# small states

## in international relations

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*Small States in International Relations*
Edited by Christine Ingebritsen, Iver Neumann,
Sieglinde Gstöhl, and Jessica Beyer

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# Small States in International Relations

# INTRODUCTION

## Lilliputians in Gulliver's World?

IVER B. NEUMANN AND SIEGLINDE GSTÖHL

### *1. Small States in the International System*

International Relations (IR) is a state-centric discipline as well as a power-centered discipline, and this volume will not challenge either of those two foundations. Our aim is rather to draw attention to the importance of studying states in their diversity. More specifically, we want to demonstrate the value of studying small states. Of the currently 191 member states of the largely universal United Nations (UN), all but one or two dozen fall into the category of small states. Hence, even though this group is highly heterogeneous, small states are simply too numerous and—sometimes individually, but certainly collectively—too important to ignore. This volume includes leading contributions to scholarship on small states in international relations that should be of interest not only for inherent reasons, but also as an inspiration for students of International Relations to better them by producing novel and innovative work on this undeservedly neglected topic. Following some historical and conceptual observations on what "smallness" entails and on how small state studies have developed, this introduction suggests three different ways to conduct future research on small states which will also benefit the broader IR discipline.

In making the case for studying small states beyond their sheer number, we should first like to question an (implicit or explicit) assumption that is still basic to a lot of thinking in IR: namely that states having powerful capabilities will inevitably use them and are thus the states most worthy of examination. This assumption can only be made for an international system where the states concerned do not feel bound by responsibility or international norms of appropriate behavior such as, for instance, restrictions on the use of force. Second, from an institutionalist point of view, the great powers are also the powers in charge of the international system, and they may shape international institutions accordingly. The status of

great-powerhood means that other actors will take what they consider to be the great power's interests into account, even in its absence. On the one hand, large states may have institutional privileges, such as a permanent seat in the UN Security Council or extra voting power in the Bretton Woods institutions. On the other hand, international institutions make resource-based power effects more visible because norms and rules are formalized and thus require justification—a reason for small states to highly value international law and international regimes. Thirdly, institutions and policies may be investigated not only as the outcome of great-power bargains, but also in terms of the actors' relations. The available case studies in IR heavily concentrate on great powers, and thus look at only one particular sample of states. By taking small states into account, International Relations would profit empirically by gaining new data. Such data would be welcome to firm up, for example, the discussions about how anarchy may have relative degrees of maturity, the importance of international institutions as foci of foreign policy, and the character of constitutive relations among the units of the states system. Studying states in all their diversity may well contribute to the advancement of IR theory. Since the publication of Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States*, theorizing has shifted its spotlight from great power capabilities and interests to the role of ideas and global governance efforts of all kinds of actors.

## SMALL STATES AS A CATEGORY IN IR

Small states started life as a residual category and under a different name. Until well into the twentieth century, in all European languages states were routinely referred to as "powers" (French *puissance*, German *Macht*, Russian *derzhava*, Spanish/Portuguese *poder*, etc.). While this noun is still used for a different category of states, namely "great powers" (and, more rarely, also for "middle powers"), "small powers" are nowadays simply referred to as "small states." This usage certainly further underlines their presumed lack of power in a quantitative sense. Following the Napoleonic Wars, "the powers" met at the Congress of Vienna. Those powers that made up the winning quadruple alliance—Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, and the Habsburg Empire—were soon convinced by the spokesman of vanquished France, Talleyrand, that questions of importance would have to be settled between these five powers. In today's parlance, we would say that they were to be settled "at five." However, some of the questions would directly concern powers that were deemed too important to be left out entirely. These powers were given access to certain meetings that were held "at six" or "at

seven." As the century wore on, these powers sometimes came to be known, through processes that still await their researcher, as "middle powers" (see Holbraad 1984). Those powers that were deemed too inconsequential to be so included came to be known as "small states."

In this formative period of state categories, the dominant grouping of great powers took on a life in international law by dint of the institutionalizing move made by these five powers themselves. They decided on meeting, as it were, in concert on a regular basis in order to discuss questions of concern, and to draw up agreements and treaties. From this activity, documents with legal force evolved, and since they were underwritten by these five powers and not by others, the category of "great power" became a legal category. It has ever since cohabited uneasily with the principle of the sovereign equality of states. From a legal point of view, all sovereign states, great or small, are equal before the law. From a political stance, however, they are far from equal. From the very beginning, the recognition of the great powers' special position in the international system at the Congress of Vienna coexisted uneasily with the system's major principle of the formal equality of sovereign states, which was to prevent the great powers from formalizing their preponderance. In the narrow sense, what is still known as the Congress is taken to mean the meetings of those powers at Aix-la-Chapelle, Troppau, Laibach, and Verona in the period from 1815 to 1822. In the broader sense, congress diplomacy refers to the continued interaction between great powers with a view to managing the system. Such diplomacy was a dominant feature of European politics up to 1848, and was also highly relevant for the rest of the period up to the First World War (cf. Holbraad 1970).[1] As a result, in the nineteenth century, which to an IR scholar runs from 1815 to 1914, small states were all those states that were not great powers. This was so because European empires had incorporated most other polities worldwide, and because there simply were not enough sovereign states around to make for a viable category of "middle powers." As Hinsley (1963: 250) reminds us, if there were six great powers at this time (Germany, Great Britain, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy), of the rest, there were only three that could even begin to claim a status as middle powers: Denmark, Sweden and Turkey.[2]

In the twentieth century, as the number of states kept rising (as a result mainly of the break-up of the Habsburg Empire in 1919, then of the British, French, and other European empires through decolonialization in the 1950s and 1960s, and of the Soviet Union in 1991), small states were all those states that were not great powers, and that were not consistently insisting on being referred to as middle powers (Australia, Canada, also regionally dominant

powers such as South Africa) (cf. Neumann 1992). We note that this definition is still residual: small states are defined by what they are not. Moreover, smallness is a comparative concept: micro-states are smaller than small states, and small states are smaller than middle or great powers, but with regard to what and how much? Many authors use absolute numbers referring to the size of populations, while others also take a state's territory or gross domestic product into account (cf. Handel 1981: 9–65; Crowards 2002). In the European context, the "bar" for small states has often been set at the population size of the Netherlands (currently 16 million inhabitants), which leaves all European countries as being small states except for Russia, Germany, Turkey, France, Great Britain, Italy, Ukraine, Spain, Poland, and Romania. The European micro-states have frequently been defined as having a population of less than 100,000 inhabitants (Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican) or one million people (thus including Iceland, Cyprus, Malta, and Luxembourg). Yet such classifications have been rather contested, since any precise definition can only be arbitrary. Hence, we need not investigate the questions of which countries are small states or great powers here; neither do we need to dwell on the conceptual history of "superpower" (basically a Cold War term) and the sundry terms for the United States (U.S.) that have recently emerged to categorize what Krauthammer (1991) baptized the "unipolar moment," such as "hyperpower." We may content ourselves with making the observation that certain tensions make themselves felt when it comes to classifying states.

If the small state category on the one hand shades into a gelatinous category of "middle powers," on the other hand it comes up against an equally gelatinous category of "micro-states." The literature on micro-states seems to congeal around issues of sovereignty and action capacity—on how dependence on other polities in formulating and conducting policy impinges on that policy (cf. Reid 1974; Plischke 1977; Harden 1985; Duursma 1996). In line with this, we suggest that it may be useful to think of micro-states as those states whose claim to maintain effective sovereignty on a territory is in some degree questioned by other states, and that cannot maintain what larger states at any one given time define as the minimum required presence in the international society of states (membership in international organizations, embassies in key capitals, etc.) for a perceived lack of resources. For example, in 1920, Liechtenstein's application for membership in the League of Nations was rejected because it had "chosen to depute to others some of the attributes of sovereignty" and maintained no army (Gstöhl 2001: 106). As a result, San Marino and Monaco did not further pursue their applications even though the League offered

limited forms of participation. The limited capacities of these states led to their sovereignty being contested. Another example for a lack of capacity could be Costa Rica in the inter-war period. That state decided not to maintain its membership in the League of Nations because it did not think it could afford it, and so it went from being a small state to being a micro-state. By contrast, when, in the same period, the Norwegian state did not think it could afford sending its minister in Buenos Aires to the other three states to which he was side-accredited to present his credentials, this would not have an effect on Norway's standing as a small state, because the larger states did not really expect a small state to have a diplomatic presence in all the other states in the system. Lack of capacity means capacity that is seen to be beyond a minimum; what this minimum is, is a question of continuous negotiation. We stress that, for a state to be micro rather than small, absence from international society alone is not enough. The perceived reason has to be a lack of resources. Consider two small states such Albania and Switzerland during the Cold War; in their various ways, they did not maintain what larger states saw as a minimum presence; their reasons had to do with things other than a lack of resources, and so their standing as a small state was not threatened.

Concern about micro-states rose again considerably in the 1960s and 1970s with the process of decolonization. Many authors pointed to the dilemma that the right to self-determination promoted by the United Nations produced several new (very) small states whose influx into the world organization could cause significant problems (e.g., Blair 1967; Harris 1970; Gunter 1977). A vivid debate took place about how those micro-states would use their collective voting power in the General Assembly, who would finance their decisions dominated by Third World concerns, and whether they should be offered restricted membership. Since neither the anticipated proliferation of micro-states nor their capture of the UN happened, the dispute died off silently (cf. Gstöhl 2001: 104–112). Many tiny colonies had not opted for formal independence and sovereignty, but for other solutions, such as autonomy within a bigger state.[3] Nevertheless, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Andorra, and other micro-states joined the UN only in the 1990s, when micro-state claims to equal sovereignty within international society were more readily accepted.

## QUESTIONS OF QUANTITY AND QUALITY

In addition to the residual, negative way of defining small states as states that are not middle or great powers, small states have often been confused

with weak states. Yet, the distinction between small and great does not coincide with the distinction between strong and weak.[4] The former is a distinction of quantity, the latter of quality. Durkheim (1992: 75) notes that "societies can have their pride, not in being the greatest or the wealthiest, but in being the most just, the best organized and in possessing the best moral constitution." The implication is that they may be strong in the sense of being a model for others to follow in this regard. Within IR, Keohane and Nye (1977) famously argue that the question of smallness and greatness was not necessarily all that useful on the aggregate level of the states system where we have usually studied it, but that it should rather be treated as a question of clout within what they referred to as specific issue areas, that is, small states possessing great issue-specific power (for example the influence of Switzerland in the financial services sector or of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the oil sector).

These are interesting ways of bracketing the issue under discussion here, which is what it entails for a state to think of itself as, and be thought of by others as being, generally "small."[5] Asking such questions has led, and will lead, to new work and new insights, and thus it should be condoned. The states system understood as a whole neither is (nor should it be) the only focus of IR inquiry. Still, it is within this system that we can locate most of the talk about great powers and small states, and where these categories first and foremost are meaningful.[6] Within this system, moral greatness, various kinds of perceived greatness in internal organization, or greatness in resources within one specific issue area have so far not been convertible into great-power status. Indeed, the category of middle power basically seems to serve the function of underlining that some small state has achieved greatness in one specific regard, while remaining hopelessly behind in others. Sweden is doubtless a strong state both in the sense that it has a high degree of internal cohesion, is able to project a persona externally, and (for these and other reasons) has a strong sense of self. But regardless of how strong it is or will become, its resources simply will not allow it to make itself felt in enough arenas and to a high-enough degree for it to be recognized as a systems-wide great power.[7] By the opposite token, Russia is no doubt weak in the sense that state-society relations make for a low administrative capacity. Still, and sustained denigration notwithstanding, it would hardly make sense to refer to Russia as a small state. The same holds true for Japan and Germany, which for a long time have been considered economic giants, and yet political dwarves.

Overall, extant scholarship in the IR discipline has focused almost exclusively on great powers, while small states have been a residual category,

defined by the alleged non-greatness of its members. It borders on two even more weakly defined sub-categories: middle powers (who may convincingly argue that they have achieved "greatness" in some other regard than in terms of systems-wide presence), and micro-states (who cannot participate fully in the institutions of that system due to a lack of administrative resources). The lack of an agreed concrete definition of small states has also marked the body of literature that might be termed small state studies. In the following sections, we discuss the advancement of this literature, and what lessons can be drawn from it for IR before the selected classic and modern contributions reprinted in this volume are introduced.

## 2. *The Development of Small State Studies*

### BEGINNINGS

European and in particular German-speaking scholars have been interested in the study of small states throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (cf. Sieber 1920; Cappis 1923; Bratt 1951). However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the onward march of the idea of the nation-state made small states look increasingly unattractive. A key example is the debate surrounding the many small German states (*Kleinstaaterei*), which were increasingly perceived as being obstacles to the prospect of a unified Germany (Amstrup 1976: 163). The inter-war period offered the foreign policy of small (European) states novel opportunities, in particular in the newly created League of Nations in Geneva (cf. Rappard 1934). Following the idealist school of thought, international law and multilateral organizations were considered of greatest importance to small states. In support of the idea of collective security, some of them even began to disarm. However, the rise of Fascism in Europe and Japan put a sudden end to such peaceful visions. During the Second World War, security studies were on top of the scholarly agenda, and realism with its focus on power emerged as the dominant theory of International Relations. After 1945, the small states' position in the new international organizations such as the United Nations attracted some discussions (cf. Markus 1946; De Rusett 1954; Fleiner 1966), but in general the social sciences were preoccupied with the emergent bipolarity and the Cold War. "In retrospect it seems surprising that in spite of the growing number of small states only a small number of sociological studies were devoted to this subject in the first two decades after World War II" (Höll 1983b: 15).

Larger academic interest in small states returned with a study of the wartime diplomacy of small states by Annette Baker Fox (1959), which

marked the beginning of a genuine school of small state studies. In *The Power of Small States*, she inquired into how the governments of small and militarily weak states resisted the pressure of great powers in times of crisis. Sweden, Spain, Turkey, Switzerland, Ireland, and Portugal all avoided being drawn into the Second World War, while other small states such as Denmark, Norway, Finland, and the Benelux countries failed to avoid the hostilities. Baker Fox examines in more detail the wartime diplomacy of Turkey, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Spain. She argues that success depended on convincing the power pressing a small state that its neutrality was advantageous to the great power, too. Her study demonstrates the importance of the geostrategic neighborhood of small states and of their diplomatic skills (in terms of bargaining and credible arguing), hence taking into account both external and internal factors.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the fundamental question remained the survival of small states among the bigger powers. In this context, alignment policy was analyzed as a means to compensate for their incapability to guarantee their own security (e.g., Rothstein 1968; Vital 1971; Schou/Brundtland 1971; Mathisen 1971; Azar 1973; Harden 1985). Höll (1978: 260) identifies three reasons for this renewed attention in the 1960s: first, the bias towards great powers and U.S. American research was increasingly perceived as a deficit of the IR discipline (particularly in the Scandinavian scientific community)[8]; second, the rapid social changes at the end of the 1960s put mainstream political science in question; and third, the increasing interdependence raised the issue of how states with limited capacities coped with the costs of dependence.

## CLIMAX

Subsequent research set out to explore possible strategies small states might utilize to mitigate the effects of structural constraints. In fact, a whole branch of research focused on the question of which policies might help prevent or reduce the consequences of smallness and scarcity (cf. Vogel 1979; Frei 1977; Riklin 1975). There are strategies to avoid increasing interdependence in the first place (e.g., "system closure" through autarchy and isolationism in world affairs); strategies to avoid high external dependence either through a selective foreign policy that saves resources but increases one's prestige (e.g., membership in international organizations, good offices) or through a specialization in certain products and a diversification of trading partners; and strategies to avoid foreign determination (e.g., neutrality, integration). The options are not limited to for-

eign policy choices, but also include domestic strategies such as consociational democracy, corporatism, or federalism. For example, Vogel (1983) provides an analytical framework that distinguishes between structurally determined behavior patterns and voluntary strategies of small states. The structural "causal chain" maintains that scarcity due to physical smallness produces external economic dependence, which may lead to external sensitivity, which in turn results in the danger of foreign determination. In order to reduce the effects of this causal mechanism, small states may pursue certain policies, and according to Vogel, they tend to concentrate on strategies to prevent external sensitivity (e.g., corporatism, or membership in international organizations).[9] As Vogel does, Lindell and Persson (1986) indicate that different levels of analysis, structure, and agency play a role. They provide a literary review on how small states can influence great powers, and identify two groups of explanatory factors. On the one hand, possible explanations comprise systemic factors such as the structure of the international system (e.g., hierarchical, hegemonical, or balance of power), the state of the international system (in terms of the degree of tension), international norms (e.g., sovereign equality, or a right to self-determination), and the actors' qualities (such as geography, resources, or reputation). On the other hand, the alternative courses of action open to small states may increase their leverage.

The study of small states as a specific research category reached its peak in the mid-1970s, in parallel to the wave of small states ensuing from the process of decolonialization. Small state theory was thriving both in economics and political science. Many economists, for example, argued that the size of a small nation determined its wealth due to its small domestic market, a low diversification of its economy, scarcity of natural resources, higher costs of production and lower economies of scale, a lack of competition, low research and development expenditure, etc. Small economies were assumed to be more dependent on external trade than bigger states, to tend to have trade deficits, to depend often on a single commodity of export, and to export hardly any industrial goods requiring a high intensity of capital or research (cf. Höll 1978: 265–270; Vogel 1979: 32–35; Handel 1981: 220–229). A similar development took place in political science, where, in particular, neorealists argued that the physical size of a state—or its relative power capabilities—determined its behavior in international politics. Therefore, small states of similar size were expected to pursue similar foreign policies (cf. Vogel 1979: 23–32). For example, as part of a broad effort to establish a research program on comparative foreign policy, East (1973) set out to test two competing models using a data

set of thousands of foreign policy events initiated by 32 states of different size and economic development in the time period from 1959 to 1968.[10] His findings rejected the assumption that small-state behavior is the result of the same general processes of decision-making that are found in larger states. By contrast, small states try to minimize the costs of conducting foreign policy by initiating more joint actions and by targeting multiple-actor fora. Economic issues were relatively more important to small states, and while they tend to avoid ambiguity in their foreign policy, they engage more in conflictive non-verbal behavior than large states.

## STANDSTILL

Most of these hypotheses have subsequently been falsified, and small-state research culminated in Baehr's (1975) conclusion that the concept of small states was not a useful analytical tool for understanding world politics. Consequently, these approaches to small states were not much further developed in the 1980s and early 1990s. The few contributions that were published in this tradition concerned specific problems of European small states and lacked any claim to generating theory (Kramer 1993: 252). The relative standstill of theory-driven research on small states at least spurred some exercises of stock-taking (e.g., Höll 1983a; Lindell/Persson 1986). Kramer (1993: 257) argues that this virtual stagnation was due to the fact that those theoretical approaches were middle-range theories bound in time and (European) context. Research on small states simply neglected the changing international environment. Besides the missing agreed-definition of small states, there was, as Amstrup (1976: 178) put it, an "astonishing lack of cumulation" in small state studies. Another scholar lamented that the study of small states had generally suffered from "benign neglect" in IR (Christmas-Møller 1983: 39).

Against these pessimistic assessments, small states still encountered some academic interest in the 1980s, especially issues of economic development (e.g., Clark/Payne 1987; Butter 1985). On the whole, however, scholars either turned to general IR theories because the size of states was not considered a relevant category anymore, or they developed new approaches to study small states. In the latter category, Katzenstein's (1985) analysis of how small states cope with the forces of an increasingly global economy stands out. Neoliberal institutionalism began to challenge the predominance of neorealist theory with its almost exclusive focus on security matters. Economic issues, international institutions and the significance of absolute, as opposed to relative, gains became more important. The general focus on

international regimes and institutions in the 1980s—a genuine area of interest for small states—helped prepare the ground for bringing small states back in. Krasner (1981), for instance, deals with the impact of (weak) developing countries on international institutions and in particular with their quest for a new international economic order in the 1970s. He argues that these countries—many of them small—have in response to their domestic and international structural weaknesses sought to alter international regimes to gain some control. They have been able to do so because the dependency school of thought has forged the South into a unified bloc opposed to the liberal principles and norms of the international system at the time; hence weak or small states can take advantage of existing institutional arrangements that had originally been created for other purposes.

## REVIVAL

The radical historical changes at the end of the 1980s further diluted, as Waschkuhn (1991: 154) points out, the theoretical claims about the size of states and its implications that were popular in the 1960s. The rise of modern information technologies and the gradual elimination of barriers to trade in the context of globalization and regional integration further questioned the assertions about small states' economies and foreign policies. The improvements in communication and transportation as well as the liberalization of the movement of goods, services, capital, and even persons and public procurement, rendered borders less meaningful to the benefit of small states (e.g., Kindley/Good 1997; Armstrong/Read 1998; Moses 2000; Salvatore/Svetlicic/Damijan 2001). Moreover, the increasingly deeper integration of small states in the European Union (EU) as well as the EU's enlargement to numerous small states, have attracted renewed attention to the small-state issue (e.g., Dosenrode-Lynge 1993; Goetschel 1998; Thorhallsson 2000). For example, Ólafsson (1998) argues—with a view to Iceland—that small states might not necessarily obtain larger economic gains from European integration than from free trade on the world market, and that influence may only be increased if each member enjoys equal rights regardless of size.

In addition to processes of globalization and regional integration, small state theory has been both promoted and challenged by the unpredicted emergence of new small states in Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Baltics after the fall of the Berlin wall (cf. Kirt/Waschkuhn 2001a). The right of self-determination, which marked the period of decolonization, regained prominence after the Cold War as a result of the dis-

integration of several multi-ethnic countries—some of which entailed ethno-political conflicts in small states (e.g., Zahariadis 1994; Jazbec 2001). In addition to internal strife, external security issues regained prominence, in particular because since the mid-1990s many small states in Europe have actively been seeking membership in the EU and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (cf. Bauwens/Clesse/Knudsen 1996; Gaertner/Reiter 2000). In contrast to the upsurge of regional cooperation in Europe (with the exception of Ex-Yugoslavia), the Americas, and the Asia-Pacific region, many small states in Africa have been facing internal breakdown (cf. Jackson 1990). Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg (1982) distinguish between empirical and juridical components of statehood. Their article, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist," adds a non-European perspective that is important because the "history of Black Africa challenges more than it supports some of the major postulates of international relations theory" (Jackson/Rosberg 1982: 24). The authors claim that, at the time of their writing, some de jure sub-Saharan African states would de facto not have qualified as states because they did not effectively hold a monopoly of force throughout their territory. Unlike in other regions of the world, self-determination came to a halt in Black Africa at the inherited colonial frontiers. That is, in most cases, a colony simply became a state with its territory unchanged even though these frontiers did not correspond to the traditional cultural borders. "In Europe, empirical statehood preceded juridical statehood or was concurrent with it," whereas in Black Africa and some other developing regions, "external factors are more likely than internal factors to provide an adequate explanation for the formation and persistence of states" (Jackson/Rosberg 1982: 23; also Rotberg 2004). To these authors, Africa's weak states persist as a result of the ideology of Pan-Africanism, the vulnerability of all states in the region and the insecurity of statesmen, the support of the larger international society, and the reluctance of non-African powers to intervene in the affairs of African states. Their contribution anticipates aspects of the current debate about failing, failed, and collapsed states.

Finally, the changes in IR theory that came with the end of the bipolar freeze (and, in some cases, the rise of nationalism) —in particular social constructivism with its focus on international norms, identity, and ideas—may have eased the opening of the field of small state studies again in the 1990s. If not only relative power and/or international institutions matter, but also ideational factors, small states may gain new room to maneuver in their foreign policy. They may, for instance, be able to play the role of norm entrepreneurs influencing world politics (cf. Björkdahl 2002;

Ingebritsen 2002); they may not only engage in bargaining with the other (greater) powers, but also argue with them, pursue framing and discursive politics, and socially construct new, more favorable identities in their relationships. Risse-Kappen (1995), for instance, argues that NATO constitutes a community of liberal democracies that has deeply affected the collective identity of all members, including the superpower. Shared values and norms, domestic pressures, and transnational coalitions helped the "small" West European and Canadian allies influence U.S. American security policies.

In sum, there was no continuous flow of research on small states. Knudsen (2002: 182) observes three rather disconnected streams of literature in the study of small states: a first tradition is concerned with issues of self-determination, a second strand deals with the foreign policy options of neutrality or alliance, and a third thread comprises the comparative literature on politics and policy formation in small states.[11]

Table 1.1 recapitulates the postwar development of small state studies described in this chapter by placing it in the context of major historical events and mainstream IR theory. Both general developments in history (such as the Cold War and its end, or decolonization) and in IR literature significantly impacted the field. The theory of International Relations has largely evolved by debates: when in the wake of World War II realism (and later neorealism) superseded the idealist school of thought, power capabilities and security issues constituted the main concern in small state studies. Ironically, this first (neo)realist period—which basically attributed no relevance to small or weak states— coincided with the heyday of small state studies. The 1980s were dominated by the controversy between neorealism (still stressing security issues and relative gains) and neoliberal institutionalism (focusing more on economic cooperation, international institutions, and absolute gains). This second phase was characterized by a relative standstill in the study of small states, even though a few key contributions were made in the field of International Political Economy. This observation matches well with the neoliberal focus on economic interdependence, but one might have expected more literature on small states in international institutions—a topic that was, again somewhat paradoxically, more prominent during the first phase. In the third period of the 1990s, the rationalist "neo-neo debate"—sharing a systemic perspective and the assumption of the (unitary) state acting according to cost-benefit calculations—has been challenged by new social constructivist and postpositivist approaches emphasizing ideas, norms, and (national) identities. This theoretical progress has led to a revival of small state studies. Recent

TABLE 1.1 Synopsis of small state studies

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Historical events | 1950s–1970s: heyday Cold War conflict; proliferation of small states through decolonization | 1980s: standstill decline of the U.S. hegemon and rise of global inter-dependence | 1990s: revival end of Cold War, globalization and regional integration; proliferation of small states through disintegration |
| Dominant IR theory | realism/neorealism | neorealism vs. neo-liberal institutionalism | rationalism vs. social constructivism |
| Small state topics | definition of small states, size and foreign policy, security issues, small and micro-states in international organizations | small states and economic interdependence and development issues | small states in European integration in globalization processes, ethno-political conflicts |

contributions inter alia pay attention to the role of small states as norm entrepreneurs, actors in regional integration, or as sources of ethno-political conflicts. In the age of globalization, not only have non-state actors acquired new meaning, but small states are also benefiting from taking part in efforts of global governance and from renewed scholarly attention.

Small state studies are still a relatively young discipline occupying a niche position in IR (Kirt/Waschkuhn 2001b: 23–25). This niche holds considerable potential for future research, both on individual small states and on theoretical aspects relevant to IR. The continued existence and even proliferation of small states in spite of the supposedly unfavorable odds must constitute a challenge to social scientists. Small states are not just "mini versions" of great powers but may pursue different goals and policies worth studying. Besides, small state studies have several insights to offer to the broader discipline of International Relations.

## *3. Small State Lessons for IR*

We suggest three ways in which the study of small states may be relevant to IR. There are a number of other reasons why small states may be profitably studied: inherent interest, interest in a particular issue area, region or

sequence of events, comparative interest, and so forth. Those are not our primary concerns in this volume, however. While our three approaches have an affinity to (neo)realism, neoliberal institutionalism, and social constructivism, respectively, in order to focus directly on the issues at stake rather than on debates about labels and wider patterns of thought, we list them simply as "capabilities," "institutions," and "relations."

## CAPABILITIES

The basic way in which smallness has been studied in IR is in terms of capabilities.[12] And indeed, if smallness is a question of a certain lack in relative capabilities, this might be a good starting point. Already Morgenthau (1972: 129–30) had made clear that "A Great Power is a state which is able to have its will against a small state . . . which in turn is not able to have its will against a Great Power," yet "a Great Power could easily sink to the level of a second-rate or small Power, and a small Power could easily rise to the eminence of a Great Power." Such studies are preoccupied with how to measure capabilities. They assume that having the capability implies pending action. The literally classic reference here is to the so-called Melian dialogue in Thucydides' analysis of the Peloponnesian War. The dialogue concerned what the great city state of Athens should do when attempts to bring the small city state of Melos into its alliance against the other great power in the system—Sparta—failed, and the prospect thereby opened up that Melos and its resources might be taken over by Sparta and used against Athens. The exchange between the Athenians and the Melians about this issue is mainly a prelude to the key dialogue, which is between those Athenians who favor killing all the men and enslaving all the women and children and those Athenians who favor letting Melos go about its own business. The former prevails. The reason why the Melian dialogue is famous is that its emblematic formulation, that we live in a world where the strong do what they want and the weak suffer what they must, has been taken to be representative for politics everywhere. If this holds good, then what there is to be said about small states was basically already said some 2,500 years ago.

The key issue here—that having a capability will automatically entail its indiscriminate use—is one that is still widespread in IR thinking. For example, Kagan (2003) recently received much attention for an argument that hinged on the assumption that the United States would act differently than the European Union in global politics simply because it had superior capabilities. Present-day neorealists still tend to begin their analyses of powers

great and small with an analysis of relative capabilities—and some of them even end there. It is interesting to note that neorealists based within states with large capabilities tend to celebrate the importance of large capabilities, thus neglecting small states. Neorealists who work in small states, by contrast, are inclined to study such phenomena as bandwagoning (that is, small state strategies of joining coalitions and alliances of states that are perceived as winning ones) or balancing (that is, strategies of joining weaker coalitions to reach a balance of power). For example, the American scholar Walt (1987) stresses how great powers bring alliances into being and maintain them once they exist, while his Danish student Wivel (2000) stresses how and why small states tend to join or not to join those alliances.

The privileging of capabilities may lead one to be dismissive of small states. Kennedy (1991: 186 n 18 in extenso) notes that "No doubt it is theoretically possible for a small nation to develop a grand strategy, but the latter term is generally understood to imply the endeavors of a power with extensive (i.e., not just local) interests and obligations, to reconcile its means and its ends." A similar sense of priority is on display in the work of the cuddly realists of the English School of International Relations, as Watson (1982: 198) writes in his book on diplomacy:

> I have cited . . . some of the services rendered by Switzerland to the diplomatic dialogue. The contribution of the Netherlands to the development of international law is also impressive. Some states are more acceptable than others when it comes to making up a peacekeeping force. . . . The impact of a group or bloc of smaller states, such as OPEC, may be considerable. Even so, these variations are minor. It is the larger powers that determine the effectiveness of diplomacy. This mechanical fact goes far to explain why in many systems of states special responsibilities for the functioning of international relations, the management of order, and the leadership of the diplomatic dialogue have been entrusted by a general consensus to great powers.

As a residual category, small states are often treated as objects, not as subjects of international relations. The history of international politics then is the history of great powers. Morgenthau's magnum opus *Politics Among Nations* (1948) should more appropriately be called *Politics Among Great Nations*. According to him, "Small nations have always owed their independence either to the balance of power (Belgium and the Balkan countries until the Second World War), or to the preponderance of one protecting power (the small nations of Central and South America, and Portugal), or to their lack of attractiveness for imperialistic aspirations (Switzerland and Spain)" (Morgenthau 1948: 196).

The basic problem with starting an analysis of small states from the question of capabilities is that it identifies one structural precondition—a difference in power that is basically materially conceived and often even restricted to military power—and simply assumes that everything else will wither into irrelevance in the long or even short run. Such a blanket assumption, however, can only be made for situations where there are no ties of any kind binding the parties together, and no feeling of responsibility on behalf of actors that are due to other causes such as international norms. In IR terms, it can only be made in a situation of highly immature anarchy, with predatory actors. For example, the assumption does not prove true for the situation that Thucydides actually describes in the Melian dialogue. Even within the system of Greek city states it was not a foregone conclusion that the strong would do as they could and the weak would suffer what they must. There is no textual evidence for arguing that this specific dialogue had to turn out the way it did. Anarchy may, after all, be more or less mature. The degree of immaturity depends, among other things, on the degree to which the system is institutionalized.

## INSTITUTIONS

If one starts not from capabilities but from institutions, then the question of smallness presents itself in a different way. Here we find the view that the great powers are also the great responsibles, that they are, as it were, in charge of the system, and that small states should therefore be studied in the light of great-power negotiations. "As when we say that a cold spell in winter is responsible for the deaths of birds, so we may note that larger states are more responsible for the way in which the diplomatic dialogue is conducted and the way in which the system operates than smaller ones are, without saying anything about the intentions of states or making any moral judgement" (Watson 1982: 195). For example, the UN Security Council has five permanent members that are supposed to work together, as well as with the other members, among which we find many small states. This example brings out how congress diplomacy is nested within a broader multilateral diplomacy, where it may make itself more or less felt depending on specific circumstances. Another and institutionally more clear-cut example is the Contact Group setup among the great powers who took an immediate interest in Balkan politics in the 1990s (cf. Schwegmann 2001).

One particularly poignant branch of theorizing that stresses a managerial great-power role is hegemonic stability theory. Hegemony exists

where one power acts as the primus inter pares, first among equals (e.g., Kindleberger 1973; Gilpin 1981).[13] It is alone in being great, and other powers are relegated to graded degrees of smallness. Against the background of the debate about an "American decline" in the 1970s, regime theory showed in the following years that international regimes may assume a hegemon's functions of providing international order and cooperation (e.g. Keohane 1984). All the same, it has recently been argued that the G8 (the informal grouping of the seven leading industrial nations plus Russia) has replaced the single U.S. hegemon and increasingly institutionalized itself as the new "group hegemon." Volgy and Bailin (2003: 91), for instance, speak of institutionalized group hegemony "when the great powers act as a group to mitigate crises and to maintain stability, and they take steps to institutionalize their relationships."

But why should the institutionalization of smallness and greatness matter? There are basically two reasons, where the second reason flows from the first. The first reason has to do with effects of power. The status of being a great power is a prerogative and hence a resource. Being recognized as a great power means that decision-makers in other polities will take what they consider to be your interests into account. The great power is thus present even when absent; it exerts power in settings that it does not even know exist. It governs from afar. In addition, other great powers will, at least in principle, recognize its rightful interests. "The contribution of the great powers to international order derives from the sheer facts of inequality of power as between the states that make up the international system" (Bull 1977: 194). Because states are grossly unequal in power, certain international issues are settled, while others are not. There may also be institutional rewards, such as a position as a guarantor of peace or a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The second reason is that institutionalization makes the power effects that flow from great powerhood less invisible in the sense that a certain set of norms and rules is being formalized, and so it is open to debate and question. A legal and political language in which to speak about interstate relations emerges more clearly as a new medium and a new resource for states to manipulate. The more resources from which a certain state is cut off, the more important to it are those resources on which it may still draw. It follows that, to small states, whose smallness is seen exactly as a result of them having access to limited material resources, this language is likely to be more important than it is to greater powers. We have here a structural factor that may predispose small states to favor discourses that institutionalize rules and norms, such as international law, international regimes, and international institutions.[14] This

insight points to the importance of studying the role of small states in international organizations such as the United Nations or the European Union. According to UN Secretary-General Annan (1998),

> It is easy for small nations to feel daunted by the global forces at work . . . Large countries with enormous labour forces, abundant natural resources, arsenals of high-tech weaponry and fleets of expert technicians and negotiators may seem to have all the advantages. . . . I would like to sound the strongest possible note to the contrary. My long experience at the United Nations has shown me that the small States of the world . . . are more than capable of holding their own. I would even go so far as to say that their contributions are the very glue of progressive international cooperation for the common good.

## RELATIONS

A different, and in a number of respects opposing, approach to studying small states via institutions is to investigate them not in terms of outcomes of great-power bargains or as already established arenas where great powers may manage international affairs, but in terms of the relations between states.[15] Small states and great powers are mutually constitutive—if there were no small states, there could be no great powers. In fact, the great powers have always been a minority in the society of states: the vast majority of states have been and are minor powers. Few social analysts working in fields other than IR would rest content with an analysis of social organizations or indeed institutions that looked only at one particular class of entities. When considered from this point of view, IR literature comes up fairly short not only because it often focuses on variation along just one variable, namely differences in capabilities, but also because even this job has not been done satisfactorily since case studies are heavily tilted towards the "giants." This weakness in traditional approaches is even more damning since the number of cases that make up the universe being studied—sovereign states—has in certain periods been very small indeed.[16] One should have thought that, given a number of cases this low, theorizing about international relations in those periods would take all cases into account. This, however, has not been the case.

For a discipline that counts perhaps as many as 10,000 scholars worldwide plus their students, it can hardly be considered an impossible task to establish data sets and conduct research that avails itself of a varied set of cases. So, even if we accept the highly contentious claim that IR should

be about the states system, as well as the even more contentious claim that the variable to be given sustained attention is capabilities, we may still argue that the extant literature is worse off for its neglect of small states. How did IR as a discipline end up in this highly embarrassing situation? There are several reasons for this relative neglect of small state studies. First, from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, it has been argued that IR is an American discipline, the U.S. is a great power, and so a great power perspective came to embed itself in the literature (Wæver 1998). This is not the whole story, however, for before the Second World War, IR was a British discipline, and Britain remains the second most important node. The next two states on the list of where to find IR scholars would probably be Germany and Japan, which also have a great-power history. Second, there are inherent difficulties in studying them, as Holbraad (1971: 77–78) rightly points out:

> Some of the charges of distortion that have been directed at the historians of earlier centuries, who snobbishly were inclined to write only about popes and emperors, kings and generals and to ignore the lower orders of society, may apply also to some modern writers on international politics. On the other hand, those who approach the subject from the point of view of the small nations are at a serious disadvantage. Moving among the pawns of international politics, among the states that, at least in major issues, tend to be objects rather than subjects, they find it hard to come to grips with a process which takes place, so to speak, above their heads.

A third reason for the relative neglect of small states in the English-language literature is that scholars studying small states often work in small states and publish in their national languages.[17] Furthermore, even writing in English often appears in journals such as *Cooperation and Conflict: Nordic Journal of International Relations* and *Journal of International Relations and Development* that are based outside of the key IR countries, the U.S. and the UK. Rather than making a mark in mainstream debates, this work tends to remain unnoticed.[18]

Fourth, we should like to add an analytical point relating to the very widespread idea that important events must have important causes, and that great events must have great causes. Serbia was too small to be the instigator of something as great as the First World War. Sweden and Denmark were too small to be the birthplace of something as grand as military conscription; it would have to be France (or, alternatively, it would have to be stressed that Sweden was not a small but a great power at the time when it initiated conscription), let alone that some micro-states could have con-

tributed "grand" endeavors, as did Malta within the international convention on the law of the sea. Regarding the make-up of peacekeeping operations, it is above all others that small states such as Denmark, Fiji, and Nepal are consistently among the stalwart nations ready to contribute troops, police, and observers. The point here is not whether the empirical supposition holds or not—we would, for example, clearly distance ourselves from the idea that an explanation of the First World War that singled out Serbia as its effective cause would be credible—but rather that there exists such a thing as an analytical bias for "grand" causes and cases.

In the following section, we introduce the eight pieces of work on small states reprinted in this volume. They can loosely be grouped into three major themes: definitional, economic, and political issues. The contributions are drawn from different time periods, reflect different theoretical traditions, and use different methods. Even though all have been written in English, the authors come from both great powers and small states on both sides of the Atlantic. We believe that this compilation is likely to provide students of International Relations with a fresh look at a neglected topic and encourage them to undertake rewarding research which will not only enhance our understanding of small states but also enrich IR theory.

## *4. About this Book*

### THE CHALLENGE OF DEFINING SMALL STATES

Annette Baker Fox contributed to the first wave of theorizing on the autonomous effect of small state behavior in international relations. Her work spoke to the puzzles of weak vs. strong, might and right, and provided an opening for other scholars to explore cases previously invisible to core international relations theorizing. For these efforts, the study of small states and the scholarly community recognize Fox as a critical player in the history of this sub-field.

Our second chapter, Robert Keohane's (1969) "Lilliputians' Dilemmas," reviews four books dealing mainly with military alliances (Vital 1967; Liska 1968; Osgood 1968; Rothstein 1968). The author critically discusses their different definitions of "small powers" and recommends that instead of focusing on perceptions of capabilities, scholars should focus on the systemic role that leaders see their countries playing. Keohane (1969: 296) therefore suggests the following definitions: "A Great Power is a state whose leaders consider that it can, alone, exercise a large, perhaps decisive, impact on the international system; . . . a middle power is a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively but may be able to have a sys-

temic impact in a small group or through an international institution; a small power is a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system." This characterization draws our attention to the importance of (self-)perceptions and to the fact that small states and middle powers might support international institutions such as alliances in order to promote international attitudes and norms favorable to their survival. "Perception of [one's] systemic role, more than perception of need for external aid in security, seems to shape small powers' distinctive attitudes toward international organizations" (Keohane 1969: 297). As mentioned above, there is a need to focus less exclusively on capabilities and more on international institutions and relations.

Chapter 3 reproduces the key part of one of the books reviewed by Keohane, David Vital's *The Inequality of States* (1967). Vital examines the "disabilities" and "possibilities" of small states in terms of their size and policy options. In order to study the material inequality of formally equal states, he focuses on non-aligned small states having "a) a population of 10–15 million in the case of economically advanced countries; and b) a population of 20–30 million in the case of underdeveloped countries" (Vital 1967: 8). Material resources are thus considered crucial, but these attributes may be modified by factors such as the level of development, the effects of geographical proximity to areas of great power interest, the nature of a state's environment, or the cohesion and support of its population. Vital argues that small states acting alone face high (and rising) costs of independence. They have the choice of three broad policies: a passive strategy of renunciation, an active strategy designed to alter the external environment in their favor (e.g., subversion), or a defensive strategy attempting to preserve the status quo (e.g., traditional diplomacy, deterrence).

Chapter 4 provides two sections of Jorri Duursma's (1996) *Fragmentation and the International Relations of Micro-states*, in which she discusses the criteria for statehood and the question of micro-states in international organizations.[19] Her summary of the historical debate shows that the legal status of small states in the international system could in the past not be taken for granted. In general, statehood requires a territory, a population, and a government. Two additional criteria, international recognition and independence, have been more controversial. Today, the effects of recognition by other states are considered purely declaratory (although recognition can have a constitutive effect in case of entities which under the general criteria do not possess statehood). As a practical consequence, however, non-recognized states will have more difficulties in being accepted

as members of international organizations. International institutions and international law are of particular importance to micro-states and small states. Their accession may oppose the two principles of the sovereignty equality of states (which favors the decision-making rule "one state, one vote") and of democratic representation according to the relative weight of populations (or "one man, one vote"). In an accentuated form, this problem was highlighted by the UN's "micro-state dilemma." Statehood does not demand a minimum size of territory or population, yet the government criterion expects some degree of effective control over the territory and population. In this context, a certain extent of independence (in terms of the rights an entity has to the exclusion of other states) has often been required, in particular with regard to small states. Besides formal independence, the government should also enjoy some actual independence in internal and external affairs.

## SMALL STATE RESPONSES TO THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY

Chapter 5 is reprinted from Michael Handel's (1981) *Weak States in the International System*. He starts with the fact that a small state is not necessarily synonymous with a weak state and vice versa. He favors a dynamic, multi-criteria definition of weak states (population, area, economy, military power, interests and influence in the international system) and examines in detail the internal and external sources of states' weakness or strength as well as the power constellations of different international systems.[20] The chapter reprinted in this volume deals with the economic position of weak states in the international system. In light of the oil crises in the 1970s, Handel (1981: 217–256) maintains that the growing reluctance of the great powers to use their superior military might has shifted conflict between states to the economic arena and thus in favor of militarily weak but economically strong states. The OPEC countries, for instance, placed a successful oil embargo on the western industrialized states and could grant or withhold enormous financial aid and investments. Other weak states exporting important raw materials at the time began to consider similar measures.[21] Handel finds that the economic predicament of the weak states may not be so severe as traditional economic theory would suggest, and that the economically weak states can pursue certain strategies to reduce their vulnerability or to react to economic pressures imposed on them by great powers. He concludes that the weakness of states is a continuum, thus requiring evaluation of various types of power such as military and economic power. Weak or small states are not the passive pawns of great

powers, for they can obtain, commit, and manipulate the power of other, more powerful states, depending on the conditions of tension and conflict between the powers and the rigidity of their spheres of influence.

Chapter 6 leads us deeper into issues of political economy. Peter Katzenstein's influential book *Small States in World Markets* (1985) explores how national responses to the pressures of the global market might affect the domestic structures of small states.[22] He examines the industrial policies of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, and Switzerland. Being exposed to the pressures of a liberal international economy over which they cannot exert any influence, these small states have successfully adapted by relying on different variants of democratic corporatism. Whereas the large industrial states have chosen either competition or intervention to respond to adverse economic change, these European states have pursued a strategy of international liberalization and domestic compensation.[23] Katzenstein calls our attention to the historically shaped domestic structures of small states.

In chapter 7, Baldur Thorhallsson (2000) tests several hypotheses based on Katzenstein's observations that the small European economies are more open and more specialized and that their strong corporatism affects their foreign economic policy. He argues that size is a significant explanatory factor for the behavior of small states in the EU's decision-making process, at least in the areas of common agricultural policy and regional policy.[24] Thorhallsson's study confirms the importance of small-state corporatism, but contends that Katzenstein's concept needs to be modified to take into account the size and special characteristics of small administrations in order to be able to explain the small EU members' different negotiation tactics and stronger reliance on Commission officials. In particular, small states are proactive in those sectors of greatest importance to them, while being reactive in other sectors because they do not possess sufficient resources to follow all negotiations.

## SMALL STATE SECURITY THREATS AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Chapter 8, Dan Reiter's "Learning, Realism, and Alliances" (1994) compares the predictions of realism and of learning theory about the alliance choices of small states in the twentieth century. His evidence shows that learning is the dominant explanation, while variations in the levels of external threat have only marginal effects on alignment policy.[25] In other words, Reiter argues that small states draw lessons from significant past

experiences—they continue a successful policy of neutrality or alliance membership, but replace a failed policy by a new choice. Such a simple alternative is not available to great powers, which are not only concerned with direct threats to their own security, but with broader national interests. This text is of interest not just because it uses quantitative methods of analysis and challenges realism on its own turf, but because it demonstrates that small states are influenced more by their own experiences than by outside threats.

Chapter 9 is a reprint of an article by Christine Ingebritsen (2002) on "Norm Entrepreneurs." She points out that, in contrast to what leading theories of International Relations would have us expect, small states also engage in global agenda-setting. For example, Scandinavia has played a leading role in strengthening appropriate standards, or "norms," in international society. Scandinavia's capacity to influence the international system at particular moments and in specific issue-areas (environment, conflict resolution, etc.) has received little attention and should be explored as another way of exercising what she refers to as "social power" in the international system.

The book is rounded off by Christine Ingebritsen's concluding chapter on the state of the art and on the potential for "Learning from Lilliput." Since a choice had to be made for this volume among decades of writing on small states, many noteworthy pieces of literature have been left out. For the readers who miss certain books or articles, or who long for more, the annotated bibliography by Jessica Beyer at the end of this volume might provide a source of comfort and further inspiration.

## *5. Conclusion: A Voyage to Lilliput in IR*

We have noted a number of reasons why IR as a discipline is paying insufficient attention to the study of small states, and should like to conclude by mentioning a final one, namely the discipline's empirical slant. The idea seems to hold sway that, regardless of their theoretical worth, writings on great-power politics have a certain inherent interest due to the importance of the subject, whereas writings on small states do not. In empirical terms, the study of small states may only be apposite if small states have pertinence for outcomes. Perhaps Keohane (1969: 310) put this argument best when he wrote, "If Lilliputians can tie up Gulliver, or make him do their fighting for them, they must be studied as carefully as the giant." This may indeed be so, but we seem to have here a kind of empirical thinking that may actually hamper the development of IR as a sys-

tematic theory-led undertaking, that is, as a social science. Scientifically, analyses should be offered for their theoretical findings rather than for their empirical ones. Let us substantiate this idea by comparing International Relations to another social science, namely social anthropology. As argued by Geertz (1973: 21),

> the anthropologist characteristically approaches such broader interpretations and more abstract analyses from the direction of exceedingly extended acquaintances with extremely small matters. He confronts the same grand realities that others—historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists— confront in more fateful settings: Power, Change, Faith, Oppression, Work, Passion, Authority, Beauty, Violence, Love, Prestige; but he confronts them in contexts obscure enough . . . to take the capital letters off them.

Social anthropology probably evolved this way of looking at and presenting its findings because it afforded a way to generalize from highly specific empirical work. In anthropological discussions, material from a number of different cases is routinely bandied about to substantiate a theoretical argument. Case studies are harnessed to do inductive work that may result in theories with wide application. In IR, this is not the case to the same degree. We suggest that one of the reasons for this is that we have traditionally neglected the study of small states, and so we have also neglected ways to set up a professional dialogue that allows such work to be relevant across the board. It is simply not the case that studies of Ugandan warfighting, Malaysian trade, or Portuguese UN policy cannot serve as useful sites from which to investigate the institutions of war and trade, or the workings of the UN. If, by war, we mean U.S. military history, and by trade we mean EU external economic relations, then perhaps the discipline of International Relations should not be considered a social science at all, but rather a kind of International History *manqué*. A social science worthy of the name takes its entire universe of cases seriously. If the study of the international system remains central to IR, then there are very clear theoretical and methodological reasons why studying only a handful of the system's states is simply not good enough.

## *Notes*

1. It may also be observed at other times and in other places. The Group of Eight (G8), for instance, has in our days been referred to as a global concert (Penttilä 2003: 20).