

Portals of Globalization – An Introduction

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ABSTRACTS

Portals of globalization is an analytical category introduced in globalization research to investigate how global flows are anchored and articulated in particular places. It has been used to analyse the way flows and controls come together on multiple scales, and how actors in these places actively manage global entanglements. Consequently, the changing positionality of these places in global networks can reveal the scope, function, and transformation of global connections and shifting spatial orders. Stemming from research debates on the historicity, regional difference, and spatial complexity of globalization processes, this issue seeks to strengthen empirical insights from different disciplinary and regional perspectives. It brings together research on past and present portals of globalization to facilitate the dialogue across disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. A special focus on a variety of local and regional contexts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America allows us to re-evaluate assumptions about the centres and peripheries of globalization processes, the mechanisms and directionality of circulations, and the asymmetries in global connectedness.

Die Kategorie der Portale der Globalisierung wurde in die Globalisierungsforschung eingeführt, um die Verankerung und Artikulation globaler Ströme an bestimmten Orten zu untersuchen. So wird sichtbar, wie Grenzüberschreitung und deren Regulierung auf verschiedenen Handlungsebenen verknüpft sind, und wie Akteure an diesen Orten globale Verflechtungen lenken. Veränderungen der Position dieser Orte in globalen Netzwerken zeigen Reichweite, Funktion und Wandel globaler Verbindungen sowie Verschiebungen räumlicher Ordnungen an. Dieses Doppelheft nimmt Debatten zur Historizität, regionalen Unterschieden und räumlichen Komplexität von Globalisierungsprozessen auf und stärkt vor diesem Hintergrund die empirische Bandbreite der Forschung. Die Autoren analysieren historische und gegenwärtige Portale der

Globalisierung aus verschiedenen disziplinären Perspektiven und mit unterschiedlichen regionalen Schwerpunkten. Ein besonderer Fokus der Beiträge liegt auf Untersuchungen zu Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika. Dies trägt dazu bei, Vorstellungen über die Zentren und Peripherien der Globalisierung, die Mechanismen und Ausrichtung von Zirkulationen, und die Asymmetrien globaler Verflechtungen zu überprüfen.

Portals of globalization is an analytical category introduced in globalization research to investigate how global interactions are anchored and managed in particular places. Despite the increasing preoccupation with global flows, circulations, and networks in academic debates, it is through particular sites – like metropolises, border checkpoints, trading places, and international conference venues – that processes of globalization become tangible. These places are not only “where the action is,” but they also turn into symbolic reference points in debates about what it means to live in an interconnected world. Therefore, those who want to understand how globalization is unfolding often look at specific locations and their role in global networks. Indeed, using place as an entry point to understand the character, mechanisms, and effects of global connectivity remains one of the most relevant conceptual and methodological approaches in research on globalization.

1. Space and Place in the Study of Globalization

Sociologist Saskia Sassen’s work on global cities epitomizes this approach by focusing on local articulations of global interactions. One of her key contributions to the study of globalization is to show precisely how and why so much of today’s connected world is still so place-bound. She argues – against a “world is flat” undertone to much of the rhetoric on globalization – that globalization is an uneven and partial process.¹ Within the differentiated geography of global economic flows, she identifies “control and command centers,” which she coins “global cities.”² Sassen advances research on cities like London, Chicago, New York, and Tokyo in the global/digital era, accounting for why they continue to be the main sites for the concentration of financial services, power, and capital, despite technological innovations that allow long-distance communication and global integration. Sassen contends that cities are not merely nodes but indispensable pillars of the global economy, as they provide its foundations: social connectivity and central management functions, cross-border mergers and acquisitions, and denationalized elite and agendas. The way in which cities are, in turn, incorporated into global flows is accompanied by a growing importance of city networks and a loss of previous functions

1 S. Sassen, *Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global: Elements for a Theorization*, in: *Public Culture*, 12 (2000) 1, pp. 215–232, p. 219.

2 Originally proposed in: S. Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton 1991; for a more recent take, see S. Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights. From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, Princeton 2006 and S. Sassen, *The Global City: Enabling Economic Intermediation and Bearing Its Costs*, in: *City & Community*, 15 (2016) 2, pp. 97–108.

and forms of integration, particularly the national role of the city. Sassen's work has been highly relevant in the way it has given inspiration to study place within the space of global flows, networks, and scales, but it also inspired criticism and additional research. Debates on the role of place in globalization processes have moved in several directions: one important strand aims to historicize global interactions by investigating earlier forms of interconnected cities and sites, thus overcoming a narrative of newness in globalization studies.³ A second debate connects the study of place in globalization with area studies and reflects on the question of how to study global connectedness in other regional contexts outside of the Global North. A third line of inquiry questions the way global places are often pitted against the nation state, rather than allowing for the possibility that state decentralization may in some cases be an active strategy by the state – not a passive reaction to global challenges.⁴ Recent research has, therefore, focused on the interplay of different spaces and scales, among them the nation state but also empires, regions, and commodity chains.⁵

Portals of globalization is one of these approaches that investigate the articulation and management of global flows in particular places. It connects all three strands, as it aims to take the study of place in globalization further in terms of paying closer attention to historically changing, regionally specific, and spatially complex ways in which this relationship between place and global networks takes shape. The concept stems from debates in historiography, but it takes inspiration from current observations of societal transformation under the global condition. In addition to the global city approach, advances in critical or new political geography and global history, as well as perspectives from different area studies, inspire this research framework. Thus, this framework aims to enable an interdisciplinary dialogue between approaches that address similar conceptual problems in researching global processes, which reflects the fact that globalization itself has become an interdisciplinary concept; it is a phenomenon that in its complexity can only be addressed from multiple disciplinary perspectives.⁶

Moreover, new perspectives in globalization research re-conceptualize globalization from a spatial lens in order to better analyse various forms of global connectivity and their

3 For approaches in transnational or global urban history, see for example S. Ewen and P.-Y. Saunier (eds.), *Another Global City. Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment 1850–2000*, Basingstoke 2008; S. Hazareesingh, *Interconnected Synchronicities: The Production of Bombay and Glasgow as Modern Global Ports c. 1850–1880*, in: *Journal of Global History*, 4 (2009) 1, pp. 7–31; A. K. Sandoval-Strausz, N. H. Kwak (eds.), *Making Cities Global: The Transnational Turn in Urban History*, Philadelphia 2017; L. Heerten, *Ankerpunkte der Verflechtung. Hafenstädte in der neueren Globalgeschichtsschreibung*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 43 (2017) 1, pp. 146–175.

4 L. Kennedy, *The Politics of Economic Restructuring in India: Economic Governance and State Spatial Rescaling*, Abingdon 2013. For China, see C. Cartier, *City-Space: Scale Relations and China's Spatial Administrative Hierarchy*, in: L. Ma & F. Wu (eds.), *Restructuring the Chinese City: Changing Society, Economy and Space*, New York 2005, pp. 21–38.

5 See for instance the research program of the Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1199: "Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition" at Leipzig University.

6 M. Middell, *What is Global Studies All About?*, in: *Global Europe – Basel Papers on Europe in a Global Perspective*, no. 105, Basel 2014, pp. 38–49, p. 43.

interactions. The basic assumption here is that globalization processes consist of a variety of global entanglements as well as intersecting and competing globalization projects. Together, they form a complex and dynamic geography, which can best be accessed from multiple perspectives.⁷ This research has moved beyond “flat” notions of globalization that prioritize large-scale connectivity, but has shown that different forms and scales of spatial organization are involved, and that regulation and the redrawing of boundaries also play a relevant role. As a result, some research debates in new political geography, anthropology, sociology, political science, critical area studies, and history have gradually come to quite similar observations and concepts of global interactions. They converge in their emphasis that globalization is characterized by a relationship between flows and controls, or the dialectics of de- and reterritorialization.⁸ This observation was further refined in proposals to analyse the relationship between different spatial frames of reference and fields of action, such as the shifting interactions of territory, place, scale, and network.⁹ In historiography, these changing spatial constellations have been investigated over time, especially the process in which territorial control (most notably in the form of the modern nation state) emerged and evolved in relation to circulations and flows (globalization), and how this has shaped changing forms of organizing space.¹⁰ Place, we argue, is a key vantage point for investigating these shifting spatial orders.

- 7 A. Appadurai, *Globalization and Area Studies: The Future of a False Opposition*. Wertheim Lecture, Amsterdam 2000; Jerry H. Bentley, R. Bridenthal, and A. A. Yang (eds.), *Interactions: Transregional Perspectives on World History*, Honolulu 2005; M. Geyer: *Spatial Regimes*. in: A. Iriye and P.-Y. Saunier, *Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, Basingstoke 2009, pp. 962–966; U. Freitag and A. von Oppen (eds.), *Translocality. The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective*, Leiden; Boston 2010; M. Middell and K. Naumann, *Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization*, in: *Journal of Global History*, 5 (2010) 1, pp. 149–170; J. Osterhammel, *Globalizations*, in: J. H. Bentley (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, Oxford 2011, pp. 89–104.
- 8 J. Agnew, *The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory*, in: *Review of International Political Economy*, 1 (1994) 1, pp. 53–80; N. Brenner, *Beyond State-Centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies*, in: *Theory and Society*, 28 (1999) 1, pp. 39–78; A. Appadurai, *Sovereignty without Territoriality: Notes for a Postnational Geography*, in: S. M. Low and D. Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds.), *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*, Oxford 2003, pp. 337–49; N. Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*, New York 2004; J. Agnew, *Globalization and Sovereignty*, Lanham, MD 2009; U. Engel and G. R. Olsen. *Authority, Sovereignty and Africa's Changing Regimes of Territorialization*, in: Cornelissen S., Cheru F., Shaw T.M. (eds.), *Africa and International Relations in the 21st Century*. London 2012, pp. 51–65.
- 9 E. Sheppard, *The Spaces and Times of Globalization: Place, Scale, Networks, and Positionality*, in: *Economic Geography*, 78 (2002) 3, pp. 307–330; B. Jessop, N. Brenner and M. Jones, *Theorizing Sociospatial Relations*, in: *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26 (2008), pp. 389–401.
- 10 C. Maier, *Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era*, *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000) 3, pp. 807–31; C. Maier, *Transformations of Territoriality, 1600–2000*, in: G. Budde, S. Conrad and O. Janz (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, Göttingen 2006, pp. 32–56; C. S. Maier, *Once Within Borders. Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500*. Cambridge, MA 2016. For related arguments, see: M. Geyer and C. Bright, *World History in a Global Age*, in: *The American Historical Review*, 100 (1995) 4, pp. 1034–1060; C. Bright and M. Geyer, *The Global Condition, 1850–2010*, in: D. Northrop, ed., *A Companion to World History*, Chichester 2012.

2. The Concept of Portals of Globalization

Building on these insights from different fields of research that advance a spatial perspective to study globalization, Ulf Engel and Matthias Middell have developed a research agenda to re-conceptualize historical and contemporary formations of globalization as changing regimes of territorialization. This approach identifies the concrete arenas and actors as well as the turning points of these processes in a long-term perspective.¹¹ Through the research training group “Critical Junctures of Globalization” (2006–2015), an institutional environment was created at Leipzig University to foster the application of these concepts by an interdisciplinary group of researchers, including doctoral and postdoctoral scholars.

Subsequently, several authors – Michael Geyer, Matthias Middell, and Katja Naumann – introduced the concept of “portals of globalization,” which suggests directing more attention to the concrete sites of global connections. Derived from joint discussions, they published their insights in quick succession and with slightly different emphases. Focusing on place became a promising avenue, as the interplay between different spaces and scales of global connectivity, and the actors driving those interactions become more easily accessible from this perspective. Therefore, these authors see portals as places with a high intensity of global interactions in terms of people, goods, and ideas; they understand portals to be hubs and mediating sites between global flows and territorial control. They all use these portals as an analytical category to focus on the specific sites, agents, and mechanisms of transfers and regulations. Instead of pitting the local against the global, they analyse changing spatial orders that shape the global connectedness of places over time. In this way, it is possible to relate past and present forms of global interactions and territorial control in a long-term perspective.

Geyer introduces portals of globalization as a way of capturing seemingly ubiquitous global flows by focusing on how they are channelled, directed, and controlled as they enter or exit a society.¹² He analyses how the relation between external and internal has been managed in modern societies by describing changes of this mediating function and its main actors and mechanisms over time. Geyer notes how the forms of flow and control change fundamentally with the emergence of the modern nation state during the long nineteenth century. The state gradually assumed border management and portal functions, but it was also increasingly challenged by global entanglements.

Middell (in a text that was revised and translated for this issue) adds another way of relating past and present globalizations through the long-term institutionalization of portal functions in particular places.¹³ He underlines that in portals, over time, actors

11 M. Middell and U. Engel, Bruchzonen der Globalisierung, globale Krisen und Territorialitätsregimes – Kategorien einer Globalgeschichtsschreibung, in: *Comparativ*, 15 (2005) 5/6, pp. 5–38.

12 M. Geyer, Portale der Globalisierung, in: W. Eberhard and C. Lübke (eds.), *Die Vielfalt Europas. Identitäten und Räume*, Leipzig 2009, pp. 544–557. English version: M. Geyer, Portals of Globalization, in: W. Eberhard and C. Lübke (eds.), *The Plurality of Europe: Identities and Spaces*, Leipzig 2010, pp. 509–520.

13 M. Middell, Erinnerung an die Globalisierung? Die Portale der Globalisierung als *lieux de mémoire*: Ein Versuch,

gain experience in dealing with global connectivity and establish institutions and knowledge reservoirs to support these capacities. As a consequence, these places also acquire a particular role in collective memory and historical narratives. While the long-dominant framework of the nation state has come into question and historical narratives in both the public and academic sphere have started to shift, place has taken on a flexible quality. Places can be integrated into national historiographies – and become national sites of memory – but they can also serve as building blocks for more complex spatial arrangements and bring to light other stories and identity projects, even global ones. Portals of globalization, then, cannot only be used to historicize changing forms of spatial organization but also to trace shifts in collective narratives, as these start to coalesce around different spaces, scales, and forms of belonging.

In an article that further systematizes this research framework, Middell and Naumann argue that the category of portals of globalization takes on several functions for investigating the history of changing spatial orders through a pronounced focus on place:

It allows for analysis of how global connectedness challenges a seemingly stable territorial order by extending it to other spheres, and it invites us to look at the various means by which elites try to channel and therefore control the effects of global connectivity (among others, by the creation of political structures and social control). It examines both the production and products of new spatial orders in the places that play an important role in connecting particular territorialities, and where global entanglements are especially tangible (and therefore challenging) in the flow of goods, people, and ideas.¹⁴

They promote a closer look at the practices, institutions, and materialities of particular places, and the actors that enhance, steer, and regulate flows as part of specific political, economic, and social projects. Moreover, the authors claim, portals of globalization can also be seen as arenas of re-spatialization, that – to the degree that they advance new constellations between regimes of circulation and territorialization – take an active role in producing new spatial orders.

While these three texts are predominantly conceptual contributions seeking to advance the debate on the role of place in global interactions, researchers both in Leipzig and in other contexts have taken up this call for further inquiry. They have added empirical insights and have further diversified the understanding of portals of globalization and their variations across different world regions. For instance, Geert Castryck focused on railway towns in Africa and South Asia since the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ He argues that looking at how actors in these places used technology, infrastructure, as well as local innovations to produce global connectedness can help to counter narratives of Western

in: K. Buchinger, C. Gantet, and J. Vogel (eds.), *Europäische Erinnerungsräume*, Frankfurt am Main 2008, pp. 296–308.

14 M. Middell and K. Naumann, *Global History and the Spatial Turn*, p. 162 (fn. 7).

15 G. Castryck, Introduction: From Railway Juncture to Portal of Globalization: Making Globalization Work in African and South Asian Railway Towns, in: G. Castryck (ed.), *From Railway Juncture to Portal of Globalization: Making Globalization work in African and South Asian Railway Towns*, in: *Comparativ*, 25 (2015) 4, pp. 7–16.

technological-scientific globalization and its diffusion to the rest of the world. Instead, this research reveals the diversity of different local ways to engage in global entanglements. Holger Weiss used the framework of portals of globalization to study the production of new spatial patterns through multilateral (not just European) networks and processes of creolization in the Atlantic world.¹⁶ Alison Bashford analysed the emergence of state regulation of global flows through the example of quarantine stations on different continents.¹⁷ Megan Maruschke studied the role of India's free trade zones as state-based strategies to produce and enable globalization,¹⁸ and Claudia Baumann investigated universities in an emerging, global higher-education landscape in different world regions.¹⁹ Portals of globalization have, thus, shown their potential to foster interdisciplinary cooperation among international scholars. The institutional framework for doing so has broadened considerably with the founding of the Centre for Area Studies at Leipzig University in 2009, which provides a framework to facilitate trans-regional and global research approaches. Since 2016, the collaborative research centre "Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition" has brought together scholars from various disciplinary and area studies backgrounds with the aim of building a typology of spatial formats as well as a historical narrative about the change of spatial orders under the condition of global connectivity. This double issue is a result of these ongoing research debates and interdisciplinary collaborations.

3. Portals of Globalization: Insights from Africa, Asia and Latin America

Stemming from the aforementioned debates on historicity, regional difference, and spatial complexity in globalization processes, this issue seeks to strengthen empirical insights from a variety of disciplinary and regional perspectives. It brings together research on past and present portals of globalization to foster not only the dialogue across disciplines in the social sciences and humanities but also to take a step further towards a more integrated approach to understanding historical and contemporary global interactions. It also adds perspectives from the Global South. Newer strands of research have emphasized an understanding of globalization(s) as heterogeneous and multipolar, and have advanced the insight that actors in different world regions played and continue to play a significant role in shaping globalization processes. This has led scholars to rethink concepts and master narratives of globalization. To mention a few, the Great Divergence debate shifted our understanding of European history by historicizing Europe's economic

16 H. Weiss, *Ports of Globalisation, Places of Creolisation. Nordic Possessions in the Atlantic World during the Era of the Slave Trade*, Leiden; Boston 2016.

17 A. Bashford (ed.), *Quarantine: Local and Global Histories*, Basingstoke 2016.

18 M. Maruschke, *Zones of Reterritorialization: India's Free Trade Zones in Comparative Perspective, 1947–1980s*, in: *Journal of Global History*, 12 (2017) 3, pp. 410–432.

19 C. Baumann (ed.), *Universities as Portals of Globalization. Crossroads of Internationalization and Area Studies*, Leipzig 2014.

performance and comparing it to that of China; postcolonial theory, especially its agenda of provincializing Europe, has re-evaluated the history of colonial and imperial relations; twentieth-century histories have demonstrated how states in the Global South shaped the contours of the Cold War; and recently, new regionalisms beyond the European model have modified concepts of regional order and sovereignty.²⁰ The contributions to this double issue add further research avenues by exploring the middle ground between concrete and site-specific empirical research and larger narratives about long-term transformations of territorialization and global connectedness. Through the lens of portals of globalization, the articles make four key contributions to empirical research on globalization processes: we highlight agency, we identify the spatial scope of global interconnections, we consider temporal change, and we specify connectivity.

First, we demonstrate the variety of actors who contribute to shaping globalization. In this issue, we focus on examples from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, thereby adding to globalization research that tends to focus on the so-called Global North. What we find, however, is that the complexity of actors in these places cannot be contained by homogeneous binaries like “Global North” and “Global South.” A number of recent historical studies, for example, have demonstrated the agency of actors from the colonies in European imperial metropolises who were able to navigate and shape both transnational and trans-imperial ties, resulting in a world order characterized by decolonization.²¹ In addition to these kinds of entanglements, shifting hierarchies, and heterogeneous positions, unexpected actors may contribute to shaping cities, states, imperial formations, and their recombinations in spatial orders.²² We aim at a differentiated analysis of these actors’ room to manoeuvre between their embeddedness in complex spatial constellations and their active role in trying to control – to foster and delimit – global connections. The investigation of portals of globalization in a variety of local and regional contexts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America allows us to re-evaluate assumptions about the centres and

20 K. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, Princeton, NJ 2000; M. Middell and P. R. Rössner (eds.), *The Great Divergence Revisited*, in: *Comparativ*, 26 (2016) 3, pp. 7-24; D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton, NJ 2000; O. Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War. Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, Cambridge 2007; O. Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev*, Cambridge 2014, pp. 125–169; U. Engel, H. Zinecker, F. Mattheis, A. Dietze, and T. Plötze (eds.), *The New Politics of Regionalism. Perspectives from Africa, Latin America and Asia-Pacific*, London 2016.

21 M. Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism*, Cambridge, 2015; M. Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century*, Oakland, CA 2015. We also take inspiration here from scholars like Coll Thrush who investigated London’s indigenous history: C. Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire*, New Haven 2016.

22 For an example, Jonathan Bach demonstrates that “villagers” were key actors who shaped the development and success of Shenzhen Special Economic Zone in China, despite hindrances imposed on them by the authorities: “They Come in Peasants and Leave Citizens”: Urban Villages and the Making of Shenzhen, China, in: *Cultural Anthropology*, 25 (2010) 3, pp. 421–458. Similarly, Jamie Monson shows how railway porters’ work allows for small traders in Zambia and Tanzania to reach world markets through the port and railway, which had otherwise been designed to handle container traffic and therefore more significant volumes of goods: J. Monson, *Moving Goods in Kapiri Mposhi, Zambia: The Scaffolding of Stability in TAZARA’s Dry Port*, in: *Comparativ*, 15 (2015) 4, pp. 87–101.

peripheries of globalization processes, the mechanisms and directionality of circulations, and the asymmetries in global connectedness.

Secondly, we identify the particular spatial scope of the interconnections produced by these actors. Entanglements are usually bounded and specific.²³ Therefore, we find that “trans-regional” is often a better designation for the connectivity, flows, and entanglements present in these contributions.²⁴ This observation adds weight to other conceptual and empirical research on understanding the term “global.” Labelling flows or other circulations as global may hinder us from investigating the mechanisms and specificities of such flows; on the other hand, using the term global may be useful as a means to define certain types of activities or connections.²⁵ This opens questions about the particular scope and scale of a place’s global connectedness. As constellations of overlapping connections become tangible in a place, we can also see their range and directionality; and we can better assess the positionality of the place in specific spatial arrangements.

Thirdly, we address the temporal nature of globalization by including studies that focus on longer time spans, periods of transition, and historical reflections of global interactions in particular places. This issue incorporates research on contemporary globalizations with historical case studies, allowing us to see how portals, actors, and forms of connectivity have changed over time; additionally, we may see how contemporary portals rely on, mobilize, or remain bound by older forms of connectivity. The longer historical perspective goes beyond debates about “when” globalization was;²⁶ it addresses “where” we can locate which globalization(s) and at which times. Today, research focused on mobile actors and capital flows risks dislocating globalization from place. The articles in this issue reaffirm concerns that globalization is not an even and ubiquitous process but a bundle of political, social, and economic projects. In studying certain places over time, the authors of this issue analyse how portals emerge, change their function, or become irrelevant. In short, we can observe a changing character of globalization and the spatial orders within which these portals are embedded as well as how actors seek to re-arrange these frameworks and their positionality within them.

Fourthly, we specify connectivity. Using portals as a research lens not only helps to show the changing spatial dimensions of connections and circulations over time; it is also part of a turn towards empirical research on the concrete mechanisms, infrastructures, actors, and media of interaction and exchange, as well as the changing aims and strategies that are articulated in these forms. This perspective aims to overcome the problems with abstract generalities implied by invoking terms such as flows, connections, and circula-

23 As has been emphasized, for example, from an African perspective: F. Cooper, What is the Concept of Globalization good for? An African Historian’s Perspective, in: *African Affairs*, 100 (2001) 399, pp. 189–213; J. Ferguson, Seeing like an Oil Company: Space, Security, and Global Capital in Neoliberal Africa, in: *American Anthropologist*, 107 (2005) 3, pp. 377–382. See also P.-Y. Saunier, *Transnational History*, Basingstoke 2013.

24 M. Middell (ed.) *Handbook of Transregional Studies*, London (forthcoming).

25 S. Opitz and U. Tellmann, Global Territories: Zones of Economic and Legal Dis/connectivity, in: *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, 13 (2013) 3, pp. 261–282.

26 For example, in economic history: K. H. O’Rourke and J. G. Williamson, *Globalization and History: The Evolution of a Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy*, Cambridge, MA; London 2000.

tions that often hinder us from reflecting on historical or regional differences in the way a place is embedded in overarching spatial constellations.²⁷

Moreover, portals of globalization have been defined as “entrance points for cultural transfer”.²⁸ Focusing on portals in Africa, Asia, and Latin America allow us to draw additional insights on the nature of such transfers. The term has rightly been invoked to overcome the language of diffusion and, thereby, Eurocentrism; however, without empirical depth and conceptual clarity the term may function to conceal asymmetries. Global interactions do not take place on an even playing field. A closer look at the positionality and agency of particular actors is, therefore, important in defining the character and function of portals of globalization and the corresponding regimes of circulation and control. As several case studies in this issue show, exclusions, inequality, and neglect continue to play an important role in portals of globalization. But a closer look at the scope, direction and hierarchies involved in transfers and circulations also helps to map a variety of historically overlooked or newly emerging regimes of circulation and control.

4. Contributions in this Issue

The following contributions reflect the aforementioned perspectives by investigating the particular scope of spatial connections as well as the forms of connectivity and agency in portals of globalization from various disciplinary backgrounds and regional areas of expertise. This double issue is arranged both chronologically and thematically to demonstrate to the reader on the one hand, the overlapping findings that emerge when using portals of globalization as an analytical category; on the other hand, we acknowledge that globalization and spatial orders have shifted overtime.

The first two texts deal with ports and how various actors seek to steer connectivity through them. These actors react to changing world orders; potentially, they also attempt to forge new forms of connectedness themselves. Both contributions demonstrate the benefits of a long-term perspective by analysing how the ports adapt to several dramatic shifts in spatial orders from the early 19th to the turn of the 21st century. Megan Maruschke’s article focuses on Bombay port. She examines how a free-port plan from the 1830s and a free-trade zone plan from the 1960s factor into elite’s globalization projects. Though neither plan was implemented, she demonstrates how actors sought to reposition themselves in trade networks and spatial orders by connecting their port to specific trade routes, for example, by building certain types of infrastructure or offering

27 S. Gänger, *Circulation: Reflections on Circularity, Entity, and Liquidity in the Language of Global History*, in: *Journal of Global History*, 12 (2017) 3, pp. 303–318. R. Wenzlhuemer, *The Ship, the Media, and the World: Conceptualizing Connections in Global History*, in: *Journal of Global History*, 11 (2016) 2, pp. 163–186.

28 M. Middell and K. Naumann, *Global History and the Spatial Turn*, p. 162 (fn. 7). M. Geyer defines portals in a similar way, see *Portals of Globalization*, p. 509 (fn. 12). On the concept of cultural transfer, see M. Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*, Paris, 1999; M. Espagne, *Comparison and Transfer*, in: M. Middell and L. Roura i Aulinas (eds.), *Transnational Challenges to National History Writing*, Basingstoke 2012, pp. 36–53.

specific incentives. She also emphasizes how different actors on the local, provincial, and national level sought to control and reorient the port. Anne Dietrich investigates Cuban ports to highlight the complex relationship between a place and its hinterland. Moreover, she connects this relationship to the port-hinterland's integration into various global networks such as the US and socialist sugar markets. She argues that, on the one hand, economic development in Cuba's hinterland during the 19th and early 20th century led to the expansion of the island's ports, while the modernization of the ports that has taken place since the second half of the 20th century allowed for Cuba's economic revival. These two contributions point out shifting means, scopes, and directions of globalization projects overtime. Certain spaces of interaction required changing technology, as international trade partners and geopolitical contexts changed. These portals were in both cases also used to strengthen and reposition the nation state in those shifting global orders.

The authors of the following two articles expand these long-term perspectives on portals of globalization. They emphasize that in addition to dealing with varying positionalities within changing spatial frameworks, portals of globalization are arenas where actors may manage the instable cultural and racial boundaries between diverse populations and articulate the legacies and memories of global connectedness. Matthias Middell's contribution is a revised version of the aforementioned text originally published in German. He suggests using portals of globalization to investigate changing regimes of territorialization and historical narratives. Moreover, he argues that portals can become *lieux de mémoire*, sites for the re-construction of memory and heritage, beyond national frameworks. He also offers a short typology of portals. They may be gateways between global connections and territorial boundedness, such as ports or trade cities; they may be metropolises where the relations between centre and periphery, imperial power and anti/post-colonial critique, and between nation and world are institutionalized and fought out; and they may be global events such as sports competitions or world exhibitions, which take on a symbolic function between Western-centric representations and an awareness of multiple modernities and differentiated global geographies. Jochen Lingelbach investigates internment camps for Polish World War II refugees in British Colonial East Africa as temporary portals of globalization. He highlights both the forced nature of this "mobility," the hierarchized social interactions enforced inside the camp, and how the camp's diversity challenged racial and national constructs which were the basis of legitimation for British political rule. Moreover, he investigates how these portals lost their function and were closed and forgotten as a result. Specific transnational and transimperial experiences, lost to national constructs in both historiography and collective public discourses, may simply remain sidelined. Both articles focus on the temporality of portals of globalization as places where the relations between various spatial orientations and different forms of cultural and social belonging are negotiated over time.

The following contributions deal with the creation of new portals of globalization and their societal impact in two contemporary trans-regional African contexts: Guinea's mining towns and their supply chains and an antiretroviral factory in Mozambique that was funded and implemented in cooperation with Brazil. Johannes Knierzinger's work on

bauxite mining towns in Guinea is an example of how portals of globalization can be forcefully established and maintained. The mining towns depend heavily on developments in the aluminum industry with headquarters in the Global North. Local and national political, social, and economic responsibility is ceded as mining corporations and their international staff usurp local forms of power. In these command centres, global inequalities are highly visible. What becomes most pronounced here, but is also present elsewhere in this issue, is a notion of how some actors can establish and control a portal, assuming functions of local, regional and state governments, leaving the local population with little to no say in how their towns and countries are connected to global supply chains. Ana Ribeiro's focus on Brazil as an emerging donor reveals different kinds of trans-regional interactions and shifting hierarchies in newly formed portals. Brazil seeks to take a more active role in managing global connections by building on former colonial relations in the Lusophone world and its own experiences with donors from the Global North, thereby redirecting aid flows from a North-South to a South-South trajectory. Ribeiro investigates the particular institutional framework and the production site that were established to make South-South development cooperation with Mozambique possible. While the project has faced challenges in securing the resources, support and capacities needed to safeguard its activities in the long term, it will potentially have wide-ranging effects on Brazil's global influence and may become a model for development cooperation in an actively constructed Global South.

The next two articles further explore how contemporary portals of globalization provide insights into active strategies of re-spatialization and the rescaling of global interactions; both emphasize regionalization and trans-regional synchronization in Africa. Nicholas Dietrich shows the intertwined nature of globalization and regionalization processes in police cooperation in Southern Africa. Investigating the emergence of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPPCO), he argues that police are both reacting to transnational crimes but also synchronizing their knowledge production and practices through regional institution building. Dietrich finds that regionalization is a multi-scalar and multi-actor process, which reacts flexibly, assuming new kinds of control functions to respond to deterritorialized flows. In the process, new spaces are negotiated and emerge out of portals. Ulf Engel investigates the headquarters of international organizations as portals of globalization, emphasizing their growing agency in international relations and their potential role in enhancing the capacities of regional organizations. He examines the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa and its interaction with the United Nations headquarters in New York. Zooming in on particular forms of interaction and entanglement between those headquarters, he observes their impact on policy fields such as peace and security, and the emergence of new forms of transnational and trans-regional communication, knowledge production and transfer. Portals of globalization as an analytical category, he argues, is a tool to investigate those profound shifts in the management of globalization processes on multiple spatial levels. Moreover, this lens shows changing functions in these sites that have become hubs for

knowledge exchange, and thereby the synchronization of practices as well as the negotiation of new territorialized forms of power and sovereignty.

The category of portals of globalization, these contributions show, is helpful to more concretely investigate not only historical transformations of global connections and attempts to manage and control them. It also reveals how in contemporary, seemingly all-encompassing global interactions, different globalization projects interact, particular forms of de- and reterritorialization operate, and power relations and scopes for action shift. The two final contributions to this double issue deal with the emergence of new actors that shape “global” policies and discourses by appropriating and synchronizing (new) practices. Moreover, they examine how the institutionalization of these new attempts to tap “the global” can become models. Micha Fiedlschuster examines the aspirations of the anti-globalization movement, institutionalized in the World Social Forum. These anti-globalization activists seek to change social hierarchies and political world orders. Though the World Social Forum emanates from the inequality in today’s world, Fiedlschuster shows in this issue how, despite its temporary but recurring structure, the forum functions as place for the exchange of ideas and practices that seek to reshape the world we live in and the conditions of many. In sum, expressing political discontent fosters outreach and instigates synchronization processes. In her contribution, Claudia Baumann demonstrates to what extent “national” institutions, universities, both produce knowledge to tackle regional and global issues, thereby reacting to changing realities, *and* seek to manage student and staff mobility, thereby themselves contributing to shaping particular transnational flows. In the process, benchmarks and scales of academic activity are renegotiated, institutional power is redistributed between universities and states, and new regional or trans-regional spaces of research and learning emerge. Looking at concrete universities can reveal new insights about the topography of higher education in the Global South that can redraw the arbitrary map of world class universities.

In sum, using the analytical category of portals of globalization reveals that certain places can be much more than transit points for global flows, or arenas where local reactions to the impact of global forces are developed. They can be used to analyse the way flows and control come together on multiple scales, and they themselves can become arenas actors use to actively sustain and manage global entanglements. Consequently, investigating the changing position and role of these places in global networks can reveal the scope, function, and transformation of global connections and shifting spatial orders. This perspective also helps to differentiate notions about the actors who shape global processes and the entanglements between flows and controls. The contributions to this volume demonstrate that when applying a place-based perspective to detailed empirical research, a great diversity of actors appear that have not only historically and presently reacted to globalization but have also played a key role in shaping it. The portals of globalization concept thereby shows how these actors and particular places are situated in a variety of complex, overlapping, and shifting regimes of spatial organization, thus moving globalization research beyond binaries of global and local, North and South. Instead, regions,

empires, states, supply chains, cooperation agreements, etc. shape places and peoples' connectivity in a global age.

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