



The Palgrave Handbook of Blue Heritage

Edited by Rosabelle Boswell
David O’Kane · Jeremy Hills

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To all those committed to saving the planet and to safeguarding our blue heritage.

Acknowledgements

This book developed out of a desire to foreground the contribution of the humanities and social sciences in ocean conservation and management. The book was also partly inspired by earlier research in South Africa and the southwest Indian Ocean region, and via collaboration between researchers in the UKRI funded One Ocean Hub project. The latter includes transdisciplinary research on small scale fishers in Ghana, Fiji, Namibia and South Africa. As the contributors to this book show, human interaction with the oceans and coasts is thoroughly complex. National governments need to do more to advance a more inclusive ocean management strategy and to consider the multifaceted nature of the human–ocean dynamic.

The work of researchers presented in this book also reveals the increasingly transdisciplinary field of ocean management and the intellectual flexibility required to understand diverse disciplinary frameworks and epistemologies in the ocean sciences. We are therefore very grateful to the authors in this book. Many are working in extraordinarily difficult and fluid circumstances but still managed to submit their chapters to this edited book. The added challenge of Covid-19 made their task even more challenging and because of Covid-19, some researchers did not manage to offer a chapter. In the ‘field’, researchers were also required to engage with communities embedded in highly unequal societies, where primary concerns were for subsistence and health care needs. For doing the difficult work of engaging research participants in local communities, sharing challenging stories, collating data and analysing it and working as part of a team, we thank the authors, the editors,

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Neil Copen is a renowned and prolific South African storyteller, working across a variety of mediums and disciplines including theatre, journalism and film. Copen has won several major awards for his writing, design and direction work including Naledi's, Fiesta and Kanna Awards, the Standard Bank

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Mariam de Haan is currently working as the African collections curator at the British Library. She obtained her Research Masters in African Studies at Leiden University in 2020. She has researched extensively in East Africa, with a focus on Tanzanian culture, economics and politics. Her future research aims to examine manuscripts and items in Kiswahili that are held by the British Library.

Bola Erinosh is at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana where she teaches and researches in the areas of environmental and natural resources law and policy. She is a qualified barrister and solicitor. She obtained an LLM and Ph.D. in International Environmental Law from the Universities of Nottingham and Sheffield, in the UK, respectively. She is a co-investigator on the GCRF funded One Ocean Hub where she leads a work package on ocean legal pluralism.

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Mimi George has a Ph.D. and is a cultural anthropologist and sailor who supports training youth to apply ancestral voyaging knowledge to current problems, including biodiversity loss and climate change. Mimi has documented voyaging traditions of Austronesian people in Papua New Guinea; a small, mixed-gender crew wintering a sailboat in Antarctic sea-ice, sea-hunter and reindeer herder networks and migrations across Bering Straits, and Polynesian islanders in SE Solomon Islands who build vessels and navigate by ancient designs, materials and methods, including weather modification and calling for ancestral lights that show the way to land. Mimi worked in response to requests for help by the people she worked with. She describes prominent roles of women and children in voyaging cultures, and how revival of ancestral voyaging networks creates sustainable and resilient communities and ecologies.

Lynn Harris is Professor of history at East Carolina University. Prof. Harris has a background in nautical and terrestrial archaeology and maritime history. She teaches courses in underwater archaeology methods, maritime material culture, maritime landscapes, watercraft history, coastal cultural resource management, African and Caribbean maritime history and archaeology. Teaching assignments have included directing summer abroad study programs and international field schools in Namibia, South Africa, Costa Rica and Dominican Republic. Harris also engages in research projects on the south eastern seaboard that integrate student researchers. Currently, two grant projects are underway. One to research and expand the African American maritime history on Portsmouth Island NC and another to conduct rapid site surveys of coastal heritage at risk using a variety of technologies and tools on diverse sites in NC, SC and GA. Each case study site has state or national historic significance, conservation management challenges and serves as an intellectual platform to segue between preservation of an historic icon and research questions. For the past four years, Harris has led a collaborative project with Costa Rican partners to study two shipwrecks and maritime legacies in Cahuita located on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. Most recently, Harris authored and edited two books, in addition to co-authoring articles published in *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, and *Coriolis: Interdisciplinary Journal of Maritime Studies*. Harris currently serves as faculty in the Program in Maritime Studies, Atlantic World Program, and Coastal Resources Management Doctoral Degree Program. She has served for several years as a member of the Advisory Council in Maritime Archaeology and is a Nautical Archaeology Society instructor who offered public workshops for diving stewardship groups locally and internationally with her colleagues. Harris welcomes graduate students who are interested

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Jens Kruger is the Acting Deputy Director for the Ocean and Maritime Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC). Jens is a graduate of the University of the South Pacific and completed an MSc at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. He has over 20 years of experience leading multi-disciplinary applied research projects and has a particular interest in the use of marine science and technology in managing the development challenges of Pacific Small Island Developing States. Jens has worked in over 20 countries including several years as a seafarer on marine survey vessels. This work in the industry and with intergovernmental organisations has resulted in more than 80 publications including technical reports, maps, scientific papers and book chapters. Jens has shaped the Pacific regional approach to maritime boundaries for many years and is passionate about collaborative approaches to ocean governance.

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Dr. Laura Major is an anthropologist with international field research experience and expertise in environmental, political and legal anthropology, and the study of material cultures. As a research fellow with the GCRF One Ocean Hub based at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK, she developed collaborative transdisciplinary work with researchers based in the Caribbean, Ghana and South Africa.

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Evanthie Michalena has specialised in green growth and sustainable energy policies and approaches since 1993. Evanthie was awarded a national scholarship from the Hellenic State (Greece) to accomplish her Ph.D. research (in the Geography Department in the Sorbonne University, France) and a Marie-Curie International European Fellowship from the European Commission to pursue postdoctoral research. She is Adjunct Professor at Fiji University, a Senior Research Associate in Sorbonne University, France and in the Aegean University, Greece. Evanthie is also a reviewer for established academic journals such as *Nature*. Evanthie assists the European Commission in the evaluation of proposals under numerous energy and environmental Calls as an EC Expert, and is appointed at the Special Advisor (Secretariat) for the Hellenic Regulator for Energy (RAE), Greece, where she now works on the monitoring of the Greek electricity market with an emphasis on sustainable energy and energy efficiency. She is also appointed as an expert from international organisations such as United Nations (UN) and Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), European ones (such as the European Energy Regulator-CEER) and has offered her consulting and academic services to more than 80 countries around the world.

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Ryan Pillay is the Deputy Director: Arts, Culture and Heritage at Nelson Mandela University. Pillay works as a researcher and project manager in the NRF Chair for Ocean Cultures and Heritage, Ocean Account Framework, and One Ocean Hub. His research areas include gender, heritage, memory and place, transformation, visual participatory methods and art-based methodologies. Through social enquiry he has designed, facilitated and documented processes in both the public, private and secular sectors. He currently holds the position of Trustee at the South End Museum and the Gcina Mhlope Trust in South Africa.

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Dr. Dominique Santos is Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at Rhodes University and Course Co-Ordinator for the Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Management. Her scholarly work explores the intersections of music, play, dreaming and heritage practices with intimate experiences of the self, space and social change. She is interested in the place of dreaming and Indigenous Knowledge systems as speculative methodology when working with life stories, archives and heritage sites, and is an initiated stick diviner in the Dagara tradition.

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1

Introduction: Blue Heritage, Human Development and the Climate Crisis

Rosabelle Boswell

In the Hollywood blockbuster, *The Day After Tomorrow*, scientists discover that a predicted environmental crisis is happening a lot faster than expected. In a matter of days, instead of years, Earth would change beyond recognition, and humans would be forced to adapt. The film highlights the globalised nature of the disaster and the minutiae of human relationships, thrown into relief against a backdrop of unimaginable catastrophe. This book does not sensationalise the unfolding disaster that is the climate change crisis. That crisis is the present reality of billions worldwide, even if there are disagreements presently about the speed with which it is happening, or the coming intensity of its effects in the coming years. What this book hopes to do, is to provide insight into historical and contemporary human cultural attachments to the sea (sometimes described as cultural heritage), and the impacts of either political decisions and/or environmental degradation on human relationships with the sea and coasts. An important claim of the book is that humans hold diverse perspectives of the sea and coast. Inclusion of diverse,

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often marginalised perspectives of the sea in development, as well as consideration of marine inspired values and cultural practices deepen democracy and advance environmentally sound practices of ocean management.

The importance of inclusion cannot be overstated. The globalised Covid-19 pandemic is revealing historical and enduring schisms which affect not only mitigation of the pandemic but also global effort to resolve the climate crisis. Millions worldwide are already being forced to endure climate changes affecting livelihood, health and habitat. The situation is even more dire for those living in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), as these countries are further compromised by human development challenges.

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, national governments in LDCs and more developed countries are prioritising the immediate challenge of saving their citizens' lives. In part, this has involved curtailment of basic rights and ultimately, access to independent forms of livelihood. At the time of writing this book, most national governments across the developed world, however, were seeking to 'normalise' life for their citizens. They had already ensured that their citizens are vaccinated against Covid-19 and that life, as it was, before the pandemic, could resume in limited forms. As this book starkly reveals, for LDCs, Covid-19 looms large, alongside the wicked problems of exclusion, poverty, poor access to livelihood and enduring pollution. It appears to some authors in the book, that these problems trump both the climate crisis and the Covid-19 crisis.

The book also shows that national governments in the LDCs need to do more, to prioritise and safeguard Earth's blue heritages, that is, the tangible and intangible artifacts and 'assets' of the oceans and coasts, as well as the intimate, cultural relations that people have with Earth's oceans and coasts, as the latter are very difficult to repair and/or restore. Moreover, important decisions are being made by both international bodies and these governments that put both the tangible and intangible 'blue' heritages at risk of terminal degradation. Of added concern to the authors, is the fact that, to date, there are 1154 World Heritage Sites the majority of which are territorial. Only 50 sites are World Marine Heritage Sites. Not one of these sites is a cultural or culturally associated site. And on the list appraised, there were only two natural World Marine Heritage Sites in Africa. Considering tangible and intangible cultural heritages and at the time of writing, there were 145 such sites in Africa but up to 39% of these contain heritages in danger. The poor regard for culture and/or its precarious situation in Africa is astounding. In Africa and among ordinary people, culture is considered a major social asset and source of human rights, cohesion, creativity, prosperity and livelihood.

A critical review of the Blue Economy (BE) imperative in Africa, states that, 'large scale BE initiatives prioritize economic gains at the expense

of environmental degradation and the exclusion of local communities' (Ifesinachi et al., 2020). The exclusion of local communities from the ocean management sector is critical given the intractable, and rapidly intensifying problems of climate change and general, environmental degradation that are devastating Earth's oceans.

Humans rely on the oceans for work, subsistence, habitation, healing and leisure. Over the span of human evolution, they have engaged with the oceans and coasts, conceptualising the marine space, aesthetically depicting it, using it for naval and imperial ambitions, lamenting it as a grave for slave descendant brothers and sisters, sailed it for sport and dived into it for other worldly experience.

This book, as previously stated, seeks to offer further insight into the diverse human social and cultural engagements with Earth's oceans and coasts. In part, the book shows what is at stake, if the trend of environmental degradation and the exclusion of local communities from ocean management continues. The book, however, also hopes to nuance accounts of negative, causal anthropogenic impacts on the environment, to reveal complex, symbiotic and intersubjective human interactions with the oceans and coasts. A major contribution of the book is its high estimation and valuation of human and cultural contribution to the 'blue economy'.

In monetary terms, it is estimated that the global ocean economy is worth 24 trillion US Dollars and that it is the seventh largest economy on earth (World Wildlife Fund, 2018). While several international reports provide detail on the financial dividends expected from the ocean economy (OECD, 2016; World Wildlife Fund, 2017), there appears to be little focus on the human, social and cultural value of, contribution to, and benefits to be gained from the oceans.

At the inception of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988, states approving the committee pledged to align their strategies for growth with the UN SDGs. But since then, it has become evident that facilitating economic growth that is inclusive, equal and environmentally sound is extraordinarily difficult to achieve. Today and despite the reality of climate change, many nation states are still not keen to decarbonise the economy or pursue environmentally sound 'growth'. Historical legacies of inequality and injustice, still unresolved for centuries, are adding to the problem. Making inclusive and equitable participation in ocean management and climate management difficult.

Mindful of these challenges and the experiences of those caught in the climate crisis maelstrom, the United Nations (UN) has set in motion various actions, declarations and global agreements to help nation states mitigate

and/or adapt to the coming crisis. The UN interventions were apparent at the 2017 UN General Assembly where state parties pledged to support and implement SDG 14, the sustainable use and development of the oceans. The ensuing global ocean governance discussions, including COP21, culminated in the UN Decade of Ocean Science, which emphasised prioritisation of the health of marine ecosystems and the securing of ocean-based livelihoods.

The Post-2015 UN Development Agenda task team (UNESCO, 2012) however, identified that culture, 'a driver of development' was not explicitly stated in the SDGs and that effort must be made to include culture as a key metric. In this regard, the EU Parliament's report on actions for sustainability (2017), emphasised that culture, an essential resource and fourth pillar of development, cuts across all the SDGs. To this end, culture should be explicitly articulated as part of the EU's sustainable development goals. Similar sentiments were expressed in the African Union's Agenda 2063, where a major aspiration noted is the achievement of a culture-centric Africa, where sustainable development processes do not exclude culture. The AU indicated it aspires to achieve an 'An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics' (African Union Commission, 2015, p. 2).

The inclusion of culture in development, however, goes beyond its relevance to the UN SDGs and ultimately to EU and AU goals. As stated further on, UNESCO's concept of culture and heritage (used to advance the conservation of biological and cultural diversity for decades), is evolving and has been at the forefront of globalised concepts of culture. While this understanding of culture is now included in discussions on human flourishing, belonging and diversity, governments in the Least Developed Countries noted in this book, have tended to portray culture and heritage as uncomplicated legacies and symbols of diversity. Heritage and culture appear to be for celebratory and recreational purposes.

But as this book shows, heritage and in particular 'blue' heritage, are important sources of cultural values, practices, sense of history, identity and solidarity. Understanding this is critical to the substantive implementation of the UN SDGs and global interventions for human development. Some of the authors writing here specifically mention the UN SDGs in the context of a discussion on the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030, the UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the UN SDGs, specifically UN SDG 14 (Life below Water), UN SDG 1 (poverty alleviation) and UN SDG 5 (gender equality).

The authors in this book also discuss UNESCO's defined tangible and intangible cultural heritages and the relevance of this understanding of