

Editor's Note:

Small States and Territories and Coronavirus

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This journal's schedule may not have been much impacted by the onset and consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. But much else has been.

For scholars of small states and territories, as well as those studying islands – many small states and territories are islands or archipelagos anyway – this period affords an opportunity to assess the movement of the virus across populations, and to reflect critically as to whether smallness and/or islandness has had any effect. The evidence suggests two contradictory dynamics.

Some of the jurisdictions with the highest mortality rates attributed to the Covid-19 outbreak are indeed small jurisdictions: San Marino (41 deaths); Andorra (40 deaths), Sint Maarten (13 deaths) and Isle of Man (20 deaths) are amongst the 10 jurisdictions around the world that have suffered most deaths attributed to the virus *per capita*. San Marino also has the highest number of confirmed infections *per capita* (538 cases recorded: one for every 62 *Sammarinesi*), followed by Andorra (743), Luxembourg (3,729) and Iceland (1,795). Of course, the addition of just one infection or one fatality to a small population base makes the ratio shoot up very fast. Note that all these jurisdictions except one (Sint Maarten) are located in Europe.

Interestingly, the UK Overseas Territories of Pitcairn (in the Pacific); Ascension, Tristan da Cunha and St Helena (in the Atlantic); the British Antarctic Territory; and the British Indian Ocean Territory have recorded *no* cases of Covid-19 (Wikipedia, 2020). While, in the French Overseas Departments, Réunion has reported just over 400 infections, no deaths from covid-19, but deaths from dengue fever (Chauveau, 2020).

Moreover, until April 2, 2020, 18 countries had reported no cases of Covid-19 (Amos, 2020). (Of course, not all countries have the resources to track, discriminate and/or record all cases and deaths.) Only six of these countries – Lesotho, North Korea, South Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Yemen – are not small island jurisdictions, suggesting that the combination of island geography, remoteness and jurisdictional powers enabled island and archipelagic jurisdictions to quickly lock themselves down and seal themselves in. These 12 jurisdictions are: Comoros; Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Micronesia; Nauru; Palau; Samoa; Sao Tomé and Príncipe; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Ten of these 12 countries are in the Pacific.

(The information in this note is correct as at 28 April 2020).

References

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