

Ausgangspunkte zu einer Soziologie kleiner Staaten: Drei systemtheoretische Perspektiven

Summary

Three theoretical models of small states are presented based on highly general premises applicable also to many other kinds of systems. The *"surface model"* starts from the premise that small states are highly exposed to their external environment because large percentages of their population are affected by transnational impacts and interactions. The *"differentiation model"* states that a small population size sets limits to the degree of internal functional differentiation, thus giving rise to various adaptation strategies in order to reduce the need for occupational roles and bureaucratic organization.

Finally, the *"connectivity model"* asserts that small states are characterized by relatively dense networks of social interrelations among their members (particularly on the level of elites), so that segregation of subunits is more difficult to achieve.

All three models provide fruitful bases for the deduction of more specific hypotheses and for explaining many empirical regularities related to the size of nations. In most cases, however, the methodological status of "size" is not that of a causal predictor, but that of a conditioning variable mediating the impact of many other factors.