

When Small States Make Big Leaps: Institutional Innovation and High-Tech Competition in Western Europe (Cornell Studies in Political Economy)

Darius Ornston

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At the close of the twentieth century, Denmark, Finland, and Ireland emerged as unlikely centers for high-tech competition. In *When Small States Make Big Leaps*, Darius Ornston reveals how these historically low-tech countries managed to assume leading positions in new industries such as biotechnology, software, and telecommunications equipment. In each case, countries used institutions that are commonly perceived to delay restructuring to accelerate the redistribution of resources to emerging enterprises and industries.

Ornston draws on interviews with hundreds of politicians, policymakers, and industry representatives to identify two different patterns of institutional innovation and economic restructuring. Irish policymakers worked with industry and labor representatives to contain costs and expand market competition. Denmark and Finland adopted a different strategy, converting an established tradition of private-public and industry-labor cooperation to invest in high-quality inputs such as human capital and research. Both strategies facilitated movement into new high-tech industries but with distinctive political and economic consequences. In explaining how previously slow-moving states entered dynamic new industries, Ornston identifies a broader range of strategies by which countries can respond to disruptive challenges such as economic internationalization, rapid technological innovation, and the shift to services.



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