
Handbook of Civil Society and Social Movements in Small States

*Edited by Lino Briguglio, Michael Briguglio,
Sheila Bunwaree and Claire Slatter*

First published 2023

ISBN: 978-1-032-37714-8 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-37715-5 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-34153-6 (ebk)

Introduction

Civil society and social movements in small states

*Lino Briguglio, Michael Briguglio, Sheila Bunwaree and
Claire Slatter*

(CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003341536-1

The funder for this chapter is University of Malta.



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Introduction

Civil society and social movements in small states

*Lino Briguglio, Michael Briguglio, Sheila Bunwaree and
Claire Slatter*

The main thrust of the book

This volume is organized in three parts dealing with aspects of civil society and social movements in small states in the political, social and environmental spheres, respectively. Various definitions of civil society are proposed in the chapters, but most of the contributors associate the term with organized groups operating in the interests of citizens, independently of government and commercial businesses, including various forms of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Civil society also encompasses social movements which are considered to be loosely organized collective campaigns in pursuit of social goals. These two terms are sometimes used interchangeably; however, some contributors argue that social movements tend to engage in 'contentious politics' including protest, while NGOs engage via more organized and institutional routes.

The focus of the book is on small states. There is not much discussion in the book as to what constitutes a small state, although the coverage of the book is on countries that are usually considered to be small ones. Generally, population size is chosen as an indicator of country size, often with a cut-off population size of 1.5 million.¹ However, countries with larger populations are often grouped with the small state category. This book includes four such small countries, namely Jamaica with a population of just under three million, Slovenia and North Macedonia with populations of about 2.1 million each, and Botswana with a population of about 2.4 million.² The small states covered in this book are mostly located in the tropical areas of the Caribbean region, as well as in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. However, a number of small states in Europe and Africa are also included.

There are many studies on civil society and social movements, but none that specifically deal with small states. Small states have particular characteristics including a limited ability to reap the benefits of economies of scale, a high degree of exposure to forces outside their control, and proximity of politicians to the voters, often leading to clientelistic relationships and patronage networks. The small island developing states have the additional problem of high environmental vulnerability, with some of them having disproportionate ecological footprints

too. These factors have a bearing on the organization and performance of civil society organizations (CSOs) and social movements as explained in several chapters of this book.

This introductory chapter is organized in five sections. The following three sections discuss the political, environmental and social issues facing small states. It is not always easy to find a clear-cut distinction between these three issues, as they are often intertwined, related to and affect each other. The sections are based on the main thrust of each chapter in terms of the above-mentioned three issues. The concluding section outlines a number of implications from the findings of the chapters.

Environmental issues

The chapters that examine the environmental role of civil society and social movements make use of an array of analytic approaches including surveys and media reports, and analyse various operational approaches adopted by CSOs and social movements, including advocacy, resistance, protests and collaboration with government entities.

The pursuit of sustainable development

Environmental activism is often associated with sustainable development goals, and frequently attempts to show that the exclusive quest for short-term economic gains is not compatible with these goals. Lewis-Cameron and Brown-Williams (Chapter 1) explore the role of CSOs in the pursuit of sustainable tourism in the small island of Tobago. The island, like many others endowed with natural attractions, including alluring beaches, generates considerable income and employment in this popular tourist destination. Apart from the possibility that a proportion of this income is not enjoyed by members of the host community, tourism often leads to environmental problems. CSOs in many tourist destinations strive to raise awareness of such environmental harm and lack of inclusion. The authors explain how CSOs in Tobago collaborated with the municipality in protecting Tobago's natural resources and promoting their sustainable use. As a consequence, this has positively contributed to the strategic positioning of the island as an ecotourism destination, with these CSOs recording a number of achievements and opportunities, as well as challenges. The main conclusion drawn in this chapter is that CSOs are well positioned to mobilize individuals, and influence behaviour and decision-making within local communities to achieve sustainable development objectives.

Sustainable development is often mentioned in many government strategies and plans, but in practice economic interests are generally assigned centre stage, with social and environmental concerns mostly being consigned to paper. Lopes (Chapter 2) shows that this is the case in Cabo Verde. In this small island state, CSOs have managed to increase environmental and social awareness, even forcing environmental concerns into the government's development agenda. The author analyses the strategies that these organizations employed in Cabo Verde to influence the government to adopt and implement environmentally sustainable socioeconomic policies. The main findings of this chapter indicate that favourable political opportunities may enable the local pro-environment movements to attain a measure of success.

Another chapter focusing on the pursuit of sustainable development is that authored by Gutierrez-Corley et al. (Chapter 3). The chapter explores the application of network governance theory with special reference to environmental NGOs (ENGOS) in Belize. The chapter finds that networking and collaborative schemes between the ENGOS themselves, and between ENGOS and state agencies or affected communities do indeed need to improve the effectiveness of their efforts to promote environmental governance. However, the chapter emphasizes

the need to strengthen the alliance between ENGOs to improve the chances of finding support from the stakeholders and influencing public policies. In turn, the authors argue, this leads to the development of communication mechanisms that enable such organizations to improve their capacity to advocate national resource conservation for the benefit of society as a whole in Belize.

Environmental protests, campaigns and resistance

Three chapters deal with environmental protests. M. Briguglio (Chapter 4) discusses the campaigns that took place in Malta in 2020 following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which were given extensive coverage in Malta's mainstream media. The author considers the issues, organizations, coalitions and types of protests undertaken during this period, and refers to the groups and organizations that make up the collective actions in question, as well as the events that form the action repertoire, and the ideas that guide the protests. The study also analyses networks and the broader context in which the protests occurred. The main findings of this study are that environmental protests have continued to take place, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study also finds that the NGOs in Malta often formed coalitions with one another, which helped to strengthen their voice.

Williams (Chapter 5) explores the impact of social resistance as a response to government approaches relating to mining in Jamaica's Cockpit Country. The region, according to the author, faces existential threats due to its dependency on mining. The author argues that both the increased investment in and the expansion of the mining sector are being undertaken without critical consideration of climate change. These economic models and practices have been met with increased resistance from social movements against what the author considers as antiquated mining practices in the region. The chapter asserts that the politics of land and space in Jamaica is an extension of the legacies of marginalized communities fighting for self-identity, autonomy and the right to exist. The author contends that although social movements have policed and attempted to protect the Cockpit Country through ideological warfare and social protests, mining threats to the region remain. However, the Cockpit controversy and subsequent debates, according to the author, highlight the importance of ordinary people in public policies.

Kasanawaqa et al. (Chapter 6) also deal with the environmental downsides of mining, this time deep-sea mining (DSM) in the Pacific. In March 2021 Pacific regional civil society groups launched a campaign calling on Pacific island leaders to join the coalition calling for a total ban on DSM within their territorial waters and in areas beyond national jurisdiction. However, the authors lament that a number of Pacific governments in the region have supported exploration activities. The chapter further argues that CSOs are frequently viewed by governments as attempting to profit from popular sentiment on development issues that contradict official plans and strategies, such as DSM. However, CSOs in the region are holding discussions on alternatives, including one that can encourage stakeholders to reach a consensus on the call for the ban. According to the authors, any compromise should involve opportunity cost considerations, as in order to win over governments and to keep deep-sea minerals unmined, the subject of costs and compensation must be included.

Environmental hazards

Many small island states are prone to volcanic eruptions which, due to the small size of the territory, often affect a large proportion of the population. Cruickshank et al. (Chapter 7) discuss the roles of community-based organizations (CBOs) in the case of the volcanic eruption of

La Soufrière in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in late 2020 and the first months of 2021. The authors argue that effusive and explosive eruptions of La Soufrière highlight the importance of disaster risk management, in which CBOs can play a very important role. The chapter assigns major importance to the grassroots approach to disaster risk management by CBOs, especially in remote communities. The results show that CBOs in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are negatively affected by several factors, including, but not limited to, partisan politics, resources and expertise constraints, excessive reliance on support from disaster management agencies and a high rate of membership turnover.

Social issues

Sexual orientation and gender issues

The issue of sexual orientation is not often discussed in the case of small states. The contribution by Andrew et al. (Chapter 8) is therefore a very welcome addition to the literature. The authors examine the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) civil society in Trinidad and Tobago and Mauritius, two small island developing states, the first located between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, and the second in the Indian Ocean. The chapter shows that in both Trinidad and Tobago and Mauritius, the LGBTQIA+ civil society movements are still at the nascent stage. The main obstacles that the movement encounters include the legal tradition inherited from their former colonizers and funding limitations. These realities are commonly found in small island states, the majority of which gained their independence from the 1960s to the 1980s. The chapter ends on the optimistic note that there is a growing social acceptance of LGBTQIA+ rights in both countries, particularly among the younger generation, and this could improve the possibilities of changes in political will which, in turn, could lead to legal reform.

Kanemasu and Chan-Tung (Chapter 9) discuss *fa'afafine* (literally meaning 'in the manner of a woman') in Samoa, namely persons who are assigned male at birth but whose gendered behaviours are feminine to varying degrees, often with a sexual/romantic orientation towards men. Despite the widespread denunciation of non-heteronormativity based on religious and cultural discourses, *fa'afafine* are a highly visible social group in the country. It is often claimed that they are shielded from the stigmatization experienced by non-heteronormative persons in many other cultures. Since 2006 the Samoa Fa'afafine Association (SFA) has served as the primary advocacy body for *fa'afafine*, and more recently also for *fa'afatama*, who are persons assigned female at birth but who identify as men or who act 'in the manner of a man'. The findings illuminate how the SFA has successfully appropriated key elements of both *fa'asamoa* (the Samoan way of life) and modern human rights advocacy under culturally embedded 'shared leadership'.

Another matter related to gender issues is violence against women and girls – a subject treated by Benoit (Chapter 10) with regard to Seychelles, a small island state in the western Indian Ocean. The term gender-based violence (GBV) is used in the chapter as an umbrella concept for the physical, sexual, psychological and socioeconomic harm, threats and coercion directed towards individuals or groups based on their gender, often occurring in the household between intimate partners. GBV occurs in many societies around the world and in order to shed light on the role of CSOs in combating such violence this chapter sought information from five CSOs operating in Seychelles. The chapter shows that civil society has an important role to play in advocating non-violent social change in the communities and in supporting survivors of GBV. As in the case of other studies, financial constraints often limit the ability of the organizations to attain their objectives.

Migration and refugees

A group of small states located in the southern Caribbean Sea, including Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Aruba, and Curaçao, are transit and destination countries for Venezuelan migrants. These migrants face various challenges including pushbacks, the risk of trafficking, smuggling, exploitation and abuse, food and housing insecurity, as well as lack of access to education, employment and health resources and services. Golesorkhi (Chapter 11) analyses the role of civil society in the context of the ‘Caribbean Sub-Region Refugees and Migrants Response Plan’ (RMRP-Caribbean). In exploring civil society efforts in the migrant transit and recipient small states, the chapter argues that although civil society is a key partner in the RMRP-Caribbean by providing essential resources and services to Venezuelan migrants, CSOs often remain overlooked with regard to funding and political engagement. According to the author, this raises important questions about agency, representation and accountability in global migration governance, especially for small island states which often report very high per capita migrant populations.

Another chapter dealing with migrant refugees focuses on Southern Europe. Kalweit and Grech (Chapter 12) examine migrant-support CSOs in three small EU member states, namely Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia. The authors maintain that the space for these organizations has shrunk in recent years because they are increasingly facing operational challenges in offering support to asylum seekers. The chapter explores issues faced by CSOs in relation to accessing operational funding; the demonization and rhetorical criminalization of migrants and migrant support organizations in political discourse; and operational capacities to respond to social gaps left unattended, intentionally or otherwise, by governments. While such challenges may have been already present to a certain degree for a number of years, they have been exacerbated in the years since the 2015 ‘refugee crisis’ and even more so following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby highlighting the long-term negative effects of unsustainable policies and practices concerning migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees.

Faith-based CSOs

Arguably, contemporary Christian churches, as do other CSOs, occupy a space between the state and the market. Religion for many people entails the mission of teaching moral principles and providing explanations for the trials and tribulations in life. By extension, faith-based organizations provide or channel the delivery of social services. Many churches have a regional character, and as such they can foster regional integration. This aspect of civil society is the subject of the study authored by Byron and Montoute (Chapter 13). The authors argue that despite the vast literature on Caribbean regional integration, the role of churches in advancing regional approaches to development remains under-explored. The chapter addresses this gap by exploring the manner in which churches contribute to the development of national/regional identity and regional consciousness, using the cases of the Catholic and Protestant churches in strengthening regional cooperation through their substantive work in the areas of migration, disaster management and humanitarian assistance.

ICT and CSOs

Information and communications technologies (ICT) play a major role in all aspects of life. They have facilitated and streamlined interactions between persons and organizations, speeded up searches for information, with immense beneficial effects on education, expedited payments and other business transactions, and enabled service providers, including governments, to reach

their clients more effectively. Titifanue and Kant (Chapter 14) focus on an important aspect in this regard, namely how ICT platforms such as social media have provided activists and CSOs with a platform to amplify their engagement in policy processes, dialogue and debate, thereby promoting democracy across the Pacific Islands at grassroots level. The chapter examines how community activists in campaigns relating to climate change and the Free West Papua movement have harnessed ICT to strengthen their advocacy and connectivity within and beyond the Pacific region. By looking at such activist groupings and their use of social media to build wider solidarity networks, the authors provide insights into how ICT could serve as a catalyst for a new wave of Pacific activism and foster bottom-up regionalism.

Economic success and CSO financing

Sebudubudu and Molutsi (Chapter 15) examine how economic success affects the fate of CSOs. The authors, writing about CSOs in Botswana, consider a situation whereby changing economic conditions have affected the viability of social movements in that country. In examining why CSOs in Botswana are experiencing challenging times, the authors single out lack of funding as a major constraint. The authors argue that in a situation whereby civil society and social movements are starved of financial support, they are rendered vulnerable and dependent on the state, thus compromising their autonomy as independent actors able to critique the state's development agenda. The authors contend that this is the case in Botswana, despite its wealthy economy driven by diamond mining. The traditional main source of funding for CSOs in African developing countries originated from developed countries, but many of these withdrew their support from Botswana's non-governmental sector as the country ceased to be a poor one. Consequently, this left a funding gap for CSOs, rendering them vulnerable to state control, with a resultant declining role in advocacy and critical stances challenging the government of that country.

Political issues

Post-communist activism

Four chapters in this volume deal with post-communist transition in four central and eastern European small states, namely Estonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and North Macedonia. European small countries do not generally feature in publications on small states, mainly because the focus of the literature in this regard is usually on the small island developing states located in the Pacific, Caribbean and Indian Ocean regions.³

Estonia, formerly part of the Soviet Union, regained its independence in 1991 and joined the EU in 2004. Uba (Chapter 16), in analysing protests in Estonia between 1992 and 2019, found that there was a decreasing protest frequency during the 1990s. However, the number of protests in Estonia increased in the mid-2000s and has remained stable since then. The average number of participants also seems to be increasing. The lack of many disruptive events, except the monument riots of 2007, signifies a relatively peaceful political culture that also characterizes other countries in the region. The analysis also showed that there was a predominance of economic issues in the Estonian protest scene during the 1990s, declining protests regarding the rights of Russian minorities since the 2010s and the rise of environmental protests from the 2000s. Even though prior research has suggested that the Estonian public is relatively patient, the author argues that a more diversified mobilization – regarding culturally liberal and conservative values and the environment – shows that Estonian civil society is becoming somewhat similar to that in Western Europe.

Rakar and Deželan (Chapter 17) provide an overview of the strength of civil society in Slovenia after 30 years of independence from former Yugoslavia, a period which ushered in free markets and political pluralism during the post-communist transition. Like Estonia, Slovenia acceded to the EU in 2004. The chapter shows that CSOs in Slovenia have grown in number, but they have not developed significantly, according to certain parameters, such as the level of employment in the civil society sector and the share of the sector's income in the country's gross domestic product, which has only changed slightly. In discussing the concept of civil dialogue, the authors show that the three-decades-long development of civil society in this country has not led to the proper implementation of such dialogue. The authors analyse civil dialogue, looking at CSO initiatives to engage with government on the one hand, and government initiatives to engage with CSOs on the other, and conclude that such initiatives were not very frequent from either side. They were limited to occasional cooperation, with the initiative coming mostly from the CSOs and rarely from the government. Moreover, the occasional initiatives by CSOs tended to be limited to the local level. The authors emphasize the point that a two-way dialogue between CSOs and the government is of major importance for civil dialogue and for the enhancement of democracy, whereby CSOs can act as an important transmission link between the government and the citizens.

The relationship between the government and CSOs is also discussed by Ivanovska Hadjievska (Chapter 19) with regard to North Macedonia, a post-communist transition country, and also an EU candidate country. The authors distinguish between politically and socially oriented CSOs, investigating the democratic potential of each of these two categories of CSOs, in terms of the extent to which organizations involve members in their activities (membership involvement) and internal decision-making processes (membership influence). She argues that politically oriented groups are expected to have a greater potential to contribute to institutional democratic effects, and socially oriented CSOs to individual democratic effects. The results of the study confirm that even though politically oriented CSOs cover a smaller section of the population, they have greater democratic potential than socially oriented CSOs, possibly because the latter have fewer funds and fewer human resources. This suggests that the long-term investment by the EU and foreign donors in CSO development in North Macedonia, which boosted the organizational capacities of politically oriented CSOs, is likely to have been beneficial for democracy in North Macedonia.

Montenegro, another EU candidate country which has passed through a post-communist transition, is undertaking major governance reforms as part of the EU accession process. Lukšić and Pejović (Chapter 18) discusses the role of CSOs in this process which, the authors argue, is very complex, long and demanding, involving various sections of society. The process poses particular challenges for any small country struggling to build adequate administrative capacities. According to the author, Montenegro responded to these challenges by integrating the civil sector directly into its negotiation structure. The author further argues that directly involving CSOs in the accession process increases the capacity of a small public administration in responding to the complex tasks associated with the accession process. The main conclusion of the chapter is that, the Montenegro model, which has been functioning for 10 years, achieved good results in terms of opening up all the accession negotiation channels. The author attributes this mostly to improved transparency, increased visibility and a feeling of ownership by civil society.

Political protests

Three chapters deal with protests and civil activism with major impacts on the political scene. Vassallo et al. (Chapter 20) contend that civil society groups are often regarded as

transformationalists as they are likely to adopt an antagonist attitude towards the governing elites in their quest for change. The authors contextualized their chapter within the intensive saga of events that developed in Malta during November 2019 and the following year, mainly calling for resignations after alleged political/business collusion that led to the assassination of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. In an unprecedented occurrence, civil society groups rooted in right- and left-wing politics came together to protest against institutional corruption. The chapter maps out the strategies and actions coordinated by civil society groups throughout this period, arguing that these actions generated a political crisis that had widespread ramifications on a Europe-wide scale, and the crisis is said to have led to the resignation of the Maltese Prime Minister, raising concerns about the impact it could have had on the EU itself.

Another protest that hit the news headlines all over the world related to the street protests of 2020/21 held in Mauritius following the Wakashio oil spill on 29 August 2020. Bunwaree (Chapter 21) contends that these protests were to some extent calling for the overhauling of a political system that was increasingly being seen as archaic, authoritarian and not in tune with the aspirations of modern Mauritians. The island's more than a half century old Constitution, largely shaped by the British which resulted in a first-past-the-post electoral system, with an annexed 'best loser' mechanism, intended as a safeguard for minority representation, does not necessarily help to forge a strong Mauritian identity. Lack of transparency and inadequate environmental protection, are, according to the author, some of the causes of growing dissatisfaction, leading Mauritians to take to the streets, challenging the current government and the nature of governance. The author further maintains that weak and fractured civil society, money politics, and persistent ethnic politics constitute major obstacles to transformation.

Some of the chapters in this volume argue that there are advantages for CSOs and social movements in dealing with their remit regionally, rather than nationally. This is the case in the chapter by Naidu and Slatter (Chapter 22) referring to the regional character of some CSOs in the Pacific which organize and advocate on region-wide concerns. According to the authors, the regional character of CSOs, while a challenge, could also be a factor in their success. The authors note that several social movements have emerged in the wider Pacific region, and refer specifically to three of these, namely the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movement, the Pacific movement against violence against women, and the more recent movement against DSM. The authors explain how shared concerns, effective advocacy, networking and relationship-building, together with conferencing, use of newsletters, internet communication and Zoom meetings, protests, campaigns and lobbying as well as donor support, have contributed to their strength and successes.

University students are often involved in protests and other sorts of activism on social and economic issues, and such protests have sometimes had major political repercussions. Sanatan (Chapter 23) explores student activism of the Caribbean left. In presenting a historical overview and activist insights on student activism in the local, national and regional context, the author maintains that following the 'collapse' of the Grenada Revolution in 1983, socialist organizing waned in the region. The chapter also explores the organizational aims and strategies of contemporary student organizations and activism in the Caribbean. The author contends that leftist politics in the Caribbean political culture have been short-lived, with weak counteraction against neoliberal governance and the selective withdrawal of the state from the social sector in the region. However, the author concludes that community-based left-wing activism can achieve gains at local level to enhance their legitimacy at national and regional level.

The problems associated with the division of the island of Cyprus in 1974 into the Greek Cypriot south and the Turkish Cypriot north are well known, but to date little has been written about the role of civil society in this regard. Moutselos (Chapter 24) presents a

systematic overview of civil society developments and social movement activities after the division of the island. The chapter traces the mobilizational ebb and flow of protest against the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus, as well as of bicomunal (Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot) grassroots initiatives for cooperation. It is argued that emerging Cypriot new social movements, in particular feminist, LGBTQI+, and environmental movements, as well as movements for the rights of migrants (and the corresponding counter-movements) have grown considerably in recent decades. The chapter highlights a number of issues, frames and repertoires that are more prevalent in Cypriot collective action compared to other countries, for instance a fascination with borders/space and memory.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has shown that CSOs can be a strong force in promoting the worthiness of values through advocacy, protests, service delivery and other forms of activism. These organizations promote a bottom-up approach to governance, as has been explained in some of the chapters.

Different approaches were used by the contributors to this volume to investigate how CSOs are organized, their remit, their failures and successes, and their relationships with their governments. Some chapters base their findings on primary data collected from surveys with CSO representatives as respondents, seeking information through questionnaires. The chapters were mostly written in 2021 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and understandably the interviews were mostly carried out via electronic platforms. Other authors relied on published sources, mostly newspapers and various news portals. In some instances, secondary data was derived from registers of NGOs and from previously published work. As shown in the chapter summaries above, the geographic coverage of the book can be said to be global, related to countries in different stages of development and different forms of government, and in different regions.

Does small country size matter?

The question arises as to whether the size of the country affects the performance of these organizations and movements. One constraint that emerged in most chapters is funding. Small states normally have limited resources due to the problem of scale constraints and indivisibilities, meaning that overhead costs cannot be downscaled in proportion to the size of the organization. In other words, the administrative costs of CSOs are likely to be higher per capita in a small organization. Another aspect related to funding in small state CSOs is limited organizational capacity which is related to membership and volunteering, both of which limit the human and financial resources that can be mobilized in a small state.

Moreover, in a small state people tend to know each other well, and the chances of collective action affecting relatives and friends of those engaged in protests and other forms of activism are higher in a small state when compared to a larger country. This matter was mentioned in the case of CSOs which deal with contentious issues such as sexual orientation.

A third factor, also associated with funding, is that foreign interests may find it easier to influence matters in the local affairs of small states through financial support of NGOs and other non-government outfits. This matter was often mentioned in the case of European countries in post-communist transition.

In small states, governments tend to intervene in day-to-day matters. There are many publications that refer to personalized politics in these states. This can be considered as an

advantage associated with the proximity of politicians to their constituents, but it can also generate the disadvantage of clientelism. This also means that in small states governments find it easier to meddle in the activities of non-government entities. This is of course the case in authoritarian governments of small and larger states, but in the case of small states, even highly democratic ones, the arm of politicians is long and interventionist politicians may find it easier to discredit CSO activity. This matter has been mentioned in some of the chapters relating to the small states of central and Central and Eastern European small states.

An issue that emerges in some chapters is that CSOs of small states could benefit if they were to act regionally. This is obviously applicable when the issue involved has a regional character. This approach is becoming increasingly possible as a result of ICT platforms, as explained in some of the studies. As one of the authors states, by lobbying regionally CSOs can strengthen their voice and improve their effectiveness.

Thus, although the issues confronting CSOs that are discussed in this volume are not exclusive to small state organizations, small country size may affect their performance, and therefore a volume dedicated to small states on this matter is justified. As mentioned above, there is a gap in the literature on the challenges faced by small states, and it is hoped that this book will make a useful contribution in deepening understanding and knowledge about this area of interest.

Notes

- 1 This population cut-off point is adopted by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Commonwealth.
- 2 World Bank 2021 data. Jamaica is included in the list of SIDS by AOSIS (www.aosis.org/about/member-states/) and by the United Nations (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids/list>). Likewise, Botswana is considered a small state by the Commonwealth (<https://thecommonwealth.org/our-work/small-states>).
- 3 However, the World Bank database does include some European small states in its list (www.worldbank.org/en/country/smallstates/overview#1).