

**Megan Maruschke: Portals of Globalization. Repositioning Mumbai's Ports and Zones, 1833–2014 (= Dialectics of the Global, vol. 2), Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg 2019, 253 p.**

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Global History is currently one of the most prolific fields of academic historical analysis, focusing on the establishment of transnational flows and the linkages between specific regions (countries, provinces, cities) and global frameworks. A key concept in the field is portals of globalization, theorized by Matthias Middell and Katja Nauman,<sup>1</sup> and applied by different researchers in different chronological and geographical contexts.<sup>2</sup>

Megan Maruschke's new book, "Portals of Globalization. Repositioning Mumbai's Ports and Zones, 1833–2014", is yet another proficient application of the concept. The work, which is a rewriting of the author's PhD dissertation in Global Studies (University of Leipzig), is divided in six chapters (besides introduction and conclusion) that analyse the role of the ports and trade zones of Mumbai since the colonial period to the present. As the author mentions, the book's perspective is historical and therefore it relies heavily on primary sources gathered in the United Kingdom and in India. The use of non-European archives is refreshing, as it allows readers to hear the voices of the Global South, which

are usually muted in historical analysis. However, some paragraphs do not indicate the source of information (for instance on p. 81, 84, and 179). In general terms, the book is easy to read, with short chapters and an accessible language, even though in some parts the proliferation of abbreviations renders the reading a tad more hermetic. Some may argue that the narrative is too descriptive, however, as an historical analysis, it must provide a description of the events in order to analyse them critically. One thing I missed was maps. I believe they would help readers to locate more precisely the event depicted in the narrative. Also, the inclusion of a glossary of the main terms used in the text (especially some of those listed in the abbreviations, p. XI–XII) would also be welcome.

Regardless, the academic quality of this book is evident and unsurprising, considering the excellence of the host conditions of Maruschke's research and her own previous experience with portals of globalization.<sup>3</sup> I especially enjoyed the long-durée approach applied to a specific region of India. The analysis covers the period between the British Raj and present-day India (including the independence, the Cold War, the non-aligned movement, and late twentieth century resurgence of liberal policies). Maybe I missed something, but I could not understand the gap between the 1880s and the 1940s, which is not analysed.

Nonetheless, this approach allows testing the limits of the concept of portals of globalization. Usually, similar analysis focuses on one portal in a narrow time span. Maruschke's approach illustrates the flexibility of the concept. She shows how infrastructures with numerous roles (imperial, global, local, commercial, naval, military),

as is the case of Mumbai ports and trade zones, functioning as portals of globalization, served different goals and agendas and adapted to political, economic, and diplomatic circumstances without losing its global character.

In this sense, the book establishes different links with other analytical frameworks, bringing them to the debate on globalization and Global Studies. I was particularly interested in the relationship between State and private initiative and the frictions between different public and private agents who supposedly have opposing goals, in their attempts to control global flows. These feuds are a frequent subject in literature about portals of globalization (specifically in the resistances offered by the construction of Nation-States to the creation of global fluxes).

Maruschke illustrates this by describing the long-term contradictions between the need to territorialize India (both in the colonial era and after independence) and the necessity to globalize it. During the British Raj, she analyses the disputes between the government of India, the Bombay Presidency, and the many private companies that operated docks in Bombay. After independence, the author describes the interaction between the government of India and private companies in Export Processing Zones and Free Trade Zones: purportedly, these areas should promote globalization and some loss of sovereignty, but the State used them to enhance territorialisation, provide some protection to the remainder Indian economy, and control companies that operated locally, which, on their side, fought to protect their own interests and to promote new fluxes, unforeseen by the central State.

However, the relationship between private and public sectors was not always quarrelsome and this is one of the most interesting findings of the book. Frequently, private and public agents realize they could not operate alone and need the cooperation of the other, and therefore they establish a symbiotic relationship (often under the form of public-private partnerships). A good example is given on pp. 146–147, when India sought to promote a more liberal economic policy to foster globalization, but with a strong presence of the State, by building new infrastructures and by favouring national companies as privileged agents of globalization. This adds to the literature about public-private partnerships<sup>4</sup> and hints at the debate on how the perspective of increasing profits or achieving given goals motivates or even forces State and private companies to work together.

A fascinating corollary of the previous discussion is how the search for globalization and the means to create global flows were inserted in diplomatic strategies (for instance to favour trade with Japan in detriment of China, as mentioned on p. 160). The role of the State here is clear. It followed a diplomatic strategy to stimulate commerce with neighbouring regions and global flows through Mumbai and through Indian agents living abroad. Nevertheless, the importance of private agents in the management of foreign investments and in the establishment of connections with other markets (especially during the Cold War) is irrefutable. This provides yet another example for the literature on track-two diplomacy,<sup>5</sup> which highlights the role of non-governmental agents that act unofficially as go-betweens for different governments.

Associated with the previous research topic, Maruschke presents a very interesting new concept, transregionalism, referring to those relations between different regions of different countries that do not completely fit in the classic divisions of transnational or international. Historians often look at nations as homogeneous monoliths, when some of its areas have completely different behaviours. In this sense, this new concept proves to be very useful.

Naturally, globalizing phenomena are also present in the analysis. It is interesting to note how Mumbai ports promoted more global fluxes other than those associated with trade. I was especially captivated by the globalization of practices and experts, specifically those associated with port management, which fall upon the literature of knowledge transfer. But the globalization of agents, finance, and diplomats (those that worked in organizations under the umbrella of the UN) is also mentioned throughout the book.

Some important issues related with History of Technology are also briefly addressed in this work. I understand that this was not the focus of the author, but I was quite intrigued about the frictions between global and local agents in different stages of technological development (for instance, on p. 70, how the development of the harbour was made to shun away native vessels). Another subject I found interesting was the association between globalism and modernity/progress (pp. 191–195) and I wondered about the role played by technology in those representations of a modern city. To conclude, this book makes a very interesting analysis of the evolution of ports and trade zones around Mumbai in a period of over a century. Megan Maruschke

uses efficiently the concept of portals of globalization, and she also adds new features to it. Therefore, this work can be a methodological source for new papers on global studies. Several aspects mentioned throughout the narrative deserved a deeper approach. Understandably, it is impossible to cover them all in the limits of a book that results of a PhD project. However, this book paves the way for further analyses by different concepts and fields within the larger scope of Global History or History of Globalization.

#### Notes

- 1 M. Middell/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), pp. 149–70, p. 162.
- 2 For a summary of works that use the concept, see H. S. Pereira, Railways as Portals of Globalisation: The Case of the Portuguese Mainland and Colonial Rail Networks (1850–1915), in: *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 28 (2018), pp. 121–138, pp. 122–123.
- 3 M. Maruschke, Zones of Reterritorialization: India's Free Trade Zones in Comparative Perspective, 1947 to the 1980s, in: *Journal of Global History* 12 (2017), pp. 410–432.
- 4 See, for instance: R. C. Marques, Regulation by contract: Overseeing PPPs, in: *Utilities Policy* 50 (2018), pp. 211–214.
- 5 J. W. McDonald Jr./D. B. Bendahmane (eds.), *Conflict Resolution: Track Two Diplomacy*, Washington 1987.