ABSTRACT

Small states make up the vast majority of the international system. However, their absolute power and relative “weight” in that same international system are reversely proportional to their number. A sheer number of small states therefore tells us little about their specific characteristics and the means to pursue their own survival and progress. Nevertheless, the scientists have for decades not been able to agree on the number of small states in the world, so most of them have simply decided to omit this problem from their research, focusing mainly on strategies and specificities of small states, that either derive from their smallness or not. Most classifications usually agree that the number of small states in the world is between a half and two-thirds of all states. The purpose of this paper lies in an attempt to re-initiate a debate among the scholars in order to try to answer the “eternal” question of how many small states actually exist in the world, and what criteria should be primarily used to define i.e. classify them.

Key words: small states; regional position; classifications of small states; quantitative, qualitative, and relational criteria; small state definition.
1 INTRODUCTION
Small states make up the vast majority of the international system. Of the 191 UN member-states, it is estimated that no more than two dozen would assuredly fall outside this category (Neumann and Gstöhl, 2006: 3).

The size of these state’s influence in the international realm along with the benefits of shaping international institutions and structure once in charge make their activity in international relations a part of their political culture. For a small state, these benefits are likely outside the realm of possibilities as they increase their level of foreign policy initiative. For this reason, it is important to look at small states differently than middle or large powers when talking about the development of foreign policy preferences (Scheldrup, 2014: 3).

Having in mind no widely accepted definition of small state has yet emerged, most attempts at defining small states have been based upon arbitrarily chosen cut-off values of selected criteria. Trying to develop a distinct research approach we have decided to use the quantitative criteria for classifying small states, “in order to correctly, on the basis of numbers, determine which countries will be discussed, taking exceptions into account” (Lusa and Kurecic, 2014: 265).

That way an arbitrary dividing line between small and other EU member states was established, with the aim to have a definite list of states that were in the focus of our study. On the other hand, according to relational criteria, being a small state is seen as tied to a specific spatio-temporal context, not as a general characteristic of the state; a state may be weak in one relation and powerful in another (Wivel and Thorhallsson, 2006: 654).

2 METHODOLOGY
In determining which states to study, the question, which state is small and which is not, is a crucial one. However, the aim here is to go beyond debating only about the criteria for defining small states, and to determine why a particular state is small and the other is not (and therefore it should not be studied) by using mainly the relational criteria – i.e. identifying the state’s position towards the other states and how it affects its behavior. The main strategies of small states in international arena are primarily determined by their relative influence, “weight”, power, and not by their absolute quantifiable features.

Here, as a one of the corroborations of the use of relational criteria, we can invoke the asymmetry theory concept, theorized by Womack (2004: 359-362). He points out: Contrary to multipolarity theory, the disparities between states can create fundamental differences of perspective between the more powerful and the less powerful. The differences of perspective produce structural misperceptions of the other’s intentions, and can lead to a vicious circle of misunderstandings that can culminate in conflict. The second major point is that, contrary to unipolarity theory, and in general, contrary to Western theories of realism and neo-realism, countries that are more powerful usually cannot impose their will on less powerful countries. There is instead a relatively stable matrix of international relationships in which exchanges may not be equal, but they are usually negotiated based on autonomy of both sides (Womack, 359-360).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Appadurai (1996) pointed out that the state and its position makes sense only as a part of the system. Which brings us to relational criteria and systemic approach – and at the same time not obliged to accept the neorealism. Very often, the position of small states, especially small island states is explained through a concept of peripherality, as opposed to central position,
accentuating physical distance and isolation. Hence, this is a relational concept; it brings us to relational criteria for defining small states (see Campling, 2006: 236, in Greig, Turner and D’Arcy, 2011: 169).

Ponižilová (2013: 8) points out: “The whole concept (of smallness as a specificity, author’s remark) is meaningless, unless we take into consideration relations with other states or size of other states, respectively. “Smallness” simply exists and makes sense only vis-à-vis “largeness.” That is why “relational” criteria, with regard to “power,” are essential for the conceptualization of small state. Drawing on all this, it is clear that we all the time have to think in the categories of mutual relations, and brings us to the relational criteria, again.

Panke (2012: 315) points out: “Size is inherently a relational concept. Big or small only takes on meaning if it characterizes one actor or object relative to another in a particular context. Hence, this special interest section does not attempt to provide an absolute definition of small states, but instead defines a state as small if it has less than average relevant capacities in a given negotiation setting. Thus, for economic negotiations, such as in the WTO setting, small states are states with less than average gross domestic product (GDP). In a weighted voting system, such as the EU in its day-to-day policy-making, states are considered as small if they have less than average votes in the Council of Ministers.”

Mouritzen and Wivel (2005) move away from the power that states possess to the power that they actually exercise. Hence, they point out that a state may be influential in one relation but simultaneously weak in another, i.e. it may be considered small in one policy area but large in another. That brings us to the relational criteria (again).

Steinmetz and Wivel (2010: 6) pose a question: “Is it demography, territory or economic output that determines smallness? If the core question revolves around the degree of power that a state possesses, is it legitimate to characterize a highly populated poor state as being more powerful than a sparsely populated wealthy one?” They are inclined to accept that by defining smallness as a ‘relational’ concept, these difficulties can be circumvented, and that “a small state is ‘the weak part in an asymmetric relationship.’”

Therefore, the relational criteria offer the best apparatus to determine the smallness of a certain state. By accepting the relational criteria, we open a possibility where the regional position of states indeed matters, determining the classification of small states presented in this paper, and causing the states like Sweden and Switzerland on one side, and much smaller states like Saint Kitts and Nevis and Palau, altogether to be studied as small states. However, not from the same region. That is crucial. Regional approach, combined with the relative criteria, and used here puts the focus on the state’s neighbors (immediate and close), and the state’s position in the region that it belongs to. It is particularly viable for studying small states since the small states’ influence rarely extends beyond the borders of the region that it belongs to, and it is often contained only to its immediate surroundings. This thesis can be found in the book published almost half a century ago, hence Fox (1959: 3) modified her definition of state size based on power with the notion of a range of interests. According to her thesis, small states have, by-and-large at least, only a local (regional) area of interest. In that sense, by using the regional approach, and a premise that the behavior of small states is a consequence of their size, the qualitative criteria were also included in this research.

A commonly accepted definition of a small state is not available (Olafsson, 1998: 3). This is true not only for the small state but also for related concepts such as the ‘Microstate’ or the
‘Ministate’: These terms have never been defined adequately’ (Rapaport et al., 1971: 29, in: Maass, 2009: 71).

While the existence of small states does not seem to be questioned, the problem has always been to meaningfully separate them from other analytical categories (Jazbec, 2001: 36). The main reason for this situation has been the very vague nature of the concepts of size and smallness (Amstrup, 1976).

De Wijk (2005: 17-23) clearly emphasized that the main features of small states are easily recognized by their inability to maintain a full spectrum of military capabilities and limited abilities to project military power in distant regions of the world. Small states are dependent upon larger countries’ military capabilities as only they can provide the framework that small states can plug into with their available assets (Urbelis, 2015: 63).

Some studies of small states resolve the problem of the small state’s definition by simply omitting it. These authors simply consider the term “small state” to be clear enough, so it does not need a special clarification through definitions and discussions about the various criteria. These kinds of studies study a state or a group of states that they call “small states”, and deal with the specificities of small states that are a consequence of their size. For example, within IR, Keohane and Nye (1977) have famously argued that the question of smallness and greatness is not necessarily very useful on the aggregate level of the states’ system where we have usually studied it, but that it should rather be treated as a question of clout within what they refer to as specific “issue areas”. That is, small states possessing great issue-specific power, for example the influence of Switzerland in the financial services sector or of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the oil sector (Neumann and Gstöhl, 2004: 2).

Some authors accentuate the importance of perception, thereby using the qualitative criteria and stating that the small state is the one that perceives itself as small, and is perceived as small by others. Studying the position and importance of the Nordic states in the EU, Magnusdottir and Thorhallsson (2011: 212) point out: “When comparing the perceptual size of the Nordic EU members, one should not focus on the differences in their fixed size, i.e. their population size, but rather on what factors have formed their self-perception and other actors’ perception of them.”

On the other hand, some studies emphasize the importance of security and defence matters for small states particularly: “The key feature determining the definition of a “small state” is not simply the size of the territory, population and economy. One could rather emphasize the heavy dependence of “small states” for their own security and defence arrangements upon a politically powerful and militarily capable global actor or upon a security and defence organization where such an actor plays a prominent role. In this light, the key issue in determining whether the state is “small” is to address key security and defence issues (Rublovskis, Šešelgyte and Kaljurand, 2013: 14)”.

The size and capability of the armed forces, the size and capability of the entire security sector of the state, and the size of the defence budget - both in real money and as a percentage of GDP – will determine whether the state should be viewed as “small” from the perspective of security and defence. Granted, one may also emphasize the role of external factors in shaping the small state security mentality (Väyrynen, 1997: 98).

There is no clear-cut definition of what it means to be a “small state”. Qualitative definitions encompass the physical and geographical characteristics of small states, their degree of insularity, and vulnerability. In terms of quantitative characteristics, the factors include land area, population size, Gross National Product, Gross Domestic Product, and per capita income.
When discussing certain roles that small states can take in the international arena, the range of small states’ functional capabilities is limited to acting as a buffer zone, diplomatic mediator, barrier state, geopolitical gateway, or periphery (Laurinavicius, Motieka, and Statkus, 2005). Due to the peripheral and transit position of the country, the set of functions will be determined by the actions of leading states (in: Smirnov, 2014: 44).

Certainly, the matter of their own survival posed the most important issue for the small states during the most of the territorial states system’s history, and even today, it is the main reason for bandwagoning as one of the strategies of small states when it comes to security.

As Raeymaeker (1974: 18) pointed out: “The foreign policy of small states therefore aims at withstanding pressure from the great powers, at safeguarding their territorial integrity and independence, and at insuring the continued adhesion to national values and ideals. A small power is a state on the defensive, a state that thirsts for security.”

The Russian political scientist M. Ilyin gave a very different definition of small power concept, in this context different from the concept of a small state.

Ilyin, the author of a state typology based on J. Colomer’s ideas, defined small powers as follows: they have a small territory and population, a pronounced dependency complex (however, in some cases they can strive for a relatively independent foreign and domestic policy), whereas their priority function is “adjusting” international relations (Ilyin, 2008). However, the currently increasing interdependence makes it possible to speak not only of “adjustment” but also of a significant impact on the decisions and actions of larger states (Smirnov, 2014: 43). However, Ilyin argues small powers are incapable of taking an independent position: situated along the axes of mega- and macro-state, small powers can move away from these axes and create more or less wide belts, arcs, and nodes (Ilyin, 2011: 14).

However, a completely precise definition of a small state does not have to pose a necessity. While this can be accepted as a rational conduct, nevertheless, small states can be studied through precisely defining what states are the object of study, and at the same time, these studies do not have to merely discuss the criteria for the small state definition, thereby pushing the discussion and research about the small states out of the focus.

By using more than one criteria and by using different combinations of the various types of criteria (quantitative, qualitative, and relational), it is possible to make classifications of small states that produce the least exceptions. Nevertheless, any classification of small states will always cause certain objections. Therefore, it is the aim of this paper to go beyond the validity of definitions (based on the various criteria) of small states, merely determining, based on multi-criteria arguments that are also explained here, which states are studied and why.

There are also classifications of small states (Maass, 2009) that recognize only two groups of criteria for defining small states: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative criteria, such as population (for example: Charles et al., 1997; Olafsson, 1998; Kisanga and Dancie, 2007), area (Hanggi, 1998: 81; Olafsson, 1998: 8-10), economic power, usually measured by the GDP (East, 1975: 160) and military power (East, 1975: 160), can be found in the studies mentioned here.

Crowards (2002) defines small states by population in clusters and uses cluster analysis, classifying 79 states as small. Thorhallsson (2006) defines small states as having less than 3 000 people working in the foreign services. On the other hand, East (1973) points out population, land area, size of economy and military resources as indicators for defining of small states.

The main objection to the use of (only) quantitative criteria is comprised in the fact that they produce too many exceptions and that the cut-offs that divide small and not so small states are
arbitrary, always leaving doubts whether this divide should be differently fitted (Q: Is a state with 1.6 million inhabitants mid-size and the one with 1.4 million small, especially if a state with smaller population has an economy that is larger than that of the state with slightly larger population? A: Probably not – that is why we need a complex use of the various criteria always having prior knowledge about a particular state and the internal and external environment i.e. region in which it functions).

The reason for using the qualitative criteria (besides quantitative) lies in the fact that no matter what quantitative criteria we use, they are simply insufficient due to the complexity of the state’s features (as mentioned in the previous paragraph).

The qualitative criteria are mostly dealing with the state’s possibilities of action (Rothstein, 1968: 12), its attitude (Evans and Newnham, 1998: 500-501) and the perception of the (small) states about themselves (Hey, 2003: 1).

The identification of the picture (self-perception) that state has about itself – whether it considers itself small or not, and does this awareness of its own smallness (if there is one) influences the relations with its neighbors and the world in general (Henrikson, 2001: 56-57). The research of state’s perceptions about themselves uses that same perception as a factor that influences the attitude of those states and it is known as the perceptive or psychological approach.

Keohane’s argumentation (1969: 296) that “a small power [state] is a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in small group, make a significant impact on the system” certainly belongs to the qualitative approach, as well as Rothstein’s (1968: 29), which points out that “a small power [state] is a state which recognizes that it cannot obtain security primarily by the use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of others.”

Hey (2003: 3) argues that the idea of small states is based on perceptions: “if states, people and institutions generally perceive themselves to be small, or if any other state, peoples or institutions perceive that state as small, it shall be so considered.”

The relational approach uses the relational criteria. It is more objective than the qualitative approach, and less objective than the quantitative. It connects the small states’ behavior with the nature of the international system and the relative position of the state in it. The criterion used to determine whether the state is small or not is the (in)ability of a certain state to project its influence in the international system (Hanggi and Regnier, 2000: 7).

Defining some state as small does not mean that this same state can also be considered as a weak state. Weakness is an expression of quality and not of quantity (as smallness is). Small states can be strong, and large states can be weak, if they have weak institutions, and, among other negative features, powerful centrifugal tendencies.

The state’s population, usually taken as the main (quantitative) criterion, does not need to determine crucially whether the stated should be considered small or not, and especially it is not a sole determinant of weakness of the state.

For example, The Commonwealth defines small states as sovereign states with a population size of 1.5 million people or less. Using this standard, 46 countries are small. Of the world’s 46 small states, 34 are islands, a number of which are located far from major markets – as in the case of the Pacific islands and Mauritius. Some are widely dispersed multi-island microstates (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2009: 5).
When defining which states to study in this paper (and not attempting to pursue the unique
definition of a small state), relational and quantitative criteria were used as primary.

Fox (1959: 2-3), for example, views small states as international actors that lack the power to
successfully apply power or resist the effective application of power on them by other states.
Such a ‘Dahlian’ understanding of power (Dahl, 1957) in the context of small states studies is
widely accepted (Maass, 2009: 72-73).

Despite the major problem known as the “ambiguity and elusiveness of the small state
definition” (see Maass, 2009; Kurecic, 2012) the decision was made to determine an exact
number of states which would be the object of study in this paper. The small states were firstly
grouped into the regional groupings that were determined concerning the previous research on
the afore-mentioned topic.

Tab. 1: The small states studied: continents, regional groupings, states included, and the
criteria for defining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent/world region</th>
<th>Groups of small states on the continent/world region</th>
<th>The small states included</th>
<th>The criteria used for classification and explanations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Europe (39)</strong></td>
<td>Small states of the EU (20)</td>
<td>Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden</td>
<td>The relational criteria were used only on the systemic level (large and small EU members), because the depth of the integration among states, and not on the level of the state (small state and big neighbor etc.). The population cut-off size of 12 million inhabitants was used as a compromise. The Netherlands, with a population of 16.85 million, numbers five and a half million inhabitants more than Belgium, with a population of 11.22 million. Of the current 28 EU member states, 20 EU members fell below the limit of 12 million inhabitants. This criterion produced the same results as the second criterion used: the categorization in terms of the number of EU states fitting into two defined groups. Panke (2008) defined small states according to the political weight they possess (with cut-off level of the EU27 average votes in the Council of Ministers (12.78).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small European states that opted to stay outside of the EU (3)</td>
<td>Iceland, Norway, Switzerland</td>
<td>Iceland and Norway are NATO and EFTA members'. Switzerland is neutral and maintains deep economic relations with the EU through bilateral agreements. Countries of high or very high income, which are not in the EU because their population does not want them to be the EU member states.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Microstates of Europe (5) | Andorra  
Lichtenstein  
Monaco  
San Marino  
the Vatican City State | Very small states that can be defined as microstates and de facto protected areas, under the protection of larger states (France, Italy, Spain, Austria), from which they benefit vi. |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Western Balkans states (6) | Albania  
Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Kosovo  
Macedonia  
Montenegro  
Serbia | Former Yugoslavia minus Slovenia and Croatia (the EU member states) plus Albania. Countries with many internal problems that have been torn by wars, corruption, and the overall pauperization for the last quarter of a century. Declared intentions to join the EU. Because of the internal and unsolved mutual problems, perspectives for that remain bleak. |
| Small non-integrated states in the European and Caucasian part of the Post-Soviet space (5) | Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Belarus  
Georgia  
Moldova | Larger and more powerful neighbors. Dependence on Russia in many spheres (except Azerbaijan). |

### Asia (19)

| Small states of Central Asia (4) | Kyrgyzstan  
Mongolia  
Tajikistan  
Turkmenistan | These states are land-locked, have a low population density, surrounded by the major world powers (Russia and/or China) and/or regional powers and larger states in general (Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan). They are significantly weaker than their neighbors are, economically, demographically, politically, and militarily. |
| Small states of the Near East (3) | Israel  
Jordan  
Lebanon | Three very different states, classified by the population criterion and their regional position. Israel is of course, because of its international influence, military and economic power a small power, much more than a typical small state. |
| Small states of the Arabian Peninsula (5) | Bahrain  
Kuwait  
Oman  
Qatar  
The United Arab Emirates | These states are petro-dollar monarchies, surrounded and influenced by larger states and powers, Saudi Arabia particularly, which acts like an ally and a protector of most of these states. Iran, as a neighbor across the Persian Gulf, is on the other hand the prime external reason of concern for these states, especially after the overthrow of S. Hussein in Iraq. |
| Small states of South Asia (2) | Bhutan  
Maldives | Bhutan is a small, underdeveloped state. It is land-locked and heavily dependent on India vii. Maldives are a small island state. |
| Small states of Southeast Asia (5) | Brunei  
Cambodia  
Laos  
Singapore  
Timor-Leste | This group is comprised of two states in the mainland part of Southeast Asia (Cambodia and Laos – a landlocked state) and three states that occupy the parts of islands (Brunei on the island of Borneo, Timor-Leste on the island of Timor) or islands (Singapore) viii. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Americas (23)</th>
<th>Small states of the Caribbean (15)</th>
<th>Small states of Central America (6)</th>
<th>Small states of South America (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda Bahamas, the Barbados Belize Dominica Dominican Republic Grenada Guyana Haiti Jamaica Saint Kitts and Nevis Saint Lucia Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Suriname Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>Guyana and Suriname were included in the Caribbean although they geographically belong to South America. Nevertheless, their history, culture, economic ties position them (geopolitically, economically, culturally etc.) much closer to the Caribbean than to South America. The same argument was used for Belize, located on the Central American isthmus, but was joined to the small states of the Caribbean. The three states are also not a part of Latin America, as a cultural region. Cuba was not included among the small states of the Caribbean because of the size of its population, its unique historical and current geopolitical position and the level of its foreign policy activity and capabilities.</td>
<td>Costa Rica El Salvador Guatemala Honduras Nicaragua Panama These are the states of the Central American isthmus, between Mexico and Colombia. Except Costa Rica, all these states show a significant level of weakness, besides smallness. They have much larger and more powerful neighbors (The U.S.A., Mexico).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Uruguay Paraguay Uruguay was included because of its small population and larger neighbors (Brasil and Argentina). However, it is not a weak state. Paraguay was included for the same reasons as Uruguay plus a lower level of economic development and a land-locked position.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Africa^ (31)</th>
<th>Small states of Northern Africa (2)</th>
<th>Small states of Western Africa (10)</th>
<th>Small states of Central Africa (4)</th>
<th>Small states of Eastern Africa (11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Libya Tunisia</td>
<td>Benin Burkina Faso Cabo Verde Gambia, the Guinea-Bissau Liberia Mauritania Sao Tome and Principe Sierra Leone Togo</td>
<td>Central African Republic Congo, Republic Equatorial Guinea Gabon</td>
<td>Burundi Comoros Djibouti Eritrea Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The reason for including Libya and Tunisia among small states of (the Northern) Africa is that these states are much smaller than their neighbors are.</td>
<td>Determining factors were relational criteria. However, population was also taken into account. Mali and Niger were not included because they are primarily weak and not so small states (especially if their territory is counted). However, their weakness is not a direct consequence of their smallness.</td>
<td>Central African Republic was included because of its small population, weakness and-locked position. Gabon and Equatorial Guinea especially, and Republic of Congo as well, besides their abundant oil reserves, have small populations and much larger neighbors.</td>
<td>Overall weakness, poor economic performance and the inferior position to their powerful and rather hostile neighbors (Ethiopia and Sudan) were used as the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Mauritius
Rwanda
Seychelles
South Sudan
Uganda
Zimbabwe

| Small states of Southern Africa (4) | Botswana
Lesotho
Namibia
Swaziland | Botswana and Namibia were included primarily because of their small population and proximity to the much larger and more powerful South Africa. Botswana is also a land-locked state (as are Lesotho and Swaziland). |

### Oceania (12)

| Small states of Melanesia (4) | Fiji
Papua New-Guinea
Solomon Islands
Vanuatu | The small states of Oceania were primarily defined by their insular (in some cases archipelagic character and its remoteness). All states of Oceania are small and island states and some of them can be also considered as microstates. Papua New Guinea, although much larger than the other small states of Oceania, was included because of its ties and closeness to the region, and it shares many of the small and weak states’ characteristics. New Zealand was not included in this research, although its population is only 4.5 million. However, it represents a true giant for almost all of the small island states (and especially microstates) of Oceania.

| Small states of Micronesia (5) | Federated States of Micronesia, the;
Kiribati
Marshall Islands
Nauru
Palau |  |

| Small states of Polynesia (3) | Samoa
Tonga
Tuvalu |  |

### 4 CONCLUSION

According to the classification developed for the purpose of this paper, based on the combination of quantitative and relational criteria, small states comprise about two thirds of all the world’s states. When we are able to classify small states, then we can study them as groups and make comparative analyses of their behavior and achievements. Except North America and Australia, small states were identified in every large region of the world. In some regions, small state comprise a large proportion or majority of all states, and in Oceania – all states except New Zealand are small. The classification of small states in this paper was made according to their regional affiliation, thereby accentuating different, regionally determined criteria, classifying various states that differ significantly in their quantitative characteristics as small, which confirms the relevance of relational criteria. Further research, which will be developed as a part of the project “Small States in the Multipolar World”, on which the co-authors are working, will provide more in-depth findings about the specificities of small states and small economies in the contemporary world.
5 REFERENCES


---

1 “Being ‘a small state is tied to a specific spatio-temporal context’ and it is this context, ‘rather than general characteristics of the state, defined by indicators such as its absolute size or size of GDP relative to other states. (…) "Smallness’ shrinks and expands ‘according to the waves of change in international power relationships” (Steinmetz and Wivel, 2010: 7).

2 The research has shown that there is no consistent correlation between population size and other measures of state size. In response to this criticism, scholars have not abandoned ‘population size’ as a criterion, however. Instead, the size of a state’s population has been integrated with additional criteria (Olafsson, 1998, 8-10). The population as a determinant of the state’s smallness simply cannot be ignored.

iii Thorhallsson (2004) considers states with a population of 38 million and above to the large states of the EU and the states with a population below 17 million small states. The only state that therefore would not fit into this classification (large and small EU states) would be Romania (which actually joined in 2007, therefore at the time of Thorhallsson’s classification still was not an EU member state).

iv With the entry of Croatia into the EU, the average voting weight in the Council of Ministers has decreased from 12.78 to 12.57. Therefore, the dividing line between Netherlands and the other states with less than 13 votes remained intact, leaving all states in the same groups according to previously used Panke's methodology. Voting system in the EU Council of Ministers has changed since November 2014. However, until 31 March 2017, member states can still request to use the previous rule for qualified majority voting.

The states, which vary enormously in their population, territory, and economic power, were grouped into one group based on their EU membership and the fact that these 20 states (out of EU’s 28) comprise only about 22 percent of EU’s population and about 20 percent of its economic power. The fact that describes the asymmetry in the EU regarding the economic power of certain members is best described by the fact the German economy was in 2014 slightly larger than the economies of these 20 states combined: Germany’s GDP amounted for 3 852.6 billion USS, while the GDP of the EU20 states was 3 669.8 billion USS. The GDP of the EU’s eight largest states (by population) amounted 80.1% of the EU’s GDP, while the GDP of EU 20 amounted for only 19.9% of the EU’s GDP. If Romania was excluded and Sweden included (since its economy is among the EU’s eight largest economies), the asymmetry would be even more visible.


v Bailes (2009: 18) considers all Nordic states as small, even Sweden.

vi Determining micro-size are not limited to choosing the right quantitative geographic or demographic attribute(s) for measurement. More importantly, there is little consensus over the issue of which particular quantitative threshold should be used for isolating microstates from larger political units (Dumienski, 2014: 11). Defining microstates suffers from the similar problem as defining small states: quantitative cut-offs, negative definitions (what microstate is not) and so on. These states should be smaller than small states. However, the questions always remain how smaller and by what criteria. In addition, the “eternal” question as well: what is a small state? This must be answered before defining microstate as “a very small state” or “smaller than small state”.

Oest and Wivel (2010: 432) have rightly pointed out that any definition of smallness based exclusively on perception obscures “the distinction between microstates, small states and middle powers” and as such cannot be useful for isolating microstates from other types of polities.

vii Due to the enormous size and importance of India in the region, all states except Pakistan could be considered as small if we would only study South Asia and use only the relational criteria.

viii Singapore is classified as a small state primarily because of its small territory and the fact that it has much larger neighbors. Nevertheless, its economic power and strategic importance make it a small power, much more
than just another small state. Cambodia and Laos are surrounded by much larger neighbors, of which Vietnam is quite dominant. In the insular part of the region, all states are certainly small in comparison to Indonesia.

Bolivia could also be included if the qualitative and relational criteria would be used only (without a regard to its population and size). It is also land-locked and therefore geographically handicapped state, surrounded by larger and more powerful, often in history hostile neighbors (Chile, Peru).

To determine which states should be considered as small in Africa (especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa) was the most difficult task. The quantitative criteria, especially when it comes to economy, are difficult to combine with population and size of most of the African states (especially the LDCs – in many cases these states have a large or at least a significant area, a midsize population and a very small economy due to the extremely low level of economic development). So the qualitative (political (in) stability, the quality of institutions, the level of political freedom, and degree of corruption etc.) and relational criteria come in. Africa is the continent where in most cases smallness also means weakness (small AND weak states). Nevertheless, most states that are not small by their size and/or population can be also considered as weak. Therefore, the criteria for defining small states are very difficult to apply and can be always disavowed. A land-locked position, which is a feature of a number of small states in Africa, also contributes to their overall weakness, low economic performance, and especially their weakness in the relations with their neighbors. Besides the qualitative criteria, relational criteria were very useful because it was possible to see the position of states towards their neighboring states. The states that had significantly larger (by the criteria of population and the size of the economy) and more powerful neighbors were much easier considered as small.

These neighbors have not shown the aspirations towards these states, and the influence of outer, former colonial/imperial powers (France, the United Kingdom) and the U.S.A. was always stronger throughout the 20th century and now than the influence of the immediate neighbors (Egypt, Algeria). This is a fact that tells us much about the de facto weakness of these neighbors (although larger than the states mentioned) and the involvement of more powerful external states in the region.

Of course, all states of the Western and Central Africa are small in comparison to Nigeria, but a line had to be drawn somewhere between the small and mid-size states in these regions. It goes for South Africa in the southern part of the African continent as well.

Its only proximate neighboring state other than the small states of Oceania is Australia, which is much large and more populous. Nevertheless, the two states share deep connections and are allies, up to a level of military alliance (ANZUS Pact). The relational criteria and the regional position of New Zealand determined why it was not included among the small states of Oceania.