A small state is a *de facto* limited entity and its smallness undoubtedly restricts its power projection. This paper seeks to clarify what is meant by power in terms of the small state. Subsequently, the paper will link the powerhood notion to the case of the sovereign base areas (SBA’s) in Cyprus. The paper seeks to elucidate that, considering power limitations, smart or soft strategies might assist in the re-envisioning of security hazards for the small state. All these aspects collide in the microcosm of the SBA’s. One must critically evaluate, how the Republic of Cyprus (RoC’s) smallness and seemingly lack of power thereof, perpetuates security qualms. The SBA’s were established under the 1960 Treaty of Establishment as British overseas territory. The desire of the de-militarization of the island, a post-colonial footprint, is depicted under UN Security Council Resolutions like 1251 (1993). Spaces like the SBA’s portray a blurred power image.

**Draft: Not for citation without prior permission of author**
The purpose of this paper has manifold objectives. At the conceptual construction stage for my PhD thesis, I have delved into the small state literature (fourth generation in particular).\(^1\) Following from the conceptual framework I have been constructing, I further researched the power asymmetries and power disparities that a small state faces in relation to larger states. This should not be conceptualized as powerlessness for the smaller player however.\(^2\) Genuinely caring for my subject matter and the fact that my empirical case study (object of study) is the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), part of what my thesis is (and which I am addressing in this paper as well), is that power is not only hard (which might be in fact irrelevant for the small actor), but there are numerous soft\(^3\) and ultimately smart strategies for which a small state can draw upon to carve its foreign policy strategy. The RoC is particularly interesting, to attempt to merge the power distortions, security qualms and perpetuating ‘backward’ political discourses that dominate the island life. As a post-colonial remnant, the Sovereign Base Areas (SBA’S) in Cyprus are an ‘idiomorphic case’\(^4\), I therefore argue that they do not allow Cyprus to reach the foreign policy ‘status’ of other successful, small yet smart small states (i.e. Scandinavian states, Austria, Switzerland). They are merely ‘reactive players’.\(^5\) What matters is not the size of the unit but the types of relationships forged with greater states, due to the perceived ‘inevitable deficits of power’.\(^6\) These disparities can translate into capabilities, by understanding the depth and limiting scope of one of the most distorted international politics concepts in relation to size; that of power. It can also be seen as one of the most important links in relinquishing some of the grasp bigger powers have on the small. Cyprus is lagging behind in realizing the utility potential small state strategies or niche strategies can offer to its foreign policy course.

When examining the Post-Cold world era, small state scholars are arguing that small states are becoming increasingly prominent in terms of security. The causes are many and are beyond the scope of this paper, but the most important assumption is the fact that great power’s desire to impose their wills upon the smaller actors has waned in a non-polar international system. Actually it has been debated that the international system has no functionality for the small state anymore. Western European states (including Cyprus) represent ‘archetypes’ of small states, highly developed economically, resilient administrations, are legitimate wielders of power inside their borders and are only weak in terms of their military might as Knudsen argues.\(^7\) I will take it a step further and argue that this is the case, if small states become conceptually aware and perceive the potential expertise levels which they can reach.\(^8\)

Security focus no longer lays on minimalist conceptions of military aspects; there is an ever increasing prominence of non-military aspects whose scale varies significantly (environment migration, economic security et.al).\(^5\) The view that small states are weak and lack in capability is up-kept due to the tunnel vision mode which dominates the political sphere. As a starting point of analysis, it must be taken as a given that a small power is only relatively weaker in relation to greater powers. This changes the scope of analysis, rather than merely treating themselves as inferior or as an end goal. Small powers are and can be much more

---

1Ingebritsen, 2002:pp.11-23; Baldacchino, 2008; Cooper & Shaw, 2013.
2Neumann & Gstohl, 2006:pp.3-36.
4Theodoulou, 2014 in Kontos, Theodoulou and Alexandrou:pp. 57.
5As Handel, 1981 characterizes small states.
9Ibid.
than that, argues Rothstein. “Small powers are something more than or different from great powers writ small”. Great and small power debates are not merely the outcomes of relative power ratios. Small powers are much more than simply weaker states. To unravel this, another fact must be considered (despite alternations in the international system) which is related to small power behavioural traits that persist and condition small state behaviour.

The security-dilemma of small states refers to the fact that in order to survive, external, ‘ambiguous’ support/assistance is needed by an outside power. European history teaches small states valuable lessons in relation to this fact, primarily that external support arrives either late, in return of spoils or acting on its own behalf. The security of a small power is an absolute necessity for its own self and it cannot increase its power base enough to shape results but exercise mere ‘transitory effectiveness’. Therefore, a small state is perpetually stuck with a ‘peripheral control’. A threat by a greater power is always a threat to a small state’s ‘independent existence’. The weaker state view in relation to a bigger state, is that, a small power is a state which recognises that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities.

Though smallness and islandness, with a small population density, allows space for a ‘creative political economy’ and ‘norm entrepreneurship’, Cyprus does not utilize these factors. ‘Design initiatives’, including geo-strategic military zones, are security threats for the host state. Small powerhood is defined as, “the potential for enhanced international authority, influence and prestige”. It is argued that, small states can also gain EU benefits and enhance their respectability, prestige and international footing. The way in which Melakopides utilizes the notion of powerhood, presupposes that the foreign policy of member states will obtain soft power capabilities eventually, as the EU gains diplomatic prominence as ‘positive proxies’. In other words, the EU is a vehicle for enhancing the small state’s power. By soft power in this context, what is meant is gaining more prestige and influence, via the adoption of EU norms, thus in Melakopides understanding overall power will increase for all small states that follow this formulaic conceptual tool. Cyprus should embrace small-powerhood as a conceptual and practical tool of foreign policy making, in order to ‘punch above its weight’ as a small state empowered. Cyprus needs a ‘metamorphosis’ and needs to stop using carrots but utilize Cypriot ‘diplomatic sticks’. In pursuing this policy, Cyprus can actively seek support, from like-minded states espousing the EU’s ‘moral politik’.

The debate of the link amongst power, security and smallness has not been exhausted. However, the bedrock of conceptualization has been discussed so let us now turn to the role of the SBA’s in Cyprus. According to Mallinson, Britain’s role has always been as one of a junior partnership/European proxy of the US, regarding defence matters. Moreover, Britain is behaving ‘anachronistically’ by hanging on to its SBA’s in Cyprus (3% of the country at

---

11 Studying the relations of small states dominance and submission power relations, on aspects of imperialism, dominance, interdependence and hegemony are, Moon, 1983; Ray, 1981; Tomlin and Dolan, 1981.
12 Baldacchino, op cit.
13 Ingebritsen, op cit.
14 Agamben, 2005; Baldacchino, 2010:p.4.
16 States that oppose Turkish full EU membership, support liberty and justice and wish to strengthen Cypriot commercial and communications sectors in becoming a hub in the Eastern Mediterranean.
Akrotiri and Dhekelia in Cyprus– not formally part of the EU). According to the White Paper, UK 2012, issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth the SBA’s are ‘an integral part of Britain’s life and history’. The main goals of the strategy are several. Two of the most key aspects include the creation of valued partnerships with the realm, as well as, to defend the territories and necessitate for their security, from externalities and to upkeep the right of self-determination. The utility of the strategically located bases is still to support the UK and its allies in security related outposts.

There are two crucial points to highlight when holding a discussion on the SBA’s in Cyprus, firstly whether they are indeed sovereign and secondly if they are a colonial remnant or not. The UK might have violated its obligations under the Treaty of Establishment and the Treaty of Guarantee by applying the principle of international law *rebus sic standibus*. This principle is a tacit condition attached to all treaties to the effect that they will no longer be binding as soon as the state of facts and conditions upon which they were based changes to a substantial degree. Furthermore, sovereignty is not absolute and is limited only to military purposes (excluding exploration for gas and oil reserves as well) and constrain freedom of action; the SBA’s do not constitute a state, nor do they have their own territorial sea.

Going back in time, the FCO had realized that the SBA’s and British facilities, were only in existence due to ‘Cypriot good will’, as Mallinson characterizes it, since the British strategic interests had waned in the early 1970’s. In fact, without US pressure Britain could have totally abandoned the SBA’s, ‘*The US Government are firmly attached to the view that withdrawal from our bases in Cyprus would have a destabilizing effect upon the Eastern Mediterranean with implications for the Middle East...*’ Yet the Kissinger ideology of up-keeping a ‘British square on the Chequer board’ as a *sine qua non* condition unfortunately prevailed across time coupled by other strategic purposes like intelligence gathering. The Future of the SBA’s, stipulates that when the British decide to relinquish the bases, it will be done free of charge. The SBA’s constitute a ‘black hole’, for international law, but this is a

---

20 Ibid.
21 Annex B, Part II- The British wanted to retain sovereignty due to the SBA’s strategic importance, Theodoulou, *op cit*:p.59.
22 The Cypriots did not have a chance to vote on the preservation of the BMBC’s. Derogations on the RoC’s territorial integrity exist as well, i.e. GA Resolution 1514 (XV) on the 'True obligation to decolonize', violating the principle *uti possidetis juris* for territorial unity post-clonization and Article 185 of the Cypriot Constitution.
25 The Declaration by the UK Government regarding the Administration of the Sovereign Base Areas (Appendix O to the Treaty of Establishment).
26 Under Appendix R, the British are obliged to pay an extent of money to the RoC, which has stopped post-1965 due to community so-called equitable problems.
29 Appendix P of the Treaty of Guarantee. This is a further limiting sovereignty factor for the British.
subject for another paper. There are innovative proposals laid out about the future of the SBA’s, particularly for the ROC to unilaterally denounce the 1960 Treaties, “...if the treaty has been concluded to last in perpetuity...” Moreover, the irregular situation of not attaining joint utility of the bases cannot proceed, if the UK does not show good intentions and give back to the ROC the part of the territories of the BMBC’s not used for military purposes. This is where the re-conceptualization of Cyprus can truly take prominence under the critical investigative foci of the small state conceptual tools and powerhood.

If power is taken to mean in the domain of international politics, the “ability and capacity to influence the behaviour of others to achieve a desired outcome” then the RoC needs to rid of the anachronistic grasp of the SBAS’s weighing it down; not allowing for smart diplomacy to prevail. Arguably, “small powers are not defined but rather are the weaker states in any given situation” and this unfortunately translates directly to the case of the RoC in its foreign policy stance. Construing that smart power is the combination of hard power of coercion and the combination of persuasion and attraction converted into effective strategies in varying contexts. In the microcosm of the SBA’s (hard power), a re-thinking of the soft mechanisms at the small state level could promote certain alternatives previously not thought of. Theophanous and Trikides, have made the argument that the mere presence of the military bases on Cypriot soil, is illustrative of the ‘lack of reciprocity’ toward the UK. Utilizing the data gathered from the public perceptions of the Greek-Cypriots in Theophanous and Trikides survey, 80% of the respondents answered that only a few perceived benefits from the prolongation of the SBA’s on the island are to be expected. Moreover, very few responded positively toward a collective security structure between the British and the Cypriots. Overall Greek-Cypriots on the majority view the British bases as ‘an unfair arrangement’. As, Pace has argued, from a small state perspective, Cyprus can overcome its peripheral, insular and divided position, by being linked to European politics gaining from ready made prescriptions, focusing more on issues of direct relevance, specialisation, re-focus on the Mediterranean, initiate policies, whilst exploiting to the fullest the Commonwealth assistance and enhancement its diplomatic scope. As a closing remark, it’s important to remember that in 2004, Britain explicitly reiterated that, it might be willing to release part of the base areas, but only if the two sides agreed to a settlement. In 2009 the British government confirmed this offer, in light of a peace deal. Unfortunately as a small state it remains a particular one, where soft and smart strategies can only be stretched up to a certain breaking limit.

30Theodoulou, Op cit:pp.58-60. A legal re-evaluation of the status of the BMBC, would include the Vienna Convention on the Law of the Treaties (VCLT, 1969, the violation of jus cogens (Articles, 53, 64 on the nullity of treaties and the determination of the people’s) and the violations of appendices, O & R.
37Ibid:pp.109-115, mistrusting the British foreign policy and being concerned about harms towards the environment with the installation of antennas and the interrelated health hazards.
38Pace, in Stefanou, 2005:pp.238-255.
40Ker-Lindsay, 2011:p.92.
Bibliography


