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UNDEMOCRATIC MINIATURES: CASES AND PATTERNS

Dag Anckar

ABSTRACT

Research has indicated that small states are conducive to democracy. However, a handful of the microstates of the world are non-democracies of long standing. The analysis in this essay of these cases builds on the assumption that the cases lack many of the capabilities and qualities that are usually regarded as important democracy determinants in the microstate universe. By and large, the assumption stands verified. Several undemocratic microstates are "large" on a microstate scale and are therefore not to the same extent as "smaller" microstates sensitive to the democracy-building capacities that are inherent in smallness. Furthermore, as the small undemocracies have not in any real sense of the term been British colonies, they are in lack of an essential prerequisite of democratic culture and conduct. Also, the small undemocracies are governed by regimes that are long-standing as well as authoritarian - microstate undemocracy, in other words, has a tradition which serves as a drag on development and conforms to the future by slow degrees, if at all.

INTRODUCTION

The question why some countries have evolved into democracies whereas others have not, has been answered in many ways and by emphasizing the role of various factors. One factor, which keeps emerging in the democracy discourse, is about state size. Again and again, research findings suggest that more than larger states, small states are conducive to democracy. The reasons for this state of affairs remain largely unexplored, and a pessimistic saying that focuses the case of small island nations is that “maybe we will never be able to isolate scientifically that elusive independent variable that seeks to make islands more conducive to democracy” (Srebrnik 2004, 341). The fact that small size links to democracy is, however, evident from findings that state, for instance, that

state size is a more useful category than degree of development or geographic location for understanding the prerequisites for democracy (Ott 2000), that some three quarters of the microstates in the world are democracies compared to about one third of other states (D. Anckar 2002, 376-378), and that the likelihood of durable freedom and democracy increases with a decrease in the size of political units (Colomer 2007, 61).

However, all rules have exceptions and this is true also of the rule that states a connection between small size and democracy. While most small states evidently are democracies, some are non-democracies, and this essay is about these exceptions. The research question to be answered is: which small states appear as marked non-democracies, and what particular features may explain that they deviate from a general pattern? Two specific considerations guide this problem-setting. First, political science has a democracy bias, large portions of the discipline being devoted to the understanding of democratic progress and democracy maintenance, and much less attention being paid to democratic failure and dictatorial politics. Studying non-democracy therefore implies a commitment to the task of broadening democracy horizons, a task which is said in a recent textbook on unfree political systems to answer to an internal need in political science as well as to a more general social motive (Karvonen 2008, 9-13). Second, the small non-democracies are deviant cases, and in comparative research the study of such cases has quite specific functions, evident in the specification of the validity space of the rule from which the cases deviate, and evident also in their entailing ability to provide a better general knowledge and understanding of the same rule (e.g. Dogan and Pelassy 1984, 109-110).

DATA AND SOURCES

The research at hand covers the time period of 1972-2007, and requires that two preliminary tasks are performed. First, the small states of the world during this time period must be identified; second, it must be decided whether or not these states have appeared as democracies. This section performs these two tasks.

"Smallness" is, of course, an elusive and even controversial concept (Maass 2009, 65-83). Given that the microstate concept keeps popping up in debates concerning the link between small and democratic, it is a reasonable point of departure to place smallness on an equality with microstates, i.e. states with populations of less than one million. This operationalization comes to use here, and the ensuing task is therefore to identify during the research period those states that are below this ceiling. The identification is done on the basis of state population data, available on the web ("Population Statistics: Historical Demography of all Countries"). Of course, one needs to observe that the population of microstates varies over time, as some microstates disappear from the pool simply because of population growth, and others join the pool in consequence of decolonization, secession, or other related events. The microstate population of the world is therefore in constant flux, and changes in the proportions of democratic and non-democratic microstates may to some extent be consequences of the simple fact that the analyst confronts at different sets of states at different times.

The ensuing analysis proceeds in stages. First, all states that qualify at some point during the observation period as a microstate are identified, the result of this count being 51. From this group are then removed those states that have not during at least three quarters of the years during the observation period qualified as microstates. For instance, Botswana was a microstate in the years 1972-1982, but no longer, due to population growth, at later dates, and is therefore not included. Likewise, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau disappeared in consequence of population growth during the early 1990s from the microstate camp. Montenegro was independent only in 2006, and is therefore not included. These calculations and considerations reduce the number of cases for investigation to 41. Qualifying as a microstate in 1972-1998, Swaziland is a border-line case, which is, however, included in the population.

The period of investigation starts from the year 1972 for a reason. Namely, from this year on the Freedom House ratings of the countries in the world are available, and these ratings, which may be found on the web, are used here to determine the democratic status up to the year 2007 of the 41 territories ("Freedom in the World. Comparative and

Historical Data"). Based on surveys provided by regional experts, consultants and human rights specialists as well as fact-finding missions and public sources, the Freedom House organization monitors the progress and decline of political rights and civil liberties in all the nations of the world and in related territories. In essence, the units are rated on seven-category scales for political rights and civil liberties, and then, on the basis of these ratings, placed into one of the categories of "Free", "Partly Free" and "Not Free". Although it is certainly true that the Freedom House data do not discriminate in full between degrees of freedom and non-freedom (Foweraker and Krznaric 2000, 767), the data are still widely used by social and political scientists and are generally credited with validity as well as reliability (e.g. Lijphart 1999; Lundell 2005; Karvonen 2008). Indeed, by integrating observations on political rights as well as civil liberties, the Freedom House conception of freedom becomes a very good approximation of what should be meant by "democracy", and this study certainly concurs in the view by Larry Diamond that the "Free" rating in the Freedom House survey is the best available empirical indicator of "liberal democracy" (Diamond 1996, 24). The guiding criterion is therefore the Freedom House rating of the country in question at the actual point of time. Countries rated by Freedom House as "Free" are classified here to be democratic, whereas countries rated as "Partly Free" or "Not Free" are classified to represent non-democratic regimes.

The microstates of the world have as a rule been rated since 1972 by Freedom House for every year during their existence as independent states, and the materials at hand are therefore almost complete. There are, however, two exceptions to this rule. First, upon being rated during the years 1972-1976, the European diminutives of Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino disappeared for several years from the Freedom House listings, to reappear from the year 1993 onwards. The data concerning these small states do therefore not cover in full the time period of investigation. Second, the Vatican City is not rated by Freedom House. This is probably because of the many political and institutional peculiarities that mark this uniquely structured city-state. Still, as evident from reviews of political life in this ecclesiastical state, ruled by the Pope, there can be little doubt that Vatican City must be counted among the non-democracies of the world,

and therefore belongs in the population that is investigated here (Duursma 1994, 415-425).

THE UNDEMOCRATIC MINIATURES

There were 37 microstates in the world in the year 1986; ten years later they numbered to 42 and again ten years later to 41. In contrast to this increase, the presence of non-democracy has decreased: while the portion of non-democratic microstates was 54 per cent in 1986, it was in 1996 reduced to 33 per cent and in 2006 to 34 per cent (D. Anckar 2008, 77-78). Thus, the general development in the microstate world has been one of advancement and democratization. However, the above figures also cast in some doubt the doctrine that emphasizes the link between smallness and democracy. The link is namely less than robust and in fact time-dependent – still in the mid-1980s, a majority of the microstates were non-democracies. It should be noted though, in defence of the doctrine, that the portion of non-democracies was already at that time much larger among larger states than among microstates (D. Anckar 2008, 77-78).

The decline in the relative number of non-democracies is in main a consequence of the simple fact that cases of democratization outnumber cases of de-democratization. In fact, only two cases from the Pacific region stand for retreats from democratic take-offs. In Fiji, independent in 1970 and one of the world's most ethnically polarized countries (Davies 2005, 47), racial tensions triggered coups in 1987 as well as the introduction in 1990 of a new constitution, which was aimed at the excluding of Fiji Indians as a group from any meaningful share of political power (Lawson 1996, 66). The introduction of this non-democratic 1990 Constitution was followed in 1997 by the introduction of still a new constitution, which represented a move towards multiethnic government and a decreased dominance of ethnic Fijians. Violent unrest again in 2000 did not alter the restored status of Fiji as a democracy; however, in the wake of a new coup in 2006 a military-appointed administration was installed (Lal 2007), and Fiji, for the time being at least, has retarded into a cessation of democracy. Solomon Islands embarked upon independence in 1978 with a Westminster-type democratic government, and an evaluation some ten years later

was that "Democracy in its modern form may be a recent migrant to the Solomons, but it would appear to be settling in well" (Alasia 1989, 150). However, this forecast has proved to be too optimistic. In 1998 tensions between the two largest ethnic groups erupted into open warfare, and the country experienced a coup as well as subsequent military intervention in 2000. Racially charged riots still plague political life in the country, which is presently regarded by many as a failed state (Larmour 2005, 22-23).

Table 1 provides a bird's eye view of the democracy situation during the research period, and also serves as a point of departure for the identification of non-democratic microstate entities. The table contains two sets of information. First, it gives for each microstate the years during which the performance of that state is observed. The years are as a rule 1972-2007, but several cases are independent later than 1972 and are, in consequence, observed during slightly shorter periods. As explained earlier, Swaziland is classified only during its microstate years 1972-1998. Also, as likewise explained earlier, data are missing for several years in regards to Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino. Second, the table assigns each state a percentage value which is here called "democracy rating". This percentage is a measure of the frequency by which the microstate in question has been rated by Freedom House as democratic. To give an example: A microstate which is independent in, say, 1975, has been ranked by Freedom House each year in the time span 1976-2007, this adding up to 32 classifications. If they have all been in the democracy category, the democracy rating of this state is 100. If the state has not once during the 32 years of classification been ranked in the democracy category, the democracy rating is of course 0. And if the state is ranked in the democracy category, say, 14 times out of 32, the resulting percentage calculation gives this colony a democracy rating of 44. The measure is crude, of course. But it orders the states along a democracy continuum, and thereby facilitates the search for democratic failures.

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Table 1. Democracy status of the microstates of the world.

Microstate:	Observation period	Democracy rating
Andorra	1972-2007	76
Antigua-Barbuda	1981-2007	52
Bahamas	1973-2007	100
Bahrain	1973-2007	0
Barbados	1972-2007	100
Belau	1994-2007	100
Belize	1981-2007	100
Brunei	1984-2007	0
Cape Verde	1975-2007	53
Cyprus	1972-2007	80
Comoros	1975-2007	0
Djibouti	1977-2007	0
Dominica	1978-2007	100
Equatorial Guinea	1972-2007	0
Fiji	1972-2007	46
Grenada	1978-2007	73
Guyana	1972-2007	43
Iceland	1972-2007	100
Kiribati	1979-2007	100
Liechtenstein	1972-2007	76
Luxembourg	1972-2007	100
Maldives	1972-2007	6
Malta	1972-2007	86
Marshall Islands	1991-2007	100
Micronesia	1991-2007	100
Monaco	1972-2007	76
Nauru	1972-2007	100
Qatar	1972-2007	0
St Kitts-Nevis	1983-2007	100
St Lucia	1979-2007	100
St Vincent and the Grenadines	1979-2007	100
San Marino	1972-2007	100
Sao Tomé and Príncipe	1975-2007	53
Seychelles	1976-2007	3
Solomon Islands	1978-2007	73
Suriname	1975-2007	44
Swaziland	1972-1998	0
Tonga	1972-2007	0
Tuvalu	1978-2007	100
Vanuatu	1980-2007	74

The resulting pattern is about a division into three. First, verifying the assumption about a link between smallness and democracy, 17 states have always or almost always been classified as democracies. These states, then, are democracy knights who consistently fly the democracy banner. Second, at another extreme and falsifying the assumption about a link between smallness and democracy, 10 states have always or almost always been classified as non-democracies. Third, a group of 13 states position themselves between the two extremes, most of these states, however, reporting quite satisfying although not immaculate democracy performances. It is the second of these three groups that is of particular interest here, the group members being: Bahrain, Brunei, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Maldives, Qatar, Seychelles, Swaziland, and Tonga. As explained earlier, Vatican City is added to this list. In the following, to account for their compact affiliation with non-democratic ideas and a non-democratic conduct, these states are named "undemocracies". With a few and very small exceptions only, each and every of these states have at each and every observation point been rated in the non-democratic categories. They appear almost immune against democracy.

EXPLAINING UNDEMOCRACY

When and if small size advances democracy, this must be the outcome of some particular factors or circumstances that link to smallness. The conceivable factors are many; one noteworthy listing is given by Robert Dahl and Edward Tufte in their by now classical work *Size and Democracy* (1973), which revolves around systematic differences between small and large in terms of participation, unity, loyalties and control. The authors suggest, for instance, that whereas complex networks of interaction characterize large units, small units appear in contrast more simple, elementary and easy of access; also, feelings of tolerance and understanding prevail more easily in small units as smallness promotes open channels of communication between those who govern and those who are governed (Dahl and Tufte 1973, 13-17; C. Anckar 2008, 434-436). Be this as it may, if some small entities are still at distance from a democracy status, this must be due to the fact that

smallness notwithstanding, the specific factors are lacking, do not have steering space, or are otherwise contradicted by circumstances which serve to neutralize or eliminate the impact of smallness. In other words: smallness sometimes confronts obstacles that are too powerful for smallness really to count. The analysis in this section follows the logic of this model.

Given this point of departure, the members of the small group of undemocracies may be regarded as choices on the dependent variable, and may be dealt with in accordance with the principles of this methodological approach (e.g. Peters 1998, 31). The first task, then, is to find out what background factors are common to the cases; the second is to determine the extent to which the common factors constitute necessary or probabilistically necessary conditions for undemocracy, conditions being necessary if it is the case that for microstate undemocracy to occur, the conditions must also occur, and conditions being probabilistically necessary if some exceptions are allowed to the above rule (Dion 1998, 133-135). The reasoning that follows is theory-driven in so far as it revolves in its search for common features around five background factors, which are in the literature credited with presumptive relevance for establishing a demarcation line between democracy and non-democracy. Whereas the first four of these five factors are about the presence or lack of conditions that are favorable to democracy, the fifth factor is about the presence or lack of a bar to the cogency of factors favorable to democracy, if and when such factors are at hand. The factors are given in Table 2, which also reports for each undemocracy the empirical value for the relevant factor. Brief reviews and commentaries on the estimated impact of each separate factor follow:

Table 2. The small undemocracies: selected background characteristics.

Undemocracies:	1	2	3a	3b	4	5
Bahrain	704	Britain	33,900	15	1.09	2
Brunei	369	Britain	51,000	4	1.02	1
Comoros	793	France	1,100	20	.07	12
Djibouti	871	France	2,300	59	.92	2
Equatorial Guinea	586	Spain	28,200	30	.51	2

Maldives	338	Britain	4,600	NA	.66	2
Qatar	646	Britain	87,600	1	.91	2
Seychelles	82	Britain	16,600	2	.37	2
Swaziland	989	Britain	4,400	40	1.00	2
Tonga	102	Britain	5,100	13	.42	2
Vatican City	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	3

Keys:
1 - size year 2006 (Swaziland 1998), population '000. Source: http://www.populstat.info/
2 – colonial background, metropolitan power. Source: D. Anckar 2004;
3a – modernization; GDP/capita (USD), 2006. Source: CIA World Factbook;
3b – modernization; unemployment rate (percentage), 2006. Source: CAI World Factbook;
4 – heterogeneity index. Source: Anckar, Eriksson and Leskinen 2002;
5 – number of sovereigns 1972-2007. Source: compilation by the present author.
NA – Not Available; Not Applicable

The Size Factor. The impact of small size is through a variety of mechanisms and channels that are sensitive to variations in size and transmit the effects of size to political style and political structure. Obviously, smallness strengthens, paves the way for and expedites the impact of political, economic and social factors that promote democracy; smallness also, obviously, tempers and negates the impact of political, economic and social factors that are detrimental to democratic breakthrough and the maintenance of democracy. One would certainly expect that the relation between small size and democracy weakens when one moves in the analysis from small-sized entities to somewhat larger entities – as the size of entities increases and as smallness thereby becomes a less pronounced quality, the potential of entities for promoting the democracy-enhancing functions of smallness will necessary decrease. From this theoretical reasoning the idea may be derived that undemocracy is in the microstate camp to be found mostly among units that are larger in size.

This idea, in fact, appears to be empirically valid. Of the 41 microstates of the world in 2006, no less than 33 had populations of less than 500.000 people (D. Anckar 2007, 194-195). This means that if the microstates in 2006 are separated into two groups, one consisting of "small" microstates with populations of 500.000 or less, and one consisting

of "large" microstates with populations in the 500.000 – 1 million interval, this second group has eight members only. As evident from Table 2, no less than five of these eight states are members of the undemocracy group that is investigated here. To this should be added that the "large" microstates Fiji and Solomon Islands (849.000 and 506.000 people respectively in 2006), as explained earlier in this article, have retired from democracy status during the period of investigation. This means that seven out of the eight "large" microstates in the world today are non-democracies. The conclusion is therefore that although all non-democratic microstates certainly not are "large", almost all "large" microstates are non-democracies. A size that exceeds the 500.000 people threshold therefore emanates as a probabilistically necessary condition for microstate undemocracy.

The Colonial Heritage Factor. Conventional wisdom has it that the states which the British left behind them were better equipped for democratic government than the states that had belonged to France or other powers (e.g. Hadenius 1992, 132-133). This is because British colonial policy by setting up representative systems and by other means aimed at a systematic preparation of colonies and colonial peoples for greater self-government. The thought is therefore near at hand that a specific colonial background may provide smallness with a lift towards democracy, whereas a lack of this background brakes a democracy development. The materials at hand, however, do not at all support this belief. Of the ten undemocracies that have a colonial background, no less than seven are former British possessions, whereas Comoros, Djibouti and Equatorial-Guinea represent other heritages. The great majority of the undemocracies being freed from British rule, it would appear, then, that the idea of undemocracy following from other than British traditions is falsified.

However, an important qualification needs to be inserted, which is about the nature of the undemocratic Arab territories. These colonies, namely, do not really fit within the realm of the theory. They were in fact never strictly part of the British Empire but had close treaty arrangements with Britain who controlled their foreign policy. They received independence from Britain under existing rulers, this meaning that they continued to exist after independence as absolute monarchies (Chamberlain 1998, 7 and 133). "Despite

superficial gestures towards liberal norms" (King 1998, 68), they are still run along autocratic lines. In sum, a good part of the materials at hand are about cases which do not necessarily convey a just and unbiased model of the impact of Westminster Rule. This characterization is more or less valid also in regards to Tonga, which was placed for some decades in the 20th century under British guardianship in matters of foreign policy and security policy (Campbell 1992, 112-113). Furthermore, the characterization is valid in regards to the Maldives – upon acquiring the islands in 1887 as a protectorate, Britain controlled external relations but undertook not to interfere in internal affairs (Suryanarayan 1993, 108-109). The colonial background which is said to promote democracy was never really at hand in all these cases, and the lack of this particular background, as it upon reflection marks practically each and every of the undemocracies, therefore turns out a necessary condition for undemocracy

The Modernization Factor. From studies of democratization the so-called modernization theory has emerged as one central body of thought. The theory was formulated by Seymour Martin Lipset in a classical study from 1959, and has later been confirmed in research over and over again, albeit exceptions to the theory abound (e.g. Diamond 1992). The theory states that wealth and economic resourcefulness tend to promote democracy; the absence of such factors, then, should in all likeliness decrease the prospects of democratization. In Table 2 the modernization factor is operationalized in terms of GNP/capita and in terms of unemployment; data for both variables are collected from "CIA The World Factbook", which is available on the net. The findings are anything but encouraging from a modernization point of view: whereas some undemocracies have poor economies indeed, others, particularly the small Arab states, perform very well. Still other states have in-between positions. The unemployment variable follows a similar spread pattern, and it is of course, given that the two factors represent two aspects of the one and same phenomenon, only natural that the spreads correlate. Anyhow, the verdict is that the modernity factor has little explanatory power, and is not a necessary condition.

The Heterogeneity Factor. It is a reasonable thought that ethnic heterogeneity fosters cleavages and conflicts, and therefore hampers democracy. It is therefore not a far-fetched hypothesis that the small undemocracies are heterogeneous units. To test this hypothesis, data are entered in Table 2 that report the degree of ethnic and religious fragmentation in the small undemocracies. Data are from a study by Carsten Anckar, Mårten Eriksson and Jutta Leskinen that provides measures running from 0 to 1 of ethnic, linguistic and religious fragmentation in the countries of the world and also gives a measure of total fragmentation, which adds to the measure for religious fragmentation the measure of either ethnicity or language, which returns the highest value of fragmentation (Anckar, Eriksson and Leskinen 2002). The figures in Table 2 reflect this measure of total fragmentation. Already a quick glance at the data shows that the fragmentation hypothesis lacks support. While the fragmentation spreading is noteworthy in itself, the degree of fragmentation is in all cases less than conspicuous. There is therefore no evident link between heterogeneity and undemocracy.

The Tradition Factor. One explanation of states being governed dictatorially is, simply enough, that such a state of affairs has always persisted. Historically, this explanation is the most usual and also the least satisfying from a scientific point of view (Karvonen 2008, 30). Still, the general validity of the explanation cannot be denied, and its relevance to the issue at hand must certainly be explored. The implication of explanations that depart from a tradition factor is that democratic breakthrough has faced obstacles that emanate from one person, one family or one clan and from their guiding interests or from a dominating and democracy-hostile cultural climate. The situation at large is reviewed in Table 2, which introduces data on the number of power-holders in the undemocracies during the 30-years-period of 1977-2006 (in regards to Brunei, independent in 1984, data are for the years 1984-2006). With the exception of the Comoros, where repeated conflicts between traditional clans have brought about a “notorious political instability” (Thibaut 1999, 243), the number of rulers is about as low as it can possibly be during a period of 30 years. The tradition factor appears to carry validity, indeed. A closer look at some few instances of undemocracy serve to illustrate further the importance of this factor. However, the cases are not similar in detail. Whereas they all display a dictatorial

stability, manifest in the survival of long and authoritarian regimes, some display more than others a conservative erosion of tradition.

Among regimes that appear paralyzed and even immovable from a democracy point of view are Brunei and some African places. Brunei is a sultanate with no elections or democratic procedures. The Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, whose title has passed within the same dynasty since the 15th century, is both head of state and head of government, and he rules since 1968 with full executive authority. The legislative body with 20 appointed members is responsible only for consultations to the Sultan, who is assisted and advised also by several councils, which he appoints. A Council of Ministers assists in the administration of the government. Although there are no elections, some legal parties exist. However, political opposition is banned (Karvonen 2008, 117-127). The worst among the worst in the undemocracy family is perhaps Equatorial-Guinea, which has been said in a book-title to constitute *An African Tragedy* (Fegley 1989). The country was independent from Spain in 1968, and Francisco Macias was victorious in presidential elections that same year. Soon Macias eliminated the leaders of the opposition, created a one-party state and proclaimed himself President for Life. His lifetime was short, though – in 1979 Macias was assassinated in a palace revolution led by his brother-in-law Teodore Obiang, who still at the time of writing is the ruler of Equatorial-Guinea. Only reluctantly and yielding to international pressure the new regime introduced in 1991 a multiparty constitution and arranged for political elections. The elections have, however, been formal and manipulated and in violation of electoral procedure (Fleischhacker 1999, 352-353). The four leading opposition parties backed out from the presidential elections in 2002, in which Obiang was once more re-elected.

The tradition factor reappears in more or less the same rigid form, for instance, in Swaziland. Independent in 1968 from British rule, Swaziland adopted a Westminster-style constitution, which was, however, suspended already in 1973 by King Sobhuza II, father of the current King Mswati III. During the following decades the monarch had absolute power and political opposition was banned. In 2001 a committee was appointed by the King Mswati III to draft a new constitution; although much criticized in national

as well as international quarters, the constitution was approved in 2005 and is now in force. The status of political parties remains unclear under this constitution, and although the royal hegemony has now met with much resistance, Swaziland is still in essence an absolute monarchy.

As noted, other cases represent a somewhat more permitting posture. Bahrain was independent in 1973 from British rule, and adopted a Western-modeled constitution that framed several democratic elements. Already in 1975, however, the Emir, i.e. the head of the reigning al-Khalifa dynasty, dissolved the National Assembly, and during the next quarter of a century the Emir issued laws by decree. Only upon the assumption of the throne in 1999 by Shaik Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa have efforts to loosen up the political petrifaction become possible, and in 2002 several amendments to the constitution were implemented. Since that year Bahrain has again a Parliament with two chambers, the members of the lower house being elected by universal suffrage. Women were in the same year granted the right to vote and stand in national elections. However, the democratization process has recently more or less come to a standstill, as opposition activists have been arrested and attempts to articulate protests publicly have been put down. Political parties are still forbidden in Bahrain, but several *de facto* parties operate since 2005, which are known as "political societies". The situation remains much the same in Qatar. True, Qatar has undertaken some political and administrative reforms, and the first constitution of the country was adopted in referendum in 2003 (Peterson 2006, 742) – from earlier years there existed only a Basic Law with the aim of preserving and legitimizing the preeminent power of the Al-Thani dynasty. However, further progress has been slow and cautious. Municipal elections, the first of their kind in Qatar, were arranged in 1999, but observers of political life in the country suggested that further reforms will stop at the water's edge of challenging monarchical authority (Bahry 1999, 123). There is no real electoral system in the country and political parties are banned.

CONCLUSIONS

It is a valid generalization that small-sized units are conducive to democracy. However, the generalization is less than law-like. It has exceptions, and this study has taken account of the most obvious exceptions, i.e. those microstates that have earned the doubtful reputation of being undemocracies of long standing. The analysis of these cases departed from the assumption that their poor democracy performances could be understood against the background of the cases lacking many of the capabilities and qualities that are usually regarded as important democracy determinants; it was also assumed that a tradition factor may militate against democracy-enhancing qualities of the states as well as amplify its democracy-resisting capabilities.

The various considerations that have emanated from the analysis are repeated and summarized in Table 3, which reports the assessments of the present author as regards the factors under scrutiny. The assessments are dichotomous, as they establish for each separate factor and each separate undemocratic state whether or not the factor in question has contributed to the maintenance of undemocracy. In some instances the impact has been difficult to decide; this is marked through the insertion in the classification of a question-mark. For example, in regards to Bahrain, the assessment is that this state is over-sized and therefore more than smaller states inclined to non-democracy, that it lacks a proper colonial background and therefore inclines to non-democracy, that it is economically resourceful and that modernization aspects therefore are less helpful in understanding the undemocracy status of the country, that the state verges upon the borderline between heterogeneity and homogeneity and that a heterogeneity impact is therefore difficult to ascertain, and, finally, that the tradition factor has been imminent, obstructing for its part pressures and developments towards democracy.

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Table 3. The small undemocracies: assessments of the impact on undemocracy of background characteristics.

Undemocracies:	1	2	3	4	5
Bahrain	Yes	Yes	No	Yes?	Yes
Brunei	No	Yes	No	Yes?	Yes
Comoros	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Djibouti	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Equatorial Guinea	Yes	Yes	Yes?	No	Yes
Maldives	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Qatar	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Seychelles	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Swaziland	Yes	No	Yes	Yes?	Yes
Tonga	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Vatican City	No	NA	NA	NA	Yes

Keys:
1 – oversized microstate;
2 – Britain as metropolitan power;
3 – impact of economic resourcefulness;
4 – impact of heterogeneity;
5 – impact of tradition factor.
NA – Not Available; Not Applicable

The guiding assumptions have only in part been verified. The heterogeneity theory has got the worst of it, and the theory that a failing economy may be the cause of the democratic inadequacy has likewise turned out unsuccessful. Other factors enter the foreground. One important observation is that several undemocratic microstates are "large" microstates, and are therefore not to the same extent as "smaller" microstates open and sensitive to the democracy-building capacities that are inherent in smallness. A second important observation is that the undemocracies are in lack of an essential prerequisite of democracy - they have not, in any real sense of the term, been British colonies. More than one decade ago, Samuel Huntington, in an influential essay, submitted his conviction that the extent to which non-Western societies are susceptible to democracy is a consequence of the extent to which they have been exposed to Western impulses (Huntington 1997, 10); the results that have been presented here clearly substantiate Huntington's assumption. While it is true that several of the undemocracies

have been British colonies, it is also true that they have been colonies in a formal sense only, which has not accommodated Western impulses. A final observation is that the undemocracies to a very large extent indeed have been and still are governed by regimes that are long-standing as well as authoritarian – undemocracy, in other words, has a long tradition which serves as a drag on development and conforms to the future by slow degrees, if at all.

This last observation may seem surprising. One would believe that authoritarian regimes cannot evoke and maintain legitimacy; in consequence, they must suffer from a lack of stability. The data that have been presented here, however, are indicative of stability rather than instability, and they therefore excite the question how and by what mechanisms the authoritarian regimes in the microstate world have been able to maintain their position and resist the waves of democratization. Most probably, different cases provide somewhat differing answers. Including "Chinese Communist party leaders, Pakistani generals, Iranian clerics, Saudi princes and assorted authoritarian presidents in some of the smaller states of Central Asia, Africa and Latin America" (Hague and Harrop 2004, 62), the authoritarian regimes in the world today represent a more variegated group than perhaps ever before. In regards to the Arab states, small and large alike, the inadequacies of the civil society certainly form an important factor. Huntington may be quoted also here: "A vigorous civil society is emerging in Muslim countries, but it is a fundamentalist civil society, not a secular and liberal civil society" (Huntington 1997, 10). A somewhat different approach, not incompatible with Huntington's view, but still different, is given by Nicola Pratt in a study which argues that the failure of the Arab world to undergo a transition to democracy is not because civil-society actors do not support democracy but because of a lack of a consensus that would challenge the post-independence hegemony that underpins authoritarianism (Pratt 2007). The challenge is no doubt difficult as well as thankless, as it calls in question power positions that are said to and also are experienced to have a divine origin. In his textbook on unfree societies Lauri Karvonen delivers a summing-up that is worth quoting at some length: "By propagating the view that the prevailing political government follows from God's will or from the inexorable laws of history, a regime may succeed in restraining a political

resistance, especially in cultures where religious conceptions are only seldom called in question" (Karvonen 2008, 63; quotation translated by the present author).

The above reviews have indicated that most microstate undemocracies may be characterized as traditional and authoritarian societies, in which the authority of the regime is connected to a particular person or sovereign, like a chief, monarch or president, rather than a certain political ideology or political party. The pattern is visible in Bahrain, Brunei, Qatar and the Maldives; it is visible also in Tonga, it reappears in Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea and Swaziland, and in part also in the Seychelles. Those who hold power positions in such traditional systems are often looked upon as family heads or headmen. In contrast, state concepts and notions that regard the state apparatus as a link between rulers and ruled tend to remain undeveloped and diffuse and do not promote a preparedness of the people to question the position of the sovereign. It remains here an open question to what extent small size, given other prerequisites and conditions, opens doors to a tradition-styled government and therefore becomes, besides being a democracy blessing, also a democracy curse. It is perhaps not a far-fetched thought that small size, as it entails better prospects of control and as it works against the anonymity of political opposition may promote rather than obstruct the origin and maintenance of authoritarian rule.

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