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Introduction

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Introduction

Samuël Kruizinga

Size and state behaviour

Are all states equal? Theoretically, the answer is yes. Since the Peace of Westphalia (1648) formally decreed that states possessed absolute autonomy over their territory, states have increasingly been understood as sovereign entities, meaning that they allow one another the fullest degree of independence when it comes to dealing with whatever and whomever resided within their boundaries. The notion that all states deal with one another on the basis of non-interference in their internal affairs found its ultimate expression in the United Nations charter (paragraph 1, article 2), which proceeds from the principle of sovereign equality and argues that in principle, and in spite of asymmetries and inequalities in areas such as military power, geographical and population size, and levels of industrialization and economic development, states have the same international rights and duties.

But as one legal scholar perceptively noted in a 1944 article, in practice 'equality does not mean equality of duties and rights, but rather equality of capacity for duties and rights'.¹ Only under the same conditions do states have the same duties and the same rights. Of course, conditions are never the same, so in reality inequality is and always has been the general, if often unspoken, rule, simply because states are not considered equal.² The clearest example of this acknowledged asymmetry, perhaps, is the habitual division of states into a multitude of different categories. Developed states, for example, are commonly understood as economic and institutional success stories and thus models for developing states. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 'civilized' states were deemed to be essentially different from their 'non-civilized' counterparts – a distinction that lives on today whenever a Western and a non-Western state are juxtaposed.

Other distinctions – made by historians, political scientists, politicians and diplomats, activists and commentators – include those between strong and weak states, successful and failing or even failed states, and those amongst allies, neutrals and enemies. These labels, applied by a variety of actors for a wide array of reasons, often result in real consequences affecting the behaviour of state representatives – either because they themselves believe such labels to express an essential truth about the country they represent or because others with whom they interact do.³

This book is about one of the key and most common means of differentiation between states, one which has had an enormous impact on the framing of the possibilities and limitations of states' foreign policies throughout history and up through the present: size. A state's size is often seen as a predictor for its foreign policy behaviour, and therefore essential differences are often imagined to exist between 'big' and 'small' states. 'Big' suggests a 'great' power, or even a 'superpower' whose foreign policy spans continents or even the entire globe, but it also smacks of domination, overreach, even the abuse of power. 'Small', by contrast, evokes a state that is a rule-taker rather than a rule-maker, and therefore indicates a lack of power or influence in the international affairs that really matter. But it might also suggest 'nimble' or 'flexible'.

This book is about 'smallness'. It is not about whether a state *is* or *was* small but about what people thought or think a small state was or is. Even more specifically, it focuses on the effects of such an attribution, which is to say it asks what smallness does. What should a small state do or not do? What is its proper place, its appropriate behaviour? What rights and duties come with its diminutive size? To explain how we analyse 'smallness', this book will first detail how size and smallness have been understood since the late eighteenth century, and how an enduring interest in size and specifically in smallness gave birth to a specific field of scholarly activity: small state studies.

Small states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

Size as a key means of differentiating states entered the general European idiom in the eighteenth century. In particular, the Seven Years' War (1756–63) – arguably both the first global war and the first international conflict to spawn, almost immediately, a host of narrative commentaries and histories across Europe – was a critical moment in the separation of small from great: great powers were the active participants in the war, small powers those nations on the sidelines. These great powers – Britain, France, Russia, Prussia and Austria – were seen as superior in resources and therefore able to make war and peace, and on the basis of their strength to offer other ('lesser', 'minor') powers guarantees against attack by others.⁴ During the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) following the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the distinction between great and small powers was formalized.⁵ Questions of continental and global importance were now 'le droit exclusif' of the 'Big Five'.⁶ Only occasionally were representatives of certain smaller states invited to join the Great Power deliberations, and then only to discuss specific issues; others were deemed too small and summarily ignored.⁷

The Congress of Vienna also initiated another trend. As a result, chiefly, of decisions made by the Big Five, certain small states were enlarged to such a size that they became viable (junior) partners in the combined efforts to combat threats to European peace and stability. In Vienna the German kingdom of Prussia was nearly doubled in size, while a United Kingdom of the Netherlands was cobbled together from the old Dutch Republic, the Austrian Netherlands (present-day Belgium) and Luxembourg.⁸ The notion that states needed to be of a certain physical size to be able

to play an important role in affairs reinforced what some political commentators of the day saw as a historical trend: states either became greater or fell into obscurity, both physically and morally. Under the influence of the Social Darwinist application of biological concepts related to natural selection and survival of the fittest to international politics, in the second half of the nineteenth century German political thinkers began to protest the fragmentation of Germany into smaller political units as signposts of its decline.⁹ The political commentator Ludwig August von Rochau, for example, wrote in his *Grundsätze der Realpolitik* that these small German states, impediments to the dream of a single great and united Germany, were ‘the source of our historic misfortunes, our lack of power [...] the maiming of our national spirit and our political irrelevance.’¹⁰ The noted geographer and ethnographer Friedrich Ratzel, meanwhile, warned that ‘small residual states form an exception to the rule that states need to grow and develop’; instead, so he believed, they had become ‘fossilized.’¹¹ Even more famously, the historian Heinrich von Treitschke argued that small states lacked the capacity to develop a successful culture and that their disappearance would be ‘an act of historical necessity.’¹² He also warned that a united Germany should not fall prey to *Kleinstaaterei*, or the inward-looking particularisms Treitschke felt were innate to smaller states.¹³ This type of reasoning became increasingly popular both within and outside Germany at the close of the nineteenth century.

However, not everyone agreed that small states bred small-minded men; some even felt that small was preferable to great. These advocates grounded this view on an intellectual lineage traceable to classical Greek republican thought via writers such as Machiavelli, Rousseau, Milton and Montesquieu, a tradition concerned with civic virtue and political participation within a polity and with dangers to that polity, such as corruption, emanating from within.¹⁴ Montesquieu, for example, argued in his *De l'esprit des lois* (1748) that an ideal republic – a state belonging to its citizens rather than being the private property of hereditary rulers – would be small rather than large.¹⁵ Large states and their citizens would have many global interests, he opined, meaning that they would be inclined to pursue these private, global interests above the common good. Moreover, a large state was less likely to be homogenous than a small state and thus its citizens would be so diverse as not to have anything in common with one another. Finally, argued Montesquieu, a large state must have a sufficiently large army to attain its many foreign policy objectives. These massive military machines quickly outgrew the possibility of civilian control, especially when soldiers operated in territories far outside the borders of their own state. To control these armies, larger states would therefore gravitate towards governments possessing strong executive powers concentrated at a single point, or else these armies would in turn overthrow their governments and establish such a strong executive.¹⁶ So Montesquieu essentially agreed with Treitschke that a state's size would fundamentally predict its behaviour – and that of its rulers and of its inhabitants more generally – but he was much more optimistic about the sort of global citizens bred by smallness than the conservative German historian was to be.

Montesquieu's notion that small was beautiful precisely because of an institutional lack of interest in power and conquest came to prominence once again during the First World War, in which the Allies proclaimed to be fighting for the rights of small nations

against the naked aggression of an unchecked Great Power in the form of Germany. Nine months after the United States (US) had joined the Allied war effort, President Woodrow Wilson stressed in his 'Fourteen Points' speech that the American war aims included the goal of a postwar peace settlement instituting a supranational body to afford 'mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike'.¹⁷ When that body, as the League of Nations, was created through the negotiations of the Paris Peace Conference in the wake of the Allies' November 1918 victory (though without the United States as a member, despite Wilson's prior advocacy), all its member states were indeed theoretically equal, but the traditional 'great powers' dominated its decision-making apparatus, fuelled in part by apprehensions that newer European 'small' states such as Czechoslovakia and Hungary were inherently unstable, and also by lingering suspicion that small states were acting in their own interests as neutral war profiteers. Nonetheless, to many observers the notion that small states occupied an integral part of the global system – a position advocated in Scandinavia, Switzerland and the Netherlands even before 1914 – was in ascendance.¹⁸ The supposed innate impartiality and active interest in global peace and security on the part of European small states were seen as key boosts to the League's organizational capacity and its efforts to promote international law, arbitration and disarmament. Their Latin American and Asian counterparts, however, supposedly lacked these qualities and were therefore in a sense considered not to be 'true' small states.¹⁹

Small state studies

After another world war, the post-1918 enthusiasm for small state internationalism came to seem short-lived and, in retrospect, even painfully naïve. The doyen of the study of international relations, E. H. Carr, for example, echoed Treitschke in the second edition of his *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, published a year after the end of the Second World War: '[t]he conclusion now seems to impose itself on any unbiased observer that the small independent nation-state is obsolete or obsolescent'.²⁰ The onset of the Cold War seemed further evidence that independent small states were becoming a global curiosity: standing alone, they could never hope to survive a conflict with great powers, whose nuclear arsenal now elevated them to the status of superpowers, so why did they continue – or why were they allowed – to exist? This question animated Anette Baker Fox's 1959 book *The Power of Small States*. Focusing not on the Cold War but on the recent global conflict, in which some small states had managed to survive unscathed while others had fallen prey to either Nazi conquest or Allied domination, Baker Fox concluded that small states were able to exploit conflict between great powers to retain 'genuine choice of action', as long as they were able to 'convince the great-power belligerents that the costs of using coercion against them would more than offset the gains'. Despite enormous asymmetries between the Axis and Allied powers on the one hand and the small(er) states of Spain, Turkey and Sweden on the other, the latter nations managed, through skilful diplomacy and/or the exploitation of their favourable geostrategic location vis-à-vis the battle lines, to remain neutral and independent.²¹

Following Anette Baker Fox's work, a new strand of political science research began to focus on small states' 'security dilemmas', which were created by size-induced strictures in the military, economic and governance spheres which small states somehow needed to overcome in order to survive. Small state studies, as the burgeoning field began to be called, moved into the limelight after waves of decolonization created a host of new 'small states' in the 1950s and 1960s, prompting questions about their long-term viability; the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement in the early 1960s spurred debate as well about how its small state members might survive without superpower protection.²² Seizing upon the topicality of 'small state studies', political scientists and international relations scholars theorized that these and other small states might solve their security dilemma either through 'balance' – playing larger countries, notably the superpowers, against one another – or by 'bandwagoning' – joining with one of the powerful nations in an alliance, in which they traded some measure of independence of action for protection. Moreover, economists also began studying small states, arguing that these nations not only shared a security dilemma but were similarly also subject to a macroeconomic development pattern caused by the small size of their domestic markets, the low diversification of their economies and the scarcity of natural resources. These factors resulted in higher costs of production and lower economies of scale, a lack of competition, and low research and development expenditure, which in turn caused, these economists argued, dependency on external trade, the tendency to run trade deficits, overreliance on a single export commodity and the lack of an exportable surplus of industrial goods.²³

Thus, a consensus slowly emerged amongst political scientists and economists who held that states of similar size tended to act in similar ways and were distinguishable from other 'types' of states. It would follow that the decision-making processes by actors within small states would qualitatively differ from those of great powers.²⁴ However, empirical studies could not verify the hypotheses generated by small state scholars on the behaviour of such states.²⁵ In a landmark 1975 article, the political scientist Peter Baehr, in an analysis of recent foreign policy decisions made by the governments of several small states, found that such decisions differed wildly both from those made by other small states and from those of larger states. Therefore, he concluded that the notion of a 'sharp dichotomy between large and small states' had no explanatory power.²⁶ Other comparative efforts to find commonalities amongst small states, however defined, were similarly fruitless. This empirical impasse, in turn, fragmented the field of small state studies, resulting in a lack of cumulative insights and a dearth of coherent debates. By the 1980s, scholarly interest in small states had pretty much waned.²⁷

However, after the end of the Cold War, small state studies saw something of a resurgence as, once again, newly (politically) independent states entered the international scene, this time not in Africa but in Europe, as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and the dissolution of Yugoslavia.²⁸ Work on small states continued to emphasize their innate constraints and limitations in the face of new types of external threats, such as the global financial crisis of 2007–8 and climate change.²⁹ But a new strain of research did not focus on small states' supposed limits as compared to larger states but rather set out to discover the unique qualities that allowed small states to survive and, especially in Europe, to thrive. This new emphasis was indicative not only

of an unspoken assumption that since the end of the Cold War and of great power rivalry in Europe the international environment had become much friendlier to small states than it had been.³⁰ Even more importantly, it reflected key methodological changes within the study of international relations. ‘Power’, a core concept within the field, was understood no longer in terms only of (potential) coercion but also as involving the ability to influence through attraction and co-option, thereby ‘getting others to want the outcomes that you want’.³¹ Wielding ‘soft power’, several researchers have hinted, is something that small states are ‘naturally’ very good at.³²

This new small state literature has generated a number of fascinating case studies showing ‘small states’ navigating the possibilities and limitations of regional and global systems in various time periods and contexts. Perhaps most importantly, their work continues to provide sorely needed antidotes to the overt theoretical, methodological and empirical biases towards ‘hard power’ and ‘Great Powers’ in the study of international relations, historically and in the present alike.³³ However, even the new ‘small state studies’ has produced little in the way of generalization. The chief cause of this lack is an enduring disagreement over the *subject* of small state studies. In essence, the new small states literature, although methodologically innovative and capable of generating rich empirical materials, is dogged by an age-old problem that has hounded the study of small states since the field’s very inception: What exactly is a small state? In other words, what are the criteria for being deemed ‘small’? The search for such criteria, independent of time and place, has resulted in a plethora of suggestions for metrics, with population size, land mass and GDP being the most popular candidates. However, every suggestion offered has been met with endless, and ultimately fruitless, debate about where to locate the border separating large from small states – a discussion further muddled by the introduction of additional size categories such as micro and medium states.³⁴ In the end, it has proved simply impossible to find universal characteristics inherent to all small states, and therefore universal indicators of small state behaviour. ‘Small state studies’ thus continues to be a field without a subject, and the category ‘small state’ still generates more confusion than insight.³⁵

Being, feeling and acting small

The central argument of this book flows from both our critique of the current state of small state studies and from the premise that its authors strongly believe that the concept still holds. That argument, simply stated, is that rather than continuing the fruitless search for timeless definitions of state size, or contenting ourselves with analyses of the politics of countries lumped together in an undefined category (i.e. ‘small’), we should recognize that size in international politics is not rigid and static but perceptual and subjective. The essays in this book are therefore not about small states per se, in the sense that they do not delineate a discrete category of states that ‘are’ small. Rather, they are about *smallness*, which we understand as an attribute that actors can recognize either in their own polity or in another. Therefore, we would argue that a category like ‘small state’ (or, indeed, ‘great power’) has real meaning if, and only if, a polity is recognized as such either internally or externally, or both, and if

people act on the basis of beliefs resulting from this recognition. Therefore, the essays take up not only the attribution of the label 'small' but also what is produced by such an attribution. Specifically, they connect smallness to discourses about the identity of states and to concrete policy actions where smallness is performed on the domestic or the international stage. Finally, this book's chapters emphasize change and relationality: the self-perceived attributes of states, or the attitudes taken towards them, can and do evolve over time, and issues related to size are almost always seen in contrast or in some other relation to the size of others.³⁶

In connecting 'smallness' to identity and policy, this book builds upon two interrelated developments in the study of international politics. The first is concerned with the construction and development of the state system or the formal and informal structures that govern the relationships amongst states. Political scientists and theorists of international relations have long assumed that this system functions essentially like a game of billiards, the balls constantly clashing against one another and differing only in their force and speed of impact. Recent decades have seen the emergence of trends in international history that no longer cast the international system as a mass of empty air for the billiard balls to roll around in but rather regard it as an environment filled with norms and rules which help guide, and which is simultaneously shaped by, the behaviours and ideas of state and non-state actors alike.³⁷

Ayşe Zarakol has argued persuasively that both the formal and informal organization of states into regional and global systems takes the shape of a series of changing and overlapping hierarchies. Within these 'deep structures of organized inequality' states are either institutionally or informally super- or subordinated to others. The 'distinctions' made between groups of states mentioned at the beginning of this introductory chapter – between developing and developed states, Western and non-Western, great and small – can be understood as positions within these hierarchies. Relations between metropolises and their former colonies, between Security Council members and other actors within the United Nations, and between 'civilized' states and 'dangerous' failing states or non-state actors can then be reframed, and better understood, as organized inequalities.³⁸

Following Zarakol, we propose a new understanding of size in international relations as a hierarchy of 'organized inequality', with 'smallness' given a historically contingent status. This conception allows us to analyse the construction and evolution of the 'size hierarchy' along with the (changing) conditions and meanings of small state status. It also allows us to question who the reference group is: Who or what do states feel they have to measure up to in order to either confirm or defend their status, or to ascend to a higher position within the hierarchy?

Crucially, we posit that there is a direct connection between a state's status in a size hierarchy on the one hand, and the worldview of historical actors identifying with that state on the other. Specifically, building upon Barry Buzan and Ole Waever's investigations into the nexus connecting foreign policy with identity, this book argues that debates about size are enmeshed within fundamental societal debates about a state's 'we' in comparison to an 'other' – either another state or group of states, or some (imagined) past version of 'us' or 'them'.³⁹ Debates about size in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in and concerning the Netherlands were, I have argued

previously, inextricably linked to discussions about the country's 'natural' role in Europe and the world, where it had a supposedly historical duty as an 'exemplar nation' leading not by force but by example. Moreover, these debates were bound up with implicit and explicit comparisons either to other countries deemed to be part of the same (European) reference group – its colonial possessions, for example, supposedly elevated it 'above the rank of Denmark' – or, due to its early twentieth-century economic and scientific booms, to the country's seventeenth-century 'Golden Age'.⁴⁰

The key takeaway here is that hierarchies of size are not just academic constructs: they have real-world effects. However, the essays in this book do not posit an *automatic* connection, as both Montesquieu and Treitschke suggested in respectively the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that would link 'being small' with 'feeling' and 'acting small'. If a nation's politically relevant majority considers the country small, this perception will exert an influence on policy: it will affect beliefs about how the state should be treated, what it is entitled to and what it has no place doing. Obviously, it is possible to propose policies that radically differ from what most people would consider appropriate, given their idea of their country's size and the implications of that size. But, as Lene Hansen has shown, advocating for such policies is a daunting task, especially when one's political opposition can point out the obvious imbalance between identity and policy. Daunting, but not impossible, since constructed identities are hardly timeless; they can and do move from being (near-)hegemonic to being politically contested over time, allowing established policy boundaries to be contested along with them.⁴¹ Moreover, 'smallness' not only forms an integral part of debates about the identity of one's own state identity but can also be attributed to another state. This descriptor can then be accepted by relevant actors within that state, either happily or begrudgingly, but such an attribution, if felt to be unfair, can be seen as 'belittling'. These attributions, too, produce real-world ramifications: if another state is seen as small, certain expectations will rise while others recede; accorded particular roles, a state will be denied others.

Discourse and image

To study size, we look first and foremost to sites where size – either of one's own state or of another – is the subject of discussion and debate. To analyse these sites, we look to discourse analysis. Made famous by Foucault and Derrida, discourse analysis concerns itself (*inter alia*) with how language, along with the ideas, concepts and categories that language seeks to put into words, is used to construct meaning and identity. What specifically interests us here is that in building meaning and identity, language functions as a referential system, in which things and people are identified through differentiation and linking.⁴² Put very simply, differentiation holds that something *is* something or has a certain *meaning* because it is not something else. Switzerland, for example, might be construed as a small state because it is small when compared to relevant others – it is smaller than great and medium-sized states such as the United States, China and Brazil, but greater than microstates such as Liechtenstein. Through linking, concepts such as smallness are then connected to sets of ideas and values, either positively or negatively. Switzerland's smallness, for example, might be analysed

as being intimately connected to values held to be positive, such as being peace-loving, internationalist or neutral. Such differentiations and linkages, being complex and multifaceted, are inherently unstable. Size comparisons between states are subject to interpretation and debate: what is obvious to one might not be so apparent to another. And connections between smallness and a certain value (or values) might change if the perception of a particular value changes. For example, the connection between smallness and neutrality was generally and highly valued in Denmark in the decades prior to the Second World War but was not so prized after the Nazi occupation, when this linkage became associated not with high-minded idealism and safety but with negative values such as cowardice and helplessness.⁴³

Of course, a huge number of actors have used referential language, in an equally wide variety of circumstances, forms, fora and media, to express their notions of how their state's size compares to others' and what positive or negative ideas and values it is linked to. We suggest, however, that a select number of common themes, reproduced in media and repeated back through policy, were prevalent in public debate. Not that everyone shared them or agreed with them, but we suggest, following Lene Hansen, that these common themes do provide 'a lens through which a multitude of different representations and policies can be seen as systematically connected', even in opposition or as foci for discussions. Moreover, smallness, and indeed size in general, is also something that can be ignored or simply go unmentioned. Such passing over might be unconscious – when, for whatever reason, thinking in terms of smallness or size plays no role in discourses related to state identity or policy – or deliberate, as when smallness is considered a taboo subject. Accordingly, the essays in this book focus not only on smallness when it is made explicit in policy or within identity-related discourses but also on smallness in action, where smallness is 'performed'. Even when it goes unmentioned, smallness can still serve to legitimize actions and can thus be read back from these actions, often through either differentiation – an action is justified because it is not another type of action which we cannot or should not undertake – or through linkage, often through terms such as neutrality or peripherality that are associated (positively or negatively) with smallness. Thus, the essays in this book treat the relationship between the *politics of smallness* and *discourses on smallness* as mutually constitutive: 'small' politics rely upon representations of 'small' identity, which is in turn produced and reproduced through political action. Both, meanwhile, form important elements within processes of identity formation.⁴⁴

To aid comparisons across time and space when discussing these discourses on smallness – and their attendant processes of linking and differentiation – in their complicated, reciprocal relationships with policy and identity formation, this volume's essays refer to common themes therein as *images* – a shorthand, often given the French rather than the English pronunciation, derived from *imagology*. Originally a method devised to analyse, compare and contrast the discursive articulations of national characterizations or *ethnotypes* ('all Frenchmen love wine, wear berets, and refuse to speak English'), imagology nowadays has a much wider purview: it assists in analysing those discourses of representation that invoke images of the national Self in contrast to the Other by prescribing particular characters to them.⁴⁵ Like discourse analysis, with which it shares a linguistic background, imagology focuses on relationality and

the use of differentiation (Self vs. Other) and linkages (characteristics associated with both Self and Other). Following Joep Leerssen and Manfred Beller, we differentiate the three terms *auto-images*, *hetero-images* and *meta-images*. The first term applies to those discourses that refer to one's own polity or to another form of collective Self; the second to discourses related to another state, group of states or (collective of) Other(s); and *meta-images*, meanwhile, are about projections: how we think, hope or fear the Other thinks of Us, or what We imagine the Other thinks, hopes or fears We think of Them.⁴⁶

Chapter breakdown

The essays presented here discuss the politics of smallness, *images* related to smallness, and wider but related issues of identity formation as they intersect with often conflicting notions of size. Their temporal focus is mostly on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, beginning with the period after the difference between great powers and small(er) states was formalized at the Treaty of Vienna. Two essays, however, connect the historical (re)construction of size to current events, underscoring the continued relevance of size hierarchies in our world today, while one essay casts its gaze further back into history, questioning the established chronology of the history of 'smallness'. Geographically, the essays in our book focus primarily but not exclusively on Europe. Europe's preponderance here is not because smallness or size-based hierarchies play no role in discourses on policy and status in areas outside of Europe but because in domestic and international debates, actors from European states – or states that define themselves partly or wholly as 'European' – have tended, until the late twentieth century, to focus nearly exclusively on references to other European states. In other words, for European debates about 'smallness', the reference group in debate status within size-based hierarchies was almost exclusively other European states. A singular focus on Europe helps to bring this emphasis to the fore. However, within these spatial and geographical constraints, the chapters feature a wide range of approaches, collectively designed to highlight the utility of the focus on 'smallness' and the methodology outlined in this introduction across a variety of empirical settings.

The first chapter, 'Belittling Spain. Hispanophobia and the mirror of greatness' by Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, focuses, for example, on analysing literary history and its key role in forging canons, featuring explicit auto- and meta-images on the 'size' of states' literary and cultural achievements. Rodríguez Pérez shows how, in developing British and Dutch literary canons, Spain was 'belittled' by being given the taint of a set of negative stereotypes that impacted its place and stature within Europe and the world in the arts as well as in politics.

Adrian Brisku's chapter, 'Dealing with smallness in Habsburg Bohemia, Ottoman Albania and Tsarist Georgia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', meanwhile, deals with the intellectual vanguard of nascent national movements within multinational empires. The collective self-images they promoted of their nations as small within 'great' imperial states deeply influenced how they viewed relations with the imperial centre and their advocacy for specific constitutional, political-economic and geopolitical strategies oriented towards national survival and growth. The third chapter,

'Smallness and the East-West binary in nationalism studies. Belgium and Romania in the long nineteenth century', by Raul Cârstocea and Maarten Van Ginderachter, uses smallness to probe existing schemas of classifying different varieties of nationalism. It focuses on Romanian elites' conscious adoption of Belgium as a developmental model, a choice closely related to their mutually recognized smallness but linked as well to ideas and values that the Belgians and the Romanians alike attached to it: peripherality, (political and constitutional) liberalism and the ability to bridge different cultures.

In Chapter 4, "Poor Little Belgium". Food aid and the image of Belgian victimhood in the United States', by Samuël Kruizinga and Marjet Brolsma, smallness is an essential part of the campaign waged on behalf of the Commission for the Relief of Belgium to solicit money, goods and political capital on behalf of beleaguered Belgium during the First World War. Belgium's hetero-image in the United States, though bearing echoes of the modern small state that had been so attractive to the Romanians, was mostly concerned with suffering: Belgium was mostly known as the Great War's primary, tragic victim. This hetero-image developed in tandem with that of Germany as the instigator of Belgium's woes and to an auto-image of America as a moral great power, a conception profoundly affecting the cultural mobilization that surrounded the entry of the United States into the war in 1917.

Our analysis moves to the interwar period with Chapter 5, 'Science, health and American money: Small-state strategies in interwar Czechoslovakia and Denmark', co-written by Elisabeth Van Meer, Casper Andersen and Ludvig Goldschmidt Pedersen. Scientists and bureaucrats in the new Czechoslovak Republic and in Denmark both followed internationalist agendas that were quite similar in their alignment with a self-image in which smallness was innately linked with scientific internationalism. In pursuing such aims, they sought subsidies from the American Rockefeller Foundation (RF), which had emerged from the First World War as a leading philanthropic entity on the global stage. The RF, meanwhile, regarded both countries as attractive candidates for the advancement of its own scientific agenda, precisely because they were small enough either to be built from the ground up (Czechoslovakia) or to be used as a pre-mapped and charted miniature testbed for international scientific collaborations and new research methodologies. Chapter 6, 'Neutral news. Forging a small states' transnational media network, 1920–40', by Vincent Kuitenbrouwer, is likewise interested in the connection between smallness and 'truth', albeit not in a scientific sense. His chapter details the creation of a network of small state news agencies intended to collectively parry the propaganda efforts of those states that threatened to monopolize the physical means of transmitting news as well as the news' contents. Their auto-images as small and neutral played key roles in their joint efforts to safeguard their independence on the eve of the Second World War and to deliver 'neutral' or 'true' news to further the cause of peace.

Chapters 7 and 8 both take longer views of the development of auto-images of smallness and their relation to international and domestic politics and to national identity narratives. In "Whoever says that Serbia is small is lying!" Serbia, ontological (in)security and the unbearable smallness of being', Christian Axboe Nielsen details the emergence of two conflicting auto-images in nineteenth-century Serbia: one where it reconciled itself with its size and focused on internal development, and one advocating

a push for a Greater Serbia, traces of which are still detectable in the country today. The latter conception quickly lost out, but the auto-image of Serbian political elites remained, and remains, characterized by a fear of smallness – defined territorially, but also (geo-)politically and demographically. Chapter 8, ‘Iceland’s smallness. Acceptance or denial?’ by Baldur Thorhallsson and Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, tracks the connection between Icelandic auto-images as they developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its foreign policy throughout the twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries. The authors conclude that Icelandic policymakers generally consider smallness a taboo subject, as it undermines a widely circulated and oft-repeated claim that the country has a natural right to self-determination and is beholden to no one. At the same time, Icelandic governments have sought forms of economic, military and geopolitical protection, which has amounted to an unspoken admission that small Iceland needed to find shelter to weather storms such as the Cold War and the financial crisis of 2008–11.

Chapters 9 and 10 move closer and closer towards the present. Sara Dybris McQuaid argues in ‘Great Britain and Little Ireland. Reimagining British and Irish relations in BIPA, Brexit and beyond’ that smallness functions as a lens through which to understand the relationships amongst various territorial, national and political communities across the British Isles as they negotiate Brexit and its impact on the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and on the constitutional makeup of the UK. She shows, by analysing the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, that political actors across the UK and Ireland use size in shifting and multiple ways in order to question, (re)frame and (re)position the constituent parts of the UK in relation to one another, to the two parts of Ireland and to the European Union (EU). In the final chapter before the book’s conclusion, ‘From David to Goliath? The question of size in Israel’s identity politics’, Alexei Tsinovoi argues that Israel’s dominant auto-image rests on three pillars: its Jewishness, its status as a security provider and its democratic values in an otherwise autocratic region. Through these identity narratives, Israel emerged as an embattled small state. However, the narratives proved unstable and began to clash, causing fissures in both Israel’s auto-image and its hetero-image in other parts of the world, exerting a severe impact on ongoing attempts to end the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The book’s final chapter, by Samuël Kruizinga and Karen Gram-Skjoldager, summarizes the various essays’ findings and reflects on the utility of our understanding of smallness and of size more generally.

Notes

- 1 Kelsen, ‘The Principle of Sovereign Equality of States as a Basis for International Organization’, 209.
- 2 Wright, ‘The Equality of States’.
- 3 Tucker, *The Inequality of Nations*; Clark, *The Hierarchy of States: Reform and Resistance in the International Order*.
- 4 Scott, ‘The Seven Years War and Europe’s Ancien Régime’, 429; Scott, *The Birth of a Great Power System 1740–1815*, 117–42; Neumann, ‘Status Is Cultural’, 103.

- 5 Schulz, *Normen Und Praxis*, 35–71.
- 6 Meisel, *Cours de Style Diplomatique, Volume II*, 133–4.
- 7 Peterson, 'Political Inequality at the Congress of Vienna', 539–42; Graaf, 'The Allied Machine. The Conference of Ministers in Paris and the Management of Security, 1815–18', 140; Graaf, 'The Legacy of the Wars for the International System'.
- 8 Schulz, 'Cultures of Peace and Security from the Vienna Congress to the Twenty-First Century. Characteristics and Dilemmas', 24–5, 28–9.
- 9 Holdar, 'The Ideal State and the Power of Geography the Life-Work of Rudolf Kjellén.'
- 10 '[D]as Erb- und Grundübel, an dem unsere Nation seit Jahrhunderten elend darniederliegt, die Quelle alles unseres historischen Unglücks, unserer Ohnmacht, unserer inneren Zerwürfnisse, unserer Niederlagen und unserer Bürgerkriege, der Verkrüppelung unseres Nationalgeistes und unserer politischen Unmündigkeit'. Rochau, *Grundsätze Der Realpolitik, Angewendet Auf Die Staatlichen Zustände Deutschlands, Volume 1*, 117.
- 11 'Die kleinen Reststaaten machen eine Ausnahme van den Wachstumsgesetzen der Staaten; sie sind wie versteinert'. Ratzel, *Politische Geographie, Oder Die Geographie Der Staaten Des Verkehres Und Des Krieges*, 184.
- 12 '[E]inen Akt der historischen Notwendigkeit'. Treitschke, *Die Zukunft Der Norddeutschen Mittelstaaten*, 24.
- 13 Original citations from Amstrup, 'Perennial Problem', 163–4. I have re-translated them from the original texts.
- 14 Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*.
- 15 See Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*.
- 16 Levy, 'Beyond Publius', 50–2. See also Alexis de Tocqueville's description of the United States as 'free and happy as a small nation', and 'glorious and strong as a great one'. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: And Two Essays on America*, 191.
- 17 Wilson, 'An Address to a Joint Session of Congress, 8 January 1918'.
- 18 MacGinty, 'War Cause and Peace Aim?' 47–50, 55; Schulz, 'La Société Des Nations et La Résolution Pacifique Des Différends: Règles, Normes et Pratiques'.
- 19 Gram-Skjoldager, Ikonomou and Kahlert, 'Scandinavians and the League of Nations Secretariat, 1919–1946', 11–12.
- 20 Carr and Cox, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, cvi. Cynicism regarding the long-term viability of smaller states in the face of renewed European conflict had become a feature of political writing as early as the 1930s. See e.g. Rappard, 'Small States in the League of Nations', 544–75.
- 21 Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States*, 8–9.
- 22 Sens, 'The Newly Independent States, the United Nations, and Some Thoughts on the Nature of the Development Process'.
- 23 Neumann and Gstöhl, 'Introduction: Lilliputians in Gulliver's World?' 11; Jesse and Dreyer, *Small States in the International System. At Peace and at War*, 12–48.
- 24 Barston, 'Introduction'.
- 25 Thorhallsson, 'Studying Small States: A Review', 23–5; Neumann and Gstöhl, 'Introduction: Lilliputians in Gulliver's World?' 10–15; Steinmetz and Wivel, 'Introduction', 9–10.
- 26 Baehr, 'Small States: A Tool for Analysis', 466. See also East, 'Size and Foreign Policy Behavior', 566–76; Amstrup, 'Perennial Problem', 178–9. Cf. Carlsnaes, 'Foreign Policies', 13.
- 27 Neumann and Gstöhl, 'Introduction: Lilliputians in Gulliver's World?' 12.
- 28 Thorhallsson, 'Studying Small States: A Review', 19–21.

- 29 Bailes, Rickli and Thorhallsson, 'Small States, Survival and Strategy', 26, 32; Benwell, 'The Canaries in the Coalmine: Small States as Climate Change Champions', 199–200; Streeten, 'The Special Problems of Small Countries', 197–8.
- 30 Thorhallsson and Steinsson, 'Small State Foreign Policy'.
- 31 Nye, Jr., *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics*, x, 1–21.
- 32 Crump et al., 'Introduction. Smaller Powers in Cold War Europe'; Long, 'Small States, Great Power?' 194–201; Panke, 'Small States in EU Negotiations: Political Dwarfs or Power-Brokers?' 124; Cooper and Shaw, 'The Diplomacies of Small States at the Start of the Twenty-First Century: How Vulnerable? How Resilient?' 3; Browning, 'Small, Smart and Salient?' 670; Chong, 'Small State Soft Power Strategies: Virtual Enlargement in the Cases of the Vatican City State and Singapore', 385–402.
- 33 Hey, 'Introducing Small State Foreign Policy', 2; Case, *Between States*, 2.
- 34 Crowards, 'Defining'; Thorhallsson and Wivel, 'Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would We Like to Know?' For debates about 'middle' states, see e.g. Chapnick, 'Middle Power No More? Canada in World Affairs Since 2006'; Ravenhill, 'Entrepreneurial States'.
- 35 Some even go so far as to advocate simply ignoring the issue altogether. 'After all, quibbling over definitions has not prevented the small state from becoming a fact of international political life'. Baldacchino, 'Mainstreaming the Study of Small States and Territories', 7. Others have argued that small is, in essence, equal to 'weak', but this observation only shifts, rather than solves, issues of definition. Alford, 'Security Dilemmas', 365; Elman, 'Foreign Policies of Small States', 172–5.
- 36 See Kruizinga, 'A Small State? The Size of the Netherlands as a Focal Point in Foreign Policy Debates, 1900–1940'; Dijk et al., 'Conclusions and Outlook. Small States on the Global Scene'. Such an approach was also championed by Smith, Pace and Lee, 'Size Matters'.
- 37 For an overview of recent developments, see Manela, 'International Society as a Historical Subject', 184–99.
- 38 Zarakol, 'Theorising Hierarchies'; Lake, 'Laws and Norms', 3–13, 28–9; Renshon, *Fighting for Status. Hierarchy and Conflict in World Politics*, 2–11, 21–44; Welch Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, 'Status and World Order', 7–10.
- 39 Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 20–1, 33–5.
- 40 Baudet, 'Nederland En de Rang van Denemarken'; Kruizinga, 'A Small State? The Size of the Netherlands as a Focal Point in Foreign Policy Debates, 1900–1940'. Referring to the seventeenth century as the Netherlands' 'Golden Age' has come under increasing scrutiny, rightly I believe. I use it here because early-twentieth-century elites employed the term specifically to mirror their own advances, albeit in different fields of endeavour.
- 41 Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 18–53.
- 42 For a very readable introduction to these themes, see Hall, Evans and Nixon, *Representation*.
- 43 See Gram-Skjoldager, 'The Other End of Neutrality. Denmark, The First World War and The League of Nations'.
- 44 Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 1.
- 45 See Sierp and Karner, 'National Stereotypes in the Context of the European Crisis'; III, 'What's in a National Stereotype?'
- 46 Beller, 'Perception, Image, Imagology'; Leerssen, 'Imagology. History and Method'; Leerssen, 'Imagology'.