

## EDITORIAL

### Mainstreaming the study of small states and territories

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**Abstract:** This paper introduces the field of small sovereign states and subnational jurisdictions, and the closing policy and identity gap between the two sets. It reviews the difficulties of iron-clad definitions of what constitutes a small state and looks at the potential for their qualitative (albeit relativistic) assessment. It then acknowledges the even richer population of subnational jurisdictions, some of which have powers that get very close to those wielded by sovereign states. *Small States & Territories* is then presented as a new academic, on line and open access journal that offers its critical space to mainstream and encourage inter-disciplinary debates featuring such small states and territories and how they handle the challenges and opportunities of small size and scale. By supporting a burgeoning field in area studies, *Small States & Territories* hopes to build and nourish an academic and policy community that will steadily militate against the current exceptionalism and exoticism of the field.

**Keywords:** scale, size, small states, sovereignty, subnational jurisdictions, territories

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## Introduction

On June 27, 2016, England (population: 53 million) and Iceland (population: 335,000) met in the ‘round of 16’ EURO 2016 football (soccer) competition. The game ended 1-2. The media went wild over the humiliation suffered by the English team, and which led to the immediate resignation of their coach (Taylor, 2016). Other sections of the media tried to explain away the success of Iceland by digging for insights into the country’s small size, its strong sense of nationhood, its invigorating climate, its active promotion of community sports and health, all neatly captured in its superb and plucky players, and nicely sublimated in Iceland’s unforgettable and intimidating thunder clap chant/applause (e.g. Doyle, 2016). And then, a week later, the same Iceland team lost 2-5 against France, and the media interest was gone. That was the week that was. Expect renewed media interest in June 2018 as Iceland’s national football team, qualifying for the world cup finals for the first time ever, plays against Argentina, Nigeria and Croatia in the opening round.

Sporadic, fleeting, irregular: this stance largely continues to be the predicament of the world’s small states, not just in the realm of traditional and social media, but also in the world of scholarship. They are “there today, and gone again tomorrow” (Hannerz and Gingrich, 2017, pp. 1-2). There are now more small states than ever; but “the analytic and policy attention towards these states has not matched their proliferation” (Cooper and Shaw, 2009, p. 1). Engagement is intense for short, rare and specific episodes, during which time all sorts of theories about the

vulnerabilities and opportunities resulting from smallness (however defined) are advanced, accompanied by such terms as ‘treasure islands’, ‘paradise’ or ‘idylls’ (Briguglio, 1995). Much of this has been anecdotal, driven by ‘policy-based evidence making’ or somewhat wild generalisations and extrapolations from discrete episodes. Repeated claims about small states (and their peoples) include: that they are unwitting pawns in the international system; harbour fragile ecosystems; have pliable governments prone to be captured by elites or cabals; and / or are easily bought, co-opted or cowed into line in the context of international negotiations (Pollard, 1996; Christensen and Hampton, 1999; Nath, Roberts, and Madhoo, 2010; Shaxson, 2012). And then, in dramatic contrast, the very same small states, and their peoples, are “the mice that roar” (Zachary, 1999); punching above their weight (Edis, 1991); impressively agile, resilient and spirited; “perfectly formed” (The Economist, 1998) and “norm entrepreneurs” (Ingebritsen, 2002). These dizzily antithetical positions are not just peddled by external observers, who feel somehow empowered, and even entitled, to come to such dramatic conclusions about small states; if that were the case, then they may be more easily dismissed, or at least taken with a few grains of salt. Instead, they are also uttered and proclaimed by representatives of the small states themselves: politicians, journalists, academics, and now also citizens-at-large via social media. In some cases, the message is peddled not out of conviction, but for its convenience, or even simply tongue-in-cheek. One may know that the claims expressed do not necessarily stand the test of scientific evidence; but they appear, nevertheless, to be the right and best things to say at that point in time. And yet, some of these stereotypical assertions and appeals may be true.

Small states are rarely problematic, except to themselves. The drama that unfolds within is rarely enough to generate outsider interest, and can easily be dismissed as “parish pump politics in goldfish bowl societies” (Lillis, 1993, p. 6). When flare ups occur, as with coups, civic and ethnic violence, the significance of the event is somewhat tempered in the eyes of outsiders by the size of the circumscribing socio-political field.

The challenge at hand is to place small jurisdictions at the *centre* of research and critical inquiry. With so many small states in the world today, and many more small subnational jurisdictions developing their own international presence and paradiplomatic practices, the absence of a sustained interest in their behaviour, in their social, economic and political character, in their development trajectories, in their relations with other powers and amongst themselves, is palpable. The commonality of the small jurisdiction has not (yet) outplayed the marginality of its scholarship. Sorely needed is a mainstreaming of the study of small states and territories, one where there are no historical or episodic excuses necessary to justify interest and focus, and where there are no (overt or covert) belittling, tongue-in-cheek or cynical approaches to the subject matter. Higgott (1991, p. 97) called for a similar “non-hegemonic study” that would take more account of the smaller states and other territories that make up the overwhelming number of jurisdictions in the international system (also Lee and Smith, 2010, p. 1091). Just as was argued in the case of islands a decade ago, and paraphrasing my own text, this is a call for an epistemic rapture, a re-centering of focus from large state to small state, away from the often implicit discourse of superiority of large state authors and writers, giving voice and platform for the expression of small state narratives (Baldacchino, 2008).

### **Not defining large or small states**

Talking about states as small is inherently problematic: no wonder then that the small state has “escaped a consensus definition” (Maass, 2009, p. 65). In the international system, what is, or what makes, formally a sovereign state does *not* depend on its size. The United Nations, at the time of writing, has 193 ‘states’ as members. Precluding membership of an international organisation on the basis of size and the associated inability to discharge the ‘full responsibilities of sovereignty’ was entertained in the past: note the refusal to admit Liechtenstein to the League of Nations in 1920 (Gunter, 1974). However, this disposition is no more: within the UN system, no prescribed distinction is made between what may be agreed upon as its smallest and largest member states, and suggestively determined by resident population: Tuvalu and the People’s Republic of China respectively (Bartmann, 2012). And yet, we often understand, infer or expect that the behaviour among such sovereign states is to be impacted *to some degree* by their recognition that one is larger or smaller than the other.

Such understandings and expectations of what are ‘large states’ may be driven by empirical notions of size: referring to resident population (China, India, USA are the largest, and in that order); geographical land mass (Russia, Canada, USA); national economic heft (USA, China, Japan, Germany); wealthiest citizens measured by gross domestic product (Qatar, Luxembourg, Macau, Singapore, Brunei); military capability (the nine countries that have nuclear weapons?); and, why not, also according to the size of their maritime exclusive economic zones (USA, France, Australia, Russia). In such league tables, some countries (USA, China) appear often: suggesting that these states are ‘large’, irrespective of the measuring unit used.

Whether Macau should be on this list depends on how exacting and precise we wish to be about the definition of sovereignty. Macau is *not* a sovereign state. However, since 1999, when it was returned to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) by Portugal, Macau has been a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the PRC and as such enjoys a high degree of autonomy except for foreign affairs and defence. The MSAR can therefore exercise, by itself, considerable policy powers including in the economic, trade, financial and monetary, shipping, communications, tourism, cultural, science and technology and sports fields. Macau, like that other SAR, Hong Kong, is a subnational jurisdiction, one of many such entities that crowd contemporary world maps and deserve their own critical focus, and which should include pertinent comparisons with their sovereign cousins. (More about this below.)

We can deal with small countries as we have dealt with large ones, performing a similar exercise with the candidates at the other end of the size continuum. The countries with the smallest resident population are Vatican City, Tuvalu, Palau and San Marino; the countries with the smallest land mass are Vatican City, Monaco, Nauru, Tuvalu and San Marino. The countries listed as having the world’s smallest GDP are Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru and the Marshall Islands. At least 22 countries do not have armed forces of their own, though they may be members of a regional security system, as in the Eastern Caribbean; or have a security agreement with a large neighbour, as Monaco does with France. Note, however, that the world’s poorest countries in terms of GDP per capita comprise a different list altogether: Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Liberia. Citizens of small states do not tend to be poor.

But: approaching the subject matter in this way, from its extreme ends, offers a false sense of security: it avoids grappling with the problematique of where to draw lines. At what point does a country stop being small or stop being large? Going back to population, and putting all the countries in the world on a continuum determined by current population levels, from Vatican City to the People's Republic of China, gives us a mean score of around 5.3 million, which is close to the population of Norway, Finland or Slovakia. Does that mean that any country above a population of 5.3 million is large; and any country below that mark is small? Crowards (2002) deploys a suite of criteria to skirt around the problem, classifying 79 countries as small by combining population counts, land area and total income: a technique which, however, discriminates against physically small but economically affluent exemplars. Empirical determinism has its fascination for those disposed towards quantitative statistics and metrics: creativity knows no bounds, and indices have been developed to rank jurisdictions in so many ways: vulnerability, resilience, environmental degradation, corruption, ease of doing business, even happiness. And yet, thresholds, ceilings and floors are (and will remain) arbitrary cut-off points, just like the formulations and justifications used to determine them.

Consider the position of the Commonwealth, which invented and disseminated the notion of the 'small state', given that most of its 52 member states have small populations. Hardly anyone will disagree that Tuvalu is a small state; but what about Botswana or Jamaica? The result is an arrangement that however meets political correctness: the Commonwealth defines small states as sovereign countries with a population of 1.5 million people or fewer. The Commonwealth also designates some of its larger member states – Botswana, Jamaica, Lesotho, Namibia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) – as small because, well, "they share many of the characteristics of small states" (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2017).

Strangely enough, Papua New Guinea (population: 8 million) is considered by the Commonwealth to qualify as a 'small state'; but Singapore, also a Commonwealth member, is not, even though its resident population, at 5.6 million, is smaller than PNG's. So: which features of small states does PNG share but smaller Singapore does not? The implicit understanding is that the Commonwealth suite of small states share development challenges, not all of which may have to do with smallness because, otherwise, Singapore would have to be included.

A similarly convenient (but equally unscientific) arrangement obtains in the case of the world's best known grouping of small states: *small island developing states*, or SIDS. These are so well known that 2014 was the international year dedicated to them. The SIDS grouping has 37 members, this time including Singapore (even though it is not considered to be a developing country) but also including Belize, Guinea Bissau, Guyana and Suriname (which are not islands); Cuba (with a population of over 11 million, the world's 80<sup>th</sup> largest sovereign state, and therefore not exactly small) and the Dominican Republic (at 10.6 million, not too far behind).

Moreover, *not* forming part of this SIDS family are four European and one Pacific small island states, some of these smaller than many of the SIDS: Cyprus, Iceland, Ireland and Malta (in Europe) and New Zealand (in the Pacific). These five are island (or, in the case of Ireland, part island) states, and three have resident populations of less than 1.5 million each, while Ireland and New Zealand are each close to 4.8 million. Yet, their status as 'developed' countries excludes them from the SIDS grouping. This is a strange and unhappy excision, since it is precisely these countries that may have important lessons to share with their SIDS cousins as to how to usurp any

challenges of development associated with small size (and also, in this case, those associated with islandness).

Thus, attempts at fixed and absolutist definitions of smallness are not very productive. What, then, is the alternative? One can argue that smallness is inherently a relative concept. Poland, for instance, has been described as a small state compared to one of its neighbours (Russia); but a large state when compared to a different neighbour (Lithuania) (Mosser, 2001). Japan, a rich and populous country, may be nervously reassessing its position and status in East Asia: it is a large state with over 100 million population, a former imperial power, boasts the world's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest economy and remains a regional donor in relation to most of its neighbours. But, with a stagnant economy and declining population, it is (and may feel) an increasingly small and unimportant player in relation to nascent and bullish China. My own birth country, Malta (population: 420,000) is the smallest member state of the European Union; but the largest country amongst the world's very small states (another Commonwealth grouping, describing states with a resident population of up to 500,000). When the Malta football (soccer) team plays competitive matches against teams from larger countries, the local media tone down expectations, expect defensive tactics, and are usually happy to get away with 'honourable defeats'. Not so when Malta played the Faroe Islands (population: 45,000) in a 1998 World Cup qualifying match, in Malta, and the local media allowed themselves to gush at the relish of notching a rare win against what was described as a team of 'fishermen'. (Embarrassingly, Malta still lost 1-2).

A more relativistic approach to smallness, one given to qualitative rather than quantitative methodologies and classifications, will not treat size as a variable to be measured (e.g. Connell, 2013). Instead, scholars are more likely to concern themselves with less tangible issues and concepts – soft/hard power dynamics, influence, self-image, inferiority/superiority complexes, capturing the moral high ground and additional forms of 'othering' – in order to examine how such small states navigate, influence, respond, seek shelter from, or simply disregard their external environment (Nugent, 2006; Thorhallsson, 2018). Here, postures, perceptions and expectations can determine actions and responses. After all, consciously or otherwise, countries have 'body language' too.

To be sure, I agree with Maass (2009, pp. 67-68) that the easiest way to 'deal with the problem' of how to define the small state is to ignore or avoid the issue. After all, quibbling over definitions has not prevented the small state from becoming a fact of international political life, as well as proven to be a useful tool for analysis (Keohane, 1969; Clarke & Payne, 1987, pp. 9-10).

### **Dots on the map**

And what a fact of life it is: these 'dots on the map' have proliferated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1944 (with the independence of Iceland) and 2012 (with the independence of South Sudan), around 100 former colonies gained sovereignty, and some others by the (often dramatic) splitting of the larger and former assemblages of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Indonesia and Sudan since 1990. The presence of many new small states (SIDS in particular) in the United Nations General Assembly was significant enough for them to demand, and secure, their own version of the 1992 'Rio Summit' on sustainable development, starting with a conference in Barbados in 1994, one in Mauritius in 2005 and one in Samoa in 2014. Most small states were British colonies prior to independence – no less than 20 of the world's 27 island states each with a resident population of up to one million are former British colonies – hence, the policy priority

within the Commonwealth to acknowledge the predicament and concerns of ‘small states’. Witnessing this profligacy of jurisdictions, larger powers, often abetted by the international press, cautioned against the granting of independence to these “damned dots” who might, with their amateurism, dilettante diplomacy and lack of international relations foresight, destabilise the delicate superpower balance (The Economist, 1971). They warned the international community about the economic non-sustainability and political instability of such small states (Harden, 1985). They opined that these ‘mini-states’ would become centres for drug trafficking, money laundering and arms smuggling (e.g. Hampton, 1994). But: these negative assessments have shifted to more neutral, and even gung-ho positive, evaluations as the world got used to smaller and smaller countries asking for, and securing, independence: Nauru in 1968; Tuvalu in 1978; Palau in 1994. The core discourse has now moved resolutely away from notions of viability – thanks also to the efforts of these small states themselves – and has shifted to discussions about how these small states are best able to mitigate, or adapt to, the consequences of climate change and global warming, including drought, floods, major storms and (especially for small island states) sea level rise as well as the prospects of mass, even wholesale, emigration (Pelling & Uitto, 2001; Kelman & West, 2009). In the European Union, the notion of a small state has become a useful heuristic device to analyse and explain the behaviour of countries beyond the ‘big six’ – Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Poland and Spain – each of which have populations of over 30 million (Thorhallsson and Wivel, 2006).

### **Subnational players galore**

At the same time that this ‘race to the bottom’ of the population threshold for sovereignty was unfolding, various subnational jurisdictions that could have opted for sovereignty decided that they would rather *refuse* independence and instead consolidate their links with their respective metropolitan powers (Clegg & Killingley, 2012; Hepburn & Baldacchino, 2016). The latter dutifully and enthusiastically obliged (as with the United States and France) or begrudgingly kept playing the role of *patron* (as with Denmark, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom). Places like Puerto Rico have been offered the chance to vote for independence via referendum at least four times in recent decades (Power & Skotnes, 2017). From Åland to Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat, and from American Samoa to the Falklands, and along with the already-mentioned Macau and Hong Kong, there are many jurisdictions that have amassed or been endowed with considerable amounts of self-rule, while still continuing to be involved in shared rule with larger states (Baldacchino & Milne, 2000). There are today some 500 subnational jurisdictions, ranging from territories whose autonomy is juridically enshrined in international treaties (Åland, Svalbard), involves protection of minority and indigenous cultures (Nunavut), reflects an attained level of autonomy within national law (Corsica, Greenland, Faroes, Hainan, Hawai’i, Jeju, Okinawa, Réunion, Rhodes, Shetland, Sicily, Wales), as well as cases of enduring colonisation (American Samoa, Anguilla, French Polynesia, Gibraltar, Pitcairn) (Kochenov, 2011, pp. 11-12).

Today, the general understanding is that, should jurisdictions that are former colonies request full independence – the Cook Islands or Niue from New Zealand; Bermuda from the UK; the Faroes from Denmark; Aruba from the Netherlands – it is likely that no one would block their way. The decision is theirs to take. Even in those cases where the central state is loath to let these components of its state secede – think recent episodes in Scotland, Catalonia or Kurdistan – these jurisdictions have negotiated and may aspire to free association, autonomous status, international representation and/or self-government while continuing to guarantee citizenship and/or labour market access for their citizens to their respective metropolitan heartlands. The ruling elites on

many such (and mainly island) jurisdictions “have been successful in negotiating constitutional arrangements with their (neo-) colonial metropolises that suit their particular needs” (Prinsen, Lafoy, & Migozzi, 2017, p. 333). These ‘arrangements’ – which can be renegotiated as situations change on the ground – are vital assets in an uncertain age, and the metropolitan link provides security, expertise and financial support in testing and turbulent times. A case in point was the response to the devastation wrought during the 2017 hurricane season in the island Caribbean: the Dutch, French, UK and US governments all pledged support and sent soldiers, supplies, equipment and money to their territories in Puerto Rico, the US and British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and the shared island of Sint Maarten/Saint Martin (Davidson, 2017); but no such ‘back up commitment’ existed for devastated Antigua and Barbuda which is, alas, an independent state. Sovereignty has its limits.

Clearly, small states have a limited capacity to respond to global environmental threats. Some small states have also ‘diminished’ their sovereignty in order to benefit from financial transfers from larger countries. Consider Nauru and Papua New Guinea, countries that have offered ‘detention services’ to Australia, accepting asylum seekers who have sought to start a new life in Australia after trying (but failing) to arrive and land there by boat (Grewcock, 2014). Consider also Palau, Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia: these are “hybrid jurisdictions” which have ‘subcontracted’ their international relations to the United States (Levine and Roberts, 2005); this leads to situations where they consistently vote with the US in the UN, as in the December 2017 vote rejecting US President Donald Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. These three Pacific small states were amongst the only seven countries that, along with Israel and the US, voted against the resolution (Beaumont, 2017). (The other four were Guatemala, Honduras, Nauru and Togo).

Meanwhile, many non-sovereign (or sub-state) territories now practise ‘paradiplomacy’ and/or have secured representation and membership in regional or international groupings (Aldecoa & Keating, 1999; Bartmann, 2006; Kusnetsov, 2014; Jackson 2018). Cities have joined in the fray, keen to expand their economic heft to other urban centres, wanting to extend visibility, markets and talent (Tavares, 2016). These constitute ‘alternative’ diplomatic practices, engaging actors, cultures and institutions in manners which go beyond conventional state-driven and state-centric dynamics.

There is therefore a diminishing ‘policy capacity gap’ between subnational jurisdictions and sovereign states today. Self-rule arrangements have created a class of ‘autonomy plus’ jurisdictions, at the same time that globalisation, multi-lateralism and ‘pooled sovereignty’ have eaten away at the presumed absolutist power of sovereign states, some of which could we now term ‘sovereignty minus’? (Baldacchino, 2018a). The space for such ‘experimentation’ has grown, given the realisation that sovereignty is not necessarily an analog switch, which is either ‘on’ or ‘off’ (Baldacchino, 2010; Kerr, 2005). Rather, sovereignty needs to be unbundled, and its presumed constituent powers assessed in their operationalisation (or lack thereof).

### **Beyond sovereignty issues**

Debating sovereignty can consume political scientists. However, the study of small states and territories goes far beyond the debate on the reach and evolution of their jurisdictional powers. There are matters which concern transportation bottlenecks and the absence of economies of scale and how these impinge on ‘natural monopolies’ and economic competitiveness (Armstrong et al.,

1993). There are the demographic upheavals which immigration or emigration can bring about in small communities and which result from what appear to be, in absolute terms, modest population changes (King & Connell, 1999). There are political systems and dynamics in place that are deeply personal, informal and intimate, and which seem to invite corruption and clientelism (but then, why is ‘small’ New Zealand the least corrupt country in the world?) and place larger-than-life individuals in power (Singham, 1967; Richards, 1982; Larmour, 1994; Corbett, 2015). There are huge pressures in favour of cultivating generalist skills, ‘occupational multiplicity’ and economies of scope, even though the official discourse lauds specialisation (Bennell & Oxenham, 1983). There is the evolution of a tourism industry that can dominate a whole economy (Conlin & Baum, 1995): tourism income multipliers reveal that tourism generates a large amount of economic activity in many small jurisdictions, but the income that remains in these destinations is often slight (Pratt, 2015). There is the question of preserving indigenous dialectics or languages while maintaining fluency in languages of international currency (Crossley, Bray, & Packer, 2011). And then there is the critical scrutiny of that constant tug-of-war between subnational units and their ‘home’ state, as well as the interminable tussle between small states and their larger neighbours where outcomes are often predictable but where the “tyranny of the weak” – as former President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, put it – can beguilingly come into play (Baldacchino 2004, p. 84). And then the media will rediscover the small jurisdiction, for yet another short period.

### **What makes a country?**

When US President Donald Trump announced tariff barriers to protect domestic steel industry in March 2018, he said: “Steel is steel. If you don’t have steel you don’t have a country” (Al Jazeera, 2018). His statements reflect a ‘large state’ bias and a jaundiced notion of what constitutes the fabric of a national economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Such statements might appeal to the politician’s domestic power base; but they also fly in the face of the practices of many small jurisdictions which survive quite well, often with no manufacturing capacity at all (except some artisanal craftwork supporting tourism). The diversified economy of a typical small state would consist of activities that generate rentier income (including tourism), some cash crops, a relatively large public sector, remittances and bilateral/multilateral state aid from abroad, and other intangible services which are not disadvantaged by small size (or islandness) (Baldacchino and Bertram, 2009; Baldacchino, 2015). Small economies are often alleged to face absence of economies of scale, vulnerability, remoteness, reduced access to capital markets, problems of macroeconomic policy dependence and overstatement of real income. However, many of these alleged problems of small economies are not peculiar to them; some can be addressed through suitable policy measures; and they can even transform themselves into advantages such as exclusivity, upmarket niching and the absence of industrial pollution (Srinivasan, 1986; Easterly & Kraay, 2000).

### **Conclusion: a new journal**

It is in this unsettled context that a need has long been felt to develop an academic journal that offers a space where issues affecting small states and territories, singly, comparatively or collectively, can be presented, debated and critiqued, and doing so on an ongoing basis.



One attempt has already been made: *Microstate Studies* was a journal that was intended to run annual issues in print format. Volume 1 appeared in 1977 and Volume 2 appeared in 1979. It was published by the Caribbean Research Institute, College of the Virgin Islands, US Virgin Islands. It was edited by Norwell Harrigan, himself a Virgin Islander, and who was committed to transcend the notion that a small state or territory would be merely aping larger jurisdictions in its policies (Baldacchino, 2013).

The dedication by established journals to special sections or issues about ‘small states’ or ‘non-sovereign territories’ will no doubt continue, and we are grateful for this continued sense of academic curiosity. Here, we especially acknowledge the efforts of *The Round Table: Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* and *Public Administration and Development*. However, interest by these respected academic outlets has been fleeting, sporadic and irregular. *Island Studies Journal*, which I helped set up in 2006, has also delivered good service to this cause, with a focus on island geographies rather than smallness, and continues to do so; although small size is often implicit and not sufficiently theorised in island studies. *Small States & Territories (SST)* will, finally, offer *all* its space to *only* such subjects and pursuits. This commitment includes the academic and policy interest in comparing policies in action as they unfold among and within small states, within small territories, and between small states and territories, and not just between small and large states where David does not always beat Goliath.

‘Outsiders’ or ‘non-resident’ academics will continue to immerse themselves in “why [and how] small states offer important answers to large questions” (Veenendaal & Corbett, 2015). We do however need to go beyond and transcend this stance: small states and territories are interesting and significant, also on their own merits, and without the need to either extrapolate from their condition to other, larger contexts; or to weigh these small countries down with the development paradigms of larger jurisdictions (Byron & Lewis, 2015; Baldacchino, 2018b).

By supporting this burgeoning field in area studies, *Small States & Territories* hopes to build and nourish an academic and policy community interested in small states and territories and which will steadily militate against the current exceptionalism and exoticism of the field. One can quibble as to whether a serious country needs to have a steel industry; but every self-respecting field of studies needs to have its own, respected, academic journal.

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