

Security in a Small Nation Scotland, Democracy, Politics

EDITED BY ANDREW W. NEAL

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Scotland, Democracy, Politics

Edited by Andrew W. Neal

Centre for Security Research

University of Edinburgh



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1. Perspectives on Small State Security in the Scottish Independence Debate¹

Juliet Kaarbo and Daniel Kenealy

During the Scottish independence referendum campaign, considerable attention was paid, by Scotland's political leaders, its voters, and actors in the international community, to the question of what an independent Scotland's foreign policy might look like. An independent Scotland would quickly find itself in a world that puts many constraints on states' international aspirations. But as a sovereign state, Scotland would have the opportunity to shape the role it would play on the world stage. This chapter examines the debate over an independent Scottish foreign policy during the independence campaign. We describe the type of foreign policy that was projected by the Scottish National Party (SNP) Government in Scotland and the reaction to that projection by actors opposed to independence. We argue that the underlying difference in the two sides was the perspective on small state foreign and security policy and that this difference resonates with long-standing academic debates about small states, and their insecurities, in world politics.

1 This paper is a fuller version of J. Kaarbo and D. Kenealy, 'What Kind of International Role and Influence Would an Independent Scotland Have?', in *Scotland's Decision: 16 Questions to Think About for the Referendum on 18 September*, ed. by C. Jeffery and R. Perman (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2014), pp. 42–45. In the empirical section on Scotland, this paper draws extensively from R. Beasley, J. Kaarbo, and H. Solomon-Strauss, 'To Be or Not to Be a State? Role Contestation in the Debate over Scottish Independence', in *Domestic Role Contestation, Foreign Policy, and International Relations*, ed. by Cristian Cantir and Juliet Kaarbo (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 140–56; R. Beasley and J. Kaarbo, 'Casting for a Sovereign Role: Socialising an Aspirant State in the Scottish Independence Referendum', *European Journal of International Relations* (2017), 1–25.

On 18 September 2014, voters in Scotland had the opportunity to separate from the United Kingdom and become an independent nation state. During the referendum campaign, considerable attention was paid to the question of what an independent Scotland's foreign policy might look like by Scotland's political leaders, its voters, and actors in the international community. As the world's newest state, what would it want to do, what could it do, and what kind of influence could Scotland have in international relations? In the end these questions were academic, as voters delivered a No vote. Yet the debate was instructive, shedding considerable light on how people think about the security needs and foreign policy potential of small states. With the possibility of a second referendum in the not too distant future, which was made more likely after the June 2016 referendum vote for the UK to leave the EU, these issues have not been left in the past.

Whilst many policy areas (such as health, education, and criminal justice) are already under Scottish authority, independence and sovereignty would bring new responsibilities and opportunities. The leaders of an independent Scotland, and Scottish citizens, would have to design and support a foreign policy for their country, and decide how best to gain influence, secure their interests, and promote Scottish values in the international system. An independent Scotland would quickly find itself in a world that puts many constraints on states' international aspirations, but as a sovereign country, Scotland would have the opportunity to shape the role it would play on the world stage.

This chapter examines the debate over an independent Scottish foreign policy during the independence campaign (dating from the announcement of the Edinburgh Agreement in 2011 to the September 2014 referendum). We describe the type of foreign policy that was projected by the Scottish National Party government in Scotland (the main advocate of independence)² and the reaction to that projection by actors opposed to independence within Scotland, and by external actors, including the UK government and international figures. We argue that the underlying difference between the two sides lay in their perspectives

2 Although we recognise that there were other actors and non-SNP voters involved in the campaign for independence, we focus here on the SNP leadership as the main advocate for independence. We also note that not all of the SNP membership agreed with all of the foreign policies advocated by SNP leaders.

on small state foreign and security policy, and that this difference resonates with long-standing academic debates about small states, and their insecurities, in world politics. By connecting the empirical debate in the Scottish case to the theoretical debate, we aim to clarify avenues for future research on small states. We also aim to highlight the implications of scholarly research for foreign policy questions faced by small states and sub-state actors aspiring to sovereign statehood in Scotland and elsewhere.

The Yes vision of independent Scottish foreign and security policy

According to evidence of public opinion, issues of foreign policy and security were not the primary concerns of voters during the referendum.³ Yet the SNP articulated foreign policy based arguments in their effort to persuade voters to support the campaign for independence. The White Paper *Scotland's Future* set out the Scottish Government's vision of an independent Scotland's international role and influence.⁴ That vision combines continuity with change. Continuity would be provided by on-going membership in a variety of international organisations, perhaps most prominent amongst them NATO and the EU. But there would also be the possibility of change as an independent Scotland would be free to pursue a set of values and interests somewhat distinct from those of the UK. A neat way of summarising states' visions of their international role is to think of four foreign policy pillars: protection, profits, principles, and pride.⁵

The SNP, articulated in the Scottish Government publication *Scotland's Future*, proposed Scottish membership of NATO and a

3 Andrew Black, 'Scottish Independence: What's Going on in Scotland?', *BBC News*, 9 September 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-26550736>; Sean Anderson, 'Scottish Independence: Which Issues Have Led the Twitter Debate in 2014?', *Guardian*, 8 July 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/jul/08/scottish-independence-referendum-twitter-analysis-topics-debate-2014>

4 Scottish Government, *Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2013), <http://www.gov.scot/resource/0043/00439021.pdf>

5 We used this formulation previously in Kaarbo and Kenealy (2014).

Scottish defence force as cornerstones of ‘protection’.⁶ In October 2012, SNP party members at the annual conference voted 426 to 332 to change its 30-year-old opposition to NATO.⁷ The approved resolution allowed for an independent Scotland’s membership in the alliance, provided that Scotland would not host nuclear weapons. Scotland would earn ‘profit’ (i.e. secure its prosperity and grow its economy) and thrive in the global political economy, according to the Yes campaign, by adopting liberal, pro-trade foreign economic policies. Central to the ‘profit’ pillar was continued membership of the EU. The message across these pillars — ‘protection’ and ‘profit’ — was, to a large extent, one of continuity. An independent Scotland would continue to be embedded in a range of alliances and institutions geared to provide security and prosperity.

Independence, however, would also allow for change. In the area of ‘principles’, ethics, and values, the Yes campaign proposed a highly aspirational policy, contrasting with its characterisation of past and present UK foreign policy. The Scottish Government, in *Scotland’s Future*, stressed the ‘different international priorities’ that an independent Scotland would pursue, seen ‘most clearly in matters of war and peace and in our relationship with the EU’.⁸ The Yes side asserted that if Scotland had been independent, it would not have participated in the unpopular invasion of Iraq in 2003, as the UK did.⁹ First Minister Alex Salmond presented an independent Scotland as one that would be less militarised than the UK, and argued that this referendum represented a chance for the Scottish people to change Scotland’s international relations. In a union with the UK, he remarked, ‘We cannot stop illegal wars. [...] We cannot stop countless billions being wasted on weapons

6 NATO represents a sticking point given that the Scottish Greens, who support independence and thus form part of the broader Yes campaign, oppose NATO membership for an independent Scotland. The Radical Independence Campaign, founded during the referendum campaign, were also opposed.

7 [N.a.], ‘SNP Members Vote to Ditch the Party’s Anti-Nato Policy’, *BBC News*, 19 October 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-19993694>

8 *Scotland’s Future*, p. 209.

9 Bagehot, ‘Interviewing Alex Salmond, the Man Who Wants to Break up Britain’, *Economist*, 12 January 2012, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/bagehot/2012/01/independence-debate-scotland-0>

of mass destruction'.¹⁰ The SNP also proposed that an independent Scotland would have a 'triple lock' on military deployments, requiring all military action to be in accordance with the UN Charter, agreed by the Scottish Government, and approved by the Scottish parliament.¹¹

The pledge to rid an independent Scotland of nuclear weapons was partly grounded in principle. The SNP's arguments against nuclear weapons were threefold: that they are a useless deterrent against the kind of security threats faced by a modern Scotland; that they are a considerable waste of money that could be better used to support policies that advance Scotland's social values; and that they are immoral weapons of war. According to *Scotland's Future*, 'Trident is an affront to basic decency with its indiscriminate and inhumane destructive power'.¹² Salmond further clarified this anti-nuclear, moral role for an independent Scotland, committing in the much-watched second televised debate to 'a policy that removes nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction because they are a phenomenal waste of money as well as being totally morally wrong'.¹³

Scotland's Future described an independent Scotland as a 'champion for international justice and peace', committed to the values of 'international development, human rights, climate change, and climate justice'.¹⁴ Scottish defence forces would be used, in addition to national defence, to support international peacekeeping and humanitarian missions undertaken under the auspices of the UN and in support of international law. Scotland would also contribute in a targeted way to NATO and EU missions. The vision was thus one of Scotland as a good global citizen, a civilian power, with a 'do no harm' principle — especially towards developing countries — firmly embedded in its international role.¹⁵

Finally, 'pride' has a place in most states' foreign policies. Pride involves the projection of a positive self-image by a country and *Scotland's Future* painted a picture of 'an outward facing nation, exporting goods, people, and ideas around the world [...] [with a]

10 C-SPAN, 'Scottish Independence Debate', Washington DC, 25 August 2014, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?321045-1/scottish-independence-debate>, time point: 3:18.

11 *Scotland's Future*, p. 251.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 232.

13 C-SPAN, 25 August 2014, time point: 1:07:43.

14 *Scotland's Future*, p. 210 and 225.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

proud military tradition'.¹⁶ For a party with 'national' in its name, there was little nationalism or negative xenophobic expressions of pride in the SNP's descriptions of its projected independent foreign policy.

How would an independent Scotland achieve this foreign policy? Nicola Sturgeon, and others campaigning for a Yes vote, argued that small states could 'punch above their weight' and have influence disproportionate to their size.¹⁷ Yes campaigners pointed out that most states in the world are small and that some small states can play an active role in international organisations, often hosting headquarters and offices and placing their citizens in key leadership positions. By adopting 'small but smart' strategies, such as niche diplomacy and economic comparative advantages, small states can be effective and influential. Such notions were reflected in *Scotland's Future*, where small states were presented as lacking large, threatening capabilities and therefore as more credible interlocutors and facilitators.¹⁸ The SNP often invoked wealthy, successful Nordic examples of influential small states and noted that independence 'does not seem to have done Australia any harm'.¹⁹ The SNP leader made similar comparisons to US and Irish independence from Britain.²⁰

The No vision of a weak independent Scotland

The No side in the referendum debate — principally the cross-party Better Together campaign — argued that Scotland would be stronger as a part of the UK than it would be on its own. The argument is captured in the phrase, often used in official UK Government analysis, '[a] strong

16 *Ibid.*, p. 207.

17 N. Sturgeon evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee, *Foreign Policy Considerations for the UK and Scotland in the Event of Scotland Becoming an Independent Country, Sixth Report of Session 2012–2013* (London: HMSO, 2013), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmfaff/643/643.pdf>

18 *Scotland's Future*, p. 217.

19 Jonathan Pearlman, 'Australians Divided over Scottish Referendum', *Telegraph*, 16 September 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/11098800/Australians-divided-over-Scottish-referendum.html>

20 Alex Salmond, 'Why an Independent Scotland Deserves U.S. Support', *Washington Post*, 7 December 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-an-independent-scotland-deserves-us-support/2012/12/07/694ba79a-3a4a-11e2-8a97-363b0f9a0ab3_story.html

voice in the world'.²¹ Given that the UK is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, one of the largest members of the EU, and already an experienced participant in other influential international organisations, Scotland's interests, according to those campaigning against independence, are better advanced through these existing channels and institutions and as part of a larger state. Their messages stressed how much larger in terms of sheer numbers and expenditure the UK diplomatic service, economy, armed forces, and intelligence services are in comparison to their hypothetical independent Scottish counterparts.²²

The No campaign repeatedly pointed out the difficulties and uncertainties that an independent Scotland would face, and the obstacles that could thwart the Yes campaign's foreign policy aspirations. They warned that the EU might not grant the same opt-outs and special terms (for example on the euro, the Schengen area, and the budget rebate) to an independent Scotland as are possessed by the UK.²³ They stressed that the NATO alliance may not accept Scotland as a member if Scotland refuses to house the UK nuclear deterrent on its soil.²⁴ They questioned SNP assertions about its rights to UK diplomatic assets, such as embassies and consulates.²⁵ In short, according to the No side, uncertainty was pervasive and risks abounded. Not for nothing was the moniker 'Project Fear' developed for the No campaign. For example, Alistair Darling (the political leader of Better Together) made the argument in the public debates that independence was, fundamentally, a risky decision: 'The

21 HM Government, *Scotland Analysis – Cm. 8554: Devolution and the Implications of Scottish Independence* (London: HMSO, 2013), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/79407/Report_excluding_annexes_Independan..._2_.pdf

22 See, e.g., HM Government, *Scotland Analysis: Cm. 8714: Defence* (London: HMSO, 2013), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248654/Scotland_analysis_Defence_paper-FINAL.pdf; HM Government, *Scotland Analysis: Cm. 8741: Security* (London: HMSO, 2013), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253500/Scotland_analysis_security.pdf; HM Government, *Scotland Analysis: Cm. 8765: EU and International Issues* (London: HMSO, 2013), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/271794/2901475_HMG_Scotland_EUandInternational_acc2.pdf

23 HM Government (2013), *Scotland Analysis: Cm. 8765: EU and International Issues*, p. 7.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

basic difference between Mr. Salmond and me, his priority is to create a separate state, no matter what the risk and what the cost'.²⁶

Where the Yes side argued that Scotland deserved its own seat at the table, Better Together argued that independence would not offer Scotland a chance to have its own voice because it would be too small to make a difference. Independence would simply leave Scotland unrepresented.²⁷ During the televised debates, Darling compared an independent Scotland to Iceland, Ireland and Panama in terms of what it could expect in, and from, the international system.²⁸

The UK Government was a key player in the Scottish independence debate, including the discussions over what an independent Scottish foreign policy could do. As noted by Walker,

The UK government, for its part, instructed each affected department in Whitehall to carry out an assessment of the costs of every kind that would fall on Scotland should it leave the Union. The result was the published series of 'Scotland Analysis Papers' [including papers on EU and international issues, security, and defence]. In addition, various select committees of the UK parliament issued their own reports, [...] emphasising the costs to Scotland and denying or downplaying benefits that might accrue from independence.²⁹

For example, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office stated that an 'independent Scottish state would have to start afresh in terms of its formal alliances, and links with every other sovereign state'.³⁰

The EU was a particularly contentious issue. The Yes campaign, and the Scottish Government, was keen to argue that an independent Scotland would remain a member and play a full and positive role in the Union. In stark contrast, the UK Government published its own legal advice, stating that an independent Scotland would immediately be

26 C-SPAN, 25 August 2014, time point: 50:34.

27 Nicholas Watt, Libby Brooks, and Patrick Wintour, 'Scottish Independence Would Be Disastrous for All UK, Warns John Major', *Guardian*, 10 September 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/sep/10/scottish-independence-referendum-trident-defence-uk-john-major>

28 C-SPAN, 25 August 2014, time point: 8:48 and 50:34.

29 William Walker, 'International Reactions to the Scottish Referendum', *International Affairs*, 90, 4 (2014), 743–59 (p. 748). See, for example, Foreign Affairs Committee (2013).

30 HM Government (2013), *Scotland Analysis: Cm. 8765: EU and International Issues*, p. 5. Cited in Walker (2014), p. 749.

outside the EU (and the UN).³¹ David Lidington, the UK's Minister for Europe, stated that 'I've been sat around the EU table for the last three years for many discussions about EU enlargement. It is the complexity, the time-consuming nature of those negotiations that the people of Scotland ought to bear in mind. It isn't straightforward'.³² Once again the implicit message was one of risk and uncertainty.

EU officials and other member states also quickly cast doubt on the automatic nature of Scottish membership, thereby drawing into question the ability of Scotland to define a post-independence role as an actor within the EU for itself.³³ In December 2012 Jose Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, declared that any new state would have to apply for EU membership, despite the SNP's previous claim that an independent Scotland would be able to renegotiate its terms of membership from inside the EU.³⁴ Spain also used EU membership as a way to cast uncertainty on an independent Scotland's role. On the eve of the vote, the Spanish Foreign Minister reiterated Spain's opinion that EU membership would not be automatic and would require unanimous support from EU member states.³⁵ 'An independent Scotland would be forced to wait at least five years to join the EU and would then have to sign up to the euro, the Spanish government [...] warned'.³⁶

However, not all EU actors shared this perspective. Graham Avery, a former European Commission senior official and a specialist in the area

31 Severin Carrell, 'David Cameron Tries to Put the Brakes on Alex Salmond', *Guardian*, 11 February 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/feb/11/david-cameron-scotland-independence-legal-advice>

32 Foreign and Commonwealth Office and The Rt Hon William Hague, 'Prospects of EU Membership for a Newly Independent Scotland', Gov.uk, 16 January 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prospects-of-eu-membership-for-a-newly-independent-scotland>

33 Daniel Kenealy, 'How Do You Solve a Problem Like Scotland? A Proposal Regarding "Internal Enlargement"', *Journal of European Integration*, 36, 6 (2014), 585–600 (pp. 587–89).

34 [N.a.], 'Scottish Independence: EC's Barroso Says New States Need "Apply to Join EU"', *BBC News*, 10 December 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-20664907>

35 Martin Roberts, 'Spain Says Scottish Independence Would Be a "Catastrophe"', *Telegraph*, 17 September 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/spain/11101650/Spain-says-Scottish-independence-would-be-a-catastrophe.html>

36 Simon Johnson, 'Spanish Warn Independent Scotland Would Get Euro Not Pound', *Telegraph*, 16 September 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/11099167/Spanish-warn-independent-Scotland-would-get-euro-not-pound.html>

of enlargement, indicated that the UK Government's position — that Scotland could not easily negotiate EU membership — was 'perplexing' and 'absurd', indicating that Scottish voters should dismiss tactics suggesting Scotland would face a challenging process in acquiring EU membership.³⁷ Barroso and Herman Van Rompuy, the European Council president, asserted that the EU treaties would not apply to newly independent parts of existing member states.³⁸ Avery described this as 'not the whole truth'.³⁹ Other EU member states also weighed in, with Czech president Vaclav Klaus and Joelle Garriaud-Maylam, a senior French senator specialising in foreign policy, challenging Barroso's position, stating that such threats 'are not credible' and that an independent Scotland 'would stay in the European Union'.⁴⁰

Beyond the debate about Scotland's ability to join the EU, there were several efforts by the UK Government to portray an independent Scotland as a 'small state' that would suffer economically from its weakness. There were, for example, efforts to highlight Scotland's more limited capacity to exploit its North Sea oil resources than would be the case with support from 'the broad shoulders of one of the top 10 economies in the world [...]', clearly suggesting Scotland required the comparative strength of the UK to effectively manage its most important economic resource.⁴¹

The question of an independent Scotland's currency, which relates to its foreign economic policy and its ability to provide for its defence, was crucial in the independence debate. There was much debate about whether Scotland would be able to keep the Pound Sterling, as was argued by the SNP.⁴² George Osborne, the UK Chancellor of the

37 [N.a.], 'Scottish Independence: Scotland Could Join EU in 18 Months, Says Expert', *BBC News*, 30 January 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-25965703>

38 *Ibid.*

39 *Ibid.*

40 David Leask, "'Independence Would Not Bar Scotland from EU Membership'", *Herald*, 1 March 2014, http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/13148291_Independence_would_not_bar_Scotland_from_EU_membership

41 Stephen Castle and Stanley Reed, 'Scottish Oil and Gas an Issue in Vote on Independence', *New York Times*, 24 February 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/25/world/europe/scot-oil-and-gas-an-issue-in-vote-on-independence.html>

42 This was another bone of contention within the broader Yes campaign. The Scottish Greens were keen to explore new currency options for Scotland, other than the pound or the euro, a view echoed by many on the left wing of the Yes campaign.

Exchequer, indicated that there would essentially be no chance of sharing the pound, with the other major UK political parties (Labour and Liberal Democrats) articulating the same position.⁴³ This resulted in a back-and-forth with Salmond providing a set of facts countering Osborne's position and accusing the UK Government of 'bullying'.⁴⁴

Other external actors also weighed in on an independent Scotland's foreign policy. NATO, for example, indicated that an independent Scotland would have to apply as a new state and that membership would require unanimous agreement of all twenty-eight states in the alliance.⁴⁵ The United States also intervened in this debate. As Walker put it,

Within the US government, there was concern that its most dependable and influential ally would be diminished by Scotland's departure. In addition, the UK and by extension NATO might be weakened if the referendum resulted in a reduction of military capabilities – including nuclear capabilities—and greater reluctance to deploy military forces abroad.⁴⁶

Uncharacteristically, 'President Barack Obama made an 11th-hour appeal for Scots to vote no, saying he hopes Britain "remains strong, robust and united" and that "The UK is an extraordinary partner for America and a force for good in an unstable world"'.⁴⁷

Other leaders also warned of the dangers of a new small state. *The Scotsman* newspaper reported: 'One of the more controversial moments of the referendum debate saw Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott

43 Andrew Sparrow, 'George Osborne's Speech on Scottish Independence: Politics Live Blog', *Guardian*, 13 February 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/2014/feb/13/george-osbornes-speech-on-scottish-independence-politics-live-blog>

44 Andrew Black and Aiden James, 'Scottish Independence: Currency Union Block Could Hurt Firms, Says Alex Salmond', *BBC News*, 17 February 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-26220638>

45 Severin Carrell, 'Nato Rejects Alex Salmond Claim over Scottish Membership', *Guardian*, 10 April 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/apr/10/nato-alex-salmond-scottish-membership>

46 Walker (2014), p. 747.

47 Raf Sanchez, 'Barack Obama Tells Scotland: Stay United', *Telegraph*, 17 September 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/11103256/Barack-Obama-tells-Scotland-stay-united.html>

state that the world “would not be helped” by Scottish independence’.⁴⁸ Abbott also remarked: ‘I am a firm friend of the United Kingdom and I want it to remain the United Kingdom, not the disunited Kingdom. It is a matter for Scotland, obviously, but as a friend of the United Kingdom that is my view’.⁴⁹ Former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt warned that independence for Scotland could create a ‘Balkanisation’ of the British Isles and he ‘suggested that a Yes vote could have a knock-on effect on Northern Ireland as well as destabilising the UK’.⁵⁰ Ireland expressed similar concerns and the head of Shell Oil also warned of the risks and uncertainties of independence.⁵¹

Small states in world politics: the debate in International Relations scholarship

The debate between the Yes and No campaigns on the influence a small state can have in the world is familiar to scholars of International Relations (IR). Many theoretical perspectives view the international system as dominated by great powers. Weak states are Lilliputians in Gulliver’s world⁵² and ‘the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must’.⁵³ While legally independent, small states, according to these perspectives, are so dependent on others, both in terms of economics and security, that they really cannot pursue an independent foreign policy. Smaller economies are vulnerable to instability in global financial and trade markets and to economic pressures by others. Small states are dependent on military alliances in the face of security

48 [N.a.], ‘Scottish Independence: Global Reaction’, *Scotsman*, 16 September 2014, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scottish-independence-global-reaction-1-3543135>

49 [N.a.], ‘Scottish Independence: How the World Has Reacted’, *Telegraph*, 18 September 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/11102506/Scottish-independence-How-the-world-has-reacted.html>

50 [N.a.], *Scotsman*, 16 September 2014, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/independence-may-lead-to-britain-s-balkanisation-1-3432564>

51 Severin Carrell, ‘Shell Boss Warns against Scottish Independence’, *Guardian*, 6 March 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/mar/06/shell-chief-warns-against-scottish-independence>

52 Robert O. Keohane, ‘Lilliputians’ Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics’, *International Organization*, 23, 2 (1969), pp. 291–310 (pp. 291–310).

53 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972 [431 BC]), p. 402.

threats and may need to compromise their goals or values in return for protection. The bottom line, for those viewing international politics through the lens of big states making big decisions, is this: small states are rule-takers, not rule-makers.

The two theories that have most dominated IR scholarship — realism and liberalism — both tend to focus on bigger, more powerful states. Realism — both ‘classical’ and ‘neo’ — sees international politics as a realm of power. Realism, as a broad approach, is often considered a theory that supports the primacy of great power politics. Whilst Hans Morgenthau, in his classic text *Politics Among Nations*, made space to discuss the strategies that smaller states might adopt, his understanding of the balance of power and his vision of international politics as driven by ‘interest defined in terms of power’ leaves little room for small states.⁵⁴ Employing the analogy of firms in the market, Waltz suggests that when all firms are not of equal size it makes sense to focus on the larger firms or, in this case, larger states.⁵⁵ More recent realist scholarship has continued to emphasise that, insofar as the anarchy of international politics can be mitigated, great powers and larger states are responsible for it, with smaller states passively receiving such ‘order’ as can be attained.⁵⁶

The newest variant of liberalism — associated with scholars such as Andrew Moravcsik — has likewise stressed the importance of power in international politics. Larger states are able to set the agenda, with small states reduced to trying to secure ‘side payments’ through international

54 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th edn. (New York: Knopf, 1985 [1948]).

55 Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA and London: Addison-Wesley, 1979), Chapter 5.

56 W. Wohlforth, ‘Realism’, in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. by Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 131–49. According to Baldur Thorhallsson and Anders Wivel, ‘Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would We Like to Know?’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 19, 4 (2006), 651–68 (p. 656), which is written from a classical realist perspective, ‘Olav Knudsen identifies six key variables that are central to preserving the autonomy of smaller states: strategic significance of geographic location, degree of tension between the leading powers, phase of power cycle for nearest great power, historical record of relations between small state and nearest great power, the policies of other great powers and the existence of multilateral frameworks of security cooperation’.

negotiations and bargaining.⁵⁷ Whilst this new liberalism has stressed the importance of non-state actors, and takes the formation of, and variation in, state preferences seriously, the predominant focus is on the bigger powers. For example, in Moravcsik's study of the history of European integration the emphasis is most heavily placed on France, West Germany, and Britain as the shapers of the process.⁵⁸ One of the founders of the modern liberal approach to IR, Robert Keohane, remarked that small states were 'system ineffectual', meaning that they have to adjust to an international system that is shaped and influenced by other, larger states.⁵⁹

Other theoretical traditions of IR similarly devote more time and attention to larger states, or great powers, than they do to small states. The English School, for example, is concerned with the construction, maintenance, and erosion of different international societies. The overarching framework for understanding international society — one that has continued to animate the English School — gives primacy to the most powerful states within any given international society, although Martin Wight, one of the founders of the school, devoted a chapter of his book *Power Politics* to 'minor powers'.⁶⁰ Constructivism shifts the focus away from material forms of power in order to consider softer forms of power and ideational power, which has opened up the possibility of considering how smaller states might be successful in creating and promoting new norms. Despite this, a constructivist understanding of how an international system is formed and maintained still places emphasis on more powerful states.

An opposing view to these traditional IR theoretical perspectives argues that small states may not be as constrained as structural approaches imply and, supported by a long-standing and growing body of research, it demonstrates that they may indeed punch above their weight.⁶¹ Handel, for example, finds that 'the economic predicament

57 See Andrew Moravcsik, 'Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community', *International Organization*, 45, 1 (1991), 19–56 (pp. 19–57).

58 Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1998).

59 Keohane (1969), pp. 291–310.

60 Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (London: Chatham House, 1978), Chapter 5.

61 An exhaustive presentation of the vast literature on small states is beyond the space limits of this chapter. For a review of the small state area of research, see

of the [economically] weak states may not be so severe as traditional economic theory would suggest'.⁶² Research on small states challenges the assumption of structural approaches that fewer capabilities (often the operational definition of small states) necessarily translates into less influence. It suggests that the possession of power (capabilities) is not synonymous with the exercise of power (influence).⁶³ This is true, of course for big states as well: power as capability does not necessarily mean power as influence; not all big states get what they want. Small states may not be able to act autonomously but, in a world characterised increasingly by interdependence, this is often a characteristic of large states too. No states, large or small, are completely self-determining and in control of the effects of their own, and others', actions.

The work on small states problematises the category of 'small state' and challenges static, deterministic, capabilities-based definitions. Small-state scholarship now generally adopts the position that 'rather than continue the search for universal characteristics of small states and their behaviour, the 'small state' concept is best used as a 'focusing device' for highlighting the characteristic security problems and foreign policy dilemmas of the weaker actors in asymmetric power relationships'.⁶⁴ Work on small state security, following developments in security studies more generally, has expanded conceptions of security to include survival, economic, societal and environmental security (see Thorhallsson and Bailes, Chapter 2).⁶⁵ Small states are no longer seen

I. B. Neumann and S. Gstöhl, 'Introduction: Lilliputians in Gulliver's World?', in *Small States in International Relations*, ed. by J. Beyer *et al.* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), pp. 3–36; Andrew F. Cooper and Timothy M. Shaw, *The Diplomacies of Small States: Between Vulnerability and Resilience* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Laurent Goetschel, 'Introduction to Special Issue: Bound to Be Peaceful? The Changing Approach of Western European Small States to Peace', *Swiss Political Science Review*, 19, 3 (2013), 259–78. See also the annotated bibliography by J. Beyer, 'Annotated Bibliography', in *Small States in International Relations*, ed. by J. Beyer *et al.* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), pp. 293–318.

62 See Michael I. Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: Frank Cass, 1981); also the summary of Handel's argument in Neumann and Gstöhl (2006).

63 Thorhallsson and Wivel (2006).

64 Clive Archer, Alyson J. K. Bailes, and Anders Wivel, 'Setting the Scene: Small States and International Security', in *Small States and International Security: Europe and Beyond*, ed. by C. Archer, A. J. Bailes, and A. Wivel (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 3–25 (p. 9).

65 See, for example, Archer, Bailes, and Wivel (2014).

as dependent; rather they seek shelter in international institutions that they in turn support to create security communities.⁶⁶

Research indicates that small states can also have influence disproportional to their size. Small states can play an active role in international organisations, often hosting headquarters and offices and placing their citizens into key leadership positions. International institutions provide diplomatic space, information networks, and a place to coordinate collective action; leadership allows small states to shape the agenda of regional and global organisations, as norm entrepreneurs, meaning that they can, acting alone or in concert with other small states, challenge existing ideas and understandings that govern international politics and thus ultimately change behaviours and outcomes.⁶⁷ Small states can also carve out niche roles, champion specific issues, and broker agreements, as they often enjoy more credibility and neutrality than larger states *because* of their small size. Indeed, 'small states are more efficient as mediators because they can never expect to be successful in pushing their national interests the way large countries can'.⁶⁸

The history of international relations reveals many examples of small states playing important roles (consider Norway's influence in the Arab-Israeli conflict during the 1990s, or Costa Rica's influence in the Central American conflicts of the 1980s). Small states can use their power, and particularly their soft power, in smart ways to advance their interests and exert influence.⁶⁹ In economics too, small states can find and then exploit highly profitable niches and smaller economies may be

66 Alyson J. K. Bailes, J.-M. Rickli, and Baldur Thorhallsson, 'Small States, Survival, and Strategy', in Archer, Bailes, and Wivel (2014), pp. 26–45; see also Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Sheffer, *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World* (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 1997); and Jean-Marc Rickli, 'European Small States' Military Policies after the Cold War: From Territorial to Niche Strategies', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 21, 3 (2008), 307–25.

67 On norm entrepreneurs, see Christine Ingebritsen, *The Nordic States and European Unity* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1998).

68 Thorhallsson and Wivel (2006); Rikard Bengtsson, Ole Elgström, and Jonas Tallberg, 'Silencer or Amplifier? The European Union Presidency and the Nordic Countries', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 27, 3 (2004), 311–34.

69 On soft power, see, for example, Alan Chong, 'Singapore and the Soft Power Experience', in *The Diplomacies of Small States: Between Vulnerability and Resilience*, ed. by Andrew F. Cooper and Timothy M. Shaw (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 65–80.

able to adapt more easily to changing economic conditions.⁷⁰ There may be other benefits to being small, according to the notion that ‘small is beautiful’. Smallness, for example, ‘may be a factor that reduces rather than multiplies security headaches. It eliminates the need to make a pretence of self-sufficient defence or even to create military forces it all. It dampens expectations of a significant outgoing contribution to global goods like peacekeeping and, rather, creates a supposition of importing help in natural and accidental emergencies’.⁷¹ Generally, this research indicates that ‘small states are neither per se power-brokers nor are they per se political dwarfs in international negotiations’.⁷²

This area of research has also identified typical and effective strategies that small states use. These include prioritisation, framing and reframing, attempts to use normative power and soft power, and the use of opportunity structures such as chairing negotiations or serving as president of an international organisation.⁷³ Some research on small states has concentrated on the effects of size-related obstacles to influence, such as fewer administrative, financial and economic resources and capacities, and on the conditions that affect small-state success and influence.⁷⁴ Conditions for success include features of the institutional environment (such as the number of other actors and weighted voting *vs* majority voting), issue types (redistributive *vs* regulative), and policy areas.⁷⁵ There is some disagreement on these conditions, however. With regard to policy areas, for example, Thorhallsson and Wivel maintain the more conventional expectation that ‘the influence of small states is smaller on security policy than on other policy areas’,⁷⁶ while in the special issue in the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, edited by Diana Panke, the realist expectation that small states will have no influence in security issues was not confirmed across the case studies.⁷⁷

70 P. J. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1985).

71 Archer, Bailes, and Wivel (2014), p. 18.

72 Diana Panke, ‘Small States in Multilateral Negotiations. What Have We Learned?’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 25, 3 (2012), pp. 387–98.

73 See, for example, Panke (2012); Thorhallsson and Wivel (2006).

74 See, for example, Panke (2012).

75 See, for example, *ibid.*; Thorhallsson and Wivel (2006).

76 Thorhallsson and Wivel (2006), p. 659.

77 See Panke (2012).

Not surprisingly, when the assumption that capabilities determine influence is relaxed, the explanations of small states' foreign policy look very similar to the explanations of great power and middle power foreign policy. In other words, a vast range of factors, from structural conditions and external threats, to mutually constructed identities, to domestic politics and the psychological aspects of decision making are relevant to understand the foreign policies that small states pursue. Generally, small state research has challenged the more structural explanations and explored other, more agent-based accounts. This is certainly consistent with the turn in international relations theory more generally to incorporate domestic and decision-making factors.⁷⁸

Gstöhl and Ingebritsen, for example, separately argue that, despite an economic interest to be open to regional integration, Scandinavia and other small European countries vary in this respect, and this variance can be explained by domestic political constraints.⁷⁹ Other research focuses more on elite beliefs. Keohane argued that state leaders' perceptions of their country's role in the world better account for states' orientations toward international institutions than capabilities, and even more than the perception of need for security protection.⁸⁰ Thorhallsson points to elite self-perceptions, among other factors, as a key element to explain Iceland's change in foreign policy from a 'system-ineffectual' state to a 'system-affecting' state.⁸¹ Reiter finds that small states 'learn' from past experiences of success and failure and adapt their foreign policies according to these lessons learned, and not to variations in external threat, as realist perspectives would suggest.⁸²

78 Juliet Kaarbo, 'A Foreign Policy Analysis Perspective on the Domestic Politics Turn in IR Theory', *International Studies Review*, 17, 2 (2015), 189–216.

79 Sieglinde Gstöhl, *Reluctant Europeans: Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland in the Process of Integration* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Ingebritsen (1998); and for a domestic political analysis see Miriam Fendius Elman, 'The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in its Own Backyard', *British Journal of Political Science*, 25, 02 (1995), 171–217.

80 Keohane (1969).

81 Baldur Thorhallsson, 'Can Small States Choose Their Own Size? The Case of a Nordic State — Iceland', in *The Diplomacies of Small States: Between Vulnerability and Resilience*, ed. by Andrew F. Cooper and Timothy M. Shaw (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 119–42.

82 Dan Reiter, 'Learning, Realism, and Alliances: The Weight of the Shadow of the Past', *World Politics*, 46, 4 (1994), 490–526.

Overall, the research on small states has come to a position similar to the rest of IR theory. According to Thorhallsson and Wivel, for example, ‘only by examining the interaction of materialist and idealist factors at different levels (regional, national and global) will we get a better understanding of the strategy of small states’.⁸³ They also argue that ‘we need to better understand how to combine materialist variables, such as power, with the observation that power affects foreign policy only through the interpretations of policy-makers’.⁸⁴ This last point is perfectly consistent with a foreign policy analysis perspective, but still often ignored by other IR theories, even when they incorporate domestic politics and decision-making factors.⁸⁵

The Scottish Government, at the time of the independence referendum, wished to see Scotland become the newest small state in the international system. But, throughout the referendum, Scotland was not a small state. Rather it was a sub-state actor, a constituent part of a sovereign nation state: the United Kingdom. The growing literature on so-called paradiplomacy⁸⁶ — that is the diplomacy, or external relations, of sub-states — has generally focused on efforts by sub-state actors to secure economic gain through missions and activities designed to secure foreign trade and investment, or to promote cultural distinctiveness on the global stage (itself also often indirectly economic in nature, designed to boost tourism and exports through enhanced visibility and brand differentiation). Most case studies of sub-state diplomacy are of regions that either do not aspire to be states or are, unlike Scotland in 2014, not on the cusp of becoming a state.

This case study illustrates that, for states that are newly emerging after independence, there exists a set of challenges additional to the general ones faced by small states. Had it become independent, Scotland would have had to negotiate in an environment in which its parent state,

83 Thorhallsson and Wivel (2006), p. 665.

84 Thorhallsson and Wivel (2006).

85 Kaarbo (2015).

86 Examples include Samuel Lucas McMillan, *The Involvement of State Governments in US Foreign Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); David Crikemans, *Regional Sub-State Diplomacy Today* (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 2010); Noé Cornago, ‘On the Normalization of Sub-State Diplomacy’, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 5, 1–2 (2010), 11–36; A. Lecours, ‘Paradiplomacy: Reflections on the Foreign Policy and International Relations of Regions’, *International Negotiation*, 7, 1 (2002), 91–114.

the UK, would have been seeking to preserve its standing and prestige in the international system. This adds another layer of complexity and the dynamic that persisted between the emerging state (in this case, Scotland) and the state from which it was emerging (in this case, the UK) would have the potential to curb the ambitions of the new state. This is an issue that scholars of paradiplomacy ought to explore further given the possibility of a second Scottish independence referendum and the ongoing situation in Catalonia.

Conclusion

The two sides of the debate, about how an independent Scotland might fare in the international system given its small size, unfortunately talked over each other. Perhaps this is not surprising in a political campaign, as they often polarise issues and present a black-white picture to voters. It was interesting to note that the two sides would often point to different small states as examples. The Yes campaign, and particularly the SNP leadership, consistently invoked the Nordic states as good examples of small states in the international system.⁸⁷ In official publications — such as the UK Government's Scotland Analysis papers — the No side built up arguments about why Scotland would struggle to emulate the Nordic states. However, in more casual settings — such as in television appearances and debates — Iceland was invoked as an example of a state that ended up battered by global economic forces. Similarly, when Alex Salmond suggested that an independent Scotland could use the pound even without the agreement of the UK, the No campaign were quick to liken Scotland, negatively, to Panama, which uses the US dollar in a similar way. It is interesting to note that the SNP shifted the emphasis they placed on specific small states over a number of years. In 2006 Alex Salmond labelled Ireland, Iceland and Norway the 'arc of prosperity', arguing that an independent Scotland could join such an arc.⁸⁸ Following the impact of the financial crisis, the references to Iceland and Ireland became less frequent, with Norway, Sweden, and Denmark more commonly invoked.

87 *Scotland's Future*, p. 477.

88 [N.a.], 'Salmond Sees Scots in "Arc of Prosperity"', *Scotsman*, 12 August 2006, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/salmond-sees-scots-in-arc-of-prosperity-1-1130200>

Overall, in the Scottish debate, the No side reflected the long-held perspective in the study of international relations that small states are ineffectual and vulnerable. The Yes side articulated the most positive side of the 'small is beautiful' perspective in small-state research. The truth of how effective and independent Scotland would be probably lies somewhere in the middle. Small states can secure their interests and advance their ideals, but this is not automatic; not all small states are effective in overcoming their disadvantages. The credibility that is key to small states' influence takes time to develop, and is dependent on how others see them. It takes planning, the selection of appropriate policies, the commitment of necessary resources, and the exercise of dynamic leadership for any state, small or large, to deliver a successful foreign policy. The right policies also need the right resources to support them, not only financial resources (a diplomatic network is not cheap) but also human capital. Diplomatic services require the appropriate experience and knowledge and that requires significant and strategic investment. While the foreign policy of democratic states is certainly affected by the public, it is leaders who steer sovereign ships. Leaders that are interested in foreign affairs and skilled at playing a two-level game of domestic and international politics can significantly enhance any state's potential.

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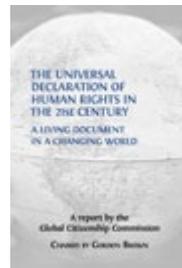
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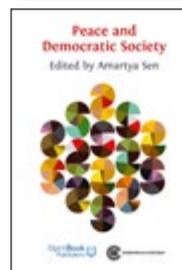
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Andrew W. Neal (ed.)

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Security in a Small Nation provides an illuminating analysis of the politics of security. Its authors reflect on a number of related issues including international comparisons, alliances, regional cooperation, terrorism, intelligence sharing, democratic oversight, and media coverage. It has a particular focus on what security means for small states and democratic politics.

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