Sanya City, Hainan Province, China

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Distance matters:

Near islands, remote islands, and the effect of distance on island development

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ABSTRACT

With a population of just 9 million, Hainan is China's smallest province. It is also China's southernmost province. This presents the island with a unique opportunity to offer specialized national services that speak to its natural competitive assets: its islandness, its tourism potential, its proximity to the equator—significant for rocket launch facilities—and its location as the natural gateway to the South China Sea. At the same time, and in spite of its 30-km strait from mainland China, and the difficulties of constructing a fixed link over the typhoon-prone Hainan Strait, Hainan has the opportunity to operate as

a 'near' island, pursuing niche development goals supported by Beijing; while enhancing its jurisdictional status and leveraging this in order to consolidate its status as a province supporting strong economic growth.

This exploratory chapter offers a first insight into how distance from the mainland (and from central government) impacts on an island's ability to determine its own destiny. It does so by adopting a global perspective and examining the manner in which near islands and remote islands have (a) nurtured different levels of jurisdictional status and autonomy; and (b) used that jurisdictional resource, where available, to chart their own development path, in ways that may be similar, complementary, different, and outright in opposition to mainland ambitions and plans. In these ongoing relationships, remote islands have a much stronger likelihood of departing from mainland agendas than near islands.

INTRODUCTION: PROFILING ISLAND DEVELOPMENT

What is the profile of island development and how does it differ, if at all, from that of its 'mainland'? This is an important question to ask of all those inhabited islands that are members of larger political units, be they other islands or mainlands. Hence, in the case of countries that either are, or include, archipelagos, there will be a relationship between mainland (or main island) and smaller island/s which can be reflected in specific economic and development approaches.

In this chapter, we will review if, and the extent to which, the physical distance of an island from its contiguous mainland creates conditions for both self-government as well as for a development trajectory distinct from mainland blueprints and ambitions. It explores situations where islands will deviate from the development plans proposed by their central governments, and will wield the tools of governance at their disposal to confront such a development agenda or else to try and shift it in order to best meet their interests. While doing so, we acknowledge earlier work in island and small state studies that has established the significance of geographical location and accessibility as a "key determinant of economic performance" of such entities (Armstrong & Read, 2014, p. 367; also McElroy & Lucas, 2014); however, here we extend this analysis beyond economics, to the realm of governance and political autonomy.

Since we are dealing with discrete islands, and not necessarily with islands that are in themselves political units, one challenge of such an investigation deals with the absence of official and reliable data. This chapter restricts its analysis to island units of larger countries that enjoy a regional and/or juridical identity, enough for them to appear as discrete units in national statistics. Luckily, since most islands that are remote from their mainlands are also distinct political, and therefore statistical, units—singly or collectively, as an archipelago—then, the problem of missing or poor data is less severe.

The chapter reserves a special focus on Hainan, the southernmost province of China and also its smallest province in terms of land area. For centuries, Hainan was part of Guangdong province, but in 1988 this resource-rich tropical region became a separate province. This jurisdictional identity creates an additional layer of administration that provides further influence and interest in determining the development trajectory of this island.

One example of this development trajectory is the Wenchang Satellite Launch Centre on Hainan, which is the Chinese rocket launch facility closest to the equator—and therefore the most fuel-efficient. The Centre began operations in June 2016 with the inaugural flight of the Long March 7 rocket (China Daily, 2016).

Additionally, in April 2018, a plan was announced to turn Hainan into a free trade zone by 2020, and transform the entire island into a free trade port by the year 2025. This would allow foreign and multinational companies to set up regional and international headquarters in Hainan. Thus, the whole island of Hainan will become China's largest free trade zone.

DEATH OF DISTANCE?

The globalization of consumer tastes, the rapid dispersion of information and communication technologies, and the relentless flow of information has led to arguments about the end, or death, of geography. In today's "global village" (McLuhan & Powers, 1992), there is a definitive compression and convergence of time and space: a consequence of things becoming easier and cheaper to communicate faster (Harvey, 1989; Janelle, 1969, p. 359; Ohmae, 1991). This concept has become a fashionable narrative in business and marketing circles, thanks to improvements in transportation, hypermobile finance, footloose capital, and media technologies. The actual physical site of things blurs immaterial, so much immigration is circular rather than unidirectional, and even the location of physical customers becomes irrelevant to their ability to receive seamless service from their preferred suppliers (Martin, 1996; Morgan, 2004; O'Brien, 1992).

And yet, the "death of distance" (Cairncross, 1997) has been grossly exaggerated. A place-based, protectionist surge has emerged as an alternative political narrative, confronting the neoliberal doctrine (Giddens, 1999). Ethnonationalism has galvanized secessionist politics (Connor, 2018); and place branding seeks to profile specific locations, including islands, for competitive advantage (Baldacchino & Khamis, 2018; Papadopoulos, 2004).

In this chapter, we argue that distance remains relevant also in the field of island governance; to the extent that an island's development agenda is significantly determined by the effects of distance from the locus of its central government. We opine that physical remoteness suggests that a subnational island unit has more jurisdic-

tional autonomy, at law and in practice, to determine its own future. Closeness to the heartland of the country reduces such room for manoeuvre, as well as restricts access to the governance tools that would be required for the island's citizens to legitimately pursue any development route that is different from that proposed and driven by the central government.

We are not making a case for geographical determinism. This has been argued earlier in relation to island studies generally: distance, like islandness, "does not cause anything" (Baldacchino, 2013a, p. 16). However, geographical circumstance may act like an intervening variable: it can contour and condition physical and social events in distinct, and distinctly relevant, ways (Baldacchino, 2004, p. 278). In this chapter, the issue of political status is singled out for scrutiny from this list of "events". We specifically argue here that the logistical challenges involved in administering islands remotely from mainlands (or larger islands) obliges that such remote islands be granted a modicum of political autonomy as a measure of administrative expediency and pragmatism.

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Thus: how far one can go—in terms of a specific, island-driven, development agenda—may really have something to do with how far one is. There is, as yet, no economic model for constitutionalism, but this chapter may be a useful start. And islands lend themselves as "natural experiments" to such an analysis, given that there are ample examples of both near and remote islands at different distances from mainlands (Diamond & Robinson, 2010).

REMOTENESS IN ISLAND STUDIES

For those studying islands, it is the natural scientists that are likely to quickly recognize a causal relationship between remoteness and island life. An increasing distance of islands from mainlands, and therefore from the main source of species pools, leads to reduced rates of new species immigrating to the island, impacting on the right-sloping curve of the MacArthur and Wilson species-area relationship (MacArthur & Wilson, 1963, 1967 [2001]).

Economists have also reviewed the dependency of outlying islands in terms of their continued reliance on trade with their former metropolitan countries (rather than neighbouring states), even though such countries may be located very far away. While this may sound irrational, those island economies whose close political linkages to

former colonial powers survived the transition to the postcolonial era have been the ones to experience higher per capita levels of economic prosperity (Bertram, 2004).

But how does distance, or the lack thereof, impact on governance and the "resource-fulness of jurisdiction" (Baldacchino & Milne, 2000)? First, there are obvious logistical challenges involved in trying to administer remote islands remotely. It becomes quickly clear that an executive body on site is needed for effective government in such locations. This executive experience of self-determination is often (but not always) sticky and irreversible, and paves the way to claims and requests for even greater autonomy by the island from its mainland (though often stopping short of sovereignty) (Prinsen et al., 2017; Rezvani, 2014).

Let us start by identifying various islands that could lend themselves to our analysis. We exclude unitary island states (Barbados, Cyprus, Iceland, Nauru, …), all land-locked states (Botswana, Luxembourg, Nepal, Paraguay, …) and the many coastal states that do not have island units or whose island units do not constitute inclusive and self-contained politically administrative units (municipalities, prefectures, provinces, regions).

ISLANDS, PARTS OF ARCHIPELAGOS

When dealing with jurisdictions that are made up exclusively of a group of islands, one island typically stands out as the 'mainland': indeed, in some archipelagos, such as Orkney or Shetland, the largest or most populated island is called 'Mainland'. This may be the island boasting the administrative capital of the country and/or the island with the main (international) airport and seaport. It, however, does not have to be the island with the largest land area (as in such cases as the Bahamas or the Maldives).

Tensions can be quite pronounced in the smallest archipelagic states, with two-island configurations that may even be constitutionally recognized. Take the case of St. Kitts-Nevis (174 km^2; population: 55,000), where Nevis (93 km^2; 11,000) actually held a referendum on secession from St. Kitts in 1998 and which was lost by a mere 200 votes (Premdas, 2001). Or consider Antigua and Barbuda (440 km^2; 82,000) where secessionist tendencies on Barbuda (160 km^2; 1,100) have flared when, in the wake of the terrible destruction wrought by Hurricane Irma in 2017, the central government has proposed a major private hotel development on Barbuda which would challenge the commonwealth-held land tenure system long practised on that island (Parker, 2017). In the Malta archipelago (316 km^2; 440,000), the sister island of Gozo (67 km^2; 31,000) enjoys a coordinating ministry and is recognized as a region for electoral purposes but otherwise lacks jurisdiction. There have been only two, Gozo-based, political parties contest national elections in Malta since 1921: and this happened only once, in the 1947 election. Would a proposed tunnel linking the two islands snuff out any aspirations for some kind of formalized autonomy (Baldacchino, 2007b)?

Not all archipelagos are small island states. Still in the Pacific, we find Japan (378,000 km^2; 127 million), the world's second most populated archipelagic state (after Indonesia). Its largest island, Honshu, at 228,000 km^2, is the world's second most populated island (after Java, also in Indonesia). It is the home of the capital city (Tokyo), its main international airports (Haneda, Narita), and seaport (Yokohama). Just over 100 million people live here. Japan claims to have 6,852 islands, of which 421 are inhabited. It has only one recognized island prefecture out of 47: Okinawa, itself consisting of dozens of small islands, and with the main island, also called Okinawa, with 1,210 km^2, having 1.3 million inhabitants.

These examples confirm the hypothesis that island units suffer from 'centrifugal politics', with the smaller and outlying members nurturing the strongest aspirations to secede, or at least carve out some autonomy from their respective mainland/main island (LaFlamme, 1983; also Bogdanor, 1999; Crist, 1966).

Aerial photo of Okinawa, Japan

ISLANDS, PARTS OF CONTINENTAL STATES

Let us now turn to islands that form parts of countries that have a mainland, continental component. Starting with Italy, a European country of some 60 million people, with just over 10% of its population living on islands: mainly on Sicily—25,700 km², the largest island in the Mediterranean sea, and with the largest island population in that sea, at 5.1 million—and Sardinia—24,100 km², the second largest island in the Mediterranean, and with the second largest island population in that sea, at 1.65 million.

Still in Europe, we find Greece, a country with a population of around 11.2 million, of which 90% live on the mainland (3 million in Greater Athens alone). Of the country's nine geographical regions, three deal only with islands: the Ionian cluster; the Aegean cluster; and the island of Crete (at 8,300 km², Greece's largest island, and the fifth largest in the Mediterranean sea) with a population of 620,000.

Croatia (land area: 56,600 km²; population: 4.2 million) is another, but much smaller, European country with a sizable island component. The total area of the 59 inhabited islands of Croatia is 3,140 km², or 5.6% of the total area of the Republic. The total island population is slightly over 100,000 (or just over 2% of the total Croatian population). Forty-one of these inhabited islands have local boards, and are not self-contained municipalities. With a population of around 19,000 and a land area of 406 km², Krk is the Croatian island with the largest area and population in the Adriatic Sea. The island, however, does not comprise its own administrative division: along with Cres Lošinj and Rab, it forms part of the region of Primorje-Gorski Kotar.

Next, we visit France (644,000 km²; 67 million), and its current 100 departments (or administrative regions). Of these, the very distant islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Réunion have been departments since 1946; and the island of Mayotte since 2011. The closer island of Corsica—with a land area of 8,680 km², it is the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean sea; and has a population of 330,000—is back to being one, single department in 2018 (after having been divided into two departments since 1975).

Within the United Kingdom (242,500 km²; 65.6 million), there are only five island local councils that do not have mainland attachments: the Isles of Scilly (actually five populated islands; land area of 16 km²; population of 2,300) and the Isle of Wight (384 km²; population of 141,000), both in England; and then the Outer Hebrides (3,059 km²; population of 27,000), Orkney (990 km²; 22,000), and Shetland (1,466 km²; 23,000), all in Scotland. Should we include the British Isles, we would need to add the Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey, and its dependencies, as well as Alderney and Sark) and the Isle of Man, which are 'crown colonies' and enjoy a special and unique relationship with the British Crown.

There are fifty states in the United States of America (9,148,000 km²; 330 million); but only the fiftieth, Hawai'i, is a fully island state. It is also the only state in the US

Oahu, Hawai'i: Makapuu Beach during the summer from the neighbouring ridge

with a significant and vocal indigenous minority that also harbours secessionist sentiments (Osorio, 2001). By virtue of the 1993 Public Law (103-150), the US Congress formally apologized "for the overthrow and the deprivation of the rights of Native Hawaiians to self-determination" when groups sympathetic to the US deposed the Queen and Government of Hawai'i in 1893, and led to its eventual annexation as a US state in 1959.

Turning now to Asia, consider the situation of the Republic of (South) Korea (100,210 km²; population: 51 million). South Korea has some 470 populated islands, with a total population of just over 1 million. However, only one of these islands is a special, self-governing province, and one of the nine provinces of Korea: Jeju (1,800 km²; population: 600,000). Jeju is the largest island off the coast of the Korean Peninsula.

Lastly, let us consider the most populous country in the world: China (9,634,000 km²; population: 1.3 billion). The largely island territories of Hong Kong (a peninsula plus 263 islands) and Macau are recognized as special administrative regions (SARs); while the island of Taiwan—35,800 km², population: 23.5 million—along with its own dependencies (also islands) is also treated as an SAR. Hainan (35,400 km²; population: 9.2 million) is the only tropical island province of China; it is a special economic zone and a designated free port region. Chongming (1,000 km²; population: 660,000), an alluvial island, is China's third largest, and is connected to the mainland by bridge and tunnel; while Zhoushan (500 km²; population: 1.15 million) is the fourth largest island,

located in China's largest archipelago with its 1,390 islands, and linked to the mainland with a bridge since 2009.

DISTANCE, SIZE, AND JURISDICTION

These random observations of islands that are parts of other, larger jurisdictions, allow us to propose a few interesting claims.

First, the larger the island's size and population are relative to those of the rest of the country, and the farther the island lies from the rest of the country, the more likely it is for that island to enjoy some level of jurisdictional identity and authority. Such jurisdictional status is likely also to be unitary, meaning that the whole island is treated as one governing unit: divided islands seem abhorrent and unnatural (Baldacchino, 2013b).

Second, relative distance and size, especially in relation to a largely continental and coastal state, also increase the likelihood that the island contributes significantly to the size of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the country as a whole. It also pushes the maritime boundary of a largely coastal and continental country outwards into the high seas, with the island invariably assuming the status of a gateway to the country's maritime aspirations. Such ambitions could be military, economic, and commercial/industrial, or a combination of these. At the very least, and where such motivations may not yet exist, these islands can still serve as natural 'hot spots' or enclaves for tourism, satisfying continental travellers who can enjoy the island's biota, attractions, and hospitality without having to leave their own country. Such islands tend to see population levels that are either stagnant or in decline, with net outmigration to the mainland.

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Third, and in contrast, so-called "near islands" (Starc, 2020), relatively close to the mainland of their country, also tend to be bridgeable. Some islands continue to hold on to their geographical status: Vancouver Island, Canada; Sicily, Italy; Kangaroo Island, Australia; Hainan, China. However, sooner or later, they are likely to find themselves connected with a fixed link—a causeway, tunnel, or bridge—to the mainland section of their country. Since they are so much more accessible, they are tempting targets for short-term tourists (such as day-trippers) and second-home tourism. This permanent physical connectivity is also symbolic of the development thrust that the island adopts, or is forced to adopt: most often, such near islands become extensions of the mainland: materially, demographically, and metaphorically. Such islands tend to see population increases, with migration from the mainland.

In places like Hong Kong, "fixed links have been continuously expanded and further proposals from the government have been made to connect several outlying islands to create land for future urban development" (Leung et al., 2017, p. 63; also Hong Kong Development Bureau, 2016). Zhoushan was set up as a National District with the theme of marine economy by China's State Council in 2011; and the archipelago "has undergone a gradual industrial transformation and continually strengthening mainland-island contact" (Yue et al., 2017, p. 48).

Thus, these islands' development is a reflection, extension, or prolongation of what unfolds on the contiguous, typically urbanized, territory. In such cases, and because of this geographical disambiguation between island and mainland, the island has a much reduced political and jurisdictional clout, if at all (Baldacchino, 2017; Baldacchino & Pleijel, 2015). In such circumstances, and as this Irish poet laments following the bridge linking mainland Ireland to the island of Valentia, fixed links permit:

> *… islands to become like a landlocked place.*
> *Surrendering their separateness,*
> *to loop with these larger shores,*
> *becoming both part and prisoners of the whole* (Murray, 2003).

The trend is statistically significant: within the European Union, there are 2,152 populated islands, located in three broad areas: the Mediterranean, the Baltic, and the North Atlantic. Among these, 1,840 would be considered near islands, while the remaining 285 would be considered remote islands. Out of the first batch, 1,722 islands (93.6%) have no formal jurisdictional status. Whereas, out of the latter group, 183 (64.2%) have a similar lack of jurisdiction. Clearly, at least in Europe, distance of an island from its continent exacerbates the tendency, and the inevitability, of some kind of island self-governance: by almost 30 percentage points. See Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: **Relationship between European islands with NO jurisdictional status and their distance from the mainland**

	Bridged and Coastal (N, %)	High Seas (N, %)	TOTAL (N)
North Atlantic	139/177 (78.5)	38/75 (51)	252
Baltic	1,478/1,525 (96.9)	49/64 (76.6)	1,589
Mediterranean	105/138 (76.1)	96/146 (65.8)	284
TOTAL	1,722/1,840 (93.6)	183/285 (64.2)	2,125

(N=2,125) (Baldacchino, 2017; Baldacchino & Pleijel, 2015).

The list of 119 subnational island jurisdictions compiled by Stuart (2008) contains former colonies, island components of federal states, and islands with a *sui generis* status resulting from international treaties. In practically all these cases—Prince Edward Island, Canada, being one notable exception—the islands with these high levels of autonomy sit at the far physical end of the country in question, and as far as one can imagine from the national centre of administration.

Meanwhile, on the high seas and at greater distance from the mainland, the stakes are higher and the ambitions of the central government bolder. Here, a dynamic relationship unfolds whereby the island may be gifted more powers of autonomy and self-governance by the central state in recognition of its special calling; while the development paradigm pedalled by the central government may not be welcomed by the islanders, who may even resist it, flexing their jurisdictional powers in the process.

TENSIONS BETWEEN ISLANDS AND MAINLANDS (I): REMOTE ISLANDS

In Okinawa, US military bases occupy almost one-fifth of the island's land area. Mass public demonstrations against the presence, relocation, or expansion of the various military bases there continue: one demonstration, in June 2016, was triggered by the death of a twenty-year-old female resident and linked to a US Marine Veteran, and is claimed to have drawn 65,000 protesters. It is unlikely that the Abe government in Tokyo would want to see US military strength in Japan diminished. Yet, demonstrations on land and at sea continue in Okinawa in the face of plans for extending Camp Schuab, a US military base. Takeshi Onega, Okinawa's governor for 2014–18, had pledged to stop the project (Tanji & Broudy, 2017).

In Jeju, the South Korean Government has built a military naval base, which was finally opened in 2016, so as to extend its Navy's operational and rapid response capability into the East China Sea. However, the locals have protested, preferring to see their island home as a 'peace island' (Gwon, 2013; Yeo, 2013).

In the United Kingdom, the three fully and exclusively island local councils in Scotland, and which are also the most remote from mainland Britain—Western Isles, Orkney, and Shetland—capitalized on discussions leading to the run-up to the Scottish independence referendum of 2014. They published a joint mission state-

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ment in 2013 signalling that, should Scotland vote for independence one day, they would wish to decide their own future for themselves, while also suggesting that such a future would include devolved powers to the islands for control over seabed resources, marine renewables, fishing, and transport (Joint Mission Statement, 2013). In response, the Scottish Government issued the Lerwick Declaration, setting up a ministerial working group to examine decentralizing powers to these three island council areas (BBC News, 2013). The three island councils are the only local authorities among the thirty-two in Scotland where independent councillors form a majority: tendencies for secession and local self-determination tend to be stronger when island-based political parties are not mere copies or branches of mainland parties (Hepburn & Baldacchino, 2016).

Something similar has happened in Corsica (8,700 km^2; 330,000), which, in 2015, elected a regionalist coalition to its Assembly. As a territorial collectivity, Corsica already enjoys a greater degree of autonomy than other French regions; thus, the Corsican Assembly is able to exercise limited executive powers (Fourquet, 2017).

In neighbouring Sardinia (24,000 km^2; 1.6 million), an Italian island province, a suite of island-based ethno-regionalist parties, with no affiliation to parties on the Italian mainland, have also been active in local politics for many years, advancing a non-dependency discourse (e.g., Seddone & Giovannini, 2014).

On the other side of the world lies the semi-autonomous and most remote province of Bougainville (9,300 km^2; 235,000) in Papua New Guinea (462,840 km^2; 8.1 million). An independence referendum is expected there in June 2019. This is a direct result of the 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement which brought a violent civil war to an end (Boege, 2018).

The village on the water, Papua New Guinea

And on the other (western) side of the island of New Guinea lies Papua (320,000 km²; 3,486,000), the largest and easternmost province of Indonesia (1,905,000 km²; 261 million). Since 2002, Papua province enjoys a special autonomy status. Such powers may have been granted to stave off secessionist sentiment in the province (Timmer, 2008).

THE CENTRE STRIKES BACK: ISLAND DEVELOPMENT ACTS

The emergence and growth of secessionist sentiments on distant islands may be difficult to prevent. Islanders may be fed up with being notionally part of a larger jurisdiction which, however, may harbour no sensibility to their specific needs. Where island-specific plans are lacking, such islands end up with structural handicaps that could easily see the quality of life of their inhabitants slide. Once this starts to happen, a "cycle of decline" (Royle & Scott, 1996) can kick in, leading to the exodus of both young people and entrepreneurs, and heralding long-term economic and demographic deterioration. Moreover, in spite of being often in a clear minority, secessionist or autonomist parties can still smartly and successfully shift mainstream politics to accommodate their aspirations, in part or in full (Baldacchino, 2019).

In such circumstances, granting some measure of self-determination has been a useful antidote. The measure may not necessarily stifle demands for more autonomy, however: in places like Scotland, it fuelled even more demands, leading to the Scottish National Party, a pro-independence party, becoming the largest political force in Scotland (Hassan, 2009).

Other measures have involved passing legislation that recognizes the peculiarities of (especially remote) islands and provides the groundwork for specific development policy initiatives, and funding, in their favour.

Japan was the first country to adopt such an approach. The Remote Islands Development Act was enacted in 1953, ushering the first of ten-year development plans, with the aim of "eliminating backwardness" and "rectifying gaps caused by their isolation or remoteness from the mainland" of such remote islands. This was done by implementing major public works projects to improve such infrastructure as road and sea transport, information and communication technology, industry, and national land conservation. This focus has shifted of late: there is now a greater effort towards environmental protection, with many remote islands becoming better appreciated for their natural qualities (including rich culture and biodiversity). Since 2002, there is also recognition that remote islands are important to Japan in order to secure and protect national territory (Kuwahara, 2012).

In the Bahamas, the Family Island Development Encouragement Act came into force in 2008. It provides duty concessions on the importation of building materials, equipment, and supplies for commercial and/or residential developments on specified 'Family Islands' (Government of the Bahamas, 2018).

In Finland, the Island Development Act came into force in 1981. It obliges all authorities to take note of the special status of islands, and so, for example, extending additional support to secure the provision of basic services, suitable island-mainland and island-island transport, and agriculture (Government of Finland, 2018).

Croatia is the most recent country to pass an 'island development act'. The Croatian Island Act, which was enacted in 1999, was significantly amended and adopted by its Parliament in November 2018 (Starc, 2018).

The European Union similarly recognizes its nine "outermost regions", eight of which are islands "located thousands of kilometres from continental Europe". These regions are acknowledged as having to deal with various challenges arising from their remoteness, but also small size, islandness, and economic dependence on very few products; these features collectively are seen to thwart the islands' development potential (European Parliament, 2018).

TENSIONS BETWEEN ISLANDS AND MAINLANDS (II): NEAR ISLANDS

For those islands that are located ridiculously close to the mainland, their geography often prevents them from taking a different tack to what the continental government

View from the Citadel of the city of Hvar, in Croatia
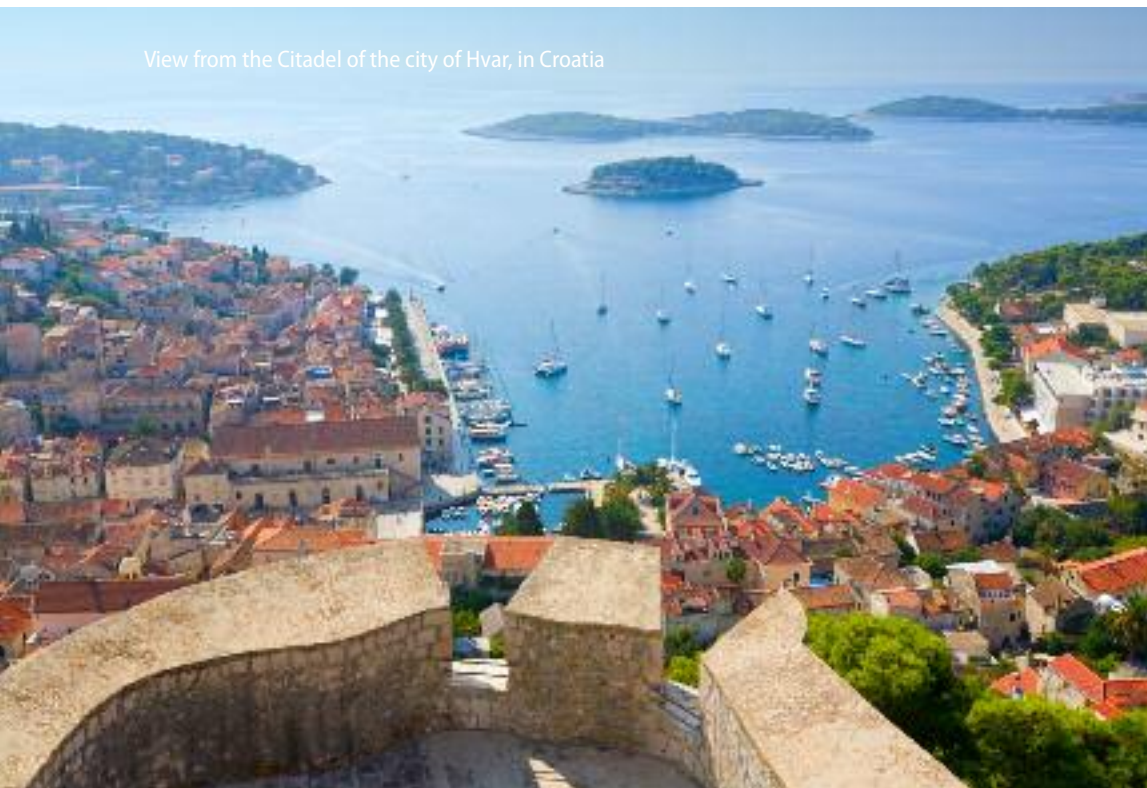
proposes. Their destiny is often to be subsumed within the development plans of the political centre, possibly losing identity and jurisdiction in its wake.

In the sprawling capital cities that have been built on islands, a series of civil engineering works have connected former islands into the expanded metropolis. Major population centres of larger islands and archipelagos include Abu Dhabi, Amsterdam, Bruges, Florianópolis, Gothenburg, Hong Kong, Lagos, Leiden, Mombasa, Miami Beach, Montreal, Mumbai, St Petersburg, Stockholm, Tromsø, and Xiamen (Grydehøj, 2014, p. 185).

Other islands have, to some degree, resisted the continental onslaught and its homogenizing effects. These tactics have included price differentials, gentrification, access tolls, and lobbying against seamless connectivity with the respective mainland. Stakeholders here realize that a fixed link can shift the power dynamic between island and mainland (Baldacchino, 2007a).

On the island of Fårö, off the island region of Gotland, in Sweden, residents voted—twice—against a proposal to have a fixed link connecting their island to Gotland (Kållgård, 2007). One has to cross over by ferry. In spite of this, "there are about 250 residential homes on Fårö and over 1,000 summer homes" (Pergament, 2007).

The island of Ré (85 km²; 18,000) lies very close to the city of La Rochelle (80,000), in Western France; its cuisine, landscape, and beaches attract thousands of French

On Fårö, an island off the island of Gotland, Sweden, there is an old, small village of fisher cabins called Helgumannen.

holidaymakers annually. When a bridge was proposed linking the island to the mainland—at 3 km, the second longest bridge in France—the islanders and those with second homes protested because they expected a massive influx of visitors and day-trippers. The eventual decision was to build the bridge and charge a toll to all vehicle users, with those having an island address benefitting from a discounted rate. Since 2009, those with an island address cross the bridge free of charge, while all others pay a €15 'eco tax' which is also meant to inhibit usage. In any case, since the bridge was opened in 1988, the population of Ré has doubled, to 18,000. From attracting 670,000 visitors a year pre-bridge, the island lured three million visitors in 2012; and the value of property on the island has increased five-fold between 2000 and 2012 (Barthon, 2008; Lichfield, 2008).

On Martha's Vineyard (260 km^2; 16,000), an island group off Cape Cod, Massachusetts, US, "the cost of living on the island is 60% higher than the national average, and housing prices are 96% higher" (Seccombe, 2017): this renders the island de facto inaccessible as a place of residence except to the very rich.

On the Toronto Islands, in Ontario, Canada—a 15-island archipelago, with 250 homes—the residents mounted a long campaign against the Toronto City Council and its plans for demolishing their homes and turning the islands to parkland. A compromise solution has been worked out, whereby Billy Bishop (Toronto City) airport (code: YTZ) has expanded operations (and is the national hub for Porter Airlines), while contained residential, leisure, and managed natural spaces have been preserved. The Toronto Islands community is credited as the largest urban car-free settlement in North America; it sits very close to the continent's fourth largest urban conurbation (Longley, 2017). The airport opened a pedestrian tunnel linking the airport (and the islands) to the mainland and Canada's largest city in 2015, after previous plans to build a bridge were aborted (Taylor, 2016). Proximity to a large and bustling metropolis reduces the chances of an island to embark on its own development path; and instead locks it firmly in the orbit of its city neighbour, with its own 'island plans'.

PROXIMITY TO A LARGE and bustling metropolis reduces the chances of an island to embark on its own development path; and instead locks it firmly in the orbit of its city neighbour, with its own 'island plans'.

CONCLUSION

"What is the influence of distance from an island's metropolitan gravitational attractor?" asks Bertram (2017, p. 76) when discussing the nature of island trade links with, often distant, metropolitan markets. This chapter also looks at distances, but of that between islands or between islands and mainlands within the same country, and their implications for governance and development. It is a modest contribution to the (still early) debates about the nature of 'near islands' (or continental islands) versus 'remote islands' (or oceanic islands) beyond the established geophysical distinction that is now a classic opening staple in island studies texts. There is a significant relationship between island status and governance capacity: so much is clear, even in the sheer number of sovereign states that are islands or archipelagos: 52 out of 193. This jurisdictional condition is also a consequence of the logistical necessity of island-based governance; this, then, becomes its own promoter for further island autonomy and self-determination.

Whether there is a significant difference between *near* and *remote* islands in their governance capacity is a different question, and calls for additional research that lies beyond the scope of this chapter. Having an aquatic obstacle matters; and if this water barrier is not narrow enough to afford bridgeability, then it matters even more. But: would increasing island-mainland distance make any additional difference in, say, the degree of difficulty in administration? Does being *even further* removed from an administrative capital render an island public, and its political cadres, more susceptible to claims of being forgotten and neglected, thus nurturing separatist or secessionist sentiment?

What we *do* know is that plans for the endogenous development of remote islands can clash with those hatched by central governments. In such situations, outcomes will depend on power play, bargaining, and nervous negotiation. Very often, central governments can still sway remote islands to pursue the development path that the centre has determined through *force majeure*. In other cases, a complementarity of interests can be sought and found between central and island governments: this is easier when the same political forces and coalitions are involved.

> **VERY OFTEN, CENTRAL governments can still sway remote islands to pursue the development path that the centre has determined through *force majeure*. In other cases, a complementarity of interests can be sought and found between central and island governments: this is easier when the same political forces and coalitions are involved.**

With *near* islands, the hand of the central government is heavier and closer. The absence of jurisdictional clout facilitates the use of such island spaces by central regimes in two broad ways: either as extensions of their urban and continental projects, often cemented via bridges and tunnels that irrevocably connect and fix such islands to mainlands; or else as tourism escapes and/or natural reserves, offering some nearby reprieve to the urban masses.

Contemporary Hainan is the 'Hawai´i of China':
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Contemporary Hainan fits within both these profiles; it is the 'Hawai'i of China', and its sandy beaches attract millions of continental Chinese every year (Westcott, 2017). As of May 2018, residents of 59 countries have been granted visa-free access to the island, enhancing its appeal as an international tropical island tourism destination (Li, 2018). At the same time, foreign workers are being encouraged to come and settle in Hainan: the resident population is projected to grow by one million by 2025 (Wang, 2018). Should a permanent link—probably a tunnel—connect the island and its capital, Haikou, to the Chinese mainland (Holland, 2018), it would become increasingly likely for Hainan to grow even faster, economically and demographically. Although Hainan may come across as a remote island, it is increasingly behaving as a near island; after all, the strait separating the island from mainland China is about 30 km wide. A tunnel to the mainland would cement that status, perhaps providing the infrastructure to propel Hainan on a trajectory of economic development similar to Shenzhen: here is a city, also formerly part of Guangdong province, that was elevated to near provincial status at around the same time as Hainan, and which has done extremely well for itself as China's Silicon Valley (Gnikivar, 2018). Hainan and Shenzhen were identified for development and given the same legal status together in 1988, but Shenzhen galloped ahead while Hainan faltered. It is now getting a second chance.

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