Introduction

Smaller powers in Cold War Europe

Laurien Crump and Susanna Erlandsson

Thirty years after it ended, this book tells the story of the Cold War from a perspective that both transcends and engages with the well-known dramaturgy of East versus West. While the conventional narrative features a superpower conflict that dominated the shape of international relations between World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall, this volume takes the aims and influence of smaller European powers as its point of departure. It challenges the classic image of a bipolar Cold War that determined the fates and scope for manoeuvre of smaller states all over the world, its course beyond their control.

In the vein of New Cold War history, researchers have questioned that bipolarity and called for more attention to the influence of smaller powers on Cold War dynamics, as well as the 'retroactive debipolarisation' of the Cold War.[1] This volume joins a burgeoning literature that highlights cooperative, multilateral and multipolar aspects of the Cold War, but it points to the roles played by smaller powers and non-state actors in a much broader thematic, chronological and geographical spectrum.[2] That endeavour emphatically includes perspectives from both sides of the Iron Curtain and beyond.

In spite of a renewed interest for small states in the Cold War era, the focus even of recent volumes on Cold War Europe tends to remain on particular themes, such as détente, European security or the end of the Cold War, instead of approaching the concept of smallness as a starting point.[3] Whereas some researchers have pointed to contacts across the Iron Curtain, even this focus tells the story of (bridging the differences between) East and West, rather than analysing the strategies of smaller European powers regardless of their alignment.[4] So far as monographs are concerned, when the role of Cold War Europe in particular has been covered, the work has not been based on primary sources.[5] And for all its other merits, Arne Westad's recent work on the Cold War focuses on the global perspective and contains little detailed analysis of individual players in Cold War Europe.[6]

Besides being about East versus West, the United States versus the Soviet Union, the Cold War is also a story of smaller versus big powers – on both sides of the Iron Curtain. This volume approaches international relations from the vantage points of the smaller powers. The aim is to examine and facilitate a comparison between the goals, strategies, and scope for manoeuvre of smaller European powers during the Cold War era empirically, without a priori assumptions about

limitations inherent to their East–West positions. Whether and how the superpower conflict had an impact on each smaller power's goals, strategies and scope for manoeuvre is posed as an open question, and so is whether and how the smaller powers' goals and strategies in turn influenced Cold War dynamics. The volume offers a thought-provoking survey of the diverse agendas as well as common denominators of smaller European powers on both sides of the Iron Curtain, including neutrals/non-aligned. It aims for a better understanding of European Cold War dynamics by considering the influence of a variety of factors and actors on the margins for manoeuvre of smaller powers.

Essential to the book's endeavour is a transcending of the East–West divide as well as the use of a shared conceptual approach. This volume suggests *margins for manoeuvre* as a common denominator that may help explain small state foreign policy behaviour, also providing a tool to discuss the interrelationship between system level, state level and individual level of influence on small state foreign policy. One of the advantages of the concept as an analytical frame is that it replaces a discussion of *power* with a term that better highlights the agency of smaller states. While power is easily associated with military strength and coercion, margin for manoeuvre leaves room for other strategies to maintain independence and pursue interests. Margin for manoeuvre also avoids the connotation to passivity or merely reactive behaviour suggested by a term like *defensive power*, which has been used to define the particular character of the power of small states as opposed to that of great powers.[7] Although it can be a useful concept, characterising small states' power as defensive by nature holds the risk of focusing attention on what they resisted rather than on what they pursued.

The idea to combine and compare studies on small states in the Cold War was born out of previous multi-archival research by the volume's two editors. In 2015, Laurien Crump showed that the smaller members of the Warsaw Pact had much more leverage over the Soviet Union than previously assumed, demonstrating the need to also analyse the aims and actions of the smaller powers within the Soviet bloc.[8] Simultaneously, a detailed comparison by Susanna Erlandsson of Dutch and Swedish security ideas and strategies in the 1940s revealed correspondences that were surprising in light of the fact that the Netherlands joined NATO while Sweden emerged as a staunch defender of neutrality.[9] While Crump pointed to diversity within a bloc generally considered monolithic, Erlandsson pointed to striking similarities between two countries with ostensibly diverging Cold War positions. Combining these insights made clear that the Cold War division of smaller European powers into the three categories – NATO, Warsaw Pact or neutral/non-aligned – fails to tell the whole story of smaller states' policies and possibilities, and, by extension, of the mechanisms of the Cold War itself. The results also seemed to suggest that a quest for the widest possible *margins for manoeuvre* might explain the choices made by different governments.[10]

This volume brings together twelve studies of a still wider range of European powers in the Cold War era in order to test and build on these tentative results. It is a unique joint effort to combine in-depth multi-archival historical research with ground-breaking conceptual work, which has been further consolidated by

an intensive roundtable workshop with the contributors in Utrecht in December 2017. It is an unprecedented endeavour not only because it includes leading young scholars of so many different nationalities, but also because the 'margins for manoeuvre' of smaller powers are not considered as a constraint but as a potential opportunity, which in turn sheds an altogether new light on their contribution to the Cold War era.

While it has not been possible to include all states of Europe, the case studies, many of which deal with more than one state, have been chosen so as to include as wide a variety of states as possible: states of different sizes and resources, and states from Northern, Southern, Western as well as Eastern Europe. Two important choices underpin the enterprise. One is the choice for a common conceptual approach highlighting states' margins for manoeuvre rather than framing the narrative as one of power relations. To avoid static categories, we have also deliberately chosen to speak of smaller rather than small powers, emphasising the variety and leaving it up to the individual authors to define the ways in which the state(s) they study are small.[11] Second, we have limited the scope to Europe to allow for a maximum of variety within a still somewhat cohesive unit of study. This is a way to avoid differences so big and contexts so diverse that the variables make a comparison and coherent narrative difficult. It does not mean that the approach would not be applicable to other areas of the world, or that Europe is more important as a Cold War arena. Ideally, this book will inspire further research and future comparisons, transcending other divides, as well as shedding a new light on Cold War Europe.

The conceptual and empirical contribution

This book straddles the divide between theoretical literature on small states and empirical literature on the Cold War. While many small state researchers have tried to list typical small state foreign policy behaviours, others have noted that such lists quickly become too long to be meaningful and act as any guide on behaviour. Moreover, compilations of small state behaviours include contradictions, like 'small states tend to choose neutral options' as well as 'small states tend to rely on superpowers for protection', so that whether they can generate any theory depends on scholars' ability to identify under which conditions small states choose which behaviour. Similar concerns hold true for attempts to determine whether the system level, state level or individual level is more important to small states' foreign policies: a ranking of levels explains little without an eye for how these levels interacted.[12]

As Iver Neumann and Sieglinde Gstöhl have pointed out for the discipline of international relations in general, Cold War studies need to pay more attention to small states in terms of relations between states. Not only do minor powers by far outnumber great powers; great and small powers are mutually constitutive.[13] We have chosen to refer to the countries studied in this book as smaller *powers* rather than *states*. While thereby recognising that hierarchies between states exist – even highlighting the Cold War as a story of superpower versus smaller powers as well

as East versus West – the use of the relative form signals that the differences in power are not absolute but complicated and contextual. In the context of Cold War Europe, the term 'smaller powers' could in fact indicate all European states except the Soviet Union. The countries in our case studies all fall within the broad category of states that are not great powers. The ways in which a state is 'small' are a contextual and therefore an empirical matter. Although practitioners of small state studies in the 1960s and 1970s (and a few later cases too) went to great lengths to find objective criteria by which to define small states, later researchers in the field have advocated a less rigid and static approach, pointing to diverse, subjective and changing discourses.[14]

We believe that this open approach leaves more room for historical reality, while still allowing for conceptual comparison. Referring to the space within which smaller powers could manoeuvre and pursue their goals as a *margin* is also a conscious choice: besides connoting to a space beside the main narrative, margin associates to a certain flexibility. By leaving it to all authors to define how the state(s) they study was (were) small and by asking them to define the margins for manoeuvre in terms of goals, interests and influence, as well as explore the strategies to stretch those margins, this volume seeks to contribute valuable insights to the field of small state studies.

The volume also makes a significant contribution in empirical terms to New Cold War history. The product of a chronologically, thematically and geographically wide-ranging cooperation between leading young historians from all over Europe, it transcends the East–West divide as well as challenging the conventional superpower paradigm. Based on original archival – mostly multi-archival – research, the chapters highlight different aspects of small state strategies using different levels of analysis, under the common denominator of margins for manoeuvre, all exploring to what extent smaller powers succeeded in stretching their room for manoeuvre and as such contributed to shaping the Cold War in ways hitherto overlooked.

Three themes guide the outline of the volume. The chapters are clustered around these themes, which are not related to the East–West divide, but rather to common strategies and opportunities of smaller powers. The first part of the volume, *Manoeuvring through Multilateralism*, addresses how smaller powers used multilateral frameworks to increase their scope for manoeuvre during the Cold War era. Part II focuses on *The Margins of Superpower Rule*, highlighting how superpower rule not only constrained but also offered opportunities to smaller powers. Finally, under the heading *Identity as an Instrument*, the contributions of Part III examine how smaller powers fostered a particular kind of national identity as an instrument to increase their scope for manoeuvre.

Laurien Crump and Angela Romano usher in Part I by discussing multilateralism as a tool for smaller powers to challenge the straitjacket of the superpowers' Cold War and promote national foreign policy goals. Their chapter (Chapter 1) responds to the call of New Cold War History to investigate the role of smaller powers on both sides of the Iron Curtain, offering a unique analysis of Eastern and Western Europe simultaneously. It deals with the smaller powers' room for

manoeuvre in four different multilateral contexts, namely the Warsaw Pact, the European Community/European Political Cooperation, NATO and the overarching context of the European security conference/the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe in the period 1965–1975.

Chapter 2 deals with the Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community in the early 1950s. Trineke Palm examines Dutch strategies for exploiting the tight margins of manoeuvre in the negotiations over a European army (1950–1952). The chapter especially highlights the interplay of different multilateral security networks within the Western Alliance, emphasising the diverse nature of power and power struggles.

A different aspect of small states' manoeuvring through multilateralism in the Cold War is foregrounded in Chapter 3 by Aryo Makko, who uses a comparative approach to investigate whether NATO membership or non-alignment provided a wider margin for manoeuvre in the multilateral setting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Like Palm, Makko highlights how different multilateral settings interplayed. The chapter compares the policies of neutral Sweden and the NATO member state Norway in the CSCE and the making of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.

In Chapter 4 Stefanie F. M. Massink examines the Dutch social democrats' attitudes and actions regarding the question of dictatorial Spain's accession to NATO. While NATO provides the multilateral framework within which the margins for manoeuvre of the Dutch government are examined, Massink adds a layer of complexity by analysing Dutch social democratic influence both when the party was in opposition and when it was later in power. That way, the contribution offers insights into how the influence of domestic politics on smaller powers' foreign policy interplayed with the margins provided by the multilateral setting (NATO).

Part II, *The Margins of Superpower Rule*, begins with a contribution by Suvi Kansikas, Mila Oiva and Saara Matala. Together, in Chapter 5 they examine Polish and Finnish traders' efforts to access the Soviet market in the 1950s and 1960s and in the 1970s and 1980s respectively. By analysing how the clothing industry of planned-economy Poland and the shipbuilding industry of market-economy Finland gained access to the Soviet market, the study sheds light onto foreign trade practices of smaller states seeking to increase their room to manoeuvre in a political situation of asymmetric trade. Kansikas, Oiva and Matala analyse the agency of the smaller powers in three phases of commerce: market analysis, marketing and political lobbying. Focusing on individual entrepreneurs and intermediate-level actors (Finland, Poland); private businesses (Finland) and state-owned foreign trade organisations (Poland), they offer a Cold War-long view of political, economic, structural, social and cultural margins for manoeuvring into the Soviet market.

The intertwining of economic and political issues returns in the discussion of the margins of superpower rule in Chapter 6. Elitza Stanoeva discusses socialist Bulgaria's parallel political and economic relations with the FRG and Denmark: their (re)activation in the early 1960s, peak around the mid-1960s, deterioration in the aftermath of the crackdown on Prague Spring in 1968 and subsequent efforts

at recovery. Assessing the bilateral relations comparatively, the chapter examines the different degrees of diplomatic autonomy that Bulgaria enjoyed vis-à-vis the FRG and Denmark as well as the divergent pressures that led to the post-1968 chill. Stanoeva's focus on the relations between smaller powers of different sizes and allegiances brings into view a complex interaction of aims and strategies of all involved, with a particular eye for how these influenced Bulgaria's margins and strategies for manoeuvre.

Moving to the West, Frank Gerits illustrates the margins of superpower rule through the case of Belgian colonialism. In Chapter 7 about the Belgian Information Center in New York, Gerits examines how the Belgian government tried to increase its influence in Washington, centring on the role of Belgian Congo in these attempts. By re-examining how the 'Congo factor' affected Belgian diplomacy, the chapter also re-examines the idea that the relationship between the United States and European empires was held together by the fear of Communist revolt in Africa.

Chapter 8, the final chapter of Part II, turns to yet another arena illustrating the margins of superpower rule: energy politics. Zooming in on the Urengoy pipeline crisis of 1981–1982, Marloes Beers approaches the role of the Dutch government from a political economy perspective and explores energy politics as an area that could have allowed the Netherlands to stretch its margins for manoeuvre in Cold War Europe. Distinguishing between the Dutch approach to Europe and to the United States, Beers analyses why it took the Dutch so long to attempt to translate its economic potential into geopolitical influence.

In Part III, *Identity as an Instrument*, Johanna Rainio-Niemi opens with a discussion in Chapter 9 of neutrality as an instrument of manoeuvring in the bipolar Cold War, focusing on how the understandings and conceptions of neutrality as an identity changed in the post-1945 period, especially as contrasted with earlier conceptions. Empirically, the chapter examines the two remaining European neutrals in 1945, Switzerland and Sweden, and two of the post-1945 neutrals, Austria and Finland. Using these empirical examples, the chapter looks at the 'new' post-1945 small state neutrality and places it in the broader national and international context within which it was formulated. It looks at neutrality's history as one in which national and international elements were profoundly entangled.

In Chapter 10, historical identity again plays an important role as Corina Mavrodin discusses Romania's initiative for creating a nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ) in the Balkans in the late 1950s. Otherwise known as the Stoica Plan, Bucharest's call for inter-bloc cooperation on creating a 'zone of peace' was the first ever such proposal of the Cold War at a time when the global public was increasingly worried about the destructive potential of nuclear weapons. The chapter analyses the Stoica Plan within the complex regional and global contexts with an eye for the ways in which Romania used identity as an instrument.

A story of instrumental changing of identity is provided by Cristina Blanco Sío-López (Chapter 11), who addresses the parallel processes of transition to democracy and European Community (EC) accession of Spain. The chapter studies the margins for manoeuvre of Spain as a smaller Cold War power and its strategies

in retracing a way back to democracy and mainstream foreign relations as part of a paradigmatically convergent transitional Europeanism. It focuses on the entangled constraints and opportunities of Spain's catch-up convergence and 'Return to Europe' scenarios, which would have a later mirror in the case of the EU's Eastward Enlargement process.

The final empirical contribution (Chapter 12) sheds light on a neglected Cold War scheme: the 'Six Nation Initiative', launched in May 1984 by Greece along with India, Argentina, Mexico, Tanzania and Sweden in order to halt what they called 'a rush towards global suicide' and to facilitate an agreement on nuclear arms control. Centring on the role of Greece, Eirini Karamouzi discusses how Andreas Papandreou built an identity as a peacemaker and became a figurehead for the Six Nation initiative. While most of the historiography has focused on the anti-nuclear rallies and the Cold War summits between Reagan and Gorbachev to deal with the Euromissiles escalation, Karamouzi examines the impact of this smaller power initiative on the discourse, framing and decisions on peace and disarmament.

The volume ends with a concluding chapter co-authored by the editors. This conclusion contains a comparative analysis of the individual chapters as well as the different parts, in which more general conclusions are drawn from the individual research findings. This chapter will evaluate to what extent the analysis of smaller powers' *margins for manoeuvre* has helped to challenge and nuance the view of the Cold War era as bipolar and dominated by the superpowers, provided a new prism for viewing the Cold War and contemporary European history at large, and contributed on a conceptual level to small state theory. By doing so it aims to shed a fresh light on European dynamics in the Cold War era, as well as setting a new agenda for future Cold War research.

Notes

1 Cf. John Lewis Gaddis, 'On Starting All Over Again: A Naïve Approach to the Study of the Cold War', in: Odd Arne Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretation, Theory* (London 2000) 31. In the same volume James Hershberg calls for a 'retroactive debipolarisation' of the Cold War. Cf. James Hershberg, 'The Crisis Years, 1958–63', 304.

2 Poul Villaume, Ann-Marie Ekengren and Rasmus Mariager (eds), *Northern Europe in the Cold War, 1965–1990: East-West Interactions of Trade, Culture, and Security* (Helsinki 2016).

3 See for example Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny and Christian Nünlist (eds), *Origins of the European Security System: The Helsinki Process Revisited, 1965–75* (New York 2008); Leopoldo Nuti (ed.), *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki To Gorbachev, 1975–1985* (London 2009); Frédéric Bozo et al. (eds), *Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945–1990* (New York 2012).

4 Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad (eds), *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations and the Cold War, 1965–1985* (Copenhagen 2010); Mark Kramer and Vít Smetana (eds), *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945–1989* (Lanham, MD 2014).

5 Mark Gilbert, *Cold War Europe: The Politics of a Contested Continent* (London 2015).

6 Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (London 2017).

7 Since the mid-twentieth century, the power of small states has repeatedly been defined as a passive kind of power, i.e. the power not to do what others demand. Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II* (Chicago, IL 1959); Trygve Mathisen, *The Functions of Small States in the Strategies of the Great Powers* (Oslo 1971); Hans Branner, 'The Danish Foreign Policy Tradition and the European Context', in: Hans Branner and Morten Kelstrup (eds), *Denmark's Policy Towards Europe After 1945: History, Theory and Options* (Odense 2000) 185–220.

8 Laurien Crump, *The Warsaw Pact Reconsidered: International Relations in Eastern Europe, 1955–1969* (London and New York 2015).

9 Susanna Erlandsson, *Window of Opportunity: Dutch and Swedish Security Ideas and Strategies 1942–1948* (Uppsala 2015).

10 Erlandsson explained the diverging paths of Sweden and the Netherlands, in spite of their common security beliefs and world views, as the result of both governments making the choice that under different circumstances seemed to give them the widest margin for manoeuvre to keep pursuing their (very similar) long-term goals. Erlandsson, *Window of Opportunity*, 224, 236–241. See also Susanna Erlandsson, 'Rethinking Small State Security: Dutch Alignment in the 1940s Compared to Swedish Neutrality", in: Ruud van Dijk et al. (eds), *Shaping the International Relations of the Netherlands, 1815–2000: A Small Country on the Global Scene* (London and New York 2018) 117–139.

11 Cf. Christopher S. Browning, 'Small, Smart and Salient? Rethinking Identity in the Small States Literature', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19:4 (2006) 669–684; Victor Gigleux, 'Explaining the Diversity of Small States' Foreign Policies Through Role Theory', in: *The World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 1:1 (2016) 27–45; Ruud van Dijk et al., 'Conclusions and Outlook: Small States on the Global Scene', in: van Dijk et al. (eds), *Shaping the International Relations of the Netherlands*, 244.

12 Jeanne A.K. Hey (ed.), *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior* (Boulder, CO 2003) 5–6, 185–194.

13 Iver B. Neumann and Sieglinde Gstöhl, 'Introduction: Lilliputians in Gulliver's World?' in: Christine Ingebritsen et al. (eds), *Small States in International Relations* (Seattle, WA 2006) 21–23.

14 Browning, 'Small, Smart and Salient?' 669–684; Samuël Kruizinga, 'A Small State? The Size of the Netherlands as a Focal Point in Foreign Policy Debates, 1900–1940', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 27:3 (2016) 420–436, 421; van Dijk et al., 'Conclusions', 244. For historical attempts to define small states, see for example Amry Vandenbosch, 'The Small States in International Politics and Organization', *The Journal of Politics* 26:2 (May 1964) 293–312; David Vital, *The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small Power in International Relations* (Oxford 1967); Robert Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers* (London and New York 1968); Maurice East, 'Size and Foreign Policy Behavior: A Test of Two Models', *World Politics* 25:4 (1973) 556–576; James Rosenau (ed.), *Comparing Foreign Policies: Theories, Findings, and Methods* (New York 1974); Tom Crowards, 'Defining the Category of "Small States" ', *Journal of International Development* 14 (2002) 143–179.

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