
Acknowledgements

Recent years have witnessed a surge of interest in the politics of small states. The euphoria of a hegemonic USA and one effective global superpower that followed the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was short-lived: had that order come to pass, all the other states in the world could have been easily considered small. But the last three recent decades have instead been characterized by a search for political and economic models that needed to fit a more complex, dynamic, turbulent and uncertain environment riven by new and serious challenges: organized terrorism, mass migration, failed states, financial collapse, tax evasion, populism, Brexit. In this context, political leaders from some of the strongest powers have pointed out and lauded the virtues of small states: these include social cohesion, pragmatic decision-making and the ability to ‘punch above their weight’. At the same time, many small states were struggling to secure not just economic prosperity and social stability but also a measured voice in international fora after advancing to political independence and sovereignty, often after many decades of colonial rule, or as parts of the now-collapsed USSR and Yugoslavia. Consequently, the study of the politics of small states has been reinvigorated with a vengeance. This has resulted in the launch of a new online academic journal, *Small States & Territories*, in 2018 and a growing number of academic articles, monographs and books on various aspects of the topic, albeit often with a narrow focus on one or a very few states.

The ambition of this book is to engage critically with the politics of small states, while wary and cognizant of the contemporary state of international relations. We add to the existing literature on the subject by providing systematic yet detailed discussions and analyses of small state politics around the world. The book presents a ‘state of the art’, global examination of small state politics, while also critically engaging with dogmas, stereotypes and preconceptions about these small states. The results of such a grand review suggest that small states share a number of domestic and international challenges, but they then vary considerably in their capacity to meet, and how to best handle, these challenges. Based on the documented analyses, the book draws a number of lessons for understanding and conducting small state politics.

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trust that the results will be of value to those researching, teaching and learning about small states as well as to those engaged in small states policy and politics.

Finally, a note on the choice of the book's cover. We opted for this graphic since it suggests that the small state is considered, and may consider itself, as a powerless and insignificant pawn in the regional or global chess game of international relations. And yet, the long shadow of a rook suggests that small states can surprise and break out of this mould of hackneyed expectations.

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