The Quiet Architects of Global Governance: Small State Agency in an Era of Diffuse Authority

Os Arquitetos Silenciosos da Governança Global: A Agência dos Pequenos Estados em uma Era de Autoridade Difusa

Los Arquitectos Silenciosos de la Gobernanza Global: La Agencia de los Pequeños Estados en una Era de Autoridad Difusa

Shamkhal Mammadov[1]
Zeynalabdin Naghisoy[2]
Muharrem Bagir[3]
DOI: 10.5752/P.2317-773X.2025v13n2p216-235

Enviado em: 23 de agosto de 2025
Aceito em: 18 de novembro de 2025

ABSTRACT

This study undertakes a critical examination of the multifaceted effects of globalization on small states, engaging with the conceptual foundations of sovereignty, agency, and security within an increasingly interdependent global order. It moves beyond traditional materialist paradigms by employing constructivist and institutionalist perspectives to assess how small states, often marked by limited strategic depth and asymmetrical power relations, mitigate structural vulnerabilities through adaptive practices such as multilateral engagement, normative entrepreneurship, and specialized diplomacy. Adopting a conceptual-analytical approach, the analysis demonstrates how the erosion of conventional state boundaries, intensified by digitalization and expanding communication networks, reconfigures security imperatives and constrains national autonomy, particularly in contexts of weak institutional resilience. Rather than treating small states solely as passive recipients of global transformations, the study underscores their capacity to act as agents that shape emerging normative frameworks and exploit institutional gaps. It further emphasizes the growing importance of intangible assets such as credibility, innovation, and normative leadership in shaping influence. The findings suggest that within the dynamics of globalization, the survival and relevance of small states depend less on material power capabilities than on their ability to reconceptualize sovereignty, engage strategically with international institutions, and innovate diplomatically.

1. Dr Shamkhal Mammadov, Associate Professor and Head, Department of International Relations, Nakhchivan State University, Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan, ORCID: 0000-0002-6072-0312, samxalmammadov@ndu.edu.az.
2. Zeynalabdin Naghisoy, Department of International Relations, Selçuk University, Konya, Türkiye, ORCID: 0009-0002-9058-6887, znaghisoy@gmail.com.
3. Dr Muharrem Bagir, Department of Sociology, Selçuk University, Konya, Türkiye, ORCID: 0000-0002-0895-1340, bagirmuharrem@gmail.com.

Keywords: Small states, global governance, globalization, interdependence, norm entrepreneurship

RESUMO

A globalização e o aprofundamento da interdependência remodelaram tanto as vulnerabilidades quanto às oportunidades enfrentadas pelos pequenos Estados, expondo-os a choques externos, como intrusões cibernéticas, interrupções nas cadeias de suprimentos e pressões regulatórias transfronteiriças, ao mesmo tempo em que ampliam os espaços institucionais e técnicos por meio dos quais podem exercer influência. A crescente integração aos mercados globais e aos sistemas de governança gera riscos assimétricos, mas também permite que pequenos Estados convertam o entrelaçamento em vantagem estratégica ao diversificarem alinhamentos, fortalecerem capacidades de adaptação governamental e investirem em formas de expertise que têm peso nos processos de formulação de regras. À medida que a autoridade no sistema internacional se dispersa cada vez mais entre órgãos regulatórios, comitês técnicos e instituições multilayer, pequenos Estados passam a dispor de novas vias para moldar resultados por meio de diplomacia ancorada na credibilidade, definição de padrões e iniciativas específicas de mediação. A análise sugere que a ordem global contemporânea não apenas impõe limitações aos pequenos Estados; ela também lhes oferece mecanismos distintivos de agência, enraizados na resiliência, na especialização e na capacidade de transformar a interdependência em influência estruturada.

Palavras-chave: Estados pequeños, gobernanza global, globalización, interdependencia, emprendimiento normativo

RESUMEN

La globalización y el creciente grado de interdependencia han transformado tanto las vulnerabilidades como las oportunidades que enfrentan los Estados pequeños, exponiéndolos a choques externos como intrusiones cibernéticas, interrupciones en las cadenas de suministro y presiones regulatorias transfronterizas, mientras amplían los espacios institucionales y técnicos a través de los cuales pueden ejercer influencia. La integración cada vez mayor en los mercados globales y en los sistemas de gobernanza genera riesgos asimétricos, pero también permite que los Estados pequeños conviertan dicha interconexión en una ventaja estratégica mediante la diversificación de alineamientos, el fortalecimiento de sus capacidades de adaptación gubernamental y la inversión en formas de especialización que resultan decisivas en los procesos de elaboración de normas. A medida que la autoridad en el sistema internacional se dispersa entre organismos regulatorios, comités técnicos e instituciones multinivel, los Estados pequeños disponen de nuevas vías para moldear resultados mediante diplomacia basada en la credibilidad, la definición de estándares y esfuerzos específicos de mediación. El análisis sugiere que el orden global contemporáneo no solo impone limitaciones a los Estados pequeños; también les proporciona mecanismos distintivos de agencia, basados en la resiliencia, la pericia y la capacidad de transformar la interdependencia en influencia estructurada.

Palabras clave: Estados pequeños, globalización, soberanía, adaptación estratégica, agencia internacional

1 INTRODUCTION

The contemporary phase of globalization, particularly in its post--Cold War manifestation, acquired a more pronounced and institutionalized character following the disintegration of the bipolar international

order and the subsequent collapse of communism (Bagir, 2024). While the Cold War structure effectively divided the international system into two antagonistic ideological and geopolitical blocs, each orbiting around a dominant superpower, namely the United States and the Soviet Union, this dichotomy, despite its restrictive nature, paradoxically preserved the autonomy of national governments, which retained near-exclusive authority over their domestic affairs, including security, cultural orientation, economic management, and the regulation of external relations. In that configuration, although states were aligned, either willingly or coercively, with one of the two hegemonic poles, the apparatuses of governance and control remained primarily centered within the territorial nation-state, with national sovereignty and governmental authority functioning as the principal locus of power (Gaddis, 2005; Held et al., 1999; Seyidbayli, 2025).

However, the post-Cold War transition toward a unipolar international structure, dominated by the United States and facilitated by the ideational expansion of liberalism (Fukuyama, 1992; Taylor, 1996), coincided with the intensification of globalization processes, which precipitated fundamental transformations in the conceptualization of political authority, economic interdependence, cultural exchange, and, critically, national and international security (Held et al. 1999; Bagir, 2024). This transformative shift was not merely institutional but also communicative and epistemological, as the rapid proliferation of information technologies, digital networks, and satellite communications fundamentally altered the dynamics of state-society relations and redefined the spatial and functional boundaries of state sovereignty. The global diffusion of the Internet, along with the liberalization of media environments, confronted states, particularly those with limited strategic depth and institutional resilience, with unprecedented challenges in managing external influences and maintaining control over public discourse and informational flows (Deibert, 1997).

Historically, the conceptualization of security had been predominantly territorial, centered on the physical protection and surveillance of borders, wherein the state functioned as the exclusive gateway through which individuals could engage with the external world (Acharya; Buzan, 2019). Even before the modern period, the nature of security was actually defined in response to a situation of all-out war. Communication channels were limited, and interactions were often limited to meeting basic needs such as preventing war or providing for war supplies. But as social life progressed, states took control of everything, effectively socializing human life in an interconnected society.

Before the spread of globalization, nationalist narratives were largely confined to state-owned or tightly controlled media outlets, which functioned as instruments for transmitting official discourses and reinforcing state authority. By contrast, the rise of a globally interconnected digital environment has significantly eroded these boundaries, allowing individuals to access, disseminate, and engage with diverse sources of information and ideological content across borders in real time, independent of state structures or their mediation. Consequently, the security

paradigm has broadened to encompass non-traditional and transnational dimensions, compelling states, and particularly small nation-states, to reconceptualize their strategic posture in response to a fundamentally transformed informational and geopolitical context.

Small states are generally defined by their limited material and geopolitical capabilities, such as small populations, territorial size, economic resources, or global influence, which shape their strategic behavior in the international system. Thorhallsson (2018) characterizes small states as entities with constrained administrative and economic capacities, often relying on international cooperation and institutions to pursue their interests, particularly in a globalized world. Similarly, Maass (2009) defines small states by their relative power asymmetry compared to larger states, emphasizing their vulnerability to external pressures and their strategic use of diplomacy to mitigate risks. Additionally, Baldacchino and Wivel (2020) argue that small states are distinguished not only by quantitative metrics like GDP or population but also by their ability to leverage niche roles, such as mediation or innovation, to enhance their global presence despite limited resources. These definitions highlight the interplay of measurable attributes and strategic adaptability in conceptualizing small states.

This research seeks to advance the literature on small state behavior in the context of globalization by highlighting how these actors exercise agency and shape global governance beyond conventional measures of power. While much of the existing research emphasizes the material limitations of small states or their dependence on multilateral institutions, this study introduces a nuanced conceptualization that highlights the strategic use of normative authority, specialized expertise, and procedural influence. By examining how small states use regulatory, technical, and institutional arenas to embed their preferences in global norms, this article addresses a gap in understanding the mechanisms through which smaller actors can exert sustained influence despite structural asymmetries. In doing so, it contributes theoretically by redefining agency not as a derivative of material capacity but as a function of strategic adaptation, credibility, and innovative engagement with institutional processes, thereby offering a fresh window into the analysis of power and influence in a fragmented global order.

This study attempts to answer a set of research questions that attempt to shed light on how small states cope with the challenges posed by their structural constraints. Specifically, it asks how globalization affects fundamental conceptual foundations such as governance, economics, and security for states with limited strategic depth and asymmetric power relations. It also examines the extent to which adaptive strategies such as multilateralism, entrepreneurship, and special diplomacy enable small states to reduce vulnerabilities and ensure a degree of cooperation and adaptation in a system dominated by super powers. Furthermore, the analysis examines how the erosion of conventional state boundaries through digitalization and the expansion of communication networks has transformed the nature of classical security imperatives and imposed new constraints on national sovereignty, especially for small states.

Ultimately, the central question revolves around whether the survival of small states in the globalization era depends less on traditional material power capabilities and more on their capacity to reconceptualize sovereignty, engage strategically with international institutions, and innovate diplomatically.

To avoid conceptual confusion, this study distinguishes between the key concepts of sovereignty, autonomy, agency, and resilience in relation to small states. Sovereignty refers to the formal-legal authority of a state to make independent decisions and exercise control within its recognized borders, while autonomy indicates the practical dimension of that sovereignty, its capacity to act freely within the structural constraints imposed by great powers and global institutions (Krasner, 1999). In contrast, agency refers to the ability of small states to act purposefully and influence outcomes beyond their material capabilities, often through strategies such as coalition building, normative entrepreneurship, or diplomatic expertise (Braun, 2019). Finally, resilience refers to the institutional and normative flexibility that enables these states to resist external pressures, adapt to systemic changes, and maintain both their autonomy and agency over time (Bourbeau, 2015). By drawing on these related but distinct concepts, this paper aims to provide greater analytical rigor in examining how globalization is changing the strategic behavior of small nation-states.

Based on these questions, this research hypothesizes that in the current globalized order, the survival of small states is determined not primarily by their material capabilities, but rather by their ability to adapt to global governance, strengthen governance adaptability, and pursue adaptive strategies such as multilateral engagement, normative entrepreneurship, and special status diplomacy, which collectively allow small states to reduce systemic fragility and maintain a degree of autonomy.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach of this study combines conceptual and analytical reasoning with a structured bibliographic strategy. The sources reviewed include peer-reviewed journal articles, monographs, and institutional reports published primarily between 1990 and 2025, selected based on their relevance to three related areas of globalization, small state theory, and international political economy. Relevant scholarly books, including Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen (2009) and also Andres Wivel publications preceding this period, are employed as foundational theoretical sources. The bibliographic collection was refined through thematic relevance and theoretical saturation rather than through quantitative sampling. The analytical categories of sovereignty, agency, autonomy, resilience, and adaptation were extracted through interpretive study and conceptual coding, allowing the study to trace the evolving meanings and operational meanings of these terms in scholarly discourse. The analytical process is therefore aligned with constructivist and institutionalist perspectives, emphasizing how the strategic behavior of small states in a globalized international order is shaped by institutional ideas, norms, and practices.

This method is informed by the logic of structured, focused comparison (George; Bennett, 2004), in which select dimensions; namely, sovereignty, security, and strategic agency, are explored in light of their interaction with globalization-induced structural pressures. The theoretical grounding relies primarily on constructivist international political theory, supplemented by ideas on small state literature, global governance studies, and critical security theory. This framework allows for an analysis that transcends materialist definitions of power, focusing instead on ideational agency, institutional adaptation, and the reconfiguration of strategic behavior in the face of complex interdependence (Keohane; Nye, 1977). Given the paper's ambition to function as a reference study rather than an empirical report, the emphasis is placed on the interpretive synthesis of existing knowledge, critical examination of current and emerging conceptual debates, and proposition of future research trajectories grounded in normative and institutional transformations affecting small states under globalization.

3 SOVEREIGNTY, ADAPTATION AND STRATEGIC AGENCY IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD

From a neoliberal institutionalist perspective, the enduring role of state actors remains intact amidst the proliferation of supranational regimes and organizations that are shifting the locus of governance and normative innovation away from national capitals. But this fragmentation is eroding the monopoly of state power structures and strengthening the influence of supranational institutions and supranational institutions in shaping actors' national and international policies (Keohane, 1984). Thus, rather than eroding into oblivion, sovereignty, as a temporary and interwoven structure, is deeply embedded in networks of legal, market--based, and ideological linkages. All actors, especially small states that are constrained by limited resources due to pursuing individual strategies, are initially constrained by their location in global architectures. But along with this, it opens up avenues for strengthening the voice of small states through common international platforms (Thorhallsson, 2018; Ingebritsen, 2006).

The increasing entanglement of states in dense networks of economic, technological, and normative interdependence has made sovereignty a much more flexible and negotiable condition than classical international relations theory once assumed. For small states in particular, sovereignty no longer means a static set of territorial or coercive attributes but rather a dynamic capacity to manage confrontation, foster strategic partnerships, and exercise measured forms of agency in various arenas of governance. Rather than seeing globalization as a unilateral force that diminishes their autonomy, many small states have begun to reinterpret its pressures as opportunities for strategic repositioning, using institutional partnerships, regulatory innovation, and credit capital to consolidate their authority at home while increasing their presence abroad. In this space, sovereignty is better understood not as a dual asset, but as a relational practice shaped by adaptability, credibility, and the ability to

navigate asymmetrical structures without ceding decision-making authority (Baker, 2021; Long, 2017).

National sovereignty is now subject to a set of new changes centered on "the shifting distribution of state power and the frequent occurrence of transnational crises" (Faude; Karlsrud, 2025). This transformation in governance is particularly evident in how small states reconfigure agency through selective engagement with global governance mechanisms. By strategically aligning themselves with issue-specific regimes such as international humanitarian action, digital regulation, environmental governance, maritime security, or financial transparency, these states use institutional influence as a source of insulation and influence. Their participation in such regimes aims to create international legitimacy to shape legislative processes, gain technical leverage, and cultivate a credible authority that compensates for limited material capabilities. In doing so, small states transform their structural vulnerabilities into platforms for self-expression, often becoming agenda-setters in areas where expertise and normative clarity matter more than economic or military power. This strategic realignment emphasizes that agency in a globalized system is increasingly exercised through institutional skill, not through the accumulation of hard power (Tonon, 2020; Wijaya et al., 2024).

From a constructivist standpoint, sovereignty is not merely a legal status but a socially constructed institution, the legitimacy and meaning of which are contingent upon intersubjective recognition and normative consensus within the international community (Wendt, 1992; Bartelson, 1993). In this view, the agency of small states is not solely determined by material capability, but also by their capacity to engage in ideational contestation, norm entrepreneurship, and diplomatic innovation, thereby influencing the constitutive rules of the international system. As such, small states can wield disproportionate normative influence when they successfully position themselves as credible advocates of global norms, mediators in regional disputes, or innovators in international governance (Cooper; Shaw, 2009).

4 RESILIENCE AMID ASYMMETRY

Small states today navigate a complex arena in which structural vulnerability to external shocks, market volatility, coercive diplomacy, and transboundary threats is a persistent constraint and at the same time a catalyst for new strategic processes. Rather than viewing vulnerability as an unchangeable state, contemporary research increasingly emphasizes how vulnerability stimulates institutional learning, accelerates policy innovation, and leads small states to diversify their external engagements in ways that enhance resilience. For example, financial fragility often forces these states to establish strong regulatory frameworks, improve transparency, and build their credibility with international investors and rating agencies. Similarly, limited military capacity encourages investment in non-traditional security tools such as cyber defense architectures, information-sharing networks, and diplomatic de-escalation mechanisms. These adaptive capacities are not created against structural vulnerability,

but emerge because of it. That is, adaptive capacities represent a strategic reconfiguration in which resource constraints encourage efficiency, foresight, and expertise (Briguglio, 2014; Vaicekauskait, 2017).

At the same time, adaptive behaviors among small states have increasingly expanded beyond traditional domains of statecraft toward predictive governance that encompasses risk assessment, technological literacy, and regional coordination. This shift reflects the recognition that multifaceted exposures span economic, environmental, digital, and geopolitical domains and therefore require multidimensional policy responses. Small states are responding by institutionalizing early warning mechanisms, nurturing innovation ecosystems to reduce dependence on foreign technology actors, and embedding their domestic agendas in transnational networks that provide both protection and visibility. Such practices suggest that structural exposure does not necessarily diminish sovereignty; rather, it can transform the concept of sovereignty by emphasizing agility, strategic diversity, and the capacity to transform vulnerability into long-term adaptive advantage (Lutmar 2025; Briguglio, 2022).

Exposure to information and technology threats has become one of the most important constraints shaping the strategic horizons of small states, as their limited resources make them particularly vulnerable to disruptions in digital infrastructure and the politicization of information flows. Unlike larger powers that can absorb cyber shocks or maintain diverse technology ecosystems, small states often rely on foreign providers for cloud services, data storage, telecommunications hardware, and artificial intelligence applications, leading to dependencies that expose them to vulnerabilities ranging from cyber sabotage to foreign surveillance and algorithmic manipulation. However, this same exposure to information is also pushing small states to adopt forward-looking strategies that combine regulatory innovation with technological experimentation (UNDP, 2024).

Some states, such as Estonia, have begun to develop sovereign data frameworks, invest in secure digital identity systems, and participate in regional cybersecurity alliances to mitigate asymmetric risks (Hardy, 2024). Others are experimenting with public and private digital innovation labs that nurture domestic technological competencies and thereby gradually reduce dependence on foreign suppliers. By turning information exposure into an incentive for institutional modernization, small states are demonstrating that technological dependence has presented them with an opportunity to strengthen infrastructure. It can also serve as a catalyst for rethinking digital governance, increasing resilience, and emphasizing a more meaningful presence in emerging global technology regimes (Kuulmann, 2024).

Therefore, in response to these growing information and technological vulnerabilities, like great powers, small states are increasingly adopting multi-layered strategies that combine institutional innovation, regulatory tightening, and strategic partnerships to counter external shocks and regain some of their digital autonomy. Many are developing comprehensive national cybersecurity architectures, such as integrating early warning systems, encrypted government communications, and centralized incident

response units, while strengthening data protection regimes to limit undue influence by foreign technology providers. Others are pursuing selective diversification by partnering with multiple technology providers rather than relying on a single great power ecosystem, thereby reducing the political risks inherent in technological dependency. At the same time, regional cooperation platforms, joint cyber training programs, and joint digital forensics initiatives are helping small states share expertise that they cannot develop on their own. Small states are increasingly investing in domestic innovation ecosystems by supporting digital startups, university research partnerships, and autonomous cloud initiatives to cultivate indigenous capacities that gradually reduce their asymmetric exposure. Thus, through this combination of defensive, regulatory, and developmental measures, some small states have transformed structural vulnerability into a more manageable strategic position (Areng, 2014; Wu, 2025).

5 THE FADING DOMINION OF STATE-CENTRIC AUTHORITY

The erosion of purely state-centered authority in the era of globalization has transformed the security environment in ways that disproportionately affect small states, exposing them to pressures that they are structurally less equipped to withstand. As security is the core for state survival, states are highly vulnerable in the new global environment (Sadri Alibabalu, 2022). No longer isolated by geography or traditional notions of territorial control, small states now face security challenges stemming from transnational economic fluctuations, global market dependencies, changing alliance structures, and the increasing assertiveness of great powers. Their limited military capabilities make them highly vulnerable to coercive diplomacy, great power competition, and regional instability. The openness of their economies increases their exposure to external shocks, sanctions, and supply chain disruptions that can quickly translate into political or social stress. At the same time, participation in global institutions and normative regimes, while offering avenues for protection, also limits their political autonomy by imposing standards and expectations often shaped by larger states. In this transformed environment, security for small states is no longer primarily limited to the concept of territorial defense, but is defined by the capacity to manage interdependence, maintain decision-making space, and mitigate the risks posed by a system in which authority is diffuse and asymmetrical power relations remain deeply entrenched (Wivel et al., 2014: 4-8, Bagir, 2024).

At the same time, the dispersion of authority in international institutions, regulatory regimes, and transnational networks forces small states to navigate security environments in which power lies as much in rules and dependencies as in military might. Their participation in global markets, financial systems, and multilateral agreements that are essential for economic survival inevitably ties their security to external actors whose priorities they cannot fully shape. This creates a security paradox. Accordingly, the same mechanisms that provide stability and legitimacy also create new vulnerabilities, from exposure to geopolitical conditionality to vulnerability to political constraints imposed by international

lenders or powerful regional blocs. Moreover, the increasing securitization of trade, infrastructure, and strategic resources means that small states often find themselves at the intersection of competing agendas of great powers, forced to balance rather than choose sides. As a result, their main security challenge is to maintain independence in increasingly dense patterns of interdependence, which requires ongoing diplomatic coordination to prevent external pressures from eroding the foundations of their sovereignty and long-term strategic choice (Samardžija and Šabi, 2014).

Beyond traditional military considerations, all states, especially small ones, now face a growing range of unconventional threats, particularly cybersecurity risks, digital espionage, and the weaponization of information, which increase their structural vulnerabilities in a globalized environment. Unlike conventional threats, which typically involve identifiable actors and tangible forms of coercion, these emerging threats operate through dispersed networks, ambiguous attribution, and low-cost disruption, placing disproportionate pressure on states with limited technological infrastructure and defense capacities. Cyberattacks targeting financial systems, energy networks, and critical public services can cause strategic paralysis without a single shot being fired. Disinformation campaigns and digital interference also undermine social cohesion, electoral integrity, and the credibility of public institutions. For small countries that rely heavily on digital governance, open economies, and external connectivity, these threats pose a profound challenge, as they undermine domestic stability and complicate foreign policy independence in ways that blur the boundaries between domestic and external security (Li, 2024; Tan, 2020).

In response to these security challenges, some small states have demonstrated remarkable adaptive capacity by integrating resilience into their technological infrastructure and governance practices. For example, Estonia has emerged as a global example after the massive attacks on its digital infrastructure in 2007 by developing a comprehensive cybersecurity architecture, including the X-Road data exchange platform, advanced digital identity systems, and the establishment of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence. These measures not only protected critical national functions from cyber disruption, but also positioned Estonia as a knowledge hub and normative actor in international cybersecurity governance (Carmichael, 2025; Marak, 2025). By leveraging expertise, institutional innovation, and multilateral engagement, the country has demonstrated how small states can turn vulnerability into strategic advantage and ensure that limited material resources do not prevent meaningful influence in a security environment increasingly defined by technological interdependence and information disclosure.

6 THE IMPERATIVES OF INTERDEPENDENCE IN ENTANGLED ECONOMIES

The deep interdependence of global markets has transformed the strategic security, especially security of small countries, forcing them to navigate an economic environment in which domestic stability is deeply tied to foreign policy, international flows of capital, trade, and investment.

In such interconnected economies, even minor disruptions such as war between other states, financial shocks, supply chain disruptions, or commodity price fluctuations can disproportionately affect national outcomes and expose small countries to vulnerabilities that go far beyond their territorial or demographic limits. The imperative is therefore not isolation but calculated integration. Many small countries in Europe and Asia have developed diverse economic linkages, protecting themselves against dependence, and actively participating in multilateral trading regimes to reduce asymmetric pressures from larger economic actors (Lupel et al., 2024; Sadri Alibabalu, 2018).

Beyond risk management, then, interdependence opens avenues for strategic leverage. By gaining specialized positions in global economic networks, small states can turn connectivity into bargaining power and influence in agenda-setting. For example, small states such as the UAE, Qatar, and Singapore, which have acted as vital logistics hubs, financial intermediaries, or suppliers of unique natural resources, have acquired asymmetric importance despite their limited overall material capacity. This strategic use of economic connectivity allows small states to shape outcomes in ways that compensate for their size, suggesting that agency in the contemporary global economy derives as much from position and relational advantage as from absolute power.

At the same time, interdependence has intensified the need for institutional complexity and adaptive governance. Small states increasingly rely on flexible policy frameworks, forward-looking regulatory regimes, and public-private coordination to manage the cascading effects of external shocks. Singapore exemplifies this approach through its proactive economic diversification strategies, strong sovereign wealth management, and regional trade leadership, which collectively ensure resilience while maximizing the country's influence in Southeast Asian and global markets (Cheang; Lim, 2023). Such practices demonstrate that taking the right measures can reduce the risks of entangled and restrictive economic relationships and can also strategically contribute to enhancing security and agency in an era defined by global solidarity.

7 SMALL STATES AS PIONEERS OF GLOBAL NORMS AND STANDARDS

Amid the architecture of global governance, small states have begun to cultivate alternative avenues for influence that go beyond the conventional emphasis on multilateral engagement or moral support. Their strategic behavior increasingly reflects a form of collective governance engineering in which groups of small actors coordinate to shape the procedural norms, administrative standards, and issue-specific regimes that structure international cooperation. This approach enables them to embed their preferences in the operating routines of global institutions and to create forms of influence that are subtle but durable. Small states are redefining how authority is exercised in institutional settings by setting coalition-based agendas in thematic areas ranging from maritime regulation and digital certification standards to biodiversity protection and

cross-border financial transparency. Rather than positioning themselves as norm entrepreneurs in the traditional sense, many of them now act as regime architects, using their regulatory authority, technical expertise, and credit capital to guide institutional design in ways that reduce vulnerability and expand their diplomatic presence. In doing so, they demonstrate that the strategic value of small states increasingly lies not in symbolic leadership or reliance on multilateral support, but in their capacity to shape the procedural DNA of global governance itself (Lutmar, 2025).

Multilateral organizations, particularly the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and regionally embedded regimes such as the European Union, the African Union, or ASEAN, provide small states with arenas in which formal equality of representation and procedural legitimacy can be leveraged to constrain the unilateralism of larger powers and advance normatively grounded foreign policy agendas. Through active participation in committees, voting procedures, and agenda-setting mechanisms, small states have been able to exercise influence that transcends their limited material power, often acting as brokers, mediators, or coalition-builders in contexts where consensus-based decision-making prevails.

Drawing on this institutional leverage, a growing number of small states have begun to specialize in highly technical regulatory areas where competence carries more weight than coercive capacity. For example, Singapore's leadership in maritime safety and port control regimes, Estonia's pioneering role in digital identification systems and cross-border e-governance interoperability, Luxembourg's and some Caribbean countries' authority in sustainable finance frameworks and green taxonomy, and Iceland's prominence in climate risk metrics and environmental monitoring illustrate how small states with technical expertise are increasingly shaping the international standards governing these areas (Lutmar, 2025).

Alongside these monitoring functions, several small states, such as Norway and Qatar, have expanded their influence by participating in peacebuilding and mediation initiatives, using diplomatic credibility and normative authority to shape conflict resolution processes (Harpviken and Barakat, 2018). Consequently, these states have garnered international public favor and cultivated soft power through astute public diplomacy initiatives (Alibabalu & Sarkhanov, 2023). Their influence is exerted through specialized committees, certification bodies, and rulemaking platforms where decisions are made based on technical credibility rather than geopolitical power. This specialization allows small states to enshrine their preferences in globally applied rules, often without overt political competition. By defining the criteria by which compliance is measured, they effectively distribute authority within global governance frameworks, ensuring that their strategic interests are maintained not through hard balancing but through soft regulatory power.

In sum, the multilateral arena serves not merely as a defensive shield against systemic marginalization, but as an active site of agency formation for small states. Through norm promotion, strategic alliances, and discursive interventions, small states are able to transcend material

limitations and assert themselves as consequential actors in shaping the rules, norms, and institutions that govern international life. This phenomenon challenges the conventional realist presumption that agency is coterminous with capability, offering instead a constructivist-inflected vision of power rooted in persuasion, legitimacy, and institutional embeddedness (Posazhennikova, 2023).

8 DISCUSSION: SMALL STATES IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

The contemporary global order confronts small states with an intricate blend of challenges and possibilities, especially in the Global South, where enduring legacies of dependency collide with the fluid forces of globalization. Far from mere bystanders on the periphery of world affairs, these states, especially in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa, are proving that scant material resources need not diminish their strategic weight. Actors such as Uruguay and Costa Rica illustrate how smaller actors can navigate a landscape riddled with power imbalances to bolster their independence (Lupel et al., 2024). Their stories imply that the trajectory of small states hinges less on shielding themselves from outside forces and more on artfully steering the web of mutual dependencies. Handled with foresight, this approach can transform economic fragility and geopolitical obscurity into springboards for enduring clout and norm authority on the world stage.

Building on this dynamic, the agency of small states in the Global South increasingly stems from their capacity to cultivate adaptive governance models that blend domestic resilience with outward-looking engagement. Their collective cooperation in areas such as innovation, sustainable development, and institutional reliability allows these states to move beyond structural constraints and exercise distinctive forms of influence within an international system historically tilted toward great powers. Panama's strategic deployment of its logistics and financial sectors, bolstered by the enduring global relevance of the Panama Canal, illustrates how small economies can convert geographic advantage and infrastructural capacity into diplomatic visibility amid asymmetrical power relations (Ruiz-Hernández, Berg, 2025). Likewise, Paraguay's growing focus on renewable energy diplomacy, particularly through its hydroelectric partnerships with Brazil and Argentina, underscores how small states can transform energy interdependence into leverage for regional influence (Berkhout, 2024). Together, these examples reveal that the strategic posture of small Latin American states lies not in opposing globalization but in reframing it as a vehicle for sustained participation in the normative and institutional environment of global governance.

Conversely, the intensification of systemic volatility, marked by geopolitical realignments, rising great power competition, and the securitization of domains once considered benign (e.g., data, health, environment), threatens to constrain the maneuverability of small states. Particularly troubling is the increasing use of economic statecraft, cyber intrusion, and disinformation campaigns by larger powers, which disproportionately affect states with limited governance adaptability and constrained

counter-coercion capacities (Balfour, Ülgen, 2024). Additionally, the retreat from rules-based multilateralism and the resurgence of transactionalism in international affairs could marginalize small states, whose leverage often depends upon the predictability and normative legitimacy of international institutions. Therefore, multilateralism and international institutions are keys in the future for the small states in uncertain world geopolitics.

Looking ahead, the role of small states in the global South is likely to depend on their ability to position themselves at the intersection of emerging global transformations such as digitalization, the green transition, and multipolarization. As technological infrastructure, data management, and climate adaptation become central to international legitimacy, small states that can institutionalize innovation, maintain policy coherence, and form transregional alliances will play a crucial role in shaping the moral and practical conditions of global governance. This may translate into a new generation of strategic partnerships that transcend traditional North-South hierarchies and lead to shared commitments to sustainability, equitable development, and digital governance. Ultimately, the future of small states will depend not on their capacity to emulate great powers, but on their ability to anticipate systemic change and adapt to credible visions for a more pluralistic world order.

Globalization has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of state sovereignty, imposing new constraints and redistributing influence across a wider range of actors. In this interconnected environment, individuals, transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations, and other private entities have increasingly become involved in international exchanges and decision-making processes, reducing the monopoly of state authority. As a result, states are forced to adopt proactive and cooperative mechanisms and reassess their traditional privileges. In effect, globalization has undermined the concept of absolute sovereignty and has required nation-states, especially smaller ones, to cooperate and develop adaptive strategies that reconcile domestic priorities with the requirements of a new global system.

Globalization has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of state sovereignty, imposing new constraints and redistributing influence across a wider range of actors. In this interconnected environment, individuals, transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations, and other private entities have increasingly become involved in international exchanges and decision-making processes, reducing the monopoly of state authority. As a result, states are forced to adopt proactive and cooperative mechanisms and reassess their traditional privileges. In effect, globalization has undermined the concept of absolute sovereignty and has required nation-states, especially smaller ones, to cooperate and develop adaptive strategies that reconcile domestic priorities with the requirements of a new global system (Long, 2017).

The present analysis is primarily conceptual, but gains further analytical depth when embedded in comparative examples that connect theory to the empirical realities of small states in different regions. The Estonian digital governance model demonstrates how technological

innovation can turn structural vulnerability into strategic advantage by enhancing administrative efficiency and cyber resilience, while Qatar's normative entrepreneurial practices, manifested through brokered diplomacy and the display of influence through global media platforms, demonstrate how soft power can effectively offset material and geographical asymmetries. Similarly, Singapore's comparative economic governance highlights the institutional agility that allows small states to maintain their competitiveness despite limited strategic depth, while Barbados' sustained multilateralism highlights the potential for institutional engagement to amplify the voices of smaller actors in the global order (UN, 2025). The extension of this framework to the Global South, Latin America and the Caribbean, such as Uruguay's commitment to multilateral rule of law, Costa Rica's environmental diplomacy and the participation of small Caribbean states in international institutions, demonstrates that small states' adaptation strategies are not geographically limited but are structurally shaped by the asymmetries of globalization. Collectively, these examples confirm that small states, through innovative governance, diplomatic sophistication and normative leadership, can not only reduce their inherent vulnerabilities but also reconceptualize agency and resilience as dynamic tools for survival and influence in the international system (Cooper; Shaw, 2009).

Expanding this conceptual framework further requires recognizing that the global environment is generating new arenas in which small states can exercise agency that was previously inaccessible. As geopolitical competition intensifies and global governance becomes increasingly issue--fragmented, opportunities emerged for smaller actors to insert themselves into specialized domains, ranging from climate adaptation financing and cybersecurity coordination to global health governance and normative standard-setting in emerging technologies. In these spaces, expertise, credibility, and institutional reliability often outweigh material capabilities, allowing small states to influence regulatory trajectories and shape discursive outcomes. As these domains expand, small states are poised not merely to adapt to structural asymmetries but to participate in the normative and institutional directions of the international system, thereby demonstrating that the future of global governance will be determined as much by agile innovators as by traditional great powers (Long, 2017).

In general, although the sovereignty of today's states has been limited by globalization in most areas, especially the Internet and the virtual world, this does not mean the end of the age of states. It means that nation-states continue to operate as the most important actors in the international system. In doing so, they must modernize themselves by abandoning some of their old habits in the economic, political, and social fields. While some nation-states carry out this modernization within the framework of the democratic system and in a timely manner, others do so with delay. While nation-states that can keep up with globalization can maintain their existence by restructuring their spheres of sovereignty, nation-states that try to resist it are weakened and weakened in the face of the international system. The task of national states here is not to wait to benefit from the opportunities provided by globalization without doing

anything, but to try to conduct this competition on equal terms, to protect themselves from the harms of globalization and, if necessary, even to shape the concept of sovereignty in line with the interests of the country. As a result, although the nation-state, which has been the main political actor since the French Revolution, still exists, it has lost many of its foundations, has largely lost its sovereign authority in the classical sense, and has undergone significant transformation in the process of globalization.

9 SUGGESTIONS

9.1 Leveraging institutional and organizational power

Small states can increase their influence by actively shaping the agendas of international and regional organizations. By promoting rule--of-law mechanisms, developing protective norms, and advancing regulatory frameworks, they can reduce asymmetries with larger powers. For example, building coalitions of like-minded states or leading norm-setting initiatives allows them to protect their sovereignty through institutional rather than material means.

9.2 Investing in digital and artificial intelligence capacities

Given the digitization of global power structures, small states should prioritize investments in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and data governance. By developing digital infrastructure and AI-based innovation hubs, they can create comparative advantages that overcome material constraints while securing critical infrastructure from external vulnerabilities.

9.3 Expanding Specialized Diplomacy

Small countries can specialize in subject areas such as climate change, maritime governance, humanitarian aid, or digital ethics, positioning themselves as essential actors in global debates. This form of "specialized diplomacy" allows them to wield influence disproportionate to their size.

9.4 Building strategic partnerships and networks

Rather than aligning exclusively with a single great power, small states should build flexible networks across regions and organizations, thereby reducing dependency and increasing bargaining power.

9.5 Prioritizing human capital and knowledge-based economies

Investing in education, innovation, and knowledge production enables small countries to rely on intellectual and normative influence. By transforming themselves into laboratories of policy innovation, they can become global authorities in specialized areas.

10 CONCLUSION

The preceding analysis has sought to illuminate the recently emerged transformations that globalization has imposed upon the structural conditions, strategic behavior, and survival imperatives of small states in the post-Cold War international system. It has become abundantly clear that traditional conceptions of state power, predicated predominantly on material capabilities, territorial expanse, and geostrategic leverage, are increasingly inadequate for capturing the operational realities of small states in a world characterized by transnational interdependence, epistemic fluidity, and normative contestation. As globalization accelerates the diffusion of power across non-territorial domains, digital, ideational, financial, and informational, small states are compelled to adopt not only their external strategies but also the very meaning of agency, autonomy, and resilience within a new complex world.

The synthesis of the empirical and theoretical ideas across this study suggests that small states must continuously negotiate the dual logics of vulnerability and opportunity. While globalization undeniably exposes them to economic volatility, cyber threats, and strategic coercion by more powerful actors, it simultaneously offers platforms through which they can amplify their influence, project normative authority, and engage in agile, issue-specific diplomacy. Hence, survival and relevance in this context are not reducible to defensive posturing or alignment-seeking alone; rather, they require proactive forms of agency, ranging from norm entrepreneurship and institutional coalition-building to digital innovation and strategic narrative construction.

Future research should explore the conceptual evolution and practical manifestations of digital sovereignty as a critical dimension of small state autonomy in the 21st century, particularly as issues of data governance, algorithmic control, and cybersecurity increasingly intersect with national security. Likewise, the growing salience of minilateralism, issue-based, flexible, and often informal cooperation among small groups of states, warrants systematic examination, as it presents a potentially transformative alternative to the constraints of formal multilateralism. Finally, greater scholarly attention must be devoted to adaptive governance models that emphasize anticipatory capacity, institutional elasticity, and cross-sectoral integration, all of which are indispensable for small states surviving in a global order surrounded by persistent uncertainty, systemic disruption, and normative flux. In sum, small states should not be defined solely by perceptions of weakness or passivity. Rather, they demonstrate strategic agency by adapting to challenges, reshaping power dynamics, and maintaining relevance in an increasingly interconnected yet fragmented global order.

In light of the research questions and guiding hypothesis, this analysis substantiates the argument that small states, while structurally constrained in an international system dominated by larger powers, have not been reduced to mere passivity or dependency; rather, they are actively aligning their survival strategies with global changes, taking advantage of the fluid and multidimensional opportunities afforded by

globalization. Thus, the evidence suggests that material power, while still relevant, no longer serves as the exclusive determinant in world politics. Instead, survival and influence increasingly depend on the ability of small states to exercise agency through adaptive governance, issue-based coalitions, and the creation of strategic positions that allow them to transcend traditional vulnerabilities. Thus, the hypothesis that survival is less dependent on mere size or material capability and more tied to institutional innovation, strategic flexibility, and normative engagement is confirmed. By embracing multilateralism, pursuing digital governance, and advancing normative agendas in international forums, small states such as Singapore, the UAE, and Qatar have not only reduced asymmetry vis-à-vis great powers but have also positioned themselves as active participants in shaping global norms and practices. This suggests that the logic of small state behavior is not reducible to reactive alignment or defensive shielding, but rather reflects proactive engagement with the structural changes of globalization.

REFERENCES

ACHARYA, Amitav; BUZAN, Barry. **The Making of Global International Relations: Origins and Evolution of IR at its Centenary.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

ALIBABALU, Sayyad Sadri; SARKHANOV, Teynur. **Iran's public diplomacy and religious soft power in Africa**. Politics and Religion Journal (Political science of religion) 2, 2023, p. 411-433. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.54561/prj1702411a. Acesso em: 23 June 2025.

ARENG, Liina. **Lilliputian States in Digital Affairs and Cyber Security**. NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCD COE), 2014.

BAGIR, Muharrem. **Globalization's Challenge to Nation-State Sovereignty and Conflicts in the Middle East**.Nous Academy Journal. p. 66–80. 2024. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13920057. Acesso em: 27 June 2025.

BAKER, Kerryn. **Independence, interdependence and flexible sovereignty in the small states of the Pacific**. Small States & Territories, 4(2), p. 369–374. 2021.

BALDACCHINO, Godfrey; WIVEL, Anders. **Small states: Concepts and theories**. *In* Godfrey Baldacchino and Anders Wivel (Eds.), Handbook on the politics of small states(pp. 3–20). Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020.

BALFOUR, Rosa; x ÜLGEN, Anders. **Geopolitics and Economic Statecraft in the European Union**. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024.

BARTELSON, Jens. **A Genealogy of Sovereignty**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

BERKHOUT, Pelle. **The role of Brazilian consensual hegemony in the Itaipu hydropower dam renegotiation**. E-International Relations, 2024. Disponível em: https://www.e-ir.info/2024/07/07/the-role-of-brazilian-consensual-hegemony-in-the-itaipu-hydropower-dam-re-negotiation/. Acesso em: 7 July 2025.

BOURBEAU, Philippe. **Resilience and international politics: Premises, debates, agenda**. International Studies Review 17(3), p. 374-395. 2015. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.1111/misr.12226. Acesso em: 9 June 2025.

BRAUN, Benjamin; SCHINDLER, Sebastian; Wille, Tobias. **Rethinking agency in International Relations: performativity, performances and actor-networks**. J Int Relat Dev 22, p. 787–807. 2019. Disponível em:https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-018-0147-z. Acesso em: 4 August 2025.

BRIGUGLIO, Lino. **A vulnerability and resilience framework for small states**. *In* Bynoe-Lewis, D. (Ed.), Building the resilience of small states: a revised framework, p. 1-102. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2014.

BRIGUGLIO, Lino. **Economic Growth of Small Developing States – A Literature Review**. IEO Background Paper BP/22-01/12, Independent Evaluation Office of the International Monetary Fund, 2022.

BUZAN, Barry; HANSEN, Lene. **The Evolution of International Security Studies**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

CARMICHAEL, Logan. **Lessons from small and highly-digitalised Estonia: Decision-making in the aftermath of cybersecurity crises**. Internet Policy Review, 14(3), 2025. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.14763/2025.3.2028. Acesso em: 15 October 2025.

CHEANG, Bryan; LIM, Hanniel. **Institutional diversity and state-led development: Singapore as a unique variety of capitalism**. Structural Change and Economic Dynamics 66, p. 207–218. 2023. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.strueco.2023.07.007. Acesso em: 23 July 2025.

COOPER, Andrew F.; SHAW, Timothy M. **The Diplomacies of Small States: Between Vulnerability and Resilience**. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

DEIBERT, Ronald. **Parchment, printing, and hypermedia: Communication in world order transformation**. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

FAUDE, Benjamin, and John Karlsrud. **The institutional dynamics of global governance in hard times: Innovation or decline?** Ethics & International Affairs 39(2), p. 114-129. 2025.

FUKUYAMA, Francis. **The end of history and the last man**. Free Press, 1992.

GADDIS, John Levis. **The Cold War: A New History**. London: Penguin Books, 2005.

GEORGE, Alexander L.; BENNETT, Andrew. **Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences**. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

HARDY, Andrew. **Estonia's digital diplomacy: Nordic interoperability and the challenges of cross-border e-governance**. Internet Policy Review 13(3), 2024. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.14763/2024.3.1785. Acesso em: 20 July 2025.

HARPVIKEN, Kristian Berg; BARAKAT, Sultan. **Comparing Qatari and Norwegian Models of Small State Conflict Mediation**. PRIO Paper. Oslo: PRIO, 2018.

HELD, David; MCGREW, Anthony G.; GOLDBLATT, David; PERRATON, Jonathan. **Global transformations: Politics, economics and culture**. Stanford University Press, 1999.

INGEBRITSEN, Christine. **Scandinavia in World Politics**. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

KEOHANE, Robert O. **After hegemony: Cooperation and discord in the world political economy**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

KEOHANE, Robert O.; NYE, Joseph S. **Power and interdependence: World politics in transition**. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977.

KRASNER, Stephen D. **Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy**. Princeton University Press, 1999.

KUULMANN, Anna. **Digital Symphony: Assessing the Synergy of Digital Development and Nation Branding on a Country's Global Standing**. Master's Thesis, Tallinn University of Technology, 2024.

LI, Tony Yuan. **Asymmetry in the Digital Age: Cyber Deterrence Strategies for Small States**. Journal of Strategic Security 17(4), 2024, p. 71-88. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.17.4.2268. Acesso em: 11 July 2025.

LONG, Tom. **Small States, Great Power? Gaining Influence through Intrinsic, Derivative, and Collective Power**. International Studies Review, 19(2), p. 185–205. 2017. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viw040. Acesso em: 20 August 2025.

LUPEL, Adam; PITAKDUMRONGKIT, Kaewkamol; NG, Joel. **Small States and the Multilateral System: Transforming Global Governance for a Better Future**. International Peace Institute, 2024.

LUTMAR, Carmela. **Perspective Chapter: Small States – A New Research Agenda**. IntechOpen. 2025.

MAASS, Matthias. **The elusive definition of the small state**. International Politics, vol. 46(1), p. 65–83. 2009.

MARAK, Sunanda. X-Road Technology: A digital backbone of Estonia's Cyber security and DPI. Future Shift Labs, 2025. Disponível em: https://futureshiftlabs.com/x-road-technology-a-digital-backbone-of-estonias-cyber-security-and-dpi/. Acesso em: 8 December 2025.

POSAZHENNIKOVA, Anna. **Small States in Multilateral Negotiations: Actorness Increase Strategies**. 2023. Disponível em:http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4673850. Acesso em: 17 June 2025.

RUIZ-HERNÁNDEZ, Carlos; BERG, C. Ryan. **Panama's port lawsuits reshape great power competition in the Americas: The Mulino Doctrine in action**. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2025. Disponível em: https://www.csis.org/podcasts/audio-briefs/panamas-port-lawsuits-reshape-great-power-competition-americas-mulino. Acesso em: 20 December 2025.

SADRI ALIBABALU, Sayyad. **The Relationship between Economy and Foreign Policy: The Case of Iran (2011-201z)**. InTraders International Trade Academic Journal 1(1), 2018, p. 66-76.

SADRI ALIBABALU, Sayyad. **Turkey's security policy towards Northern Syria and Iraq amid regional chaos (2011–201t)**. Bilig 102, 2022, p. 147-170. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.12995/bilig.10207. Acesso em: 15 May 2025.

SAMARDŽIJA, Višnja; ŠABI, Senada Šelo. Security challenges in the Western Balkans: Building 'soft' security after conflict. In ARCHER, Clive, BAILES, Alyson J. K.; WIVEL, Anders (Eds.). **Small States and International Security: Europe and Beyond** (130-148). London: Routledge, 2014. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315798042. Acesso em: 25 August 2025.

SEYIDBAYLI, Toghrul. **U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan and Realignment of Eurasian Rival Powers**. Journal of Strategic Security 18(2), 2025, 215-239. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.18.2.2499. Acesso em: 26 November 2025.

TAN, Eugene E.G. **A Small State Perspective on the Evolving Nature of Cyber Conflict: Lessons from Singapore**. PRISM Futures, 8(3), 2020, p. 158–171.

TAYLOR, Frank F. **Whose world order? Cuba vs. Pax Americana in the Persian Gulf**. Socialism and Democracy 10(1), p. 21–45. 1996. Disponível em:https://doi.org/10.1080/08854309608428175. Acesso em: 23 June 2025.

THORHALLSSON, Baldur. **Small states and shelter theory: Iceland's external affairs**. Routledge, 2018.

TONON, Clément. **GovTech, the New Frontier in Digital Sovereignty**. French Institute of International Relations (Ifri), 2020. Disponível em: https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/migrated_files/documents/atoms/files/tonon_govtech_digital_sovereignty_2020.pdf. Acesso em: 2 June 2025.

UN. **Sustainable Development Report 2025**. The Sustainable Development Report, 2025. Disponível em: https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/chapters/. Acesso em: 20 November 2025.

UNDP. **Small Island Digital States: How digital can catalyse SIDS development**. New York: UNDP Global SIDS Team, 2024.

VAICEKAUSKAIT, Živil Marija. Security Strategies of Small States in a Changing World. *Journal on Baltic Security*, 3(2), 2017, p. 7–15. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.1515/jobs-2017-0006. Acesso em: 2 May 2025.

WENDT, Alexander. **Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics**. International Organization 46(2), p. 391– 425. 1992.

WIJAYA, Trissia; LIAO, Jessica, C; BAIK, Ewon; KATADA, Saori N. **Pivotal Power of Small States to Save the International Liberal Economic Order: The Case from East Asia**.The Pacific Review 38(2), p. 285–316. 2024. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2024.2369700. Acesso em: 12 May 2025.

WIVEL, Anders; BAILES, Alyson J.K. and ARCHER, Clive. Setting the scene: Small states and international security. In ARCHER, Clive, BAILES, Alyson J. K.; WIVEL, Anders (Eds.). **Small States and International Security: Europe and Beyond**. P. 3-25. London: Routledge, 2014. Disponível em: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315798042. Acesso em: 9 September 2025.

WU, Pong Soon. **The Strategic Use of Artificial Intelligence by Small States**. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), 2025. Disponível em: https://rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/the-strategic-use-of-artificial-intelligence-by-small-states/. Acesso em: 17 October 2025.