

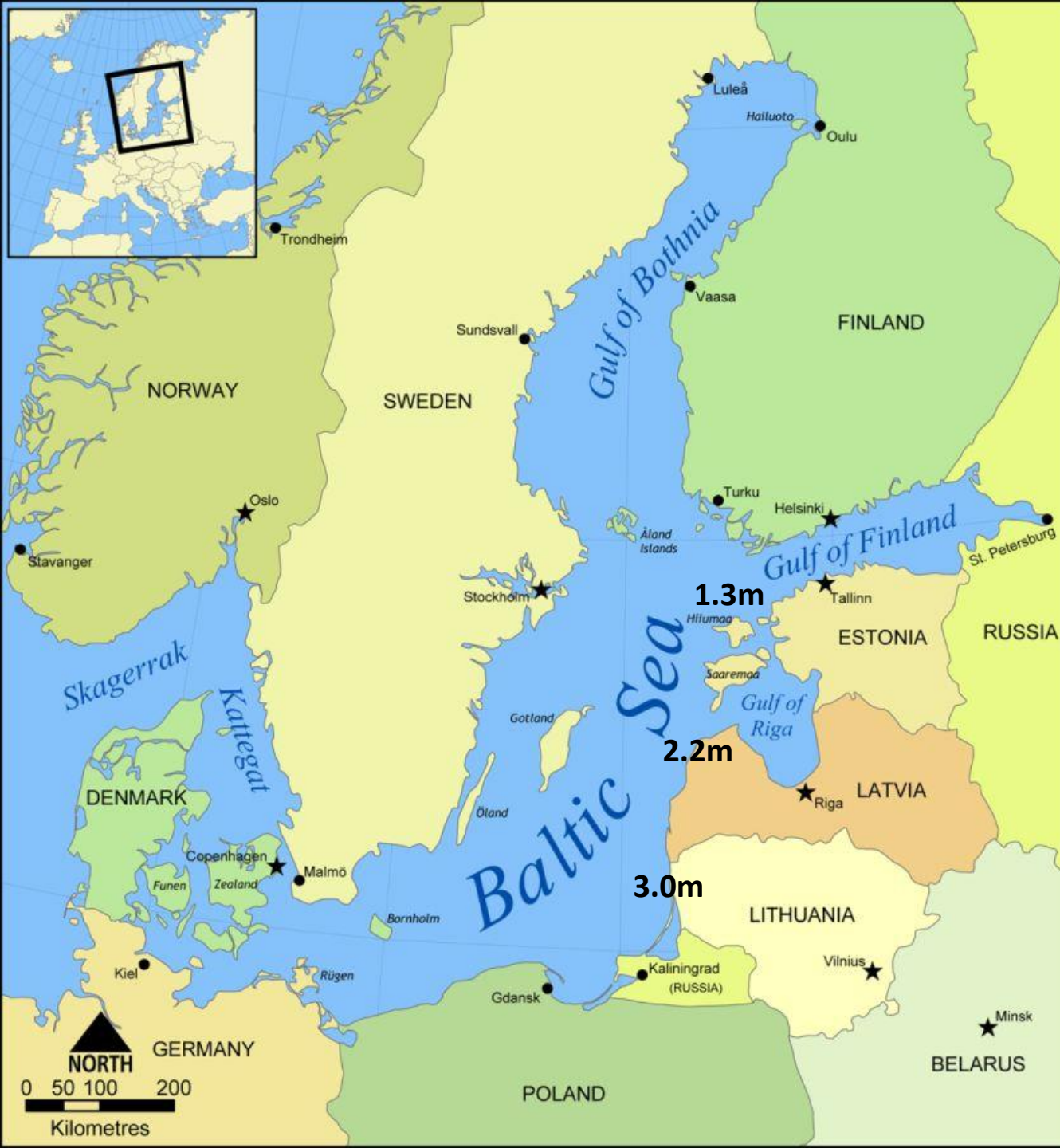
The Political Mechanics of Smallness

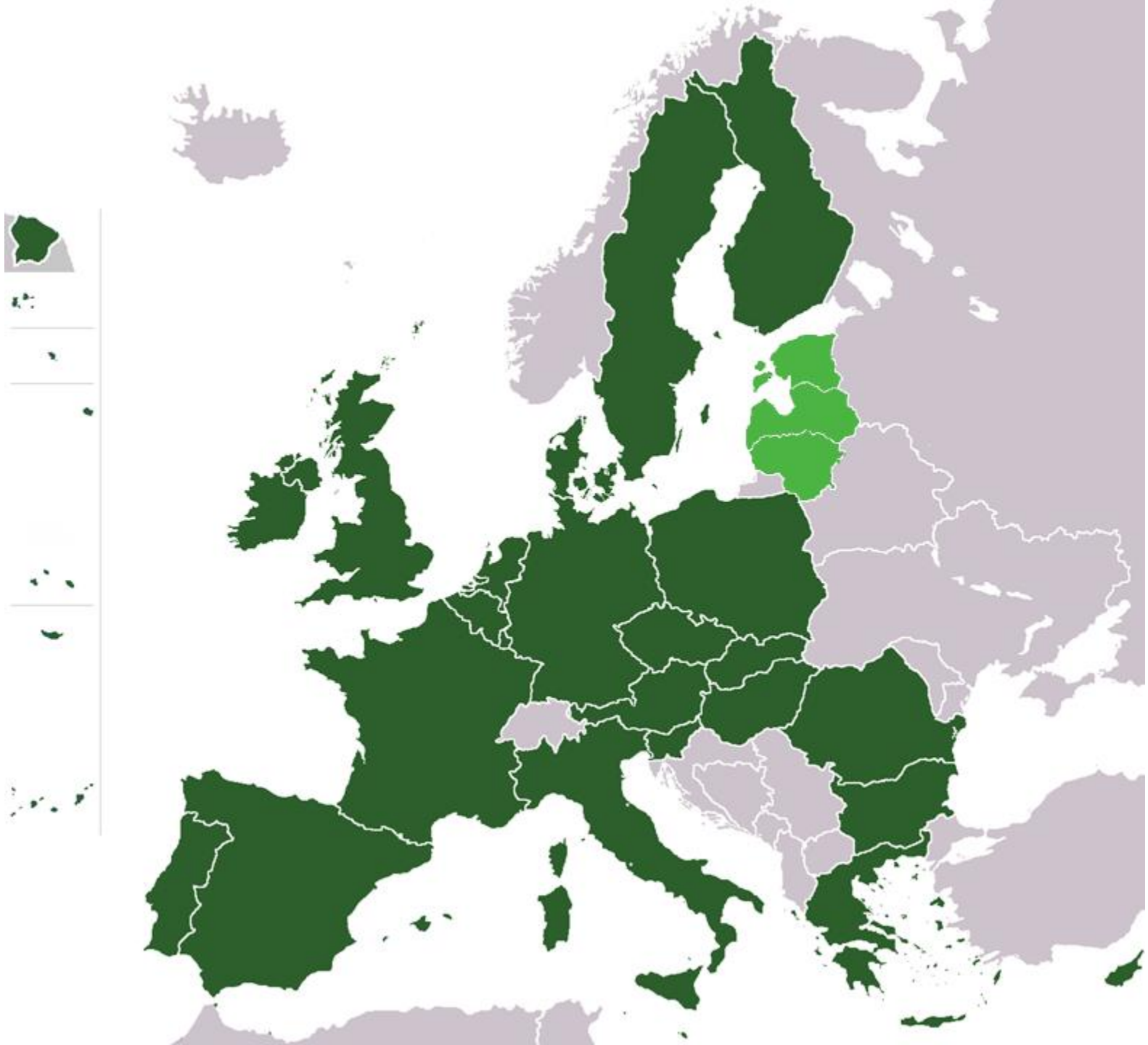
The Baltic States

Allan Sikk

University College London

ESRC Seminar on Small States in Europe and Global Markets
19 March 2013 Surgeon's Hall, Nicholson Street, Edinburgh







ECONOMICS:

- **Cost of public goods**
- **Openness / dependence of trade**
- **Volatility**

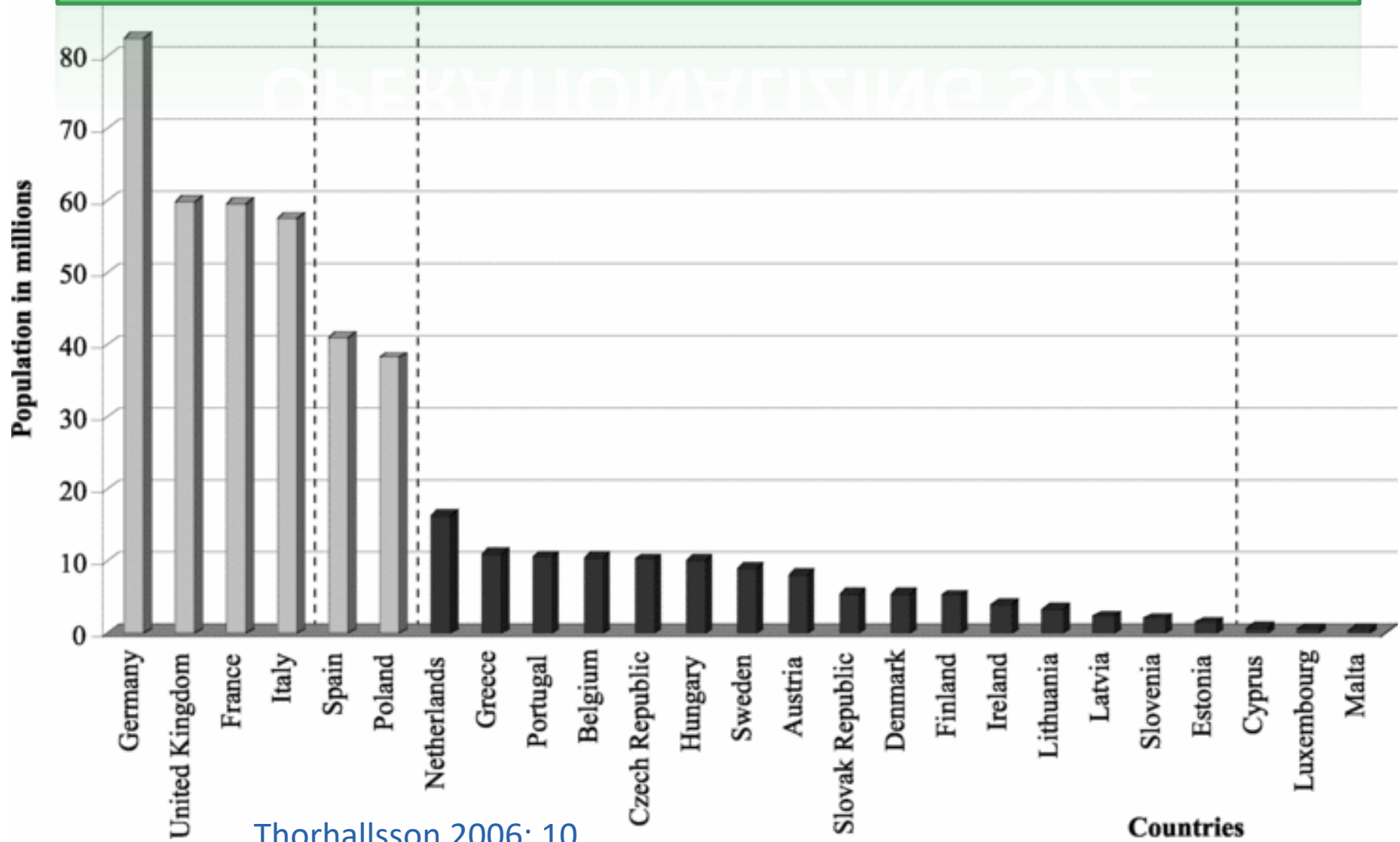
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

- **Real or perceived size matters**

Democracy

- **Classical argument:**
small is democratic
UNITY → DEMOCRACY
- **Madisonian argument:**
DIVERSITY → DEMOCRACY
- **Dahl & Tufte 1973 *Size and Democracy*:**
all countries “too big”

OPERATIONALIZING SIZE

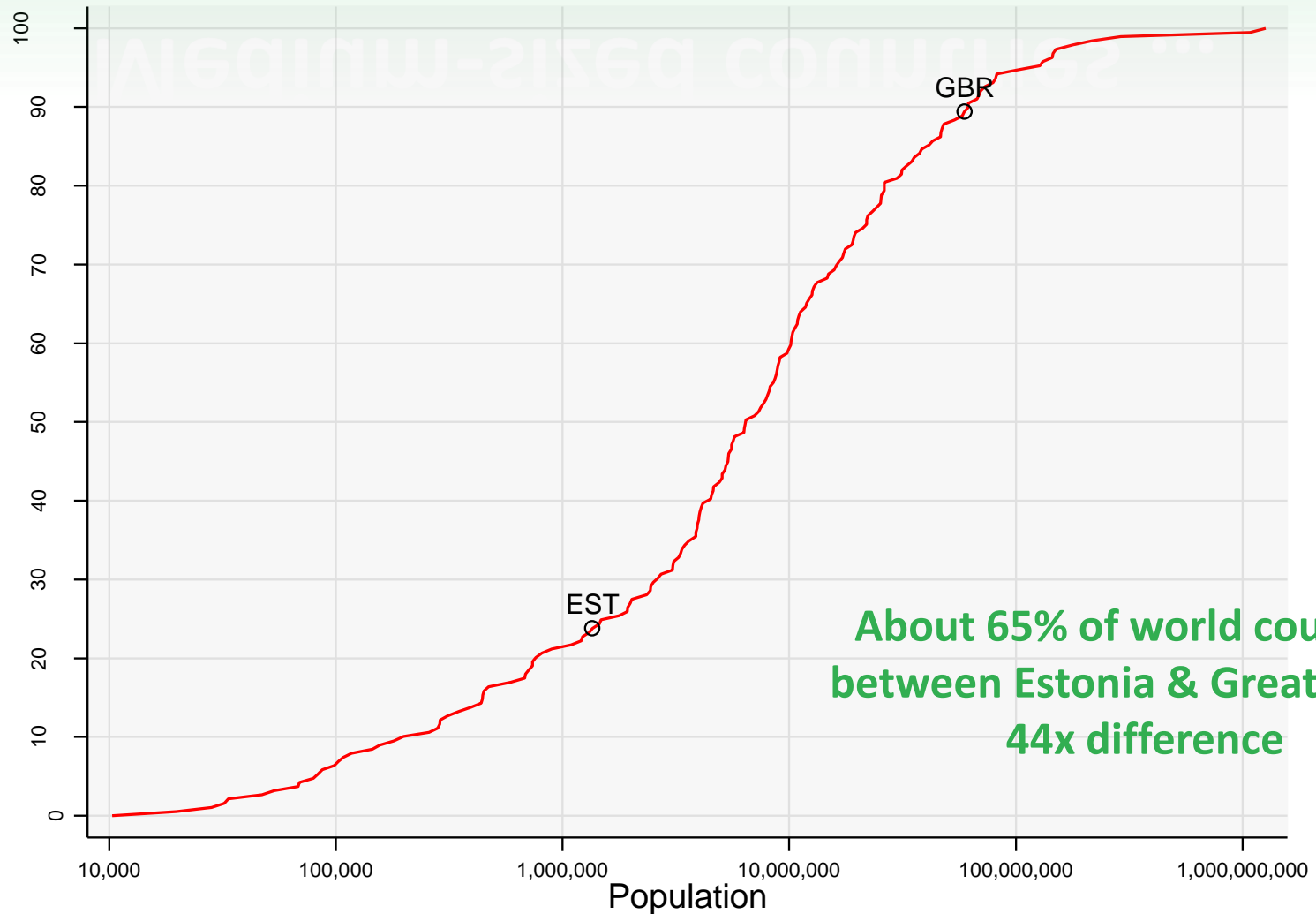


Smallness

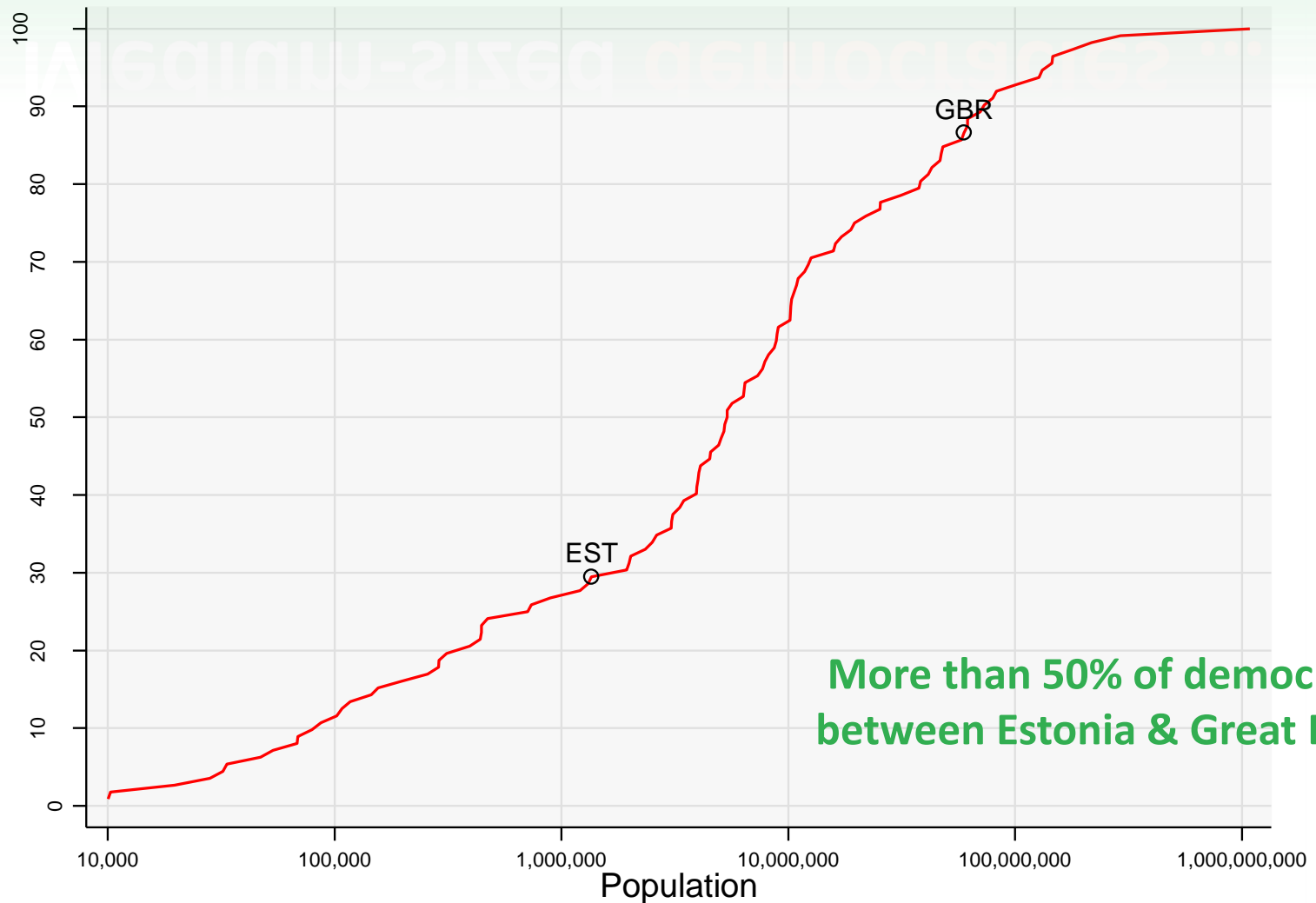
Smallness

- **Thresholds:**
- $P = 1$ million or $P = 100,000$
- **Arbitrary** – often based on empirical breaks

Medium-sized countries ...



Medium-sized democracies ...

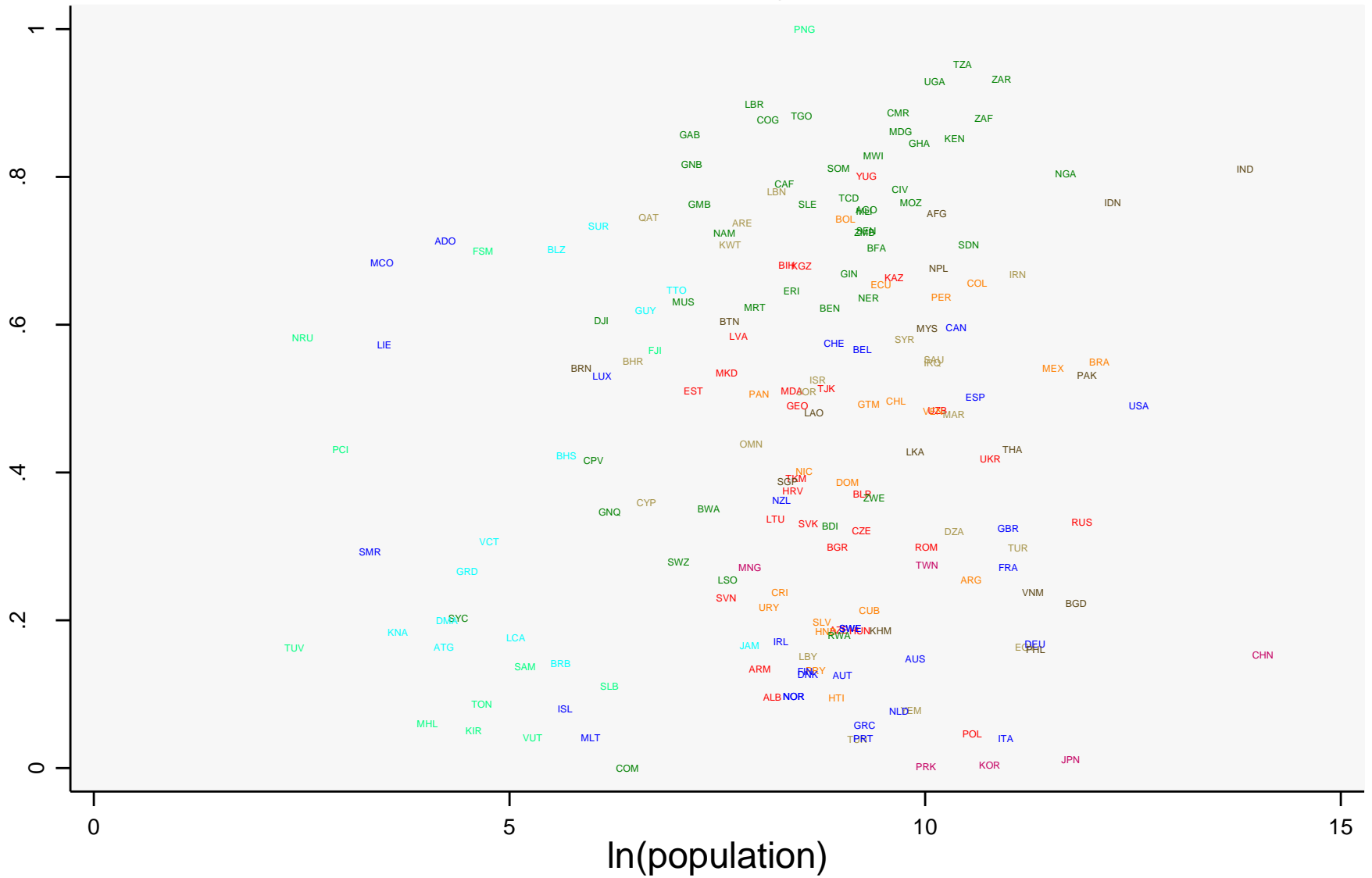


Socio-political effects of SIZE

- **Heterogeneity?**
- **Stability**
- **Effect on democracy**
- **Effects in democracies**

Population and ethnic heterogeneity

colours by regions



Stability

- Size increases the **risk of civil conflict** in Sub-Saharan Africa (Brückner 2010)
- Small states more likely to **remain democracies** (Ott 2000)

Size effect on democracy

- **Positive impact** (of small size)
- **Mechanisms?**
- **Intervening factor: islandness**

Size effect **IN** democracies

- **Democratic corporatism & consensual democracy** (Katzenstein 1985)
- **Party membership**
Larger membership in smaller countries; members more active in smaller parties (Weldon 2006)
- **Political institutions**
- Assembly size: Taagepera & Shugart 1989:
 $S = p^{1/3}$

The State

- **Population → Size of public administration**
- Size of public administration → **capacity, competence, voice etc**
 - Specialisation: **“Plumber’s law”** Dahl & Tufte
- **Small political elites:**
personalisation of politics → **consensus**



Political elites

- **Small elites** → **pol ↔ admin circulation** →
collusion of parties and the state (Sikk 2006)
- **Distance between elites and citizens**
→ **political culture?**

INTERMEDIATE INSTITUTIONS

- **Assembly size → party system**
Sikk & Taagepera, forthcoming
- **Political parties**
- **Parliamentary structure**
(e.g. committee structure)
- **Administrative structure**

European politics & parties

- **Lithuania: 12, Latvia: 9, Estonia 6 MEPs**
- **No Baltic MEP in 4 committees (excluding substitutes):**
 - **Regional Development**
 - **Agriculture & Rural Development**
 - **Fisheries**
 - **Culture & Education**
- **Single member in 8 committees**

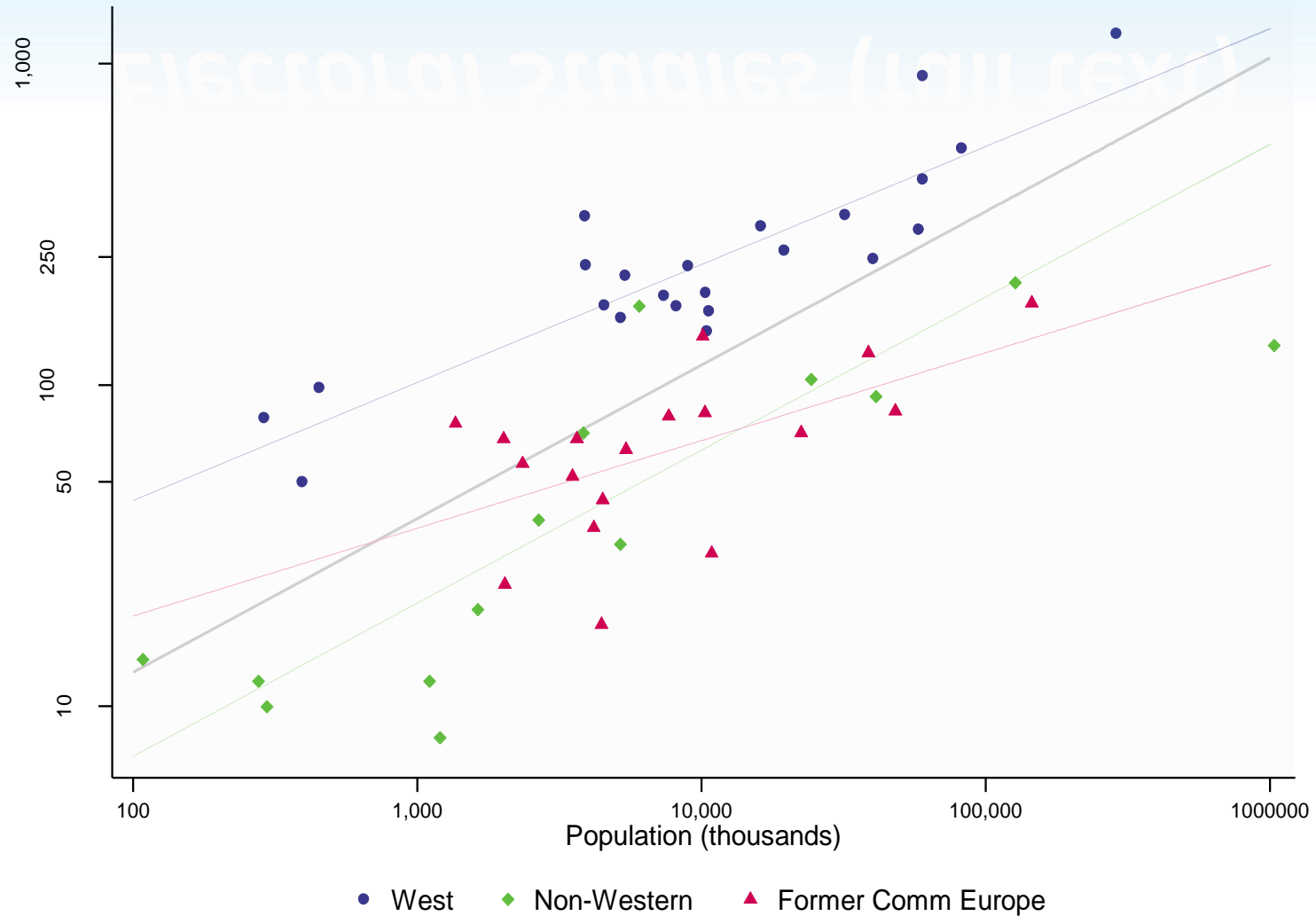
SMALL NUMBERS!

- Studying **small things** may require different methodological approaches
- Small parties:
 - Standard-size surveys pretty useless
 - The same can apply for voting data
Predicted support in small districts below 1 vote
- Small countries:
 - Whether there is a single expert on a field* hangs on chance
** Especially within individual parties*

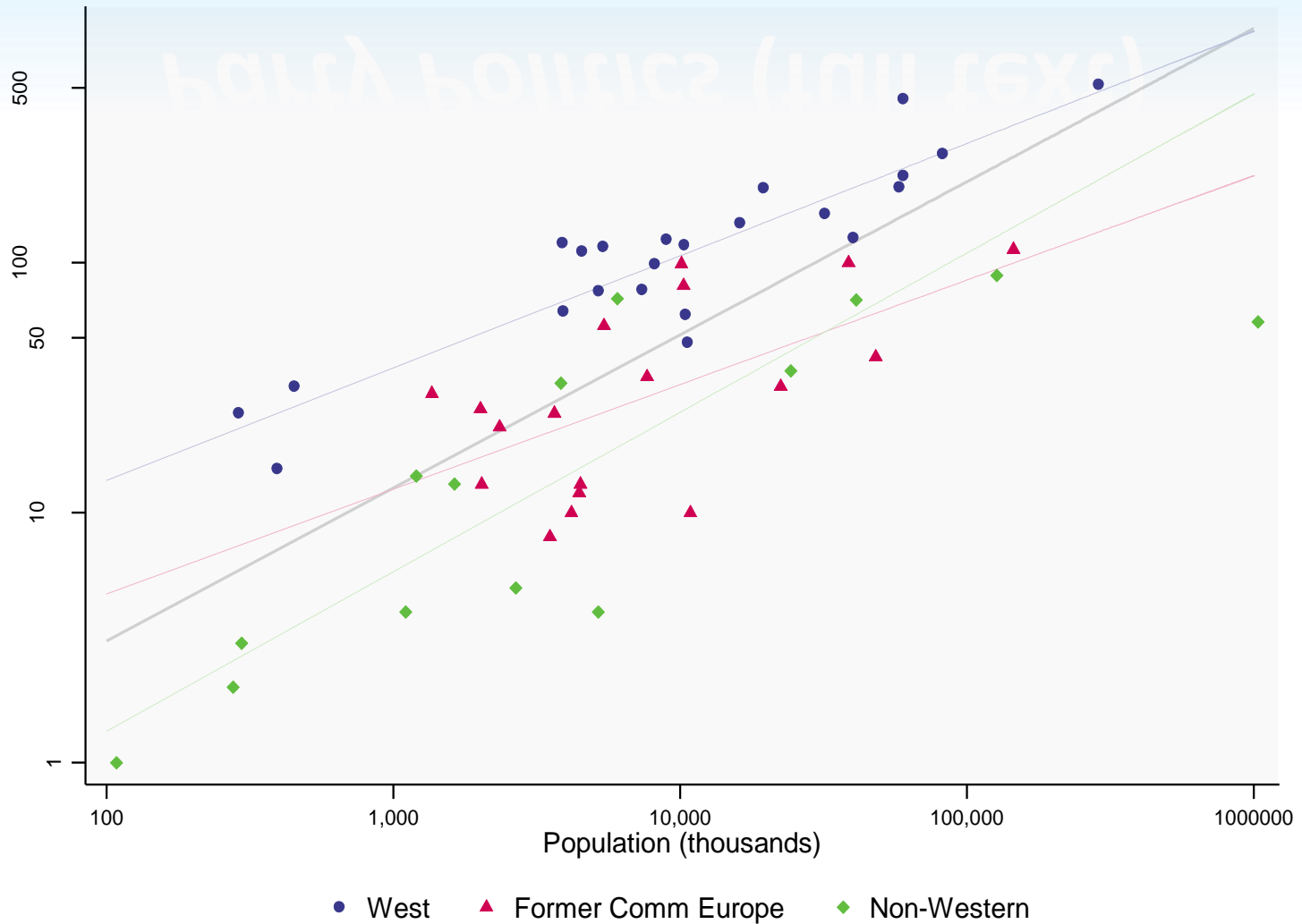
Size bias in political science?

political science?

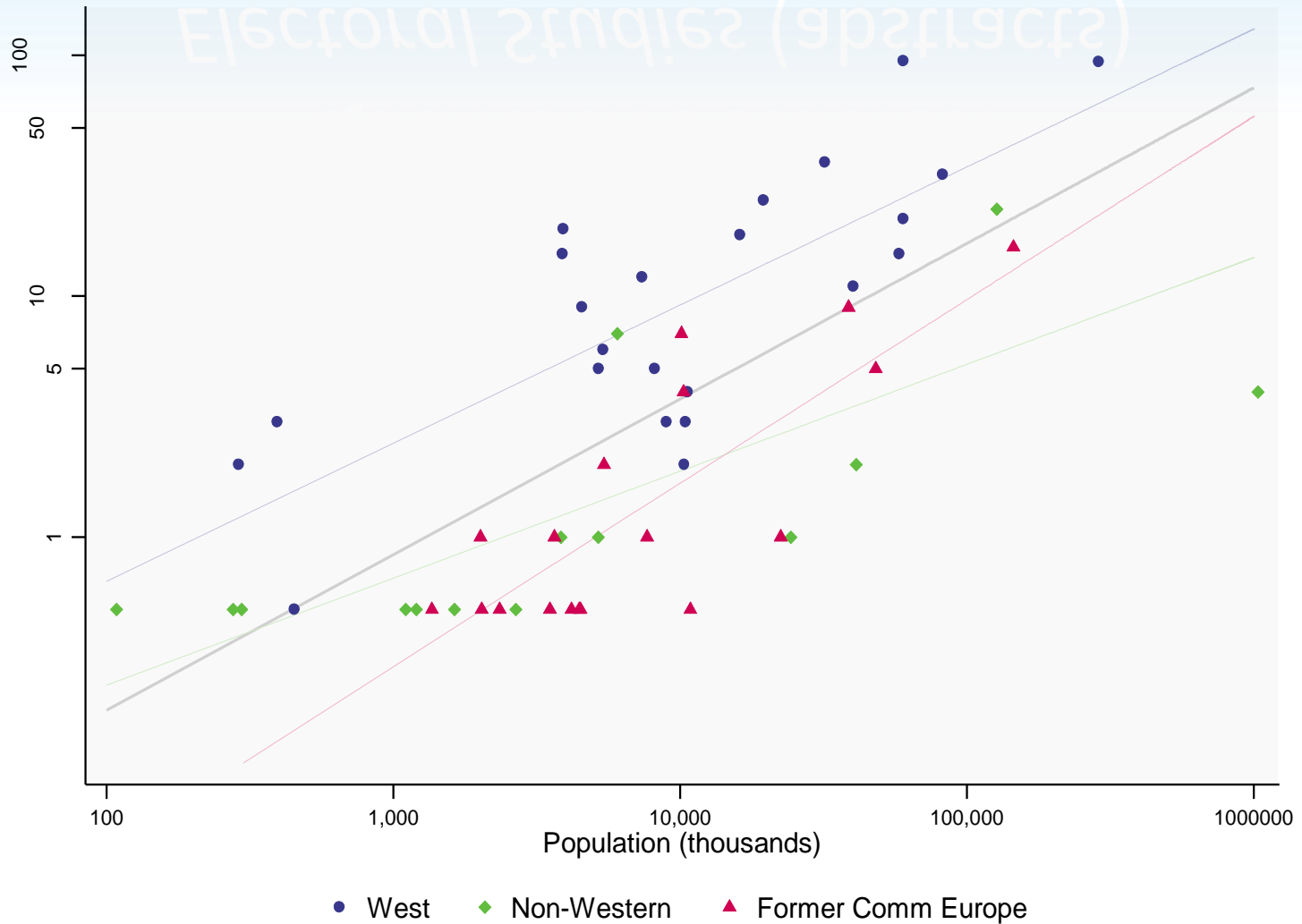
Electoral Studies (full text)



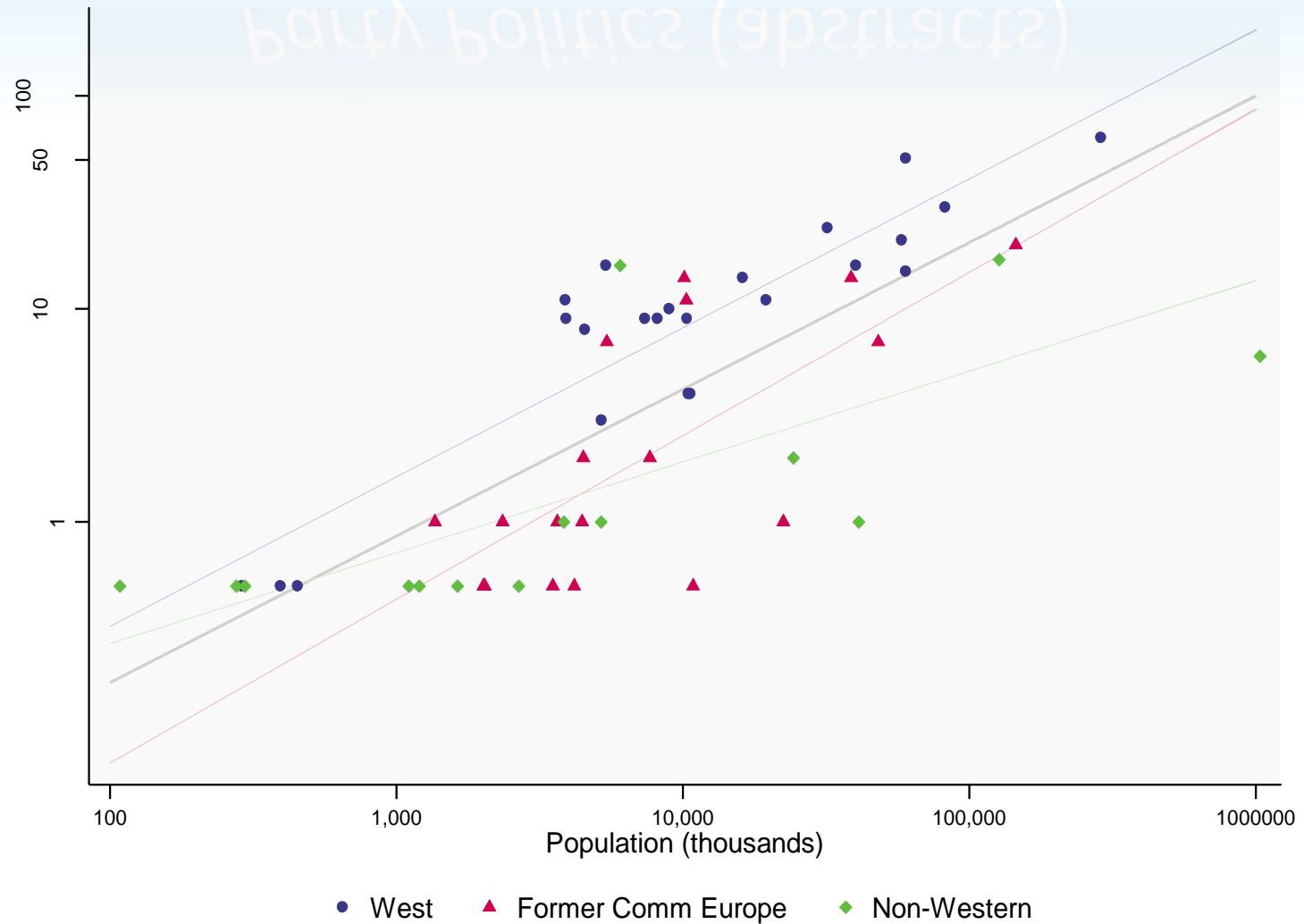
Party Politics (full text)



Qualitative studies: Electoral Studies (abstracts)

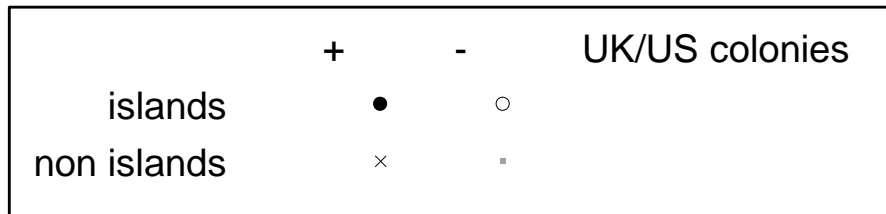
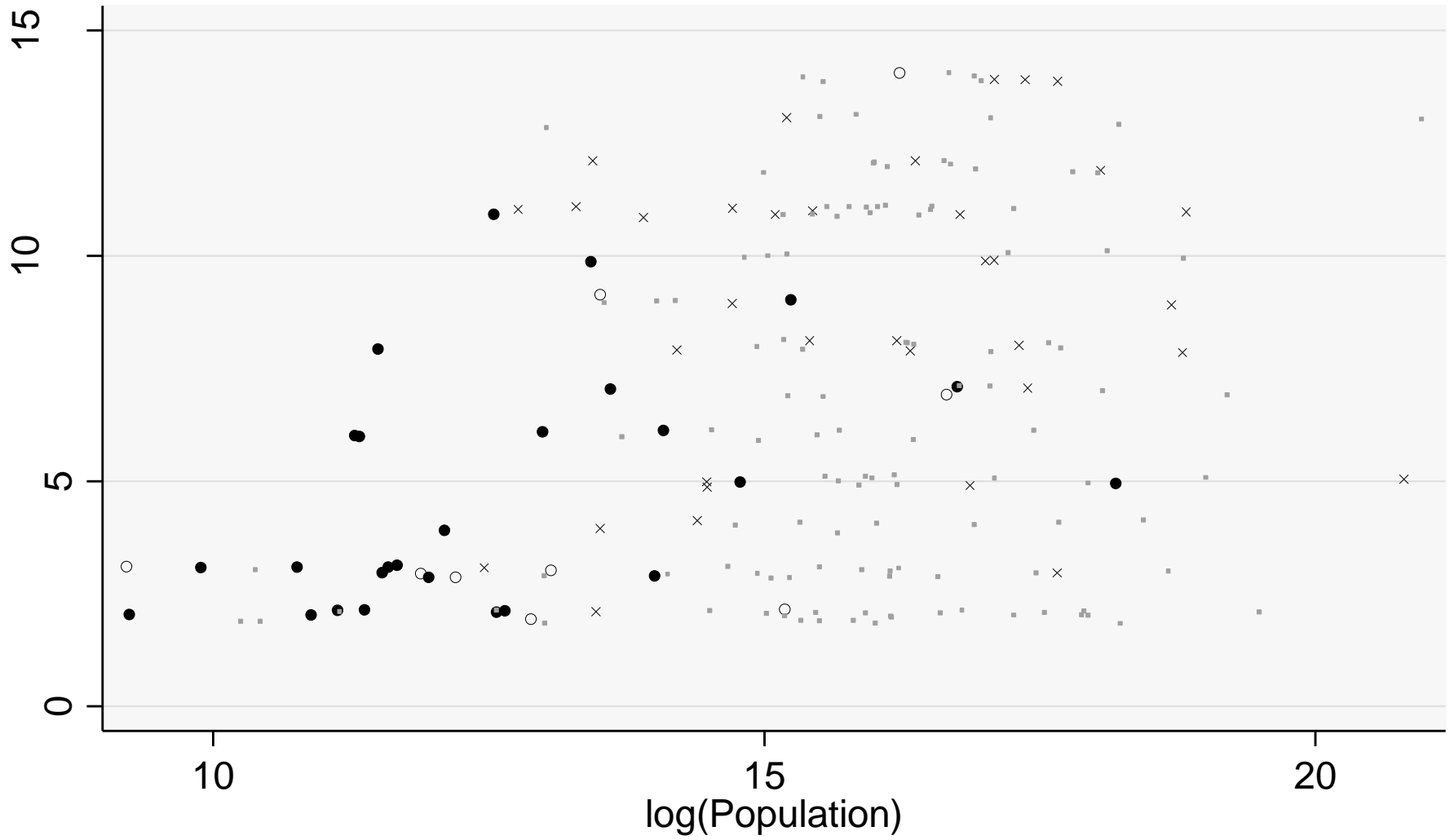


Qualitative studies: Party Politics (abstracts)



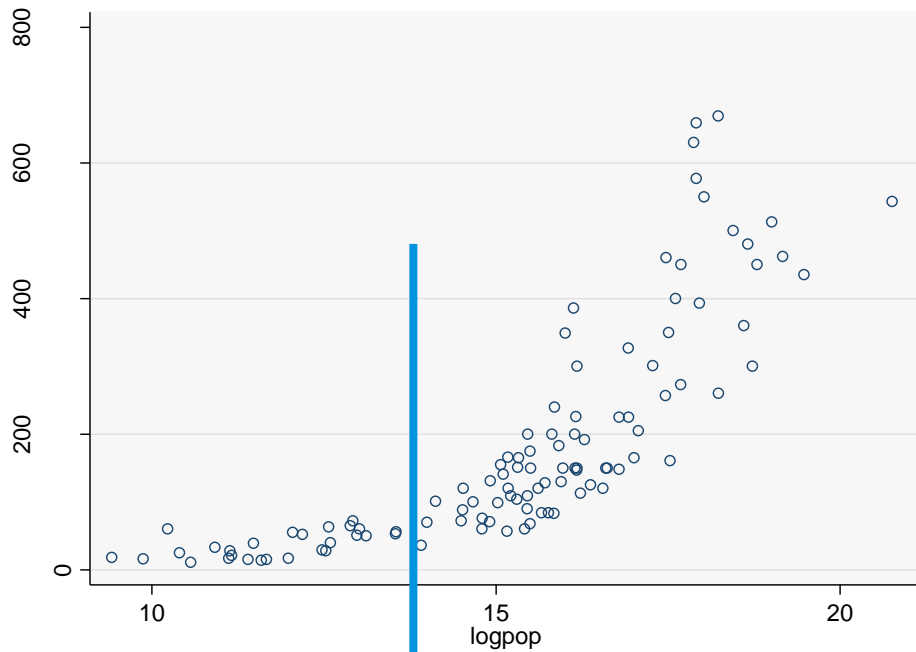
Additional charts

Additional charts

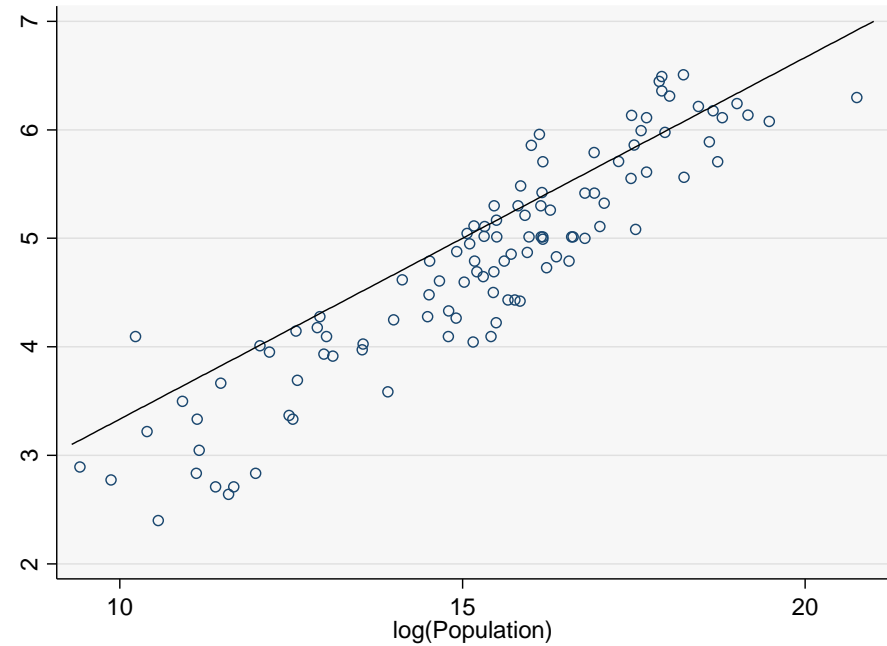


Population & assembly size

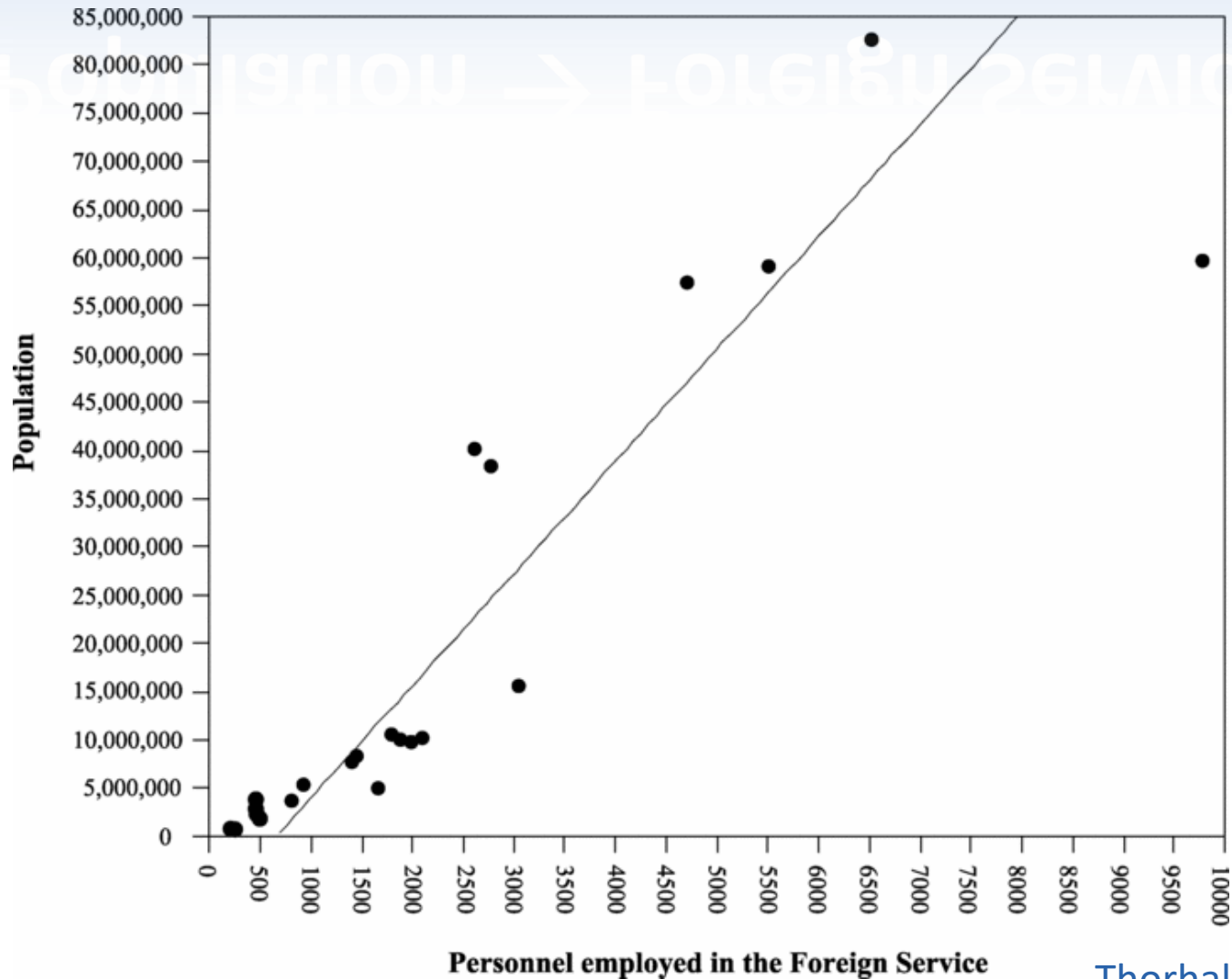
Population & assembly size



Cut-off point at 1m?



Population → Foreign Service



Population → Foreign Service

