

‘Representing islands – producing islandness: Rethinking identities, mobilities, and relations in island research’, a special section of *Island Studies Journal*, 16(2), November 2021

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For a long time, islands and insular spaces have increasingly become an object of research among scholars of various disciplines. The increasing interest and critical discussion on island research got also visible by the established research field of Island Studies that has produced a remarkable amount of significant and insightful theories. There have been numerous debates on the concepts of insularity and islandness and new approaches have emerged such as understanding islands as ‘assemblages’ (e.g. Sheller 2009) and using the ‘archipelago’ to rethink the relations between islands (e.g. Stratford, Baldacchino, McMahon, Farbotko & Harwood 2011; Pugh 2013a). Intriguing in this sense is the possibility offered by Philip Hayward (2012) to look at the islands as ‘aquapelagos,’ that is in their relation to the marine and terrestrial spaces, or the concept of ‘islandscape’ stressing the multidimensionality and co-production of islands by various (human and non-human) actors as well as political agreements (Nimführ & Otto 2020). However, Adam Grydehøj (2017) notes that a reflection on what kind of knowledge is produced is underlit and he calls for a decolonial shift in island studies (Nadarajah & Grydehøj 2016).

Since islands (could) have a meaning for the actors who deal with or produce them, a contextualization of this meaning is essential. Epistemically and methodologically, scholars face the challenge of countering the dominance of external perspectives on islands with an insular internal view (Baldacchino 2008) while at the same time not essentializing the island (King 2009) nor reproducing Western perspectives (Pugh 2013b; Nadarajah & Grydehøj 2016). Islands have always been — and in some cases are still — confronted with a colonial gaze. Thus, to avoid producing another layer of a colonial view (King 2009), we should critically reflect on how islands are represented in our research, which theoretical concepts are referred to, and what knowledge is produced by applying them. Furthermore, the researcher’s own position within the field should be reconsidered.

The concept behind this Special Section has been developed during the workshop ‘Anthropology of islands: Reflecting islandness from a historical and cultural studies perspective’ which has been organized at the Department of European Ethnology of the University of Vienna in Austria, 21–22 November 2019. This is, however, an open call for paper: Researchers who were not attending the workshop are welcome to submit papers to the journal special section, and presenting a paper at the workshop does not guarantee publication in the journal.

This special section aims to invite scholars who are researching on and/or about the island(s) to reflect on their current research designs as well as their research perspectives and positionality by using examples of their recent research projects. We want to explore how islands are represented and islandness is produced by us as researchers. Theoretical, conceptual as well as practice-methodological aspects of research and work approaches, processes, contextualizations and relationships can be reflected upon.

Based on empirical and/or theoretical findings the papers should address the following questions:

- Which theoretical concepts do we refer to?
- How do we deal with situated and changing manifestations and meanings of islands?
- Which ascriptions of the island do we observe and how can we deconstruct them?
- How do we deal with the reproduction of essentializations of the island?
- To what extent do we take the “geo-politics of knowledge” (Mignolo 2011) into account in our research?

Island Studies Journal (ISJ) is a web-based, freely downloadable, open access, peer reviewed, electronic journal that publishes papers advancing and critiquing the study of issues affecting or involving islands. It is listed and abstracted in Scopus and Web of Science (Social Science Citations Index). Selected peer-reviewed papers will be published as a special thematic section in *Island Studies Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 2 in November 2021, but individual papers will be published online ahead of print as and when they complete the peer review and editorial process.

Interested authors are asked to submit abstracts of 150–200 words by 15 March 2020 and will get notified by 25 March 2020. If accepted, initial drafts of full papers will be expected by 1 July 2020. The deadline for final submission is 1 November 2020. Submissions should be e-mailed to the guest editors (please use the title *Special Section on Representing islands* as the e-mail subject). Manuscripts should be between 5,000–10,000 words and must be written in excellent English (prepared in accordance with the ISJ submission guidelines: https://islandstudies.ca/guidelines_instructions.html).

For further information, or if you are interested in submitting a paper, contact both guest editors Sarah Nimführ (sarah.nimfuehr@univie.ac.at) and Greca N. Meloni (greca.nathascia.meloni@univie.ac.at).

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