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Politics and democracy in microstates. A comparative analysis of the effects of size on contestation and inclusiveness

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CHAPTER THREE

Personalism, Executive Dominance, and Particularism

The Academic Literature on Microstates

1. Introduction: The *Polis* Revisited: the Re-Emergence of Microstates

Out of the twenty-one microstates that are analyzed in the current dissertation,¹ none was a member of the United Nations before 1974, when Grenada was the first of them to join. Whereas the autonomy of the European microstates was already recognized for centuries, none of them had joined the UN at its founding in 1945, due to the reluctance on the part of larger states to accept microstates as full members.² Of the four European microstates Andorra's political status was always somewhat indistinct, as the territory was jointly ruled by two Co-Princes that resided outside the Principality.³ A process of political reform that started with the creation of representative political institutions in the early 1980s and culminated with the enactment of a new constitution in 1993 brought this situation to an end, and ascertained the complete sovereignty of Andorra, which was validated with UN-membership in that same year. The other three European microstates of Liechtenstein, Monaco, and San Marino joined the UN in the early 1990s as well, which marked the definite recognition of their statehood (Duursma 1996: 492-494).

Outside of Europe, the acquirement of United Nations-membership by microstates mostly coincided with the attainment of decolonization and independence. In this light, it can be pointed out that the decolonization of island microstates generally occurred at a later stage than decolonization in Asia and Africa, which entails that many microstates actually form part of Huntington's

¹ This number results from the decision to apply a cut-off point of less than 250.000 inhabitants as a criterion for classification as a microstate. In addition, UN-membership is applied as a scope condition to exclude non-independent territories and dependencies. In the next chapter, more attention will be paid to the explanation and justification of these parameters.

² This was not so much a denial of the sovereignty of these microstates, but rather an unwillingness to bequeath microstates with all the rights that full UN-membership entails. Larger states were especially concerned that small states would form a majority and therefore dominate the General Assembly (Duursma 1996: 131-136).

³ From 1278 onwards these used to be the Count of Foix and the Bishop or Urgell, but due to the transfer of the former's claims to France in 1607, the French President is the current second Co-Prince in addition to the Bishop.

third wave of democratization (1991).⁴ In the Pacific Ocean, the island nations of Samoa,⁵ Nauru, and Tonga became independent in 1962, 1968, and 1970 respectively, and as such emerged as the first independent microstates outside of Europe. In the Eastern Caribbean, Grenada was the first island microstate to be granted statehood in 1974, with the other five island states in this region following between 1978 and 1983. The 1974-Carnation Revolution in Portugal resulted in the decolonization of all of its colonies, one of which is the contemporary African microstate of São Tomé and Príncipe, which became independent in 1975. One year later, the Republic of Seychelles became the second independent African microstate. The Pacific microstates of Tuvalu, Kiribati, and Vanuatu acquired statehood in 1978, 1979, and 1980 respectively, and in this region the former US Trust Territories of the Marshall Islands (1986), the Federated States of Micronesia (1986), and Palau (1994) have become the world's youngest microstates.⁶

A remarkable aspect of the seventeen non-European microstates is that a wide majority of them is a former Anglo-American colony; ten of them used to be British colonies, and three were American Trust Territories. The remaining four were Australian (Nauru) and New Zealander (Samoa) trusteeships, a Portuguese colony (São Tomé and Príncipe), and a jointly ruled British-French condominium (Vanuatu). Whereas most of the larger former British islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific are now independent states,⁷ larger French islands such as Martinique and Guadeloupe in the Caribbean, Mayotte and La Réunion in the Indian Ocean, and New Caledonia in the Pacific have not acquired independence. In general, the French have thus retained much more of their island colonies, and it is telling that the only ex-French colony among the contemporary independent microstates is Vanuatu, which was jointly ruled with the United Kingdom.⁸ Since

⁴ Since Huntington excludes countries with less than one million inhabitants in his analysis, these cases are not examined in the volume. However, inclusion of these countries would have resulted in about twenty additional cases of third wave-democratization, which means that Huntington excludes about one third of available cases from his analysis.

⁵ Until 1997 this microstate was known as Western Samoa (to distinguish it from American Samoa).

⁶ As twenty-one microstates thus became member of the United Nations in the twenty-year period between 1974 and 1994, it is somewhat remarkable and perhaps revealing that since then no new ones have entered. In many dependencies and overseas territories independence movements continue to struggle for autonomy and self-government, but support for these movements seems to be fading rather than growing.

⁷ Some of the smaller islands, such as Anguilla, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, and the Cayman Islands in the Caribbean, and the Pitcairn Islands in the Pacific, continue to be part of the United Kingdom.

⁸ This is also demonstrated by the fact that the United Kingdom was a strong proponent of independence of Vanuatu (at that time still the New Hebrides), whereas France opposed it for a long time (Van Trease 2005: 299-300).

microstates are particularly prone to retain the political institutions that they inherited from their colonizer (Farrugia 1993: 223; Sutton 2007a: 202-203), it is no surprise that the Westminster majoritarian model of government predominates in this group of countries (Anckar 2008c: 75).

Table 3.1: List of Microstates by Population Size, Area Size, and Decolonization⁹

| Country | People | Area in km² | State Since | Colonizer |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Nauru | 9.322 | 21 | 1968 | Australia |
| Tuvalu | 10.544 | 26 | 1978 | UK |
| Palau | 20.956 | 459 | 1994 | USA |
| Monaco | 30.539 | 2 | <i>1297</i> | - |
| San Marino | 31.817 | 61 | <i>301</i> | - |
| Liechtenstein | 35.236 | 160 | <i>1866</i> | - |
| St. Kitts and Nevis | 50.314 | 261 | 1983 | UK |
| Marshall Islands | 67.182 | 181 | 1986 | USA |
| Dominica | 72.969 | 751 | 1978 | UK |
| Andorra | 84.825 | 468 | <i>1278/</i> | - |
| Antigua and Barbuda | 87.884 | 443 | 1981 | UK |
| Seychelles | 89.188 | 455 | 1976 | UK |
| Kiribati | 100.743 | 811 | 1979 | UK |
| St. Vincent and the Grenadines | 103.869 | 389 | 1979 | UK |
| Tonga | 105.916 | 747 | 1970 | UK |
| Federated States of Micronesia | 106.836 | 702 | 1986 | USA |
| Grenada | 108.419 | 344 | 1974 | UK |
| St. Lucia | 161.557 | 616 | 1979 | UK |
| São Tomé and Príncipe | 179.506 | 964 | 1975 | Portugal |
| Samoa | 193.161 | 2.831 | 1962 | N-Zealand |
| Vanuatu | 224.564 | 12.189 | 1980 | UK-France |

In table 3.1, the twenty-one microstates that are at the heart of the current dissertation have been listed and ranked on the basis of their population size and territorial size. In addition, in the fourth and fifth columns the year in which the microstates gained independence and the former colonial powers who ruled the countries before this time have been presented. Despite the fact that they have been exceptionally understudied, in the last decades a small yet insightful body of literature on various political aspects of the microstates has emerged. Due to the fact that these countries are clustered in four regions of the

⁹ Data have been retrieved from the CIA World Factbook (2011), and area size has been presented in square kilometers. For the four European microstates no colonial powers have been listed, since these countries were never formally colonized. The years in which they gained statehood have been presented in italics, since these dates are not official, and because the autonomy of these microstates has regularly been in question even after the initial attainment of independence.

world, many of these publications however focus exclusively on the microstates in one region (e.g. the Eastern Caribbean microstates), or are case studies of only one microstate. However different the microstates may be, and however differing conclusions these various publications may draw, on the basis of these books and articles an image of the various political aspects that microstates share can be acquired.

Whereas an extensive overview of the theoretical debate on the political effects of size was offered in the previous chapter, the present chapter will discuss the more empirical case study-literature on the political characteristics of microstates, as it has appeared after their re-emergence on the international political scene in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰ This case study-literature is not only different from the theoretical literature in the sense that it is more empirical and to a larger extent based on real-world observations and evidence, but also because it generally does not – or at least not explicitly – employ size as the major explanatory variable of political characteristics.¹¹ This is primarily a consequence of the fact that only one or a few cases are studied, as a result of which findings are often treated and explained as idiosyncrasies of the cases under scrutiny. As is shown in the current chapter however, many of these apparent idiosyncrasies are observable in microstates around the world, which suggests that they are in fact no idiosyncrasies at all, but rather can potentially be listed as political consequences of smallness.

In the present chapter, the nature and characteristics of microstate-democracy are discussed. This discussion is structured on the basis of Dahl's conceptualization of polyarchy, which identifies democracy as consisting of the two separate dimensions of contestation and inclusiveness (1971: 3-4). For reasons that are more comprehensively discussed in chapter 4, in the present study these dimensions are further subdivided into the following four sub-dimensions:

- 1) Contestation I: the presence of political alternatives and a political opposition;
- 2) Contestation II: the horizontal balance of power between institutions;
- 3) Inclusiveness I: the relations between citizens and politicians;
- 4) Inclusiveness II: the political participation of citizens.

¹⁰ Exceptions are the European microstates, on the politics of which a handful of earlier empirical studies exist.

¹¹ In this sense, whereas the literature discussed in the previous chapter was primarily *variable-oriented*, the publications that are examined in the current chapter are chiefly *case-oriented* (Ragin 1997).

In the current chapter, these four sub-dimensions provide structure to the discussion of the case study-literature on microstates, since the chapter offers a sequential outline of the ranking of microstates on each of the four sub-dimensions.

Whereas the literature discussed in the previous chapter assumes size to be the primary explanation of democracy and other political characteristics, this chapter commences by outlining a number of explanations of microstate-democracy that assume this phenomenon to be spurious in nature; i.e. that attempt to explain it by pointing to co-varying factors such as (colonial) history and geography.¹² The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth sections of the chapter delve into the case-study literature on four components of democracy in the microstates, which in sequence are the presence of political alternatives and political opposition (section # 3), the horizontal balance of power between institutions (# 4), the relations between citizens and politicians (# 5) and the political participation of citizens (# 6). In the conclusion of the chapter, the central notions and features that follow from the case study-literature are connected with the theoretical literature on size that was discussed in the preceding chapter.

2. Explaining Democracy in Microstates: Spurious Correlations

The theoretical literature on size and democracy that has been discussed in the previous chapter generally considers size to be the main explanatory variable of political (and economic and international) developments, and therefore also of democracy. By contrast, large-N studies on democracy that have added size as only one many independent variables, and that have discovered statistical correlations with democracy, mostly attempt to explain this effect by pointing to a co-variance between size and other variables (cf. Hadenius 1992; Stepan and Skach 1993; Barro 1999; Clague et al. 2001). In essence, these scholars therefore argue that the statistical correlation between size and democracy is spurious in nature, and that size is not at the root of this association. In addition to these quantitative large-N studies, a number of more theoretical publications also endorse this view. The primary variables to which size has been linked in order

¹² According to some authors, the effect of size on politics can be seen as necessarily indirect, and therefore always depends on at least one intervening variable (Ott 2000: 129). However, whereas the theoretical literature on size that was discussed in the previous chapter generally adopts size as the primary explanatory factor of a certain political framework, many other authors have linked size to one of the more often-mentioned democracy-stimulating factors. The most noteworthy explanations of this latter kind are discussed in the third section of this chapter.

to explain democracy are religion, geography and insularity, colonial history, and international politics and foreign policy.

Culture and religion have occasionally been proposed as explanations of microstate-democracy, most notably by Axel Hadenius (1992: 126-127). After having discovered a statistical correlation between smallness, insularity, and levels of democracy, this author stresses that “it is more interesting to observe that island states are far more Protestant dominated than others” (Hadenius 1992: 126).¹³ When Hadenius adds Protestantism to the model, the significance of the relationship between size and democracy disappears. According to Dag and Carsten Anckar however, who embark on a review of Hadenius’ findings, these conclusions are erroneous, primarily because all Protestant nations in Hadenius’ sample are actually island nations (Anckar and Anckar 1995: 215-216), which renders it impossible to control for causality. In addition, the Anckars argue that Protestantism may have a different meaning and different implications in different world regions, which makes it vulnerable to conceptual stretching (1995: 217). In Pacific island microstates for example, Protestantism was imported from outside and has been blended with traditional religions and customs, thus creating subtypes that are incomparable to the Western European type of Protestantism. When the religious characteristics of the twenty-one microstates are examined, it becomes clear that this group also includes a number of predominantly Catholic nations, which are no less democratic than the Protestant microstates.¹⁴

It was already noted in the previous chapter that the variable of size has often been linked to insularity, because most microstates (and all non-European ones) are island nations. According to a number of authors, insularity is actually at the basis of the ostensible statistical connection between size and democracy

¹³ This line of argument builds on Max Weber’s (1958) thesis that Protestantism stimulates capitalism and individual responsibility. The notion that certain cultures and religions foster democratic development whereas others undermine it has been most prominently raised by Samuel Huntington (1984: 207-209; 1991: 72-73; 1996: 70), who argues that ‘Western Christianity’ is conducive to democracy whereas for example Islam and Confucianism are not. This argument has been confirmed by other authors (Bollen 1979: 582-583; Hadenius 1992: 118-121; Barro 1999: 175-177; Bruce 2004), but has also been strongly refuted by others (Sen 1999; Stepan 2000; Norris and Inglehart 2002). As the accuracy of the hypothesis thus remains unsure, the debate on it is highly contentious, with the recurring accusation of ethnocentrism being expressed (cf. Said 2004: 293).

¹⁴ In addition to the four European microstates, São Tomé and Príncipe, Dominica, St. Lucia, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Seychelles all have Roman Catholic majorities (CIA World Factbook 2011). In fact, the only non-democracy among the microstates is a Protestant country; the Kingdom of Tonga. Although Protestantism is thus clearly not the driving factor of democracy in microstates, it should be noted that allegedly democracy-undermining religions and ideologies like Islam and Confucianism are not present in the microstates, as all of these countries have predominantly Christian populations.

(Stepan and Skach 1993: 11-13; Clague et al. 2001: 23; Baldacchino 2005: 35-36; Congdon Fors 2007; Anckar 2008a: 454-455). It is a common supposition in the literature that island countries are more likely to democratize than non-island states, primarily because of their geographical isolation and remoteness. From an external point of view, isolation implies that conflicts or turmoil in other countries cannot spillover to island nations, which therefore creates a much more stable political environment. Internally, isolation is supposed to stimulate social cohesion and a sense of community, and in that sense island status can be supposed to further exacerbate the sociological consequences of smallness (Clague et al. 2001: 23; Anckar 2008a: 437).

Although the overlap between size and insularity renders it difficult to disentangle the separate effects of these variables on democracy, and both small countries and island countries display comparatively higher levels of democracy, it should be remarked that whereas the smallest countries (the twenty-one studied in this dissertation) are with one exception all democracies, the same cannot be said of all island states, since many larger island nations are non-democracies (e.g. Cuba, Fiji, Haiti, Madagascar, and Singapore). As a result, it appears that the positive effects of insularity primarily materialize in the case of small islands, which would mean that the democracy-stimulating effect of size surpasses that of insularity.

In addition to the geographical factor of insularity, some authors have argued that their geographical location rather than size renders microstates to be democratic. In an article by Carlo Masala (2004), various hypotheses that aim to explain the link between smallness and democracy are tested for significance, but these are all rejected as the author comes to the conclusion that the association between the variables is an accidental result of the fact that many small island states are located in the proximity and sphere of influence of larger, democratic states, since “[a]ll micro-islands studied here are located in areas that should be classified as belonging to the indirect sphere of influence of the United States or democratic regional powers (like Australia)” (Masala 2004: 252).¹⁵ Moreover, Masala argues that both the US and Australia actively promote democratic governance in the Caribbean and Pacific island states, respectively, which can fulfill the function of a “rim and buffer” (Masala 2004: 254).¹⁶ In line

¹⁵ Translation by author from original German text: “[a]lle hier untersuchten Mikroinseln befinden sich in Gebieten, die dem mittelbaren Einflussgebiet der USA oder demokratischer Regionalhegemone (wie Australien) zugeordnet werden müssen”.

¹⁶ Specifically, Masala argues that “Beide Staaten, sowohl die USA als auch Australien, agieren aus ihren eigenen Interessen heraus als aktive Unterstützer (...) demokratischer Staatsformen in den karibischen und süd pazifischen Mikroinseln” (2004: 254). (Translation [WV]: “Both states, the US

with these ideas, other scholars have argued that the geographical clustering of microstates increases the spread of democracy due to demonstration effects.¹⁷ According to Benjamin Reilly, for example, the Caribbean and Pacific regions are the most democratic areas in the developing world, primarily as a result of the presence of so many democratic microstates (Reilly 2002: 355-356).

The prevalence of democracy in microstates has also repeatedly been explained on the basis of their (colonial) historical characteristics (Caldwell et al. 1980: 954, 960; Baldacchino 1993: 31-34; Payne 1993a: 58-60; Sutton 1999: 68-69; Srebrnik 2004: 333). In the literature, it is repeatedly pointed out that most microstates are former British (or Anglo-American) colonies, experienced longer and more intense periods of colonial rule, and mostly acquired independence by means of a relatively tranquil and skillfully managed process of decolonization. Furthermore, several authors emphasize the tendency of microstates to stick to the type of government they inherited from their former colonial rulers (Sutton and Payne 1993: 586-587; Anckar 2004b: 215-217; Sutton 2007a: 202-203).¹⁸

Regarding the length and intensity of colonialism, the argument has often been made that microstates, being island nations, were among the first countries to be colonized. Furthermore, due to their small dimensions, the impact of colonization in small island nations is hypothesized to be amplified. Both the increased length and intensity of colonization are supposed to engender a better socialization in democratic values and traditions among the populations of microstates, which in turn creates a better environment for the development of democracy after independence.¹⁹ In addition to the intensity and durability of

as well as Australia, out of their own interests act as active supporters (...) of democratic forms of government in the Caribbean and South Pacific micro-islands”).

¹⁷ In the academic literature on the causes of democratization, regional and demonstration effects have repeatedly been heralded as a major explanatory variable in accounting for the spread of democracy (Starr 1991: 371-377; Gasiorowski 1995: 893; Gasiorowski and Power 1998: 744-745, 764-765; Doorenspleet 2004: 318).

¹⁸ Although the notion that their Anglo-American colonial background can explain democracy in microstates has been contradicted by several authors (Diamond and Tsalik 1999: 118-119; Anckar 2002b: 384-385), the correlation between the variables of size and colonial heritage is certainly remarkable (Clague et al. 2001: 27, 31). According to Anckar and Diamond and Tsalik however, there is strong evidence for an inverted relationship, in the sense that ex-British colonies are in general more likely to be democratic *because* many of them are so small. This argument is buttressed by the observation that among all states in the world, only less than half of the former British colonies is now a democracy (Anckar 2002b: 384-385).

¹⁹ According to Godfrey Baldacchino, colonialism played a particularly influential role in microstates due to the fact that most of these islands had a very weak native population that was rapidly annihilated by the colonizers, or had no native population to begin with (1993: 31). As a consequence, many microstate-societies were actually *created* by colonial powers, which had ample opportunities to politically educate the subdued native or imported slave population. According to Caldwell and others, the extended colonial ties have made microstate-populations more ‘westernized’ than other third-world societies, in large part because they were part of the European maritime system already before colonization started elsewhere (1980: 560).

colonization, the smooth transition to independence of microstates has been cited as beneficial to the establishment of democracy. As Baldacchino argues, “few [microstates] actually *struggled* for independence; for many, the process was undramatic, somewhat haphazard, or even sudden” (1993: 31; italics in original).²⁰ Finally, multiple scholars emphasize that due to the propensity of microstates to preserve the institutional structure of their former colonizers, it is evidently plausible that the maintenance of democratic norms and procedures can be explained on this basis as well (Sutton 1987: 8-12).

A final variable with which size has been linked in order to explain democracy is the element of international relations and foreign policy, which in the case of microstates primarily entails vulnerability and dependence. According to various scholars, the foreign policy of microstates can be understood in terms of the model of international patron-client relations (Carney 1989; Sutton and Payne 1993: 589; Seibert 1999: 12).²¹ As Masala points out, democratic governance in microstates can be explained on the basis of these clientelistic international relations, in which American and European patrons demand adherence to democratic norms and procedures in exchange for economic and military support (2004: 254).²² In a seminal article, Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way argue that *linkage* to (Western) democratic countries generally provides a greater stimulus to democratization than *leverage* from the West (2005: 21). Linkage may exist on different terrains, such as economics,

²⁰ The gradualist decolonization of microstates has also been referred to in other publications, where attention is also paid to the fact that the process of decolonization occurred on the basis of extensive negotiations and consensus between colonial authorities and microstate-representatives (Ott 2000: 70; Srebrnik 2004: 333). In fact, the progress towards independence was often initiated and fueled by the authorities in London rather than by local grassroots groups, and self-government was actually frequently opposed by large segments of the microstate-societies. The progress towards independence was mostly also stringently controlled by the colonial powers, which had the competence to postpone the attainment of independence if for example no adequate constitution could be decided upon (cf. Ghai 1988: 4-6 for the Pacific microstates). In some microstates (e.g. St. Kitts and Nevis, Vanuatu, and Kiribati), independence was delayed due to lingering tensions between various islands, which had to be resolved before London would permit self-rule.

²¹ According to Christopher Carney, who has developed a conceptual framework to apply patron-client relations to international relations, this type of relationship should be distinguished from plain dependency-relationships, primarily on the grounds that the patron-client relationship is voluntary and based on a certain degree of affection and solidarity (1989: 46-47). In international politics, the role of the client state is to deliver ‘intangible goods’ such as ideological convergence, international solidarity, and strategic advantage to the patron state, in exchange for material goods such as financial, economic, or military support. In order to keep receiving material support, the client state needs to display continuing international solidarity and loyalty to the patron state, for example by voting according to the interests of the patron state in the UN General Assembly.

²² The provision of aid and other forms of external investments has often been linked to democratization in the academic literature (Wright 2009), although this finding has been contradicted by other scholars (Bräutigam and Knack 2004; Knack 2004).

geopolitics, and socio-cultural aspects, but the authors argue that geographical proximity is the most imperative factor (ibid.: 23). Furthermore, and of interest to the present study, the authors point out that the effects of linkage are augmented in the case of small, economically and militarily weak states.²³

Whereas the global re-emergence of microstates after the 1970s has resulted in the recurrent observation of a statistical link between smallness and democracy, many scholars hence do not accept explanations of this phenomenon on the basis of the classical theoretical literature on size that was discussed in the previous chapter. When it comes to analyzing the effects of size on politics and democracy in microstates, which is the aim of this dissertation, the theories debated in this section have to be taken into account, since findings that appear to be caused by size might actually result from factors with which size correlates. This does not only pertain to the incidence of democratic government in microstates, but might apply to other political features of these countries as well. Now that the concept of democracy has been somewhat further explicated and a number of alternative explanations of microstate-democracy have been presented, the following four sections will discuss the findings of the case study-literature on microstates with regard to the four sub-dimensions of democracy. Since the (case study literature on the) political systems of the cases that have been selected for in-depth analysis are extensively discussed in chapters to come, the discussion in this chapter focuses on literature on the other seventeen microstates.

3. Contestation in Microstates: Political Alternatives and Opposition

Seeing that out of the twenty-one microstates in the world, only one is not classified as an electoral democracy by Freedom House (the Kingdom of Tonga), in virtually all microstates political alternatives have the right and opportunity to enter the contest for political offices. The presence of this condition of democracy is not only confirmed by Freedom House, but also in the case study literature on individual microstates. Whereas a majority of the Pacific microstates operates without political parties, which complicates the identification of a political opposition, in all other microstates the existence of political alternatives can be confirmed on the basis of the presence of multiple political parties in parliament. This means that formally and institutionally, Dahl's requirement of contestation

²³ In addition to the size of the state, the significance of linkage increases further when no competing issues on Western policy agendas exist, and when no alternative regional power supports the non-democratic regime (Levitsky and Way 2005: 21-22). Levitsky and Way argue that the *combination* of leverage and linkage will yield the most promising situation for democratic development

for public offices is adhered to by almost all microstates. However, the case study-literature on microstates reveals that a focus on this formal and institutional condition obscures the fact that political competition in microstates appears to be of a markedly different nature than in larger democracies.

Whereas political and partisan competition in larger democracies mostly revolves around political cleavages, substantive political interests, and political programs and ideologies, to a large extent this appears not to be the case in microstates. Regarding the European microstates, in his publication on Monaco Georges Grinda for example points out that:

“Unlike many countries, here is no ideological confrontation in the usual sense of the word. Indeed, the political movements, although existing and very active, have nothing in common with party organizations in neighboring countries, where an organized structure, a government programme, and the conquest of power are the objectives. Such movements are associations, in civil law, and on very general themes differentiated more by the respective sensitivity of their leaders and their members than by ideological forces” (Grinda 2007: 72).

In similar fashion, David Beattie points out that between the two main parties of Liechtenstein,²⁴ there is “little if any difference in their political and social philosophies” (2004: 189). Until 1993 formal political parties did not exist in Andorra’s *Consell General de les Valls*, as they were technically outlawed (Eccardt 2005: 82), but according to Joan Becat the two parties that emerged after 1993²⁵ are “necessarily personalized due to the smallness of the electorate and the demographic basis of Andorra” (2010: 155).²⁶

With regard to parties in the Eastern Caribbean microstates, similar observations have been made. As Peters points out, political parties in these countries are basically personalistic, as the demise of a political leader usually results in the downfall of the entire political party (Peters 1992: 109; cf. Grenade 2004: 4; Will 1991: 49 for the example of Grenada).²⁷ This notion is confirmed by Duncan and Woods, who argue that politics in the Anglophone Caribbean is highly personalized:

²⁴ These are the Fatherland Union (*Vaterländische Union - VU*), and the Progressive Citizens’ Party of Liechtenstein (*Fortschrittliche Bürgerpartei in Liechtenstein - FBP*).

²⁵ These are the Liberal Party of Andorra (*Partit Liberal d’Andorra*) and the Social-Democratic Party (*Partit Socialdemòcrata*).

²⁶ Translation by author from original French text: “*forcément personnalisés compte tenu de l’étroitesse du corps électoral et de la base démographique andorrane*”.

²⁷ As Will points out, “In 1989 the partisan landscape of Grenada was highly complicated (...), with the remnants of Mitchell’s NNP competing against Blaize’s TNP, the NDC which was led by three highly independent personalities (including Brathwaite), and the GULP, a highly personalistic party made up of a mesmerized and loyal, but increasingly senior rural ‘crowd’ under the leadership of the island’s unchallenged labour leader Sir Eric Gairy” (Will 1991: 30-31).

“Governing and opposition elites know each other personally. (...) It contributes to often reducing political discourse and conflict over policy issues to personal conflicts. In other words, personalities matter in island democracies and sometimes the cleavages that emerge in the population are as much a division over different personalities as over policy and ideological issues” (2007: 209).

The primacy of personalistic over programmatic contestation seems to entail that political parties are not really distinguishable on the basis of their ideological orientations. As Peters argues;

“While the people in the Caribbean have the right to elect a government every 5 years, they do not so based on national issues. There seems to be no defined “common good”. Political campaigns run by those who wish to represent the people are not centered around issues, but rather on personalities and charisma” (1992: 38-39) .

Whereas this observation applies to the entire region, similar findings have been reported about the individual Eastern Caribbean microstates. For the case of Dominica, Cecilia Babb for example notes that:

“None of the parties espouse a clear national economic, political, and social ideology, and their only role seems to be to compete with each other for management of the state apparatus” (2005: 2).

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Hillebrand and Trefs make a comparable observation, noting that:

“The competition between PPP and SVLP²⁸ determined the country’s two-party system from 1961 to 1974. It focused more on their respective leaders than on their ideological differences” (2005: 596).

In addition to the relative insignificance of ideological and programmatic contestation, in the Eastern Caribbean the personalization of politics has also resulted in the concentration of power in the hands of single individuals, leading to a culture of authoritarian leadership and oppression (Peters 1992: 54). In all six Eastern Caribbean countries, political emancipation was initiated by trade unions which later transformed into political (Labour) parties, and unified and mobilized the population under the banner of working-class ideals. However, in reality these unions advocated the political and economical emancipation of blacks rather than representing an authentic left-wing or socialist ideological platform (Emmanuel 1983; Peters 1992: 38-39). As a result of the fact that these parties managed to remain in office for decades, the leaders of these parties established highly personalistic and often quite authoritarian regimes. The most

²⁸ People’s Political Party, and St. Vincent Labour Party.

illustrious examples of these are found in the Bird family's dynasty in Antigua and Barbuda (1960-2004), and Eric Gairy's rule of Grenada (1967-1979).²⁹

The personalistic instead of programmatic nature of political parties and political competition also emerges in the case study-literature on the African microstate of São Tomé and Príncipe (Seibert 1999: 193; Frynas et al. 2003: 16). Santomean politics is repeatedly described as extremely personalistic, and political parties appear to be based exclusively on interpersonal relations and conflicts (Seibert 1999: 316-317). It is worth quoting Seibert at length about the nature of politics in this African microstate:

Because of small size and insularity, social and political life in São Tomé and Príncipe is marked by a small-town mentality. Among the small elite most people know each other personally and some are interrelated by kinship ties. The spatial and societal distance between rulers and ruled is small. Many citizens are acquainted with details of the politicians' private lives. In such an intimate environment, national politics resembles the characteristics of micro-politics: political actions stem from essentially personal relations based on individual contact rather than the indirect, administrative relationships and formal contacts that dominate in a larger society. Consequently, politics in São Tomé and Príncipe is highly personalized, while personal issues are frequently politicized. The effects of strong personalism in small states are considered as potentially positive, as rulers are personally accessible and can be held directly accountable for their actions, but also potentially negative, since administrative decisions are based on personal factors rather than on impartial rules (1999: 316-317).

Since the reintroduction of multiparty-democracy, three parties have always managed to win seats in the 55-member Santomean National Assembly, but these parties are not cohesive and exist of temporary alliances between individuals. Apart from the prevalence of personalistic politics, this is also a consequence of the general absence of cleavages in the country's society, and the parties therefore do not advocate divergent interests (Seibert 1999: 316).³⁰ Competition seems to be primarily oriented towards the question who can control the state apparatus and state resources, of which the benefits are continuously distributed to political supporters (Seibert 1999: 320-321). In turn, support for political parties and politicians from among the citizens seems to be

²⁹ According to Hillebrands and Schwehm, "[t]he political dynasty of the Bird family has dominated the politics of Antigua and Barbuda since the colony was granted self-government in the late 1950s" (2005a: 61). On Gairy's leadership in Grenada, Archer points out that: "Gairy had no difficulty in completely dominating his own party. Gairy insisted on one-man rule, and there was no group of leaders around him. From the moment Gairy assumed the premiership in 1967 to his removal from office some 12 years later, he controlled every significant state decision in Grenada" (1985: 96).

³⁰ Specifically, Seibert argues that: "There are no big differences between the parties with regard to alternative political programs. (...) The parties do not mirror different socio-economic interests" (1999: 316-317). This conclusion is confirmed by Frynas et al., who point out that "[i]n Santomean politics, differences between the main parties are often only superficial. Personalities and personal connections matter most" (2003: 16).

primarily determined by family and friendship relations. In this light, the popular explanation of the abbreviated version of the country's name, STP as "*somos todos primos*" ("we are all cousins"), indeed seems adequate.

In the Pacific microstates, finally, the absence of political parties entails that politics is automatically more personality-oriented. In various publications, the personalistic nature of political competition is mentioned for the cases of Tuvalu (Panapa and Fraenkel 2008: 5, 9), Nauru (Wettenhall and Thynne 1994: 70; Hughes 2004: 6; Connell 2006a: 56), the Marshall Islands (Meller 1990: 56-57), Kiribati (Van Trease 1993: 17, 56, 67, 79-80, 83), and Tonga (Campbell 2006: 276). In an article on the characteristics of leadership in the Pacific islands, Abby McLeod emphasizes the pervasiveness of personalistic 'big-man' leadership in the region, and points out that "[i]n Melanesia, legislators are accountable to the people on their own terms – that is via the distribution of wealth – not in terms of delivering upon legislative, policy and party-based ideological promises" (2007: 29). In the somewhat larger Pacific microstates in which political parties do play a role (e.g. Samoa and Vanuatu), partisan competition camouflages the more personalistic contestation that undergirds it (Van Trease 2005: 324-327; Morgan 2008: 135).³¹

Although the twenty-one microstates are located in completely different parts of the world, have reached markedly different levels of socio-economic development, and differ on characteristics like culture, religion, and demographics, on the basis of the case study-literature it can be ascertained that *all* of them are characterized by the prevalence of personalistic politics and the relative insignificance of ideological and programmatic competition. This finding, which in the previous chapter was expressed by among others Benedict (1967a: 49), Sutton (1987: 15-16), Lowenthal (1987: 38-39), and Farrugia (1993: 223-224), therefore appears to represent a political feature that in all probability is a key effect of the smallness of these microstates. Due to the fact that these case studies are case-oriented and do not attempt to extrapolate or compare the observed political features to other microstates, many of these authors apparently fail to recognize the effects of smallness on the politics in the cases they study, and rather treat their results as idiosyncrasies of the particular microstate(s) under investigation.

³¹ According to Van Trease, in Vanuatu "[d]ividing up the spoils has become the focus of coalition making; ideology is almost never an issue" (2005: 324).

4. Contestation in Microstates: The Horizontal Balance of Power

In addition to the relative insignificance of ideology and political programs, the case study-literature on microstates also confirms the supposition of executive dominance as an effect of smallness. In the previous chapter, it was discussed how Benedict (1967b: 53-54), Sutton (1987: 12), and Gerring and Zarecki (2011: 8-12) have noted that the governments of microstates are supremely powerful in relation to other political and societal institutions, leading to a distorted institutional balance of power in microstates. In the context of the personalistic politics in microstates, executive dominance often entails that individual politicians are able to accumulate vast powers, leading to personality cults and big man-leadership. To this it can be added that the political leaders of microstates have been found to remain in office for a significantly longer period of time than their colleagues in larger states (Sutton 1987: 16), which obviously increases their opportunities to establish and consolidate their power bases.

Out of the four European microstates, three are principalities and therefore have a Prince (or in the case of Andorra two Co-Princes) as head of state. Although Liechtenstein and Monaco refer to themselves as constitutional monarchies and are also recognized as such by for example Freedom House, the Princes of these microstates unquestionably occupy a much more active and powerful position in their political systems than their counterparts in larger European monarchies.³² In both countries, executive and judicial power is traditionally located in the hands of the Prince, who delegates this power to self-appointed government ministers and judges.³³ Additionally, both Princes have the right of initiative, the right to convoke and dissolve parliament, and have extensive veto-powers, which means that the entire legislative process depends on consensus between the Prince and parliament. Whereas the survival of Liechtenstein's government is dependent on the confidence of both Prince and parliament, Monaco's government is responsible to the Prince only, and the Monegasque National Assembly has no control over the executive (Grinda 2007: 76, 88).³⁴

³² The specific political arrangement of both Monaco and Liechtenstein has in several publications has been described as a division or balance of power between the Prince and the people (cf. Beattie 2004: 174; Grinda 2007: 53; Marxer 2007: introduction).

³³ Since 2003, Liechtenstein's Prince and parliament jointly select and appoint judges (Beattie 2004: 246).

³⁴ Due to these factors, the influential and active political role of the Monegasque and Liechtensteiner Princes seems to render a classification as *semi*-constitutional monarchies more accurate, and their constitutional position appears more similar to those of for example the Moroccan and Jordanian monarchs than to their European colleagues.

As a consequence of the fact that the constitutional and practical political role of non-elected leadership in Monaco and Liechtenstein is thus quite extensive, it can be questioned in how far these countries fulfill Dahl's requirement of contestation for the main political offices (Dahl 1971: 4). The Monegasque and Liechtensteiner Princes are the most powerful players in the political systems of their respective countries, and especially in Monaco elected politicians in the National Assembly have a very limited political role as they do not possess the competence to effectively control the government. As Grinda argues:

"The National Council has no right to restrict the Government's political responsibility; only the Prince can do this. The National Council has no control over the executive since it cannot oblige member of government to resign, nor does it have the right to interrogate, research or investigate the actions of government" (2007: 88).

Whereas elections in these microstates are undoubtedly free and fair, and the condition of inclusiveness is therefore absolutely adhered to, for the main political position – the monarchy – no elections are being organized. In this sense, it is hard to agree with Freedom House's ranking of these countries as full-fledged democracies. In the Andorran political system a similar situation used to exist, but the once omnipotent Co-Princes now occupy a modest and mainly ceremonial political role, comparable to that of the British or Belgian monarchs (Colliard 1993: 386).³⁵ In short, personality-oriented preeminence of the executive can certainly be noted for the cases of Liechtenstein and Monaco, whereas this appears to be no longer the case for Andorra.

As described in the previous section, personalistic leadership and executive dominance also characterize Eastern Caribbean politics. In his analysis of politics and democracy in this region, Peters for instance remarks that:

"What is peculiar about the Eastern Caribbean system is the absolute authority that government somehow inherits. Government officials are able to circumvent laws that they have enacted. They are able to use public resources for personal gain (1992: 9)

³⁵ In contrast to other monarchies Andorra's suzerains do not have to be noblemen, and it is quite remarkable that both of them are no monarchs in their own territories, since one of them is a president and the other a bishop. In former times, there was an informal division of power between the politically-dominant French president and the spiritual and religious authority of the Bishop of Urgell (Colliard 1993: 382). Currently, the Co-Princes retain a real veto when it comes to the ratification of international treaties, and they also appoint judges on the advice of the government (Colliard 1993: 386-387; Eccardt 2005: 84). Furthermore, Andorrans have absolutely no say in the selection and appointment of their co-Princes and their respective representatives in Andorra. Apart from these regulations however, Andorra's co-Princes function as 'normal' heads of state.

The conclusions of Peters on executive dominance are in large part shared and confirmed by Paul Sutton, who highlights how Eastern Caribbean Prime Ministers have managed to dominate their legislatures, judiciaries, bureaucracies, and media (1999: 73-75). With concern to the power of Caribbean prime ministers, Sutton points out that “[s]hort of defeat at a general election the prime minister is invincible” (1999: 73). In case studies on individual microstates, executive dominance is generally substantiated. For instance, in an article on Dominica Anthony Payne highlights the relative weakness of non-governmental institutions:

The weakness of the civil service and state institutions in general, and the absence of a viable civil society continue to constitute key structural constraints to further development” (2008: 328).

On the case of Grenada, Archer highlights how Westminster structures have amplified the authoritarian elements of the system (1985: 94; cf. Hinds 2008: 396 on this issue), and in addition describes how “institutions and mechanisms outside of government which limit the power of a prime minister in metropolitan countries are poorly developed” (ibid.). Finally, in their chapter on elections in Antigua and Barbuda, Hillebrands and Schwehm illustrate how the Bird-dynasty has not only crushed the opposition, but also destabilized and manipulated the media and the judiciary in the country (2005a: 61).

In line with O’Donnell’s observations in larger third wave democracies, on the case of São Tomé and Príncipe Seibert warns that “[t]he democratization process runs the risk to remain restricted to the creation of institutions based on formalist perceptions of liberal democracy” (1999: 244). In particular, Seibert describes how the bureaucracy of this African microstate has been politicized as a consequence of government patronage, arguing that:

“The public administration is perceived as the representative of the ruling party rather than a neutral broker between competing interests representing an overarching national interest. Civil servants do not possess an ethic of neutrality” (1999: 244).

Seibert primarily links executive dominance in São Tomé and Príncipe to the country’s ‘goldfish-bowl society’ and intimate social relationships, as a result of which formal institutional roles fall victim to personal relationships, which limits their neutral and impartial functioning. According to Seibert, the smallness of the microstates, and the ensuing close personal bonds between the elite and the people however also prevented the regime from becoming as oppressive as many mainland African states (Seibert 1999: 150).

In the literature on Pacific microstates, governments have also been observed to dominate their political system at the expense of other institutions. On the case of Tuvalu, Goldsmith argues that government is the largest employer and therefore dominates the microstate's economy (2005: 105-107), whereas Panapa and Fraenkel highlight that "the opposition functions not as check or balance agency" and "parliament is seen as the arm of the government-of-the-day" (2008: 2, 13). In Nauru, Kun et al. observe that:

"The majority of Nauruan parliamentarians do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities. There is a sense that parliament merely rubber stamps legislation presented by the government" (2004: 14).

As Hill finds in the Federated States of Micronesia, also in the Pacific the independence and impartiality of the civil service is undermined by government patronage, and "[w]ithin the public service corruption occurs in the form of nepotism and is an obstacle to the hiring of the most competent public servants and the most qualified contractors" (2004: 5).

The three larger Pacific microstates (Tonga, Samoa, and Vanuatu) have at times experienced less democratic forms of government. As in Liechtenstein and Monaco, Tonga's monarchy continues to play an influential role in this microstate's politics, rendering it the only non-democracy in the group of twenty-one microstates.³⁶ The Tongan parliament, judiciary, and press are all reported to be acting in the interest of the country's monarchy, which undermines their potential democratic role. Whereas Samoa was the first Pacific island nation to become independent in 1962, until 2000 political rights were reserved to Samoa's traditional leaders (the *Matai*) only (Huffer and So'o 2003: 281-282).³⁷ The enduring authority and control of the Samoan *Matai* with regard

³⁶ Tonga has been ruled by the Tupou-royal dynasty since at least 1875, but the origins of the monarchy of this microstate according to some sources goes back to the 10th century. The microstate's government consists of ministers appointed by the King, who mostly have traditional titles as well (James 1994: 242). In recent years, pro-democracy forces united under the Human Rights and Democracy Movement have made inroads into Tongan politics, and in 2006 the first commoner (Feleti Sevele) was elected prime minister of the island nation (Koloamatangi 2009: 231-232). However, when King Tupou IV's nephew Tu'ipelehake who had played a major role in reconciling the King, nobles, and pro-democracy advocates died in a car accident in the same year, the stability of Tongan politics became further imperiled, culminating in the 2008 riots in Tonga's capital Nuku'alofa. In 2010, a major legislative reform that represented a major step in the direction of constitutional monarchy and therefore democracy was implemented. As a consequence of this law, a majority of Tongan legislators is now popularly elected, and the country's Freedom House rating on political rights went from '5' to '3' (Freedom House 2012).

³⁷ The authority of traditional leaders on the local level of politics was augmented as a consequence of the *Village Fono Act*, which allowed for the chiefly council (*Fono*) of each Samoan municipality to rule in matters of custom. In addition, out of the forty-nine MPs, in 2009 forty-

to elections, the judiciary, and the media are the primary reasons for Freedom House to give the country less-than-perfect ratings,³⁸ and the influence of chiefs in many ways seems to consolidate rather than decrease (Macpherson 1997: 44, 48; Freedom House 2012). In Vanuatu, the Anglophone Vanua'aku Party managed to remain in office for eleven years to the detriment of the Francophone opposition (Huffer and Molisa 1999: 102; Morgan 2008: 117). In this period, Vanuatu was autocratically ruled by Father Walter Lini, who brought the country into the Soviet block and advocated 'Melanesian socialism' in the region (Morgan 2008: 121).³⁹ After the end of the Cold War, Vanuatuan politics became characterized by infighting between big man-politicians for power and influence, with endemic instability and factionalism as a result (Huffer and Molisa 1999: 102; Van Trease 2005: 298; Paterson 2009: 251).

In addition to the earlier observed prevalence of personalistic over programmatic contestation, the current section has revealed that microstates are particularly prone to executive dominance in relation to other institutions. Whereas this occurs in the form of powerful, institutionalized non-elected leadership in some of the European and Pacific microstates, it happens in the form of charismatic big man-rule in the Eastern Caribbean, São Tomé and Príncipe, and other Pacific island nations. In all these cases, executive dominance comes at the expense of other institutions, of which the functioning is undermined by a lack of resources and the multiple-role relations that result from smallness. The fact that only one microstate (Andorra) is a possible exception to this pattern, whereas all other microstates around the globe experience this effect, indicates that executive dominance can almost certainly be recognized as a universally valid political consequence of smallness.

5. Inclusiveness in Microstates: Relations between Citizens and Politicians

Whereas it can on the basis of the discussion in section two be argued that personalistic politics and executive dominance are common features in other third wave-democracies as well, it can also be ascertained that size has an effect

seven held *Matai*-titles, which is indicative of the dominant role that traditional leaders continue to play in the Samoan system.

³⁸ Samoa receives a score of '2' on both political rights and civil liberties (Freedom House 2012).

³⁹ In the aftermath of the 1980 Coconut War in which the island of Espiritu Santo attempted to break away from the rest of the archipelago, Lini used the argument of stability to establish a personalistic and repressive rule. However, at the end of the 1980s conflicts within the leadership of the Vanua'aku Party erupted, and in 1991 Lini was ousted from the party leadership (Premdas and Steeves 1994: 69; Ambrose 1996: 53). After 1991, the exclusion of the Francophone part of the population and Vanuatu's alignment with the Soviet block came to an end, but in its place a period of great turmoil, fragmentation, and instability commenced.

on the influence of these factors. In similar fashion, whereas particularism is a widespread phenomenon in many new, non-Western democracies (O'Donnell 1996), as the literature on the political consequences of size reveals, it can also be determined that smallness increases the likelihood of particularism (Benedict 1967b: 53-54; Lowenthal 1987: 38-39; Farrugia 1993: 223-224). Since personalism, governmental pervasiveness, and particularism are all features that emerge in both the academic literature on new democracies and in the theoretical literature on the political effects of size, it can be questioned in which way their size renders microstates different from other third wave-countries. In general, it appears fair to say that size aggravates or intensifies the political factors that characterize new democracies. This is certainly the case with regard to the particularistic nature of citizen-politician linkages.

Although the influence of particularism in the European microstates is uncertain, the case study-literature on these countries does point to a general awareness about its potential drawbacks as a result from size. For example, as Catudal and Duursma reveal most of these microstates hire policemen and judges from abroad, since “with nearly everyone related to one another, citizens feel that only outsiders can serve impartially” (Catudal 1975: 197). In Monaco, for example, “the majority of the judges in the Monegasque courts and tribunals have to be French nationals” (Duursma 1996: 285), whereas in Liechtenstein “foreign judges may never constitute a majority” (Duursma 1996: 149). Until 1993, Andorran judges were appointed by the Co-Princes, but this situation has changed and at present “judges should be preferably, but not necessarily, of Andorran nationality” (Duursma 1996: 357).

In the literature on the Eastern Caribbean microstates, clientelism, patronage, and nepotism are recurring and defining characteristics of politics. As Peters argues, “[t]he relationship between the government and citizens in the Eastern Caribbean in the post-independence era is essentially one of clientelism” (1992: 128). This conclusion is shared by Sutton, who points out that “Caribbean politics established strong links between political leaders and their supporters, cemented by patronage networks that deliver jobs and benefits in return for votes” (1999: 74). The most elaborate analysis of the issue has however been published by Duncan and Woods, who perceive patronage to be an essential component of Anglophone Caribbean politics, that is also related to the small size of these countries. The authors especially highlight the redistributive effects of patronage, which they believe to “mitigate poverty and social exclusion” (2007: 211).

Patronage and clientelism also emerge as key political factors in the literature on separate Eastern Caribbean microstates. In his account of elections in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ryan for example argues that “[t]he use of state resources to establish bases of patronage was an important means of securing votes” (2005: 2). In similar fashion, on the case of Antigua and Barbuda Phillips argues that “[t]he ALP⁴⁰ has also made use of government funds as an electoral tactic; for example to repair roads, to embark on construction projects, and to provide jobs for supporters and would-be supporters” (2005: 2).⁴¹ On the case of Grenada, finally, Wendy Grenade explains how Hinds’ findings with regard to “a culture of party or racial patronage or clientelism” in the Eastern Caribbean are also applicable to this particular microstate (2004: 11). In summary, the case study-literature suggests that the Eastern Caribbean microstates confirm the political pattern of particularism that was suggested by some authors in the previous chapter.

In the case of the African microstate of São Tomé and Príncipe, patron-client relations appear even more perennial and prevailing than in the Caribbean microstates. According to Seibert, “[i]n São Tomé and Príncipe patron-client relationships have been deeply entrenched in local society since the 16th century” (1999: 11). These linkages can possibly be attributed to the small size of this island state, since “[j]obs and resources are not distributed according to economic necessities and the professional capacities of the person in question, but to maintain clients, satisfy kinship obligations, or to do favors to lovers and friends” (1999: 151). As Seibert convincingly shows, the implementation of democratic institutions has not concomitantly resulted in a decline in particularism, since “[d]emocratic institutions have merged with the political attitudes and clientelist models of resource distribution which have characterized all previous regimes”, and “[p]arty competition has only resulted in new opportunities for creating and exploiting patron-client relationships that link individuals to politicians and parties” (1999: 244, 322).

Patronage and clientelism are also defining characteristics of Pacific politics, but since the distribution of favors by political leaders is a key component of traditional Pacific island cultures, it can be hard to disentangle particularism from custom and traditions in this region (Larmour 2005: 4-5;

⁴⁰ Antigua Labour Party.

⁴¹ In fact, in the literature Antigua and Barbuda is often mentioned as the most corrupt and patronage-ridden of the six Eastern Caribbean microstates, and Thorndyke notes that “Antigua has over two decades acquired the regrettable image of being the most corrupt society in the Commonwealth Caribbean, hosting a notorious amorality from top to bottom” (1993: 147)

Duncan and Nakagawa 2006). As Taafaki and Oh for instance point out on corruption in Tuvalu;

“The Tuvalu tradition of reciprocity can provide an effective measure of accountability. It is important for the political survival of leaders to provide employment opportunities for their constituents. This may take the form of contracts for government projects, appointments to the board of statutory bodies, or in some cases, influencing appointments to the civil service. In some countries, these actions may be considered as bordering on corruption. Tuvalu politicians, however, view these actions as a form of accountability to their electorate. It is a fact of Tuvaluan reciprocity, a custom that is still very strongly practised, and corruption is not seen as a significant problem in Tuvalu” (1995: 8).

A comparable observation is made by Kun et al. on the case of Nauru, since they note that “[a]spects of traditional culture such as gift giving, privileges of elders, and the extensive relationships amongst many Nauruans have rendered investigations on corruption more difficult. It is common for the people of Nauru to go to their MPs to ask for money and other favors” (2004: 5).⁴²

Although anticorruption and sunshine laws have been implemented in most Pacific islands, these are often in conflict with traditional culture and values. As Nancy Pollock shows, this is for example the case in the Marshall Islands:

“Traditional values of gift-giving as a means of social cohesion and recognition of kin and wider social ties sit uneasily alongside formal rules against corruption. Nepotism in the civil service and gift-giving at election times may be considered as instances of corruption, but this interpretation is unclear in an indigenous setting” (2004: 11).

In a publication on the Federated States of Micronesia, Edward Hill especially highlights the prevalence of nepotism and patronage in the public sector, revealing that “[w]ithin the public service, corruption occurs in the form of nepotism. Although the laws provide for the hiring of public servants on the basis of merit and require an examination of candidates, in fact personal managers and others have found ways to put relatives and friends ahead of more qualified applicants” (2004: 14). In Kiribati, “[c]orruption (...) occurs at all levels of society, though it is most notable in governmental circles with regards nepotism, petty bribery from public officials and possible instances of vote buying” (MacKenzie 2004: 4).

⁴² In similar fashion, these authors later argue that “[v]oters usually see the receipt of gifts in return for votes as a legitimate part of the electoral process, as it may be the only thing they ever see coming out of the State. Nepotism continues to arise where elected leaders use their powers to meet their welfare obligations to their voters” (Kun et al. 2004).

The larger Pacific microstates are no less plagued by particularism. Tonga's pro-democracy movement was initially also campaigning against abuses of power and corruption, but in the 2005 elections they were themselves accused of such actions (Campbell 2006: 56). Since the 1990s, Vanuatuan politics has been increasingly beleaguered by corruption and misconduct of politicians, with "Ministers and Members of Parliament from all parties being implicated in inappropriate and even criminal conduct" (Huffer and Molisa 1999: 102). The smallness of electoral districts also increases the likelihood of clientelism in Samoa, as "MP candidates will usually visit all the villages in their constituency to ask for support, and this includes bringing gifts for the villages" (So'o 2009: 206). In short, without exceptions the problems of corruption, lack of accountability, and particularism appear to dominate the politics of Pacific island states.

In accounting for citizen-politician linkages in small states, with the possible exception of the European cases particularism appears to play a role in all microstates. It is especially remarkable that other, more positive hypothesized effects of smallness, such as enhanced feelings of efficacy and awareness among citizens, and increased opportunities for communication and responsiveness do not surface as key political features in the case study-literature. Instead, on the basis of this literature the proximity between citizens and politicians actually appears to undermine the quality of political representation, seeing that clientelism and patronage are generally believed to result in political and social dependency (Benedict 1967b: 53-54). Since several publications also indicate that the political participation of microstate-citizens is limited to the casting of a ballot once in several years (Peters 1992: 133),⁴³ in the next section attention will be paid to the characteristics of more conventional forms of participation in microstates.

6. Inclusiveness in Microstates: The Characteristics of Participation

In the literature on size and democracy, the positive effect of size on levels of citizen involvement and participation is listed as one of the key advantages of smallness, and higher levels of turnout in small states have been reported in several publications (Blais and Carty 1990; Franklin 2002; Gaarsted Frandsen 2002). At the same time, Dahl and Tufte have concluded that "political participation and sense of effectiveness among citizens do not depend to any

⁴³ According to Peters, "[d]emocracy means to the Caribbean people the freedom to elect their leaders, but immediately after the elections their political participation ceases. They withdraw from the political process completely and assume their status as subjects of the leaders" (1992: 133).

significant degree on the size of a country” (1973: 65). Since statistics on other conventional forms of participation such as party membership, participation in rallies and demonstrations, or the frequency of contact between voters and their representatives are either lacking or unavailable, turnout is the only form of participation on which enough data are available to enable cross-country comparisons.

A first remarkable characteristic about participation in the European microstates is the fact that women were until extraordinarily recently excluded from the franchise. Whereas female suffrage was introduced during the interbellum in most of Western Europe, women gained voting rights in San Marino in 1959, in Monaco in 1962, in Andorra in 1970, and in Liechtenstein only in 1984 (Eccardt 2005: 101). In this latter microstate, equal rights between the sexes was only realized in 1992 (Beattie 2004: 176), and according to Freedom House “Liechtenstein society remains conservative, and practice lags behind principle when it comes to female emancipation” (2012). Despite these downsides, turnout figures in the European microstates have been quite high, reaching on average 71.8% in Monaco, 73.9% in San Marino, 78.6% in Andorra, and even 86.5% in Liechtenstein.⁴⁴ With the exception of Liechtenstein, these figures are however in line with European averages (Wattenberg 2000: 71-72), which indicates that size does not directly have an influence on turnout in the European microstates.

In publications of Peters and Sutton, levels of voter turnout in Eastern Caribbean microstates are reported to be high, especially in comparison to other developing countries (Peters 1992: 209; Sutton 1999: 70). The Eastern Caribbean microstates have rather comparable figures of voter turnout, and with the positive exception of Antigua and Barbuda (which has an average figure of 71.6%), all microstates in this region have an average turnout level of between sixty and seventy percent. This is comparable to turnout figures of larger island states in region like Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados, whereas it is much lower than voter turnout in the Bahamas (which is mostly above ninety percent). Furthermore, since voter turnout reaches on average about 65% in North America and 69% in Latin America (López Pintor et al. 2002: 77), the Eastern Caribbean microstates do not have exceptionally high levels of participation in comparison to the rest of the Americas. In general therefore, their smallness actually does not seem to generate higher turnout levels in the Eastern Caribbean microstates, and twenty years later, Peters’ conclusion that

⁴⁴ Own calculations, based on turnout data of the International IDEA database (International IDEA 2011). Figures represent the average of the five most recent parliamentary elections.

“voter participation is among the highest in the Third World” (1992: 209) can no longer be substantiated.

Regarding other forms of participation, on which no data is available, the case study-literature offers a number of indications. According to Peters, “[p]olitical participation by the citizens of the Eastern Caribbean is centered around mass rallies in cities and towns”, yet “[m]ost leaders appear to welcome mass participation in the electoral process in order to get elected to government, but seem to discourage participation in the actual governing of the state” (1992: 7, 113). In addition, Peters argues that “[d]emocracy means to the Caribbean people the freedom to elect their leaders, but immediately after the elections their political participation ceases. They withdraw from the political process completely and assume their status as subjects of the leaders” (1992: 133). Furthermore, as Hinds argues, in the Anglophone Caribbean “patronage undermines mass independent participation in the political process” (2008: 393). On the basis of this literature, it appears that apart from election campaigns and the elections themselves, political inclusiveness in the Eastern Caribbean is quite limited.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, the average turnout level in the five most recent parliamentary elections is 67.7%, which is just a little bit higher than Africa’s average of 64% (López Pintor et al. 2002: 77). In his book, Seibert argues that “[v]oter turnout in São Tomé and Príncipe has been high, both by African and international standards”, but this observation is hence not really corroborated by IDEA-figures. Again therefore, smallness seems to have at best a marginal impact on the level of participation, although “[t]he increasing venality of election campaigns, the changing election results, and the voting patterns within small communities and families both prove that voters in the creole society of São Tomé and Príncipe are not submitted to heavy social or group pressures, but enjoy a considerable individual freedom of political choice” (Seibert 1999: 326). Apart from these remarks, the literature offers little clues on the nature of alternative forms of political participation in the African microstate.

With an average of 79%, Oceania stands out as the world region with the highest voter turnout figures. Since over half of this region is composed of microstates, it seems plausible that at least part of this achievement is an effect of the smallness of the many Pacific island states. At the same time however, turnout statistics on many elections in microstates are lacking, as a consequence of which it hard to estimate average levels of electoral participation. Out of the five most recent Tuvaluan elections, for example, only one turnout figure is available (80.0% in 2002), and the same applies to the Marshall Islands (50.1%

in 2007), Kiribati (67.5% in 2007), and the Federated States of Micronesia (52.6% in 2007). With the exception of Tuvalu, these figures are well below the Oceanian average, and this also holds true for the average figures of Tonga (59.0%), and Vanuatu (62.9%). As a result, only Nauruan (90.3%), Palauan (77.3%), and Samoan (82.3%) figures conform to the average level of the region, and as a matter of fact the largest countries in this region (Australia and New Zealand) have the highest turnout figures. In the Pacific, therefore, the notion that smallness fosters participation is forcefully rejected.

In the case study-literature on Pacific microstates, the relatively negative observations with regard to voter turnout in the region are partially explained. On the case of Vanuatu, for example, Morgan notes that “[s]ince independence, voter turnout has declined steadily, indicating increasing voter disenchantment” (2008: 134). In similar fashion, on the case of Tonga Kerry James notes that “[l]ow turnout (49%) could indicate a passive resistance to the democratic rhetoric and perhaps to politics as a whole” (2002: 314). In general, the case study-literature indicates that the Pacific culture of respect and obedience to political leaders sometimes hampers the willingness of citizens to take part in politics. On the case of Nauru, Quanchi for instance points out that “[t]he predicted close and constant scrutiny by the public did not occur, as inordinate personal wealth and associated consumerism prevailed over political action. Clan loyalties to elected chiefs and leaders also overrode criticism” (2009: 125). In summary, in none of the four regions in which they are located do microstates significantly outperform larger countries with regard to participation, and Dahl and Tufte’s conclusions with regard to the absence of a relation between size and participation therefore appear to be accurate.

As mentioned before, no data or statistics are available on the frequency of contacts between citizens and their representatives. However, in table 3.2 the ratios of citizens per Member of Parliament have been presented for all microstates, where it can be seen that in the smallest microstates each MP represents less than one thousand citizens. Even in St. Lucia, where the fewest number of MPs per citizen can be noted, individual MPs still represent less than 10,000 citizens. If these figures are compared to countries like the Netherlands (111,538 citizens per MP), Germany (130,717), or the United States (721,488), it becomes clear that representation in microstates can be expected to occur on the basis of completely different dynamics than in larger states. In the analytical chapters of this dissertation, this hypothesis will be examined in four microstates. Now that the case study-literature on the nature of contestation and

inclusiveness in microstates has been discussed, this literature will be contrasted with the theoretical literature of chapter 2 in the conclusion.

Table 3.2: Citizen-MP Ratios in the Twenty-One Microstates⁴⁵

| Microstate | Citizens | MPs | Citizens per MP |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------|------------------------|
| Nauru | 9.322 | 18 | 518 |
| Tuvalu | 10.544 | 15 | 703 |
| Palau | 20.956 | 16 | 1.310 |
| Monaco | 30.539 | 24 | 1.272 |
| San Marino | 31.817 | 60 | 530 |
| Liechtenstein | 35.236 | 25 | 1.409 |
| St. Kitts and Nevis | 50.314 | 15 | 3.354 |
| Marshall Islands | 67.182 | 33 | 2.036 |
| Dominica | 72.969 | 32 | 2.280 |
| Andorra | 84.825 | 28 | 3.029 |
| Antigua and Barbuda | 87.884 | 19 | 4.625 |
| Seychelles | 89.188 | 34 | 2.623 |
| Kiribati | 100.743 | 46 | 2.190 |
| St. Vincent and the Grenadines | 103.869 | 21 | 4.946 |
| Tonga | 105.916 | 30 | 3.531 |
| Federated States of Micronesia | 106.836 | 14 | 7.631 |
| Grenada | 108.419 | 15 | 7.228 |
| St. Lucia | 161.557 | 17 | 9.503 |
| São Tomé and Príncipe | 179.506 | 55 | 3.264 |
| Samoa | 193.161 | 49 | 3.942 |
| Vanuatu | 224.564 | 52 | 4.319 |

7. Conclusion: Connecting the Theoretical and Case Study-Literatures on Size

In the conclusion of the previous chapter, I pointed to a discrepancy between the theoretical literature on size and democracy and the more recent statistics that reveal a correlation between smallness and democracy. Whereas smallness was almost unequivocally cherished by philosophers and thinkers up to the 18th century, since that time a clear majority of the literature has emphasized the drawbacks rather than the advantages of a small population size. In fact, it can be seen that much of the recent optimism about the presumably democracy-stimulating features of smallness are primarily based on statistics, and are actually not buttressed by convincing theoretical explanations. The examination of the case study-literature on microstates that was carried out in the present chapter in large part supports the more comparative literature on the shortcomings of smallness (especially those described in section 5 of the

⁴⁵ Based on own calculations. Data have been retrieved from the CIA World Factbook (2011), and the database of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2011). In the case of bicameral legislatures, only the number of MPs in the lower house of parliament have been taken into account.

previous chapter). This suggests that the statistical link between size and democracy camouflages or misrepresents the true nature of politics in small states, which means that the quest for the explanation of this statistical link (cf. Anckar 2002b; Srebrnik 2004: 339) is actually doomed to fail.

If the main points of the two strands of literature that were examined in the previous and the current chapter are compared, two sorts of potential explanations for the supposed statistical link between size and democracy remain plausible. On the one hand, on the basis of the discussion in section 3 of this chapter, it could be hypothesized that this link is spurious in nature. As argued in this section, the explanation of microstate-democracy on the basis of religious factors or insularity is somewhat problematic in light of the abundance of non-Protestant microstates and non-democratic island nations. On the other hand, the location of microstates in democracy-enhancing regions of the world, their colonial legacies, and international political factors can all be supposed to stimulate democratic development, and can possibly explain the prevalence of democracy in microstates. In the case study-chapters of this dissertation, the relevance and applicability of these factors will be examined for each of the four microstates under investigation.

In addition to the possibility of a spurious correlation, I would like to propose an alternative explanation of microstate-democracy, which is based on the fact that most microstates can be regarded as third wave-democracies. As will be discussed extensively in chapter 4, scholars have encountered considerable difficulties in the classification of various 'third wave'-countries (cf. Huntington 1991) that have not managed to complete the transition to democracy. In particular, O'Donnell has highlighted how these countries have implemented democratic institutions and structures, whereas democratic norms and traditions remain to be lacking (O'Donnell 1996). According to O'Donnell, the academic focus on formal democratic structures leads to the disregard of non-institutional factors such as personalistic politics or particularism. Although almost never studied as such, seventeen of the microstates can be classified as third wave-democracies, which means that O'Donnell's line of argument can possibly be extended to these cases.

Due to the lack of more in-depth, substantive, qualitative analyses of microstate-democracy, the data of Freedom House are virtually the only information available on the political systems of these countries. As a large-N aggregate index of democracy, the Freedom in the World-survey is necessarily focused on formal, institutional indicators of democracy, and can only to a limited degree analyze the less formal and more substantive characteristics of

democracy in these countries. This statistical, quantitative focus has been adopted by many scholars who study democracy in microstates, whereas more qualitative, comprehensive analyses of microstate-politics have remained relatively scarce. It is at least partially the aim of this dissertation to fill this gap in the scholarly literature, by offering a comparative, in-depth analysis of politics and democracy in microstates.

The examination of the case-study literature on microstates has revealed that the politics of these countries are plagued by more or less similar features as those that emerge in the literature on third wave-countries. Personalistic politics, executive dominance, and particularism are all elements that characterize politics in larger third wave-countries as well, and in this sense the microstates do not appear to be markedly different from their larger counterparts. At the same time, publications on the individual microstates also suggest that size is at least to some extent at the basis of these political patterns, which might be reinforced as a consequence of smallness. The accuracy of this expectation will be further examined in the analytical chapters (# 5-8) of this dissertation. Now that the theoretical literature on size and the empirical literature on microstates have been discussed, and the implications of this literature for the present analysis have been outlined, in the next chapter attention will first be devoted to a number of conceptual and methodological issues.