

CAPITAL AND PORT CITIES ON SMALL ISLANDS SALLYING FORTH BEYOND THEIR WALLS: A MEDITERRANEAN EXERCISE

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Capital-cum-port cities on islands tend to be disproportionately large and cosmopolitan; their multiple effects on their peri-urban interface are quite dramatic when there is hardly any hinterland to speak of. In these cases, urban growth is often manifest by the 'city as island' breaching its fortified encasement, spilling over and embracing a physical as well as cultural scape that does not necessarily share its rubric of ideas and epistemologies. The breaching of city walls on small islands (by locals, and not by invaders) is thus a symbolic as well as material manifestation of a creeping and pervasive urban project of modernisation which nevertheless leaves puddles of anti-urban angst and bravado. This paper engages with this 'articulation by compression' dynamic, and fleshes it out in relation to three Mediterranean capital-cum-port island cities: Palma (Spain), Valletta (Malta) and Corfu/Kérkyra (Greece).

Introduction

One confusing characteristic of a number of places, including many islands, is the ambiguity between different features that carry the same name. For example, it is very common for the main island of an archipelago to carry the same name as that of the archipelago itself; or is it the other way round? From Australia to Iceland, from Tasmania to Newfoundland, this slippage occurs readily. This practice could suggest that the residents of the larger unit within the constellation do not pay much regard to those residing on their smaller, sister islands; and believe that the conflation of their island (as a part) with the whole is a foregone conclusion that emphasizes and affirms its unchallenged stature within the group.

Another uncanny practice is to assign the same name to an island city/town as that of the island on which it is based. Corfu Town on Corfu Island; Rodos Town on Rodos Island (or Rhodes), and Chios Town on Chios Island, all three in Greece; Vis Town, on the island of Vis, Croatia; as well as Ibiza/Eivissa Town on the island of Ibiza/Eivissa, in Spain's Balearics, are such examples.

Sometimes, both these tendencies are combined, to the chagrin of visitors and tourists. Consider Lipari Town, on the island of Lipari, in what are often referred to as the Lipari Islands, Italy. Or Zanzibar town, located on the island of Unguja (but also known informally as Zanzibar), in Tanzania's Zanzibar archipelago. Confusing enough?

Again, one reasonable assumption as to the reason for the 'island town equals island name' conflation practice is the sheer size of the town or city in relation to the island on which

it finds itself. After all, on small islands, the city can tower over the rest of the community, commanding a considerable proportion of the population; the island's settlement pattern could be totally dominated by the urban sprawl emerging away from and out of its capital (and typically main port) city.

This Paper

Much of the contemporary scholarly literature on city-states shies away from engaging the concept of islandness (Hansen 2000), which is itself bound up with the concept of smallness. This exploratory paper seeks to make amends to this dearth of research focus. It reviews the emergence and development of small island cities, looking specifically at how the decision or opportunity to allow them to outgrow their city walls—where such walls exist—and spread out may have had a significant effect, not just on their own urban character but on that of the island on which they are located. The point of the departure is the small and compact city island, where the urban area effectively takes over *all* the terrestrial space available; the very notion of a rural area or countryside, but also of second or more towns, disappears. Next is a review of the built environment of not-much-larger islands where a notional ex-urban countryside exists, and where the city, typically the capital and main port, plays a towering role in local affairs. In this discussion, much is made of the decision or condition of walled cities being breached to make way for the expansion of the city and its spill-over into erstwhile countryside; this episode is symptomatic of various implications on the eventual urban-but-pre-rural island landscape.

The rationale for this paper is provided by two principles that are now common currency within the study of islands, but neither of which has as yet been forthcoming from, or applied to, urban studies. The first is the notion of what I refer to as 'articulation by compression'—the ABC of island living (Brinklow 2013):—this term acknowledges the intricate nature of dense psycho-social networks, acquaintances and assemblages in small island spaces and societies (e.g. Freudenberg 1986). At the same time, the 'ABC' notion serves as a tacit warning against a glib appreciation of small island goings-on as mere scaled-down, microcosmic-like renditions of what unfolds in larger spaces.

The second, which is also a manifestation of the first principle, is the deep, lasting and intimate impact of various types of 'invasions', including colonialism, in and on small island societies (Baldacchino 1998; Dommen 1980). The impact is all the more intense and total because there is typically no hinterland, physical as much as cultural, to retreat to (Hintjens 1991: 38). Taken together, these two tensions can help explain the overbearing influence of main cities on small islands, practically all of which today are also port cities, and which remain responsible for much of their residential densification.

Enter the Mediterranean

I do so in the context of the Mediterranean sea. Being Maltese by birth, I have a special and natural interest in this part of the world. Moreover, as a meeting place and melting pot of many cultures, this area has witnessed a clash of civilisations over millennia: North and South, Europe and Africa, Christendom and Islam, and now the European Union and beyond. In the course of most of this turbulent history, small islands in this sea have been especially vulnerable to sea-borne invasions and raids. Of course, other parts of Europe were also exposed to such raids; but the Mediterranean climate is benign enough to permit such

expeditions and threats almost all the year round. In earlier times, when living in unprotected areas of the countryside was done at one's peril, and when the risk of being caught by pirates and taken into slavery was not slim, a walled town or city would have been the *only* secure settlement in many small islands, particularly in the Old World.

This stark condition explains why, where this has been at all physically possible, settlements were established on high ground, allowing both an easier visual patrol over longer distances, and away from the coast; as well as a better defensive position, should an attack unfold. Mdina, the old capital of Malta; Rabat, the capital of Gozo; Corte, the old capital of Corsica; Knossos, the old capital of Crete; and Çinarlı, the main town on Gökçeada (known as Imbros until 1970), are thus all located inland. The exception was the case of the coastal and port settlement which, by definition, had to be close to the shore, but vulnerable to attack. Such settlements may have had an associated inland town, to which—given enough warning—their populations would retreat in case of an attack: Pollenca and Puerto/Porta Pollenca; Andraitx and Puerto Andraitx, Soller and Puerto Soller, all from the Balearics, are suitable examples.¹ The other alternative was for these port cities to be defended, and therefore well fortified. Hence the development of protected coastal settlements, on islands as much as elsewhere; often compact urban and commercial sites surrounded by built fortifications, themselves usually following geophysical contours and features, meant to house garrisons while providing shelter to and protecting the local population in the case of any such raids. Some of these settlements have morphed into island capital cities: practically all of which are coastal, embodiments of the cultural and commercial traffic that reflect maritime ecumenes (Murphy 2001).²

Island Tropes

The Mediterranean sea is home to many stories, legends and ballads that narrate the sad tales of islanders, and other coastal dwellers, who have had friends, neighbours and relatives carried away by marauding pirates into slavery, often never to return (David 2004). In 1535, Barbary Pirate Heyreddin Barbarossa attacked Mahon, on the island of Minorca, and took 6,000 captives as slaves back to Algiers. Moors raided and sacked the village of Mosta, in Malta, in 1526, taking almost 400 prisoners, 'including a bride, together with the guests all dressed up for the wedding' (Cassar Pullicino 2012: n.p.):

Poor Maid of Mosta.
Sad things awaited her on that Monday morn.
The Turks came and carried her away
When she least expected them.

(Ballad of the Bride from Mosta, translated from the Maltese original.)

Another song from Malta narrates a similarly sad tale, of a hapless young man waiting in vain for his bride to be. This one unfolds in the village of Marsaskala, on Malta's south-east coast, and the site of the landing of a daring Turkish raid in 1614 (The Malta Independent, 2014):

Marsaskala knows the tragedy
Although many years have passed
Because beautiful Maria
Was very well known in her village
Joseph (her groom) waited for her, for many days and nights.
But alas, it was all for naught.

(The ballad of Maria the beautiful. My translation from the Maltese original.)

At times, whole island populations have been thus captured, and whisked away. In 1544, Heyreddin Barbarossa (again) raided the island of Ischia, taking 4,000 prisoners, and enslaved some 9,000 inhabitants of Lipari, almost the entire population. In 1551, Turgut Reis enslaved the entire population of the Maltese island of Gozo, between 5,000 and 6,000 souls, sending them to Ottoman Tripolitania. (A promontory overlooking the bay where the enslaved islanders were forced to embark onto the Turkish galleys is still known as *Ras in-Newwiela*; *ras* meaning head; and *newwiela* means those who are handing over: presumably, the slaves onto the ships.) Even as late as 1798, the island of San Pietro, south of Sardinia, was ransacked by a surprise pirate raid and all 920 survivors, mainly women and children, were taken away and sold as slaves in Tripoli (Zacks 2005).

These episodes foreground at least two levels of island tropes: first, the small island, bounded unto itself by the sea which however also acts as the interface with good things and bad which must all come from elsewhere. Second, the fortified settlement itself—a castle, a town, or both—bounded unto itself to defend those inside from the enemy without. The non-fortified island space, the *extramuros*, thus acts as a kind of an ambiguous, ‘in-between’ space: life-sustaining on most counts, but dangerous, and prone to attack and infiltration at other times. This ‘inside and outside’ dialectic is an important feature in understanding small island cities, about which more will be said below.

But let me start with a description of how today’s city states tend to be very small states or territories with very high degrees of urbanisation.

Small (Micro) States

Microstates tend naturally to be city states. If able to grow at least within the strictures of their national borders, successful cities in microstates tend to advance and consume all available space, transforming their small state territory into a continuous urbanscape. In such circumstances, it is not uncommon for adjoining countries to pick up the slack and take up the overflow of investment, trade, business and population from the (usually smaller) neighbour. Vatican City functions in synch with the Italian capital city of Rome; a relationship codified by the Lateran Concordat of 1929. The leafy suburb of Beausoleil in southern France borders the city state of Monaco; in fact, Rue de France in Beausoleil is Monaco on one pavement and France on the other. Hong Kong, the larger of two Special Administrative Regions (SAR) of China, is a quasi-city state; with its adjacent Chinese city of Shenzhen, they are both booming world cities (Ng 2002).

Such a spillover is more difficult in the case of *island* states, given jurisdictional border issues, though somewhat facilitated if there is a fixed link to their respective mainland. Malaysia’s Johor Bahru exists in symbiosis with nearby Singapore, a city state; and the Johor Bahru Port of Tanjung Pelepas is a direct competitor to the Singapore Port Authority (Sparke *et al.* 2004). Adjoining territories within the same state have an easier symbiosis. Thus, Zhūhǎi is a prefecture-level city in Guangdong province, People’s Republic of China, which borders the smaller Chinese SAR of Macau, a city state of sorts, composed of a series of islands linked to the mainland by various bridges. The former city state and republic of Venice, Italy, with its 118 islands, now has a population of around 60,000 on its lagoon (*centro storico*), but it is functionally linked with the *terraferma* and the two adjacent towns (*frazioni*) of Mestre and Marghera, where another 176,000 residents reside (Bagliani *et al.*, 2004). Paris, founded on *Ile de la Cité* on the river Seine, spilled over onto the adjoining river banks, to which it has long been connected by bridges (Jones 2006).

As a rough global average, island states and territories already have a population density that is at least twice, and as much as three times, that of mainland states: 48 persons/km² for populated continents (51, without Australia); versus 94 persons/km² for island jurisdictions; rising sharply to 144, without Greenland (Baldacchino 2010: 168). One reason for such higher densities of/on small islands is that mainland states normally have larger areas of countryside or undeveloped land over which settlements can develop, and which ‘pushes down’ population densities. Moreover, and in spite of the permeability of borders and the interchange facilitated by the aquatic medium, island jurisdictions cannot or will not shed their populations readily, even where population densities are already considerable (Baldacchino 2010: 168). With this natural limit to land area, some small island states and territories—Maldives, Singapore, as well as Hong Kong, Macau and Xiamen (China)—have taken to land reclamation projects (Glaser *et al.* 1991; Wang *et al.* 2010; Wan & King 2013); but this is expensive, its results are limited, and not always geologically feasible. A more common consequence is the export of people: many island diasporas are more numerous than the resident island populations they leave behind (Connell 2007). This human haemorrhage has spawned a type of small island economy that depends considerably on household-to-household remittance transfers, earned and sent from overseas (Bertram 2006).

Expanding the Island Capital City

In any case, the urban settlements on the small island—much as happens elsewhere—will tend to expand, typically radially out from and along the main and port city. This development could easily overrun and end up incorporating outlying suburbs. The expansion is also driven by an urbanisation wave that sees the city absorbing displaced islanders from the countryside, pushed out by less attractive agricultural, forestry or fishery practices, and often in search of paid regular employment.

What makes small islands distinct in this dynamic is the sheer scale of the impact of port city urbanisation. A database compiled by the World Bank clearly shows that capital cities on small states and territories—that is, those with resident populations of less than one million—are much more likely to contain disproportionate levels of the total population of that same state or territory than larger states. Of the 20 states and territories in the world today whose capital cities now contain 80% or more of that jurisdiction’s total population, only two have populations of more than one million (Singapore and Hong Kong); and all except Djibouti are islands or archipelagos (World Bank 2014).

Until then, many city walls would have historically established and defined the maximum perimeter of the city. Indeed, in some civilisations, ‘wall’ and ‘city’ were so tightly linked that one could easily stand for the other (Tracy 2000: 1). For example, the Chinese character for *wall*, 城 (*chéng*) is also used to denote ‘city’. But, with the threat of piracy gone, and the fortifications rendered obsolete by modern military technologies, many of these city walls were dramatically breached or torn down, partially or totally, to allow for the urban expansion. Only strict zoning regulations and/or a modern appreciation of heritage may prevent a widespread building spree, keeping the capital city growth in check, and maintaining a modicum of rurality in small island settings. We thus come across the phenomenon of the city island, or the island city, an urban agglomeration that effectively takes over the whole territory of the island, or islands, in which case they are usually linked by bridges and/or causeways to each other. Macau would fit this description. This appellation would also apply to the Spanish

exclave of Ceuta, and the UK overseas territory of Gibraltar which, while not quite geophysical islands, are both politically islanded by virtue of having neighbours that dispute their territorial status, while their respective metropolitan power is further distant.

Indeed, with growing populations and expanded economic activity, various small islands easily overrun their land borders. The Croatian settlement of Primošten, for example, was initially confined to the islet off the coast with that name; but the connecting drawbridge became a causeway when the Turkish threat abated, and now the town has expanded onto the adjoining mainland. At least two other Croatian island settlements, Tribunj and Trogir, have similarly ‘fused’ with their adjoining mainlands, to which they are now connected by bridges (Faričić & Mirošević 2014: 125).

On larger scales, consider Montreal, in Quebec, Canada; or Stockholm, the capital of Sweden; or Bombay/Mumbai, in India; these are suitable examples of what was initially an archipelago, now a connected series of islands that have fused and spilled over adjoining mainlands. And the settlement originally on the island of Manhattan has spilled over to become the largest metropolis in the United States (Shorto 2005).

The Lingering Anxiety of the in-between

But, let me proceed now to consider larger islands (and typically smaller populations) where the major city/port is *not* the only city/town and does *not* engulf the rest of the island. The development dynamic here is interesting because, on one hand, the city and port may very well be the centre of marine-based or driven, mercantile and industrial activity; and the conduit for the arrivals of ideas, peoples and practices from overseas. After all, by definition, ‘capital cities have always been plugged into international networks’ (Smith & Ebejer 2012: 137). Tourist arrivals, by sea and then by air, would (still today) be largely channelled through the city. And, prior to the popularisation of car ownership and/or the introduction of effective public transport systems, it would have been simply essential to reside close to the city if it was one’s employment location. Opportunities for private or government employment, in commerce, shipbuilding/repair or public administration, may have existed exclusively in *the city*.

However, the island territory may be large enough, demographically and economically, to permit the growth of various sub-urban, other urban and/or rural settlements, and especially after the threat of invasion and piracy has abated. Many of these patterns would today include coastal developments associated with burgeoning mass ‘sun, sea and sand’ tourism industries. This more recent settlement growth may be less beholden to external interests than the capital city for their development, or else cultivate different trans-territorial links. Consider, for example, the case of Sóller, a village in Mallorca that has been historically connected to France both economically and culturally. In this way, the ‘in between’ space that characterised the island city during those anxious times when it was liable to attack still remains an anxious space, aloof from the city’s *habitus*, a term coined by Bourdieu (1977) to represent socialised norms and schema that guide behaviour and thought; ‘a set of unconscious schemes that structure our situation-specific ways of thinking, perceiving and acting’ (Blondeel 2005: 1) and which I am here (provocatively?) applying to the city *per se*. While the ‘city as island’ escapes materially and conceptually from its fortified encasement, creeping out and becoming de-islanded in the process, the city also rolls over and materially embraces a scape that does not necessarily share its rubric of ideas and epistemologies. And so, while the visual and physical typology of the peri-urban zone or interface (PUI) may suggest a seamless conurbation, the socio-cultural and ideational praxis

‘on the ground’ suggests otherwise. What had been an ‘in between’ space many years ago is still, in some respects, similarly contested and just as ambiguous.

What transpires is more than the typically envious relationship that exists between first and second cities the world over, and in both islands and mainlands (Umbach 2005). The difference here is that the first city, often the port and administrative capital, is the territory’s main segue for connecting regionally and internationally. Through that port and city, new ideas arrive and take root, ethnic diversities may thrive, radical ideas transported from elsewhere reach and start circulating on the island, and a cosmopolitan intelligentsia may emerge. That is where the (overseas educated) national professional and political elites will be based; and that is where the main centre/s of higher education will open. Historically, this city would have been the main, if not the only, point of entry into the island and the first, and possibly only, point of contact between foreign visitors and local residents (Smith & Ebejer 2012:142). In contrast to this modern cultural mix and its overwhelmingly urban expression, there is the relative backwater of rural or smaller urban settlements beyond the city, where ideas may be more conservative, change may be slower, suspicions of and about the urban elite rife, and a rural idyll is constructed and often paraded, sung and otherwise upheld as a more authentic representation of the island culture than the hybrid amalgam that pervades what unfolds in the main city (e.g., Quintero Ribera 1987 on Puerto Rico). This is perhaps a better way of representing the ‘open versus closed’, or ‘routes versus roots’ dichotomy often attributed to island societies (Law 2005; DeLoughrey 2007).

Of course, different islands will have manifestly different histories; but this ‘main city versus the rest’ nexus and the problematique of a ubiquitous urban shadow and yet a resilient anti-urban ideology and mythology of conservatism and conservationism (Smith & Ebejer 2012: 139) may recur in spite of these differences. They can be fleshed out using the specific details of particular places, events, texts and perhaps even personalities. And this dichotomy may present itself even though, geo-physically, economically and in terms of domestic mobility and circulation, there may appear to be no such thing as a ‘rural-urban divide’, especially in such a relatively small, island space.

What I wish to highlight in the rest of this paper is the manifestation, symbolic as well as material, of the breaching of island city walls on small islands, paving the way to this pervasive urbanisation which nevertheless leaves puddles of anti-urban angst and bravado. I will do so in relation to three Mediterranean island cities drawn from three distinct states: Spanish Palma, Maltese Valletta and Greek Corfu/Kérkyra. I contend that the fate of city walls, in the context of changing land use values and priorities in the Mediterranean basin, is a powerful indicator of the tension between global and local, inside and outside, roots and routes that is at the heart of small island life. And while these walls may be considered a banal (*after* Billig 1995) representation of this tension; it is far from being an accidental one. Rather, it is a ‘constitutive outside’, a liminal structure delineated by acts of power (Mouffe 2000: 21) which change across time.

Breaching the City Walls: The Island City spills over

It is ironic that, in so many cases—the case of Rhodes is one notable exception—city walls that have not been breached by any enemy, have then been demolished or breached by the locals to make way for building extensions, to permit better access roads in and out of their city, to reduce the threat of contagious diseases amongst otherwise too densely populated

settlements, and/or to recognise and improve the connectivity between the old city and its younger suburbs which would have sprouted beyond its perimeter and which would now represent its main expansion centres.

Palma

The impacts of such a decision could be quite significant. Palma (de Mallorca) is the capital of Mallorca and of the Balearic Islands, part of the region of Catalonia, Spain (Population of Mallorca: 870,000; population of the city of Palma: 400,000). It is spoken of as a city whose beauty and heritage are constantly being menaced by the march of modernity (Picornell 2010). Some chronicles trace this loss to the Plan Calvet and 1902, when, citing population pressure and hygiene concerns, most of the massive walls (*murallas*) that once surrounded the city's historic centre started being demolished, and the ensuing rubble used to fill in the moat (Seguí Llinas & Capella i Cervera 2001). The walls thus operate at a symbolic level as the limits and paradigmatic horizons of an enclosed and stable city, which could destabilise the island's cultural balance through its potential growth beyond its clear limits (Picornell 2014). According to a guidebook by Lluís Ripoll (1946: 24), it is through the cracks in the walls that 'the old city would lose its character.' The writer Jaume Vidal Alcover (1993[1986]: 11) also identifies the dismantlement of the city walls with the beginning of 'the city's depersonalisation and dehumanisation'. In Picornell's analysis, the city of Palma is a 'monster' whose growth now threatens the identity of the rest of the island.

More recently, there has been a new appreciation of what survives of these historic walls, along the shoreward side of the city. Some parts of the various city walls can still be seen today as if 'forgotten leftovers', mainly below *La Seu* (the cathedral), to the western part of *Passeig Sagrera* (Baluard de Sant Pere), and behind and towards the eastern parts of the *Parc de la Mar* (Baluard del Princep) (Mallorca Photo Blog, 2009). The general wave of appreciation of the history of urban morphology in Mallorca, as elsewhere, has led to a passionate accommodation of its old city walls within modern conceptualisations of urban living. The 'turn' has also led to a critical questioning of the ascendancy of mobility discourse in contemporary human geography (Franquesa 2011).

Valletta

That of Valletta, the capital of Malta (population: 410,000), is a different story (Thake & Hall 1993). The city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has largely maintained its encircling walls intact. It was built from scratch by the Knights of the Order of St John, starting in 1568, and was therefore a cosmopolitan European city from its outset. It served as the seat of the Order until its eviction from Malta by Napoleon in 1798. 'A monumental architecture of auberges, palaces and public buildings dominates the cityscape' (Smith & Ebejer 2012: 141). Nevertheless, population growth for most of the 19th and 20th centuries was not inside Valletta proper, but in the 'Valletta conurbation', an urban agglomeration centred on the capital and radiating outwards towards the north, west and south, now still holding about two-thirds of Malta's population: around 300,000 people (Chapman & Cassar 2004). (Malta is the third most densely populated state in Europe, after Monaco and Vatican City.) Valletta itself has declined in importance, and now has about 6,000 residents; but some 20,000 locals descend on the capital every weekday for work, shopping or recreation. In spite of the self-evident radial urban sprawl, Valletta has remained fairly intact as a fortified city. The one main visible breach

through its walls is Glormu Cassar Avenue, initially called Duke of York Avenue because its foundation stone was laid in 1927 by the then Duke of York, the future King George VI of Britain. Ironically enough, the British military authorities in Malta at the time would have recommended the opening of the breach to facilitate communications in and out of the city (just as they supported similar breaches for the installation of the railway at around the same time.) Otherwise, the main entrance to the city has of late been returned to its old fortress feel, with a narrowed fixed pedestrian bridge (Rix 2014). Interestingly enough, Mdina, Malta's old capital, has kept its walls intact; as that city has become almost exclusively residential and touristic, the pressure for access has been much less than in Valletta and certainly more manageable, with only some 300 residents (Boissevain 1996; Malta Population Estimates, 2014).

In any case, a sense of *Il-Belt* (literally, 'the city' of Valletta, with no local rival) versus 'the rest' is redolent. This was acutely borne out during the brief French occupation (1798–1800) when French troops shut themselves in Valletta, defended by the same fortifications that were meant to repulse the enemy, and presumably with some connivance by the Maltese capital city's residents. 'Valletta, especially in the 18th century, was home to the Maltese intelligentsia, eager to welcome the challenges of the Enlightenment' (Xuereb 2011: n.p.). An alliance with the French was to these Maltese urbanites probably preferable to a return to the despotic rule of the decadent Order of St John. Meanwhile, the countryside, inspired by the Maltese clergy and which had led the popular revolt against the French, maintained a resolute two-year siege of the city, with the assistance of a few British and Portuguese troops and some warships maintaining a blockade. An enduring rural-urban rivalry breaks surface in the traditional animosity between supporters of the Valletta football team and that of Birkirkara, now Malta's most populated town (22,500 residents) and originally a rural settlement, but now ironically swept up within the expanded Valletta conurbation (Armstrong & Mitchell 2006).

Corfu

The third case is the town of Corfu, also known as Kérkyra (Κέρκυρα), on what is now a Greek island bearing the same name, located in the Ionian Sea and, for 400 years, a Venetian outpost. (Population of Corfu region: 102,000; population of Corfu town: 40,000). Most inhabitants lived within the walls of the Old (Sea) Fort, built on the foundations of an earlier Byzantine castle. Already in the Middle Ages, however, the town could not accommodate the whole population and settlements sprouted outside the city walls. Writings from the 13th century onwards tell of a separation of administrative and religious powers between the inhabitants of the citadel and those of the outlying parts of the town occupying what is now the Esplanade. However, in the aftermath of the first great Ottoman siege of Corfu in 1537, when the suburbs were burnt, the Venetians expanded the fortifications of the city; the city walls were subsequently strengthened in 1546. To do so, the Venetians razed 2,000 homes in the suburb of San Rocco. The Newer (Land) Fort above the old harbour was erected between 1576 and 1588 to protect the town from a potential second Turkish invasion. Large walls linked the two fortresses, so that the town's inhabitants could, once again, all live safely inside. The old town of Corfu, that occupies this area, is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The walls were however destroyed: during the British occupation (1814–1864) the outer fortifications on the western edge of the town were demolished and residential areas planned outside the defensive walls. In 1864, when the island was attached to the Kingdom of the Hellenes, the

town's fortresses were disarmed and several sections of the perimeter wall and yet more defensive structures were demolished. Today, only two of the four gates of the old town survive. What was the main gate of Corfu, the *Porta Reale* (Royal Gate), was demolished in 1893. Nineteenth-century Corfu town was dominated by a reform-minded elite while the rural surroundings were driven by more radical and nationalist interests, seeking integration with the fledgling Greek nation-state. Corfu town was a capital city, a port city, an administrative centre, as well as a military base, a centre for the transport and transit of travellers, commerce and cargo, and an educational and intellectual hub. Corfu's international airport was built just 3km outside the Corfu city limits in 1962; thus most international visitors to the island are effectively channelled in and out through the capital city's limits.

By the way, administrative reform in Greece in 2010 meant that the region of Corfu is now a single municipality, instead of the former 12. This 'reform' officialises the sheer dominance of the city over the rest of the settlements and outlying smaller islands. (The same process occurred on Chios, where Chios Town is now the municipal capital.) But, the smaller settlements resent this and are lobbying to undo-the reform, to some extent.

Discussion

The sheer relative dominance of *island* capital-cum-port cities dwarfs all other settlement patterns; and the breaching of the city's erstwhile formidable walls is a telling reminder of how what was inside came to be outside, even in small islands where there was, and there could be, no hinterland to speak of.

Small islands are often theorised as open systems; they are particularly susceptible to the impact of external events in three distinct yet related ways: in the suddenness of impact, in the intensity of effect, and in the speed of penetration. Such dynamics can be said to constitute the character of vulnerability. Indeed, as Royle (2001: 58–59) points out, small islands rarely survive sieges and invasions; if and when an enemy force arrives, the stricken islanders find it very difficult to avoid defeat (and as also documented above by wholesale island populations being enslaved).

And yet, there is another, less dramatic power dynamic at play on most small islands: one where the invading force is resident, and where the invasion has been taking place slowly and steadily, with no military campaigns to show for it. This is what political theorist Gramsci (2000) would call 'a war of position', a subtle contest of ideology, economic rationale, and culture whereby cosmopolitanism, modernity, ethnic diversity, institutionalisation, and liberalism confront rural conservatism, informality and tradition; and not an all-out "war of manoeuvre" of rushed and self-evident military tactical moves.

The breaching of the island capital/port city walls makes material and symbolic that which is already cultural and social. The spillover is pervasive and ubiquitous, to the extent that some small islands are now effectively just one integrated, articulated urban settlement. Commonly enough, the terrain thus 'liberated' by the removal of these city fortifications, as well as the empty spaces envisaged as part of their defence systems (such as moats), are transformed into or replaced by transport infrastructure, including car parking zones, of which there never seem to be enough. Roads, the occasional railway line and the public transport network tend to represent the articulation of the island city with 'the rest'. (For example, until 2011, practically *all* public buses in Malta had the space directly in front of the main entrance to Valletta as either their point of origin or destination.)

This discussion has also implications on the economic trajectory of island jurisdictions. Various tentative typologies have converged in proposing an ideal type of island economy that thrives by virtue of extensive links and interactions—commercial, cultural, intellectual—with the world beyond. King and Connell (1980: 3) call this ‘the cross-roads island’, citing Malta as an example, enjoying a ‘nodal location’; and with ‘sailors and traders, colonists and conquerors, flocking in from either side’ (Semple 1911: 424). Warrington and Milne (2007: 413–415) refer to the same type as ‘the entrepôt island’: a jurisdiction blessed by locational centrality, but generating *internally* the circumstances contributing to its success (emphasis in original). These conditions include investment finance, entrepreneurial flair, and a market-friendly legal regime. The authors cite Singapore, Mauritius, the Channel Islands and Åland as apt examples. UNEP (2014: 17 *et seq.*) has also recently proposed an island-centric development model premised on ‘technological leapfrogging’ (UNEP 2014: 23) where information and communication technologies, along with strong investments in education, diaspora engagement and human resource development, help to lift islands into strategic economic niches. What these models envisage are cosmopolitan and polyglot societies, melting pots of ideas and beliefs that nurture entrepreneurship. The Mediterranean was very much like this before the rise of nationalism and border security; this analysis could well explain the relative decline of this region as a source of creativity and innovation (Abulafia 2011).

What these models also presuppose is a strong urban infrastructure that islands can often only deploy via their port-cum-capital cities. Cosmopolitanism and polyglot societies are typically found in and nurtured by urban and coastal environments; these may not be easy to come by on small islands: Warrington & Milne (2007), UNEP (2014) and King & Connell (2000) propose various alternative models to account for such variants. It should therefore come as no surprise that island cities which fulfil the crossroads/entrepôt criteria loom large, in every sense, in their respective milieu. Indeed, economist Paul Streeten (1993: 199) does not mince his words: he has argued that a city island or city island state, leading to the absence of a rural hinterland, has pivotal significance for economic development, because it exempts that territory from ‘the slowcoach of agriculture’. As has been argued elsewhere:

In the case of small, densely populated island territories starved of land—such as the city-states of Bermuda, Hong Kong, Malta and Singapore – industrial or service sector developments have been the inevitable growth poles, obliging a quick shift of mind-frame towards export promotion and the penetration of export markets. It also inhibits the formation of a land-owning peasantry or plantocracy which can become a formidable lobby in domestic and regional politics, seeking protection from cheaper imports and contributing to higher costs of food items to consumers (Baldacchino 2010: 67).

Notice the references to the usual island suspects. These island cities or island city states—all among the top ten most densely populated jurisdictions in the world—are therefore spared from the lobbying of strong rural and agricultural interests which inhibit the turn towards the cross-roads/entrepôt island. There are hidden blessings in having not much land, a high population density, and/or a relatively poor soil. And, as if to offer itself as the exception to prove this rule, amongst the world’s most densely populated states and territories, *only* Bangladesh is both poor and has a large agricultural economy (Baldacchino 2012: xxviii). The absence of a rural hinterland is ‘potentially good news for development’ (Baldacchino & Bertram 2009: 148); or at least of a certain kind of development, and one that presumably does not meet the enthusiastic support of rural interests, where they linger. Again, there is at

least one exception that proves this tenet: New Zealand. This island economy has a rural hinterland that has always been highly developed, technologically sophisticated, and global in outlook. Even there, farmers have historically generally been a conservative political voice, but their influence has waned since the 1950s (Baldacchino & Bertram 2009: 148). Ireland may also qualify as an exception, with its competitive agricultural sector that coexists with an urbane and high-tech economy (Trauth 2001). However, neither New Zealand nor Ireland are small enough to be city islands.

Conclusion

Of all the delectable islands, the Neverland is the snuggest and most compact, not large and sprawly, you know, with tedious distances between one adventure and another, but nicely crammed. (J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*, 1911: 5).

Port cities are notoriously open and connected (Driessen 2005); and capital cities are quintessentially places where an outward orientation is manifest (Dijkink 2000: 66). Such characteristics are not specific to islands: Vance (1970) and Johnston (1982) have proposed a similar model to explain the colonial settlement of what is now the eastern seaboard of the United States. Moreover, the island Mediterranean has had a historical liability to attack and invasion fairly different from that of other mainland or coastal settlements. However, small island cities, while being small in absolute size, would nevertheless tend to be disproportionately large centres of urban settlement on the islands where they are located; they have no frontier or hinterland with which to engage. And so, in combining port status and capital city status with a small island perch, one does tend to end up with a very strong paramouncy of ‘the city’ over island life and with an associated densification that is also reflected in Neverland (also an island) being ‘nicely crammed’. No wonder, therefore, that the island and its port-capital city can end up sharing the same name. Demolished city walls stand for a historically reversed siege and invasion of the hinterland by the city. But this invasion and domination masks a different political reality and cultural praxis. The island capital-cum-port city becomes a palimpsest for urbane cosmopolitanism that jars against the routines of the rural area; and yet, even where such countryside may have given way to suburbia, old traditions and representations die hard. Urban-rural tensions can be determined in most jurisdictions. But, on small islands, this strain can be glimpsed even *within* urban and peri-urban settlements. These are powerful in-between spaces where resentment, jealousy and rivalry could play out. Indeed, unlike larger cities which may have undergone a similar (and an even earlier) breaching of their walls—for example, Paris in 1853 and Barcelona in 1854—there may be *only* peri-urban settlements to speak of in such small islanded locales, and no urban-rural divide as such.

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Notes

1. I am grateful to Prof. Stephen Royle for alerting me to this phenomenon.
2. The only exceptions I can think of are Nicosia (Cyprus) and The Valley (Anguilla).

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