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Building Resilient Islands/Institutions for Growth and Sustainability: The Prince Edward Island and Institute of Island Studies Experience

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Canada

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in Island Studies and Sustainability,
University of Prince Edward Island
and University of Malta



Outline

- My Background
- Narratives of Small Islands (Vulnerability and Resilience)
- Vulnerability and Resilience on Prince Edward Island, Canada
 - The Biosciences: An Example of PEI Entrepreneurship
- The Institute of Island Studies at UPEI: Local and International Roles
 - An Example of our Approach: Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation on Small Islands
- Other Island-Based International Institutes/Centres
- Questions?

Who Am I?

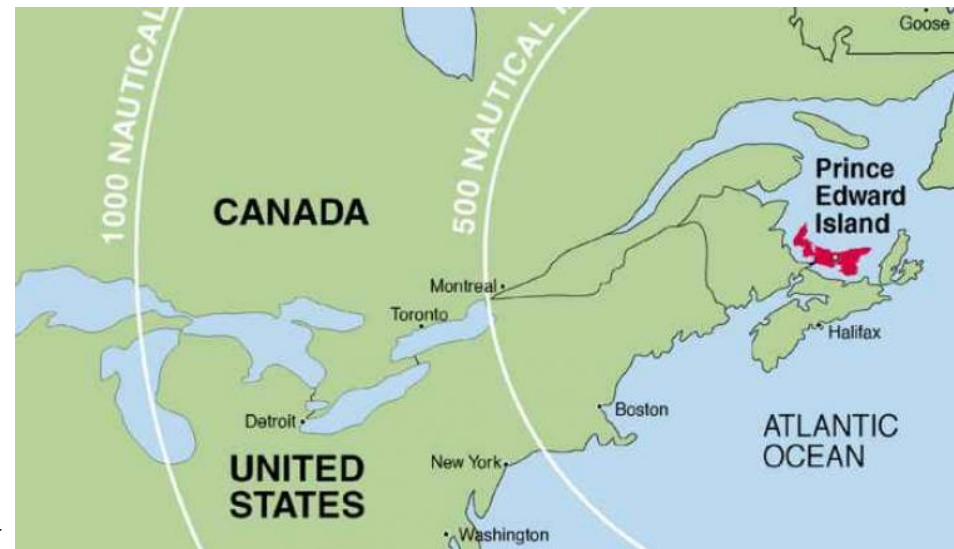
- Economic geographer and university professor
- Served as Department Chair, Dean, VP Academic at several Canadian universities
- Lived on PEI, Canada for 9 yrs.

Recent roles in the Caribbean:

- Served as External Reviewer for SALISES at UWI
- Assisted Centre of Excellence for SD of SIDS and Univ. of Aruba (UNDP)
- Chair of Conference Planning Committee – March 26-29 in Aruba on “*Sharing Stories of Island Life: Governance and Global Engagement.*”
- By no means a “Caribbean expert”

Current Roles at UPEI:

- Chair, Executive Committee, Institute of Island Studies (research & public engagement)
- Coordinator, Master of Arts, Island Studies post-graduate program
- Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Island Studies and Sustainability



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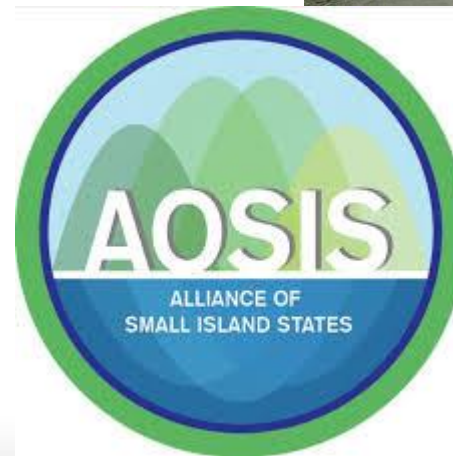
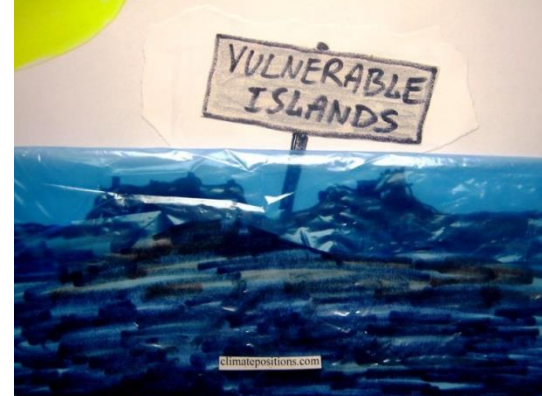


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Islands as Vulnerable

Research and Popular Media:

- Islands as vulnerable, fragile, remote (economy, ecology, culture)
- Need outside help to solve their problems (e.g., Small Island Developing States & Rising Sea Levels)

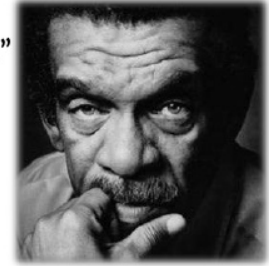


Islands as Resilient/Entrepreneurial

Poem by Derek Walcott

(the Schooner Flight, 1979)

“Open the map. More islands there, man,
Than peas on a tin plate, all different size,
One thousand in the Bahamas alone...
There are so many islands!
As many islands as the stars in the Night”



Counter narrative:

- Islands as resilient, high economic and political capacity
- Islanders as resourceful, mobile.
- A “World of Islands” perspective
- Ability to navigate and influence political and economic relationships (political entrepreneurship)



islands
climate
resilience

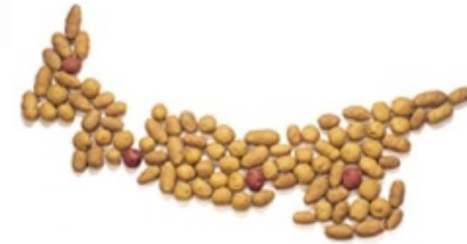


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Stereotypes of Prince Edward Island Economy

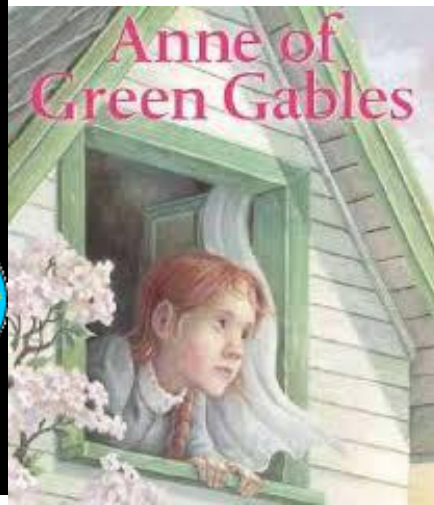
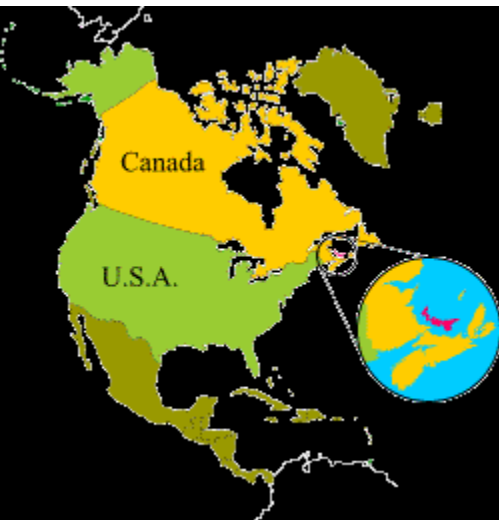
- Historically, strong manufacturing presence (e.g., shipbuilding)
- Now, seasonal economy:
- Agriculture and fishing/processing (potatoes, shellfish)
- Summer tourism (1.5 million)
- Iconic “Anne of Green Gables” (L.M. Montgomery)
- Image of rural society, conservative values, independent
- “Garden in the Gulf”; “Million Acre Farm”; “The Gentle Island”



**P.E.I.
POTATOES**



Prince Edward Island
travel & tourism guide



Characteristics of Prince Edward Island Economy

- Canada's smallest province in area and population
- 5,660 sq. km. (St. K&N = 270 sq.km.)
- 155,000 people (St. K&N = 56,000)
- A SNIJ (Subnational Island Jurisdiction): Powers devolved from federation
- Relatively poor:
 - Mean hhd income < 85% of Cdn. average
 - GDP/cap. 75% Cdn. average
- Unemployment Rate consistently higher than most provinces
- Transfer payments (fed. to province) a significant share of economy
 - 34% of provincial budget (2016/17)
 - \$3,940/capita (highest of any province)
- Primary sector employment (6.2%) compared to Canadian average of 3.8%
- **BUT:**
- Currently fastest growing province
- Population-led development strategy
- Economic migrants/newcomers (increasing diversity)
- New slogan, **“The Mighty Island”**



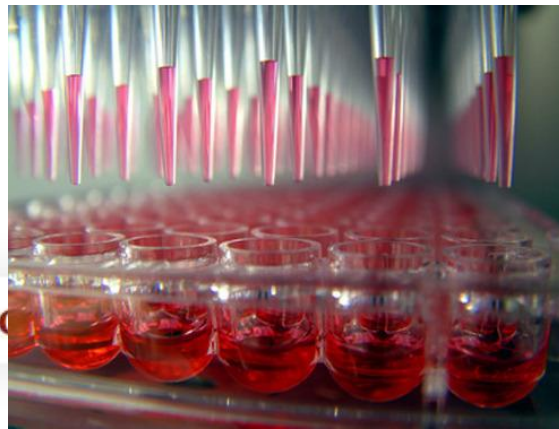
The Biosciences on PEI

Two main kinds of biosciences on PEI

- Aquaculture/aquahealth (natural products development); anchor firm is Novartis
- Medical diagnostics devices and pharmaceutical (anchor firm is Diagnostic Chemicals/BioVectra)
- Normally found in larger metropolises

In 2017, biosciences on PEI still only 1.5% of GDP **BUT**:

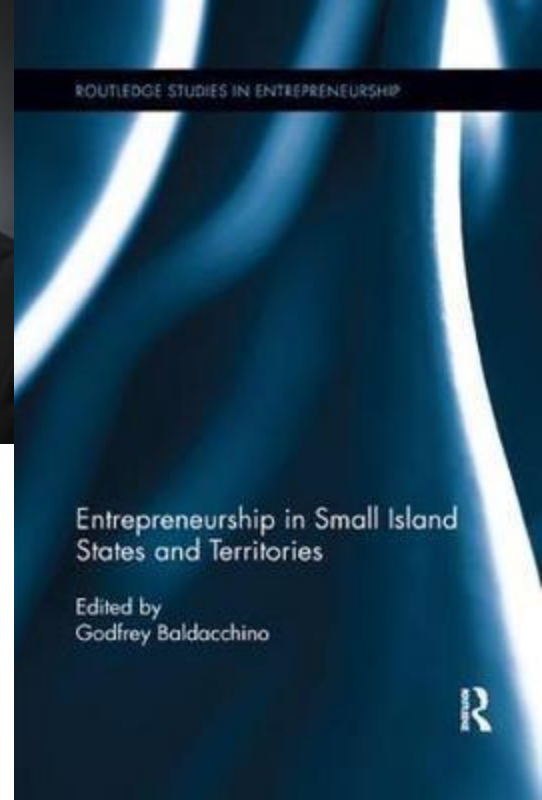
- Fastest growing sector (revenue growth 33%/yr. from 2006 – 12)
- Compare to tourism at 2.4%/yr.
- Number of companies increased from 12 (2002) to 54 (2018)
- Current sales = \$250 million Cdn
- Only 1,600 direct employees BUT higher average income = \$54,000 (compared to \$38,589 average industry)



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Themes to Explain Growth of PEI Biosciences

- *Pivotal Role of Individuals*
- *Conservatism with Entrepreneurship*
- *Strategic Business Decisions*
- *Biosciences as a Cluster*
- *Diagnostic Chemicals and BioVectra as Anchor Firms*
- *Government, Governance and the Private Sector*
- *Accessibility, Isolation and Location*



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BioAlliance

collaboration to commercialization



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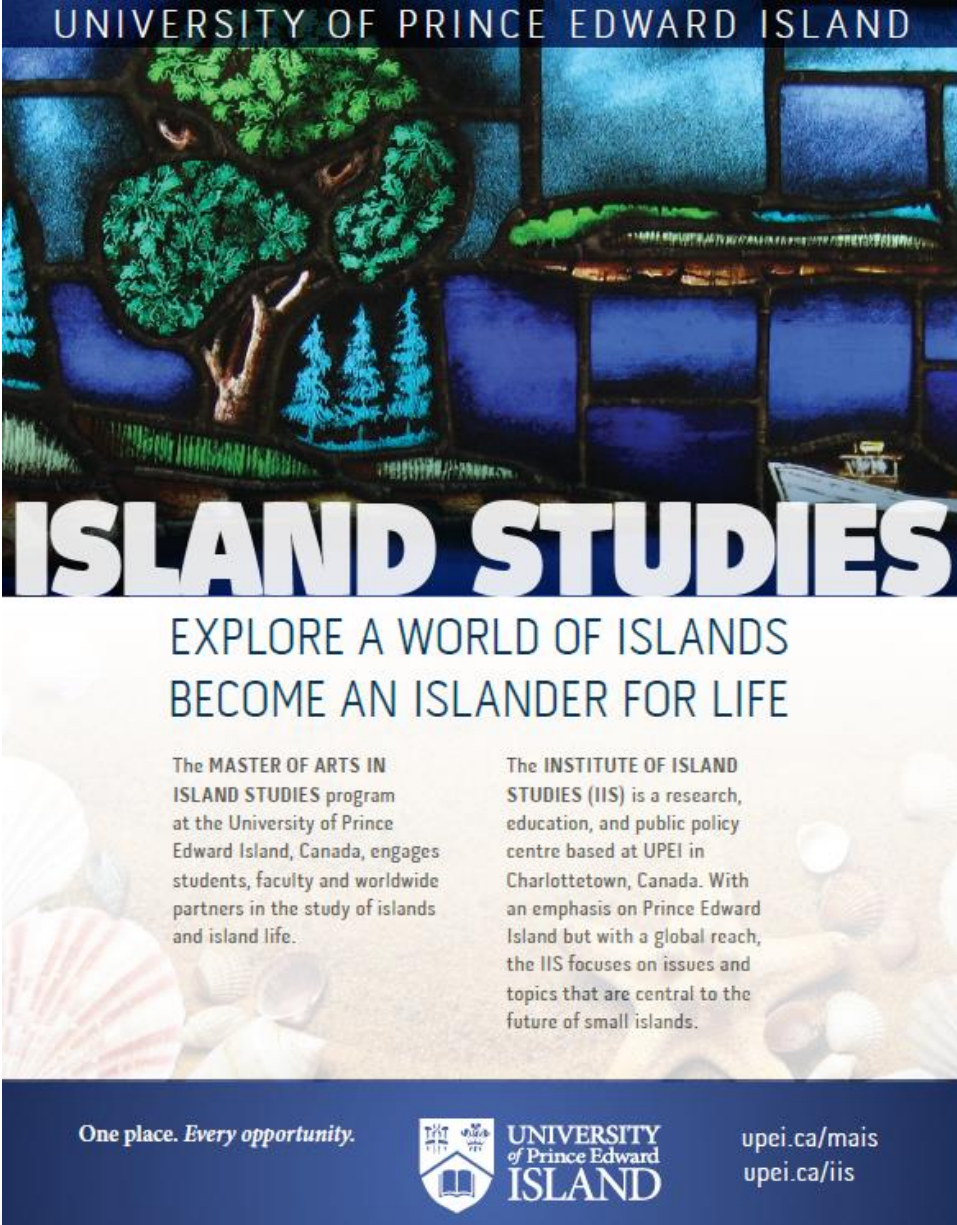
Institute of Island Studies, UPEI: Vision and Four-Point Purpose

Established – 1988

Vision: To be the leading centre of excellence on issues related to island studies scholarship, public policy and engagement.

Purposes:

1. *To encourage a deep knowledge, understanding, and expression of Prince Edward Island*
2. *To serve as a bridge between the University and Island communities*
3. *To contribute to the formulation of public policy in Prince Edward Island*
4. *To undertake and facilitate island studies research and education at local, national and global scales*



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ISLAND STUDIES

EXPLORE A WORLD OF ISLANDS
BECOME AN ISLANDER FOR LIFE

The MASTER OF ARTS IN ISLAND STUDIES program at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada, engages students, faculty and worldwide partners in the study of islands and island life.

The INSTITUTE OF ISLAND STUDIES (IIS) is a research, education, and public policy centre based at UPEI in Charlottetown, Canada. With an emphasis on Prince Edward Island but with a global reach, the IIS focuses on issues and topics that are central to the future of small islands.

One place. Every opportunity.

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upei.ca/mais
upei.ca/iis



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What Are We Doing on Prince Edward Island



Island Studies Press (both scholarly work and PEI non-fiction)

Public Symposia on Issues Important to Islanders (“honest broker”)

- Population & Migration; Local Governance; Sustainable Agriculture; PEI as a Carbon Neutral Jurisdiction

(Often combined with workshops for government staff)

- Monthly Lecture Series (open to public)

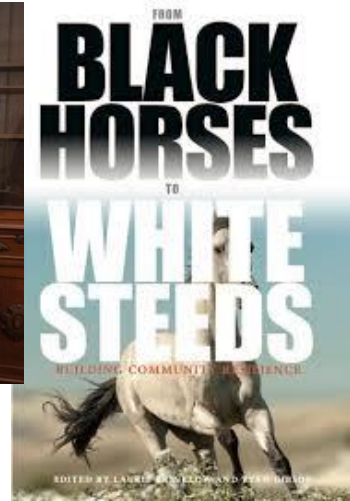
Host International Conferences:

- **Building Small Island Resilience to Global Climate Change (Sept. '16)**
- Building Community Resilience: Innovation, Culture, and Governance in Place (Aug. '15)

Master of Arts in Island Studies degree:

- Thesis-based (40 graduates)
- Course & Work-study-based (Island tourism, Sustainable Island Communities; International Relations & Island Public Policy)

Research Contracts for Province (e.g., Survey of Islander Diaspora)



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What Are We Doing Elsewhere in the World

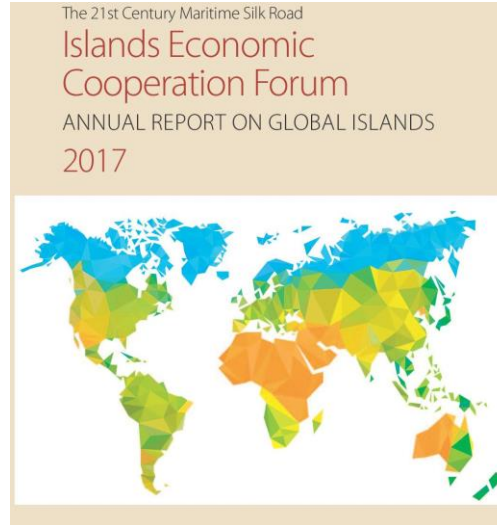
- International scholars come to PEI to teach and study
- UNESCO Chair in Island Studies and Sustainability
- Small Islands Research (e.g., Island States and Territories: building Sustainable
- Our Role in RETI (Research Excellence in Island Territories; 26 universities)
- 12 Island 3-yr. Research grant on governance and sustainable development
- Co-host International Conferences
- UofAruba/COE Conference in Aruba March 26-29
- Hainan Island, China Contracts:
 - 2 International Conferences on Island Economies (Nov.'17/Aug.'19).
 - Boao Forum Annual Reports



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An Example of Our Approach: PEI Conference on “Building Small Island Resilience to Global Climate Change”

- Partnered with UPEI Climate Research Lab
- Funding from PEI and Cdn. Govts.
- Four Sessions/Themes:
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Food Security
 - Renewable Energy
 - Innovation
- Three levels of Speakers at each session: local/PEI, National; International
- Audience = PEI and Regional Civil Servants (so Training)
- Public Forum (open to public)
- Charlottetown “Statement”
- All presentations recorded and uploaded to our website



CHARLOTTETOWN STATEMENT

Building Small Island Resilience to Global Climate Change



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Other Island-Related Centres/Institutes

Reviewed 20+ Institutes/Centres

Examples:

- James Michel Blue Economy Research Project (BERI), Seychelles <https://www.unisey.ac.sc/research-consultancy/blue-economy-research-institute>
- Institute for Sustainability and Resilience, University of Hawai'i, Manoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/isr/>
- Institute of International Affairs/Centre for Small States Studies, University of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland https://english.hi.is/small_state_studies
- Islands and Small States Institute, University of Malta, Malta <https://www.um.edu.mt/islands>
- Others emerging in Jersey (Channel Islands); Okinawa, Japan, etc.
- Be careful about adopting any one model to another island.
- Growing Geopolitical Role of Islands



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Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lessons Learned

1. “Small” can be a blessing and a curse
2. Islands are not remote
3. Economies of scale not always important
4. Lots of island entrepreneurship is present
5. Diversification not always the solution
6. Collaboration is key (trust/relationships)
7. Look to other small islands as models, not large mainlands
8. Champions are critical
9. Consistency in broad goals

Recommendations

1. Sign MOUs and Agreements with other islands (e.g., use my connections with Hainan, China)
2. Use your universities & colleges to develop stronger international linkages (e.g., RETI)
3. Develop a better data base on your diaspora
4. Enact population-led development policies (e.g., economic migrants)



Thank You!



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