

# ANALYSING AND PRODUCING TELEVISION REPORTS

A study of the Îles du Ponant that analyses how the audiovisual sector may contribute to Island Studies and Island Development

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**ABSTRACT:** This article is based on a study conducted on the Îles du Ponant islands in western France which focused on the relationship between islands and the medium of television. Two approaches were developed. First, a large corpus of television reports was analysed. Second, two geographers produced a documentary series presenting the results of a study on the social, economic and regional dynamics of the Îles du Ponant. Our objective is not to expand on the contents of the representations of these islands which were disseminated by traditional television media or in the documentary series developed by the above-mentioned geographers. Rather, we seek to show how this approach may prove beneficial, both for island territories and for research. We will also question the role audiovisual media play in Island Studies more generally.

**KEYWORDS:** Television, audiovisual media, development, Îles du Ponant, methodology

## Introduction

UNESCO implemented the 'Small Islands Voice' programme in 2002, the objective being to support and strengthen traditional local media as well as new media platforms such as websites and internet forums (see UNESCO, 2003). It seeks to encourage the people living on islands to reflect on sustainable development and to make their voices heard at the local and international level. This programme has been implemented in island regions such as Fiji, the Maldives, the Seychelles and the Bahamas. It is based on a concept of the media as a space for collective discussion and as a creator of relationships between remote locations. In this context, the media are used as a tool to compensate for the geographic isolation of islands and the project uses media to strengthen local dialogue and to build a global island network around issues related to sustainable development. In essence, the media's role is to pass on information and share solutions.

The *ID-îles*<sup>1</sup> (Initiatives and Development in the Îles du Ponant) research programme is based on the same assumptions, applied at a more local level. Rather than contribute to the networking of islands around the world, the programme's objective is to bring together thirteen sub-continental islands located on the Atlantic and English Channel coasts of France. This programme was not undertaken by an international institution but rather by researchers in Geography from the Université de Brest in France. Both programmes, ie the Small Islands Voice and *ID-îles*, use media, and particularly television (in the case of the latter), to analyse sustainable development and to help implement inter-island reflection on these issues. This article questions how this approach is beneficial to Island Studies. However, we must begin by presenting the Îles du Ponant in order to identify the issues and challenges these islands encounter.

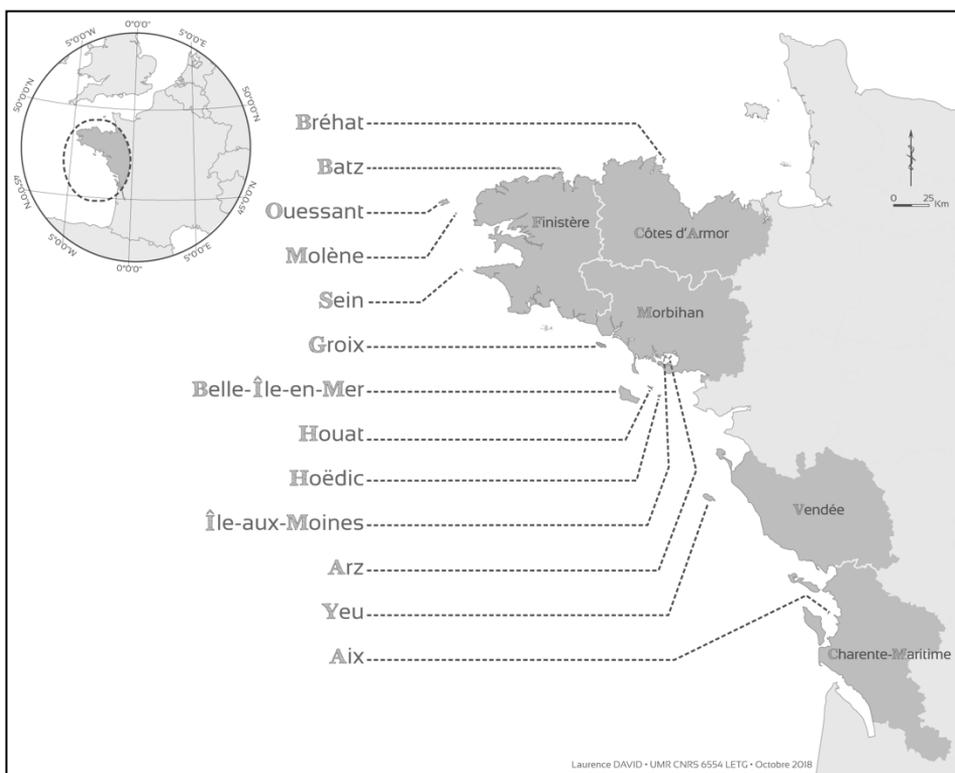


Figure 1 – Location of the Îles du Ponant

France has approximately one thousand islands and islets located on the Atlantic and English Channel coast (Brigand, 2000). These are known as the Îles du Ponant. Our study focuses on 13 of these islands, with a total population of 16,261. They are inhabited all year-round, are not connected to mainland France by bridges, and are *communes* (individual administrative districts with elected mayors and councils). Despite these similarities, they vary greatly. First,

<sup>1</sup> The *ID-îles* programme analyses the interactions between social, economic and regional dynamics of the Îles du Ponant and entrepreneurship on islands. It develops specific themes such as adaptation to transport constraints and the role of new technologies. It has been funded by the Foundation of France since 2015.

as Figure 1 shows, they are distant from one another. They are located in three regions and five different departments. The fact that they belong to different territorial entities means that they are governed by different policies and that the resources available to the different islands differ, thus hindering networking.

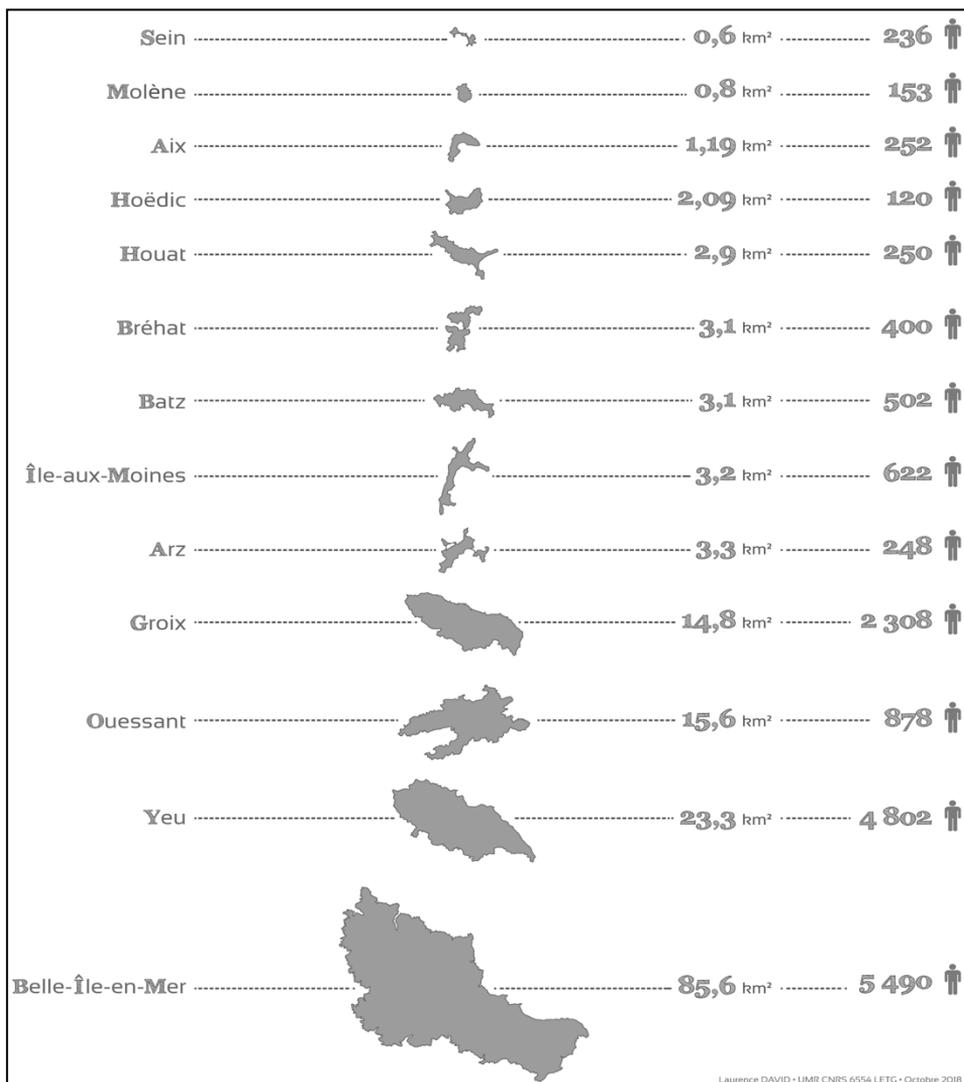


Figure 2 – Surface areas of the Îles du Ponant and number of inhabitants

Figure 2 shows that a second criterion for differentiation is their size. The surface area of l'île de Sein, the smallest of the Îles du Ponant, is 0.6 km<sup>2</sup> compared to the largest, Belle-Île-en-Mer, which covers 85.6 km<sup>2</sup>. With 5,343 inhabitants, the latter is also the most populated, in marked contrast to the former, which only has 113 inhabitants. The third element of differentiation concerns disparities in transport services in relation to distance to the mainland and difficulty in gaining access to these services. The island closest to the mainland is located 0.2 km by air (Île-aux-Moines), and the farthest, 18.25 km (Ouessant). Figure 3

shows this distance according to the duration and number of daily return ferry crossings, which defines the practices of islanders and visitors alike. Although presented briefly, these criteria have a significant influence on many areas such as employment and access to services.

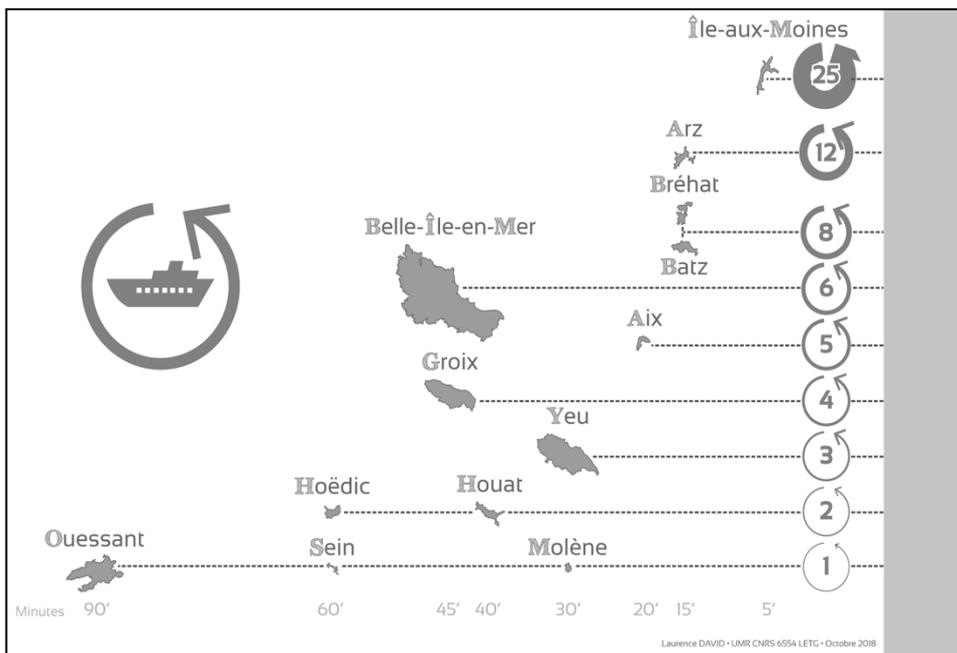


Figure 3 - Duration and number of return crossings between the Îles du Ponant and French mainland per day

In 1971, the island municipalities came together under the Association pour la Protection et la Promotion des Îles du Ponant (APPIP) to raise government awareness of their difficulties. This organisation was renamed the Îles du Ponant Association (AIP) in 2000 and is principally concerned to implement funding programmes. It focuses on the fields of urban planning, energy transition and local economies. It is an important space for dialogue, albeit one that is limited to elected officials. While AIP's actions generally focus on equipment projects, they rarely target actions seeking to create networks between the different islands. However, the participation of the association in the *ID-îles* programme since 2010, its support for the creation of a festival that invites residents to meet on a different island each year, the creation of a new island newspaper (*L'écho des îles*) and the implementation of the 'Island know-how' brand reflects its willingness to embrace new fields of collective action. In the early 1990s, newspapers relayed information about island life but before the implementation of the *ID-îles* project, no media were shared by all the islands to enrich and strengthen inter-island relationships,<sup>2</sup> despite the fact that the islands share similar challenges and can gain knowledge from the solutions experimented by others.

<sup>2</sup> An island photography journal also been created, entitled *Îles - Regards photographiques sur la vie insulaire*, and three editions have been published (as at September 2018).

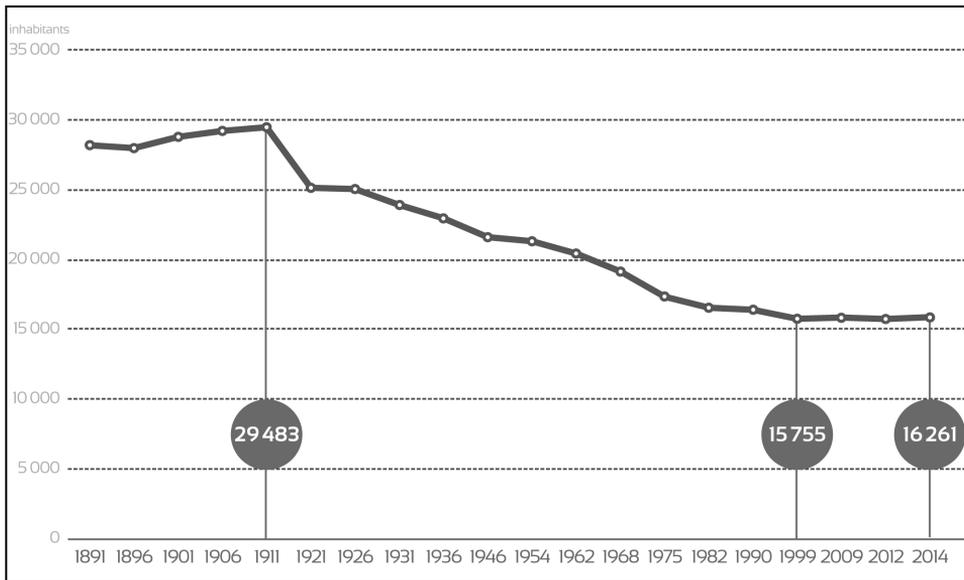


Figure 4 – Population changes in the Îles du Ponant (1891-2014)

The key development issue shared between the islands concerns maintaining an all-year round population. Indeed, as Figure 4 shows, the islands experienced significant population decline in the 20th Century. In this period, for instance, the island of Sein saw its population drop from 1144, in 1946, to 202, in 2009. Some islands saw the number of inhabitants drop to one sixth of their previous population in the space of sixty years. Since 1999, however, population figures have stabilised and some islands have even experienced slight population increases. To understand this phenomenon, a team of geographers and economists working with the AIP implemented the *ID-îles* research programme. The findings of this study show that these dynamics may be explained by the settling of new residents who are attracted by the quality of island life. While most are retirees, young working people have also set up businesses to enable them to live on the islands. The study focused on analysing these new entrepreneurs, their profiles and their trajectories, their sectors of activity, the benefits and constraints they encounter, and their vision of their island's development and its future. The programme was also driven by the desire to benefit island regions and populations. It thus seemed particularly important to disseminate the results of the study and, in so doing, to question the often-pessimistic dominant discourse about the future of the islands. The study (Brigand, 2014) shows that entrepreneurs have succeeded in creating sustainable activities in new sectors, and that associations, groups and political actors have sought to establish initiatives to support and encourage living on the islands all year round. It seemed important to disseminate these ideas and projects. Given that the organisation of joint events across these remote islands is inevitably limited, we decided to use television as a medium to present the results of the research programme, show concrete examples in the other regions, and lead the debate on development. The support provided by Tébéo, the local television station (through the funding of a PhD thesis and the broadcasting of programmes) was essential to enable the successful completion of this research programme, which ran for more than three years.

The objectives of this article are twofold. First, to present briefly the methods implemented to analyse the images of islands produced by television. Second, to introduce how the authors used the audiovisual tool in order to disseminate new representations of islands. Rather than focus on representations specific to the Îles du Ponant, specific attention will be paid to how this approach may be beneficial for Island Studies: ie how can researchers use the media, especially television, to improve knowledge of islands and to promote positive socio-economic dynamics? We will begin by questioning the role that media, notably television, play in the field of Island Studies. We will then show how we used television reports as data to question representations of island development. Last, we will discuss the process of making a documentary series through an analysis of how this contributes to both island regions and Island Studies.

1. The role media, and television in particular, play in the field of Island Studies

The role of different media and their representations of island regions and territories emerged as a topic of debate in Island Studies in the first issue of *Island Studies Journal*. In preliminary remarks to his article 'Islands, Island Studies, Island Studies Journal' (2006) Baldacchino (2006) highlighted the importance of islands for the arts, notably through the example of *Robinson Crusoe*. In the second article in the journal, Hay (2006) goes as far as to theorise that the island may be "the central metaphor within western discourse" (2006: 4). Hay evokes existing studies and images of islands in all their diversity and ultimately proposes that these analyses should be excluded from the field of Island Studies: "[s]o powerful is the metaphorical idea of island that it can be deployed in the absence of even the slightest reference to the reality of islands" (ibid: 28). He justified this proposal by referring to the relationships of domination that these representations, often produced by people living on the mainland, may create with regard to island people. It should be noted, however, that Hay does not dismiss the study of representations of islands as a whole. He excludes the representations of imaginary islands, without ties to the field, but proposes to include studies of media that interact with island regions. Many articles have responded to and/or discussed Hay's contentions - as evidenced by the fact that it is the most cited article in *Island Studies Journal* (Stratford, 2015).<sup>3</sup> It is impossible to explicate and develop the different elements of the debate on the perceptions of metaphors revolving around islands in this article but one of the important events in the development of the topic was the creation of the journal *Shima*, dedicated to the analysis of islands and marine cultures. The editorial 'Introduction to Island Culture Studies' in the first issue (2007) set out the journal's four thematic areas, two of which the Editorial Board considered as in need of debate: how "diasporic island communities" (ibid: 3) are taken into account, and "fictional representations of islands and 'islandness'" (ibid). While acknowledging Hay's criticism, the journal clarified its position as centred on a cultural approach that was open to the *representation* of islands. Debate on whether the analysis of the representations of islands should be addressed thus depends on the connection between the work undertaken and the island, irrespective of whether it is metaphoric or documentary, dominating or interactive.

Once this "faultline" is identified, it is necessary to question the role played by studies that focus on media representations of islands in the field of Island Studies as it has developed over the last decade. Given that we cannot consider all the publications in this field, we chose to conduct a literature review based on four international, English Language refereed

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<sup>3</sup> It must be noted, however, that Hay's article outlines three different "faultlines" of Island Studies. The impact of this article cannot therefore be limited to its contentions about metaphoric aspects of islands.

journals devoted to Island Studies cited in the call for papers for the 14th International Small Island Cultures conference: *Island Studies Journal*, *Shima*, *Urban Island Studies* and *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*. The call for papers reminds us that these journals have been influential in the shaping of this field of study. Based on the analysis of the discourse produced by the journals, a list of articles was drawn up after reading the titles and abstracts of each of the articles published in the four journals (comprising 493 items). Our focus was on material discussing media representation of islands, not just studies that focus directly on islands. Instead we focussed on the analysis of discourse around islands created and disseminated via various instruments (books, movies, songs, newspapers, etc.). “Representation” is understood here to be a material configuration referring to a different entity, to the practical purposes of communication. Representations can pursue an objective approach, as Levy and Lussault have identified, representations “leave free reign to the subjective expression of he/she who represent... in no event is a representation a replication of reality. It is always an interpretation” (2013: 866).

The results of this literature review are presented in Figure 5. There was no article on the analysis of the representations of islands in the last journal created - *Urban Island Studies*. There were 23 articles in *Island Studies Journal* (approximately 11% of the articles published in it), 48 articles in *Shima* (approximately 25%) and 4 articles in *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* (approximately 5%).

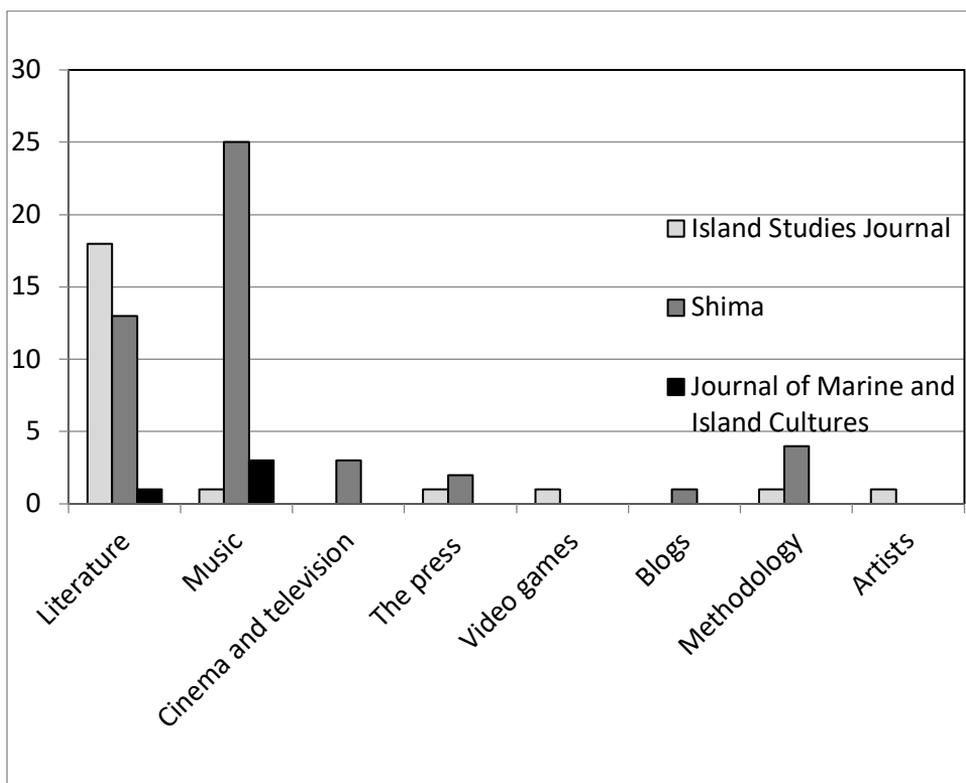


Figure 5 - Number of articles about media representations in (English Language) Island Studies journals (2006-2018).

Most articles on representation,<sup>4</sup> focused on the analysis of the representations produced, except for those in the “methodology” category (which centred on the use of audio, artistic and audiovisual methods) and in the “artists” category (which focused on interviews with island artists). Literature (31 items) and music (26 items) were the most commonly addressed artistic representations of islands, given that the journals had devoted a special section and issue, respectively, to one of the themes.<sup>5</sup> However, no article from *Island Studies Journal* questioned the film or television representations of islands<sup>6</sup>. *Shima* published an article on the representation of Hong Kong in the films produced by Wong Kar Wai (Biancorosso, 2007) and two articles analysing television fiction series (Giuffrè, 2015 and MacKinnon, 2016). Among the articles on methodology, one focused on the Fogo Process experiment which had been carried out in the 1960s to distribute messages from people in isolated zones to politicians (Crocker, 2008). In the field of media studies, one article evoked the highly reflection presence of a famous island owner (Butkus, 2014). This inventory reveals that the reflection between audiovisual media and its interactions with island regions remains relatively underdeveloped in the key English Language journals that participated in the development of the academic field of Island Studies. The few existing articles are focused on specific case studies. Broadly speaking, no article has questioned the interactions between an island and its audiovisual representations more generally. It is, however, possible to relate cultural approaches focused on the analysis of representations to more social approaches. Indeed, films or reports intended for the general public are disseminated, across islands and between islands and the mainland, and they could provide interactions that may be promising to observe and theorise. We will not present this analysis here. Rather, we will present the methods implemented to question and act on the development of the Îles du Ponant using the medium of television in order to outline several avenues for reflection.

## 2. Analysing television representations of the Îles du Ponant

In order to analyse the television representations of the Îles du Ponant, we contacted the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA)<sup>7</sup> and compiled a database comprising 21,285 reports dealing with the islands between 1945 and 2015. Among these documents, 60% were from news and current affairs reports. The main feature of the corpus is thus its volume. Rather than undertake a comprehensive analysis of a specific item, this study attempts to obtain a global vision of the representations of islands presented on television. What analytical methods are privileged and what are the interests of such an approach?

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that only the article titles and abstracts were read, not the entire article. It is thus possible that some articles focusing on the representations of islands are not contained in this inventory. In the case of *Island Studies Journal*, numerous articles in the Book Review section were not taken into account. We only considered the ‘Scholarly articles’ section. For consistency, the articles published in *Shima* with the header ‘Feature Review’ were also not considered (despite one [Hayward, 2007] addressing a filmic representation of a fictional island).

<sup>5</sup> *Island Studies* v12 n2 featured a theme section on ‘Island fictions and metaphors in contemporary fiction’ and *Shima* v11 n2 comprised a theme issue on ‘Island Music and Performance Cultures’.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted, however, that in *Island Studies Journal* v12 n2 (referred to above), members of the Island Poetics Research Group co-authored articles on island poetics in which film analyses were developed.

<sup>7</sup> This research was made possible due to the work undertaken three students working in the Master’s workshop at Université de Bretagne Occidentale that led to the drafting of the *Inventaire et analyse des programmes télévisés consacrés aux îles du Ponant* (Houbib, Lugand and Paul, 2017).

The primary interest of such a corpus is to conduct quantitative studies based on the information provided in the notes of each television report. Incorporated into a database, these notes make it possible to characterise the reports by identifying their chronological distribution, the channels that produced them, and the periods when they were broadcast. This enables us to give a precise response to different assumptions, such as the assumption that the media perceive islands as highly attractive. It is notable in the latter regard that despite the time, cost and logistic constraints associated with reporting on islands, there were more than three reports per day in 2015. The database also allowed us to observe how the volume of reports were distributed across islands. The high disparity observed may be explained in part by the islands' surface areas and their geographical location. Thus, the most remote islands, such as Ouessant (5000 reports between 1945 and 2015), were more widely represented than islands closer to the mainland, such as those in the Gulf of Morbihan (249 reports on l'île d'Arz over the same period). This quantitative approach also allowed us to identify trends in the themes analysed by drawing on the words used in the titles, abstracts and key words attributed to 8,519 reports by archivists from the INA. Figure 6 shows the number of reports made based on a selection of 13 keywords. The figure shows, for instance, that important issues for islands such as housing, health or trade were addressed less frequently than issues around shipwrecks or storms. The term "paradise" was quoted almost as often as the term "housing". Through this distribution, one senses that fantasised images of islands are omnipresent in television.

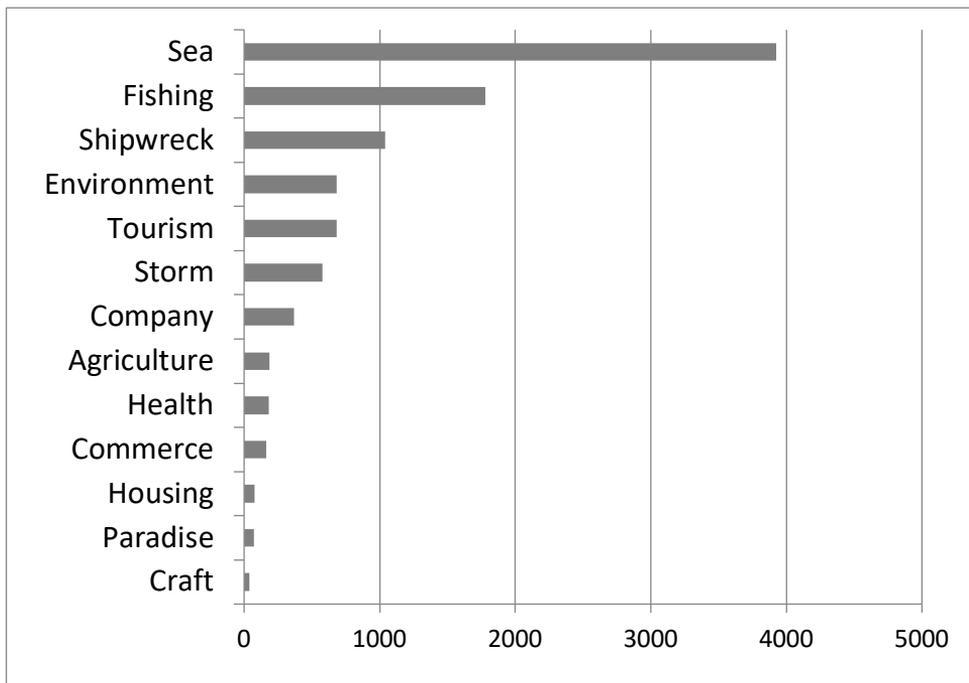


Figure 6 - Distribution of the topics covered in media reports

Qualitative analyses complemented this preliminary identification of general trends. Rather than watch all the televised reports, we chose to undertake a systematic viewing based on specific themes: centred on a specific island, a specific period or a specific activity. This approach allowed us to respond to specific questions while gaining comprehensive

knowledge of the reports as a whole. The analysis of such a corpus made it possible to access a very wide range of documentary resource material. Given that news reports documented events directly, they bore witness to the events that islands experienced. For instance, they contained interviews with stakeholders or witnesses on the topics addressed. But beyond these subjects covered, the informative approach to journalism made it possible to distinguish some information in the details of the shots, such as the number of boats in a port, current development plans or existing businesses, and agricultural practices. Careful observation of the filmed material thus allowed us to collect substantial information regarding past economic activities and their impact on the landscape. It also made it possible to undertake diachronic reflections on the territories.

Motion images have a great capacity for embodiment. They may give complex processes, such as the process of economic specialisation, a concrete image. For instance, despite observing a similar product at the same period – such as lobsters – there may be differences across the islands. In 1965, a report on Île de Molène documented the trap fishery practised on the island while another report focused on how fish was cooked in an up-market restaurant in Île-aux-Moines. Comparing the two reports enables us to highlight the differences between offshore islands whose inhabitants make their living from the sea and islands closer to the mainland which are already highly specialised in tourism. Similar comparisons may be conducted following observations of the evolution of the same area. For instance, we can analyse the evolution of a sardine canning factory in Belle-île-en-Mer, which was in operation in the 1960s, then abandoned, then transformed to house a company manufacturing high-end seafood such as urchins, then finally transformed into a bed and breakfast establishment. The trajectory of this place is an embodiment of the island's economic reorientation from fishing port to tourist resort. While comparisons between reports is an essential element of analysis, one might add another dimension by using other sources of knowledge such as statistical or field data. To return to our previous example, one may, for instance, put the analysis of reports into perspective by referring to the number of sardine canning factories, fishing boats or tourists for each period, or to the accounts gathered from actors on the ground who participated or observed changes in that specific location.

Beyond a source of documentary information, the corpus also allowed us to analyse the dominant discourse of the media on the islands according to different periods. Rather than focus on island developments, the diachronic analysis therefore focused on the representation of these developments. Onscreen or offscreen narration used in different periods and programmes was sometimes characterised by an emphatic style that highlighted the subjectivity of the journalists' perceptions of the island. The choice of subjects and how they were represented using images and sounds thus reflected an outsider's view of the development of these regions. For instance, the first reports devoted to each island ran between 1945 and 1965. It appears that the most remote islands, lagging behind in terms of development, attracted journalists much more than islands close to the mainland. There were two dominant discourses. In some reports, the island was presented as attractive precisely because of this lack of development. One hour away from the mainland, these regions seeming made it possible to cross the border of the modern world and to sustain the image of a lost paradise. The second discourse was more nostalgic. It anticipated the signs of upcoming changes, such as electrification, and regretted practices such as sailing that had already disappeared. Other discourses on island development later emerged, such as the harsh criticism levelled at the growing tourist pressure in the 1970s and 1980s, with television reports systematically depicting tourists alighting from boats. Another discourse that

emerged was quite pessimistic and focused on the depopulation and demise of the islands, with reports privileging images of deserted alleys and docks.

Analysing a feature-length documentary or a small corpus makes it possible to evaluate the singular point of view given to a region. In contrast, analysing a vast corpus of television reports helps outline the general trends that emerge from this large amount of data. From a methodological perspective, comparisons (across periods, films, islands, and data) are the main driving force behind this study. In line with the debate that drives Island Studies with regard to analysing real or fantasy representations, this corpus also enables us to analyse how the common elements of the island imaginary (such as heaven, prison, or ships) re-emerge and are constructed within reports rooted in current events and reality. While we believe that this analysis is extremely promising for Island Studies, analysing television representations of island regions also seems to be essential for the analysis of the media themselves in the field of Information and Communication Sciences. Indeed, these spaces are geographically restricted and are also disproportionately represented. The same places, the same participants, and the same themes are addressed in many programmes across different periods. The material thereby provides a preferred framework for the analysis of choices on how topics are addressed and written, as well as for changing techniques and their impact on the representation of regions (currently the drone, for instance). Lastly, these reports are widely distributed and viewed, and they interact with regional dynamics. They are thus commented on in the islands and on social media, attracting visitors as well as new residents charmed by a lifestyle model that is an alternative to mainstream, urbanised Western society. Based on this reflection on the impact television programmes may have on territories, we decided— as researchers — to make a documentary series devoted to the Îles du Ponant.

### 3. A documentary series on the sustainable development of islands

Generally speaking, the media construct a discourse presenting islands to the inhabitants of the mainland who are unfamiliar with these islands. We sought to reverse this situation. The objective of the *ID-îles Magazine* documentary series is to present our point of view as researchers to the islanders. This series comprises nineteen 26-minute episodes broadcast on three local television stations in the Brittany region as well as uploaded to the <[www.id.iles.fr](http://www.id.iles.fr)> website. The series is composed of two types of episodes. The first use a monographic approach to focus on dynamics and socio-economic initiatives specific to a given island. The second focuses on a theme common to all the islands, such as the export of island products to the mainland. The originality of this project is that the television reports were written, shot and edited by the research team rather than by audiovisual professionals. The programmes were made by the authors of this article. The first named author, Corsi, is a PhD student in Geography who had already worked on the research programme and who was hired by a local television station for the duration of her thesis. Her mission was to produce and edit the series. The station was responsible for her training in audiovisual technology and for the dissemination of the episodes produced. Her thesis director, the second named author of this article, Brigand, who has been conducting research on the Îles du Ponant for the last forty years, was the second researcher, and participated in the writing and hosting of the programme and played a supervisory role to ensure its completion. As the episodes progressed, we implemented a method to adapt social sciences approaches to audiovisual writing.

We primarily drew on the results of our research programme to write the documentary series. This allowed us to define the material's key issues and content. Our findings were further updated through a first series of interviews with the islands' stakeholders and key actors of the themes addressed (which were not filmed). As we had been working on the research program for the prior 4 years, we had a network of people following our work. Some of them chose to get involved in the process of making the documentaries. They helped us meet new islanders and make them take part of the project. The argument they mostly used was about the utility of the TV material for the islands themselves. Of course, the process of writing and working with the island community was different on each of the 13 islands, depending on the political context, our connexion with the mayor and the economic actors, and the implication of some associations, etc. Participants were selected according to different criteria such as the degree to which they represented global trends, the originality of their approach, the reproducibility of their project on other islands, their complementarity with the examples presented in previous episodes, and their relationship with the media. We sought to give a voice to islanders who had enjoyed little or no previous media coverage. Once the outline was collectively validated and a relationship of trust established with the participants, each participant was filmed on two separate occasions. On the first occasion, the first co-author filmed a semi-structured interview lasting approximately one and a half hours in a quiet environment conducive to discussion. On the second, she used video observation (Lallier, 2011) to film the participant at their place of work. Rather than simply feature islanders, our objective was to complement their speech by images of their actions. Based on the filmed material, a skeletal story was developed during the editing and rounded out by co-author one. This involved alternating the testimonials and ensuring that they were aligned with sequences that presented the quantitative research findings in a synthetic manner. These sequences were presented in a didactic tone and with animated infographics and a voice-over, enabling us to provide specific information on global trends illustrated and embodied by the stories filmed in the field. The film's rhythm and structure were thus shaped by the alternation of sequences reproducing research dynamics between quantitative and qualitative approaches, field data and laboratory data, general reflections, and case studies. After editing, the films were first presented on the islands during the screening of the programme and then in subsequent debate sessions.

These projections and the broad dissemination of programmes (approximately thirty times in the month they were released) provided an opportunity to survey the islanders' perceptions of our work. The challenge for this project was to deliver material that was useful for islanders. To make these films accessible to everyone, we strove to make them short, to avoid jargon, to favour common places, and to carefully choose the transitions to build a coherent narrative from the beginning to the end of the programme. Translating our knowledge of islands into images and sounds allowed us to take advantage of enjoyable, educational and attractive moving image sequences. For example, we presented statistical analyses with infographics trying to be simple, dynamic and aesthetically appealing. During our discussions we were surprised that episodes of a didactic nature were the most popular among the islanders, who appreciated being able to learn new things, even about their own island, while watching TV. The comments made by the islanders who viewed the programmes allowed us to analyse several reception processes. The first was a strong sense of identification. The reaction we heard most after projection was: "It's really our island; it's what we live on a daily basis"<sup>8</sup>. This judgement was often backed up by comparisons with

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<sup>8</sup> Comments collected in Ouessant after the screening of *Magazine ID-îles* n°5 in January 2016.

other television reports: “It’s not the picture postcard image you usually see”<sup>9</sup>. The people appreciated that different development issues were addressed. Once they were able to recognise their island, the viewers identified the differences between our vision and their vision of the island. They noted, for instance, the discrepancies between the information provided and their knowledge of the islands with regard to quantitative data (for example their knowledge on population and housing dynamics) and qualitative (a few inhabitants were surprised to find out about projects they were unaware of). Lastly, they noted the different opinions. Indeed, many islanders were pessimistic about the future of the islands, particularly with regard to their depopulation. While the discourse around the films evoked the islands’ challenges, it also showed that there are encouraging signs such as the return of young islanders who come to resume traditional activities or to experiment with new projects. This positive vision surprised the islanders. The double process of identification and distancing led to a third important element of reception, ie the discussion of development issues in island communities. The islanders told us that the broadcasts gave rise to many discussions during which everyone commented on the content, gave their own vision of the future of the island, and discussed the challenges or solutions mentioned. The last significant process was local engagement with the programmes, particularly noticeable by the fact that the islanders’ themselves diffused them, or that they looked up other episodes of the series.

Beyond the positive reception of the programmes, one might legitimately question how these programmes are beneficial for island regions. First, the production and dissemination process involve bringing people together and thus creating spaces for exchange between different island stakeholders who do not always know one another or who are sometimes opposed, for instance elected officials and entrepreneurs. Some regarded participation in the programme as a means to make public a particular position. While we initially designed the programme to disseminate our research findings, we quickly realised that it also made it possible to diffuse local and accurate information, responding in some instances to the communication difficulties between stakeholders in the same region. Our specific contribution was the comparison across islands, which we made as often as possible. Our objective was to put quantitative data into perspective (for instance the number of businesses according to the economic sector) or by citing public or private initiatives experienced on other islands (for instance agricultural revival projects). Given that these islands are remote and without maritime ties, our programme helped pass on experiences and allowed islands to overcome island particularism and put regional dynamics into perspective. Finally, the television series, coupled with other actions associated with the research programme, encouraged elected officials and islanders to reflect on and discuss island entrepreneurship issues and to work together to support initiatives.

Despite the constraints of using audiovisual techniques (in terms of training, costs and time), this experience was also highly beneficial for us as researchers. By providing a tool to interact with the islanders, each film surpassed the usual interviews. Although we were responsible for the film production and the associated narratives, the islanders also participated in this project and some were even involved in the films; in other words, we undertook this project together. We believe that the documentary programme, which can be accessed by all, is a fair return for the time that different members of the community accorded us. We should, however, emphasise that while these television documentaries are tools enabling us to have a discussion with inhabitants about our area of analysis, they are not, in any sense, conventional scientific publications. In the field of academic research, audiovisual media is

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<sup>9</sup> Comments collected in l’île d’Arz after the screening of *Magazine ID-îles* n°14 in June 2017.

capable of giving testimonies collected in the field from islanders their rightful place. Combined with sounds and images, testimonies grant access to speakers' emotions. Audiovisual language is thus a response to the need to hear once again the voice of islanders in studies that focus on them (an approach advocated by Baldacchino, 2018). Lastly, this experience helped us to transform audiovisual media, which we conceive as a tool, into a subject of study in itself.

## Conclusion

By way of conclusion, it seems necessary to comment on the limitations of our approach. Our approach was progressively formalised, on an experimental basis, as we pursued the analysis of television reports and the production of programmes. The construction of this approach is still ongoing. We have laid the foundations, the value of which we will subsequently assess. It is possible, however, to go even further in terms of the analysis of audiovisual productions and outputs. The issue of the media, notably television, and islands is a field that has received little attention and one which should be enhanced and developed within the framework of a multidisciplinary research programme. It may be interesting to put into perspective the analysis of television reports by collecting islanders' perceptions of these reports and by analysing not only how they are diffused, but also their impact. The contribution of sociologists and anthropologists, in particular, may open up new avenues of research, particularly by analysing the role media plays in the construction of often stereotypical images of islands and islanders. These images also play a part in the formulation of economic, social or even political policies. Lastly, we must emphasise that a researcher with a camera produces material for the present but also for the future. The "heritage dimension" of the interviews is clear. Similarly, the comprehensive analysis of the interviews enables more in-depth knowledge to be gained about some issues, such as the ties that unite islanders to their region, or those associated with local development. We had imagined that the use of the camera would be an obstacle and limitation preventing us from completing our work on the ground. Much to our surprise, this was not the case. The warm reception and the human ties established between the researchers and the islanders as the production programme progressed reflect a genuine, sincere and deep collaboration. They also reveal a genuine acknowledgment of what each party brings to the project which, from this perspective, falls within the field of participatory research.

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