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The Faroe Islands are currently at a crossroads in their constitutional status. Discussions concerning changes in the current constitutional status are ongoing and several analyses about possible trajectories of future development are being proposed. Argued in a context of Faroese nationalism, this article tries to assess these trajectories in the future jurisdictional and political development of the Faroe Islands in terms of three possible scenarios: independence or full sovereignty (as is Iceland); a freely associated statehood (as are Niue and the Cook Islands in relation to New Zealand); or a confederation, probably involving changes at both the central level of the Danish state and the European Union level. This article argues that the most likely future development is that of a state in free association with Denmark. Meanwhile, island politics can change very quickly and the traditional cleavages in Faroese politics are liable to changing degrees of public support.


This paper accepts the challenge posed by Godfrey Baldacchino in Islands and despots, published in Commonwealth & Comparative Politics in February 2012, to acknowledge and investigate the implications of the expressions of harmony and solidarity often observed in small island societies. To do so, aspects of the Isle of Man’s political and social life are discussed from the perspectives of popular rule and rationality. This paper argues that a homogeneity in preferences and the political practices of small island states might be a rational way of protecting a vulnerable economy and thus ensuring economic growth and a sufficient allocation to each island resident of the scarce resources required to survive. Such small island homogeneity and consensualism is therefore not necessarily indicating a deficient democratic practice, but might just connote another way of conducting democratic governance, spawned from a particular way of living and a particular range of needs.
Over the past few decades the Pacific region has undergone many changes through decolonization and postcolonial adjustment. Political change in new and existing Pacific nations is marked by efforts to reclaim identities, histories and futures. The smallest Pacific community with a separate identity is Pitcairn Island, the last British colony in the Pacific. Using critical ethnography this case study of Pitcairn examines the notion of erasure in relation to the history and politics of colonization and decolonization. Erasure is inextricably tied to the issue of power; the imbalance of power and the scrutiny of processes of social negotiation between centre and periphery. This paper argues that erasure has not been sufficiently well theorized in either island studies or postcolonial studies. As a subnational island jurisdiction the issue for Pitcairn is how to reclaim identity, maintain autonomy without sovereignty, and create a sustainable future for its small island community.

In order to explicate the relevance of the island dimension for political categories, for each of seven political institutions, a series of four comparisons are conducted on a global basis. The first is between small island states and all other states, the second is between small island states and larger island states, the third is between small island states and small mainland states, and the fourth is between island states and mainland states, regardless of size. The finding is that islandness links in many instances to the choice of institutional settings. Political scientists are therefore well-advised to include in their analyses islandness among the factors that shape institutional choices.

Political architecture differences have only seldom been explained in the political science literature by reference to physical factors like size and geography. Correcting this neglect while focusing on microstates and especially on archipelago geographies, this article aims at uncovering the impact of geographical non-contiguity on political institution-building. Three separate devices for power devolution – federalism, bicameralism and assembly quotas – perform as dependent variables, and the guiding hypothesis is, for each device, that the device is implemented among archipelagos to a higher extent than among contiguous entities. Although there are marked differences between devices, the findings in general support the belief that territorial non-contiguity is more likely to
foster power devolution. The findings also survive controls that investigate the impact of contesting factors.


States differ in the extent to which they give their constitutions rigidity. Exploring constitutional amendment methods in 21 small island democracies with plurality elections, this study aims at explaining such rigidity differences. The leading expectation is that rigid amendment dominates in countries which have experienced in their political life disproportionate dominance in terms of party politics or excessive social fragmentation. These countries, namely, have probably internalized a need to ward off by means of high amendment thresholds sudden constitutional replacement, which is one possible consequence of the plurality election method. A main empirical finding is that a pattern of positive co–variance certainly exists. Whenever the triggering factors (dominance/fragmentation) are at hand, rigid amendment follows; whenever the factors are not at hand, moderate amendment follows. The finding strongly supports an image of small islands as thoughtful and purposeful political actors that design their political institutions to reflect their particular needs.


Recent scholarship, particularly in new imperial studies, has underscored the role of networks in shaping imperial projects. A networked approach offers a useful lens through which to analyze nineteenth–century steamship services, and in this paper I draw on such a perspective to focus on the operations of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSPC). Importantly the RMSPC, unlike some of the other British Government mail–contract holding lines, operated across an archipelago as well as an ocean. In probing the significance of the RMSPC’s archipelagic context for the maritime network, this paper draws on a theoretical intersection between networked approaches to empire and island studies. I suggest that an examination of the maritime network through an archipelagic lens brings to the fore colonial priorities, imperatives and hierarchies that can appear flattened out through a networked approach alone. I argue for an archipelagic framing of analysis in order to heighten the local and regional significance of this transportation infrastructure, in effect foregrounding the relationship between the maritime service and mobilities in the Caribbean.


This paper presents results from a regional policy evaluation study conducted for the European Commission. The study examined the impact of the European Regional
Development Fund and Cohesion Fund on EU regions with ‘specific geographical characteristics’, namely islands, mountain regions and sparsely populated areas. These types of regions have been attracting increasing EU regional policy attention and their economic development is considered important in helping the EU to attain its important ‘territorial cohesion’ objective. The focus of this paper is on the island regions. Evaluation of island regions in their own right has not been undertaken before by the EU. The study focuses on the 2000–06 and (still on-going) 2007–13 EU regional policy programs. The paper presents the methodology adopted by the study before turning to the main findings concerning the types of policy initiatives adopted in the island regions, and the appropriateness of the policies used for the economic situation faced by the islands. The islands encompassed by the study are all normal sub-national regions of EU member states. Islands with an unusual degree of administrative autonomy (e.g. the Outermost Regions) were excluded.


This rejoinder seeks to build upon McElroy and Lucas’ excellent paper by exploring further the relationship between distances from small islands to their main markets and economic performance. It is argued that the nature of this relationship is not only statistically very strong but also that it is nuanced and multifaceted. A very fruitful set of areas for further future research awaits any researcher brave and energetic enough to pick up the baton and run (or swim—we are talking islands here) with it.


This paper offers glimpses into how businesspersons, entrepreneurs and small business managers resolve their most pressing problems under conditions characterized by smallness and islandness in order to survive. Applying a nissological approach complemented by an action-oriented grounded method, the researcher explores and inductively analyses the mind-sets of islanders to explicate the basic socio-psychological process that influences how they resourcefully overcome problems associated with mistrust and powerlessness, transforming these into opportunities of trust-building and empowerment. Two concurrent and seemingly contradictory processes emerge from the analysis, suggesting that Gozitans—the residents of the small Mediterranean island of Gozo—apply both overt formal and covert informal processes to solve their problems.


Migration strategies often permit densely populated island territories to alleviate unemployment, ease pressure on limited resources, and compensate for the absence of
economic diversification. This paper evaluates two types of recent migratory flows affecting the Maltese archipelago: international migration to and from the islands triggered or intensified by European Union membership; and domestic, inter-island movements between the ‘mainland’ (Malta) and the smaller island (Gozo). The descriptive statistics used are based on published data, whilst the qualitative evaluation is derived from focus groups and interviews with stakeholders. Conclusions suggest that emigration remains an overall positive experience at the individual level, with constructive spill-over effects, mingling of cultures and better use of resources at the national level. Such benefits can be expected to increase if authorities design policies which encourage rather than discourage migratory flows.


This paper draws on a New Zealand case study, Motuihe Island, to examine the challenges of conserving cultural heritage in places renowned for natural heritage values. In keeping with the broader trend toward the ecological restoration of islands close to Auckland, Motuihe Island is undergoing conversion into an ecosystem of native flora and fauna. Issues and tensions relating to the management of natural and cultural heritage will be discussed and influencing aspects investigated: the nature/culture dualism, the effect of New Zealand’s history and identity, and the influence of islandness on heritage management.


Islands are sites of innovative conceptualizations, whether of nature or human enterprise, whether virtual or real. The study of islands on their own terms today enjoys a growing and wide-ranging recognition. This paper celebrates the launch of Island Studies Journal in the context of a long and thrilling tradition of island studies scholarship.


Not sun, sea, sand but ice, isolation, indigenous people: the critical exploration of extreme tourism in cold water locations has barely started. Cold water island locations tend to have harsh, pristine and fragile natural environments, characterized by wide open spaces. They become contexts for an exceptional and expensive form of vigorous, outdoor, adventure or cultural tourism, and direct encounters with nature. The nature and practices of the tourism industry suggest a more sustainable form of island tourism, very different from what is experienced on the warm, tropical and exotic island stereotype. This paper critically reviews some of the salient contrasts between the ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ versions of island tourism. It discusses how, on many ‘cold water’ island locations, sound strategic
management, limited civilian ‘buy in’, low populations and an absence of pluralism in political life, can conspire with climate and relative inaccessibility to limit tourism to a small scale, low–impact industry with a relatively high, locally–retained value added. Some ‘warm water’ islands are trying to follow this model for tourism development, with mixed results.


The ‘in betweenity’ of islands is an ongoing problematic in contemporary politics. Given their geographic definition and boundedness, islands tend to be unitary jurisdictions – that means that they are unlikely to be shared by more than one power. In fact, there are just 11 islands in the world whose territory is ‘shared’ between more than one national jurisdiction. Meanwhile, there are still various small islands and other bounded territories whose status is contested amongst different (usually larger) states, including Kinmen (Taiwan), Falklands/Malvinas and Gibraltar. In this context, this essay reviews the River Plate area (between Uruguay and Argentina): historically a point of tension between two major powers in Latin America; and some of that tension has been centered on the islands in the region– particularly Martin García.


The pursuit of nissology, or island studies, calls for a recentering of focus from mainland to island, away from the discourse of conquest of mainlanders, giving voice and platform for the expression of island narratives. Yet, studying islands ‘on their own terms’, in spite of its predilection for authenticity, is fraught with epistemological and methodological difficulties. The insider/outsider distinction does not work all that well when it comes to islands, where hybridity is the norm. This paper seeks to extend this debate, grappling especially with the contributions of Grant McCall and Peter Hay to the sparse literature. Five dilemmas related to indigenous island geographies are presented and discussed, in a semi-autobiographical style.


Islands have transitioned from being conceived as prototypes of idealised polities to being deliberately engineered as offshore enclaves where the rules of the parent state need not fully apply. With their manageable size, separation and distance from the mainland,
small islands are rendered as convenient laboratories for entrepreneurial political engineering, and equally handy sites for research on the same. Island migration policies manifest this contemporary flexibility and creative governance of states. As we approach the 500th anniversary of Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), this paper explores these ideas in relation to the migration phenomenon on Europe’s southern flank. Using an island studies approach, it discusses the problematique of island spaces caught in this dynamic but which cannot be ‘offshore’ because, as unitary island states (Cyprus and Malta) and unlike larger states with small outlying and peripheral island components (Italy and Australia), they must somehow be ‘both inside and outside’. The paper goes on to critique such facile binarisms, arguing for a more nuanced appreciation of islands as well as a recognition that what may be, at face value, an expression of a state’s authority is as much a manifestation of its limitations.


Contending and competing geographies are often implicitly involved in archipelagic spaces. Various small island states and territories with multi–island geographies have flourishing tourism industries that presuppose an archipelagic experience: visitors are encouraged to explore and sample different island constituents of the territory. This strategy taps into different tourism niche markets, improves local value added, and shares tourism revenue beyond key nodes and urban centers. The organization of such an important economic activity however often reflects a ‘one–size–fits–all’, tightly coordinated, frequently contrived process that does not necessarily speak to the cultural and biogeographical forms of diversity that reside in the archipelago. This paper offers the notion of archipelago as a new way of rethinking problems and challenges encountered in island tourism, and then assesses the implications of this conceptualization on the representation of ‘the archipelago’ in the Azores, Portugal, and reviews what this approach means and implies for sustainable tourism policy.


A global review of islands and their connections with astronomy throughout history up to the contemporary times suggests eight compelling, distinct yet interlocking reasons why islands have been and remain so important to astronomy and astronomers. Islands constitute favourable locations for various types of astronomy–related activities: from tracking satellites and monitoring significant celestial events, to providing exceptional
locations to jurisdictions with mandated dark and unpolluted skies. They appeal for their favourable longitude and (especially southern) latitude, as well as for their disposition towards the conditions that the scientific community may expect in an ideal world: relatively clear viewing conditions from a secure, self-contained platform that is, however, endowed with connectivity. This article is written as a contribution to the International Year of Astronomy (2009).


A European Union initiative is seeking ways of determining the development potential of Europe’s lagging regions, which include various islands. On the basis of the policy review, methodology and data collected by the ongoing EUROISLANDS project, this paper presents Kökar (population: 262), the easternmost municipality of the Åland Islands, as a prototype archipelago that is seriously challenged by its size and multiple peripherality. It reviews the state of its social and transportation infrastructure, and of its human and financial capital. While the situation is serious, there are opportunities for branding, for developing associated economic activity, as well for appealing to a new wave of residents.


This study focuses on entrepreneurs in the small island state of Malta and investigates whether starting up and running an enterprise is facilitated or hindered by being in a small island environment. Specifically it asks (1) whether being on a small island, on the periphery of a major market, facilitates or hinders entrepreneurship and start–up success; (2) whether Malta’s cultural context and enterprise environment affect entrepreneurship and start–up success; (3) what the key success factors among Maltese start–ups are; and (4) how creativity and innovation are reflected in Maltese start–ups. Qualitative research among 13 start–ups is supported by telephone–based research among a sample of 90 respondents. Findings contribute to the pool of business expertise and context–specific information from small island states that is often missing from the international literature.


This paper revisits the status prospects for Taiwan in light of recent events in Kosovo and Tibet. In both cases, and certainly in Taiwan itself, the long standing contest between claims for self–determination and the tenacious defence of the principle of the territorial integrity of states has emerged once again to dominate the analysis of these cases. This contest is particularly dramatic in the divided international response to the independence
of Kosovo. In the case of Tibet, widespread international support for Tibet is in sharp contrast to the furious and determined resistance of China. Taiwan’s anomalous status remains that of a legal sovereign state, the Republic of China, enjoying some measure of recognition and formal diplomacy and a de facto state whose international relations are confined to paradiplomatic channels, extensive though they are. The paper considers the prospects for changes in the current anomalous status of the island state.


The political uses of islands under the dynamics of EU border production and management are explored in this four-paper collection. Although the island migration model is not unique per se, irregular migration to southern European islands does have some specific features, including the extraordinary media attention it draws. From this perspective, the scientific analyses offered here aim both to show the particular situation that these islands find themselves in within the European policy framework for controlling irregular immigration and, more generally, to illustrate how these island places are like the development of film into photograph, revealing the issues, complexity and stakes particular to undesirable migrations.


This paper is based on qualitative research undertaken since 2010 with African immigrants living in the small island state of Malta. Its purpose is to deconstruct a number of discourses and preconceptions about irregular migration, migrants and islandness. We argue that, in order to better understand the situation of migrants in Malta, we have to engage critically with conventional wisdom that depicts (usually small) islands as isolated, immobile and homogeneous spaces. Using a spatial approach, we propose the term ‘counter–islandness’ to describe a migration situation characterized by movement (versus immobility) and articulation of scales (versus isolation). We show how different scales in their complex and multiple interactions contribute to shaping and determining the future and trajectories of the ‘undesirables’. We explain how Malta has found itself at the heart of a complex circulatory system, articulating mobilities operating at various scales. We then categorize the role of the island within migratory patterns into three different forms: the island as barrier, hub, and place of settlement.


A recent paper by Feyrer & Sacerdote (2006) argues that the legacy of colonialism in a sample of 80 small islands is positive rather than negative, in the sense that a long period
as a colony in the 18th and 19th centuries correlates positively with present-day incomes and low infant mortality rates. Remaining a colony to the end of the 20th century is also positive for income. Colonial rule in the 17th and 20th centuries has no impact. This review essay relates Feyrer & Sacerdote’s work to other recent, cross-country research on the linkages between colonialism and development, and offers some criticisms of their data and conclusions. An interesting ongoing debate, as well as plenty of opportunities for further research along these lines, are anticipated.


This brief paper comments on McElroy’s Note, identifying one or two potential issues with its data and statistical method, but welcoming another contribution to the substantial body of islands scholarship that has appeared under McElroy’s name. An important emerging topic for research is whether two key groups of small island economies—those that are now sovereign states and those that are (still) non-sovereign territories—have followed diverging or parallel development paths since decolonization. Some evidence is noted pointing in both directions, leaving a wide-open field for future research.


The notions and materiality of connections, through electronic networks as well as modes of mobility, play an ever-increasing role in how we define, understand, engage and experience the world we live in and the islands we live on. This article presents an account of Icelandic encounters with technologies of telecommunication and explores how electronic connections have participated in formulating a particularly connected, island spatiality. It is argued that an island can be regarded as a kind of connected laboratory suitable for studying how associations form around technologies of connections, which can be traced through various actors. For this purpose, the historical genealogy of connections and telecommunication in Iceland is analyzed, as well as more contemporary ideas and representations of mobile phone usage and network connectivity. It is maintained that connections have fundamentally altered the spatiality as well as representations of Iceland. While still an island in a geographical sense, and in that manner remote and isolated, the social space of the island now denies such connotations in many respects, valorizing the connectivity of Iceland and its people.


The island of Barbuda has a relatively unique history, land tenure and geography. Unlike its Caribbean counterparts, the island is not suited to large-scale agriculture due to its
arid climate and relatively thin soils. Instead, the enslaved and eventually free people of Barbuda developed a complex herding ecology centered on common land ownership. As a result, carefully designed historic wells are strategically located around the island.

With the challenges brought about by climate change, an interdisciplinary, international team led by the Barbuda Research Complex is investigating the state of existing water and food resources and examining how the availability and quality of water resources have influenced local cultural practices. Barbudans and international scientists are working together to improve their resilience and live more sustainably in this new era of climatic adversity.


This paper charts the academic development of island archaeology from its roots in Darwinist and anthropological island studies through island biogeography to processual and post-processual archaeology. It is argued that the rarely made explicit yet fundamental premise of island archaeology that insular human societies show intrinsic characteristics essentially dissimilar from those on mainlands is false. The persistence of this misconception is due in part to the emphasis on islands as ideal units of analysis. It is suggested that island societies should be studied at the level of the archipelago and/or mainland coastal setting within their maritime cultural framework, ultimately leading up to an archaeology of maritime identity.


Since the earliest of times, islands have captured the artistic imagination; and, often, for the artist who finds his or her muse in being ‘islanded’, the smaller the island the better. Archipelagos offer an ideal setting for artists who take their inspiration from place: on small islands off islands they can experience an intensity of island living they might not otherwise have on a main island: boundedness and connection, isolation and community. This paper examines expressions of islandness by artists who live on islands off islands that are poles apart: ‘archipelagos’ of the Canadian North Atlantic and the Great Southern Ocean. It draws upon interviews with those artists and writers to consider the nature of humans’ attachment and attraction to islands, exploring through the lens of phenomenology what Stratford et al. call the entanglement between and among islands.


An internet forum, supported by the Small Islands Voice initiative, has since 2002 provided a place where islanders from around the world could discuss issues and problems and also learn from the experiences of others. This paper provides a reflective
overview of the discussions over the past four years and attempts to identify some specific characteristics that identify islanders in their approaches to everyday living. An analysis of the forum respondents shows that approximately two thirds are male; one half come from the Pacific islands; and more than a half are employed in island–based occupations. Discussions have covered infrastructural development; resource management; environmental, social and economic issues. The overview indicates islanders are very willing to speak out and take ownership of their issues and problems and their discussions show a significant level of understanding about the need to balance limited resources and economic development. Proposals for action are practical and feasible and there is a strong vein of common sense running through the responses. Most significantly, islanders show a deep love for their island homes, an attitude of caring about the future development of their islands, and a willingness to try to solve their problems themselves.


This paper looks at productivity growth rates in Malta and Cyprus and proposes policies as to how these island states might augment their productivity and competitiveness. We identify three possible growth strategies for the two islands: an innovation-oriented economy, a controlled input–cost economy and an opportunistic growth model. In order to infer which strategy might be best suited to the two states, we conduct a comparative analysis amongst different EU countries in terms of productivity yardsticks. We also evaluate trends in gross value added (GVA), employment levels, and unit labour costs (ULCs) in the most important economic sectors of Malta and Cyprus. The research suggests that a Controlled–Input Cost model is best suited to most Maltese and Cypriot economic sectors. Possible policies aimed at fostering future growth and competitiveness in the island states are proposed.


It is widely argued that small states and territories have relied upon the strategic trade and economic policies of larger countries to achieve development goals. Using the case of the export–oriented tuna industry in American Samoa (a territory of the United States), we argue that its status as a sub–national island jurisdiction (SNIJ) has been essential in jumpstarting and supporting industrial development. However, this relationship and its associated benefits are just one set of factors that influence the economic development opportunities and constraints that American Samoa’s tuna industry faces in the contemporary world economy. Moreover, the maintenance and future possibilities for industrial development in both SNIJs and (arguably) more economically vulnerable sovereign small developing island states (SIDS), is increasingly unlikely in the context of a globalizing capitalism and the new international trade regime.

Small islands frequently suffer from population decline, especially of young people, putting continuity of community at risk. At the same time, their limited size can mean an intense competition for housing stock, particularly in scenic or economically successful islands which draw investors and migrants: a dynamic that fuels inflation. This paper investigates property inflation on the Isle of Man and its threat of displacing young inhabitants and upsetting social sustainability. Qualitative interviews with young Isle of Man émigrés and residents investigate the influences upon decisions to either remain on, or leave, the island. Whilst prices were not found to be significant in the decisions of those that have left, they were very much so for those who wished to remain. Those who have left claimed to have done so in order to improve their financial and personal options, but most did not necessarily want to leave. The overall result is distress, work disenchantment, family postponement and potentially, rising xenophobia.


This article explores islandness in the River Plate imaginary. Two modern foundational island texts—Thomas More’s *Utopia* and Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*—have exerted a formative influence on the Spanish–American colonial imagination, an influence inflected by the particular historical experience of the River Plate region and its dominant city, Buenos Aires. The figuration of islandness is examined in three twentieth-century Argentine novels by Macedonio Fernández, Leopoldo Marechal, and César Aira. The article finds both continuity and evolution in the images of islandness in these novels.


This article considers the significance attributed to Prince Edward Island in managing a marginalized single female identity, as presented by accounts of thirty never–married and previously–married Island women, aged twenty–seven through sixty–five. As popular media and social narratives overwhelmingly position contemporary single women against an urban backdrop, the question arises as to whether unmarried Island women feel marooned in ways their urban counterparts may not. In accordance with feminist aims to produce research for, rather than about, women’s lives, the paper focuses on two themes from fieldwork interviews that were of particular interest to participants. The first theme relates to negotiating female singleness within the Island’s family–centered culture, and the second theme presents participants’ talk around advantages and
disadvantages of living in Prince Edward Island, Canada, as single women. The paper concludes with a summary of other findings from the study and suggestions for future research on female singleness and island locales.


Small island states have increasingly sought new means of economic diversification. Several Caribbean states have begun to develop medical tourism, partly building on existing tourist-oriented economies. Medical tourism has boomed in this century in several states in Asia and in Central America. The Bahamas, Barbados and the Cayman Islands exemplify different strategies for medical tourism, in order to generate foreign exchange and new employment, and reduce costs from overseas referrals. Most medical tourism projects have been developed by overseas corporations and are oriented to a US market. Business principles rather than health care dominate development strategies, notably of emerging transnational medical corporations, and raise ethical issues. Success will be difficult to achieve in a crowded and competitive market.


Small islands are disadvantaged by conventional development strategies and have sought unusual means of achieving economic development and raising their global profiles. The small Channel Island of Alderney, with a largely non-existent physical resource base, and steady population decline, has sought to develop several service sector activities, increasingly involving the internet and virtual activities. Internet gambling has proved successful. Bitcoin minting offers unique possibilities. Alderney has achieved economic development without significant local assets other than creativity and ingenuity, and a somewhat distinctive political status.


This paper comments on ‘Entrepreneurship and the dot tv phenomenon’ by Baldacchino & Mellor (2015) who suggest that state-run entrepreneurship is behind the success of .tv. To examine this, I briefly review the early years of .tv, the government’s administration of .tv, the actual impact of .tv income, and the numerical weight of .tv income compared with other sources of government revenue. I debunk several .tv-related myths and explore the media’s enduring .tv attraction. I also comment on topics covered by the authors that are unrelated to .tv – such as subsistence, exports, development models – identifying inaccuracies, issues in need of clarification, misleading descriptions, or material that I find stretched beyond credibility. Connecting .tv success to entrepreneurship might be a reasonable premise, but I doubt its plausibility. Notions of entrepreneurship, however, can be conceptually different. Perhaps this could be a starting
point to re-examine such differences, some of which can be slender, in the context of island- and sovereignty-related assets and income.

Keywords: assets, budgets, dot tv, entrepreneurship, governpreneurship, income, revenue, sovereignty, subsistence, Tuvalu


This paper examines the island effect in two enormously influential colonial fictions published in the final decades of the British Empire in India. Through a detailed analysis of the Club scene in Forster’s A Passage to India (1924) and Orwell’s pervasive use of the Kyauktada Club in Burmese Days (1934), this paper brings critical focus to the phenomenon of the Club in British India. It explores the way the Club functions as an ‘island’ microcosm within a larger framework of colonial isolation, and the way intimate colonial relations prevail within its walls and sustain an isolated community which fears for its survival outside its enclosing border.


The experiences of contemporary protected areas indicate adaptations to challenges brought about by resource management strategies. Resident communities, protected area management, and the tourism industry stakeholders demonstrate that evolving relationships are complex webs of competing and cooperating interests. The geographic isolation of East Maui delayed the cultural disruption of traditional practices and is an area where residents simultaneously resist assimilation and re-create cultural landscapes to offer visitors a glimpse into the past and a view of an emerging future associated with the renaissance of Native Hawaiian identity. Partnerships have brought about and nurtured the perpetuation of culture and the conservation of biodiversity as stakeholders recognize shared benefits. Among the outcomes are that residents have reconstituted the identity of East Maui as a Hawaiian place with benefits to various stakeholders, including a network of protected areas. A sustainability framework suggests a reappraisal of how to nurture, not alter, East Maui’s identity.


Islands are the rule and not the exception. One major objective for nissology – defined as the study of islands and islandness – in the 21st century should be to debunk the unfair prejudice that ‘island studies’ continues to suffer at present time. To do so, a systematic
treatment of the island phenomenon needs to be undertaken and this should be backed up by substantial theoretical underpinnings. In seeking to turn the dominant continental paradigm on its head, islands not only deserve to be studied on their own terms; they also become the *deus ex machina* of a holistic understanding of the world archipelago and its ongoing globalization. This vision should contribute towards bridging the gap between ‘continentalists’ who tend to consider islands only as epiphenomena of larger land trends, and ‘island studies’ practitioners. The first paper dwells on the physical geographical and historical unfolding of the importance of islands. The second paper concentrates on the physical geographical and historical unfolding of the importance of islands.


As with most warm water islands, Malta’s tourism has been historically focused on ‘sun, sea and sand’ package holidays. As a result, the ratio of visitors to locals has expanded very quickly and the strain on infrastructure from too many tourists is evident. As do other small islands, Malta also suffers from an absence of pluralism amongst the political-economic elite and a familiarity between voters and politicians, thereby creating barriers to implementing successful policies. Through an examination of how successful tourism policy implementation has been to date, this paper examines Malta’s tourism development as it relates to sustainable tourism. The paper addresses the economic, social and political implications of tourism development as well as discusses barriers to implementing a tourism policy specifically geared to sustainability. The paper concludes by providing insights into sustainable tourism policy implementation issues for other island destinations.


This essay assesses the principles of economic vulnerability and resilience and their contribution to the study and development of small island developing states (SIDS). It is based on a detailed critical account of the contents of a recent publication – Briguglio & Kisanga (2004) – that addresses this issue. It is thus an extended book review that examines arguments central to many current mainstream considerations of small island economies.


Islanders tend to develop rules and methods for regulating the use of the marine environment and its accessible resources. Where islands have been subject to the influence or domination of external political forces, and such resources have become the
subject of increased demand, then differences of approach, of understanding and of patterns of use can come into conflict. This is especially so where there is increased emphasis on coastal development, pressures to privatize and register coastal land and to regulate the commercial exploitation of marine resources. This article considers the Shetland & Orkney Islands from the north and Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands from the south, drawing out similarities and differences of legal approaches to key issues relevant to the foreshore and the coastal zone.


In this brief article, we respond to Geoff Bertram’s overview of the current state of research into the legacy of colonial institutions. We make the general case for islands as a useful unit of observation in thinking about cross country income differences. The nature of island exploration and settlement provides a unique natural experiment that is not available in a mainland sample of countries. However, we feel that the results provide useful insights to the general literature about the relationship between colonialism and income. We also respond to Bertram’s criticisms of our data and sample selection. In many cases, problems he identifies have been addressed in the most recent version of our work.


Archaeology has, and will continue to make, some important contributions to the broad field of ‘island studies’. In this essay, I discuss four major topics in island archaeology that are helping to shape the way we think about islands. These include: (1) seafaring and the human maritime diaspora; (2) the effects of aquatic boundaries and isolation; (3) historical ecology and the impacts of humans on island ecosystems; and (4) climate change, sea level rise, and coastal degradation. As archaeologists continue to explore these and other issues with colleagues from both the social and natural sciences, we will come to better understand how islands have shaped humans, and humans have shaped islands.


In a recent ISJ paper, ‘Island archaeology: in search of a new horizon’, Boomert and Bright (2007) argue that the field of island archaeology should be replaced by an archaeology of maritime identity. We disagree and counter that although islands share many physical, biological, and cultural similarities with continental coasts, coastal zones also grade uninterruptedly into riverine, lacustrine, and terrestrial landscapes, raising questions about the validity of their concept of the archaeology of maritime identity. In
E. Stratford

Our view, island archaeology (the application of archaeology to island settings), regardless of past biogeographical underpinnings, has made major contributions to understanding the historical ecology, human impacts, and cultural developments of islands around the world. A focus on islands by archaeologists has encouraged scholars to study the history of island and maritime societies within a comparative framework that is useful for breaking out of the often provincial focus on a single island or archipelago.


This paper argues that literature has much to contribute to the theoretical work of island studies, and not just because literary texts provide evidence of the ways islands are conceptualized in different historical and cultural contexts. To this end, it discusses Amitav Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide (2004), a novel which actively theorizes key concepts in island studies. The Hungry Tide is set in the Sundarbans, an immense archipelago in the Ganges delta, and tells the largely forgotten history of the forced evacuation of refugees from the island of Morichjhāpi in 1979. The liminal space of the Sundarbans, the tide country, is an extraordinary setting for a literary exploration of the relationship between postcolonial island geographies and identities. Ghosh’s depiction of the watery labyrinth and storm–tossed islands of the Sundarbans raises and addresses questions, which should be at the heart of the critical meta–discourse of island studies.


In the first five years of the 21st century, Pitcairn Island received more attention in the news media than at any other time in its history. This essay examines the representation of Pitcairn and its community in contemporary Australian, New Zealand and British newspapers. In particular, it analyses the reporting of the trials and convictions of seven men before the Supreme Court in late 2004 for sex offences against women and girls over a thirty year period. The aim of this paper is to measure the force of linguistic and textual norms to manage our thinking about place. It identifies and interrogates dominant patterns in descriptions of Pitcairn Island in the news in order to consider the vexed question of the relationship between the reality of islands and their representation.


The Minquiers and Écréhous reefs are located in different parts of the Gulf of St Malo between the British island of Jersey and the French mainland. As a part of the Bailiwick of Jersey, they are geographically very close to the international sea border between Jersey and France, and have had a history of disputed sovereignty. Due to their respective geographical locations and histories, the Minquiers and Écréhous are important sites for
the field of Island Studies because of their existence as “border islands”. This article offers a study of these reefs in their spatial context of land and sea, discussing contemporary issues, including fishing, environmentalism and tourism, and offering cross perspectives in terms of their political, economic and cultural connections with Jersey and France. They exist in a context of immense spatial change with substantial tidal ebbs and flows, and between mainlands and historically contested maritime terrains. Such a study helps show how the Minquiers and Écréhous occupy an inbetween space (land, sea and nations), which resulted in international agreements in 2000 that confirmed both the maritime boundary separating France and Jersey, and the areas agreed on as common waters for fishing purposes within Jersey’s jurisdiction. In this setting, this paper offers a critical discussion on the nature of “islands inbetween” (including all the Channel Islands), where land and sea are interconnected as a result of nature, politics, historical fishing rights and leisure activities.


The literature and practice of organizational design are mostly based on simplistic conceptions which ignore recent theoretical developments in organizational studies. Conceiving of organizations as ‘designed islands’, it is argued, can contribute to a more solid theoretical foundation to organization theory, viewed as normative science. Relying on the work of Peter Sloterdijk, who describes the forms of life in space in terms of spheres, the heuristic power of the island metaphor is explored. What can be learnt from the art of isolating in order to construct lived organizational environments is then discussed, and the paradoxical relationship between connection and isolation is highlighted.


This paper explores the problem of negotiated identity on Madeline Island (Wisconsin, USA). In this social context, who is and who is not an islander is not clearly defined as simply locals or tourists. The winter population is numerically overwhelmed by the summer population, many of whom spend several months on the island over the summer. This creates a sliding scale of participation where the island identity is negotiated in the context of the rest of the island community. This negotiation is examined in geographic sites of conflict, discourse, and the transcripts referencing winter and its effects on people. This paper takes islanders’ colloquial categories, builds them out more objectively, and illustrates how these categories and their membership is negotiated through claims to the Islander identity.

Islands are usually thought of as being territorial–like continents, but on a smaller scale. Yet, they differ from continents in one fundamental regard: their relationship to water. Islands must be understood as ecotones, a concept of increasing importance to the environmental sciences in recent years, but not well known to island studies scholars. An ecotone is a place where two ecosystems connect and create a unique environment different from both. It therefore illuminates aspects of island life that are obscured when we treat islands as bounded territorial units constituting a singular ecosystem. Continents may contain one or more ecotones; but islands, especially smaller ones, are dominated by the ecotone where land meets sea. The littoral ecotone helps explain many of the distinctive qualities of island economies and the adaptability, dynamism, and resilience of island societies. It adds to the extensive revisionist literature that has already challenged the myth of island isolation, boundedness, and remoteness.


Islands play a significant role in international irregular maritime migration. Frequently they are part of maritime interstitial spaces between states, and their location, combined with institutional membership, makes them part of international migration routes and subject to border management strategies. In this paper borders are analysed as social institutions used for regulating relative permeability through rules of entry and exit for persons, goods and capital. Borders institutionalize territoriality and are politically implemented by states. They are selective, also in migration, and irregular border transit is not always indicative of an inability to control. The Canary Islands are used as an illustrative example of how border management at the southern edge of the European Union has evolved towards more coercive deterrence and tighter surveillance. The Canary Islands experienced irregular maritime immigration from the west African coasts during the first decade of the 21st century and most of these migrants intended to use the islands as transit space towards the European continent. Increasing surveillance in countries of origin, enforcement of border controls and stricter return policies were used to stop flows. The so-called cayuco crisis in 2006 induced institutional change in border management and forced the active involvement of the EU through FRONTEX.


Mauritius is often considered a ‘success story’ to be read for salutary purposes by other small island developing states (SIDS). While it does share broadly similar attributes with many other SIDS, and acts in unison with other SIDS in international fora, local histories, cultures, geography and location invariably lead to significant differences in developmental trajectories. This paper presents an assessment of Mauritian history in order to explore the contemporary threats and opportunities that face the island in its contemporary quest to transform the island into Maurice Île Durable. Rather than
offering Mauritius as a guide to other SIDS, it presents a useful case study of the tension between establishing social equity and carving out a functional role within the global economy.


The island province of Orkney played a crucial role in Norway’s overseas expansion during the Early– and High–Middle Ages. Located just offshore from mainland Scotland, it provided a resort for westward–sailing fleets as well as a convenient springboard for military forays into Britain and down the Irish Sea. The establishment of a Norwegian–Scottish peace and the demarcation of fixed political boundaries in 1266 led to a revision of Orkney’s role in the Norwegian realm. From that point until the its pledging to the Scottish Crown in 1468, Norway depended on Orkney as a hub for diplomacy and foreign relations. This paper looks at how Orkney figured in Norwegian royal strategies in the west and presents key examples which show its transition from a tool of war to a forum for peace.


This paper explores the concept of social capital in terms of the capacity of sub–national island jurisdictions (SNIJs) to exert their jurisdictional powers through formal and informal social policy and structures for economic purposes. It examines the ways in which jurisdictional capacity can generate (or conversely, deplete) social capital in the pursuit of economic sustainability. Strong bonds amongst islanders, effective relationships with the metropole, and resourceful use of jurisdictional capacity present advantages. Recommendations on how island jurisdictions can learn from each other in formal and informal policy initiatives are presented.


This paper considers the development of a generic cultural brand for islands. In 2002, Shetland’s local government and the Corporate Edge consultancy developed a modernized, internationally–oriented Shetland brand. This official brand conflicts with Shetlanders’ traditional, locally–oriented identity concept, which has impeded the brand’s success. With emphasis on printed tourism marketing materials, Shetland’s experience is compared with those of other European islands. This comparison highlights a predominance of cultural island brands emphasizing modernity and old–fashionedness. Finally, this paper looks at problems with top–down place branding and suggests that those involved in centralized place branding processes take local identity into account.

Island studies research has traditionally focused on relatively rural, peripheral, and isolated communities, yet island cities (strongly urbanized small islands or archipelagos or major population centres of large islands or archipelagos) also represent an important research area. Island spatiality has a host of historical and continuing effects on urban development, influencing urban densification and agglomeration, zonal differentiation, and neighbourhood formation in cities both big and small. This special section of Island Studies Journal includes papers on the island cities and urban archipelagos of Peel (Isle of Man, British Isles), Nuuk (Greenland), Palma de Majorca (Spain), Belize City (Belize), and Mumbai (India). The Island Cities and Urban Archipelagos research network seeks to help enrich wider island studies scholarship and contribute to introducing the island dimension to urban studies.


Both islands and cities are often conceptualized in terms of centre–periphery relationships. Scholarly attempts to nuance popular associations of islands with peripherality and cities with centrality reflect awareness of underlying power relationships. Drawing upon island studies and urban studies knowledge, the case of Nuuk, Greenland, is used to explore how centring and peripheralizing processes play out in an island city. Greenland as a whole came to be regarded as a peripheral region under Danish colonialism, but since the 1950s, Danes and Greenlanders have sought to transform Greenland into its own centre. Nuuk grew into a city and a political, administrative and economic centre relative to Greenland’s small settlements, which came to be seen as central to Greenlandic culture. Nuuk’s rapid growth—dependent on imported Danish designs, materials, technologies, policies and labour—has resulted in an island city of immense contrasts, with monumental modern buildings standing alongside dilapidated 1960s apartment blocks and with strongly differentiated neighbourhoods. Nuuk is both at the centre and on the periphery, enmeshed in power relationships with other Greenlandic settlements and with Denmark. Nuuk is a result of urban design processes that are conditioned by both infrastructural systems and a confluence of spatio–temporal factors.


The Arctic archipelago of Svalbard has been under Norwegian sovereignty since 1920 yet remains subject to international law. Until recently, the islands’ only major economic activities were unprofitable Russian and Norwegian funded mining operations aimed at
maintaining continuous settlement. Now, however, Norway’s top–down governance of the territory has been complicated by the emergence of economic diversity, multinationalism, and local democracy in the town of Longyearbyen. Simultaneously, China and other states are promoting their Arctic interests by exploiting the preoccupation with Russia that characterizes Norway’s Svalbard policy. By interpreting Svalbard’s local communities through the prism of international relations, this article highlights the practical challenges to creating genuinely international territories.


This article addresses the nature of autonomist impulses and initiatives that developed on the Isle of Wight, off the southern coast of England, in the late 20th Century. Drawing on recent discussions of the process of decolonization of island territories and the broader field of study of ethno–political mobilization in support of regional autonomy, the article considers the reasons why local autonomist initiatives failed to secure significant traction with the local population. Focus is placed on the historical process of identity building, on how the Isle of Wight community conceptualizes its relationship with England as a whole and of the manner in which the island and its heritage has been considered as quintessentially English.


Las Fiestas de la Calle de San Sebastián is a four day–long festival in San Juan, Puerto Rico. While the festival comprises music and dance that is a combination of various Caribbean and Latin American aesthetics, there is a small group of local musicians who insist on staying away from the larger throngs to specifically play a Puerto Rican music medium known as plena. By defining a distinct physical space that is separate from the rest of the festival, but also a part of the festival, they sing throughout the night speaking to contemporary issues of American imperialism, class warfare, and corrupt politicians. During the festival the complex power dynamics of Puerto Rico as a United States territory, lacking both independence as a sovereign nation and the same rights as a state, are manifested in festival performance. This performance tries to negotiate how the island remains autonomous while being attached to a more powerful mainland economy.


This article takes the “island” as a key trope in tourism studies, exploring how ideas of culture and nature, as well as those of paradise (lost) are central to its interpretation for tourists and tourist industries alike. Increasingly, however, island tourism is blurring the line between geographies of land and water, continent and archipelago, and private and
E. Stratford

public property. The case of ‘The World’ islands mega project off the coast of Dubai (UAE) is used to chart the changing face and future of island tourism, exploring how spectacle, branding and discourses of the gigantic, miniature, and fake, particularly alongside technological mediations on a large-scale, reflect the postmodern neoliberal world of tourism and the liquid times in which we live. Artificial island complexes such as this one function as cosmopolitan ‘non-places’ at the same time that they reflect a resurgence in (British) nascent nationalism and colonial nostalgia, all the whilst operating in a sea of ‘junkspace’. The shifting cartography of ‘the island’ is thus mapped out to suggest new forms of place-making and tourism’s evolving relationship to these floating islandscapes.


The question is posed: is a coherent theory of islandness – nissology – possible? Faultlines within constructions of islands and islandness are noted. Some of these axes of contestation have remained latent but have the potential to be sharply divisive. Three of the identified faultlines are examined: the nature of the island ‘edge’, the import for questions of island memory and identity of massive inward and outward movements of people, and the appropriation of island ‘realness’ by those for whom ‘island’ best functions as metaphor. A case is made for the excision of the latter from the purview of island studies. Despite apparent irreconcilability within island studies’ emerging faultlines, it is argued that place theory does constitute a theoretical framing that can work for island studies. Following a brief overview of the faultlines that also exist within place studies, it is noted that the difference–respecting and identity focused nature of phenomenology of place is particularly apposite for island studies, and the paper concludes with a consideration of what a phenomenology of islands might look like.


This paper argues for a shift in the focus of island–themed scholarship away from theories of islandness toward an engagement with psychologies of island experience. The former project has become mired in intractable dilemmas. The present paper pursues two linked lines of observation. First, it is maintained that integral to any coherent notion of islandness is a psychology that simultaneously assimilates containment with remoteness and isolation (the latter not to be equated with disconnectedness). In some of its manifestations this psychology is pathological in character, conducive to despair, cultural and economic stagnation, and a xenophobic conservatism. In others it is enabling, conducive to resilience, resourcefulness, cultural dynamism and a can-do economics. It may also make islands unusually relevant, rather than unimportant backwaters, in the search for workable modes of living on a small and fraught planet. Second, it is contended that, if there is enough in the notion of islandness to justify a coherent intellectual preoccupation called ‘island studies’, it must have to do with the element of the sea. Isolation, remoteness, containment – none of these psychological orientations, the
qualities popularly held to characterize islands, will do – because these are all characteristics of certain real and imagined continental locations, and must, therefore, be psychological qualities evoked by some more primary condition. If there is something coherent to island studies beyond its status as a branch of biogeography or a minor tributary within literary studies, it must be that to be girt by sea creates distinctive island psychologies. Nevertheless, as globalizing processes burgeon, such a psychology becomes more precarious – containment, remoteness and a sense of apartness from the great human tides inevitably recede – and this is the real threat to a coherent sense of islandness (and, hence, ‘island studies’).


This paper reflects upon the relation of island communities to global cultural heritage agendas through discussion of two particular examples, the first two island locations successfully nominated by the Canadian government for UNESCO World Heritage listing: L’Anse aux Meadows, on Newfoundland, and Nan Sdins (Ninstints) on SGang Gwaii. This reflection involves discussion of the motives and discourses that led to their formal establishment as cultural heritage sites and those that have come into play in subsequent social inscriptions and interpretations. This line of inquiry intersects with, and is illuminated by, a consideration of the spatial contexts of the island networks that have facilitated particular moments upon which their heritage status is based. In particular, I refer to their relation to sea-lanes and coastal/inter-island lines of contact that are, in turn, predicated on particular moments of climatic, navigational and socio-economic history. The paper concludes by offering a point of mediation between traditional concepts of heritage agendas and socio-cultural development in island communities pertinent to the development of Island Studies as an activist enterprise.


Best known for inspiring Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, the Galápagos Islands are often referred to as an evolutionary Eden and celebrated as one of the world’s few remaining bastions of pristine nature. However, recent concerns of a crisis of over-development prompted UNESCO to put the Galápagos on its list of World Heritage Sites In Danger. In this paper, we interrogate the conception of pristine nature which undergirds the recent crisis discourse and argue that such understandings of nature are not in fact natural, but are social productions that reflect particular ways of understanding island space. We then explore the material and political effects of understandings of pristine nature by showing how they work to structure the tourism industry and investment in public infrastructure in ways that have created social inequalities as well as negative environmental impacts. We then briefly discuss measures taken so far to address the crisis situation, arguing that they would benefit from critical attention to the complexity of socio-environmental relations in the Galápagos and a re-thinking of the
This article presents research which analyzes landscape transformation, using an interdisciplinary approach embedded in an archipelagic context. The investigation unfolds in Quinchao, a cluster of ten islands of the Quinchao Department, Chiloé archipelago, Región de Los Lagos, Chile. The investigation gathers reflections from such disciplines as anthropology, geography, biology and psychology which share similar reflections on the configuration of landscapes as an affordance or enabled property of the human–in–ecosystem assemblage. Ethnographic interpretations and Social Network Analysis of fieldwork data are used to propose a theoretical framework for the investigation of coastal and marine landscapes in archipelagic contexts.


The latest and most significant round of multilateral climate negotiations (COP21) takes place in Paris (30/11 to 11/12/2015). Like other participants and signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, small island states have submitted contributions (INDCs) towards reducing emissions as a precursor to the creation of a post-Kyoto global emissions framework. This reflection outlines their contributions and examines the underlying dynamics of small island INDCs as they attempt to engage with the process of international negotiation. Preliminary findings confirm the need for small island states to be supported financially and technically by global institutional mechanisms in order to develop the capacity to deal with climate change.


Gotland, Åland, Saaremaa, Hiiumaa and Bornholm are five islands in the Baltic Sea which constitute, or have until recently constituted, provinces or counties. Combining perspectives from the fields of island studies and history, this article investigates how regional history writing has contributed to the formation of regional identity on each island since the year 1800. The special geographic situation of the islands–somewhat secluded from the mainland but also connected to important waterways–has provided their inhabitants with shared historical experiences. Due to varying geographic and historical circumstances, the relationship between regional and national identity is however different on each island. While regional history writing has often aimed at integrating the island into the nation state, it has on Åland in the 20th century been used to portray its inhabitants as a separate nation.

This paper examines the influence of islandness on development and governance of Bruny Island (offshore from Tasmania, Australia’s only island state). While traditional economic activities, particularly agriculture, are in decline, tourism is increasingly important to the island economy. While some 600 people live on the island all-year-round; there are some 2,000 ratepayers, including holiday home owners. This location is being rapidly ‘discovered’ by people drawn from interstate and overseas to the island lifestyle, and this is leading to a process of gentrification, with consequences for islanders. Bruny Island’s local governing authority is based on the Tasmanian mainland and hence is another source of externally-driven change. Amidst these pressures, island community visioning can be an important source of resilience.


Jersey has attained a recognized international reputation especially in agriculture, tourism and finance. Over the past century, this small island has developed rapidly as a tourist destination and, since the 1960s, as a leading international finance centre. This paper discusses how a public–private organization uses a notion of islandness in order to help add value to local produce and products, and at the same time offering a sense of authenticity in terms of provenance. As an organization and brand, Genuine Jersey was launched in 2001 and is now a particularly visible island-based brand that does much to support local businesses and promote selected island produce and products more broadly to locals and visitors alike, as well as within a wider export industry. Drawing on discourses mainly from island studies and marketing, the article discusses how and why this brand exists on Jersey. While including a critical discussion of the brand itself, the paper shows how Genuine Jersey operates on and as a result of this particular island context.


This paper explores how nationalist narratives from Taiwan grappled with incorporating their ‘island frontier’ into conceptions of a Chinese unitary state. In the post–World War II era, after the Chinese Nationalist government–in–exile re-established itself on the island of Taiwan, US–dominated scholarship strategically framed Taiwan as a convenient substitute for the study of China. This framing went hand in hand with the re–Sinicization project on the island vigorously pursued by the Nationalists after they took control over the island after the collapse of the Japanese Empire. The Nationalist agenda emphasized the historical connection between the island and mainland China in order to politically create an imagined, and imagining, national community across the Strait. This
E. Stratford

paper critically investigates how continent–based nationalist narratives have sought to incorporate offshore islands into their unitary framework. It does so by deploying the concepts of geobody, geomancy, geochronology, geosymmetrical analogies, and regional demarcation to explore the geographical ideas on the construction of the postwar national imaginary.


Accessibility is a multifaceted concept that expresses the case of access between two points in space. For islands, accessibility is a key quality, since isolation and small size considered as inherent characteristics of islandness. In this paper, we discuss differences between geographical distance and accessibility potential in the Greek Aegean, combining different transportation modal choice (ferries and airplanes) with the use of an accessibility index that incorporates modes and frequency of connection and data of actual usage. The findings indicate that geographical distance is not determining accessibility and new geographies emerge based more on the availability of transport modal choices.


In 1974, the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, both former British colonies, experienced significant events that permanently altered their economic and social realities. The coincidence of these occurrences offers an opportunity for a historical comparison of island development. In effect, this paper argues that the economic paths of these islands were shaped largely by their responses to neo-liberalism. Cyprus’ support for domestic enterprises and resistance to neo–liberal policies throughout the early 1990s compared to Trinidad and Tobago’s forced acquiescence to them and reliance on its energy sector explain the difference in their economic trajectories. Analytically, I argue that island nations can chart a course for economic strategies that benefit more of the population despite neo–liberal pressure to adopt policies that advantage global capital. This comparison supports the island studies position that islands have distinct place–based and/or historical capacities for resourceful and creative tactics towards economic autonomy and development.


This paper is concerned with the relationship between jurisdictional powers and economic and innovative capacity in the context of sub–national island jurisdictions (SNIJs). The jurisdictional powers thesis, prominent in the present island studies debate, is confronted
and discussed with reference to an empirical, comparative, study of the three Nordic SNIJs: the Åland Islands, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. The paper takes as its point of departure an ideal–type SNIJ which is characterized by a good match between jurisdictional powers and economic capacity; it then analyzes the three cases in terms of this ideal–type. Three different types of configurations emerge, representing three types of deviations from the ideal–type SNIJ; these are discussed in terms of their development potentialities.


Due to their size and isolation, and subsequent marginalization and resource limitations, islands frequently face significant development and sustainability challenges; but these same characteristics provide significant advantages too. Natural heritage can support many livelihoods, although care is needed to avoid overexploitation. This paper presents an overview of sustainable livelihoods from natural heritage on islands, indicating the challenges and benefits which emerge. Ethical concerns are described along with the importance of ensuring the diversity and transferability of livelihoods.


Much disaster research has a basis in non–island case studies, although disciplinary disaster–related research across past decades has often used case studies of individual islands. Both sets of work contribute to contemporary 'participatory action research' which investigates ways of dealing with disasters on islands. This paper asks what might be gained through combining disaster research, island studies, and participatory action research. What value does island studies bring to participatory action research for dealing with disasters? Through a critical (not comprehensive) overview of participatory action research for dealing with disasters on islands, three main lessons emerge. First, the island context matters to a certain degree for disaster–related research and action. Second, islandness has much more to offer disaster–related research than is currently appreciated. Third, more studies are needed linking theory to evidence found on the ground on islanders’ terms. Limitations of the analyses here and future research directions are provided.


This paper examines the changing role of islands in the age of globalization and in an era of enhanced and diversified mobility. There are many types of islands, many metaphors of insularity, and many types of migration, so the interactions are far from simple. The
‘mobilities turn’ in migration studies recognizes the diversification in motivations and time–space regimes of human migration. After brief reviews of island studies and of migration studies, and the power of geography to capture and distil the interdisciplinarity and relationality of these two study domains, the paper explores various facets of the generally intense engagement that islands have with migration. Two particular scenarios are identified for islands and migration in the global era: the heuristic role of islands as ‘spatial laboratories’ for the study of diverse migration processes in microcosm; and the way in which, especially in the Mediterranean and near-Atlantic regions, islands have become critical locations in the geopolitics of irregular migration routes. The case of Malta is taken to illustrate some of these new insular migration dynamics.


Some preliminary thoughts were penned in 1991, on the founding of an academic journal devoted to the study of the world’s islands. This collated contribution is an opportunity to look back critically at what was advised then, and what has actually come to pass through Island Studies Journal. Russell King’s prescient report from 1991 is followed by a series of candid reflections by members of ISJ’s International Editorial Board.


This paper proposes a theoretical framework to model employment mobility in island areas. It aims at identifying the critical factors affecting the decision of the employees to relocate their workplace to an island area, given a possible residential relocation. Emphasis is given to the role of transport and telecommunications systems on the region’s connectivity and accessibility. Discrete choice models are developed, using both observed and latent variables for the workplace relocation decision to the Aegean island area in Greece. Data was collected in the year 2012 from 518 Greek employees. Findings indicate the importance of the role of transport and telecommunications systems for employment mobility in island areas. The estimated choice models identified profiles of the employees who are prone to: a) keep their current workplace; b) relocate their workplace to the island area; c) change occupation after residential relocation. Finally, the sample enumeration method integrates the models’ results across all Greek employees.


This paper considers the archipelago as a model of exchange and commerce to explore the meeting place between art and what Denis Cosgrove has described as the
geographical imagination. It does so by considering two artistic projects in which the domains of art making overlap the author’s interest in sea kayaking; the two together constituting a vernacular, personally inscribed practice. These projects, at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (2006) and as part of Tasmania’s biennial Ten Days on the Island (2011), are contextualized by the work of theorists coming from geography and visual arts. The paper extends Katherine Harmon’s observation about the way that maps, like artworks, may highlight differences between collective and individual experience. Like the form of hand-drawn maps, another seemingly obsolete technology, the camera obscura, is presented as a means of invoking a heightened, experiential engagement with the (island) landscape.


This article focuses on the experiences of early 20th century expeditions trapped over winter on Antarctic islands. These explorers were in a paradoxical position, completely isolated from the world they knew but in uncomfortably close quarters with their companions. Prominent amongst the available resources that they could use to maintain sanity in these doubly trying circumstances were texts. Like the Antarctic ice, which effectively turns islands into part of the mainland, but can just as easily make an iceberg out of a seemingly stable piece of the continent, texts were a means towards both connection and insularity for these men.


The Channel Island of Sark (5.5 km²; population 500), Europe’s sole surviving feudal entity, was forced into democracy in 2008 following an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights by billionaire twins Sir David and Sir Frederick Barclay, tenants of the subsidiary island of Brecqhou. Unhappy with subsequent Sark election results that rejected most of their chosen candidates, backers of Barclay interests have now brought suit to revise the 2008 electoral reform act. The applicants contend that the current system discriminates against those favouring needed development and that Sark still remains essentially under the feudal control of the Seigneur and his cronies. This essay discounts these complaints as spurious and as obnoxious, for threatening the traditional values that sustain Sark’s legendary tranquillity. The Sark saga is an object lesson in steadfast small-island resistance to unwanted ‘improvement’ by outside agency, however motivated.


Island and maritime spaces between regions have become central places of recurrent crises over human migration and re-articulations of state sovereignty. Islands, the very
sites where land meets water, are among the contested sites of struggle over entry and exclusion. In this paper, the Mediterranean is our main area of geographical inquiry. We explore the connections between crises of sovereignty, migration and islands, seeking to enhance connections between scholarship on migration and sovereignty. We argue that migration management and its geographical articulation on islands involve persistent reconfigurations of sovereignty, particularly evident during times of crisis over human migration. Such crises and re-articulations of sovereignty are creative uses of geography that repeatedly lead to a failure to protect human rights. To develop this argument, we bring feminist theorists of state sovereignty into conversation with political geographers. We move across scales of governance and political mobilization to show how a reconfiguration of sovereignty through regional and national management regimes leads to complex legal geographies and sovereign entanglements that migrants and advocates must navigate to claim rights.


It is widely argued that second home demand causes the displacement of permanent residents. This study examines the displacement theory by looking at three case islands in the Stockholm archipelago, scrutinizing the development of population figures and second homes. Results show that the individuals migrating from these islands are improving their situation compared to prior to their migration; there are also signs that the decision to migrate is associated with major events in life such as studies, job opportunities and family formation. Hence, this study questions the simplified suggestion that there is a widespread displacement of people due to outside demand for second homes.


Bay Street has always been at the centre of commercial, cultural and political life in the Bahama Islands. It also acts as a gateway for millions of tourists who come to Nassau, the Bahamian capital, via cruise ships every year. Not surprisingly, Bahamians and non-Bahamians have widely divergent impressions of Bay Street. The need to accommodate the tourists who are critical to the Bahamian economy has meant that Bay Street, despite its deep social significance for Bahamians, has increasingly become a tourist space. With reference to the ‘sense of place’ and place attachment literature, this paper traces the transformation of Bay Street and attempts to tease out the most obvious tensions between the Bay Street that Bahamians experience and Bay Street as a port of call.


This article traces the demographic contributions of island studies scholarship in four
sections. First, demographic transition theory is applied to the population history of the region. The second highlights the impact of this demographic scholarship on related social science fields in the Caribbean. The third and fourth contributions focus on the impact of migration on two related hypotheses: the demographic transition and the mobility transition. In the first case, migration patterns between St. Kitts-Nevis and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the 1960s suggest that the age-sex selectivity of migration tends to accelerate the transition in sending societies and retard its progress in receiving societies. In the second case, empirical support is provided for the so-called ‘migration transition’ whereby former chronic labour exporters become labour importers under sustained growth.


This is a brief response to Armstrong and Read, Poirine, and Bertram, synthesizing their welcome thoughtful remarks in response to my paper, and briefly outlining the way forward that research in this area of island studies could take.


This paper examines the recent incursion by China (meaning both Beijing and Taipei) into the Caribbean and Pacific. The general contours of Chinese trade and investment are discussed to provide a background context for a more specific exploration of Chinese aid, especially to small islands across the two regions. A review of recent literature primarily from Western sources reveals that the main strategic use of aid by Beijing (People’s Republic of China–PRC) has been to support the demands of its growing economy but secondarily to isolate Taiwan (Republic of China–ROC) diplomatically. This conclusion, illustrated with several case vignettes, is based on the focus of Chinese aid on those islands retaining diplomatic links with Taipei as well as on the political manoeuvring this Cross–Strait rivalry has spawned. The paper further suggests that the types of projects Beijing and Taipei have funded, like those of their Western counterparts before them (Australia, Japan, United States), yield limited long-term island development gains.


This exploratory study suggests that over half of island welfare can be explained primarily by geographic proximity to world markets and affiliated political status. This result is drawn from a provisional test of geographical location on the economic performance of 34 small island jurisdictions and Gibraltar.

This paper reviews the separation of the Ellice Islands from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, in the central Pacific, in 1975: one of the few agreed boundary changes that were made during decolonization. Under the name Tuvalu, the Ellice Group became the world’s fourth smallest state and gained independence in 1978. The Gilbert Islands, (including the Phoenix and Line Islands), became the Republic of Kiribati in 1979. A survey of the tortuous creation of the colony is followed by an analysis of the geographic, ethnic, language, religious, economic, and administrative differences between the groups. When, belatedly, the British began creating representative institutions, the largely Polynesian, Protestant, Ellice people realized they were doomed to permanent minority status while combined with the Micronesian, half–Catholic, Gilbertese. To protect their identity they demanded separation, and the British accepted this after a UN–observed referendum.


This essay makes use of the Western concept of the archipelago as a starting point for an examination of island to island relations in the Torres Strait, Australia, as they are rehearsed in the imaginary domain of story, in both its written and oral modes. The essay deploys Spivak’s notions of planetarity and Bloch’s concept of utopianism as ways of charting the relationship between two Torres Strait stories, one old, one new. In so doing, the essay seeks to identify the capacity of Torres Strait literature and storytelling to re-conceive relations of space and time and to acknowledge a spatial and temporal mobility running parallel to the circumscribed trajectories of late modernity.


This article examines community sustainability in the year–round islands of Maine, USA, with a critical focus on the impacts of seasonal residents on sustainability. The context of this research is to provide foundational material to determine and measure sustainability in island communities. Data examined includes population, housing, housing affordability, housing occupancy, property valuation, and taxable sales. Food availability is an important secondary consideration. The overall finding is that the island communities as they have historically existed are not likely to be sustainable but may become sustainable in a new form. The overall impact of seasonal residents on sustainability is inconclusive except that there is a clear negative impact in the area of housing. Directions for additional research are discussed.

This paper presents a first exploration, qualitative in character, based on a review of 412 songs produced in the period 1960–2009, about islands in rock music as both social products and social tools potentially contributing to shaping ideas, emotions, will, and desires. An initial taxonomy of 24 themes clustered under five meta–themes of space, lifestyle, emotions, symbolism, and social–political relations is provided, together with some proposals for further research.


The sustainability challenges faced by islands in the European Union (EU) are not well reflected in EU policy, where the approach to island issues has been incremental and fragmented. This paper identifies EU islands and their main sustainability issues, and argues for a stronger awareness of island issues in EU policy processes. It notes in particular the current restrictive definition of islands, which excludes island states, and the fact that the issues of peripherality and insularity do not fit into any of the categories provided in the EU’s impact assessment guidelines. Moreover, since European islands are found at various administrative scales, there is a lack of harmonized statistical data on fundamental factors necessary for monitoring their sustainable development.


This paper analyses data on two aspects of unofficial place–naming or folk toponymy on the Dudley Peninsula, the eastern peninsula of Kangaroo Island, South Australia, namely (1) local unofficial toponyms, and (2) offshore fishing ground names. These place–name categories reflect naming patterns that embody specific local events, history and land use in the island’s colourful past, and represent an important element of the collective memory of the area. It argues that a deeper analysis of various taxa of folk toponymy, especially in remote island locations with brief histories, can help toponymists and linguists understand broad principles involved in place–naming. Furthermore, it suggests island toponymy in Australia is an under–researched field, which deserves greater prominence in Australian place–name studies.


Lack of local understanding and low preparedness for tourism characterize many remote communities of the Polar North, thus undermining positive attitudes towards tourism even if tourism is seen as a development force. The relatively new interest in Arctic regions as a tourist destination combined with different exogenous forces like globalization and
climate change make the situation even more complex. The peripheral and insular location often renders cruise tourism as the only option. Under these circumstances, the readiness to accept tourism as a development tool varies from destination to destination, ranging from being seen as a passport to development to a threat to local culture and traditional life. In order to bridge these perception gaps, the idea of a mental or written contract between tourists and local residents is discussed.


This essay explores the development of an art project with the island as its central theme. The process is explained through a selection of background material and other considerations that have led to the work. As a starting point for this project, the author worked on the island of Ameland, The Netherlands, where she was born and raised. To experience the island from an outsider’s point of view, she also stayed for a period of time on Grímsey, North Iceland. The work that resulted from this period of experiencing and gathering information around islands, *Island / Us*, consists of two sculptures that deal with borders, protection, self and community. Among selected fragments are texts from literature and science, photos and sketches, underpinned by personal experience.


The use of islands and archipelagos as settings in video games has proven enduring and popular: these locations are usually shown to be dangerous places where travel can be difficult. The use of island and archipelago settings in this medium developed along with conventions about water in general being an obstacle to traverse, meaning that player characters that experience islands and archipelagoes are forced to discover ways to travel around, over, and away from them. Islands remain popular settings because they work well with players’ preconceptions about these spaces, with people’s understandings of natural boundaries that make travel difficult, and with game designers’ intent to control player character movement throughout a world that is necessarily constrained by the reach of technology.


The MIRAB model developed by Bertram and Watters, based on remittances and aid, has dominated the small island economy literature for two decades. Recently, two challenges have surfaced: the PROFIT formulation emphasizing domestic policy flexibility – a so-called ‘resourcefulness of jurisdiction’ – and a dynamic private sector (Baldacchino,
2006); and the SITE model, stressing the role of tourism (McElroy, 2006). To date, there has been no comparative assessment of these different island models. This article addresses this gap. Its point of departure is to consider SITE islands as a subspecies of the PROFIT cluster. It constructs comprehensive profiles across 27 socio–economic and demographic variables for two island sub-groups with populations of less than three million: 23 MIRAB and 35 PROFIT–SITE. Results indicate PROFIT–SITE islands are much more affluent, socially advanced and demographically mature than their MIRAB counterparts.


Indonesia and the Philippines are amongst the world’s mega–biodiversity countries. Their insular nature has certainly contributed to this level of diversity. However, at the same time, there is rapid environmental degradation in terms of forest loss, loss of plant and animal species and overexploitation of wildlife. Insular Southeast Asia, with a population of over 300 million, is more densely populated than any other insular area. Yet, remarkably, this region plays a low–key role in comparative island studies. Both Indonesia and the Philippines have recently moved from centralized forms of government to regional and even local autonomy. This article presents an overview of the present state of biological and cultural diversity of the two archipelagic states. Recent changes in styles of natural resource management are discussed, with a focus on forest resources in the area.


This article analyses perceptions of residents of the Seychelles in the western Indian Ocean in relation to a long-running debate over small island developing states (SIDS) as to whether they are vulnerable or resilient. The results of data obtained from 25 key informant interviews and 70 household surveys conducted in 2013 showed that respondents perceived their country to be both vulnerable and resilient. Moreover, the data revealed that the relationship between vulnerability and resilience was complex, and that five interpretations of that relationship were evident: conflict, compromise, complementarity, symbiosis and transformation. Also, the conceptual distance between the two terms – vulnerability and resilience – was shown to be closer than may be commonly assumed. Finally, the paper questions whether the debate over vulnerability versus resilience is rightly confined to SIDS or could be equally applied to other states.

This article analyses the relationship between island and city in the configuration of an insular identity. The hypothesis addresses the special visibility that, in the case of small islands, results from the confrontation between two relevant singularities—the city and the island—in the symbolic conceptualization of territory. The opposition between island contexts and urban spaces is thus considered in terms of the local/global and rural/urban binaries. These are analysed in contemporary cultural representations of the relationship between the island of Mallorca and its historical and administrative capital, Palma. Since the 1960s, Mallorca has become a mass tourism destination with a considerable demographic impact, especially in the capital, which is the island’s gateway for both tourism and immigration. This paper considers geographical, literary and media discourses along with particular mass-consumption cultural products to argue that Palma is represented as a predatory ‘monster’ devouring the island’s ‘local’ identity. It is argued that different types of neo-ruralism have emerged and reinforced the opposition between the island and the city. This opposition underlies a process of counter-acculturation that delineates and strengthens Mallorcan self-representation in a context defined by an increasingly diverse population as a result of tourism and migratory flows.


This paper explores processes of islanding, de-islanding, and re-islanding in the context of island cities. Although today popularly associated with rural, peripheral, and isolated landscapes, concepts of the ideal city coincided in Medieval and Renaissance Europe with emergent notions of the ideal island. Major European cities such as Amsterdam, Paris, and Copenhagen were established on densely urbanized small islands. In accordance with dominant political and military philosophies, they were subsequently developed through comprehensive urban design into vast yet coherent urban archipelagos. In contrast, the contemporary development of Belize City as an island city took place through piecemeal land reclamation, absent comprehensive urban design, resulting in a very different kind of urban archipelago. Neither the coherent European island cities nor Belize City are generally regarded as islands today, yet their histories of urban development evidence the impact of spatial attributes of islandness on urban form. Comprehensive urban design efforts are currently directed at land reclamation and waterfront revitalization in Belize City, aiming to restore Belize City’s island city status. We argue that cities can be islanded, de–islanded, and re–islanded in the minds of their inhabitants and that it is necessary to recognize the connection between ideal islands and ideal cities in order to understand the islanding process in full.


The purpose of this study is to determine the levels of satisfaction with various life domains that constitute objective conditions of the quality of island life, and which
influence the perception of islanders’ personal well-being among the inhabitants of three small islands (Zlarin, Kaprije and Žirje) in Croatia. The obtained results are based on a resident survey (N=141). A quality of life assessment was carried out by recognizing the specificity of an island’s surface area and its population (small communities, mostly elderly people), as well as by evaluating choices that respondents perceive to be important for their well-being. Based on applied multivariate analyses, the research suggests that life satisfaction, besides a significant correlation with material status (income), is also greatly affected by the extent of preserved social values, common to the rural communities to which the observed islands belong, such as the closeness of personal relationships (level of acceptance in the local community, solidarity) and the social order maintained through informal control (which provides a sense of security). Both islanders who have never lived off their island, as well as returnees and inmigrants, positively value the way of life in island communities.


The results pointed out in the note ‘The significance of geographic location in island studies’ by McElroy & Lucas (2014) suggest that the economic performance of small islands is inversely related to their remoteness from the rest of the world and positively related to their political affiliation to a large country. In this note, I propose some policy implications and review some theoretical explanations for this result. I also present similar results obtained with a gravity model of tourism demand for small islands.


The Balearic Islands are one of the main tourism regions in Europe, and tourism has been the structural capitalist activity of urban growth there since the 1950s. Mapping tourist accommodation in the Balearics might help spatially explain the important socio-spatial transformation of a small archipelago in the Western Mediterranean. This paper analyses the diffusion of tourist accommodations as the main vehicle for urbanization since the 1950s. The tourism production of space has gone in parallel to economic cycles with particular urban expressions related to the different regimes of accumulation. Over time, as access to sea, air, and road transport, availability of investment capital, and institutional support has changed, so too have the directions of urban tourism development in the islands.


Sub-Antarctic Heard Island and Macquarie Island are among Australia’s offshore
properties susceptible to colonization by species introduced by humans. While both islands share World Heritage status and are IUCN Category IA Protected Areas (Strict Nature Reserves), different quarantine protection regimes are in operation. Macquarie Island’s biosecurity appears to be less catered for while the means and likelihood of introductions are greater. The administrative, political, practical and geographical contexts within which quarantine management planning takes place variously impact on the level of quarantine protection provided to both islands. These and other remote sites of high conservation value are unlikely to receive heightened protection until the issues associated with such management contexts receive greater attention.


Whether in Homer or Plato, Shakespeare or Huxley, throughout history, thinking about islands has shaped how we think about human nature and our place in the world. However, to date archipelagos have received far less attention. This is problematic because we live, increasingly, in a world of island–island movements and not static forms. Not only in the more obvious cases of the Caribbean, Hawaii or the Philippines but, as Stratford et al (2011) say, many ‘continental forms’ like Canada and Australia are in fact archipelagos composed of thousands of island movements. To this list we can add more manufactured archipelagos: wind turbine arrays, industrial oil and military constellations. The key question therefore arises: what does it mean to think with the archipelago? This paper argues firstly that archipelagic thinking denaturalizes the conceptual basis of space and place, and therefore engages ‘the spatial turn’ presently sweeping the social sciences and humanities. Secondly, such thinking highlights the trope of what I call ‘metamorphosis’, of the adaptation and transformation of material, cultural and political practices through island movements. In both cases, I argue that thinking with the archipelago requires an important shift in how we frame analysis and engagement.


This paper explores perceptions of immigrant quality–of–life (QOL) and islandness in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, and compares these perceptions to those of Canadian–born residents of the same provincial capital. The study employed a mixed–methods approach, including a household telephone survey conducted in the summer of 2012 (n=302), focus group interviews with immigrants in late 2012 and observations on preliminary results by the staff of the PEI Association of Newcomers to Canada (PEIANC), the primary immigrant settlement service agency on the island. The analysis of the results suggests that immigrants have a high and undifferentiated assessment of their own QOL, sense of belonging and sense of place compared to Canadian–born islanders; immigrants are also critical of the quality of education and of the range of recreational and cultural events underway on the Island. While they express positive
sentiments regarding life on the Island, immigrants still feel excluded from social and economic opportunities.


Islands have often been cited as models of human impact upon the environment. With high rates of endemism and other unique characteristics, island ecosystems are subject to dramatic perturbation. The arrival of humans in Near Oceania during the Pleistocene led swiftly to a series of fauna extinctions. In the New Guinea Highlands clearing and tending of wild plants gave rise to tree and root crop agriculture, intensive cultivation technology, and anthropogenic grasslands. By 3600 BP (Before Present), Lapita settlers had reached Remote Oceania, leading to deforestation and declines in birds and other species. European contact introduced new biota and new technology, with significant consequences for island environments and societies. Questions have been raised concerning the impact of climate change on island ecosystems. Population growth plays a significant role in environmental degradation, though not necessarily as a proximate cause. The Tikopian arboriculture system provides one of several Oceanic models of sustainability.


This paper compares and contrasts the management systems and governance structures of two island sites with national and international World Heritage recognition: Lord Howe Island (off the mid–east coast of Australia) and Fernando de Noronha (off the north–east coast of Brazil). Using historical and contemporary references, the paper explores the manner in which two distinct approaches to governance are implicated in the daily living of community members, and considers their socioeconomic activities. We use the case of tourism and World Heritage management as examples of the complexities involved in the different forms of governance structures adopted by these two small oceanic islands: similar in nature and official status, but significantly different when the outcomes of their governance practices are analysed. In the final part of the paper, we suggest mechanisms and approaches that can promote sustainable local engagement with island issues.


Saltwater Chronicles investigates the notion of islandness in contemporary Newfoundland readership through two in–depth case studies of book clubs as representational spaces in the elaboration of local knowledge and identities. We demonstrate how select Newfoundland readers perform acts of regeneration in which the lived, loved, and
experiential dimensions of literary space come to invoke the permeability of psychic and geographic borders, the dangers and possibilities of the landwash, and the always–already precarious designation of limits between self and other. We provide examples of how, for these island readers, islandness as a symbolic point of address slips and border–crosses in the in–between semiotic spaces of literary encounter.


This paper proposes the notion that words mirror ideas, perspectives and world–views. Etymologies and meanings of general words for ‘islands’ in a number of languages in North and West Europe are then discussed. Here, islands are shown to be etymologically constituted by the interplay between land and water, and which of these two is emphasized varies. In the third section, a number of Swedish island words are surveyed, in an attempt to illuminate the principle of linguistic relativity. Finally, the implications of these findings for island studies are discussed.


The first part of the paper examines uses and meanings of the orientational metaphors ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘out’ and ‘off’. In the discussed languages in North Western Europe there are general principles of metaphoric entailment and underlying image schemas that guide the choice of positional metaphor: islands you are normally ‘on’, and mainlands ‘in’. The second part of the paper examines cases where this use is debated or contested. The author finds that these contestations seem to be fuelled by the different relations between subject and object that positional metaphors entail. Expressions with ‘in’ highlight belonging and collective identity, enlarge objects by conceptualizing them as encompassing containers, and reduce subjects to a part of the object. Expressions with ‘on’ highlight individuality and agency, reduce the object, and enlarge the subject by placing it above the object. Such differing entailments of positional metaphors may influence how islands are positioned and understood.


Mediterranean islands exemplify well the interactions between tourism, heritage and culture on islands. After an introduction that considers their heritage and the pressures which might be applied by tourism because of insular characteristics such as scale, the paper considers the Spanish island of Mallorca as a case study. First its history and consequent heritage is identified and then various stages in its tourism development, which might be recognized in Butler’s model, are treated with particular reference to two very different foreigner commentators on the island, George Sand and Robert Trimmell. The mass market tourism exemplified by Trimmell has brought a reaction and in recent
decades Mallorca has given much more consideration to its environment and heritage, illustrated here through the example of the district of Calvià and its Local Agenda 21 policies. This has seen a considerable impact on the island’s tourism and marketing initiatives, as well as upon its natural environment.


This publication takes the form of a written version of my inaugural lecture, which was presented at Queen’s University Belfast on 10 March 2010. It is more personal and considerably more self-indulgent than would normally be acceptable in an article, with more of my own experiences and also my own references than would usually be considered proper. However, the bestowal of such a title as Professor of Island Geography is something of a marker of the maturity not just of me but maybe also for island studies. After a section describing my path into island geography, the lecture deals with the negativities of islands and the seeming futility of studying them, only then to identify a new or at least enhanced regard for islands as places with which to interact and to examine. Reference is made to islands throughout the world, but with some focus on the small islands off Ireland. The development of island studies as a discipline is then briefly described before the lecture concludes with reference to its title quotation on St Helena by considering that place’s islandness and how this affected/affects it in both the 17th and 21st centuries.


This brief and commissioned paper reviews ten years of book reviews that have been published in *Island Studies Journal* (2006-2015). The paper discusses numbers and types of reviews, the nationality of the reviewers, the spatial, thematic and/or disciplinary focus of the books reviewed, using these observations to make critical comments on *Island Studies Journal*.


Over the last 20 years, the government of the small Caribbean island nation of Dominica has pursued the development of ecotourism on the island. The hope is that this industry will promote dispersed economic development while providing environmental protection and cultural conservation. However, not enough has been done to determine whether or not the industry is achieving the desired results. To this end, this study explores the growth of the tourism industry on Dominica and shows that, while not perfect, ecotourism is providing some definite benefits to the island in this regard.

Islands, especially smaller ones, are characterized by discontinuity of space and are considered as some of the least accessible areas. In this paper, we seek to shed light on the accessibility problems that islands face from the point of view of island residents. This shift in emphasis considers additional aspects to accessibility that include the availability of connections to access services required to cover the needs of island residents and the different destinations where these may be available, and the time that one may have to spend to get to these destinations in order to use these services. An alternative measure of accessibility is proposed, based on the time required to travel; this is then applied to three different Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. The accessibility of the residents of these islands to selected services is compared with that of settlements in continental Greece of similar population and distance to the capital Athens. The findings clearly demonstrate the adversities that island residents have to face, especially for smaller islands, where accessing selected services may require as many as four destinations, with virtual distances 4 to 6 times longer than ‘real distances’.


Creative, innovative, and timely research on islands and island futures is warranted and pressing, not least because island(er)s are poorly served by established tropes of them as subordinate to continents or mainlands. Opportunities exist to provide a more thoroughgoing account of island life and island relations, and the seven papers in this special issue address that task. In works that consider islands in the Timor Sea, the Caribbean, the Pacific, Atlantic and Southern Oceans, and that span several different disciplinary frames—archival–historical, critical theoretical, literary, cultural, geopolitical, sociological and artistic—these papers evidence both the diversity of approach to thinking with the archipelago, and numerous points in common. Among the latter is an understanding that island relations are built on connection, assemblage, mobility, and multiplicity, and a commitment to critically examine the ways in which these entanglements affect and give effect to island life. The models of island relationality brought to light by this collective focus on the archipelago reveal new and diverse connections of island peoples with their physical and cultural environments, and with the world beyond; create spaces for growing resilience, association and engagement; and invite further study.


This paper offers a critical review and reflection on the first decade of publishing of
scholarly and review articles in Island Studies Journal. Following brief comments on the politics of publishing in any field, and in island studies per se, attention turns to consider how Island Studies Journal has contributed to and shaped the study of islands; what is written, by whom, using what broad methods of approach; and how the journal has tracked in terms of readership and citations, and the ‘echo-effects’ of the latter. The final part of the paper concerns prospects for the journal in its next decade, and invites both the community of scholars who identify as island scholars, and affiliates and allies in other fields, to be more strategic, active, and consistent in using this important scholarly resource.


Certain limitations arise from the persistent consideration of two common relations of islands in the humanities and social sciences: land and sea, and island and continent/mainland. What remains largely absent or silent are ways of being, knowing and doing–ontologies, epistemologies and methods–that illuminate island spaces as inter–related, mutually constituted and co–constructed: as island and island. Therefore, this paper seeks to map out and justify a research agenda proposing a robust and comprehensive exploration of this third and comparatively neglected nexus of relations. In advancing these aims, the paper’s goal is to (re)inscribe the theoretical, metaphorical, real and empirical power and potential of the archipelago: of seas studded with islands; island chains; relations that may embrace equivalence, mutual relation and difference in signification.


Tuvalu is a Pacific atoll nation–state that has come to stand for predicaments implicating climate change, forced emigration and resettlement, and loss of territory and sovereignty. Legal and policy remedies seek to address such challenges by radically reframing how sovereignty is conceived. Drawing on literary and legal theory, we seek to extend such work in the terms of cultural geography and anthropology by considering how the archipelago and cultural practices known as fenua could be deployed as symbolic and material resources emphasizing mobility and connection, in contrast to normative ideas of sovereignty, whose orientation to territory imperils atoll states. Our fundamental argument is that legal and policy reforms addressing climate change emigration must be enriched by accounting for the emotional geographies that attend the changing real and conceptual borders of sovereignty and by creating alternative spaces of hope and action.

Island studies can be deceptively difficult for inexperienced undergraduates due to the field’s trans-disciplinary and international scope, advanced academic content and engagement with a wide range of cognitive processes and methodologies. At the same time, island studies can potentially transform and motivate students on a personal level by tapping into their experiential knowledge when they adopt an island-centred standpoint. Such a stance is challenging to measure and not automatically or readily achieved. A teacher of island studies must therefore be sensitive to presenting and studying islands ‘on their own terms’, but realistic as to what progress can be made at an introductory level by general students. This paper draws upon the author’s experience in teaching the core introductory survey course in island studies to undergraduates at the University of Prince Edward Island from 2007 to 2009. That experience is examined in light of the dilemmas which relate to indigenous island geographies.


An intellectual treatment of islands and isolation lends itself to a foundation in a liberal arts education. The introductory undergraduate course on island studies can serve as a topical platform on which to develop critical thinking, research, analytical, and creative thinking skills for beginning college students. The paper analyzes the natural history perspective in island studies and its methods of inquiry as pedagogical strategies that enhance the development of academic curiosity. The success of this approach to early undergraduate education is documented in traditional assessment and the direction that student-driven inquiry followed throughout the course. A course in island studies is a natural fit into progressive curriculum design strategies that are currently under development at many colleges and universities.


Mumbai is a collection of seven islands strung together by a historically layered process of reclamation, migration and resettlement. The built landscape reflects the unique geographical characteristics of Mumbai’s archipelagic nature. This paper first explores the material, non-material and epistemological contours of space in Mumbai. It establishes that the physical contouring of space through institutional, administrative and non-institutional mechanisms are architectured by complex notions of distance from the city’s coasts. Second, the paper unravels the unique discursive strands of space, spatiality and territoriality of Mumbai. It builds the case that the city’s collective imaginary of value is foundationally linked to the archipelagic nature of the city. Third, the paper deconstructs the complex power dynamics how a sea view turns into a gaze: one that is at once a point of view as it is a factor that provides physical and mental form to space. In conclusion, the paper makes the case that the mindscapes of space, value and power in Mumbai have archipelagic material foundations.

Economic development on Indonesia’s numerous small islands faces a number of challenges stemming from the islands’ isolation and resource limitations. Mariculture has been promoted as a viable development strategy in these areas, and this research assesses a marine spatial planning approach to support net-cage grouper mariculture development in waters surrounding Kaledupa Island located southeast of Sulawesi. Data collection focused on 15 biophysical capability parameters, plus an additional 7 suitability parameters assessed through interviews with villagers and local experts. Capability analysis identified 4,511 hectares capable of sustaining grouper mariculture within the 8,582 hectares study area. Suitability analysis identified 2,667 suitable hectares based on villager opinions and 4,083 suitable hectares based on local expert opinions. Reliance on villager opinions and resolution of fragmentation issues reduced the final area deemed suitable to 2,423 hectares. This study highlights the importance of utilizing local ecological knowledge in marine spatial planning, and emphasizes the need for follow-up studies, monitoring and enforcement of environmental regulations to ensure that negative impacts do not emerge in island communities as a result of mariculture development.


This paper uses the metaphor of diasporic hubs and hinterlands to document and analyse the various diasporic formations that overlap and encounter each other on the divided island of Cyprus. After a review of the various ways that islands interface with migration processes and some essential historical and statistical background on Cyprus and its population, the paper considers a number of migrations/diasporas that are based on or affect the island. They include the emigration from the diasporic hub of Cyprus during the 1950s–1970s; return migration, both of the original emigrants and their descendants; the British military/colonial settlement of Cyprus; retirees and ‘lifestyle migrants’; and various categories of recent immigrants, for whom Cyprus is a diasporic hinterland. We draw both similarities and differences between migratory dynamics in the northern, Turkish Cypriot part of the island and the southern, Greek Cypriot part. In the final part of the paper we describe recent fieldwork on various spaces of inter-diasporic encounter in Cyprus.


Southern European countries have come to constitute the most vulnerable external border of the European Union (EU) over the last decade. Irregular migration pressures have been acutely felt on the EU’s southern sea borders, and particularly on four sets of
islands: Canary Islands (Spain), Lampedusa and Linosa (Italy), Malta, and Aegean Islands (Greece). This quartet is, to a large extent, used as stepping stones by irregular migrants and asylum seekers to reach the European continent. This paper studies the role of these islands as ‘outposts’ of a framework of externalization. It starts by discussing the notion of externalization and its different facets. It considers how externalization is linked to both fencing and gate-keeping strategies of migration and asylum control. The second part of the paper focuses on the special role of the island quartet with respect to the externalization web cast by national and EU-wide migration policies. It concludes with a critical reflection on the multi-level character of externalization policies and practices that occur both within the EU and between the EU and third countries.


This paper explores the term ‘city’ per se, and the right to city status in the British Isles. It addresses the nature of modest insular proto-cities, those on small islands and archipelagos that have no great significance outside their own insular sphere, by looking at Peel on the Isle of Man, which claims city status on the basis of its cathedrals, ancient and modern, ruined and working. Whilst not meeting the current United Kingdom’s criteria for city status, Peel’s claim can be validated on two fronts, ancient right and Manx independence from the Crown, or asserted in confident maintenance of the status quo. The latter embodies the independence and otherness of islands and their cities— and their determined self-belief.


This paper examines the history and development of books about islands in Western culture. Islands are prominent in Homer’s Odyssey, and Plato’s island of Atlantis is perhaps the most famous mythical island of all time. The Greeks were the first to develop the island–book as such, but Roman writers showed much less interest in insular themes. The article traces the history of the immrama (medieval Irish accounts of mythical Atlantic island voyages), notes the importance of islands in Marco Polo and John of Mandeville, describes the rise of the isolario, or island–book illustrated with maps, and concludes with the emergence of the Robinsonade.


Studying mobile actor networks of moving people, objects, images, and discourses, in conjunction with changing time–spaces, offers a unique opportunity to understand important, and yet relatively neglected, relational material dynamics of mobility. A key example of this phenomenon is the recontinentalization of Canada amidst dramatically changing articulations of the meanings and boundaries of the Canadian land–ice–ocean
mass. A notable reason why Canada is being re–articulated in current times is the extensiveness of Arctic thawing. The reconfiguration of space and motility options in the Arctic constitutes an example of how materiality and sociality produce themselves together. In this paper we examine the possibilities and risks connected to this recontinentalization of Canada’s North. In exploring the past, present, and immediate future of this setting, we advance the paradigmatic view that Canada’s changing Arctic is the key element in a process of transformation of Canada into a peninsular body encompassed within a larger archipelagic entity: a place more intimately attuned to its immense (and growing) coastal and insular routes.


Upon the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles in 2010, the smallest islands in this federation – Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba – became special municipalities of the Netherlands, and were hence politically and constitutionally integrated into the Dutch metropolis. The present article seeks to understand this development in the context of the broader academic literature on small, non–sovereign island jurisdictions in the Caribbean and elsewhere. After a description of the reforms and a discussion of the perceived benefits and drawbacks of the new political status, the newly created Dutch Caribbean municipalities are compared with other non–sovereign jurisdictions in the Caribbean. Whereas the choice for political integration in itself can be compared with the French postwar policy of *départementalisation*, in terms of the historical significance and the direction of the reforms, the new political situation on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba could rather be better likened to that of the British Overseas Territories and their relationship with the United Kingdom.


Since 2001, the villagers in Vanuaso Tikina, Gau Island, Fiji, have collaborated with the University of the South Pacific to manage their environmental resources to prepare them for difficult and challenging times ahead. This review essay seeks to publicize this island community–based experience by illustrating a range of resource management initiatives, and some of the challenges of their implementation. The experience is instructive to the rest of Fiji and other island and coastal societies where similar initiatives can be tried or further promoted.

Islands are sites where specific forms of governance can develop, providing insights for ‘continental’ nations. This paper discusses the role the political system has in shaping nationalist policies and demands in island settings, examining the specific cases of Puerto Rico and Newfoundland. Starting from a hypothesis outlined by both Fazi and Hepburn, this paper aims at finding empirical data and evidence to the hypothesis that island jurisdictions having a different party system than their central state show an increase in their nationalist demands. In order to do so, this paper first examines the definition of island nationalism and offers, following Lluch’s typology, a framework for analyzing nationalist demands. Then, it examines important historical material in both Newfoundland and Puerto Rico. This will demonstrate how political parties and political leaders can use nationalism to shape policies and will allow us to verify the initial hypothesis.


In the modern era, the demarcation of national boundaries has been a critical feature of the international system. Continent-based demarcations are often more complex than island-based demarcations due, in part, to the former’s generally greater ethnic, religious and historical diversities. However, island-based demarcations, especially when involving archipelagos, can also be a challenging process. States with extensive archipelagos are often faced with geographical archipelagic ambiguities, whereby it is unclear to the archipelagic state and other states where the former’s national boundaries begin and end. This paper explores the archipelagic ambiguities modern Japan was faced with and examines their origins and how they were resolved. By 1868, Japanese leaders realized that Japan’s lingering territorial uncertainties could no longer be left unaddressed if their country was to become a contemporary state. The modern demarcation of Japan was a process lasting more than a decade, until the country resolved the geographical ambiguities along its northern and southern peripheries.


Car ownership is growing in many countries and this growth results in further car use and increasing emissions: a trend diametrically opposed to a reduction of transport energy and longer term sustainability targets, and a problem that is particularly acute in island states across the world. The aim of this paper is to consider how various contextual factors influence the development of transport systems in four island states. Within this, the paper seeks to explore how transport systems have developed in Cuba, Mauritius, Malta and Singapore. The paper finds that a number of contextual factors have combined to result in four rather interesting transport outcomes.

The 2008 global financial crisis had significant repercussions on small island states and territories. This article discusses the efforts of tourism entrepreneurs from Rodrigues, a subnational island jurisdiction and a dependency of the Republic of Mauritius, to combat those effects by organizing themselves as the group Associations du Tourisme Réunies (ATR). Their aim was to secure subsidies from the Mauritian government to reduce the price of airfares to Rodrigues so as to attract more tourists to the island. The article offers an ethnographic account of how the economic crisis was tackled in a creative way by ATR and how its members put the negative image of a Creole minority suppressed by a Hindu majority to strategic use to achieve a stronger recognition of Rodriguan interests within the Republic of Mauritius.


It is commonplace to think of an island as a discreetly bounded unit. Selected writings on islands by the poststructuralist philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida reveal the island variously to be both real and imaginary, mythological and scientific, but as most problematic when constituted in political terms as an indivisible, sovereign entity. These two thinkers’ more broadly developed concepts of the virtual and the impossible, respectively, are seen to disrupt any assumptions about the fixity and closure of the island polity. Instead they emphasize its actualization through processual relations that can be difficult yet dynamic and decisive in effecting the move from being to becoming—other. As the possibilities for instituting more ethical as well as different political relations open up, the question of island studies remaining in its currently coherent, familiar form is raised for consideration.


The narrator of Christopher Koch's 1958 novel *The Boys in the Island* claims for Tasmania a different soul, distinct from that of the Australian mainland to the north, in the same breath in which he claims for the island a different weather. Observations of the distinctiveness of island geography and weather—and of the quality of the light—are recurrent in narratives set not only in Tasmania, but also on those islands to which Tasmania itself acts as a ‘mainland’. This paper surveys a range of texts, including Koch’s *The Boys in the Island*, Joanna Murray-Smith’s *Truce*, and my own *The Alphabet of Light and Dark*, in which a Tasmanian island functions both as a setting for the protagonist's idealized childhood and as a metaphor for the protagonist’s true self. It explores the representation of islands in these texts, examining how a specific tradition of writing about Tasmania intersects with a broader tradition of writing about islands.