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“Small States and Kinopolitical Power at Sea: Taming Nomadic Forces from Greenland to Greece”

Discussant

George Kalpadakis | Senior Researcher, Modern Greek History Research Centre (KEINE), Academy of Athens

Abstract

Under international law of the sea, the concept of ‘state sovereignty’ defines all relationships in the ocean space and serves as the fundamental tool to control mobilities and exercise jurisdiction over movement, often framed as the ‘kinopolitical power of the state’. Small states emphatically wield kinopolitical power to diminish any non-state mobilities and consolidate their position in the international arena. To examine the interplay between non-state mobilities (nomadic forces) at sea, which often challenge existing territorial assumptions, and the exercise of kinopolitical power by small states, this presentation delves into two examples. First, it draws insights from the way control over movement is wielded by a small Inuit nation striving for decolonization, Greenland, over its distinct Indigenous nomadic subgroups, by confining them within a delineated territory and implementing certain resource management mechanisms. Subsequently, examining migration policies and violent practices at sea, it shows how Greece, under the same territorial rationale, seeks to assert kinopolitical power in the Mediterranean Sea and control any non-state movement. Through these examples, this presentation highlights how sovereign territorial logics not only impose a singular spatiolegal architecture for the world's oceans but also silence distinct ontologies of movement embedded in Indigenous, migrant, or other non-state jurisdictions in the ocean space.

Speaker's CV

Apostolos Tsiouvalas is a PhD Research Fellow at the Norwegian Centre for Law of the Sea (NCLOS) at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø. Apostolos is also a Research Associate at The Arctic Institute – Center for Circumpolar Security Studies, a think tank and registered 501c3 nonprofit organisation based in Washington D.C., U.S.A and board member of the Hellenic Polar

Zones Society (ELEPOZ). Apostolos holds an LL.M. degree in Polar Law from the University of Akureyri in Iceland, an MPhil degree in Indigenous Studies from UiT The Arctic University of Norway, and a BA degree in Law from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece. Apostolos' main research interests revolve around legal anthropology, new materialism(s), legal pluralism, indigenous rights and environmental law in the Arctic. His doctoral project is critically exploring Law of the Sea's understanding of motion in the world's oceans as an artifact of legal modernity and seeks to revisit it in light of premodern theorizations of motion and legal anthropological research with Arctic Indigenous communities. Throughout his PhD studies, Apostolos has been awarded fully-funded fellowships at various institutions, including the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Ilisimatusarfik - the University of Greenland, the Polar Cooperation Research Centre in Kobe, Japan, and the Sustainable Ocean Alliance Fellowship program in Panama City, Panama. In 2022, Apostolos was honored with an award from the French Institute of Norway as the best early-career scholar in Norway focusing on ocean research, followed by research mobilities in Brest and Paris, France.

