

6-1-2018

Selchow, Sabine. Negotiations of the New World: The Omnipresence of “Global” as a Political Phenomenon. Transcript Verlag (Distributed by Columbia University Press): Bielefeld, 2017.

Autumn Cockrell-Abdullah Ph.D.
Kennesaw State University, acockrel@kennesaw.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/jigs>



Part of the [Anthropology Commons](#), [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#), [Environmental Studies Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cockrell-Abdullah, Autumn Ph.D. (2018) "Selchow, Sabine. Negotiations of the New World: The Omnipresence of “Global” as a Political Phenomenon. Transcript Verlag (Distributed by Columbia University Press): Bielefeld, 2017.," *Journal of International and Global Studies*: Vol. 9 : No. 2 , Article 13. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/jigs/vol9/iss2/13>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of International and Global Studies by an authorized editor of Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. For more information, please contact phuffman@lindenwood.edu.

Selchow, Sabine. *Negotiations of the New World: The Omnipresence of “Global” as a Political Phenomenon*. Transcript Verlag (Distributed by Columbia University Press): Bielefeld, 2017.

Negotiations of the New World: The Omnipresence of “Global” as a Political Phenomenon by Sabine Selchow introduces the unorthodox into our public, political and academic discourses through an interrogation of the “striking omnipresence of the adjective *global*” in these realms as a political phenomenon. Selchow’s opening sentence is quite compelling, “Sometimes, what is important, or at least valuable and fruitful to study has not (yet) been identified as worth studying – for instance, the striking omnipresence of the adjective *global* in contemporary discourses” (p.9). The author points to the ubiquitous nature of the adjective *global* as more than a linguistic curiosity and the domain of linguistics discourses. Instead, she points to the abundant use of the word in political discourses, like the use of “global south,” “global cooperation,” “global crisis,” and “global war on terror”, to name but a few (Selchow 2017: 10). Selchow’s autobiographical insight into her own engagement with the adjective *global* is revealing and worth quoting here in full:

“Actually at home in the political studies and International Relations (IR) discourse, I was intrigued by the seeming omnipresence of the adjective global and its colorful and somewhat paradoxical gestalt. Simultaneously, I was surprised by the fact that the adjective and its striking popularity have attracted but little attention from scholars and commentators. The academic literature is not short of engagements with the notion of ‘the global’. Yet, there is rarely any engagement with the word global. The adjective global is widely used but less widely debated or scrutinized.” (p. 10)

In *Negotiations of the New World: The Omnipresence of “Global” as a Political Phenomenon*, Selchow argues that the adjective *global* is more than a linguistic curiosity; instead it is also a political phenomenon, worthy of scholarly attention by a broader academic audience. Selchow observes that the contemporary use of the adjective *global* constitutes the discursive reproduction of a web of meanings that closely enmesh the word *global* with the talk about *globalization* and, at the same time, refers to the word *globalization*. The adjective *global*, as a political phenomenon, constitutes a distinct dimension of the enduring contestation over the construction of the world (p. 11). These observations are what set Selchow’s work apart from other studies about and conceptualizations of global and globalization – the implication that *global* proclaims the making of a “new world”. It is, Selchow suggests, a discursive reproduction of a web of meanings that is best called ‘new world’ (p. 12). In addition, Selchow diverts from other studies of that which is *global* in that she pursues the word as a political phenomenon and a social construction of social reality, demonstrating the perpetual contest over understandings of the world (p. 13).

Dr. Sabine Selchow, is a Research Fellow at the Civil Society and Human Security Research Unit, Department of International Development at the London School of Economics and Senior Research Associate at the Institute for Global Prosperity at University College London (UCL) and Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich. This book began as a doctoral dissertation at the London School of Economics and Political Science and ideas from this book

were presented across various institutional settings, in particularly the Collège d'Etudes Mondiales, Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris. Dr. Selchow's Sabine's research falls into three interrelated areas including the role of collective notions of the global, the changing nature and role of legitimacy and expertise in security and how 'web 2.0 culture' is changing politics and the political subject.

Selchow lays out her novel and interesting work over seven chapters in what she refers to as five main steps. After introducing her argument and the nature of her research, Selchow goes on to problematize the word *global* in Chapters 2 and 3. In these chapters, reflects on the constructed and productive nature of language and she focuses on three noteworthy aspects that constitute the contemporary word global. These aspects include the fact that 1) the contemporary word *global* is semantically open; 2) has a 'disputedly undisputed' existence and 3) the enmeshment of the adjective *global* with the globalization discourse. In Chapter 4, the author focuses attention on her unique perspective on the discourse of globalization, extending and substantiating her conception of globalization that is a re-production of a web of meaning that brings out an object called 'new world'. In Chapter 5, Selchow drills down into her 'new world' concept, demonstrating the 'newness' of the world as an aspect of political actors' struggle to legitimize past and future decisions and actions. In Chapter 6, the author returns to the word *global*, applying a synthesis of the insights generated in five previous chapters. In Chapter 7, the reader is offered an empirical exploration of the omnipresence of the adjective global, understood through Selchow's conception of global in U.S. President Barack Obama's 2013 public communication.

Sabine Selchow's book, *Negotiations of the New World: The Omnipresence of "Global" as a Political Phenomenon*, is an interesting, well-written and completely unique perspective that provides fantastic insights into the "curious omnipresence of the contemporary adjective global". It is both exciting and encouraging to see a scholar of Selchow's caliber take a chance and start out in an unconventional way and to explore this topic in a new way. Selchow comments on this, "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" (Selchow 2017: 199). The development of innovative and production of new knowledge should certainly be applauded and encouraged. At times, the prose is dense and challenging to work through. The author has much to work through and does so with a thoroughness and attention to detail that is praiseworthy. Selchow's work will certainly benefit scholarship in her own fields of Political Science and International Relations, but clearly offers contributions which could also be easily applied in the fields of Conflict Management, Anthropology, Sociology and the like.

Autumn R. Cockrell-Abdullah PhD
Kennesaw State University
acockrel@kennesaw.edu