

Island spaces in the Indian Ocean Contemporary Mutations

The Indian Ocean, the third largest in terms of surface area (75 million km²) contains no less than two thousand islands, ranging from monoliths such as Madagascar, still called the *Grande Ile*, to sprinklings of archipelagos. Be they isolated, or nerve centres these insular spaces are singularly remarkable microcosms, (Bernardie, Taglioni, 2005). If the Indian Ocean offers such an astonishing array of island territories, their recent history nevertheless reveals that they have undergone profound social, economic, judicial, literary, artistic, linguistic or geographical transformations. Some have become resolutely open to globalization (Singapore, Mauritius), yoked to tourism or maritime hubs while others live in the margins, like Socotra, the outer islands of the Seychelles, Lamu, the Comores or Mentawai (Guebourg, 2006). Oscillating between confinement and network, exchange and migrations (Doumenge, 2010), these island spaces have nevertheless “preserved” their specificities through isolation and geographical remoteness. Yet how far must they reconcile traditional modes of life and modernity? How do Indian Ocean islands fit into the framework of cosmopolitanism and processes of creolization?

This call for papers for what is the maiden issue of the OSOI e-journal, would like to be resolutely open. It aims to enhance the understanding and analysis of recent evolutions of island societies in the Indian Ocean through the intersecting of multiple pluri-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches. It purports to interrogate social changes, either proper to each island or common to an archipelago. Such changes may equally be tackled from a comparative approach, even if geographer Doumenge, asserts that no island has its twin. Nevertheless to adopt a comparative approach to the study of these insular spaces is relevant and will show the dynamics and resistances to contact and socio-cultural and linguistic mutations. Such an approach could also question the various forms of identity resistance in the face of globalisation or other changes.

While the objective of this call is to enrich the debate on this dialectical research, at the origin of any scientific approach, from local to global, any one or more of the three themes of the OSOI (risk and development/power and network/territory and mobility) which form the framework of this concept note, must also be present in the submissions.

We welcome proposals in the following areas:

- In history, the questioning of the role of Indian Ocean islands during the last two centuries, either as spaces inserted into colonial Empires, or at the heart of maritime spatiality, involved in two world conflicts, or as islands in the throes of decolonization, subsequently coveted during the Cold War. Themes with a monographic or global approach are welcome.
- In economics, these insular spaces, due to their small size, are often characterized by a greater vulnerability to external shocks (the rise in raw materials, economic and financial crises, etc) than larger territories. In this context, the strategy for lesser insular economies in the Indian Ocean is to be able to adapt to an economic environment, which is constantly changing, and subjected to increasing uncertainty.
- External or internal legislative and statutory evolutions of islands, affected by singular dialectics (common law/local law, integration/adaptation) or by **phenomena** of transfer of laws or legal acculturation, witness complex legal situations which represent interesting objects of academic study and offer exciting avenues for scholars to explore. The changes in the status of Mayotte with regard to the French Republic or the European Union is an emblematic example of these evolutions.

- For the geographer, the development of islands rests upon a number of alternatives: tradition or modernity, introversion or exposure, continuity or mutation. These challenges are part of the regional island spaces. « Confetti », « morsels of land », enclosed spaces, » the appellations may be numerous, but the question remains as to what weight these territories carry on the international scene. What imprint do these mutations have not only on the natural landscape but also the socio-economic and political one?
- Are such internal or interspatial contrasts on the increase? How far have these transformations, or the resistances to them, been given expression in insular literature, artistic practices or in languages of contact? And conversely, what is the role played by literature and the arts in the imaginary, in language and poetics in the structuring of these mutations? Beyond these specificities proper to each space, what connexions, - either conscious or unconscious, - does such literature weave between themselves? And how does it express negotiations peculiar to these territories of linguistic and cultural exchange?

For this issue, the call is open to all disciplinary fields in order to encourage complementary visions and ideas, from the world over.

Proposals of a page are to be sent before the **20th of August 2017**.