No One Is An Island: An Icelandic Perspective explores how Iceland's behaviour is influenced by the country's small size and is a timely contribution to Icelandic studies and small states studies in general. This interdisciplinary edited collection came as a result of "No one is an island: Iceland and the International Community", a conference held at the University of Akureyri in March 2016. The book provides an extensive overview of the subject at hand as it brings together works by Icelandic scholars, mainly from the field of social sciences. As Frímannsson points out in the epilogue, the overall aim of this book is to reflect on Iceland's and Icelanders' attitudes and relation to the outside world (135) as the country gradually and dramatically changed over the course of the last century. Comprising of six unique articles divided into two sections, this short book in size but not in content will be of help to scholars and students alike interested in small states, microstates and everyone wishing to know more about Iceland's position and future in the international community.

The first section explores Iceland's representation through non-Icelandic academic research, within the Icelandic media and through the experience of people who chose to migrate to Iceland. In Chapter One, Giorgio Baruchello reflects on his twelve years as the editor of *Nordicum-Mediterraneum* (NoMe). As editor of NoMe Baruchello has been dealing with and reading many articles by non-Icelandic, mainly Italian, scholars who have intellectually explored the island from various viewpoints. Baruchello identifies four recurrent themes: Iceland as "the land of the Vikings", Iceland as a Nordic State, Iceland as an Arctic State, and Iceland as a dimension of the spirit. Fully aware that it would be a difficult task to assess how representative these four themes are of both the stereotypes and the commonplaces in the collective consciousness about Iceland, Baruchello concludes by assessing how well they fit with Icelanders' self-representation and presentation of their culture to foreigners. Iceland as an Arctic nation might be the fastest-growing identity. In the last decades or so, the Arctic has managed to carve itself a space in the Icelandic consciousness and within Icelandic politics. The majestic, almost spiritual character of the Icelandic landscape and geography will not surprise anyone – it is how Icelandic touring companies have advertise the island since the tourist boom of the last few years. Nonetheless, Baruchello's conclusion is that although Icelanders still partially enjoy their country in the same way their ancestors did, urbanisation and high living standards have also had an impact on how Icelanders perceive their country's own identity as they sometimes tend to agree with how the country is regarded abroad rather than on their own

perceptions.

Birgir Guðmundsson then shifts the focus to media in a microstate. Using Iceland as a case study, Guðmundsson posits the media system in Iceland is in many way similar to its Scandinavian counterparts, more specifically regarding the extent to which cultural and historical factors play a role in the literacy development and the universality of communication and media (36). Guðmundsson also pinpoints several differences that make the media landscape in Iceland unique, such as a lower trust in internal political pluralism and less developed journalistic professionalism. The latter is due to the cumulative effect of a distrust in political pluralism within different media outlets as well as competition within a small media market. Comparatively, Guðmundsson concludes that changes seen in other Nordic/Northern European countries are also being seen in Iceland. Global-level trends and technological changes have had an impact on the way the Icelandic media now handle the news.

Chapter Three "Migrating to the High North" (Stéphanie Barillé and Markus Meckl) is based on interviews with people who have immigrated to Akureyri, Iceland. Beside the wealth of information about how migrants might feel when moving to Akureyri and how they have adapted to their new life, this chapter is truly of interest because it conveys a positive narrative about migration studies. In researching on migrants' well-being and happiness – an under-researched topic in migration studies – studies like this shift the focus to the positive impact of migrating onto the host country.

The second section tries to make sense of Iceland's role and interests within the international community. Of particular interest in this section is Chapter Four and Chapter Five. The former (Rachael Lorna Johnstone and Hjalti Ómar Ágústsson) focuses on Iceland's role in Arctic governance. This chapter offers a thorough overview of Iceland's geopolitical and legal interests in the North as it explores Iceland's multilateral approach to Arctic relations and how Iceland has managed to frame itself as the only "full Arctic" state. Trying to make sense of Iceland's priorities in the Arctic, the authors show that multilateral cooperation is key to Iceland's strategic position in the region. From its Arctic policy documents to fisheries management to Iceland's exclusion from the "Arctic Five" table, the country is shown as promoting cooperation with Arctic and Non-Arctic stakeholders through the Arctic Council, a forum where a small state has as much say in the decision-making

process as “big Arctic players” such as Russia or the United States. Toward the end, the chapter also briefly touches on Iceland’s role within the emerging West-Nordic cooperation. Albeit brief, this last part provides readers with a platform to the next chapter in which Grétar Thór Eythórsson and Gestur Hovgaard consider the West-Nordic Region and the Arctic. A republic since 1944, Iceland is the bigger player in this newly emerging cooperation nexus in the North Atlantic. Building on previous research and contributions, the authors examine the unique relation between Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Iceland as this relation intricately evolves between the West-Nordic region and the Arctic. Contrasting each country’s interests as well as Danish interests, the authors find common grounds and challenges for the West Nordic region. West Nordic cooperation needs to challenge the status quo and find innovative ways and structures to have a real impact as a geopolitical subregion.

“Iceland and Foreign Aid” (Gunnlaugsson et al.) depicts Iceland’s path from a poor country under Danish rule in the 19th century to a recipient of foreign aid in the post-WWII period to a donor country in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Iceland’s transformation, often credited to applying free market logic and policies, is mostly due to a combination of several factors within different economic contexts. Its geographic position and military importance during the Cold War meant that Iceland received generous development assistance through the Marshall plan, PL480 and the UN Development Program and beneficial loans from the World Bank. As pointed out in this chapter, this meant that Iceland could lay the foundation for its own development aid agency while still receiving foreign aid. Using Malawi and district (local) cooperation as a case study, the researchers also show how Iceland has shifted its focus in development aid from fisheries only cooperation towards including more social sector initiatives such as health, water and sanitation and education alongside fisheries.

In the epilogue, Guðmundur Heiðar Frímannsson provides some personal reflections on the previous chapter as well as on the small size of Iceland’s society and its effect on Icelandic life as a whole. With the eye and the insight of an Icelandic philosopher, Frímannsson offers what could be deemed as a concluding comment in which he wraps up the contributions to this volume. His final analysis is that the book contributes to a deeper understanding of Iceland’s smallness. One can indeed only agree with such a concluding remark, overall *No One Is An Island* is a superb addition to the field of small states, regional and Icelandic

studies. Baruchello, Kristjánsson, Jóhannsdóttir and Ingimarson have managed to compile high-quality articles in a readable, small format that will suit even those who lack time for academic readings – the book can be read in one evening. The book's only drawback might be its price. Coming up at £58.99 on Cambridge Scholars Publishing's website, this concise book might not be in everyone's budget but its in-depth and thorough overview of the subject at hand is well worth the read and would make an excellent addition to university libraries' collections.