



The Social Construction of the Ocean (Cambridge Studies in International Relations)

By Philip E. Steinberg

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The world's oceans have been extremely important in the development and interaction of societies throughout history. This unique book uses the tools of political geography and international relations to examine the ways in which nations and peoples have viewed and used the oceans. Most social scientists have looked on the seas as a resource, but Steinberg sees them as a space defined by society, arguing that political and economic forces have shaped the governance and representation of the sea as much as they have the land.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Steinberg lucidly summarizes the book's major themes: the sea is not a place, but it is a space 'where social contradictions are worked through, social change transpires, and future social relations are imagined' (p. 209). This is an apt summary of an excellent book, which makes a highly original contribution to a much-underconsidered portion of political geography in theoretically-nuanced and empirically-informative ways. It is not only the first such major contribution to the study of the political economy-and-geography of the oceans, but destined to be a classic." *Political Geography*

"This is much more than a social constructionist's book about the sea. Steinberg has produced a splendid, innovative text that will be of interest to all social scientists with an interest in the historical development of the modern world from outside narrow nationalist perspectives." Peter J. Taylor, Loughborough University

"The subject is fascinating, and the author offers an admirable sweep of the ways in which the ocean has been used and depicted over the past 500 years or so. He draws on a rich variety of source materials, and some of [his] ideas sparkle...." *Choice*

"In a relatively short book, Philip Steinberg succeeds in explaining the social and historical nature of our past and present conceptualizations of the sea." *Journal of World History*, Hans K. Van Tilburg, NOAA Ocean Service

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