Introduction: Envisioning the World, Mapping the Global

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Mapping and making the global through practices of observation

Visions of the world and descriptions of the global are based on *practices of observation*. Rather than working with an account of structures and connections, or with a fixed definition of 'the global', the contributions in this book seek to identify narratives, images and models that are used in practices of observation in order to address 'the world' or 'the global' and how they come to appear as a distinct realm of the social world. In addition to considering the conditions for the 'emergence' of the global in particular practices of observation, this book is also interested in the impact of these global modes of observation on field-related discourses, processes and agents. It focuses, therefore, on the *phenomenological* dimension of globalization processes. The individual contributions reconstruct how specific visions of the world emerge in different social fields and how various actors throughout time have tried to map, describe and make sense of the global, thereby contributing to its constitution, that is, to its 'making'.

This book brings together views from Sociology, History, Literary Theory and International Relations and takes up a range of discussions in world society/world polity as well as in global history research. Many disciplines involved in the field of globalization research are witnessing an increased interest in approaches that pursue the process of globalization at the level of local practices, discourses and strategies. Diverse as the disciplinary, theoretical and empirical backgrounds of the contributions gathered here may be, they converge in the effort to retrace 'practices of world making' (Bell 2013: 257) in various areas of society. The aim is to establish a connection between different areas in order to find underlying commonalities in observational practices that are not evident at first glance and consequently little addressed in the

globalization literature. We particularly focus on two core issues: the practical driving forces of globalization and the relation between the global and the local. Regarding the former, a main concern is to complement accounts that focus on only one, or a few, 'grand' narratives – such as global capitalism, legalization, digitalization etc. – with reconstructions of how a global horizon emerges within the perspective of particular observers. As a corollary to this analytical approach, we also seek to demonstrate the ways in which the global and the local are to be understood as complementary sides of the same processes (Werron 2012: 110; see also Robertson 1998).

The growing unease with the grand narratives of globalization

'Grand' narratives of globalization are usually exactly that: impressive and also beautiful in their grandeur. The diversity of empirical reality quite often turns out to be less beautiful in its actual messiness. The grand narratives that seem to dominate globalization research (cf. Greve and Heintz 2005: 111; Sassen 2007: 6) focus on the emergence of institutions and organizations that operate on a worldwide scale, on global networks, interconnectedness through communication technology and global communicative structures. However, various fields of research are experiencing a growing unease about such narratives and criticize them for being biased towards structural or even structurally deterministic accounts of global social reality. Criticism has been levelled at, for example, world polity theory (of the so-called 'Stanford School') and its focus on 'the institutional conditions of diffusion' (Strang and Meyer 1993) when attempting to make sense of globally diffused cultural patterns or sociological systems theory that ascribes the spatial decontextualization of communicative acts to the problem-specific mode of operation of different function systems (economy, science, law etc.) while comprehending the emergence of a world society as a necessary corollary of the process of functional differentiation (Luhmann 1991: 60; Stichweh 2000: 18). Both world polity scenarios of the diffusion of global cultural goods (Greve and Heintz 2005: 111) and systems theory's narrative of universal functional differentiation have been pointed out for being rather insensitive towards specific empirical questions (Werron and Holzer 2009: 7). Likewise, in the field of global history the 'preoccupation with connectivity' (Conrad 2018: 824) has been countered by a research agenda that is more interested in 'the strategies of local actors' (ibid.: 825) towards the global as well as in concrete 'articulations of globality'

(Bell 2013: 257). Generally speaking, current debates on globalization reveal the impulse to empirically substantiate its grand narratives.

Different paths have been taken to theoretically articulate this general unease. In sociology, the distinction between 'micro' and 'macro' has turned out to be one of the most prominent pathways taken in this respect. In research on processes of globalization and the formation of a world society/world polity, it has become a frequent trope to juxtapose macro- and micro-sociological approaches to conceptualizing the global (Greve and Heintz 2005: 111; Knorr-Cetina and Bruegger 2002: 907). In line with this seeming conceptual divide, macro- and micro-oriented modes of analysis have been competing with each other both in addressing the drivers of globalization as well as in conceptualizing the relationship between the global and the local.

In contrast to 'macro-structural' accounts of a global social reality, sociologists from different theoretical backgrounds have attempted to cultivate a perspective that shifts attention to the local phenomena that are embedded in, and entangled with, processes of globalization. As Saskia Sassen (2007: 4) observes: 'Conceiving of globalization not simply in terms of interdependence and global institutions but also as inhabiting the national [we could add "the local" – authors] opens up a vast and largely unaddressed research agenda'. In trying to redress this situation, Sassen (ibid.: 193) has called attention to the 'microsites' and 'microspaces' in which global dynamics unfold. In this context, she (ibid.: 8) studies global cities as sites of local 'instantiations of the global'. Similarly, Karin Knorr-Cetina and Urs Bruegger (2002) speak of 'global microstructures' when studying specific orders and patterns of social interaction which maintain global financial markets. Efforts to provide stronger micro-foundations can also be observed within neo-institutionalist theory. As has been critically noted, however, a micro-perspective might be incompatible with a general research frame that still tends to overlook individual actors (cf. Powell and Colyvas 2008; Hasse and Schmidt 2010; Kirchner et al. 2015).

While it is generally regarded as plausible to split globalization research along the micro/macro distinction, there exist a number of attempts to employ more complex conceptual frameworks to adequately describe processes of globalization. Sassen (2007: 8), for instance, calls for 'different conceptual architectures' which require 'new categories that do not presuppose the customary dualities of national/global and local/global'.[1] In a similar manner, Rudolf Stichweh (2000: 16), building on Niklas Luhmann's reservations about the micro/macro distinction,[2] stresses that an interaction may be simultane-

ously attributed to both the micro- and macro-levels. According to this understanding, world society actualizes itself through particular local acts: 'The fusion of the global and the local takes places at the local level' (ibid.: 257).

The shortcomings of the micro/macro distinction have been addressed in different areas of globalization research and have inspired a variety of conceptual alternatives. In the field of migration studies (Faist 2018; Sassen 2001; Basch et al. 1997; Pries 2002), scholars have recognized that the dynamics of regular cross-border interactions sustain a space with its own right and rules. Thus, for example, *transnational social spaces* in which processes in the micro and macro dimensions intersect have come under the spotlight. In contrast to typical perspectives on globalization, the literature on transnational spaces primarily shifts the focus to the meso-level dynamics of everyday practices. In a similar sense, the concept of *glocalization* is probably the most prominent attempt to conceive of global and local processes as representing two sides of the same coin. Shifting the focus from top-down perspectives that consider globalization as separated from local, regional or national processes, the glocalization literature emphasizes the spatial multidimensionality of societal phenomena (Robertson 1998; Wellman 1999; Bauman 1998).[3] The literature on glocalization envisions modes of observing the global through the local that allow it to be shown that 'globalization is responsible both for homogeneity and heterogeneity' (Roudometof 2015: 9). The concept of glocalization has raised awareness of the fact that globalization does not take place beyond the local level, but operates through it.

Observation as a practice that conditions globalization

The present volume follows up on attempts to undermine the micro/macro distinction of conventional globalization research. We acknowledge that analysing globalization and dividing globalization research along micro/macro lines can be heuristically and analytically fruitful in many respects. However, we think it is useful to employ a distinction that has the advantage of covering both micro- and macro-phenomena and structures in processes of globalization: Bettina Heintz and Tobias Werron argue that globalization may unfold in two different, yet often related dimensions that both cover and span the micro/macro distinction. Firstly, globalization occurs on the dimension of global/transnational *networks* and *connections*. This means that, in various areas of society such as the economy, transport, law, entertainment

etc., interconnections emerge that are not confined to the borders of the nation-state. Secondly, globalization takes place at the level of *description* and *observation* (Heintz and Werron 2011: 361f.). The field of law is globalizing, for example, not only through international treaties and supranational institutions, but also through judges taking account of legal developments in other countries and voluntarily aligning their decisions with foreign jurisprudence and the idea of a world law (see the chapter by Preuss, this volume). The discipline of Social Work does not react to an objective world in which it then establishes itself, but rather engenders the global in manifold ways in its own discourse and practices of observation (see the chapter by Holtgreve and Giebeler). Geopolitical world conflicts, such as the conflict between Russia and the West, can be traced back to competing ways of envisioning the world (see the chapters by Akopov, Elmuradov, Vásquez, and by Sunca).

This volume thus focuses on the descriptive dimension of globalization that has received far less attention in globalization research than the level of connectivity. With Werron (2012: 112), we agree that it is worthwhile to describe globalization processes independently of the dimension of connectivity. Globalization phenomena are also recognizable where connectivity is limited or even actively resisted. Phenomena such as the isolation of a state through border protection, anti-globalization resentments, concepts of global enemies (e.g. bankers, Jews, etc.) can thus be interpreted as globalization phenomena (see the chapters by Jacobsen and Werron and by Aksakal). Moreover, by focusing on the level of description, it is possible to identify models of worldmaking that elude the dominant globalization narratives by drawing on unorthodox epistemologies of the global and the world. Notably philosophy and literature offer the potential to counter the Eurocentrism of the current globalization discourse with multipolar and planetary alternatives (see the chapters by Gasser and by Auer).

Sharing the impression that there is a tendency in globalization research towards self-explanatory and universalistic narratives that are hard to pin down empirically, we follow up on the suggestion that processes of globalization materialize in specific local acts, discourses and practices of observation. From this perspective, the global as a spatial framework is not self-evident, but rather 'constructed' in concrete practices. The contributions gathered here capitalize on the insights of the spatial turn in sociology. Rather than starting from prefabricated spatial assumptions, they pursue the question of 'how the global is generated *socially* in each case' (Epple 2018: 395). Yet, despite their focus on concrete practices, they seek nonetheless to make a contribution to

globalization research and attempt to avoid the shortcomings of many studies professing a 'micro-sociological' perspective that tend to concentrate on local practices of organization and interaction but neglect the question of how the *global* is envisioned and observed in these practices. Although the global is implicitly presupposed in many 'micro-founded' studies, it is not addressed as an object of investigation. Rather than confronting the grand narratives of globalization research with meticulous isolationist accounts of microsites, our goal is to add empirical and historical depth to these narratives by examining practices of worldmaking as empirical evidence of how narratives on the global and the world evolve and sustain themselves. The focus is thus directed towards the *conditioning* practices that underlie processes of institutionalization, diffusion, and functional differentiation among others.

There are various societal domains in which it is far from evident that agents would be likely to position themselves in relation to the global (Heintz and Werron 2011: 361). For instance, it seems highly unlikely that a Constitutional Court would transcend its national legal framework by quoting the decision of a foreign court. Likewise, a claim that educators all over the world take global educational standards into account when implementing reforms at local schools and universities would require explanation. The existence of global modes of observation visible in various social fields and areas comes with prerequisites attached and is, from a historical standpoint, relatively new. Stichweh stresses that (2019: 517): 'Observation was tied to closely circumscribed localities for a long time'. From this point of departure, globalization research has commonly called attention to the various ways in which new communications technologies have had deterritorializing effects on practices of communication and observation. While this is a valuable perspective, research tends to neglect to reconstruct *how exactly* modes of observation in specific social domains have transformed in the course of globalization dynamics. To which problem does the globalization of specific observational practices respond? How is the global conceived in these practices?

The aim of this book is to identify and contextualize specific modes of observation and communication by which the global is addressed. Each contribution analyses a 'special type of communications [...] that explicitly address the world as an issue and are thereby constitutive of the world' (Stichweh 2000: 240). Professing a broadly constructivist understanding of processes of globalization, we acknowledge that the world/the global is created in practices of communication and observation. We thus seek to retrace globalization on the level of these practices. In this context, the communicative conditions

necessary for the perspective of the global are to be brought to the fore. We are interested in 'the way in which humans fabricated symbolic systems, how they constructed and reconstructed worlds' (Bell 2013: 258). Through which narratives, images and models have different agents created the discursive horizon of the global?

Fields and theories

By focusing on practices that envision the global from field-related stand-points we attempt to retrace how the global is created by different agents in different fields and discourses. Generally, this means that the global is in-scribed as the relevant horizon of meaning, which needs to be distinguished from any structural definition of the global. It says nothing about the struc-tural establishment of connections on a global scale (cf. Albert 2016: 27ff.). While, arguably, it has historically often been the case, there is no necessity for a 'phenomenological globalization' to precede a 'structural' one. Durable connections might very well be established and actualized before they are in-scribed into the meaning horizon of the global. This phenomenological ap-proach is neither defined by, nor restricted to, a specific discipline or a fixed theoretical frame. Numerous disciplines are capable of adopting a 'second or-der' perspective and retracing practices of worldmaking in a phenomenolog-ical manner. This applies to social science disciplines as well as the domain of cultural theory – for instance the field of literary studies which, as illustrated by Lucy Gasser's contribution to this volume, may comprehend literature as a 'world-making activity' (Cheah 2016: 2).

In this sense, the present volume responds to a research interest that has become particularly pronounced in the field of global history. In this field, conceptual problems such as the micro/macro divide and the global/local dis-tinction are regularly discussed (cf. Conrad 2016: 129ff., 230ff.). In tangible proximity to the sociological discussions outlined above, the advocates of a new global history distance themselves from the universal narratives of his-torical globalization research, conventionally known as world history. In the course of this reorientation, criticism is also directed at approaches within the field of global history that primarily deal with the reconstruction of transna-tional networks and the global interconnectedness of structures, goods, ideas, etc. (for a description of this current, see Moyn and Sartori 2013: 9ff.). Global historians like Sebastian Conrad and Duncan Bell challenge this 'diffusionist

bias' (Conrad 2018: 824) with a research agenda that explores globalization from the perspective of particular actors, practices and strategies (Conrad 2018: 825; Bell 2013: 257). As part of this 'second order approach' (Moyn and Sartori 2013: 5), categories like 'the global' or 'the West' become the *object* rather than a fixed spatial *frame* of analysis (Bell 2013: 273). The emergence of a global consciousness and its required means of representation and imagination then themselves become a problem of global history (Moyn and Sartori 2013: 16f.).

The perspective on the world and the global suggested here allows the following chapters to take their inspiration from a variety of theoretical backgrounds, such as systems theory, neo-institutionalism and postcolonial theory. Many theoretical traditions possess the heuristic potential to pin wide-scale processes of globalization to concrete practices and processes of communication and observation. This also holds true for systems theory and neo-institutionalism, even though both theoretical traditions, as mentioned above, run the risk of being empirically insensitive and/or giving structural-deterministic accounts of processes of globalization. The notion of 'observation' provides systems theory with a key concept for phenomenologically reconstructing how the global has become a distinct category in particular observational practices (Stichweh 2019: 517). Likewise, by stressing that the diffusion of cultural ideas depends, at least to a certain degree, on their 'theorization', neo-institutionalist scholars have displayed a great deal of sensitivity to the epistemological preconditions that underpin the diffusion of global cultural goods (Strang and Meyer 1993: 492). A common denominator of the conceptual frameworks employed in this volume may be found in their shared constructivist understanding of global social reality. Globalization depends on models, narratives and categories by which the global/the world is observed. The theories drawn upon allow us to investigate empirically how the global is instantiated in particular practices of observation.

The 'second-order' approach pursued here requires the question of whether practices of observation address global matters conceptually as the *world* or as the *global* to be initially left open. In sociology, the notion of *world* serves to establish a phenomenological lens different from the diffusionist grand narratives of globalization. *World* in this sense can be understood as a projective representation of a global horizon created by a social system using its own means and resources (Stichweh 2000: 234). In historical scholarship, by contrast, universal narratives of globalization are ascribed to the field of *world* history while the 'actor's category approach' (Bell 2013: 257) finds its place in *global* history.

The focus on concrete practices follows attempts to apply insights from sociological practice theory to research on globalization (Epple 2018). It is concrete practices that consolidate social structures through routinization. Applied to the theme of this book, the task is to locate small-scale practices that are constitutive of globalization processes (ibid.: 406). Thus, if one concentrates on practices as 'drivers of globalization', the grand narratives typical of globalization research may be fruitfully backed up by diverse empirical accounts. Such an approach holds the potential to combine a phenomenological notion of the global with structural accounts of global social reality, thus also potentially avoiding the seeming reluctance of micro-sociological approaches to engage in theory (building). Global trends, which at first glance may seem to follow a uniform pattern, can thus be analysed with regard to the possible heterogeneity of their constituent practices. As Epple (ibid.: 404) rightly points out, the praxeological perspective sensitizes to the different practical reference problems of certain global developments.

On the basis of case studies, the contributions to this volume thus reconstruct how the global manifests itself in particular practices of observation. Each chapter questions the master narrative of globalization prevalent in the field in question and adds empirical as well as historical depth to it. The individual contributors retrace why, how and in what contexts different sorts of agents and actors position themselves in relation to the global. They attempt to observe how the global is envisioned by different agents and how the specific vision of the global has informed and shaped discourses. This phenomenological stance allows us both to place the spotlight on the driving forces of globalization and to undermine the dichotomy of the micro/macro divide in globalization research. We attempt to comprehend how globalization unfolds in the eyes of the observer. Hence, the focus is on the actors and agents of globalization (Holzer et al. 2015: 5; Epple 2018: 394).

Empirical inspirations

Assuming such a perspective, Werron and Holzer (2009: 13) highlight the field-specific methods of theorizing and modelling that have proven essential for the disembedding of entire social fields from local, regional and national contexts. This angle has the potential to identify the schemes and models that allow field-specific global publics to be addressed. For instance, in order to understand the globalization of economy, attention has to be paid to the field-

intrinsic modes of observation which have broadened the scope of economic communication and transaction: 'Economic theorization as a condition of the disembedding of the economic field starts with basic schemes such as prices or product categories that allow for the "commensuration" [...] of formerly unique or incomparable products and lead to increasingly complex and abstract models such as market statistics or neoclassical concepts of the market' (ibid.).

In a similar manner, it has been demonstrated how certain narratives have been pivotal for the emergence of a global mode of observation in the world of sports. Narratives of comparative competition and theoretical models such as tables, records and rankings have been the necessary prerequisites for the idea of simultaneous global competition (ibid.: 14). On the basis of these conditions, modern sport has been driven towards the global. At the turn of the 20th century, the 'projective inclusion' (Stichweh 2000: 234) of the global was palpably present, for instance in the decision to refer to the final competition in the baseball season as the 'World Series' (ibid.; Werron 2005). Certain semantic and media conditions were essential for this turn towards the global. For the development of sport into world sport, the 'local limitation of comparative horizons' (Werron 2008: 105) had to be overcome.

Sebastian Conrad has convincingly illustrated how the field of global history may harness the 'second order' approach sketched above in order to critically engage with the master narratives of globalization research. He examines the practical motives and strategies that led the Japanese to adapt the Western temporal regime in the 1870s. He refutes the assumption that the change in the temporal regime was the product of colonial 'top-down imposition' (Conrad 2018: 840) and the direct 'result of [global] transfers and of connections' (ibid.: 842). As the spread of Western clocks and calendars in Japan well before the 19th century proves, mere cultural transfer cannot satisfactorily explain the Japanese adoption of the modern understanding of time at the end of the 19th century. Rather, as Conrad points out, the 'sweeping societal transformations' (ibid.: 842) within Japan must be closely examined in order to find a plausible explanation for the sudden change of temporal mentality. The overcoming of traditional notions of time through modern temporal representation may then be understood as 'one of the ways historical actors responded to a series of fundamental social changes triggered by technological innovation and large-scale mobility, by projects of state building and empire, by capitalist production and global market integration' (ibid.: 847)

In a similar manner, Angelika Epple has demonstrated how a constructivist perspective on the observation- and communication-based 'making of the global' may be combined with an approach that takes into account questions of social agency. Tracing the process of how *Stollwerck Gold* chocolate has become a global brand, Epple investigates in great detail 'how a global visual language has appeared to be reasonable *from a company-internal perspective*' (Epple 2007: 14, emphasis added). In so doing, she not only shows how the global view in modern marketing and advertising strategies depends on the 'invention' of a universal and spatially decontextualized product brand (a 'world brand'), but also, taking a functionalist perspective, demonstrates that the idea of a product brand emerged as a reaction to new forms of communication in the sale process, notably the fact that the personal relationship between the salesman/producer and the consumer had been rendered obsolete by changing economic dynamics in the 19th century. The preconditions for global marketing strategies may thus be studied at a local level, taking into account the motives that have driven a company to detach a product from its regional and national context (ibid.: 19).

We take these empirical studies as inspirations to further investigate how the global manifests itself in empirical practices of observation. Turning to the fields of social work, literature, philosophy, law, anti-Semitism, foreign politics and international diplomacy, revolutionary politics and migration studies, the contributions to this volume do not simply reiterate broad narratives on how the respective fields and the corresponding agents have turned global. Rather, choosing the 'actor's category approach' (Bell 2013: 257), every contribution empirically retraces how the global has emerged as a specific theme in the respective discourse under investigation and how different agents position themselves in relation to this global horizon.

Overview of chapters

Each of this volume's chapters takes a perspective on envisioning the global in a range of cases and from different disciplinary perspectives, namely IR/political science, sociology, Social Work, literary studies and philosophy.

In her chapter, *Gladys Vásquez* discusses the vision of the 'New World' espoused during the first half of the 19th century in Latin America. She asks how diplomats compared the 'old' to the 'new' world, and demonstrates the contradictions inherent in the intra-regional discussions on the reconfigura-

tion of power after the end of formal colonialism. Her chapter shows how the political representatives of the Americas used visions of the 'old' and 'new' worlds in order to establish a new balance of power. Practices of comparison are used as a theoretical approach in global historical research in order to examine the discourses of the American political elites who attempted to create an American Confederation.

Marc Jacobsen and *Tobias Werron* discuss the emergence of modern nationalism as a worldview both particular and comprehensive. They show how anti-Semitism must not only be understood as hostility towards Jews, but also as a lens for interpreting world affairs and a vision of 'how the world should be'. From a perspective of historical sociology, they outline the connections between globalization, nationalism and anti-Semitism between the late 18th and the mid-19th century. Focusing on examples from German discourse, they show how nationalism is not only a reaction to, but also a product of, globalization. In addition, they trace the historical entanglements between nationalism and anti-Semitism.

Assuming a sociological perspective, *Karlson Preuß*' chapter investigates how the discipline of Comparative Law embraced the notion of world law at the turn of the 20th century. Critically engaging with the cosmopolitan aspirations of comparative legal literature, his contribution historically contextualizes the popular idea that legal practice will induce the global harmonization of different jurisdictions. He detects hidden discursive motives and strategies underlying the ostentatious universalism of early-20th-century comparative lawyers. The chapter demonstrates how many legal scholars invoked the idea of a 'world law' in order to justify a politicized model of judicial decision-making.

Sandra Holtgreve and *Cornelia Giebeler* discuss four dimensions of contemporary Social Work discourse's approaches to 'the global'. They ask which understandings of the concept prevail in discussions of social work practice and theory. Their chapter demonstrates how social workers can be understood as world political actors 'from below', and argues that the global serves firstly as a professional rationale for responding to the effects of globalization, secondly as a perspective from which to respond to heterogeneous lifeworlds, thirdly as a common ethical base for the profession, and fourthly as a global arena for professional action. These four dimensions characterize the particular way in which social work can observe the global from the margins of society, making the profession unavoidably pluralist and critical in relation to universalizing arguments in globalization studies.

Yasin Sunca studies the Kurdish case in order to analyse global politico-social and historical processes in the emergence of revolutions, asking how the revolutionaries' observations of their global environment shaped the events in Rojava. From a perspective of historical sociology, he elaborates on three processes: international relations in the struggle for nation-state formation; the international leftist ideology that underlies radical-democratic social transformation; and global geopolitics during the Syrian war, which opened a space for renegotiating regional hierarchies. These three aspects lead Sunca to the central argument that 'the international' was an integral part of the vision that drove the Rojava revolution from its very beginnings.

Mustafa Aksakal observes how global policies and politics are perceived, and replied to, at local, national and regional level as regards the relation between migration and development. The chapter provides an overview of debates on the migration–development nexus in Latin America. Their inherent focus on structuralism in the 1950s, dependency theory in the 1970–80s, neo-structuralism in the 1990s, and *Buen Vivir* from the 2000s on provided key narratives that promoted a particular way of observing the world. In this context, he is able to develop a counter-narrative to hegemonic discussions on the nexus.

Sergei Akopov analyses practices of mapping the global in contemporary Russian politics. His contribution establishes 'loneliness' as a key factor in reading international relations with regard to Russia. Akopov argues that Vladimir Putin has paved the way for a 'politics of loneliness' that informs Russian claims to sovereignty and the right of intervention, while Russia has reinvented itself as a lonely entity in current world politics in the past decade.

Engaging with Russian politics as well, *Aziz Elmuradov* describes the confrontational dynamics between Russia and the European Union as a conflict of competing visions of the world. Analysing contemporary testimonies from Russian political philosophy and political discourse, Elmuradov demonstrates that the idea of a 'multipolar world' underpins current Russian foreign policy. His contribution retraces the geopolitical, historical and civilizational dimensions of the concept of multipolarity.

The final two chapters draw on literary studies and philosophy in order to develop conceptual alternatives to Eurocentric ways of envisioning the world. *Lucy Gasser* focuses on literature as an imaginative practice of worldmaking. Taking a postcolonial perspective, she explores travel narratives from the Global South that challenge the Eurocentrism of imperialist globalization narratives by recentring the global and creating novel horizons for the world. Her

contribution pays tribute to literature from the Global South as a resource for imagining new global centres and pluralistic alternatives to colonial narratives of globalization.

Michael Auer turns to the writings of the philosopher Kostas Axelos in order to propose the notion of 'the planetary' as a conceptual alternative to 'the global'. The chapter reconstructs how Axelos took the planetary paradigm from the philosophical discourse of the Weimar Republic and developed it into a postcolonial alternative to the canonical narratives of European modernity. Opposing the burdened legacy of globalization discourse, Auer honours planetary thinking as an alternative methods of worldmaking that transcends the centrism of Western narratives of modernity.

The present volume in its entirety, and most of its individual chapters, emerged from work carried out within the Research Training Group 'World Politics: The Emergence of Political Arenas and Modes of Observation in World Society' at Bielefeld University. This group's research agenda has two main streams: 'modes of organization' and 'modes of observation'. This distinction reflects the fact that, like all social systems and contexts, modern world politics, like other globalized fields, can and needs to be characterized and analysed in terms of the formation both of distinct structures and of distinct frames of reference. By providing insights into the phenomenological dimension of globalization, the present volume falls squarely into that latter thematic area.

Notes

1   Remarkably, Sassen herself does not seem to fully live up to this call when, for example, she distinguishes between 'the formation of explicitly global institutions and processes', for instance the WTO, on the one hand, and local/national dynamics that involve 'processes that do not necessarily scale at the global level as such yet [...] are part of globalization', on the other hand, thereby suggesting a clear cut between macro-sociological and micro-sociological grasps on globalization (Sassen 2007: 5f.). We argue that the global manifests itself at the same time, yet differently on the micro- and on the macro-level.

2   'The micro/macro distinction reduces the complexity of the description of an object, disregarding reciprocal interdependencies among the levels' (Luhmann 1987: 126).

3   On the relation between this multi-dimensionality and conceptualizations of world society as a social 'whole', see the debate Albert 2007, Robertson 2009 and Albert 2009.