

# THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN SMALL ISLAND STATES



Edited by  
DOUGLAS G. LOCKHART,  
DAVID DRAKAKIS-SMITH  
and JOHN SCHEMBRI



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## THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN SMALL ISLAND STATES

Islands are coming under increasing environmental and social pressure, particularly as a result of the impact of tourism. In many ways, the small scale of these islands—almost enclosed systems—provides researchers with ideal cases in which to observe this process and test theory.

*The Development Process in Small Island States* focuses on the political security, tourism, gender issues, ecosystems, landscapes and economies of island communities. It encompasses islands at very different stages in the development process, identifying valuable common lessons and providing insights into the developmental issues particular to islands. With case studies drawn from the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and the Pacific, the book examines the position of islands as ecologically and economically vulnerable places.

**Douglas Lockhart** is Lecturer in Geography and **David Drakakis-Smith** is Professor of Development Studies, both at the University of Keele. **John Schembri** is Lecturer in Geography at the University of Malta.



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*For Tom and Jean and in memory of  
Bill and Jessica*



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*Douglas Lockhart*  
*David Drakakis-Smith*  
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## INTRODUCTION

*Douglas G.Lockhart*

This monograph examines a number of environmental and economic issues relating to island development. The chapters are based on papers first presented at the Commonwealth Geographical Bureau Conference on Small Island Development held in Malta in March 1990. The conference brought together about forty researchers from fifteen Commonwealth and four non-Commonwealth countries and was pitched at a broad level, not only to ensure the widest possible geographical coverage, but also to draw comprehensive material from islands at very different stages in the development process to see what lessons could be learned and exchanged.

Islands have long attracted the attention of geographers and researchers in cognate disciplines and, moreover, research has been spread over a range of economic, environmental and social issues. International conferences have been held at fairly regular intervals and most of the comparative studies of island development have originated at such meetings. One of the earliest initiatives to debate the human issues specific to smaller territories occurred in 1962, when the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in the University of London began a seminar series. Seminars were held at regular intervals over a two-year period and more than twenty papers demonstrated the extent to which many small countries shared common problems. About half of these papers were subsequently published in a volume edited by Burton Benedict (1967). In some ways this book set a pattern which many later works followed; chapters on general themes such as political, economic and demographic characteristics were followed by

case studies of individual islands and smaller countries. However, the inclusion of Luxemburg, Swaziland and Tory Island (off the coast of Ireland) among the case studies gave the volume such a varied character that, not surprisingly, the conclusions which were drawn were tentative and probably account for the dearth of follow-up studies, at least until 1972 when a group of Sussex University researchers were joined by planners at a conference on small developing countries at the University of the West Indies in Barbados. The conference papers were subsequently published in a volume edited by Percy Selwyn in 1975. This book, and a discussion paper published three years later, concentrated on development policies, aid to small states and different types of dependent island economies.

The 1970s was, however, a period of dramatic changes with many island states achieving independence, and the process of forming regional organizations began to gather pace. Towards the end of the decade these changes were accompanied by heightened international interest in the problems of small island states. In particular, island states were given special status by the United Nations and by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and there was also a major change in Australian aid to Pacific and Indian Ocean island communities.

One consequence of all this interest was the choice of development problems of small islands as the topic for the 1979 Seminar of the Development Studies Centre of The Australian National University. The papers from this interdisciplinary seminar were published the following year (Shand 1980). In his introduction the editor sought to define smallness in terms of land area, population and the narrowness of the economic base. The book's chapters are grouped into eight sections that deal with primary activities; population and migration; trade and transport; economic stability; health and education; administration and politics; development strategies and aid and, lastly, an overview and assessment. Unusually only two chapters, Britton on tourism to Fiji and Fisk's analysis of development in Niue, discuss individual nations and the emphasis of the book falls heavily on more than twenty general chapters.

Island research received a major boost in the wake of the

Falklands/Malvinas dispute in 1982. The crisis undoubtedly aroused interest in the study of small islands and one result was that post-crisis studies tended to give more weight to individual places.

Cohen's *African Islands and Enclaves* (1983), for example, was very much influenced by the conflict with chapters on the militarization of Diego Garcia and the structure of terror in Equatorial Guinea. More traditional concerns of social scientists, such as tourism, employment and economic diversification, feature in studies of the Canary Islands, The Seychelles and Mauritius. Such studies, and more particularly the wideranging review by Connell (1988), demonstrate that, far from being places of unchanging tranquility, many islands are in fact experiencing rapid transformation.

This point is also made with reference to the US invasion of Grenada in the introductory chapter of Clarke and Payne (1987) in their volume on *Politics, Security and Development in Small States*. This book emerged as a result of growing concern that current academic knowledge of the small states of the world was inadequate. It tries to answer the question 'How have small states coped with their smallness in the context of recent international economic and political trends?'. In their literature review the editors recognized that the division of subject material adopted by Benedict appeared to be most effective and in consequence their book can be divided into three sections. The first contained four surveys of the general situation encountered by small states, namely, the political, social, economic and security aspects of their existence. The second section comprised eight case studies of Commonwealth islands and enclaved states, each with a population of less than one million. The final section is reminiscent of the work of Selwyn and contains two broad perspectives on the problems of small islands taking contrasting academic and policy standpoints.

Finally, in this review of major texts on island states, a collection of essays on the theme of sustainable development and environmental management has been published as part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) 'Man and the Biosphere' programme (Beller, D'Ayala and Hein 1990). Once again the book has its origin in a conference (held in 1986 in Puerto

Rico). The introduction by Hess addresses a familiar theme; the problems emanating from smallness. The structure of the book followed the by now 'traditional' format with a further eight chapters dealing with general issues and fourteen case studies of individual islands or island groups. A notable feature was the wide difference in the island communities investigated and there were chapters on European islands such as Gozo, the Isle of Man and those off Brittany. The Indian Ocean was represented by Mauritius and there were several studies of the Pacific and Caribbean, while Bali, China's nearshore islands and Japan's remote islands each merited a chapter.

The wide-ranging observations and recommendations of the book reflect the interoceanic character of the conference. However, the editors identified a number of key common problems, notably 'distortions' on island economies, transport and accessibility, population change, unemployment, decisionmaking, natural resources and key economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism and industry. A range of possible strategies to ameliorate these problem sectors were summarized in a series of tables at the end of the volume.

In planning our conference, we were certainly guided by the trends identified in this overview of existing literature. As a result the primary aim was to bring together individuals who had undertaken research on a wide range of problems facing small islands in their attempts to develop. As noted earlier the conference was therefore pitched at a broad level, not only to ensure the widest possible geographical coverage but also to exchange information on the various stages of the development process.

Malta was selected in part because the island had recently shown considerable interest in reviving its role within the Commonwealth. Moreover, as geography does not currently constitute a university degree programme in Malta, it seemed an excellent opportunity to show what geographers have done and can do. In addition, Malta itself could and did provide a living laboratory of some of the common problems faced by many small island states. In this context, the conference included two days of field visits in Malta and the smaller neighbouring island of Gozo. The conference embraced political, economic, social and environmental issues in island development.

The majority of participants addressed these issues in relation to particular case studies; however, we also invited Russell King and John Connell to prepare broader perspectives on island problems. Although revised versions of eight papers on environmental and economic themes have already been published (Lockhart and Drakakis-Smith 1991), this volume represents the principle conference publication bringing together the keynote addresses and a selection of substantive and revised papers. It is divided into two parts. The first addresses more general questions on island development, such as security, gender and basic needs, whilst the second half relates some of these issues to empirical studies of individual localities.

It is within this context of island studies that the contributions in this book should be placed. There are thirteen chapters in all. The first comprises the introduction to the volume; the next six are substantive surveys of aspects of island development and the remainder focus attention upon case studies of different development issues in widely-contrasting island locations. The authors are all leading researchers each of whom has wide-ranging experience of island communities.

In Chapter 2 Russell King, who has been researching processes such as emigration, tourism and dependency in various island communities in the Mediterranean for some twenty years, begins by discussing the attractiveness of islands to geographers and to other research workers. Next he attempts to define what is meant by an island in the context of size, population and political as well as physical relationships to neighbouring land masses. He considers the historic roles that islands have played and goes on to show how the colonial period has left its imprint in the fortifications and ecclesiastical architecture that are prominent features of many Mediterranean island landscapes. Another facet of island life is insufficient resources and a lack of employment opportunities to satisfy the aspirations of younger members of society. King describes how emigration has become a way of life throughout the Mediterranean and the Caribbean and he gives examples of formerly self-sufficient islands that have increasingly come to rely upon remittances from emigrants. Another recent change has been the growth of tourism and King assesses the

uneven impact upon communities and landscapes. Drawing upon a number of recent studies he points to the need for greater harmonization of tourism development with the environment.

In Chapter 3 on political and security issues, Tony Lemon begins with a survey of the political status of island territories. He goes on to discuss internal political structures, and the relative stability of the governments of Commonwealth small island states, before finally examining the potential vulnerability of such countries to external pressures. His prognosis for the future of autonomous small states, written at a time of apparent easing global tensions, was relatively optimistic.

Janet Henshall Momsen in Chapter 4 deals with gender differences in the perception of environmental hazards in the Caribbean. She begins by identifying the main types of hazards that characterize small islands. Next she discusses land use change with reference to the feminization of agriculture. Momsen argues that women in the Caribbean tend to be more active in the labour force than in most parts of the Third World, and this characteristic is particularly true of on-farm jobs. The field-work results from several islands demonstrates inter-island differences can be of greater significance than gender differences in attitude towards environmental problems.

The Caribbean is also the geographical focus for Richard Butler's contribution to the volume in Chapter 5. Butler reviews the literature on tourism on islands and offers a general model of development which provides a back cloth against which factors influencing development are discussed. Case studies from Antigua, the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands provide empirical evidence to support the theoretical model.

Robert Potter in Chapter 6 completes a trio of Caribbean studies by focusing on basic needs in the Windward Islands. More particularly, he examines the heavy dependence on imports and tourism and the comparative failure of policies which sought to achieve greater self-sufficiency and social progress in matters such as housing. Potter reviews a plethora of ill-co-ordinated initiatives. However, in highlighting the post-revolutionary experience of Grenada, the author notes

with regret the brief economic renaissance based on grassroots development that was cut short by the military intervention of the United States.

In contrast, the final chapter in Part I by John Connell begins with a wide-ranging review of the development of natural resources, industry and tourism. Examples are drawn from islands in the Pacific, the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans. He emphasizes the difficulties of attaining economic growth through conventional strategies and Connell points to their survival through a mixture of remittances from emigrants and foreign aid. This much was evident in Potter's chapter. However, Connell shows that such trends are widespread throughout the Pacific and indeed in almost every island microstate.

The scale of analyses in Part II (Chapters 8–13) changes and here the contributors illustrate particular facets of island life drawing their conclusions from just one or two countries. Henry Frendo in Chapter 8 begins with a picture of the complex history of Mediterranean islands. He goes on to examine the colonial and post-colonial periods in Malta and Cyprus. In particular, his analysis highlights the relationship of Malta and Cyprus to the European mainland, and the ways in which British colonialism have blurred that relationship.

In Chapter 9 Huw Jones discusses demographic characteristics of small islands in general before commenting on recent demographic change in Mauritius, an island which thirty years ago suffered from grave problems of population pressure on limited resources. The eradication of malaria and an increasing birth-rate precipitated a population explosion in the 1950s and 1960s with an annual growth rate in population of over 3 per cent. Twenty years later the population growth rate had been cut to almost 1 per cent. He examines the factors which account for this spectacular fertility decline and demonstrates that growing female participation in employment and greater opportunities for secondary school education have promoted later marriage and smaller family size. Jones also emphasizes the role of family planning policy which has targeted rural as well as urban households before attention is given to temporal and local variations in fertility.

In Chapter 10, Michael Sofer and Israel Drori review socioeconomic change in Fiji and Jamaica resulting from rural



land settlement schemes. They present evidence to show how settlement projects in both islands mirror African experience in which the initial impetus for reform comes from state agencies and subsequently the initiative shifts to the settlers themselves. They discuss the characteristics of land settlement schemes on islands and then discuss two case studies, Narata village in Viti Levu, Fiji and Ebony Park, Jamaica. In both instances the schemes were state initiated and were later modified by the settlers themselves. The transformation involved adjustments of land use and labour reorganization and the authors describe in detail how problems have been tackled in contrasting circumstances.

In Chapter 11 Rajesh Chandra examines the industrialization process in Fiji. Given its status as a nascent industrializing state, Fiji provides important visions for other island states ambitious to transfer themselves into the new Singapore or Hong Kong. Chandra documents in detail how this process is heavily dependent on both foreign and state investment but is subject to distortion by localized events.

Douglas Lockhart (Chapter 12) discusses the problems of tourism development in Cyprus. He notes that in the post-war period the tourism industry has had to overcome enormous difficulties, the major problems being civil unrest in the late 1950s and again in 1963 and the military intervention by Turkey in 1974. Lockhart traces the historical development of tourism and shows that Cyprus shares many of the patterns characteristic of other Mediterranean islands. He then turns to the situation between 1974 and the present day. His central concern is to explain the contrast between the rapid growth of facilities in the Greek Cypriot South and the very mixed fortunes of the Turkish Cypriot northern area. Finally, he attempts to predict the prospects for tourism in the two communities.

Chapter 13 deals with the impact of development upon the changing landscape of the Maltese islands. Patrick Schembri and Edwin Lanfranco begin with an overview of the physical landscape illustrating the major geomorphological and climatic features and the typical habitats. Next they discuss the human impact upon that landscape, stressing the loss of countryside due to building development, quarrying and waste disposal problems. It is clear that these have contributed to the

destruction of many ecologically sensitive areas. The authors also deal with soil erosion and grazing and the loss of specific kinds of habitat. They rightly point out that the Maltese natural environment has been subjected to a great variety of development pressures and that new approaches to countryside management are required in order to ensure an acceptable balance between development needs and the protection of the natural heritage.

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Part I

GENERAL  
PERSPECTIVES  
ON SMALL ISLAND  
DEVELOPMENT



## THE GEOGRAPHICAL FASCINATION OF ISLANDS

*Russell King*

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce some of the work that has been done on islands as a systematic geographic phenomenon. Islands have attracted the attention of scholars and writers from many disciplines. Geography, biology, ecology, anthropology, history and economics are perhaps the obvious ones, but we should not overlook the insights into island life and landscapes provided by poets and painters, many of whom have been drawn to the special island *ambience*. Islands spell romance and adventure and, following the genre of *Treasure Island*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Swiss Family Robinson*, have been the setting for many famous yarns.

Since previous conferences on islands—notably ‘Islands ’86’ and ‘Islands ’88’—have concentrated on the Pacific and Caribbean islands of the world (see Beller 1986; Boutilier 1986; Chapman 1988), I shall take most of my examples in the pages which follow from the island-strewn sea that I know best, the Mediterranean. Given the profusion and diversity of islands in this region, such a choice would seem appropriate. The geographical position of the Mediterranean as the southern margin of Europe means that pressures for change involving processes such as emigration, tourism and dependency can be studied in a particularly clear fashion. My main concern, however, will be to describe the landscape changes that these processes provoke. Running through the latter part of this chapter will be the notion of cycles of landscape change on islands. Three such phases may be recognized. The first is the creation of an intensely-humanized landscape by the build-up of population over time, and