Dialogues in Human Geography

Author response

Further assembly work: A mountains to seas Blue Economy imaginary

Dialogues in Human Geography
2017, Vol. 7(1) 50–55

DOI: 10.1177/2043820617691663
journals.sagepub.com/home/dhg
SAGE

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Abstract
In response to the suggestions of our commentators, we sketch in some new directions for geographic assembly work aimed at developing situated holistic Blue Economy imaginaries. We focus on several interlinked provocations: conceptualizing mountains to seas imaginaries, centring water, rethought relations of governmentality and governance derived from new ethically informed behaviours, strategies for transitioning conceptions into new policy models and attentiveness to global economic and environmental futures.

Keywords
Blue Economy imaginaries, enactive policy development, ethical governmentality, mountain to sea

We are grateful to our commentators for outlining inspired redirections and extensions to our thinking and we take the opportunity to conduct further assembly work, this time among this diverse group of fishers for the Blue Economy. Our response is an argument that, at this Anthropocenic moment, a decisive switch away from compartmentalized conceptions and separate management of land, coast and sea is a must. This challenge is historically and geographically unprecedented. We consider implications and priorities in reassembling knowledge, policy and practice 'led' by the beacon of 'mountains to seas'.

A mountains to seas Blue Economy

For Christopher Bear (2017), we have not referred enough to the recent scholarly turn to the oceans, to the entanglement of non-humans, or to blueness. These matters are not new to New Zealand geographers or to New Zealand Māori, marine science, policy and local communities (Harmsworth and Awatere 2013, Le Heron et al., 2016), and we welcome Chris' spur. However, even in these, for us, familiar contexts, the sea is still overlooked, not connected to coast or land particularly, and rarely discussed in terms of aspects of planetary circulation, so, we accept that the challenges are great. Within New Zealand geography, Gordon

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contributed to the turn to the oceans (Winder, 2006) and to land–sea management issues (Winder and Rees, 2010), but we did not address this literature in detail in what we envisaged as an economic geography intervention with Blue Economy, one that was nonetheless expressly open to assemblage approaches but, for the purposes of the paper, aimed first and foremost at the economic framing of Blue Economy.

We offer the mountains to seas metaphor in response to Chris' commentary. Not only does recent New Zealand science address interactions around water from 'mountain to sea' (Schiel and Howard-Williams, 2015) but a visitor attraction, 'From the Mountains to the Sea' (Ki Uta Ki Tai in Māori), is proposed for the City of Christchurch. This attraction, based on the Eden Project in the UK, will 'tell the story of water in nature, culture and science' (http://www.waterforlife.org.nz/the-idea/). There are some obvious assembling implications that stem from the mind shift and mental recomposition invoked by the metaphor. Water, its mobility, state and qualities, human and non-human connections can be made centre stage, paving the way to co-develop with varied knowledge communities more holistic understandings and interpretations of life. There is unprecedented scope to acknowledge and co-interrogate indigenous knowledge, its insights about connectedness, and a revisiting of issues over beliefs, visions and perspectives. Giving 'voice to the ocean', 'thinking like water' and trying to 'voice water's contingencies' that offer new imaginings about making *economy* differently rather than taking the categories of economy from land to coast and sea. With this metaphor, the externalities of individual and combined acts in space and over time cannot be overlooked and will have to be embedded in any new narratives. While a first pass at mountains to seas may suggest an imagined one world model (Cosgrove, 1994), the variegated nature of situated narratives focused at large- and small-scale contexts will displace the singular view with a plurality of conceptions. Positively, a remapping of existing institutional frameworks with their limits and forward potential will be needed. In case 'Blue Economy' seems to be an unexpected add-on to the physical systems thinking inherent to this metaphor, we see an explicit call in Blue Economy to revisit the underlying platforms for economic rent, making explicit how economy is being practiced in different relations and connectivities of water. In this work, focus should be on looking at what might be privileged through association and involvement and what sorts of protectorates of privilege could be co-developed as part of new directions in thinking, thus invigorating individual and collective forms of social license to use and operate.

So much for a sketch of the potential of 'mountains to seas Blue Economy': it is also important to acknowledge just how difficult it is to 'think from the ocean'. For Māori in the Pacific, Tangaroa was dominant and it was only in the context of larger land masses that Tāne-mahuta became focal.[1] Perhaps, the word 'sea' is too land biased and it could be better replaced by 'ocean,' and 'atmosphere' would extend the metaphor even further. What, as yet invisible, entities will be revealed by bulldozing the siloes land, coast, sea? We will all be stretched as we try to imagine how to build new policy institutions that umbrella water at work. 'Into the ocean' may be even better as a metaphor as it implies mixing and remixing – a further sign of water's mysterious contingencies. Among the challenges will be building collaborative networks that rescale and replace existing configurations. Nevertheless, the mountains to seas Blue Economy metaphor can help to reveal the poor rendition of holistic and connected processes in Blue Economy and other policy frameworks, due to the artificial and arbitrary sectioning of research, policy and investor responsibilities upon which they are premised.

One water

Health geographer Ronan Foley asks for a broader effort to value the blue: by incorporating health, well-being and wider cultural practices; by opening up the ontology to an ethically framed duty of care; as well as the emotional and affective power of blue (all themes familiar to human geographers); and adds psychotherapeutic geographies and legal geographies (legitimation, ownership) to the mix. Perhaps most pertinent to our mountains to seas

argument is his promotion of an ethical care perspective. This parallels health thinking or the Maori perspectives of ecosystems (Harmsworth and Awatere, 2013) or the beach care or water care movements well known in New Zealand. We would reframe this as one water, so that it is in keeping with the scales, and emotional and affective power of the Blue or Water Planet. Note that our reframing should reveal where actors and their attendant mobilities are actually positioned. The starting points of engagement in the new narrative will not look like those of the past: they will be simultaneously personal, local, political and global. By bravely centring, for example, self-other relations, as investors, or institutional actors, those involved can be pressed to name, and think through, what impacts their investment choices might be having on the investment options of others elsewhere. This is a new politics that asks investors and institutional players to defend their actions in new kinds of socio-ecological framings. This is not an impossible or unfair ask. Workshop experience in New Zealand shows that participants put into three domains of land, coast, and sea could imagine relations and build knowledge about connections with 'others' with ease and insight. The ground up ethical development we advocate here means new identities and subjectivities, people will change as they change their worlds and are reshaped in different ontologies of relations and performance. He also picks up the 'trading environments' (Winder and Dix, 2016) metaphor, calling for multiple and emergent sets of new trading environments, in which work to contest and trouble the term Blue Economy can be handled. For us, since marine spatial planning (MSP) is now being understood as a process of negotiation rather than a rational framework to solve conflicts and reach sustainable development (Jones et al., 2016), Ronan's call for an ethics of care in Blue Economy demands input from across geography.

Governance and governmentality

China has never been a region of study for us but its geoeconomic and geopolitical significance is undeniable. The Chinese experience is salutary and a reminder that new directions will probably never be entirely free from existing investment and institutional trajectories. The likelihood of these being held up as 'working examples' of good governance of marine resources is high. Moreover, whatever alternatives are being put in place, clashes over priorities among economy, ecology and culture are likely, and coexistence an uncomfortable situation. Rae Choi's (2017) wisdom is that a powerful state (in contrast to the thin regulatory structures of many countries nowadays) might prioritize exploitation and devise formal and informal arrangements to translate this into investments and supportive institutions. This should not surprise: even the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) puts the use of resources first in its covering guiding principle, and, in many countries, this ethos is expressly stated in legislation which thus enshrines and effects the UNCLOS priority. But we shouldn't lose sight of Rae's major insights: that governing mentalities are not preset; they are part of opening up and maintaining governable spaces; which, in turn, will vary from one geographical context to another; and which should be seen as crucial institutionalizations in refashioning framings, behaviours and practices as governance moves towards mountains to seas imaginaries. For her, Blue Economy is a 'travelling concept', a 'complex, governmental project', and one with both progressive *and* socially and environmentally blighting outcomes. These are important amendments to our account of Blue Economy and indeed part of further amendments required in transitioning to the metaphor of mountains to seas.

That China's MSP assigns primary functions to each zone in an effort to '"rationalize" messy and overlapping uses' unfortunately confirms our suspicions: MSP in practice contrasts strongly with and falls short of the ideals we read of for it. That is, the prospects for (1) a multi-use integrated planning ideal and (2) an ecosystem-based MSP (legislated for by the European Union (EU) but not yet delivered) may not be realized. Young Rae Choi finds that, despite its acknowledged efforts to conserve coastal and ocean environments, China's Blue Economy planning construes the oceans as 'underdeveloped frontier spaces through which infinite

possibilities for "better" uses are imagined, institutionalized and invested'. We agree with her that such a finding is truly alarming.

Over- or underutilized?

Karyn Morrissey (2017) brings unique perspectives from her involvement with MSP. She contends that 'land activities have reached their limits', bringing pressures on the oceans through new and expansionary interactions. Consistent with our mountains to seas conception, we posit that land use limits must be engaged with, largely because of the temporalities and spatialities of their externalities. Instead of focusing purely on oceans and MSP, we hold that resketching the configurations of property rights, investment and practical behaviours, land ownership and revealed commitments in terms of water mobilities and encumbrances is a strategy to elevate alternative practices and values. As we have already suggested, a caring ethos reaches out with its emphasis on who is relating (or choosing not to relate) to others in the cascading of water-infused relations towards the sea. To propose that it is inevitable that there will be more human interaction with the sea could be read as an abandonment of any alternative, when, in fact, improved governance will be needed: How will activities be valued and assessed? 'Marine resource' seems to open diverse ways to characterize ocean values, yet we know that 'conserving marine resources' is not the same thing as 'conserving marine ecosystems'. New Zealand abandoned land use zoning in the 1990s, replacing it with sustainable management in marine, coastal and land environments, and this experience inclines us to question whether the new challenges and practices in marine planning are really so different to those in land-based planning and whether an ecosystem-based MSP is ready for the challenges ahead. Under Blue Economy, 'marine activities' are now being managed effectively and in an integrated fashion, but how integrative and how free from economic or utilitarian resource use capture is this emerging spatial planning? As economic geographers, we worry about the utilitarian resource focus of the Blue Economy we read about, and its apparent dominance of the related concept of MSP.

We find that Karyn's concerns over what social and critical geographers bring to the debate around Blue Economy, and what we add to the 'knowledge base of our oceans and seas' dissolve somewhat when the development of ethically enlivened perspectives and practices is prioritized. This implies interdisciplinary engagement and familiarity with the practices and languages of other disciplines. Human and physical geographers of many specializations have long been engaged in coastal, marine and ocean research. The contributions come in many fields related to MSP and Blue Economy including sustainable lives and livelihoods of fishers, coastal management and planning, regional and community development, logistics and port planning, tourism geography, ecosystem management and fisheries management. A recent special issue in *Applied Geography* (Levine et al., 2015) attests to facets of this engagement. So what is potentially 'new' is the engagement of cultural and social geographers, and here we are appreciative of the commentaries of Christopher Bear and Ronan Foley (2017) that help to reveal the possible scope of a cultural critique of Blue Economy (see also Cardwell and Thornton, 2015, Foley and Havice, 2016). This said, a big knowledge risk is that the foundational Blue Economy perspective begins by announcing its utilitarian starting point and thus the constraints that will be imposed on the knowledge base of our oceans and seas: What role for the social or cultural, for health, environmental or critical economic geography perspectives in this new 'knowledge base'? That said, we see the disciplinary framings that are inherent in the Blue Economy as a field of engagement not simply an alien terrain.

Critical yet intimate engagement

Jennifer Brewer (2017) commends us for proposing and enacting 'a position of critical yet intimate engagement' despite 'a dauntingly ill-defined policy arena'. She sets out the strategic choices for human geographers in precise terms: challenge Blue Economy with an alternative rubric; identify areas of the Blue Economy conversation where our contributions might prove useful; or stand idle as Blue Economy sails on without us. Her commentary

addresses, in a constructive way, many of the critical issues raised by Karyn Morrissey and especially her concern of disciplinary boundaries and knowledge bases. Directly or indirectly, each commentator points to issues of translation and interdisciplinary bridging for geographers engaging with Blue Economy: issues that need to be dealt with in enacting a critical but constructive approach to Blue Economy. While we can confirm Jennifer's experience – geographers are well prepared to play brokerage roles on interdisciplinary teams – we fear that even cosmopolitan and diplomatic geographers, adept at bridging and translating between disciplines, will be challenged by the interdisciplinary terrain of the Blue Economy.

High on Jennifer's list of reservations are the points that Blue Economy is only a 'distasteful Cartesian project', that MSP 'serves no unified policy purpose', and 'democratic participation' in a marine policy frontier will be constrained. She asks: Why should we expect marine governance to be simpler than land-based governance? We submit that the more holistic governance and management implied by mountains to the seas will most certainly require increased reflexivity among scientists when confronted with the challenges of multiply (unique) public participatory processes. Jennifer raises scalar concerns, warns of too little attention to the physical power of ocean processes, and foresees that the attenuation of social relations in the oceans will continue to impair operationalization of Blue Economy and MSP. She openly wonders about the hopes for legally defensible property rights expressed in Blue Economy documents.

Our concerns emerge from our own experiences in New Zealand, Canada, and Europe. Gordon learned from shifting context, from Atlantic Canada's fisheries debacle to New Zealand's neoliberal fisheries management 'wonder', and on to the EU's MSP experiment: context matters in diverse ways. New Zealand marine conservation and fisheries management seemed to be on a good way, but we could see points for critical engagement (Le Heron et al., 2008) and aimed to offer critiques that could result in adaptations of the regulatory and governance regimes. We both assisted postgraduate students who gained senior positions within relevant ministries. Then we were confronted by a late arrival term: Blue Economy. This constituted a new policy agenda, one for which we were not trained, and one which threatens to hijack or displace all our meagre efforts to date, including our assembling work with marine biologists, Māori interests, regional governments, and national ministries. Our expanded mountains to the seas agenda simply compounds the issues and complexity. How do we engage with this?

Sea of islands

For New Zealanders like us, 'islands' is a satisfying metaphor for connectedness. This is not so much because of the exotic imaginaries, romantic and savage, of the Polynesian myth, as so eloquently addressed by geographer John Connell (2003), that are often coupled with (small) islands, but rather because of their association with the 'sea of islands' imaginary used by Polynesians to describe the Pacific Ocean: a metaphor that speaks, among other things, to the boat traffic among the islands of the archipelago and thus to voyaging and interconnection (Hau'ofa et al., 1993). From this perspective, what matters is the amount of boat traffic, the potentialities of interactions on the shore and the quality of the hospitality. Such a metaphor shifts emphasis from bridging to contact, sharing, voyaging and interconnection, and from mapping and charting to navigation skills, sea worthy boats and a reputation for hospitality and care on our own island. We are delighted that our efforts to 'capture' Blue Economy have been rewarded with such interesting and inspiring commentaries and responses to our paper.

Acknowledgement

We thank Paula Blackett, Karen Fisher, Alison Greenaway, Dan Hikuroa and Nick Lewis for making suggestions on contemporary developments in mountains to seas thinking in New Zealand, and Marie Aschenbrenner for suggestions on MSP in the EU.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Note

1. Tangaroa is the atua (ancestor) with dominion over sea and fish, while Tāne-mahuta is the atua of forests and birds. *Maori Dictionary* https://maoridictionary.co.nz/ and Harmonsworth and Awatere, 2013.

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