

Small State and Region in Southeast Asian Studies

Wei Min

SIS·PKU

October 18, 2019

Basic Points of View

(1) As a research object, Small State is a special Country Type with unique National Attributes and Behavioral Patterns, and Small State Studies should adopt the Research Paradigm suitable for its Uniqueness and Particularity.

(2) The Research Paradigm of Small State Studies can be summarized as that: (a) Smallness and International System are the core variables of analysis; (b) the Logical Framework can be reduced to that both Smallness and International System affect and construct the National Attributes and Behavioral Patterns of Small State. (c) The Research Perspective of Small State means that "smallness" is an indispensable logical starting point in Small Studies.

(3) There is strong correlation between Small State and "Region". For one thing, "Region" is much more appropriate and effective level for Small State Studies. For another, Small States play a unique and indispensable regional role, which is an important link in the study of regional construction and regional development. The Relevance Research between Small State and Region is worth considering.

(4) In Southeast Asian Studies, the Research Perspective of Small State should be paid much more attention to.

Framework

1. Small State is a unique Country Type in International System
2. Research problems on Small States in International Studies
3. The Theoretical Paradigm of Small State Studies
4. Small State and "Region" are naturally corelated
5. The Research Perspective of Small State in Southeast Asian Studies

1. Small State: A Unique Country Type in International System

- As a special Country Type, Small State has unique national attributes and behavioral patterns in International System.
- What is Small State? This is a great challenge in Small State Studies.
- The definition of Small State depends on the yardsticks chosen.

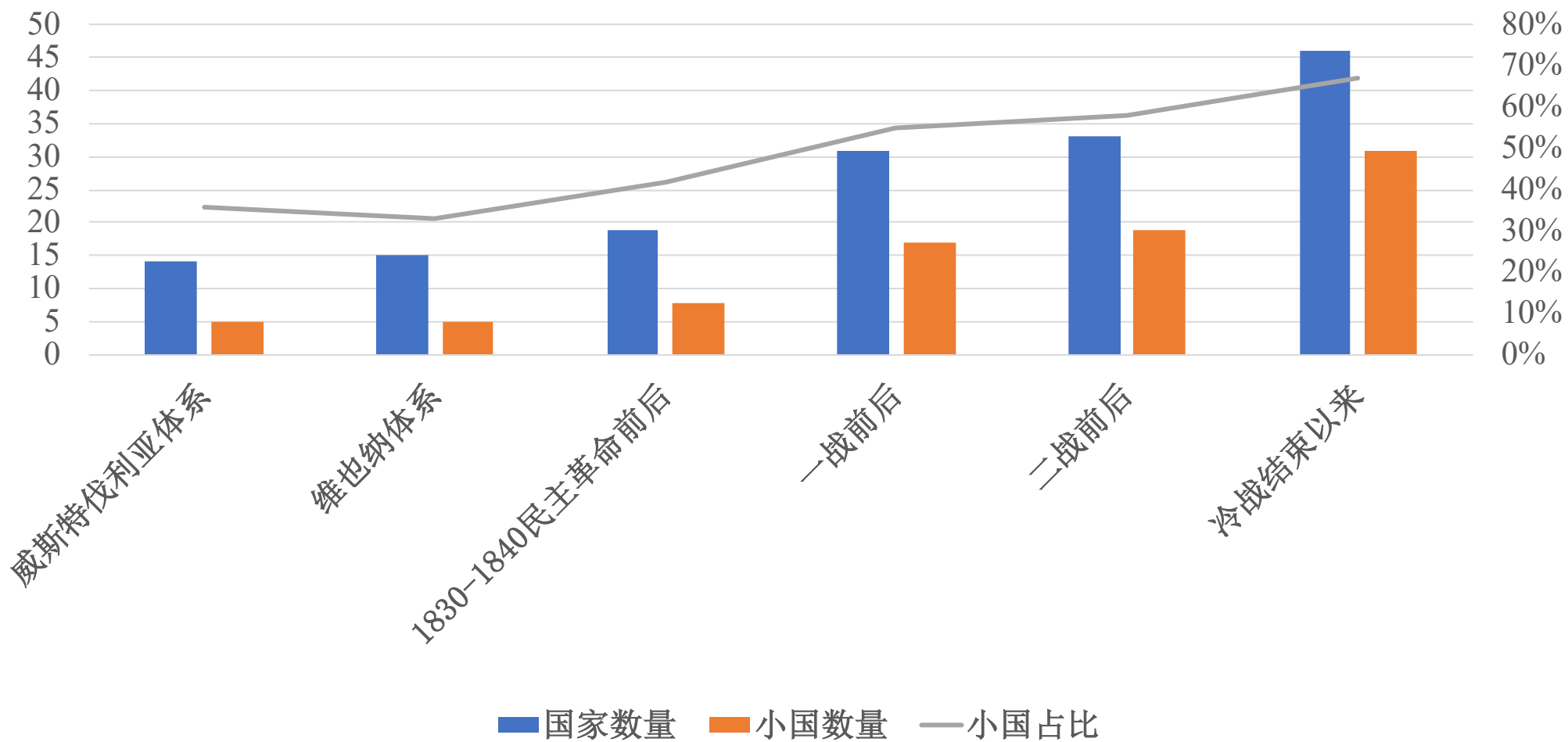
(1) Small population size is a shared feature of Small States.

- Small State is the largest number of countries in today's International System.
- If Small State is defined as the country whose population is less than 10 million, among the 193 Member States of the UN, there are **113** Small States, accounting for 58.5% of total.
- There are **37** Small States with a population of less than 10 million among 65 countries along the Belt and Road, accounting for 57% of the total.
- In 10 Southeast Asia countries, there are **3** countries with a population much smaller than 10 million, namely Laos (6.75 million), Singapore (5.61 million) and Brunei (0.42 million).

The Number of Small State in Europe in Different Period

Historical Period	Total	Number of Small States	Proportion of Small States
Westphalia System	14	5	36%
Vienna System	15	5	33%
1830-1840 Democratic Revolution	19	8	42%
Since the First World War	31	17	55%
Since the Second World War	33	19	58%
Since the end of Cold War	46	31	67%

The Number of Small State in Europe in Different Period



(2) Small States have unique national attributes and behavioral patterns different from larger-size countries.

- In international system, Small States have relatively much more vulnerability, dependence and marginality; the impact of the international system on them is much more evident.
- They tend to focus on low politics rather than high politics, advocating soft power rather than hard power.
- In security area, they rely more on the stability of the system and the goodwill of the strong countries, preferring non-traditional security rather than traditional-security.
- In economic development, they rely more on the outside world and generally pursue an open strategy.
- In diplomacy, they tend to pursue multilateral diplomacy and Niche or field diplomacy, to follow the strong powers in the system, and prefer regional integration.

2. Situation and Problems of Small State Studies

- (1) The Small State Studies is quite small in International Studies.
- (2) The Small State Studies is short of a systematic and universal theoretical paradigm.
- (3) Lack or absence of a specific Research Paradigm of Small State in the Studies involving Small State.

3. The Theoretical Paradigm of Small State Studies

—— How to choose the core analysis variables? Criteria for selection :

(1) whether it can highlight the particularity and uniqueness of Small States.

(2) Is it a common feature of all Small States?

(3) Whether it has prominent analytical value and conceptual effectiveness for the analysis of the basic features and behavioral patterns of Small States.

—— “smallness” and International System: the most appropriate and persuasive core variables for Small State Studies.

How to determine the Logical Framework

—— The logical thinking:

- (1) This is an unbalanced world.
- (2) The Country Size is of great political and economic significance.
- (3) Smallness is the cornerstone and starting point of Small State Studies.
- (4) International System is the premise of Small State Studies.

—— The logical framework of Small State Studies: "Smallness" and International System, affect and construct the fundamental attributes and behavioral patterns of Small States.

4. Small State and "Region" are naturally related.

- (1) Geographical location is the "destiny" of Small State.
- (2) Regional integration is an important mechanism for Small States to safeguard and promote their national interests.
- (3) The "region" is the main level of Small States' diplomacy.
- (4) Small State is an important variable in regional construction and regional development.

Small State – Region Relevance Research

- Strong Correlation between Small State and "Region" requires the Relevance Research.
- For Small State Studies, the Regional Level is an indispensable research background.
- For Regional Studies, the Research Perspective of Small State cannot be ignored.

5. The perspective of Small State in Southeast Asian studies deserves attention.

—— In China's International Studies, Small States have been neglected for a long time.

—— China's Southeast Asian Studies also has the problem of neglecting and ignoring Small States.

—— China has only so-called Country Studies, not real Small State Studies; it has only copied all kinds of analytical models and theoretical paradigms, but no specific Research Perspective of Small State.

The Research Perspective of Small State in Southeast Asian Studies

- (1) From the absolute definition, there are three undisputed Small States in Southeast Asia.
- (2) Small States are an important way to understand the ASEAN process.
- (3) From the perspective of relativity, In terms of international relations with extra-regional greater powers, both Southeast Asian countries and ASEAN are applicable to the behavioral logic of Small State.

Conclusion

- Small State, as an increasingly prominent international phenomenon, cannot be neglected in International Studies.
- The "arrogance" of great power, the "ignorance" of Small States and the unreasonable research paradigm can be seen widely in the Studies concerning Small State.
- Small State is a special and unique Country Type, which needs corresponding Research Paradigm suitable for its particularity and uniqueness different from larger size countries.
- In Regional and Country studies, and in Southeast Asian Studies, the Research Perspective of Small State is necessary, and it is an Academic Growth Point.

Thank you!