

~~blue carbon trading opportunities. Then again, perhaps it would take another book to adequately explain all the nuances of the blue economy.~~

~~On the plus side, the last chapter does make reference to the degrowth movement that is gathering strength in Europe and North America. This social movement advocates equitable downscaling of production and consumption that will reduce societies' throughput of energy and raw materials. Renouncing economic growth in the North, say the proponents, would not only allow humanity to stay within the ecological limits of the planet but also contribute to restoring global social justice. In practice, degrowth is compatible with many grassroots projects already happening on islands that are adopting elements of the green economy model such as: community owned renewable energy systems, self provisioning through organic food production; local currencies or bartering; housing cooperatives, waste reduction and reuse initiatives.~~

~~The coda to this book wonders if readers might be left feeling a little dazed and confused. They should not be as the authors have achieved their aim of explaining a complex subject using a strongly interdisciplinary approach based on environmental science and by engaging readers to constantly question the diversity of opinions that exists. The authors pose a final question. Can the green economy offer us genuine hope for the future, or is it just a utopian dream or a passing fad? Like the authors, I do believe that individual behaviour matters. It is the daily decisions that each of us takes that can help make the world a better place. Whether we try to consume less, reduce our carbon emissions, recycle our waste, or purchase green goods and services, it can all make a difference. Although our individual actions might seem trivial, they are now being multiplied as evidenced by the growing number of island communities around the world from Barbados to Hawai'i that are actively embracing the green economy, and the Seychelles who are at the vanguard of promoting the blue economy.~~

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David A. Rezvani (2014). *Surpassing the sovereign state: The wealth, self-rule and security advantages of partially independent territories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 374pp+index. ISBN: 978-0-19-968849-4. Hbk. Also available as e-book. £60.00.

The concept of a “partially independent territory” (PIT) is that of a nationally distinct polity that shares and divides some sovereign powers with a sovereign (core) state (p. 82). As such, it combines notions of elusive nationalism with the more positivist assessment of a division of powers. The book’s point of departure is an observation that is rigorously backed by statistical results: many of the inhabitants of the world’s sovereign states are poorer, less secure, and less stable when compared to the residents of these PITs. And this is the irony of the 21st century: one where the international system is arguably driven by and organized in terms of sovereign states; whereas (some of) these sovereign states themselves have taken initiatives that have spawned subnational units that operate with some autonomy yet without full sovereignty. This is the new terrain of the changing nature of the international system that secures core focus in this text.

Puerto Rico is the PIT that gets the most detailed treatment in this fascinating book: it is, according to the author, the world's largest island PIT by population, and the one jurisdiction that has stretched, and still continues to challenge, the capacity for creative governance amongst US lawmakers. Other cases that benefit from considerable scrutiny include Scotland, Catalonia, Hong Kong and Iraqi Kurdistan. All four entities have been embroiled of late in initiatives that manifest their flexing political muscle, with the option of full independence a tantalizing (but according to Rezvani, not necessarily the smartest) prospect.

The book contains 10 chapters, organized in three sections, followed by four rich data appendices. Chapter 1 makes the case for PITs as distinct entities that merit being studied on their own terms, if anything because of their proven effectiveness in securing political and economic benefits for their citizens as well as for their core metropolitan patron state. Chapter 2 draws on the political science literature about integrationalism, federalism and (neo)-functionalism, in order to cogently explain the origins and enduring existence of PITs. Chapters 3-5 review in detail what are the mechanisms that make self-determination possible, with a special focus on territories that are, or have been for some time, under the purview of the United Kingdom (such as Bermuda) and the United States (such as Puerto Rico). Rezvani offers an interesting set of data in his appendices, including a listing of 66 PITs with details of the dates when they secured their autonomous status. (The oldest PITs are the Channel Islands, Guernsey and Jersey: autonomous according to Rezvani since 1744; but possibly since 1204.) Autonomy is not always credible: the author uses Chapter 6 to expose and discuss cases of 'sham federacy' whereby a supposedly autonomous status may be none other than a form of neo-colonialism. Chapter 7 foregrounds the role and emergence of PITs by looking at the historical emergence, strengths and weaknesses of sovereign states, culminating in the contemporary post-Westphalian regime. Having thus profiled SS and PITs, Chapter 8 engages in some interesting comparative quantitative number-crunching (while controlling for population), confirming the superior performance of the PITs. Chapter 9 discusses the historical conditions that have led to the disappearance of some PITs (including the securing of full independence or the absorption into symmetrical federalist regimes as in Canada and the US). Chapter 10 wraps up the argument, reaffirming the case that PITs make viable and attractive alternatives to full independence.

This book makes a bold claim: that it is the first book that systematically discusses the existence, origins, maintenance, and occasional termination, of partially independent territories in international and comparative politics. Had the author acknowledged more of the growing literature about subnational island jurisdictions (SNIJs), such a statement would have been placed in better scientific and historical perspective. Indeed, there is no reference to the manner in which geography, and islandness in particular, facilitates the generation of both specific national distinctiveness as well as a physical circumstance that, coupled with distance from the core state, demands local administrative machinery that, given adroit political leadership, can very well advance with time to secure autonomy status.

As with all political classifications, Rezvani has had to determine at what point a jurisdiction is no longer fully independent. He has chosen to classify two European continental microstates of Monaco, and Liechtenstein (but not, San Marino, Andorra or the Holy See) as well as the three Pacific 'Compact' states of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, all with full UN membership, as partially independent, fielding the argument that these entities have, possibly irrevocably, entered into legal 'mutuality commitments'

whereby they have devolved some of their sovereign powers to other, larger states (p. 90). I disagree with this classification: the devolution of power is in itself an act of sovereignty (and may, *in extremis*, be reversed); moreover, with Rezvani's own benchmark, all 28 member states of the European Union would therefore be PITs, given the extent of devolved powers to Brussels. In any case, these scholarly debates are illustrative of the fuzzy nature of sovereignty: the very condition that makes PITs possible, and even attractive.

Rezvani proposes 66 PITs (of which 43 are islands, or on islands). He may have inadvertently left out other examples that also benefit from *de jure* or *de facto* asymmetrical (and not, as Rezvani argues, symmetrical) federalism. These include the provinces of Canada (notably Quebec, a recognized nation) and the components of various other federal-like systems around the world that have some degree of autonomy and executive power – as with the region of Crete (Greece) or the local authority of Shetland (Scotland, UK). In the case of the latter, one of the complications of (sub)nationalism is that jurisdictions may be nested into each other, living with different layers of jurisdiction. Then there are various other cases which the author deems to be “modern colonies” (p. 92) where full constitutional powers are nested in the metropolitan power. I am troubled by this categoric claim since tensions between, say, local elected politicians and the Governor appointed by the Queen (in the case of the UK examples) suggest all but unidirectional power dynamics. Even tiny Pitcairn, the UK’s last dependency in the Pacific, mounted a resolute charge against Britain’s right to meddle in its internal affairs during its child sex abuse trials (The claim was, I believe, too hurriedly dismissed by the judges.)

Compared to the world’s great powers, PITs have small populations. Most of them have relatively small economies. They do not engage in war. Some may therefore think that they do not matter. Such observers should think again. (p. 300).

Rezvani is right: as subnational jurisdictions, PITs are not just here to stay, challenging the presumed hegemony of the world sovereign state system. They provide some engrossing lessons about why autonomy *without* full independence and statehood is a better option in an increasingly uncertain world.

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~~Kerstin J. S. Werle (2014). *Landscape of peace: Mechanisms of social control on Lamotrek Atoll, Micronesia*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer. 235pp. ISBN: 978-3-658-05831-9 (pbk), US\$50; 978-3-658-05832-6 (ebk), US\$42.~~

~~Kerstin Werle’s ethnography of Lamotrek Atoll in Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia, unravels a rich cultural tapestry that draws on previous anthropological studies of this low coral island. The published PhD thesis is part of a wider interdisciplinary project aiming at a holistic understanding of Lamotrek society at the dawn of the 21st century. The project anchors itself on the influence of globalization on ethnopsychologies, personhood, and belonging. The choice of field location is premised on the idea that “the traditionally mobile Micronesians very quickly become adaptive to new cultural spaces” (p. 1). The theme of~~