

Island Enclaves: Offshoring, Creative Governance and Subnational Island Jurisdictions. By Godfrey Baldacchino. Kingston, ON and Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010. 301 pp. US\$32.95 paperback. ISBN: 978773537439.

Covering almost three-quarters of the planet's surface, ocean space has always played an important role in societies for sustenance, livelihoods, commerce, and culture. The fact that most of the world's population lives within 200 km of a coast demonstrates our intimate connection to the sea. Yet, as a voluminous medium of constant movement and change, the ocean is a difficult place to govern or enforce regulations. These physical properties complicate questions of management, responsibility, resource allocation, sovereignty, and security.

One way of wrestling with such complex issues is by examining how they play out in subnational (or non-sovereign) island jurisdictions (SNIJs): a category of analysis suggested by Godfrey Baldacchino in this timely book. By reviewing mainland/big state versus island/small state relations as they affect SNIJs, Baldacchino examines a broad range of strategies and technologies of creative governance that have taken offshoring to new heights in the 21st century.

Take ocean governance: as small island states know only too well, ocean space still maintains contested legal regimes, with an assemblage of oddly striated jurisdictions, extending progressively offshore from territorial waters, the contiguous one, exclusive economic zones, extended continental shelves, and ending in the high seas or international waters. Each of these fringes establishes a gradient of ownership and liability. Like Baldacchino's islands, ocean spaces represent exemplars of 'fractal sovereignty', 'ambiguous zones, and 'non-spaces'. Efforts to territorialize the sea simply further extend the terrestrial boundaries of coastal nations, imposing fixed grids on this seething expanse. But, managing the ocean thus – as a static space – has led to much ambiguity regarding sovereignty, security, management, and responsibility. Consider the transboundary environmental degradation in the form of trash gyres: diffuse collections of garbage that gather under a migrating atmospheric high-pressure area in open waters. The complexity of dealing with an issue of this scale, its production, legality, and spatial distribution due to winds and currents, makes it an extremely challenging environmental problem. Such gyres embody ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity and chaos, like the very ocean that hosts them.

Despite the evident land/sea binary, the juridical enclaves of the islands discussed in Baldacchino's book share many commonalities with spaces of ocean governance such as a 'fuzziness' of sovereignty, contestable borders, and a long history of mainland subjugation. But they also share the potential for alternative modes of 'viable development'. While the materiality of capitalism demands that ocean space be treated as either a surface of transport or the location of exploitable resources, the obvious maritimism of the world's small island states and territories demands a more comprehensive concern with, and stewardship of, the sea. The degradation of the ocean by marine debris – and the equally galling crisis in fish stocks worldwide – necessitates new legal, political, and social understandings. Perhaps, by better aligning our aquatic imaginaries with the physical fluidities of ocean space, and seeing islands as objects of becoming, we can envisage policies that reduce trash production, prevent ocean pollution, and restore the ocean's health.

Katherine G. Sammler
The University of Arizona, USA

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