

Content

Acknowledgement	5
Abbreviations.....	12
1. Introduction.....	13
1.1 A Story of Four Chokepoints	13
1.2 Chokepoints Between "Magic Bullets" and "Hyper-Surveillance"	15
1.3 Selecting Brazilian and Portuguese Chokepoints.....	20
1.4 Fieldwork and Research Questions.....	22
1.5 Findings and Theoretical Approaches.....	23
1.6 Structure.....	25
2. Methodological Considerations.....	29
2.1 Ontological Atomism, External Relations, and Formal Comparison.....	31
2.1.1 Comparisons and Case Selection.....	32
2.1.2 Quality Criteria and Data Evaluation.....	33
2.2 Towards a Non-Dogmatic Marxist-Feminist Ontology	34
2.3 Epistemological parameters of Marxist-Feminism	36
2.4 Relational and Incorporated Comparison.....	41
2.5 Quality Criteria of Marxist Feminist Research	43
2.5.1 Reflexive and Democratic Thinking.....	44
2.5.2 Disclosing Power Structures.....	47
2.5.3 Reflexive and Activist Fieldwork	47
2.6 Survey, Sample, and Evaluation of Material.....	52
2.6.1 Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviews.....	53
2.6.2 Reflexions on the Interview Sample.....	55
2.6.3 Content Analysis, Coding and Retroduction	56
2.7 Concluding Points on Methodology.....	57

3. Logistics – "Go They Must"	59
3.1 Logistics in Capitalism.....	60
3.2 Critical Logistics	63
3.3 The "Line" between M-C-M'	65
3.4 The Commodity and its Use-Value.....	66
3.5 Transport as Commodity and Production Site	68
3.5.1 Between Economy's Appendix and (Renewed) Supply Chain Master	69
3.5.2 Regionalism and Changing Trade- and Transport Patterns	72
3.6 Turnover Time and Storage	74
3.7 Fixed and Circulating Capital	76
3.8 Workers' Struggles on the Lines between M-C-M'	80
3.9 Closing Remarks on Logistics	83
 4. A Spatially Embedded History of Chokepoints.....	 84
4.1 A History of Portuguese and Brazilian Ports	85
4.1.1 The Portuguese Empire and the Port of Lisbon	85
4.1.2 Colonialist Expansion: from Lisbon to Santos	90
4.1.3 The Port of Lisbon in the European Periphery	96
4.1.4 Final Remarks on the History of Brazilian and Portuguese Ports	100
4.2 An Economic History of Brazilian and Portuguese Airports	102
4.2.1 Neo/Colonial Traits of Aviation in Brazil	102
4.2.2 The Airport Santos Dumont.....	106
4.2.3 Portuguese Aviation: from Colonialism to Neoliberalism.....	108
4.2.4 Humberto Delgado Airport from Colonial War to Mass Tourism.....	109
4.2.5 Conclusion on Aviation	110
4.3 Final remarks on the History of Portuguese and Brazilian Chokepoints	111
 5. The Social Reproduction Metabolism of Embodied Labour.....	 113
5.1 Connecting Marxist-Feminism to Industrial Relations	113
5.2 The Body from the Lens of Social Reproduction Theory (SRT)	116
5.2.1 Class Position	117

5.2.2	Exploitation	119
5.2.3	Temporality	120
5.2.4	Spatiality	122
5.3	Social Reproduction Metabolism	125
5.4	Exploitation patterns	129
5.4.1	Masculinist Exploitation Patterns	130
5.4.2	Feminine Exploitation Patterns.....	132
5.4.3	Racialised Exploitation Patterns	133
5.4.4	Precarious Exploitation Patterns	134
5.5	Social Reproduction Metabolism as a Tug-Of-War.....	136
5.5.1	Temporal Conflicts of SRM	137
5.5.2	Spatial Conflicts of SRM.....	137
5.6	Concluding Remarks on Embodied Labour and SRM	138
6.	Embodied Segregation and Exploitation at Chokepoints.....	140
6.1	Gendered Segregation in the Maritime and Port Sector.....	141
6.1.1	Intergenerational Male Family Ties in the Maritime Industry.....	141
6.1.2	Masculinist Exploitation Patterns at the Port.....	144
6.1.3	Female Workers within Masculinist Exploitation Patterns.....	146
6.2	Racialised Segregation in the Maritime and Port Sector.....	153
6.2.1	Racialised Exploitation Patterns in the Maritime and Port Sector.....	154
6.2.2	The Racialised History of Portuguese and Brazilian Maritime and Port Labour	155
6.2.3	Cultural Othering and Racialised Gender Biases.....	160
6.2.4	Reclaim Lashing: A Cross-Cutting International Campaign in a Racialised Sector.....	161
6.3	Conclusion: Divisions and Convergences in Port Labour.....	163
6.4	Gendered Segregation in Aviation	164
6.4.1	The Making of the Aerial Workforce	165
6.4.2	Feminine Exploitation Patterns in Aviation.....	166
6.4.3	"In Nobody's World": Invisible Feminised Airport Labour....	168
6.4.4	Organising Obstacles for Embodied Feminised Labour	171
6.4.5	Aviation Labour and the ILO.....	173

6.5	Racialised Exploitation Patterns in Aviation: "White space" Up in the Air	175
6.5.1	FOC in Aviation	176
6.5.2	Racialised Cargo Handling	178
6.5.3	The Exclusive Struggle at the "White Space" in Brazil	178
6.5.4	Portugal's Aeronauts Started a Wave: European Strikes at Ryanair	179
6.6	Concluding Remarks on Segregation in Aviation	180
6.7	Conclusion: Embodied Segregation and Exploitation at Chokepoints	180
7.	Precarious Embodied Exploitation	183
7.1	Health and Safety Conflicts at Chokepoints from a Historical Perspective	184
7.1.1	Health and Safety in the Maritime and Port Sector	185
7.1.2	Health and Safety in the Aviation and Airport Industry	189
7.2	Tasks in Today's Port and Aviation Industry	192
7.3	The Tug of War in the Metabolic Rift at Chokepoints	194
7.3.1	Temporal Conflicts at the Ports in Lisbon and Santos	194
7.3.2	Temporal Conflicts at the Airports Humberto Delgado and Santos Dumont	198
7.3.3	Spatial Conflicts at the Ports in Lisbon and Santos	203
7.3.4	Spatial Conflicts at the Airports Santos Dumont and Humberto Delgado	207
7.4	Concluding Remarks on Precarious Exploitation	211
8.	The State and SRM at Chokepoints	214
8.1	Materialist State Theory	216
8.2	The Capitalist State and Authoritarian Neoliberalism	218
8.3	Authoritarian Practices in a Democratic Context	219
8.4	The Unruly Nature of Chokepoints	223
8.5	Authoritarian Scale Shifts and Up/Downscaling	225
8.6	Trade Unions, State, and Class Struggles	227
8.7	Concluding Remarks on the State	230

9. Chokepoints in Authoritarian (and) Neoliberal States	232
9.1 Remnants and Novelties of Authoritarian Practices.....	233
9.2 The Estado Novo in Brazil and Portugal.....	235
9.2.1 Initial Dockworkers' and Aviation Workers' Unionism in Brazil	238
9.2.2 The Estado Novo in Portugal.....	239
9.2.3 Corporatist Dockworkers' Union Structures and Unorganised Aviation Labour in Lisbon	241
9.3 The 1960s and Mid-1970s: Authoritarian and Illiberal Practices in Brazil and Portugal	242
9.3.1 Oppression of Unionised Santos' Dockworkers.....	243
9.3.2 Aviation Workers and the Battle for Aerobrás	245
9.3.3 Regaining Strength: Brazilian Aviation Workers in the 1970s and 1980s	247
9.3.4 Disruptive Struggles in Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Portugal.....	250
9.3.5 The Battle at Lisbon Airport: Harbingers of the Revolution	251
9.3.6 The Transition of Portugal Towards Democratic Parliamentarism	254
9.4 Authoritarian and Neoliberal Practices in the Brazilian Port and Airport Sector.....	255
9.4.1 Santos' Transformation from a Port City to a City with a Port	257
9.4.2 The Neoliberal Transformation of Port Labour in Santos	258
9.4.3 A Conflict on Temporal Autonomy in Santos	261
9.4.4 Neoliberal Practices Challenging Aviation Labour in Brazil	263
9.4.5 The Fatal Consequences of the Hub-Spoke System	264
9.4.6 The New Neoliberal Wave in Brazil.....	266
9.4.7 The Labour Reform of 2017 in Temporal and Spatial Conflicts	268
9.4.8 The General Strike in April 2017 and the Division of Workers	270
9.5 Authoritarian and Neoliberal Practices in the Portuguese Port and Airport Sector.....	272
9.5.1 Neoliberal Practices in the Port of Lisbon in the 1990s.....	272

9.5.2 Upscaling: from Liverpool to Lisbon: The Founding of the IDC	274
9.5.3 The Port of Lisbon Struggle on a European Scale Against "Self-Handling"	275
9.5.4 The Lisbon Port Struggle on a National Scale	278
9.5.5 Fighting Precarious Exploitation Patterns in the Port of Lisbon	279
9.5.6 International Solidarity – Upscaling of Struggles	281
9.5.7 Aviation Workers in Portugal against Subcontracting	282
9.5.8 Open Skies in the European Union and the Impact on TAP... ..	284
9.5.9 The Struggle for Keeping TAP Public	285
9.6 Conclusion on State, Struggles, and Chokepoints	288
10. Conclusion	290
10.1 Part One: Logistics	291
10.2 Part Two: The Body and Social Reproduction Metabolism	293
10.3 Part Three: The State and Authoritarian Practices	298
10.4 Methodological Reflections on Limitations	300
10.5 A Future of Four Chokepoints	302
11. References	304
12. Appendix	332
Index	339

1. Introduction

It's an industry that's built on silence. And trying to get to the bottom of that stuff is extremely difficult. (UK30 2018: item 14)

1.1 A Story of Four Chokepoints

On November 23, 2010, Portugal is in the midst of a severe economic crisis. At nine o'clock in the evening, Lisbon airport is completely closed. A few stranded passengers are sleeping in the corridor. On a normal evening, taxis would queue to take people into the city centre. Instead, around 200 workers and union officials in red vests are standing in the narrow street in front of Lisbon airport. The red vests of the gathered crowd have a line written on them: "Greve Geral" (General Strike). This picket line marks the beginning of a 24-hour general strike, scheduled to commence the following day. However, it appears that members of the fire prevention staff and other categories of airport personnel have already vacated their posts, refusing to work. The general strike is the first since the 1980s. It is perceived as a revival of a tradition that had seemingly become a relic of the past. Four further general strikes will be held in the following three years, during which workers will challenge austerity measures such as privatisations, wage cuts, and a general worsening of working conditions and precarity. On the evening in which the strike is taking place, some workers at the picket line appear to be taken by surprise. One of them tells me that, at least in the last 15 years, colleagues would go home when they went on strike. However, on this particular day, it is different. Several workers remain at the airport and proceed to construct a picket line, utilising vests, flags, whistles, and chanting slogans. In the following 13 years, the airport, the national Portuguese airline TAP, and the aviation industry on a global scale encountered unprecedented levels of turmoil, a situation that was further exacerbated by the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. When viewed from the perspective of the beginning of the general strike in November 2010, as seen from the vantage point of Summer 2023, this modest picket line appears to have been a harbinger of the significant events that were to follow.

Exactly two years later, in November 2012, on the afternoon of the third general strike in Portugal since the onset of the economic crisis, a joint demonstration was held by social movement activists and trade unions for the first time. I conduct an interview with the newly elected leader of the Lisbon dockworkers' union SETC (later SEAL), António Mariano, a former port instructor. The Portuguese government is in the process of introducing a new law that is intended to dismantle the closed-shop system in the ports. This development

has prompted a series of protests, with demonstrators gathering outside the local café in which we are talking. The protestors are predominantly comprised of young, precarious, and partially unemployed workers, students, and thousands of members of the two trade union federations CGTP-IN and UGT. For the first time, the dockers' union, which is independent of these federations, took part in the general strike and demonstration. You can hear them later. They cursed and used firecrackers during the march. And they are wearing yellow vests with a writing on the back that says: "Don't fuck my job". I ask António if they have a picket line at the port to ensure nobody works while they are at the demonstration. And he responds: "We are 300 workers, and all of us are here." He does not expect anybody else capable of doing the work instead. However, the new port law will permit the installation of private labour agencies within the port, often employing workers with limited or no experience. Following a period of general strikes and significant port strikes against labour agencies in 2014 and 2016, conflicts have arisen with new workers, resulting in the necessity for picket lines. Additionally, for the first time, dockworkers have experienced confrontations with police. The struggle over the port labour law has also spread to other Portuguese ports, including Setúbal in the south and Leixões in the north.

In July 2017, a general strike occurred in Brazil for the first time in decades. The following year, in March 2018, I encountered Selma Balbino, a former black airport worker, at the trade union office of the SNA. This office was located approximately a twenty-minute Uber journey from Santos Dumont Airport, the first Brazilian civil aviation airport. Her concerns regarding several recent accidents dominated the conversation with Selma. This included the precarious working conditions, the anger about the fake government audits, and the government's inability to intervene in unsafe working conditions, rather than the blockade of the airport during the general strike, particularly caught my interest. Brazil experienced a severe economic crisis a few years after the crisis afflicted Portugal. This period was characterised by the impeachment of the PT president, Dilma Rousseff, and the subsequent rise to power of the conservative Michel Temer. In the days leading up to my meeting with Selma, the city councillor, a black woman, Marielle Franco was assassinated by a former police officer, precipitating widespread mass demonstrations in major Brazilian cities. These events profoundly impacted Selma. Whilst she was engaged in discussing fights for safer and better working conditions, she also reflected on the increase of hate speech on social media, the *ódio* (pt. for hate), mirrored in increasing attacks on black, trans, and femme representing people.

In the same month as the meeting with Selma, a strike of dockworkers occurred in Santos, the largest port in South America in terms of space. The protest involved several hundred dockworkers marching in the sun, accompanied by a truck with giant megaphones and a group with drums. The workers ex-

pressed dissatisfaction with the trade union leadership, with the office of the trade union president being occupied not only by the president himself but also by other former and current trade union officials. The industrial conflict, it can be argued, emerged due to a change in the labour law, which enforced shorter shifts with a mandatory break time of 11 hours. This apparent improvement in labour standards subsequently led to a strike, but the question remains: how did this come to pass? A few days later, I attended the workers' strike meeting, where a fierce debate ensued among the workers concerning the continuation of the struggle.

This thesis is informed by the spatially embedded histories of these four chokepoints and their workers' occupational health and safety struggles. These struggles function as the central epistemological vantage point from which theoretical and operational considerations derive.

1.2 Chokepoints Between "Magic Bullets" and "Hyper-Surveillance"

In the context of a globally expanding and interconnected transport industry, chokepoints such as ports and airports have attracted scholarly and activist attention. It has been suggested that containerisation and the globalisation of production transformed the logistics sector into a space of enormous power for labour and social struggles. As outlined by Jake Alimahomed-Wilson and Immanuel Ness in the introduction to their edited collection *Choke Points* (2018), critical hubs within logistics networks can become the target of occupations or strikes, resulting in economic blockages. The emergence of internationally connected value chains, coupled with crisis-driven class struggles over the distribution of wealth, has led to an increased significance of chokepoints in the context of trade unions and social movement activism. In contrast, other scholars have drawn attention to the fact that chokepoints appear to function as laboratories for the implementation of surveillance, control, and security measures by companies and states. Furthermore, they regard them as terrains in which national labour law has been modified or undermined. Hubs of global logistics networks are subject to stringent regulations, including security checks, militarisation, camera surveillance, and in some cases, the right to dismiss employees without notice for security reasons. This potentially undermines the possibility of transformative, disruptive action in these nodes.¹

1 See Edna Bonacich and Jake B. Wilson (2008): "Getting the goods"; Theo Notteboom and Jean-Paul Rodrigue (2009): "The future of containerization"; Craig Martin (2013): "Shipping Container Mobilities, Seamless Compatibility, and the Global Surface of Logistical Integration"; Deborah Cowen (2014): "The deadly life of logistics"; Neil M. Coe (2014):

The present thesis puts forward a third position, namely that the concept of chokepoints ought to be regarded as anything but a "magic bullet" for labour struggles, or as overregulated authoritarian spaces within which such battles are impossible to fight. In contrast, the focus is on workers' views of their workplaces, which are considered to be precarious and, consequently, dangerous spaces. The Social Reproduction Metabolism (SRM) framework is utilised to elucidate the nexus between precarity and the jeopardy to health and safety, including the very threat to the survival of workers. This analysis unveils a multifaceted dynamic, where precarity and risks for health and safety are intricately intertwined, forming a double-edged sword.

Precarity has been shown to simultaneously inhibit and facilitate trade union and labour activism at chokepoints. Consequently, chokepoints cannot be viewed as "natural" shortcuts to organise or advocate for enhanced wages, living, and working conditions in isolation. However, the organisation of workers can be facilitated when activists and trade unions take health and safety risks and precarity into consideration. Their struggles at chokepoints can move beyond the regional scale of the workplace and affect the national and even transnational state apparatuses and economic processes. There is a *potential* power, which is buried under fatal accidents, physical and mental congestions, disorganisation processes, and a general threat of a rift in the Social Reproduction Metabolism of the workers' labouring bodies.

Moreover, the Social Reproduction Metabolism lens, which is predicated on a materialist analysis of embodied labour, facilitates the analysis of the role of different state apparatuses in governing chokepoints and work via increasingly authoritarian practices. From the vantage point of general elections, economic development, and democratic rights, the two countries Brazil and Portugal appear to be diverging examples of Authoritarian Neoliberalism. From the perspective of Social Reproduction Metabolism, both states and their transport industries demonstrate parallels in the escalating exploitation of workers, both physically and mentally. The labour struggles of workers at chokepoints are characterised by dual aspects: firstly, the refusal to continue subjecting their bodies to the conditions imposed by the transport industry; and secondly, the challenge to the absence of welfare, legal protection, and the suppression of strikes by the state.

This third position aims to enhance the discourse surrounding chokepoints and labour struggles from a theoretical, methodological, and empirical perspective. The ontology employed is Marxist-Feminist in approach, with a reflexive and activist methodology, and a relational and incorporated compari-

"Missing Links"; David Jaffee (2016): "Kink in the intermodal supply chain"; Peter Cole (2018): "Dockworker Power"; Jake Alimahomed-Wilson and Immanuel Ness (2018): "Choke Points"; Brett Neilson et al. (2018): "Logistical Asia. The labour of making a world region" Laleh Khalili (2020): "Sinews of Trade and War".

son. Materialist theories on logistics, the body, and the state are also utilised, and will be specified below.

Statistics from the World Bank and IATA demonstrate that chokepoints are central to the global economy. There has been a substantial increase in international transport since 1970. Aerial passenger transport is nine times higher than in the 1970s, with approximately 4.46 billion passengers arriving and departing worldwide in 2019.² Freight transport via air has increased by more than 400 per cent in terms of both volume and distance.³ As IATA (2019) points out, the time-sensitive commodities transported via air account for less than one per cent of global freight volume, yet represent one-third of global commodity value. As passenger and cargo numbers grow, so too does the lack of airport capacities and infrastructures. This has led to a growing number of economic bottlenecks. Globally operating institutions such as IATA (2019) are lobbying states and local governments to invest in airports and stop unjustified charges against airlines or "unnecessary sustainability investments" (IATA 2024: 36). However, it is evident that there have been apparent backdrops with the financial crisis from 2018 onwards, which later conflated with the global health crisis triggered by the novel corona virus (Covid-19) (IATA 2020: 11). Historically, the global aviation sector has never been affected so strongly, not even after the security crisis triggered by 9/11 in the United States. The available data indicates a 60.32 per cent decrease in passenger transport between 2019 and 2020.⁴ In the context of a pandemic, airports turn into global super spreaders. Speed is the business of aviation with severe advantages for tourism and the capitalist economy but disadvantages for global health (Harris/Keil 2018: 173).

While speed is the business of aviation, volume is the business of maritime trade. It is estimated that between 80 and 90 per cent of global commodity volume is transported by ships across the sea. Sea trade grew by more than five times between 1970 and 2019. In 2024, more than 109,000 commercial ships crossed oceans and passed rivers worldwide with a capacity of 2.35 billion dwt (UNCTAD 2025). Despite the focus of recent studies on containerisation as part of the "logistics revolution", it is evident that container freight accounts for a mere 14 per cent of maritime trade, ranking third behind oil tankers (28 per cent) and dry bulk carriers (43 per cent), which dominate the global sea transport sector (UNCTAD 2024). A parallel can be drawn between the situation of ports and that of airports. While demand for capacity at ports is increasing, states and local governments are not adequately responding to the

2 World Bank Air transport, passengers carried: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IS.AIR.PSGR> [Access: 20.02.2021].

3 World Bank air transport, freight: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IS.AIR.GOOD.MT.K1> [Access: 09.01.2021].

4 Airports and airlines reported a decline in revenues of between 98 and 89 per cent for the year 2020 (IATA 2020: 12).

needs of globally operating companies, resulting in ports becoming severe bottlenecks for regional, national, and global economies.

The term "chokepoint" was initially coined in the context of warfare, where the organisation and orchestration of violent action are of central importance. In the military definition, chokepoint means the central passage, for instance, a tunnel or a bridge that the antagonist army passes. Destruction or blockade cuts the antagonist force from its path. However, a chokepoint can also be considered a metaphor for a violent physical interaction with a body. To choke someone means to strangle the neuralgic spot between the head and body as a threat to interrupt the oxygen and blood circulation. The body in question can be compelled to relinquish its resistance or be eradicated. Embodied labour is exhibited at chokepoints, for instance, in the physical materiality of workers, who at a certain juncture may potentially "choke" the economy and the state through stoppages and blockades. Moreover, transport sector workers, and to a greater extent during the period of the pandemic, are themselves at the "chokepoint": They experience a sense of being overwhelmed by physical and mental congestion, fatal accidents, or exposure to viruses, compounded by dismissals.

In the contemporary discourse on chokepoints and the "logistics revolution", the definition of the term has remained largely consistent with its military origins. However, it has been contextualised within the broader framework of economic, political, and social interaction, as well as power relations. In contemporary scholarship, particularly within business studies, economic geography, and industrial relations, the term "chokepoint" is frequently employed to denote the critical vulnerabilities of the global value chain. "... [T]he fact that global production depends on extended supply lines means that these lines can be cut" (Bonacich/Wilson 2005: 74). The interdependence of global production on supply chains is related to the increase of cross-border trade in recent decades, as well as the growing role of exports and imports in comparison to domestic trade (Fischer et al. 2010: 8-9). This phenomenon has been explained by several authors from different disciplines and theoretical approaches. One such explanation is the introduction of the container, which standardised global trade, minimised transport costs, and thus allowed the expansion of cross-border circulation of goods. This development was initiated by the "logistics revolution". (Bonacich 2003; Levinson 2006; Notteboom and Rodrigue 2009; Bensman and Jaffee 2016). Given that containers are primarily transported by sea, a significant proportion of literature addressing chokepoints categorises ports as sensitive global circulation areas. In today's global trade landscape, a significant proportion of ports function as pivotal intermodal transshipment hubs. These critical logistics nodes facilitate the seamless transfer of substantial volumes of goods, typically stowed in containers, between various modes of transportation. This process, as outlined by Jaffee (2016: 3), involves the intermodal transfer of goods from

sea to land and vice versa, underscoring the importance of these ports as crucial nodes in the global supply chain network. In critical logistics, ports are regarded as "the space in-between national territories" and "a space of transition, a three-dimensional zone subject to specialised government" at sea (Cowen 2010: 604).

Not only ports but also airports are central chokepoints for circulation. Globalisation is not limited to the production of goods but has extended to services. One factor for this process is the rapid development and expansion of the Internet. Online platforms are used to find workers for various temporary services (Kassem 2024). Additionally, as transport costs have declined, commuting has become less expensive, too, which allows requesting services increasingly from all over the world (Wöhl/Lichtenberger 2021).⁵ Aeroplanes convey not only passengers and workers but also perishable, light, and high-value goods. Hence, airports exhibit the same characteristics as those described above for ports: They, too, are intermodal transshipment points, as both passengers and goods are transferred to other modes of transport, and in the majority, they also represent transit zones between nations. Airspace and the air border also delineate "a space of transition, a three-dimensional zone subject to specialised government", as quoted from Deborah Cowen above.

Chokepoints are places where historically and spatially embedded infrastructural circumstances slow down commodity circulation and endanger exchange value realisation. In the Chatham House Report from Rob Bailey and Laura Wellesley (2017: iv), 14 global maritime, coastal, and inland chokepoints are analysed that at that time potentially threatened the supply of critical fertilisers and food. Those crops, such as maize, wheat, rice, and soybeans, feed 2.8 billion people worldwide. Only five years later, several of these chokepoints, such as the Suez Canal or the Black Sea, that were reported about, have become interrupted due to geopolitical tensions and military conflicts (UNCDAT 2024).

An essential feature of global chokepoints is the lack of alternative transport routes to avoid any danger of disruption (Bailey/Wellesley 2017: viii). Besides rising prices, interruptions could lead to severe hunger crises in different parts of the world. The report states that the chokepoint risks increase due to climate change and rising sea levels (ibid. v). Additionally, the new economic crisis from 2018 increased political and economic tensions in and between imperialist states. Those tensions lead to a further decline in globalised trade, protectionism, regionalism, and socio-political struggles in logistics (UNCTAD 2020: xi). Not only activists and trade unions but also states and companies might use critical chokepoints and their "logistical power" to enforce tariffs or political concessions (Gregson et al. 2017; Farrell/Newman 2020).

5 See for the impact of Covid-19, for instance, on care workers in circular migration Leiblfinger et al. (2020) and Lichtenberger/Wöhl (2021).