

ISISA NEWSLETTER

Published by the International Small Islands Studies Association

Volume 31, Number 2, December 2025



As we conclude another active year for our community, this newsletter highlights key ISISA activities and achievements across the global islands network. We are pleased to announce the ISISA “Islands of the World” Conference, taking place in July 2026, with applications still open to participants from all disciplines and regions.

This issue features calls for papers, upcoming conferences, recent publications, and event highlights, reflecting a year of growing membership and collaboration. The next issue will be published in June 2026. Submissions should be sent to acuka@unizd.hr by June 15, 2026. Thank you for your continued engagement, and we wish you a productive year, joyful holidays, and a prosperous New Year!

Newsletter editor:
Anica Čuka

CONTENT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

UPCOMING EVENTS

REFLECTIONS ON PREVIOUS ISLAND EVENTS

NEW PUBLICATIONS

CALL FOR PAPERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025



President's Report

As we come to the end of 2025, I reflect on the year that's been and the work we've undertaken: four ISISA executive members invited to a pre-conference meeting with IoW organizers in South Korea and serving on the committee as we plan for what's promising to be an amazing conference on Jaeundo, Shinan County, South Korea, in July; finally getting our online payment system up and running; hosting our first online Annual General Meeting; and looking ahead to future conferences in Curacao, Gozo, and Yokohama. Thank you to everyone who's working tirelessly on our behalf to make our Islands of the World conferences the best they can be! I look forward to seeing what 2026 holds in store.

I continue to be astounded by the ever-expanding network of island researchers around the globe, demonstrating that Island Studies is thriving. From my privileged vantage point as ISISA President and Assistant Professor in Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island, I have witnessed a veritable explosion in scholarly publishing through journal articles and books and a marked increase in the number of conferences, webinars, research projects, academic programs, and organisations devoted to islands and archipelagoes. Being invited to serve on boards and advisory committees for such organisations as Åbo Akademi University's Archipelago Institute and the Korea Island Development Institute (KIDI) has been an absolute pleasure and I look forward to seeing what silo-busting work we will undertake in 2026.

It's also been uplifting to be part of the resurgence of the Research Excellence Network of Island Universities (RETI) and



help organize activities with the Northern and Arctic Island Studies Research Thematic Network of the University of the Arctic. It's been especially wonderful to see so many new Island Studies scholars entering post-graduate Island Studies programs and then graduating from universities around the world and becoming part of our Island Studies family.

And, as we head into 2026, we look forward to being part of 20th anniversary celebrations for our flagship journal Island Studies Journal – the official journal of ISISA. Founded in 2006, the journal keeps going from strength to strength.

I want to recognize and thank as always our committed Executive of volunteers: Vice-president Sarah Nimführ, Secretary Anna Baldacchino, Treasurer Bobby MacAulay, Newsletter Editor and Ordinary Member Anica Čuka, Ordinary Members Adam Grydehøj, Rosemarie Azzopardi, and Ayano Ginoza.

Warm New Year's wishes to all islanders far and wide!

**Laurie Brinklow, BA, MA(IS), PhD, OPEI
President of ISISA**



Upcoming events – ISISA 2026!

www.2026isisa.kr



ISLANDS OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE



July 7(Tue) – 11(Sat), 2026 | Ramada Plaza & C-ONE Resort, Jaeundo, Shinan County, South Korea



Latest
UPDATE!

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION
DEADLINE EXTENDED

New Submission Deadline | **January 31, 2026 11:59PM KST**

Upcoming events – ISISA 2026!

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Theme

“Island Space and Time”

This call invite island scholars and researchers to submit abstracts and posters for oral and/or poster presentations on the sub-themes outlined below.

Join us in Korea's "Island Capital," which boasts around 1,004 islands, to share innovative research and foster collaboration among island communities.



Governance,
Policy Studies,
and Politics



Economy,
Population, Tourism,
and Mobilities



Environment,
Natural Sciences and
Biocultural Systems



Art, Culture,
Heritage, Myth,
Tradition, and History



Infrastructure
and Technology



Theory,
Epistemology,
and Methodology



Upcoming events – ISISA 2026!

Important Deadlines



- Abstract Submission Closes
Sunday, 30 November, 2025
- Session Proposal Submission Closes
Sunday, 30 November, 2025
- Feedback & Notification of Acceptance on Abstract
February, 2026

Call for Session Proposal

We are excited to invite you to be part of the 2026 ISISA scientific program by organizing a Special Session. We will provide a session slot, venue, and necessary equipment. Please note that the session organizer is responsible for coordinating the session and inviting speakers.

Download
Proposal Form

❖ How to submit : Fill out the proposal form and submit it to the secretariat by email at abstract@2026isia.kr. For more details, [CLICK!](#)

Apply Now



Are you a student in a college or university in a degree-seeking program and considering attending the 2026 ISISA?



*Student
Travel
Grants*

For any queries related to the call for abstract, please contact conference secretariat.

International Small Islands Studies Association NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Upcoming events

The Call for Abstracts is open for the sessions organized by the **IGU Commission on Islands** at the **IGU Regional Conference 2026**, which will take place in **Istanbul, 17–21 August 2026**.

IGU Commission on Islands organizes two sessions, in collaboration with the IGU Commission on Tourism, Leisure and Global Change and the IGU Commission on Political Geography:

1. ISLANDS CONTESTATIONS: RECLAIMING UTOPIA FROM TOURISTIFICATION

Co-Chairs:

Macià Blázquez Salom, University of the Balearic Islands, Spain

Anica Cuka, University of Zadar, Croatia

2. FLUID SOVEREIGNTIES: GEOPOLITICS, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE FUTURE OF ISLAND AND MARITIME SPACES

Co-Chairs:

Takashi Yamazaki, Osaka Metropolitan University, Japan

Edward Boyle, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Japan

 Abstract submission deadline: **9 January 2026**

The IGU Commission on Islands will provide partial financial support to cover conference-related expenses for a limited number of early-career researchers. More detailed information about this support will be shared soon.

For full conference and submission details, please visit:

<https://www.irc2026.org/en/COMMISSIONS.html>



IRC 2026 REGIONAL CONFERENCE

17-21 AUGUST 2026
İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY - İSTANBUL/TÜRKİYE

Exploring the Earth, Connecting Worlds



International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Upcoming events

Commissions on Islands and Political Geography Joint Session

„FLUID SOVEREIGNTIES: GEOPOLITICS, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE FUTURE OF ISLAND AND MARITIME SPACES,“

Co-Chairs:
Takashi Yamazaki (Osaka Metropolitan University, Japan)
Edward Boyle (International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Japan)

Deadline: 9 January 2026 Friday
<https://www.irc2026.org/en/COMMISSIONS.html>

IRC 2026
REGIONAL CONFERENCE
İSTANBUL - TÜRKİYE
17-21 AUGUST 2026
Exploring the Earth, Connecting Worlds



Island and maritime spaces in the 21st century are increasingly influenced by geopolitical rivalries, environmental changes, and legal ambiguities. From disputed interpretations of UNCLOS and the expansion of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) by major powers to the race for seabed resources and the melting of polar regions, islands and their surrounding waters have become central arenas of global contestation. In this context, islands have become crucial locations where geopolitical tensions, environmental vulnerabilities, and cultural identities intersect. This joint session invites papers that explore the intersection of island studies, political geography, and environmental geopolitics, focusing on topics such as territorial claims, boundary-making, maritime governance, sustainable development, island imaginaries, decolonial perspectives, infrastructures, and mobility and settlement in island spaces.

- **How are sovereignty and territoriality being reconfigured in island and maritime contexts?**
- **What is the role of islands and seas within conflicts, security discourses, and practice?**
- **What are the implications of climate change for island communities?**
- **Which boundaries operate in island and maritime spaces, and to what effect?**
- **How do international legal frameworks and local practices intersect in island and maritime governance?**
- **What is the relationship between infrastructure and perceptions of islands?**
- **How do islands and seas function as productive and constitutive sites of the political imagination?**

This session seeks to reposition islands and seas as central to political and geographic imaginaries, rather than peripheral and external spaces. Island perceptions and realities reflect the intersection of the local and the global in island and maritime spaces, and their position on the front lines of geopolitical contestation and climate challenges. We encourage submissions from diverse regions and perspectives.



International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Upcoming events

Photo: Matheen Faiz via Unsplash

ISLAND CONTESTATIONS: RECLAIMING UTOPIA FROM TOURISTIFICATION

Co-Chairs

- Macia Blazquez-Salom, University of the Balearic Islands, Spain
- Anica Cuka, University of Zadar, Croatia

Call for Abstracts

IRC 2026
REGIONAL CONFERENCE
İSTANBUL - TÜRKİYE 17-21 AUGUST 2026
Exploring the Earth, Connecting Worlds

ISU - UGI
Tourism - Tourisme

Islands have long embodied the utopian ideal, a space for retreating to nature or for self-discovery in an environment where, as Thoreau (1849) observed, "there are moments when all anxiety and stated toil are becalmed in the infinite leisure and repose of nature." Given the perceived advantages of their isolation, islands are increasingly attracting degrowth initiatives in the current context of polycrisis (Kallis et al., 2022).

However, as David Harvey (2002) identified the reverse of similar singularities within highly coveted cities in terms of rent monopolies, financialization also privileges islands as a refuge for capital and elites. This often results in land grabbing and displacement driven by class dynamics and purchasing power (Blázquez-Salom, 2021).

This inherent tension between utopia and privatopia (Vives et al., 2025) manifests through social responses to touristification and gentrification. Examples include the mobilization within the South Europe Cities Facing Touristification (SET) network. These mobilizations are not rooted in "tourism-phobia" but rather in the defense of the right to enjoy shared spaces, be it cities or islands (Blanco-Romero, et al. 2019; Armas et al., 2023).

The purpose of this session is to critically examine the intersections between utopian and privatopian ideals on islands, understanding them as contested spaces. We are particularly interested in highlighting experiences of social empowerment among local communities, adopting a class perspective. This aims to foster aspirations for and promote the hope of a truly socially and environmentally just social organization.

Abstracts for themed sessions to be submitted by 9 January 2026 (or earlier) in conference submission site. Check them all out via the QR code.



International Small Islands Studies Association NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Highlights on 2025 International Natural Conservation Conference, Penghu Archipelago, Taiwan, June 7-12, 2025

Arrival to the Archipelago

From June 7 to 12, we had the opportunity to participate in the 2025 International Natural Conservation Conference, held on the Penghu Archipelago in Taiwan. The event was organized and hosted by National Taiwan University, National Taiwan Normal University, National Dong Hwa University, National Penghu University of Science and Technology, the Taiwan National Parks Association, and the Taiwan Geoparks Association.

We arrived on the archipelago a day early and were warmly welcomed by our hosts, Prof. Jiun-Chuan Lin, Prof. Huei-Min Tsai and Prof. Wen-Cheng Wang. Located in the Taiwan Strait about 50 kilometers west of Taiwan's main island, Penghu is a patchy archipelago forming a mosaic of suggly islands and islets, around 20 of which are inhabited. Some of these are connected by bridges, forming a unique island landscape, a bridged "islandscape".



Photo (up): Prof. Lin and Prof. Wang, our wonderful hosts in front of the map of Penghu Islands



Photo (left): Fish market in Makung

International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Highlights on 2025 International Natural Conservation Conference, Penghu Archipelago, Taiwan, June 7-12, 2025

Geoparks in Taiwan

Taiwan is home to 9 national parks, 10 geoparks, and 13 national scenic areas, each with its own unique natural and cultural features. Geoparks, in particular, follow a multidisciplinary, community-driven model that emphasizes local engagement and sustainable development. Their structure allows for flexible responses to a wide range of challenges—be they ecological, cultural, or economic. The success of each geopark is closely tied to its local context, including its geology, geography, cultural identity, and governance. As such, active community involvement and the development of site-specific management plans are essential for addressing local needs effectively.

The main duty for the management of every geopark is to preserve and highlight the patrimonial value of geological and paleontological local features.

One such example is the Penghu Marine Geopark, which few ISISA members had the chance to visit during the conference. It highlights the area's dramatic volcanic landscape and serves as a model for integrating conservation, education, and sustainable geotourism in a marine island setting.



Photo: South Penghu Marine National Park



Photo: The famous twin hearts stone weir of Chimei. It is a clever adaptation of local tidal conditions to catch fishes. The former name of Penghu islands was “Pescadores” which means fishermen in Portuguese.

International Small Islands Studies Association NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Highlights on 2025 International Natural Conservation Conference, Penghu Archipelago, Taiwan, June 7-12, 2025

Conference Highlights

The conference brought together conservation professionals, researchers, policymakers, and environmental advocates from around the world for a vibrant five-day exchange of knowledge and experience. With a rich program of keynote speeches, themed sessions, and field excursions, the event provided a dynamic space for dialogue on the future of nature conservation.

The program officially began on June 8 with a welcoming ceremony and group photo, followed by keynote addresses from experts representing Taiwan's Ministry of the Interior and several international universities. Topics included climate change adaptation, biodiversity targets such as the "30 by 30" goal, and new approaches to managing national parks, protected areas and geoparks. The variety of speakers was inviting for interesting discussions and comparative perspectives. In the afternoon, participants attended two parallel tracks: Protected Areas and National Parks and Geoparks and Geotourism. Presentations addressed themes like shoreline change, ecological networks, local participation, and the growing role of a mindful geotourism in conservation.



Photo: At the foreground, the conference attendees. In the background typical flat top plateau like basaltic islands.

International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Highlights on 2025 International Natural Conservation Conference, Penghu Archipelago, Taiwan, June 7-12, 2025

Conference Highlights

June 9 focused on marine resources and island sustainability. Morning sessions explored coastal conservation, erratic and fragile water resources, and challenges faced by small island communities. The afternoon featured a field trip to Penghu's geological landmarks—including columnar basalt formations and the iconic Whale Cave—, a visit to one of the beautiful temples on the island, ending with an outdoor group dinner and a visit to the Penghu International Fireworks Festival, which was attracting an enormous number of people.

On June 10, participants took part in a full-day boat excursion to the southern islands of the archipelago. With landings on several islands, scenic cruising, and locally prepared meals, the trip offered a memorable and hands-on look at the region's natural and cultural richness, and how the area is managed in terms of tourism. That evening, attendees returned to Taipei, inspired by the experience and the connections made throughout the week.

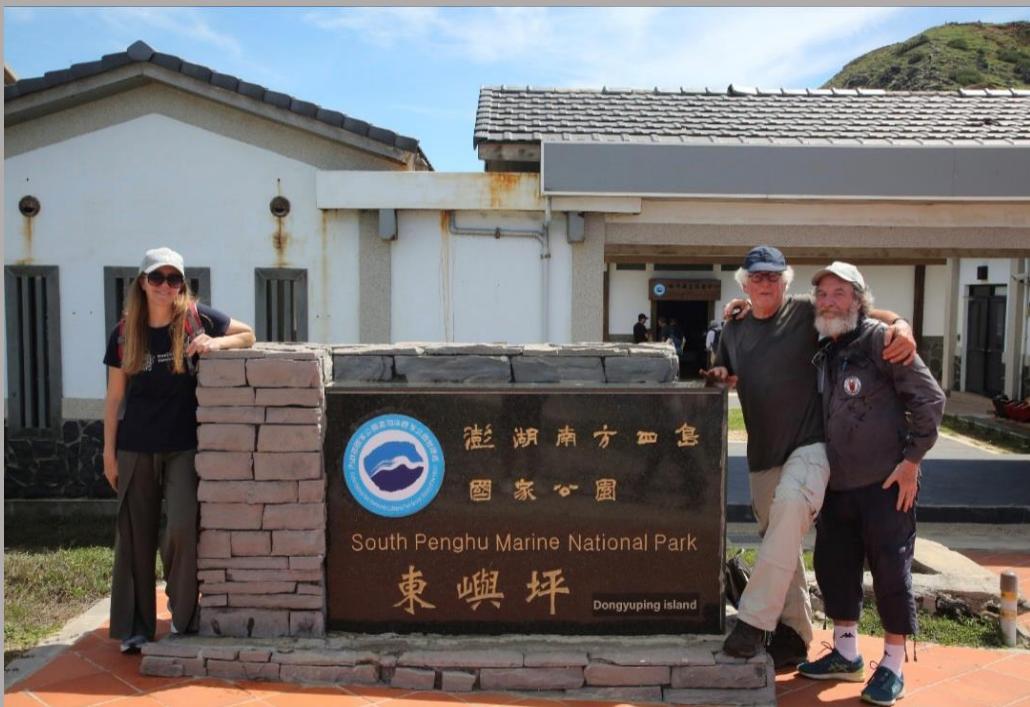


Photo: ISISA members in motion: from left to right, Prof. Anica Čuka from Zadar Uni. (Croatia), Prof. Gerard Persoon from Leyden Uni. (Netherlands) and a Dr. Christian Depraetere, a nissologist from the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD)(France).

International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Highlights on 2025 International Natural Conservation Conference, Penghu Archipelago, Taiwan, June 7-12, 2025

The 2025 International Natural Conservation Conference was a great success. It brought together diverse perspectives and fostered collaboration across disciplines and regions, all in support of a shared mission: the protection and sustainable management of our planet's natural heritage. The warm hospitality of the Taiwanese organizers was greatly appreciated by all participants.

Christian Depraetere, Anica Čuka and Gerard Persoon

Photo: The 'whale' made of debris washed ashore on the coastline, as part of the Penghu Debris Art Festival





Book launch

Isolation and Imagination: The Pleasures and Perils of Island Gardening

Four years in the making, this exciting new book is now finished and shortly to be published. Join a cadre of contributing writers at the 2026 ISISA Conference to be held at Jaeundo, Shinan County, South Korea to celebrate this landmark book launch.

In this volume, contributing authors, many of whom are active ISISA members, have spelt out the joys and pleasures of island gardening and have not been hesitant in raising the unique challenges, the trials and tribulations, indeed the perils, they encounter when gardening on a small island. Surrounding these engaging stories, ISISA executive members past and present, have generously contributed valuable insights and analysis. Professor Godfrey and Dr Anna Baldacchino have provided a lively introduction; Professor Dr Beate Ratter and Professor Gerard Persoon have jointly written an analytical chapter entitled *Gardens ON Islands: Gardens AS Islands* and current ISISA President Dr Laurie Brinklow has gathered the analysis and the storylines together in a poignant, poetic Afterword: *In the Garden of the Gulf*.

The graphic design of this volume is startling, satisfying and creative. Superb illustrations bring garden stories to life.

For the reader it is like an armchair journey in which gardens are explored, gardening is explained and gardeners can be met; the book contains all of that and more.



Photo: A waterwise garden at dawn.
Kangaroo Island; Jennie Teasdale

This project has demonstrated the cohesiveness and strength of the members of ISISA in coming up with something different, something that will both delight the lay reader and excite the small island scholar. Over 70 authors have contributed to this volume demonstrating that writing collaboratively can work and produce a spectacular result.

**Jennie Teasdale AM
Project Coordinator
Kangaroo Island
Australia**





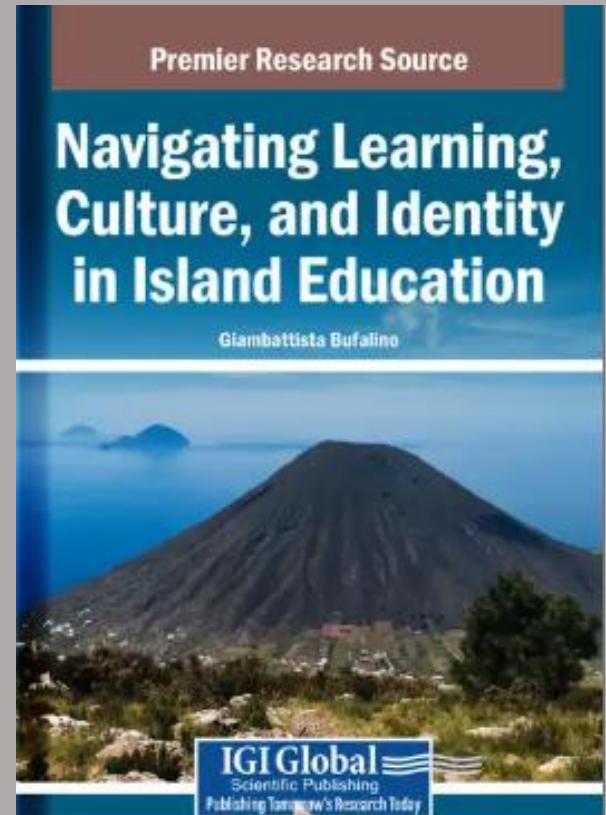
Book launch

Navigating Learning, Culture, and Identity in Island Education edited by Giambattista Bufalino,

Navigating Learning, Culture, and Identity in Island Education, edited by Giambattista Bufalino, offers a timely contribution to the growing interdisciplinary dialogue between education studies and island studies. Bringing together diverse empirical and theoretical perspectives from island contexts across Europe, the Pacific, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia, the volume repositions islands as generative spaces for pedagogical innovation.

The book is conceptually anchored in the notion of islandness, understood not merely as a geographical condition but as a relational, ecological, and cultural ontology that profoundly shapes learning, identity formation, and community life. Across its fourteen chapters, the volume explores key themes such as sustainability education, interculturality, refugee education, higher education persistence, school leadership, and community engagement, demonstrating how island contexts intensify global educational challenges while also fostering resilience, creativity, and situated forms of knowledge.

One of the book's major strengths lies in its ability to bridge theory, policy, and practice. The contributors combine critical frameworks, such as archipelagic thinking, place-based education, and decolonial perspectives, with grounded case studies that illuminate everyday educational realities in insular settings.



In this sense, the volume foregrounds the complexity of islands and positions them as laboratories for rethinking education in times of climate crisis, mobility, and social transformation. Overall, Navigating Learning, Culture, and Identity in Island Education is a collection that will be of particular interest to scholars, graduate students, and practitioners working in education, island studies, environmental humanities, and comparative education.

Giambattista Bufalino



International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025



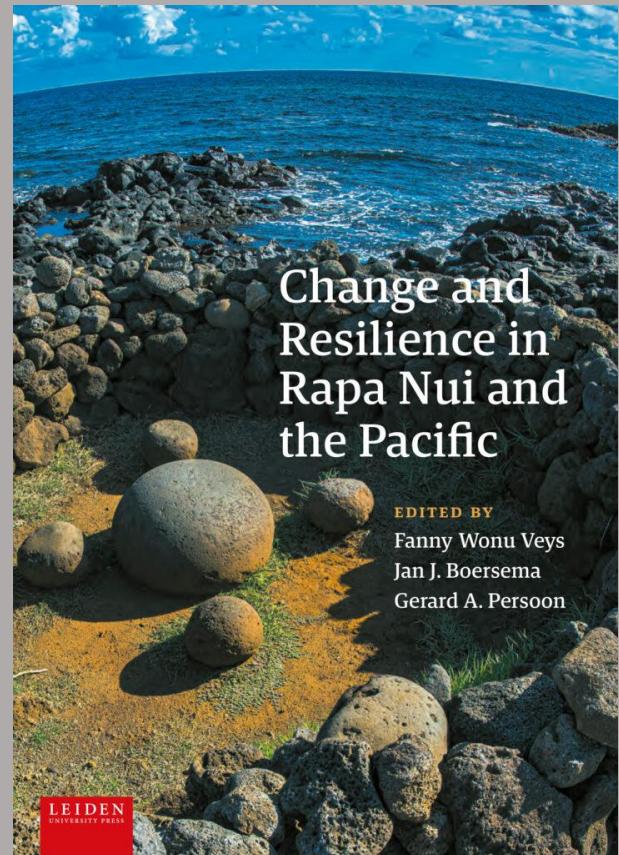
Book launch

Change and Resilience in Rapa Nui and the Pacific

Editor: Fanny Wonu Veys, Jan J. Boersema & Gerard A. Persoon

This book is due to be published in January 2026 and is now available for backorder

This edited volume reflects the latest research on Rapa Nui and the Pacific in the fields of archaeology, education, history, Indigenous studies and museology. Archaeologists show the relationship between value judgments, archaeological data and mapping; economic, ideological and socio-political interactions and stone quarrying; rock art and voyaging histories and Rapa Nui astronomy. The book pays attention to European views including those of the explorer Jacob Roggeveen, the expedition leader Walter Knoche, nineteenth-century eyewitness accounts, the ethnologist Alfred Métraux, and Professor John Macmillan Brown. The representation of Rapa Nui in popular culture is discussed. Contributions show that Rapa Nui identity is expressed through ancestral medicine, finding ways to self-determination in relation to Chile, barkcloth traditions and body art, and architectural space and place. The violence of western education systems is unpacked in the context of Rapa Nui. Contributions also discuss how museum collections, be they photographs, stone and obsidian artefacts reveal new dimensions of Rapa Nui history.



Concerns about the restitution of Rapa Nui objects and ancestral remains are explored. Authors discuss the still undeciphered Rojorongo script from a historical, science and linguistic perspective and reminisce on 1970s life on Rapa Nui and ethno-archaeological experiments. Two contributions take the reader outside of Rapa Nui to Palau and the Marquesas. More information: [here](#).

Gerard A. Persoon



International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Book launch

The Drowned: Elements of Loss and Repair, Elaine Stratford, University of Tasmania

by Elaine Stratford

The Drowned: Elements of Loss and Repair was published by Palgrave in November 2025. Funded by the Australian Research Council Discovery Grant program, the work develops an elemental geography of water, with particular attention to islands, coasts, rivers, and maritime worlds.

Moving across colonial histories, contemporary inequalities, and climate-altered waterscapes, the book invites readers to ask how lives are rendered disposable in watery settings and what it might mean to attend to loss, absence, and repair in more ethically grounded ways. Islands figure throughout as sites where water's material, cultural, and political force is especially concentrated and revealing.

Available from [Palgrave](#).

PALGRAVE SERIES IN ELEMENTAL THINKING

The Drowned

Elements of Loss and Repair

Elaine Stratford



palgrave
macmillan





Elemental Thinking book series: call for proposals

Elaine Stratford is leading a new Palgrave book series, Elemental Thinking, which brings earth, water, fire, air, and related elemental processes into dialogue with the social sciences and humanities. The editorial team now invites work that treats elements as active forces shaping power, injustice, care, and planetary futures. Proposals are warmly welcomed for full-length monographs, Palgrave Pivot short books, and edited collections. The series will be of particular interest to scholars working on islands, oceans, climate change, colonial legacies, and environmental justice. More information is available [here](#).

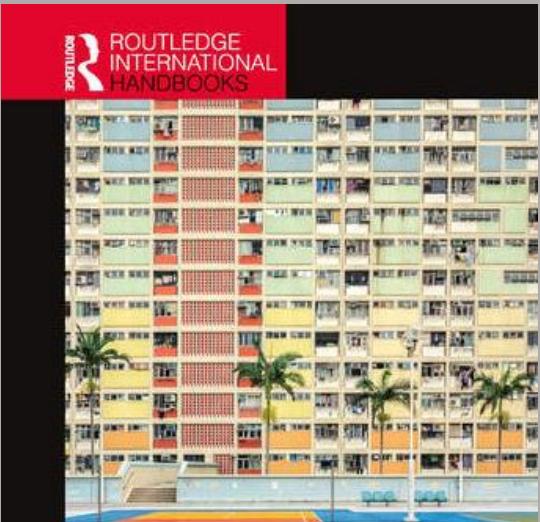


New edited collection with island content: The Routledge Handbook of Home

The Routledge Handbook of Home was published in November 2025.

Edited by Elaine Stratford, University of Tasmania, and Katie Walsh, University of Sussex, the handbook offers a wide-ranging, interdisciplinary examination of home as material practice, emotional relation, political claim, and spatial condition. Among the 46 chapters by 60 authors are several that engage directly with island places, displacement, asylum, homing and unhoming, and Earth itself as an island home. Contributors include Elizabeth McMahon, Godfrey Baldacchino and Anna Baldacchino, and Charalampos Tsavadaroglou, alongside scholars from geography, anthropology, sociology, and allied fields. The volume will be of strong interest to island studies researchers concerned with dwelling, belonging, displacement, and planetary care.

Find out more from [Routledge](#).



The Routledge Handbook of Home

Edited by Elaine Stratford and Katie Walsh



NEW PUBLICATIONS

Nimführ, Sarah, & Tejeda Martínez, Raisel (2025). Nobody dances with pain: Re-centering traditional Cuban music in the musicolonial politics of the transatlantic Caribbean. *Folk, Knowledge, Place, Early access.*
<https://doi.org/10.24043/001c.147460>

This article examines Son Cubano as both a musical form and a socio-cultural practice, focusing on its role in articulating resistance, cultural memory, and decolonial self-assertion within the transatlantic Caribbean. Calling for a decolonial mode of listening, we approach song lyrics and their musical textures as barometers of island life and as cultural markers of social change, when listened to attentively. The article builds on the paper we presented in June 2024 at ISISA 2024 in the panel Island Cultures. We therefore extend our thanks to the participants of ISISA's 19th Islands of the World Conference at the University of Mataram in Lombok for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this article.

Enjoy the performance of 'El Cuarto de Tula' at ISISA 2024 once again by following the link to the accompanying video (QR code):



NEW PUBLICATIONS

Special session: The future of small islands within the European political and geographical context - Journal of Maritime and Islands Culture (JMIC) - issue 14(2) - 2025 <https://jmic.online/issues/>

The special session, edited by Gabriele Casano, Arturo Gallia, Stefano Malatesta and Dionisia Russo Krauss, promotes a reflection, both geographical and political, on the opportunities and dialectics shaping the future of archipelagic and island regions (and islanders) in Europe. Collecting mostly Mediterranean cases, the papers aim to offer a multidisciplinary vision ranging from the analysis of supranational policies to the micro-analysis of lived experiences.

The collection opens with a contribution by Aikaterini Tsampi entitled A Global Approach between Islandness and Human Rights: The Future of European Islands, which helps readers to understand the discussion developed in the other papers, in terms of both theory and politics. Shifting the analysis from the supranational level to the systemic challenges that arise at the local level, the essay by Anica Čuka, Julijan Sutlović and Josip Faričić, Geographic and Social Marginalisation: Healthcare Disparities and Challenges on Croatian Islands, explores one of the most critical spatial features of small islands: the access to healthcare. Islands' demographics are further explored in Vera Graovac Matassi and Marin Perko's work, Socio-Economic and Demographic Implications of Population Ageing on Croatian Islands: The Case Study of Hvar Island. 'Islandness' and Risk Perception: Climate Change and Marine Diversity Loss in the Campanian Archipelago, by Clara Di Fazio, Eleonora Guadagno and Maria Paradiso, shifts the focus to the vital connection between island communities and the environment. To complement this focus on perception, Lorenzo Brocada's essay, Vulnerability and Resilience Analysis of Mediterranean Protected Small Islands: A Comparative Analysis of the Cross-Border Region Interreg Marittimo (Italy/France), discusses the management of island ecosystems. Giambattista Bufalino and Donatella Privitera's essay, Reimagining Education in Insular Territories: Pedagogical Innovation and Social Sustainability in the Aeolian Archipelago, examines social innovation in island education. The work of Pietro Agnoletto, Antonia De Michele and Nicoletta Tomei, Multidisciplinary methods on islands' future imaginaries: The Islands 4 Future project on the island of Ponza, Italy, stresses the agency of younger generations. The issue concludes with a deeply reflective and methodologically innovative contribution by Patrizia Domenica Miggiano: Nostalgia and memories of everyday life: A Narrative-Visual Study of Sant'Andrea Island (Gallipoli, Italy).





NEW PUBLICATIONS

Malatesta, S., Gallia A. (2026), Seasonal Islands Geographies. The Human Geography of Italian Small Islands. Patterns, Challenges and Perspectives. Springer.

Italy comprises almost 60 inhabited islands, either temporarily or permanently populated, spanning from the Tyrrhenian basin to a few dozen miles off the Tunisian coast. The geography of these archipelagos is characterised by significant geophysical, landscape, demographic, and cultural diversity. This heterogeneity positions Italian small islands, alongside Dalmatia and the Aegean islands, as a key region for understanding the human geography of the Mediterranean.

Within the islands' diversity, however, shared dynamics emerge, such as relatively large distances from the mainland, predominantly volcanic geological origins, small surface areas, and mono-economies based on summer tourism. The title the authors chose - Seasonal Island Geographies - points to the overarching interpretative category they intended to apply to the description and analysis of Italian small islands geographies. As Peter Haggett proposed in his celebrated introduction to human geography concepts, human geography is fundamentally concerned with the humanisation of spaces, with time serving as the key variable through which this transformation unfolds.

Indeed, time-space connections are essential to understanding the human geography of micro-island systems. Starting from this preliminary conception, the volume examines the key dimensions of human geography on Italian islands – including tourism, energy production, demography, connectivity, and administrative geography – by placing “seasonal politics” at the heart of its analysis. In other words, it explores how the humanisation of space is bound up with the cyclical nature of the seasons. The book opens with a foreword by Anica Čuka, Chair IGU Commission on Islands.





The Importance of an Integrity Law and System for Developing Nations by Bonnie Benesh

For developing nations striving to achieve sustainable growth, social stability, and international credibility, the establishment of an effective integrity law and a complementary institutional system is indispensable. Integrity systems—comprising legal frameworks, enforcement bodies, transparency mechanisms, and cultural norms—form the backbone of good governance. Without these structures, corruption, mismanagement of public funds, and erosion of public trust can severely undermine national progress.

One of the key reasons an integrity law is vital is its role in setting clear standards for ethical behavior across government and public institutions. Developing countries often face challenges such as weak rule of law, limited regulatory capacity, and a lack of accountability. A well-designed integrity law defines what constitutes misuse of power, sets boundaries for public officials, and provides legal consequences for violations. This clarity not only deters misconduct but also empowers citizens and civil society to hold authorities accountable.

Moreover, integrity systems enhance economic development. Investors—domestic and foreign alike—are more likely to commit resources to countries with transparent governance and predictable rules. Corruption increases the cost of doing business, distorts competition, and discourages long-term investment. By establishing anti-corruption agencies, audit institutions, procurement oversight bodies, and whistleblower protections, a nation signals its commitment to fairness and stability. This fosters a more attractive business environment, encouraging entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable economic growth.

An integrity framework is also crucial for ensuring that public resources benefit the population as intended. In developing nations, funds allocated for infrastructure, healthcare, and education are often limited and must be managed efficiently. Corruption can siphon off resources, resulting in poor-quality services and widening inequality. Effective monitoring systems, transparent budgeting processes, and independent oversight bodies ensure that development funds are used responsibly and reach their intended targets. This is essential for poverty reduction and for building public confidence in state institutions.

Equally important is the cultural dimension. Laws alone cannot fully eradicate corruption; they must be supported by a social environment that values ethical conduct. Integrity systems promote this shift by embedding transparency in public administration and encouraging civic participation. Public education, community engagement, and access to information empower citizens to demand higher standards from their leaders. Over time, this fosters a culture of integrity that becomes self-reinforcing. Developing nations, such as Curaçao, cannot achieve lasting progress without a strong integrity law and system. Since at least 2016 an Integrity Chamber was legislated. In 2022, The Think To DO Institute, worked closely with the government to create an Integrity Law. The law was not yet adopted. These mechanisms promote accountability, strengthen economies, safeguard public resources, and cultivate trust between citizens and the state. By prioritizing integrity, developing countries lay the foundation for stable governance, equitable development, and a prosperous future.



The Importance of an Independent Autonomous Administrative Authority (ZBO) in an Integrity System by Bonnie Benesh

A robust national integrity system depends not only on clear laws and ethical standards but also on institutions capable of enforcing them effectively. Among the most crucial of these institutions is an independent, autonomous administrative authority—known in Dutch as a *Zelfstandig bestuursorgaan* (ZBO). Establishing such a body strengthens the integrity framework by ensuring impartial oversight, reducing political interference, and promoting long-term trust in governance.

A ZBO's independence is its greatest asset. When oversight functions—such as monitoring compliance, investigating misconduct, and issuing sanctions—are housed within politically controlled ministries, there is a significant risk of conflicts of interest. Officials may be reluctant to scrutinize their own colleagues or superiors, leading to weakened enforcement. By contrast, a ZBO operates at arm's length from the government, allowing it to investigate and act without fear of political retribution. This autonomy is essential for addressing corruption, abuse of power, and unethical practices in a credible and consistent manner.

An independent authority also enhances transparency and public confidence. Citizens are more likely to trust an integrity system that is overseen by a body perceived as neutral and professional rather than one influenced by political dynamics. A ZBO can publish independent reports, audit public institutions, and recommend reforms based solely on evidence. This contributes to a culture of openness and helps shape more informed public debate around governance issues.

Furthermore, ZBOs strengthen institutional resilience. Because they are not tied directly to political cycles, they can maintain continuity in long-term integrity policies and safeguard standards even when governments change. This stability is particularly important for developing or reforming integrity systems, where consistent enforcement helps nurture a culture of accountability across the public sector.

Finally, the specialized expertise within a ZBO allows it to apply complex integrity principles effectively. Whether handling conflicts of interest, overseeing financial disclosures, or managing whistleblower protections, an autonomous body can provide professional, technically sound guidance that supports high-quality public administration.

A ZBO is not merely a structural choice but a cornerstone of an effective integrity system. Its independence, transparency, continuity, and expertise collectively strengthen democratic governance and foster the trust essential for a well-functioning public sector.

International Small Islands Studies Association NEWSLETTER, December 2025



NEW VIDEO by Bonnie Benesh



Another short video has just been released which might be interesting for other countries and ISISA members. It is about Media and Democracy.
Video can be accessed via QR code.



International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025

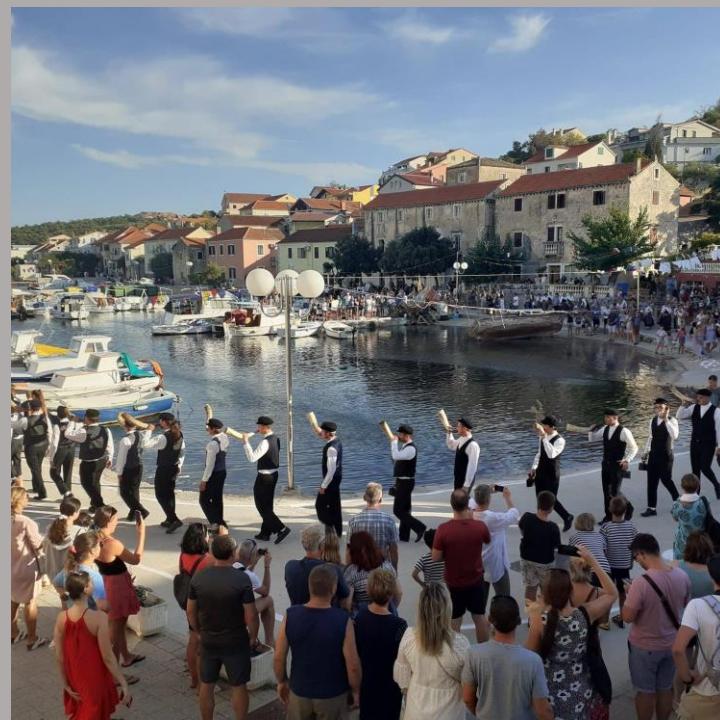


Dugi otok Island – keeping alive island tradition

Dugi otok, located off the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea in Croatia, is the largest of the Zadar Archipelago islands. Characterized by a diverse landscape of rugged cliffs, fertile plains, and rich coastal waters, the island has traditionally supported communities whose livelihoods depended on fishing, agriculture, and maritime activities. The interplay of sea and land has shaped not only the economic life of its inhabitants but also their cultural expressions, social structures, and communal practices, which continue to be celebrated through local traditions and events.

Saljske užance constitute a traditional cultural event held in the village of Sali on Dugi otok and occupy a significant role in the preservation of local identity and intangible cultural heritage. Emerging from the quotidian practices of island life, particularly those associated with fishing and agriculture, Saljske užance have, over time, evolved into a well-established form of community-based cultural expression.

The program of Saljske užance is structured around theatrical performances, short plays, and competitive activities, which convey historical ways of life on the island in a manner that is both humorous and ethnographically informative.



Through satire and witty portrayals, the performances address themes such as fishing, agricultural labor, familial relationships, social dynamics, and human interaction with the maritime environment. A distinctive feature of the event is the use of the local dialect, which serves to preserve linguistic heritage and reinforces the authenticity of the performances.

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NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Dugi otok Island – keeping alive island tradition

A particularly noteworthy aspect of Saljske užance is the performance of Tovareća muzika, an indigenous musical practice unique to the region. This performance is an integral component of the event's identity and contributes to its distinctiveness and recognition beyond the local community.

Saljske užance actively involve participants of all generations of males, ensuring the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, customs, and values while fostering a strong social and educational dimension. Humor, rooted in self-irony and shared communal experience, facilitates engagement and strengthens the connection between performers and audience.



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NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Dugi otok Island – keeping alive island tradition

Although Saljske užance are held during the summer months and attract a substantial number of visitors, the event's primary function extends beyond tourism. Its core purpose lies in the preservation of cultural identity, reinforcement of communal cohesion, and valorization of quotidian island practices. The combination of traditional theatrical expression, local dialect, inclusive male participation, and the distinctive tovareća muzika renders Saljske užance a culturally significant and enduring component of the heritage of Dugi otok.

The preservation of events such as Saljske užance is crucial not only for maintaining historical and cultural continuity but also for strengthening the social fabric of the local community. By actively engaging multiple generations in shared creative and performative activities, such traditions foster a sense of belonging, collective responsibility, and intergenerational solidarity. These events serve as a vital mechanism through which the community reaffirms its identity, maintains cultural knowledge, and cultivates cohesion, thereby ensuring that local heritage remains a living, participatory element of contemporary social life.

Anica Čuka



International Small Islands Studies Association

NEWSLETTER, December 2025



Announcements:

Looking ahead: roles and new directions for Elaine Stratford, University of Tasmania

Elaine has asked the ISISA newsletter team to let members of the community know that she will formally retire on 31 December 2025 and, from 1 January 2026, will move onto a casual contract with the University of Tasmania.

Conferred the title of Professor Emerita and awarded the University's Distinguished Service Medal, Elaine will also hold an honorary role in the School of Geography, Planning, and Spatial Sciences and will focus on several book, research projects, and work with PhD candidates.

Elaine has also established a sole trader venture, Studio Stratford, a research, writing, editing, and coaching practice drawing on four decades of academic and public intellectual experience, with health, career, and life-course coaching to be added in early 2026.

To learn more about those services, please contact Elaine at elainestratford@hotmail.com.



PROFESSOR
Elaine Stratford

International Small Islands Studies Association

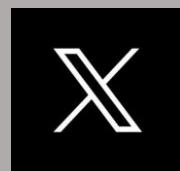
NEWSLETTER, December 2025



HOW TO REACH ISISA?

There are various options how you can reach ISISA. You can do it via web page and/or social networks facebook and X:

<https://www.isisa.org/>



You are warmly invited to submit your **contributions** for the upcoming ISISA Newsletter by **June 15th, 2026**. We greatly appreciate your participation and look forward to receiving your submissions to acuka@unizd.hr.

HAPPY NEW
YEAR !!!

