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## 1

# The Diplomacies of Small States at the Start of the Twenty-first Century: How Vulnerable? How Resilient?

*Andrew F. Cooper and Timothy M. Shaw*

Small states are mostly acted upon by much more powerful states and institutions ... Vulnerabilities rather than opportunities ... come through as the most striking manifestations of the consequences of smallness in global politics.

(Payne 2004: 634)

Resilience can be defined in many ways, but here it is defined as the ability to recover from or adjust to change. This definition is associated with the coping ability of an economically vulnerable country ... Resilience may be inherent or nurtured ... Nurtured resilience is that which is developed and managed, often as a result of some deliberate policy ... resilience building. On the other hand, a country can adopt policies which exacerbate its inherent vulnerability.

(Briguglio 2007: 105)

While there are now more small states than ever, the analytic and policy attention towards these states has not matched their proliferation. Hence the timeliness of this collection, which is designed as a catch-up exercise from both an academic and practical perspective and concentrates on the Caribbean. Reflective of a structurally imposed condition, small states continue to be disconnected from the most salient debates in International Relations (IR). Current theoretical shifts in IR to the regional-global architecture are almost universally perceived to be due

## 2 *The Diplomacies of Small States*

to the emergence of the so-called BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China) – or alternative acronyms such as the Next 11 (N11) – at the upper middle of the international hierarchy, and not to any relocation among small actors.

Yet this continuing bias towards re-ordering imposed by the big states – new or old – should not hide the impact that small states have in rethinking and reconfiguring practices of diplomacy. What small states lack in structural clout they can make up through creative agency. Indeed, in an increasingly multi-dimensional fashion, small states matter not only in the diplomatic domain, but also in the more general domain of global governance. Dominant images of weakness cannot be completely set aside, as witnessed by the number of failed or fragile states that fit the small states category (cases such as East Timor and Haiti are in the forefront), but this representation needs to be balanced by attention towards the innovative character of small states. Quite explicitly, it is this positive but under-played dimension that is the focus of this volume.

In geo-political terms, small states had some considerable leverage in the bipolar world because of their numbers. Leveraging the attributes of the Westphalian system in their favour, small states practiced much of their diplomatic activity within the United Nations, capitalising on the rule of one vote per sovereign state.

In the post-Cold War context, this form of collective activity via ‘Third World’ solidarity has eroded. Small states no longer attempt to work as part of a wider South-oriented trade union movement. Consistent with the trend towards fragmentation and a differentiated form of hierarchy, these states tend to compete with each other for niches in the global political/economic arena rather than cooperate. Globalisation has served to exacerbate differences and divergences. Inter-small state competition constitutes both upward mobility – such as Singapore, Iceland, Malta, Barbados, and Mauritius – and an alternative race to the bottom, most visible in the South Pacific as witnessed by Vanuatu, Nauru and the Solomon Islands.

In functional terms, the more successful small states adopt international practices that run on parallel lines to the classic middle power diplomacy associated with much bigger states, whether of a traditional (Canada/Australia/Nordics) or non-traditional (South Africa/Chile) variety (Cooper, 1997). Managing to break away on selective issue-areas, small states have revealed that they can adopt diplomatic practices that involve global networks advancing global governance on issues such as the land-mine ban or fisheries certification. It is worth noting here that before the agenda was taken up by a host of upper-level countries it

was Trinidad and Tobago that took the initial lead on the International Criminal Court.

The proliferation of small states has also led to further forms of both inter- and non-state regionalisation. Smallness compels external cooperation for reasons of communication, development, environment, security, and technology. Such regional relations may constitute fuzzy boundaries as cultural, ecological, economic and strategic sectors do not necessarily nest neatly. The variety of post-imperial 'commonwealths' in the Caribbean (Clegg and Pantojas, 2008) is indicative of such complexities and is reflected in the diversity of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the EU Association ([www.octassociation.org](http://www.octassociation.org)), half of which are in the Caribbean.

Symptomatic of the transformation in the analysis and practice of small states is the early work of David Vital (1967; 1971), undertaken at the height of the Cold War. His two monographs, both preoccupied with the state of Israel in the Middle East, were written in a period of intense bipolarity; they are contextually 'pre-globalisation' and are acutely realist with a concentration on conflict. Beyond Vital, the bulk of the literature in this period is premised on the assumption that small states could not simply assume their sovereignty/independence would be respected by greater powers. Greater powers often saw strategic relevance in interfering with the domestic policies of smaller states, and violated their territorial integrity when deemed necessary. This impression of vulnerability increased the closer a small state was in proximity to the greater power's sphere of influence (Mathisen, 1971: 49–66, 238–65; Schou and Brundtland, 1971: 31–7).

The context of the international economic system was just as problematic, as witnessed by the volatility of the oil shocks through the 1970s. Small states lacked diversification in their economy and were therefore more reliant on trade than larger states. Limited domestic market size and high transportation costs (a result of both remoteness from major markets and small cargo loads) further reduced their competitiveness and return. When the proximity to a larger state was close, economic dependence on a larger power merged into geo-political vulnerability (as found in the case of Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana vis-à-vis South Africa) (Schou and Brundtland, 1971: 43–6; Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States, 2000: 6–7; Kisanga and Danchie, 2007: 55–97).

The post-Cold War era has in some ways brought with it greater vulnerabilities. For example, the early work of Lino Briguglio (1995) is concerned with post-independence island states, and is characterised not

only by economic but ecological vulnerability, a notion that has become more acute with an appreciation of the dangers of climate change.

Yet, small states in the twenty-first century cannot be seen simply as structurally weak Lilliputians in a system controlled by the big and strong. Briguglio (2007: 105) for one has gone beyond vulnerability to advocate 'resilience', even 'nurturing', given the myriad opportunities and challenges of 'globalisation'. Briguglio affords considerable onus to the meshing of the operationalisation of resilience and the means by which diplomacies are used.

Keohane opened up some of these possibilities in his well-known 1971 article, 'The Big Influence of Small Allies'. But his privileging of diplomatic agency was still tempered by a number of analytical obstacles. Realist thinking still dictated that small states chose between a narrow set of choices, namely a bandwagon or a balancing approach. Moreover, the states that were given most of the attention in these studies were far more akin to middle powers than smaller states. Much of the older literature (pre-1990s) tends to focus on states that are under the population range of 10–15 million, categorising the world into Large States or 'Great Powers', Medium States or 'Medium Powers' and Small States or 'Small Powers'. When making specific reference to states below the 1–1.5 million people range, they were often referred to as Microstates (Vital, 1967; Dommen and Hein, 1985; Plischke, 1977).

The privileging of resilience and resourcefulness takes us in a very different, nuanced, and innovative direction. If many of the problems for small states need to be relocated, the need and the ability to find solutions require the same treatment. In this narrative the image of small states is reconfigured in quite striking ways. Vulnerability is a naturally imposed and predictable condition in which the room for manoeuvre is severely constrained. Resilience by way of contrast is adaptive, allowing structural factors to be resisted and reshaped.

As the construct of small states as simply system-takers is modified, the range of activity options is expanded. Instead of collective enterprises, so central to the Lilliputian-Gulliver image, a considerable emphasis is placed on individual actor-ness. Clearly there are commonalities of responses among small states as evidenced throughout this book. What jumps out from the collection's contributions, however, is the range of options open to small states. Consistent with the flexibility built into the theme of resilience, a few of the countries showcased within this volume have built up economic niches using well-planned strategies and a focus on education and technological infrastructure development. Other states have adapted in a far more ad hoc – or even opportunistic – manner.

All retain some aspects of conformity with respect to their diplomatic profile, traditionally associated with a club-orientation and state-centric diplomatic activity. In formal terms of sovereignty and jurisdictional issues, principles of non-interference continue to be the fundamental mantra of small state diplomatic culture. In practice, however, these principles are often contravened as most small states see themselves – and are often seen by others – as the mavericks and the rule-benders of the international system.

The increase in the supply of small states willing and able to be creative has coincided with the demand for such activity. In many cases, necessity has been the mother of innovation as both the severity of the crisis and its transnational nature have revealed themselves; this is especially so regarding environment-related issues. In other cases, adaptive capacity has gone hand in hand with an appreciation of both the risks and opportunities located in the dynamics of globalisation and liberalisation. The opening up of the global financial sector provided space for innovative small states to promote greater integration of their banking and investment services with larger economies, while exposing them to greater economic risks in times of crisis (see Sanders, 2008). Market conditions for commodities continue to have a bust/boom personality, with the added ingredient that import-driven inflation can offset rises in exports of raw materials. Manufacturing, for its part, is increasingly the preserve of selected members of the BRICs (most notably China) and the N11 and not the traditional twentieth century industrial states. Small states are therefore pushed to seek and maintain novel, and often precarious, areas of activity that are not conditioned by size or geographic location. This tendency is accentuated by the emergence on the front lines of international politics of the G20 – a forum that explicitly privileges big states/economies from the global South as well as the established G8.

### **From vulnerability to resilience and beyond? Challenges/realities of practising small state diplomacy**

The articulation of a ‘vulnerability’ agenda coincided with the dominance of the dependency lament around the new international economic order (NIEO) debate. During the debate, ‘new’ states in the South – the Third World – could together impact the two Norths: East and West. Vulnerability as both actuality and ideology was refined and advanced for the small island developmental states (SIDS), a process aided in particular

by the still-new Commonwealth Secretariat with academic and methodological support from Lino Briguglio and his colleagues at the University of Malta.

The need for different lenses to examine small states has animated many of the contributors to this book. Godfrey Baldacchino highlights the deficiencies in understandings of small states in his pivotal contribution. It is no longer good enough to simply present small isolated states as weak. The notion of a collective ganging up of an assembly of Lilliputians – the so-called ‘tyranny of the weak’ – also remains inadequate.

Naren Prasad builds on his own body of work (2004: 45), suggesting that ‘most small islands distort international trade rules ... most of these successful strategies are based on rent-seeking activities which are generally considered unconventional.’ Prasad goes on to identify some established and more recent strategies to exploit globalisation for small states: ‘[Export Processing Zone] EPZs, offshore financial centres, remittances, aid and rent-seeking and deriving other unconventional sources of income – go against mainstream thinking in economics.’ Prasad proceeds to identify other current ‘unconventional strategies’: selling sovereignty, military bases, fishing rights, shipping registries, passport sales, philately, trust funds, telephone country codes, domain names, satellite businesses, and peacekeeping operations. He could also have added in the formal economy, Internet gaming (Cooper, 2008b), and cruise-ship visits, especially hubs (Chin, 2008), let alone myriad opportunities in the informal sector such as drug and gun smuggling and money-laundering (Griffith, 2000).

Winston Griffith has recently argued that the Internet’s ability to transcend distance means that resourcelessness should not be an obstacle to development, especially in education, services and skills. Rather, Griffith (2007: 941) argues that:

Neither a country’s economic smallness nor a lack of a diverse natural resource base is a constraint on its economic structure of production ... if a country has an abundance of knowledge skills at competitive prices, it can attract FDI which can help to diversify its economic structure of production.

Thus resilience as motif has replaced vulnerability in a few small states, especially ‘developmental island states’ such as Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago. These states take their cues from other small developmental

states such as Singapore, a newly industrialised country (NIC), as well as Iceland and Ireland in the North Atlantic. The lessons from Singapore, as traced by Alan Chong in extensive detail, are particularly intriguing as the state-based diplomacy of the late twentieth century is being eroded, if not completely transformed. The developmental state orientation, with its high promise and delivery of economic growth, is promoted not only by order and stability but through an increasingly sophisticated expression of soft power. Essential ingredients in this approach are both the projection of a normative doctrine (the championship of Asian Values) and instrumental deliverables (a generous foreign aid programme).

Yet the degree to which lessons can be transported between regions and across the equator remains in dispute. Singapore basks in its post-colonial success, initiated by a small nationalist elite pushing meritocracy. As detailed by Carlyle Corbin, some of the more successful economies are dependencies, such as Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands (BVI) and the Caymans in the wider Caribbean ([www.ukota.org](http://www.ukota.org); Shaw, 2008: 77–80). Yet, amid these success stories, Corbin's analysis depicts the deeper contradictions located within these entities. Yes, they may be leaders in specific economic areas but they lag in the maturity of their political status. Whatever their developmental attributes these non-independent territories remain bastions of inequality on the periphery of both diplomacy and governance.

The case of Singapore is also quite different from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries featured in Jacqueline Braveboy-Wagner's chapter. Akin to Singapore, these small-sized developing states have gone through an extensive decolonising process, but to a much greater and protracted manner than the latter. Moreover, they embraced collective efforts through the G77 caucus in the UN. Nevertheless, as Braveboy-Wagner's chapter fully articulates, the notion of vulnerability was reconstituted over a span of decades due in part to the politics of structural adjustment, the frustrations relating to changing traditional preferential trading arrangements, and the new security concerns post 9/11. Braveboy-Wagner demonstrates the growing resilience in selective issue-areas such as sustainable development and norm entrepreneurship. Although each has diplomatic particularities because of their geographic positions, concerns about global brands and communication strategies have become accentuated. In such an atmosphere of shape shifting it is anticipated that the foreign ministries of small states – embedded to the protocols of the past – will come under greater pressure to maintain their status.

## **Facing diverse and uncertain challenges: Case studies of small states' diplomacy vis-à-vis regional organisations**

Notwithstanding these signs of adjustment on the ground, small states literature remains overly state-centric. It has remained so despite the intimate relations between economy/society and state-given smallness, histories of migrations, and proximity to the environment. If divergences in economic performance are to be interrogated, then, given globalisation, the roles of national and global civil societies, private companies and other diverse and competitive actors must be given the attention they deserve; each factor amplifying the opportunities and risks that influence the behaviour of small states.

Such a blend of challenges can be traced through a focus on regionalisation. Baldur Thorhallson's discussion on Iceland is indicative of some of these trends. At a state-centric level, the deepening engagement of Iceland with the European Union reflected core national interests. At a society level, though, this tendency reflected the rise of a prominent financial sector encouraged through greater liberalisation and privatisation. On both sides, a greater sense of confidence and inclination to take risks animated this type of re-orientation. The embedded sense of defensiveness turned into self-assertiveness with attendant overconfidence and over-stretch. There is no more pertinent recent example of how vulnerability and resilience have become closely intertwined. Iceland's culture of unconventional behaviour in its financial sector brought short-term advantages and exposed it to massive longer-term pitfalls.

Anthony T. Bryan brings attention to the controversial topic of PetroCaribe and CARICOM. Dealing with the pressures emanating from the issue of energy security is a key test of resilience for the CARICOM countries. Still, as the small Caribbean energy-importing countries respond to these pressures through forging closer ties to Venezuela, resilience can turn into opportunism. Bryan convincingly depicts the dilemma, arguing: 'Dependence on oil and gas imports is higher in this region than anywhere else in the hemisphere, meaning that the potential for resource diplomacy is greater as well.'

As in other contributions, it is the ability of Bryan to nuance the PetroCaribe case that makes it so compelling. Details include a comparative discussion between the responses of the Caribbean states. Trinidad and Tobago, with its abundant energy resources, has remained resistant, but a range of other CARICOM countries have bought into the programme with sharply different implications. In Bryan's words the

overall regional impact is one that 'emphasised the vulnerability of the regional institution'.

Each perspective highlights both the diversity and challenges before small states. One issue relates to the relevance of cross-regional/international associations. The Commonwealth has been an important forum for SIDS issues at the inter-state level, and now cooperates with the World Bank in an ongoing Joint Task Force (Shaw, 2008). As David McIntyre (2001: 117) notes:

The Commonwealth has, indeed, become the premier small states forum. It has a higher proportion of small-state members than any other worldwide political organization ... From the mid-1980s, then, a small states dimension became a significant feature of Commonwealth activities.

Such sentiments are echoed by Paul Sutton (2001: 75): 'The Commonwealth has emerged as the intergovernmental champion for small states.' If the inter- as well as non-state Commonwealths can extend their reach to UK and other overseas territories (i.e. Australia and New Zealand), then their global coalition would have more clout as it would include Bermuda, BVI, and the Caymans.

The World Bank organises and hosts an annual Small States Forum in association with the Commonwealth as almost 30 of the 45 small states at the Forum are Commonwealth members. The orientation of the Forum suggests that given developments in global telecommunications, islands may no longer be at a disadvantage, at least in service sectors that rely on the Internet ([www.worldbank.org/smallstates](http://www.worldbank.org/smallstates)).

The other issue, of course, is the emerging sense of competition between bigger actors. According to Debbie Mohammed, relations between the EU and CARICOM can be just as controversial as those with Venezuela. Notwithstanding the passing of the hegemony of *dependencia*, the EU's aggressive selling of EPAs has dismayed the small states in the South as it has encouraged fissures between the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions. These negotiations contain high degrees of asymmetry, but despite these flaws the big picture continues to change. Eurasia or Eurafrica may become more salient than relations among the Southern regions (Gaens, 2008; Robles, 2004), while EU–small state connections become ever more apparent and imperative.

Some projections of state-based activity by small states still contain evidence of the club model's hold regarding the diplomacy of small states. In terms of causation, this orthodoxy goes back to the concept of legal

equality as a fundamental characteristic of statehood and membership in the community of nations. Many international governmental organisations, as indicated above, operate on a 'one state, one vote' system that not only favours small states, but gives them a huge incentive to place weight on the symbolic attributes of sovereignty and club-membership. Status as an equal member in the society of states animates a good deal of the statecraft from this category of countries.

As Daniel P. Erickson illustrates this mode of diplomatic behaviour is accented by the convening function of major events for small states. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) allows small states, and their leaders, a particular high profile as hosts. For the last three years CHOGMs have been held in smaller countries – Malta, Uganda, or Trinidad and Tobago. Far more distinctive is the case of Trinidad and Tobago hosting the 2009 Summit of the Americas, which, unlike APEC, is without a set rotation worked out between its members. Nor is there a precedent of small states as hosts, as with the CHOGMs. As such the stakes for a state such as Trinidad and Tobago are much higher. As Erickson puts it, the 2009 Summit 'elevates the region from a historically marginal position to centre stage'.

Stretching out from these diplomatic 'club' activities are varied forms of networking. Certainly the 2009 Trinidad and Tobago Summit of the Americas promises once more to bring out the sensitivities that have built up over the years between the US and Venezuela and their respective allies. This is not the only potential confrontation, however. What should not be minimised is the overlapping struggle between a corporate-oriented agenda and societal groupings going back to the 2001 Quebec City Summit. Time will tell whether Trinidad and Tobago can get the Summit process back on track, with a rekindling of the original 'spirit of collegiality', or whether the 2009 Summit will be better remembered as an event featuring street demonstrations and barricades between the state leaders and societal forces!

### **Between conformity and the search for loopholes: Case studies of small states' diplomacy vis-à-vis international organisations**

Tensions over club diplomacy go hand in hand with a tilt away from standard recipes for economic growth. The model followed by small states has deviated from one laid down in orthodox textbooks: from selling postage stamps, radio frequencies and flags of convenience to a range of formal/legal and informal/illegal services, such as cruise ships (Chin, 2008), ecotourism, Internet gambling (Cooper, 2008b), offshore

banking and retirement communities to drug and gun-smuggling, respectively.

Some of these activities have become more pronounced because of constraints in other areas. Where international institutions allow small states to play an effective role, rules are abided by. This dynamic comes out in Donna Lee's chapter on small African state cotton diplomacy with respect to the WTO. In its coalitional form, and with its focus on a single commodity, this activity exhibits a backward looking style. Where it is completely different is in the new formal relationship developed between the Cotton 4 with Oxfam, shifting the nature of the 'club' towards a more networked format. Such innovation served as an indication that these small countries were not simply conventional patterns of the past.

Still, it is the obstacles as much as the opportunities that influence small state behaviour. The erosion of preferential trading systems through further globalisation has increased the difficulties small states face in maintaining a competitive international position economically, especially those already facing high transportation costs (Hurt, 2003: 161–76; Prasad, 2004: 45–8).

Shifting to an internal lens, small state 'governance' is different because of the intimacy of the ruled with their rulers. The elites across the club and network divides all know each other (Heine, 2006; Cooper and Legler, 2006). Thus integrity is even more crucial in such jurisdictions. Distinctions between state and non-state, or political and economic, tend to be blurred, and the external tends to be relatively more salient than in larger states, particularly the BRICs. To compensate somewhat for their often microscopic foreign ministries, public diplomacies that engage a wider set of non-state resources and networks would seem to be inevitable. Yet, up to recently, small states have not been known for the creative use of such partnerships.

One sign that this hold of orthodoxy is eroding comes out in Andrew F. Cooper's chapter on Antigua and its WTO Internet gambling dispute with the US. Having carved out a distinctive and lucrative niche in the global economy, Antigua (as a rentier state) and its allies within the gambling industry were determined to hold on to that advantage in spite of being branded as the proverbial 'Pirate of the Caribbean' by the US. Fighting this stigmatisation, without active help from its Caribbean neighbours, Antigua used new forms of private authority to defend its interests. It also used sustained and subtle forms of public diplomacy to re-configure its image as an innovator both with respect to regulation and as a technological service provider. As in the cotton case asymmetry could be reversed by the use of good arguments and persistence.

The gap between orthodox images and the unconventional behaviour of small states is stretched even further once other forms of specificity are brought into the mix. The identification and impact of assorted diasporas are central to small, especially island, state development: from social and financial relations to cultural and welfare, symbolised by call cards in distant metropolises. Given such historic migrations, the flow of remittances has become a major issue, not only through ubiquitous franchises like Western Union and MoneyGram – contemporary legacies of the ‘barrel’ culture – but informal channels.

Don Marshall reminds us how the stigmatisation of the unconventional behaviour of small Caribbean states is not at all a new phenomenon, with constant attempts to regulate spaces of money flows. The authoritative construction has been that small states are sites of ‘considerable intrigue’ with ties to the underworld. Consistent with the main theme of this collection, Marshall re-evaluates these contours of financialisation as a misunderstood “‘tool kit’ of innovative instruments’, built not on a basis of a conscious design but ‘opportunist pragmatism’. Gambling was condoned both as a style of doing business in overall terms as well as a specific industry.

Even with this creative mentality there continues to be gaps in terms of the exploitation of niche economic opportunities. A fascinating case study examining obstacles of this sort comes out in Keith Nurse’s chapter regarding the cultural industries. Caribbean small states have established high-profile brands in music and other forms of cultural expression. Nonetheless, cultural creativity has not been backed up by ‘an entrepreneurial, managerial and marketing capability from within the Caribbean’s business sector’ or with respect to state support.

As Nurse acknowledges there are some recent signs of advance, via festival tourism for example. But most of the big ticket events remain connected with the diaspora. Gaps remain, however, as witnessed by the lack of massive global distribution networks. Symbolic appreciation of cultural industries as critical ingredients for identity formation and nation building is evident. What is lacking is an appreciation of cultural industries as a critical strategic resource.

In order to promote an adaptive culture, Briguglio (2007) has advocated that states nurture promising sectors in the twenty-first century. While some governments have encouraged growth in these areas, others have yet to accept Briguglio’s advice. Such a development strategy implies that regimes must reach beyond the state, embracing a range of heterogeneous non-state actors. Can small states partner with non-state actors to minimise vulnerability and maximise resilience in the new

century via public diplomacy (see [www.publicdiplomacy.org](http://www.publicdiplomacy.org))? Or even celebrity diplomacy (see Cooper, 2008a)? To give just one illustration of the nexus between entertainment and public/celebrity diplomacy, Rihanna (a major star in the music world, and a member of the Caribbean Diaspora) has been named an honorary youth and cultural ambassador of Barbados. Although more symbolic than instrumental, this innovative use of celebrity diplomacy reveals that small countries can be quick to make sure success stories at the individual level are linked to national rebranding.

If some organisations, notably the Commonwealth, are viewed often as champions of small states, other organisations are taken to be their adversaries. The OECD, in William Vlcek's contribution, falls very much in the latter camp, at least in terms of its attacks on tax havens or off-shore financial centres. As Vlcek argues: 'The OECD has constructed a perception that the low-tax regimes offered by OFCs ... pose a threat to the tax base of OECD members.'

Although vulnerable to this sort of confrontation, Vlcek sees the Caribbean small state response as very much in accordance with the interpretation of resilience. As in the Internet gambling case, a good deal of this counter-attack was contingent on robust forms of public diplomacy with a focus on other issues such as capital flight from developing states. Unlike the Internet gambling case, however, no single small state was isolated in this fight. Vlcek concludes by stating that 'the small states demonstrated their resilience through claims for equal representation with the OECD states'.

## **Juxtaposition of relevant approaches and debates**

Early small state/SIDS analyses emerged from political science and island studies in the initial post-independence era. Since then, as the number of small states and their issues have proliferated, so has the range of analytic assumptions and approaches as indicated in the third part of the Baldacchino (2007: 295–512) reader on development with chapters on security, political economy, governance, tourism, migration, gentrification and sustainability. The literatures increasingly span perspectives and debates through both uni- and multi-disciplinary analyses. Focusing on different periods, regions and issues means different rankings of factors and approaches, with ecology, illegal activity, new regionalisms, and new security arguably becoming more salient than before. As Baldacchino (2007: 1–30) suggests, island studies is more diverse and dynamic than ever.

Unlike the bipolar SIDS strategy of crying 'vulnerability', more public, contemporary diplomacy has involved using global rules against some of their authors: a rather robust form of resilience. Thus, to advance their OFCs out of the +/-40 world-wide, as William Vleck highlights, some of the SIDS have been able to turn the tables against the EU/G8/IMF/OECD advocates of the Harmful Tax Competition Initiative through the Financial Stability Forum, not wanting to get black-listed by the Financial Action Task Force (Marshall, 2007; Vleck, 2007 and 2008). Similarly, Antigua has been able to claim compensation from the US for trying to halt cross-border Internet gambling (Cooper, 2008b). In turn, small states might espouse the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) as it becomes established in the energy and mining sectors, as a further opportunity of verifying their financial integrity.

As may be expected, this exciting intellectual and practical agenda is overshadowed by a concentration on the new 'big's' – BRICs, N11, etc. – and their thoughts and actions. It also is often subordinated to a Continental bias, including the renewed interest on Africa. Both of these trends, however, have enormous spill-over effects on small states. Whereas it has been the US/EU that traditionally dominated the theme of asymmetry in the small states literature, increasingly China, India, and Brazil have to be brought into the analysis. This necessitates deeper comparisons with Africa, in terms of BRICs diplomacy and hard and soft power. In either case we endorse Lemke's (2003: 116) plea for Africa, while fitting the sentiment within small state theory and policy: 'My goal is to offer specific steps to improve IR research designs so that Africa and the developing world more generally no longer go missing.'

More positively, sources on small states and islands have evolved from national and international agencies to local and global NGOs and think tanks as indicated in the list of websites below. Thus in 2007 alone, Chatham House ([www.chathamhouse.org.uk](http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk)) and CIGI ([www.cigionline.org](http://www.cigionline.org)) generated innovative and distinctive analyses on the Caribbean given contemporary globalisation. Payne and Sutton (2007) were more comprehensive, critical and regional in their CIGI working paper than the Baker (2007) collection from London, which concentrated on more familiar formal economic and ecological factors rather than the range of informal relations including remittances. The question that remains is: what notions, sources, policies, and actors are going to advance the analysis and practice of the small states in the future?

## **Futures for small states: development for all/some/none?**

Given the diversity of political economies/cultures among small states, no one projection about future trajectories is likely to emerge. Nevertheless, the divergence between vulnerability and resilience is stark (Briguglio, 2007; Briguglio et al., 2008) especially in terms of human development/security. Our edited volume will illuminate some of the choices and prospects between more 'fragile' communities and more ebullient 'developmental states'. Here we point to the unavoidable impacts of formal and informal globalisations along with responsive patterns of 'governance' at all levels. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) offers greater possibilities in these processes, allowing diverse participation in international relations at little cost and need for human resources.

The context to any such projections for the small state is cast between vulnerability and resilience given continuing, albeit uneven, globalisation, as indicated in the current debate and unease about the EU's imposition of regional EPAs. Such unease is compounded as dependencies become increasingly competitive with nominally independent regimes. While at the same time, economic vulnerabilities within leading industrialised states have become more pronounced. Constrained availability of credit and dwindling confidence in Western financial markets may play out over the long term to re-orientated multilateral trade and financial regulatory regimes, a process in which small states must insert resilient diplomacy.

At the end of the first decade of the new millennium, it is increasingly recognised that human and ecological resources are becoming more salient than traditional primary products in a relentless era of globalisation. This recognition is apparent in the handful of developmental island states, from Malta to Singapore and Mauritius to Bermuda and Caymans, thus far. Such a perspective reinforces the role of diasporas in terms of technology transfer and policy development as well as remittances/returns/retirements (Dawson, 2007). In the new century small states, as well as BRICs (Cooper et al., 2006; Shaw et al., 2007), the members of the G20, and N11s, contribute a lot to overlapping interdisciplinary fields such as development, environmental, and security studies in addition to established disciplines like political science and international relations. At odds with traditional perspectives, there is no single right way for small states to proceed; whether in Iceland or the Caribbean. They are free to push against orthodoxies in very different

ways (both in terms of ideas and outcomes) from what was expected and possible in the past.

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