the social dimension of knowledge and stresses that the patterns and frames, through which knowledge/meanings are individually constructed, are in fact not exclusively individual cognitive phenomena. Rather, they are embedded in a framework of social surroundings and communication which serve as a guiding and restricting frame. Accordingly, the individual construction of meaning and knowledge is only possible if the cognitive processes are constantly and simultaneously referenced to the social dimension, to collective knowledge (see Fraas 2003:6). Collective knowledge becomes manifest in communication, and communication becomes manifest in (inter)texts. However, through its manifestation in texts, individual knowledge not only becomes collective but with that it also enters a process of 'social ratification' (Fraas 2003:7; Teubert 2006). In other words, it enters a process in which it is either collectively accepted as being 'suitable' or not. It is considered as 'suitable' if it relates convincingly to past communication processes, which means, if it is communicated in a 'suitable' form and, further, if it is collectively considered as suiting social reality.

In the first place, these points provide once more support for the argument that the world-wide proliferation of the term 'global' is the result of a world-wide perception of the world as being 'global'. Given the process of 'social ratification' within communication, it is clear that there is support for the argument that 'global' is collectively 'accepted' as appropriate for addressing contemporary phenomena. Furthermore, these initial points are relevant to the investigation of the 'global dimension' in several respects. Firstly, it was argued that a reasonable strategy of investigating 'global' (ie to 'discover' its meaning(s)), is to start with the linguistic term 'global'. Yet, based on a post-structural understanding of meaning, by nature, the term 'global' is not associated with one single meaning/idea; hence, any simplistic approach to what 'global' is, is questionable. Further, 'global' cannot be taken for granted but invites critical exploration. The meaning of 'global' evolves from within a complex process in which an individual/cognitive and a collective/constructivist dimension interplay. Hence, to explore 'global' means to look at texts, in which this collective dimension is manifest. However, only in the intertextual relation of *masses* of text can we discover the collective meaning of 'global'. Further, to investigate 'global' means to realize that, as a political concept and a social category, 'global' only exists in the 'local'. This 'local' can refer to all sorts of identity features, such as national identity, gender, sexuality etc. Hence, the dominant notion that there is a (spatial) distinction between 'global' and 'local' needs to be left behind.

In order to cash-in the above sketched out claim for an exploration of the 'global' as a social category via an approach of 'global' as a linguistic sign, this paper advocates borrowing the method of a computer-assisted frame-based corpus linguistic analysis as it is developed, explained and discussed in the work of scholars such as Konerding (1993), Barsalou (1992), Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998), Teubert (2002; 2005; 2006) and Fraas (1998; 2003). Corpus linguistics is a sub-field of linguistics which systematically analyses a set of texts in order to gain knowledge about language; corpus linguistics is a methodological rather than a theory-based approach. Due to the availability of computerized corpus data and the fast development as well as accessibility of software used for analysis (such as the well known AtlasTI, NVivo etc), corpus linguistics is becoming more and more popular.[20] A corpus linguistics approach allows researchers to quantitatively analyse a significant high number of texts[21] in

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[20] For an overview of the development of corpus linguistics see for instance Leech 1991.
[21] See e.g. the corpus of the written contemporary German language at the IDS with more than 2 billion tokens, (http://www.ids-mannheim.de/kt/projekte/korpora/) or the Brown Corpus of Standard American English.

order to 'reveal' collective knowledge, or, to put it better, in order to provide data for an analysis of collective knowledge. This can be done via a combination of various methods, most obviously and valuably via a co-occurrence analysis based on the mathematical principles as they are also known from social science methods in general. In the context of corpus linguistics co-occurrences are groups of words which appear together more frequently than the mathematic possibility would suggest, e.g. 'good morning' or 'climate change' or 'global warming' but also 'the school' or 'a tree'. Based on the assumption that there is an equal probability that each word in a language co-occurs with every other word, it can be investigated to which extent individual word combinations occur more frequently than the probability suggests. This computation then does not only show how words are used in specific texts but, due to the analysis of a corpus of masses of texts, it reveals patterns in the collective/social uses of words. These, in turn, can be analyzed with regard to the guiding frames and schemes in which they are embedded (see Fraas 2001).

Hence, through the radical focus on the linguistic sign 'global', usages and, consequently, collective frames and schemes can be 'revealed' which can then be operationalized for (a) a comparison between different language groups (e.g. German and US English) in order to determine if there is a common idea of 'global', and (b) for an analysis of their role, function and relevance, hence the 'global dimension', in political discourses of the same as well of different language groups.

This radical 'linguistic step' makes it possible to avoid the application of a pre-determined idea of 'global' but to take into account the fact that 'global' is a social category and as such a social construction in itself.

4. Concluding Remark

This paper gave an overview over the guiding frame of a broader research project. This broader research project analyses the role of 'global' within contemporary foreign policy making. It was triggered by a fascination of our 'complicated times', by the challenges for social scientific research that are associated with contemporary 'global' transformations, by an astonishment at the omnipresence of the concept of 'globalization' in Political and International Studies discourse and by a dissatisfaction with the marginalization and naturalization of the term and concept 'global' within this discourse. The research project sets out to find an alternative approach to the 'global' and to evaluate if a focus on the 'global dimension', that is the role of the idea(s) of 'global', add value to the analysis of contemporary foreign policy making.

This paper introduced the two main arguments related to the thematic and methodological basis of the broader project. The paper argued that 'global' needs to be taken seriously in the study of contemporary politics. While 'globalization' (= a process) has come to be of extraordinary importance in Political and International Studies, as a point of reference as well as an object of research, 'global' (= a condition, state) has been widely dismissed. In fact, it has slipped off the radar screen of critical investigation due to a 'naturalization' of the term 'global' in the majority of studies. In general, one can distinguish between two broad understandings of globalization in contemporary Political and International Studies: (a) globalization associated with an increasing interconnectedness and (b) globalization associated with a growing 'global consciousness'; these two associations, in turn, implicitly lead to understandings of 'global' as world-wide (in a spatial sense) and the 'world as a whole' (in a normative sense). Both ideas dismiss and suppress the fact that 'global' has become a significant social category which coins contemporary socio-political reality. The term 'global' is

omnipresent and is used across discourses. Accordingly, there seems to be a wide-spread collective belief that the world is 'global' which, as it can be assumed, also coins contemporary politics, adding a 'global dimension' to it. Yet, the phenomenon of this wide-spread collective belief of the world as being 'global' cannot be approached via a pre-determined concept of 'global' (as they are used in existing globalization studies) because this dismisses the essential political character of 'global'. Consequently, 'global' rather needs to be taken seriously as a social category which is in itself a construction. Hence, a crucial step is to actually investigate what this 'global' implies and, for instance, if there is a planet-wide idea of 'global' in the first place.

In order to operationalize 'global' (understood as a social category) for political scientific analysis of the 'global dimension' of politics, the paper argued for adopting a strong linguistic approach starting with the analysis of the word 'global'. Based on insights from post-structuralism as well as cognitive and general constructivist perspectives it was argued that a frame-based corpus linguistic analysis offers the possibility of investigating the collective/social meaning(s) of global in order to operationalize them for the analysis of the 'global dimension' of contemporary politics.

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