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Transnational Party Alliances

Analysing the Hard-Won Alliance Between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European Parliament

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TRANSNATIONAL PARTY ALLIANCES

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*ANALYSING THE HARD-WON ALLIANCE
BETWEEN CONSERVATIVES AND CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT*



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FOR MY PARENTS

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Preface

This study examines processes of transnational alliance-building among Conservative and Christian Democrat parties in the European Union (EU). The route was embarked upon in the summer of 1992 in the context of a research trip to Brussels. A colleague of mine, Associate Professor Magnus Jerneck, and I interviewed several officials and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), most of whom belonged to the Group of the European People's Party. It was the coming into force of a hard-won alliance between the British and Danish Conservatives and the Christian Democrats in May that year which brought us to Brussels, to investigate the supposedly tortuous negotiations on this alliance, its nature and its future.

Having been recruited as a research student and teaching assistant at the Department of Political Science, Lund University, my immediate decision was actually to write a doctoral thesis precisely about transnational party alliances. The intention was that it would focus upon the Socialist International and its member parties. Curious about the patterns of conflict and co-operation within party families, I was impressed by the long-standing links between Socialist parties. However, learning about the talks between Christian Democrats and Conservatives about a closer partnership, I decided to shift focus to those party families instead. Those talks were held between politicians representing what political scientists traditionally have categorised as two separate *familles spirituelles* and whose parent parties I knew had a history of conflictual relations. I decided to reconstruct the background to the recent search for a formal alliance.

While studying at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in early 1992, I read a few articles in the British press about the controversy over the Tory MEPs' request for allied membership of the EPP Group. The controversy was aroused because of the divisions within the British Conservative Party over Europe and the fact that it was opposed to a federal Europe, something Christian Democrat parties integrated in the transnational party federation of the European People's Party (EPP) advocated. In the 1989 European elections the EPP manifesto even called for a United States of Europe.

What I was not fully aware of at the time was how strong the opposition to an alliance with Conservatives was in some Christian Democrat quarters. Nor was I conscious of the extent to which the EPP link was entangled with the ideological development of the Tory Party and the factionalism in its domestic internal arena.

In February 1994 I spent two weeks in London to meet with high-profile Tories. Gradually understanding the underlying dynamics of the Tories' EPP link and what was at stake, I was naturally encouraged to continue to trace the processes at work. I was also encouraged by some of those many friendly interviewees who noted the perfect timing of my research and said that I was writing history at a historical moment. The subject had become extremely sensitive in British domestic politics and there was every prospect that it would continue to be.

Having been to Brussels in late June 1992 to conduct interviews, I went to Athens in November 1992 to observe the IXth EPP Congress and ask further questions about the alliance. Immediately before the opening of the Congress I attended a meeting of the EPP Political Bureau, and later on the press conference held after the summit of the EPP Conference of Party Leaders and Heads of Government. In December 1993 I was also present at the Xth EPP Congress in Brussels.

Having been to Strasbourg once before, I went there for the session weeks in June and December 1993. I was also around in Strasbourg's *Palais de l'Europe* at the first session week after the June 1994 European elections. In October 1995 I was also pleased to meet again with officials and MEPs of the EPP Group during another visit to Strasbourg.

Further interviews were conducted in London, Dublin and Copenhagen in 1996 and in Brussels in January 1997. Altogether, I have paid visits to party headquarters and offices of party foundations and research institutes in Bonn, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, the Hague, London, Rome and Stockholm. With access to party archives, I have come across invaluable material which complements the interviews.

I want to express my gratitude to Dr Thomas Jansen — EPP Secretary-General from 1983 until October 1994 and now at the Forward Studies Unit of the European Commission — for all he has done for me. I am also grateful to Dr Leo Tindemans — a former EPP President and Belgian Prime Minister — who in his capacity as EPP Group Chairman (1992-94) gave me the opportunity to directly observe EPP Group meetings on a number of occasions.

I owe all of the interviewees an immeasurable debt of gratitude for sharing their knowledge and inside information with me. Thanks to the interviews it has been possible to gain new insights as well as to cross-check information established elsewhere or available through scholarly work, the media or even hearsay.

The following people have been particularly supportive of my research project and I would like to extend a special thanks to them: John Biesmans, Deputy Secretary-General of the EPP Group and former Deputy Secretary-General of the European Democratic Group (EDG), Jens Karoli, International Secretary and former Secretary-General of the Danish Conservative Party, Harald Rømer, Director-General of the Secretariat-General of the European Parliament (EP) and former Secretary-General of the EDG, along with the present EPP Secretary-General Klaus Welle and his predecessor Dr Thomas Jansen. All five of them commented on a late manuscript version in part or in its entirety. This brought me to Copenhagen in December 1996 and to Brussels in January 1997.

A special thanks also to Janet Berry at the EPP Group secretariat who was extremely helpful in arranging appointments in Brussels and Strasbourg.

Being without a full-time salary most of my years as a research student all research trips could not have been carried out without the generous funding, hereby acknowledged, provided by the following foundations: Arvid Lindmans Sextioårsfond, Carl Swartz Minnesfond, Crafoordska Stiftelsen, Hierta-Retziusstiftelsen, Jacob Letterstedts Resestipendiumfond, Knut och Alice Wallenbergs Stiftelse, Kungliga Vetenskapsakademien, Stiftelsen Lars Hiertas Minne, and Stiftelsen Siamon. In this connection I would like to acknowledge the support given by Professor Lars-Göran Stenelo, Head of the Department of Political Science and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lund University.

I also would like to express my thanks to those scholars with whom I have discussed some of the themes of this study. In October 1992 I presented a paper at the annual meeting of the Swedish Association of Political Science. I am grateful to those who contributed with comments then and to fellow participants of the workshop on Inter-Party Relationships in National and European Parliamentary Arenas at the Joint Sessions of Workshops organised by the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) in Leiden, the Netherlands, in April 1993. I have also

had the pleasure of taking part in a multinational research project on transnational parliamentary assemblies run by colleagues at the Centre for European and North American Studies, Göttingen University, and another on transnational party politics in the EU, run by colleagues at the Department of Politics, Leeds University. During my stay in the UK in 1992 a meeting with Professor Geoffrey Pridham at Bristol University resulted in some useful advice. In addition to his, academic contributions in the field of transnational party co-operation were made in the 1970s by Dr John Fitzmaurice and Dr Norbert Gresch. I have benefited from their advice and expertise as well.

At the LSE, I learned a lot about European integration and politics in courses and seminars given by Professor Christopher Hill, Professor Gordon Smith, Dr Robert Leonardi and Dr Paul Taylor, who was my tutor. Originally, my request to become a visiting research student at the Department of International Relations was accepted by Professor Fred Halliday, who showed an interest in my original thesis topic of the Socialist International.

No list of thanks could be complete without a word of gratitude to the colleagues and friends at the Department of Political Science in Lund. I have sealed a very much appreciated friendship with fellow and former research students there. Of them, Per Larsson and Anders Uhlin have been my lunch partners throughout these years. I also want to express my gratitude to Matts Hansson and his family for their kindness and generosity.

I have also benefited from comments on various papers presented at seminars at the Department. As discussants during the seminar in December 1996 at which a preliminary manuscript version was reviewed, Dr Michael Karlsson, from Stockholm University, and Mikael Sundström, deserve a special mention. The same could be said of others who contributed with comments then. Mikael Sundström has also helped with the technical editing.

I am especially indebted to Associate Professor Tom Bryder, Associate Professor Torbjörn Vallinder, Professor Lennart Lundquist, Dr Ingvar Mattson, Hans Hegeland, Kristian Sjøvik and Patrik Hall for taking their time to read and comment on a late version of the manuscript. Their constructive criticism has duly been taken into consideration in the final revision of the manuscript.

Having been my tutor for the final undergraduate essay, Professor Christer Jönsson convinced me to apply to become a research student. The idea had been expressed by Magnus Jerneck, but uncertain of my own capacity I had not taken it seriously. Since, I have had the privilege to have this kind-hearted and keen-minded personality as my advisor. Full recognition is given to Magnus's intellectual input and wise suggestions for improvements.

Needless to say, the shortcomings of this book are my own. This also goes for the written English. For the proof-reading of the manuscript, I owe Barbara Lindberg at the English Department, Lund University, many thanks.

Old friends from my native town of Karlskrona have all shown a remarkable patience with my long, and perhaps tedious, monologues about my research. I am especially thinking of Anders, who once had to endure me telling the story of the 1989 election of the EP President. My story is said to have lasted for almost two hours, which is quite possible!

I have left till last the persons I must thank the most. My aunt Gun-Britt and her husband Kaj have always received me in Stockholm with great generosity and hospitality. My sister Catharina, my brother-in-law Miro, their two wonderful daughters Moa and Alva, and my parents Margaretha and Mats have provided those moments when I have been able to relax from work and recharge the batteries. Together with all of them in the beautiful city of Karlskrona, I have found an oasis after what sometimes has felt like how it must feel to be on a lonely walk in the desert, although mine was a walk preceded and followed by many exciting and encouraging discoveries in the jungle of transnational party alliances.

After all they have done for me, I am pleased to be able to dedicate this book to my beloved parents. Without their love and support this route would probably never have been embarked upon in the first place.

Karl Magnus Johansson,

Lund and Malmö, March 1997.

List of Abbreviations

AP	Alianza Popular (Spain)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCD	Centro Cristiano Democratico (Italy)
CDA	Christen Democratisch Appèl (The Netherlands)
CDI	Christian Democratic International
CDs	Centre des Démocrates Sociaux (France)
	Partido do Centro Democrático Social (Portugal)
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union (Germany)
	Cristiani Democratici Uniti (Italy)
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COCDYC	Conservative and Christian Democratic Youth Community
CSP	Christlich Soziale Partei (Belgium)
	Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community
CSU	Christlich Soziale Union (Germany/Bavaria)
CSV	Christlich-Soziale Volkspartei (Luxembourg)
CVP	Christelijke Volkspartij (Belgium/Flanders)
	Christlich-Demokratische Volkspartei (Switzerland)
DC	Democrazia Cristiana (Italy)
DEMYC	Democrat Youth Community of Europe
DR	Democratic Rally of Cyprus (Cyprus)
EC	European Communities
ECCS	European Union of Christian Democratic and Conservative Students
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDA	European Democratic Alliance
EDG	European Democratic Group
EDS	European Democrat Students
EDU	European Democrat Union
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ELDR	European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
EPF	European Policy Forum

EPP	European People's Party
EPU	European Political Union
EU	European Union
EUCD	European Union of Christian Democrats
EUCDW	European Union of Christian Democratic Workers
EUW	European Union of Women
EUYCD	European Union of Young Christian Democrats
EVP	Europäische Volkspartei Evangelische Volkspartei (Switzerland)
EYCD	European Young Christian Democrats
FD	Force Démocrate (France)
FG	Fine Gael (Ireland)
H	Høyre (Norway)
IDU	International Democrat Union
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IYDU	International Young Democratic Union
Kd	Kristdemokratiska Partiet (Sweden)
KDH	Krestansko–demokratické Hnutie (Slovakia)
KdS	Kristdemokratiska Samhällspartiet (Sweden)
KDU-CSL	Krestanská a Demokratická Unie–Ceskoslovenska Strana Lidová (Czech Republic)
KF	Det Konservative Folkeparti (Denmark)
KOK	Kansallinen Kokoomus (Finland)
KrF	Kristeligt Folkeparti (Denmark)
LKDP	Lietuvos Krikcioniu Demokratu Partija (Lithuania)
M	Moderata Samlingspartiet (Sweden)
MCD	Movement for Christian Democracy (United Kingdom)
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
ND	Nea Demokratia (Greece)
NEI	Nouvelles Equipes Internationales
NGYO	Non-governmental youth organisation
NTB	No Turning Back Group
ODA	Obcanska Demokratická Aliance (Czech Republic)
PCS	Parti Chrétien Social (Luxembourg)
PDP	Partido Democrático Popular (Spain)

PES	Party of European Socialists
PINGO	Party international non-governmental organisation
PN	Partit Nazzjonalista (Malta)
PNT-cd	Partidul National Taranesc, crestind i democrat (Romania)
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Spain/Basque Country)
PP	Partido Popular (Spain)
PPDF	Parti Populaire Démocratique Français (France)
PPE	Parti Populaire Européen
PPI	Partito Popolare Italiano (Italy)
PR	Parti Républicain (France)
PS	Patto Segni (Italy)
PSC	Parti Social Chrétien (Belgium/Wallonia)
PSD	Partido Social Democrata (Portugal)
RI	Républicains Indépendents (France)
RPR	Rassemblement pour la République (France)
SDP	Social Democratic Party (United Kingdom)
SEA	Single European Act
SKD	Slovenski Krscanski Demokrati (Slovenia)
SVP	Südtiroler Volkspartei (Italy/South Tyrol)
TD	Teachta Dála (member of the Dáil Éireann)
UCD	Unión de Centro Democrático (Spain)
UDC	Unió Democràtica de Catalunya (Spain/Catalonia)
UDF	Union pour la Démocratie Française (France)
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party (Northern Ireland)
WEU	Western European Union
YEF	Young European Federalists
ÖVP	Österreichische Volkspartei (Austria)

Research in and about Process

Research Problems of the Study

At a time of internationalisation, political parties move beyond the nation-state. Participating in non-national arenas, they thereby add a transnational dimension to the ways in which political scientists analyse not only political parties themselves, but also democracy and power. Moving between different levels of political activity, political parties are examples of linkage actors.

At the outset, it is stressed that political parties are rooted at the domestic level. It is therefore logical that they traditionally have been studied by party theorists almost exclusively as national or sub-national units. However, the central research problem addressed in this study is how to account for the observation that parties enter into transnational alliances. Thus, I wish to expand the field of party research. The fact that transnational party alliances are built is an indication of the spread of transnational relations. Such phenomena also confront international relations theorists with an analytical challenge.

The political impulses and the degree of institutionalisation of alliance-building among political parties are clearly more extensive at the European level of representation than at the level of the world-wide party Internationals. Within the European Union (EU), alliances have been built both within the “nascent” European parties and within the groupings in the European Parliament (EP).¹ Altogether, these alliances have not received as much attention as they deserve.

Initially, studies related to this research area focused on the party groups in the EP and its forerunner, the Common Assembly.² Then, research-

¹ The term of “nascent” European parties is borrowed from Simon Hix (1996), with whom I first discussed this subject in early 1992, when we both were students at the LSE, and then on a number of occasions. See also Hix and Lord, 1997.

² See Fitzmaurice, 1975; Haas, 1958b; Lindberg, 1963; Oudenhove, 1965.

ers were curious about the foundation of transnational party federations in the mid-1970s in response to the decision that there would be European elections.³ More recently, curiosity about the transnationalisation of party politics has been aroused by the role of party groups within the EP, which has seen its powers extended, and the call for European parties.⁴ This call found its way into Article 138a of the Maastricht Treaty:

Political parties at the European level are important as a factor for integration within the Union. They contribute to forming a European awareness and to expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union.⁵

During the course of my research, there were ongoing processes aiming at restructuring the very character of existing transnational party federations. A much closer co-operation within the Socialist party family was suggested, with tighter links to party headquarters and member parties sometimes singing a solo urged to “singing the song together.”⁶ Socialist parties were called upon to increase their efforts to form a European Socialist Party.⁷ Accordingly, the *Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community* (CSP), founded in 1974, was transformed into the *Party of European Socialists* (PES) in November 1992. Likewise, the *Federation of European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Parties*, founded in 1976, became the *European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party* (ELDR) in December 1993. The *European Greens* took the name *European Federation of Green Parties* in June 1993.

³ See Gresch, 1978; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982; Lodge and Herman, 1982; Niedermayer, 1983; Pridham and Pridham, 1979ab, 1981; Rutschke, 1986; Ward, 1980.

⁴ See Attinà, 1990, 1992; Bardi, 1992, 1996; Bell and Lord, 1997; Gidlund, 1992; Hanley, 1994b; Heidar and Svåsand, 1995; Hix, 1993, 1995, 1996; Hix and Lord, 1997; Jansen, 1995ab, 1996; Jerneck, 1990, 1996; Johansson, 1993, 1996, 1997bc; Katz and Mair, 1993; Kuper, 1995; Ladrech, 1993, 1996; Pedersen, 1996; Raunio, 1996, 1997; Tsatsos, 1994.

⁵ See Treaty on European Union. This Article was very much the result of backstage lobbying by leading Christian Democrats. At the time of writing, there were calls for the 1996 IGC to develop this Article.

⁶ Interview with Axel Hanisch, Brussels, 26 June 1992.

⁷ Interviews with Ton Beumer, Brussels, 26 June 1992; Julian Priestley, Brussels, 26 June 1992.

Socialists, preparing the launch of the PES, were aware of a closer cooperation between Christian Democrat and Conservative parties. Also, they seemed impressed by the Christian Democrats' formidable network and organisation. Of the original transnational party federations in the European Community (EC), the *European People's Party — Federation of Christian Democrat Parties of the European Community* (EPP), founded in 1976, had from the outset been seen as an embryonic European party.⁸ For Christian Democrat parties, there was also the *European Union of Christian Democrats* (EUCD), which acquired its name in 1965 as the successor organisation to the *Nouvelles Equipes Internationales* (NEI), which had held its constituent congress in 1947.

Consisting of Christian Democrat parties united by a strong commitment to European integration, the EPP has been able to present basic programmes and manifestos for the European elections. European Christian Democracy and federalism go hand in hand and the EPP has from the outset "been an avowedly federalist transnational political party...."⁹ However, despite the common ground among its founding members, potentially serious problems lay ahead within the EPP. In the words of Hanley: "What is special about the EPP is that it is dominated by a group of national leaders (party and governmental) who happen to agree about very fundamental aspects of policy. Nevertheless there are some things on which these leaders do have differences (*and which would merit a separate study*)."¹⁰ This study will show that there were differences over such a fundamental question as how to relate to Conservatives. At the same time, it will also show that a consensus aiming at the formation of an alliance, at the European level, was gradually built.

The problem for the Christian Democrats, in terms of credibility and identity, was how to handle the challenge of centre-right parties not

⁸ The full name of the EPP was later changed into *European People's Party — Christian Democrats*.

⁹ Burgess, 1989:5. See also Burgess, 1993; Girvin, 1994:724.

¹⁰ Hanley, 1994b:197. Emphasis added. See also Pridham, 1982. Hanley (1994b:190) points to the EP — alongside election campaigns — as the main forum where the EPP can carry out its task of ideological education, arguing that the "party's day to day strategy here probably deserves a separate detailed study...." In my article on party group dynamics in the EP the EPP Group provides the major case of the role of party groups there. See Johansson, 1997b.

sharing a tradition of Christian Democracy but interested in joining them. There were the Conservative parties within the anti-Socialist alliance of the *European Democrat Union* (EDU), founded in 1978 with a few Christian Democrat parties, notably the German CDU/CSU and Austrian ÖVP, as members along with the British and Nordic Conservatives as well as the French neo-Gaullists. The British and Danish Conservatives sat together in a joint party group in the EP.

Most countries joining the EC/EU since 1973 have party systems in which the dominant political party on the right-of-centre is Conservative, whereas Christian Democrats either have been weaker or non-existent. In fact, Christian Democrats and Conservatives rarely meet head-on within the same national party system. Where secular Conservatism is strong, Christian Democracy tends to be weak or non-existent (in the Nordic countries, Greece, Spain and the United Kingdom).¹¹ Where Christian Democracy is strong, secular Conservatism tends to be weak or non-existent (in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). As to national party systems in Europe overall, it has even been suggested that whether the major party of the right-of-centre is a Christian Democrat or a secular Conservative party is “the single most important factor separating one group of countries from another....”¹²

Given this division between the party families of European Conservatism and Christian Democracy, they have lost ground vis-à-vis Socialism at the European level, challenging them to search for some kind of formal alliance. This challenge has confronted Conservatives and Christian Democrats with a severe conflict between strategic and ideological goals. This conflict, to which I shall return throughout the study, became acute following the request by the British Tories, after the June 1989 European elections, to become allied members of the *Group of the European People's Party*.¹³

¹¹ Gallagher *et al*, 1995:195.

¹² Gallagher *et al*, 1995:205.

¹³ Regarding the British Conservative Party, the term “Tory” will be used interchangeably with “Conservative”. The words Conservative and Conservatism will always be referred to with a capital “C”. Parties sharing this ideology will generally be referred to as Conservative even though one could argue that they have become increasingly Liberal, or neo-Liberal. Indeed, this was one of the arguments principled Christian Democrats put forward for not interacting closer with Conservative parties, often labelling them Liberal-Conservative.

Having initially deferred the application, the EPP Conference of Party Leaders and Heads of Government decided, after much internal soul-searching, that a formal alliance could be entered into. It was, in effect, officially implemented on 1 May 1992, almost three years after it had been requested. Having associated the decision with a review, the alliance was renewed after the 1994 European elections.

It is this hard-won alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats which provides the case selected for analysis. Injecting a temporal dimension to the analysis of an ongoing process of transnational alliance-building among political parties, one can differentiate between two consecutive phases, namely *formation* and *evolution*. In this study, the formative phase is the one from the time of the application, in June 1989, up to the implementation of the alliance, in May 1992, whereas the evolutionary phase is the one thereafter.

Whereas all the traditional Christian Democrat member parties of the EPP will come to the fore in the analysis, the focus in the Conservative camp is upon the British Conservatives. The rather brief references to the Danish Conservatives are there primarily to clarify their position and to highlight some of the dilemmas involved in transnational alliance-building among political parties. This priority is logical insofar as the Danes had no real alternative since the British Conservatives were so keen on joining the Christian Democrats, and also insofar as it was the application from the Tories which was the most contentious for Christian Democrats. Once European Christian Democracy had opened up for the British Conservatives, there was every prospect that the door would be kept open for other related centre-right parties as well. Against this background, the alliance was from the very beginning seen as having significant implications not only for the party-political landscape in the EP, but eventually also for West European party systems as such.

Research Strategy of the Study

Aims and Research Question

The overall aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding and the growth of knowledge of transnational alliance-building among political parties. I shall attempt to fulfil this aim through the insights gained by an in-depth analysis of the alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats. Thus, the intention is that the specificity of this alliance shall provide answers helping us to understand the generality of the principal research problem. The study seeks to combine empirical and theoretical aims.

The empirical aim is to increase the knowledge of European Conservatism and Christian Democracy. These party families have not attracted as much academic work as have Socialist parties.¹⁴ A contribution of the study is therefore to redress this balance by providing knowledge with regard to the essence of these ideologies, and the differences between them.

The theoretical aim is to develop tools which can help us to analyse and understand the phenomenon of transnational alliance-building among political parties, reinforcing certain theoretical arguments and challenging others. Aiming at theory development, problem-oriented theories, concerned with 'real-life' phenomena, are utilised for analytical purposes. Purporting to analyse a specific type of transnational alliance, one built by political parties, I associate myself with *transnationalist* and *neofunc-*

¹⁴ Books on Christian Democrat parties are Arbøl (1984, 1992), Becker and Morsey (1988), Dreyfus (1988), Durand (1995), Fogarty (1957), Hanley (1994a), Irving (1973, 1979), Jansen (1996), Kleinmann (1993), Leonardi and Wertman (1989), Pridham (1977), Seiler (1978/1996), Whyte (1981) and Zuckerman (1979). See also the articles by Hartmann (1978) and Irving (1976). Pridham (1980) is a useful bibliographical survey of historical works on Christian Democracy and Christian Democrat parties. For studies on Conservative parties alongside Christian Democrat parties, see the volumes edited by Girvin (1988), Horner (1981), Layton-Henry (1982), Morgan and Silvestri (1982) and Veen (1983). See also von Beyme (1985) and Stammen (1980). The Liberal party family, touched upon in this work, is studied in Kirchner (1988).

tionalist approaches to the study of international relations and European integration. Since parties are rooted at the domestic level, I also concern myself with *domestic politics* approaches.

On the basis of these aims, and the focus on the alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European parliamentary arena, the operative research question guiding the analysis throughout is the following:

What factors promote, respectively impede, the formation and evolution of a transnational party alliance such as this?

By attempting to answer this question, I seek to specify the process mechanisms which can explain *how* and *why* transnational party alliances are built.

I will differentiate between three categories of process mechanisms by the causal roles they play, namely *opportunities*, *motives* and *constraints*, and address factors under each category. These concepts are close to the processes at work and will structure the analysis in this order. This is because I first of all want to illuminate the set of opportunities and then the motives that led decision-makers to avail themselves of these opportunities. Having analysed the enabling factors, promoting the processes, I will then enter into the constraining factors, impeding these processes. The arguments in favour of an alliance will thereby be identified immediately prior to those against.

With political parties rooted at the domestic level of politics, I became aware that the relevant constraints must be traced at that level. It follows that the concept of constraints will be associated with the domestic politics approaches. Still, however, it is important to emphasise that domestic structures may not only provide constraining factors, but also enabling factors.¹⁵ Therefore, domestic politics will also enter into the analysis of opportunities and motives. However, I also experienced at an early stage that some of the most important factors promoting the processes could be

¹⁵ Although there is a strong voluntaristic strand injected and actors are in the foreground of this study, a crucial undertaking remains to identify and analyse how domestic structures constrain actor autonomy. For a learned actor/structure-discussion, see Lundquist, 1987. See also Carlsnaes, 1992, 1994.

identified at the European level of politics. Focusing on this level, opportunities and motives will be analysed through the theoretical approaches of neofunctionalism and transnationalism.

Case Study Analysis

Analysing the hard-won alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European parliamentary arena is a case study of transnational alliance-building among political parties. Thus, the units of analysis are the political party and the transnational alliance.

The qualitative case study relies heavily on within-case analysis to specify the mechanisms that link the initial research questions and theoretical perspectives to the empirical findings and conclusions of the study. The link will be provided through the concepts of *opportunities*, *motives* and *constraints*. A fundamental concern of the research is to search for determinant factors within each and every one of these broad conceptual categories. Developing a toolbox of process mechanisms, I would like to argue that the strength of the concept of the mechanism itself is its concern with the number of links, or connections, between different phenomena and factors and thus with establishing causal patterns.¹⁶

Specifying process mechanisms, and bringing them together, the research undertaken is that of process-tracing. This is a method for identifying, or discovering, intervening cause-effect links in the search for a causal pattern. In the words of George and McKeown:

The process-tracing approach attempts to uncover what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behavior that then occurs; the effect of various institutional arrangements on attention, processing, and behavior....¹⁷

Assembling “bits and pieces of evidence into a pattern” the interest of

¹⁶ Cf Nyhamar, 1996.

¹⁷ McKeown, 1985:35. See also George, 1979:113.

the case study researcher is “not in a single bit of behavior but, rather, in a stream of behavior through time - - - Any explanation of the processes at work in the case thus not only must explain the final outcome, but also must account for this stream of behaviour.”¹⁸

Since the growth of the web orients the search for additional bits and pieces, in the terminology of process-tracing, the alert case-study researcher must, however, invest much energy in assembling such bits. However, the focus should be on the overall stream and how the mechanisms work together and result in the final outcome. Although the presentation of the case does not have to follow a chronological narrative there is a chronological dynamic in process-tracing insofar as actions and decisions are taken in response to different sorts of stimuli, or catalysts. In this respect, process-tracing can be seen as an analytical within-case form of historical explanation. Regarding the formation of the specific transnational party alliance studied here, I deemed it necessary to explore its historical and political background to be able to understand it properly.

The study combines a discovery or inductive approach with a more deductive approach to data collection and analysis.¹⁹ In other words, the theoretical foundations are used as a heuristic device to enhance the understanding of the empirical problems at hand, while the strategy at the same time consists of developing theory through inductive research procedures.

By studying the complex world out there — my understanding of research — the student of politics is in a position to build and develop theory based on observations of political phenomena as they are in ‘real’ life and not solely in accordance with some established, but perhaps outdated, presumptions. When tracing processes, it is essential for the researchers themselves to collect data by getting close enough to the situations being studied and to the actors involved to be able to understand the depth and details of what is going on.²⁰ Instead of satisfying myself with mere illustrations, I will search for empirical *evidence*.

The heavy reliance on within-case analysis differentiates the qualitative

¹⁸ George and McKeown, 1985:36.

¹⁹ Cf Patton, 1980:46.

²⁰ Cf Patton, 1980:36.

case-study method from statistical analysis.²¹ Quantitative techniques have not been applied in this study. Statistical measurement of party group cohesion, and quantitative content analyses of resolutions adopted by party leaders' summits, have their inherent weaknesses. In the EP, decisions are far from always taken by a roll-call vote and are also the result of negotiations within and between the party groups.²² And resolutions revealed in public only reflect where agreement has been reached and tend to be diluted on the basis of the lowest common denominator, while more controversial matters are swept under the carpet temporarily or for good. Within the EPP, for instance, it is often reported that decisions have been reached unanimously even when the controversies behind the decisions have not been completely solved.

There are hidden agendas and social exchange in political processes that only can be traced through qualitative methods. As to the alliance-building processes between Conservatives and Christian Democrats, it is only by taking into account the interpersonal contacts and elite exchanges through the party links that a full picture of the patterns of interaction between them emerges.²³

In short, I would like to point out "that *qualitative* and *unscientific* are hardly synonymous."²⁴ I also would like to argue that a single case study can contribute to genuine understanding and to scientific generalisation. Although this study primarily deals with one specific transnational party alliance, I claim that the search for *opportunities*, *motives* and *constraints* as well as the very depth of the analysis provide a basis for generalisation about process mechanisms related to transnational alliance-building among political parties. Still, however, the very complexity of the determinant factors traced within the case study, makes it difficult to specify and rank

²¹ Cf George and McKeown, 1985:23.

²² Cf Johansson, 1997b. Studying the ECSC Common Assembly, already Haas (1958b: 415, n 37) pointed out that the "scarcity of roll-call votes precludes the use of voting statistics as an index of party cohesion. The degree of absenteeism and the silence of many members during debate makes the use of content analysis hazardous as a quantitative technique of gauging cohesion."

²³ Cf Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:215-216.

²⁴ George and McKeown, 1985:54.

the relative importance of the process mechanisms.²⁵ This is a problem to which I will return in the concluding chapter.

Another methodological problem concerns the analysis of motives. Studying party behaviour by identifying motives, I associate myself with the traditionally rationalist orientation of party research. I look upon parties as strategic collective actors and upon their leaders as strategic individual actors, who think in terms of ends-means and make choices within constraints. In this, I include sub-groups within political parties.

For the analysis itself, this orientation implies that I seek to reconstruct intentions and calculations, or considerations. Motives can be traced by drawing inferences from the intentions as stated by the actors themselves or from their actions.²⁶ Both of these alternative methods have been used in the present study.

It is a general methodological problem, when tracing motives to explain party strategies, that actor motives seldom are observable in the empirical material.²⁷ There is also the problem of showing the causal nexus between actions and the consciousness, or considerations, of the actors themselves.²⁸ Given these methodological problems, one should preferably collect the material by getting close to the situations being studied and to the actors involved, to be able to identify the actions and their underlying motives.²⁹ In this way, one could say that the researcher, adopting an empathetic attitude, looks inside the actors for their operative motives.³⁰ Trying to trace actor motives and essentially to overcome the methodological problems in question, I have made an effort myself to be close both to the situations and to the key individual actors involved.

By limiting the study to the alliance between the party families of European Christian Democracy and Conservatism, I will be able to explore the complex dynamics determining such alliances and to avoid the risk

²⁵ Cf Eckstein, 1975:129-130.

²⁶ See Hadenius, 1981:15.

²⁷ Cf Karlsson, 1995:26.

²⁸ Cf Vedung, 1982:45-47.

²⁹ In other words, I have tried to reach beyond the textual plane by analysing the informational plane, that is, the information upon which the textual material is based. Cf Lundquist, 1982:42-48.

³⁰ Cf Vedung, 1982:45.

of oversimplification and superficiality. Beyond the horizontal links, I will take into account the vertical dimension of transnational alliance-building among political parties, that is, the interlinkage between the domestic and European arenas of party politics.

The strength of the application of qualitative methods to case study research, is that they allow for an intimacy with the case under scrutiny.³¹ This enables the researcher to identify hidden agendas, coded language, signals and symbolic behaviour. Specific words and concepts have different connotations and meanings in various contexts, resulting in communication failures across countries.³² The word Conservative is an example to be raised in this study.

Inevitably, however, case study research involving process-tracing requires a great deal of detailed information. To establish the validity of case studies, multiple sources of evidence should be used.³³ I have tried to document events and arguments as extensively as possible. The following two sections will present the different sources, of which interviews provide the main source.

Interviewing and Direct Observation

Tracing and reconstructing a process, the primary data gathered for this work are based on interviews. The interviewees are present or retired MEPs, MPs, party leaders and Secretary-Generals, officials working in the secretariats of the EPP Group and the EPP Party as well as in national party headquarters and party foundations, officials in the Commission and the EP and members of delegations to EPP Congresses.³⁴ Almost one hundred interviews were conducted between May 1992 and January 1997.

³¹ McCracken, 1988:17, 32; Patton, 1980:47; Stenelo, 1984:29; Uhlin, 1995:53; Yin, 1984.

³² Cf Jönsson, 1990a.

³³ Cf McCracken, 1988:27; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984:99; Yin, 1984:91.

³⁴ Similar sources of information were used in previous works, such as Gresch, 1978; Lodge and Herman, 1982; Niedermayer, 1983; Pridham and Pridham, 1981. However, only the Pridhams have applied interviewing to the same extent.

Mainly in the initial phase of the research process, the interviews had an explorative function, serving to generate ideas and impulses relating to the events which could be of particular interest for analysis.³⁵ In this way, the interviews offered guidance for further research. Step by step, the interview method of “snowballing” means “getting to know some informants and having them introduce you to others.”³⁶ Having located potential key informants, access was gained to a wider community of people. In the series of interviews, the questions changed over time and each interview built upon the other. In this stage of the research process, the interviews were of an open-ended nature.³⁷

With research proceeding, the interviews became increasingly focused as the intention was to impose “cross-checks” to corroborate certain facts or statements made by other interviewees or information established elsewhere, including various documents, the media or even hearsay.³⁸ This kind of probing interview should be conducted first when the researcher has established a certain degree of knowledge of the research topic, preferably maintaining a low profile about the insights made so far.³⁹ When a sufficient number of more focused interviews have been conducted, the intention is that the “snowballing” and “cross-checks” should result in an ever clearer picture of the jig-saw puzzle.

The drawbacks with this strategy of interviewing are that it is immensely time-consuming, that all respondents may have their own reasons for influencing the interviewer in one direction or the other and, thus, that there are the inevitable problems of biased information and selecting interviewees. Would another selection have given other results? And, how many interviews are really necessary?

Each study is unique and there can be no general recommendations as to the number of interviews. I myself have conducted as many interviews as I considered necessary to be able to answer the question guiding the

³⁵ Cf Jerneck, 1983:9; McCracken, 1988:25; Sannerstedt, 1992:18; Stenelo, 1984:31.

³⁶ Taylor and Bogdan, 1984:83-84. This strategy is a way of establishing or identifying a personal network and is similar to the one used in network analysis or studies on implementation of political decisions.

³⁷ Cf McCracken, 1988:25; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984:77; Yin, 1984:83.

³⁸ Cf Lundquist, 1993:111; Stenelo, 1984:31; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984:99; Yin, 1984:83.

³⁹ Cf McCracken, 1988:34, 40; Yin, 1984:83.

research in this particular study. It is true that some of the top politicians involved in the processes studied have not been interviewed.⁴⁰ Perhaps more importantly, however, I have interviewed people immediately below the top level, such as International Secretaries. Also, I have, in fact, had the opportunity to meet with living witnesses to the deliberations within the European Council and the EPP Conference of Party Leaders and Heads of Government, including several leading party figures and among them a few former Ministers and even Prime Ministers such as John Bruton, Garret FitzGerald, Jacques Santer and Leo Tindemans (see the list of interviews).

One could argue that there should be a closeness in time between the events studied and the interviews, so that the respondents have a fresh memory of the events. On the other hand, they may come to see the events from different angles and with clarity first when some time has passed since they originally took place. Therefore, closeness is no definite requirement implying that the researcher should refrain from contacting people involved in events taking place some time, perhaps decades, ago. In this study, some interviews have actually been conducted with persons involved in the building of transnational party alliances twenty years earlier or more. Cross-checking their answers with each other as well as with documents from the periods in question and other sources, including media reporting and previous academic works, it is stressed that those persons remembered very much indeed.

Still, it must be said that the validity was enhanced by the fact that most of the interviews were conducted very close to the main events studied, with the first series of interviews taking place shortly after the implementation of the alliance in May 1992. In this initial phase of the research process, the interviews were conducted together with a colleague.⁴¹ This gave us the possibility to cross-examine each other shortly after the interviews, which is the great advantage of being more than

⁴⁰ As for Wilfried Martens and Margaret Thatcher, both have twice sent me disappointing responses to my requests for interviews. The informants representing the British Conservative Party include one of its Vice-Chairmen, from 1990, and people working with Thatcher in the 1970s.

⁴¹ Associate Professor Magnus Jerneck at the Department of Political Science, Lund University.

one interviewer. On the other hand, a respondent may feel uncomfortable by facing more than one questioner.⁴²

Conducting most interviews on my own, I was always keen to go through the interview notes shortly after they had first been taken. Otherwise, the obvious risk is that some information may slip the mind. Not having used a tape-recorder, there could not be any longer quotations from the interviews but occasionally single words or parts of sentences are quoted. As these quotations were carefully marked in the very interview situations there is no doubt whatsoever that they correspond exactly to what was said by the respondents.

Some persons were interviewed on different occasions because there was a need for clarification from the first interview and for additional cross-check information from this very source. Sometimes there was a supposed value in having the reactions to preliminary results or hypotheses generated so far.⁴³ Since some meetings with informants have been more or less informal and coincidental they are not listed as interviews, but will be referred to in the footnotes as informal conversations.

It is often stressed that the anonymity of the respondents should be secured.⁴⁴ Of course, it should whenever there has been agreement about this between the interviewer and the interviewee, but anonymity cannot be taken as a general rule in interviewing. For the sake of documentation and context, one could instead argue that it is most important for readers and other researchers, undertaking cumulative research, to know who said what, when and where. When searching for patterns of conflict and co-operation between political parties, it is a value in itself to document attitudes of individual representatives of the parties concerned. As is often the case in studies stressing anonymity, it would be easy for those involved and others to find out about the identities if they really wanted to. After all, some of those involved took on a high profile and their attitudes were widely known. Indeed, some respondents actually commented that since their attitudes were so manifest, I should feel free to refer to them by name.

⁴² Cf Trost, 1993:23-24.

⁴³ Cf Patton, 1980:198-199; Stenelo, 1984:31.

⁴⁴ See Dexter, 1970; Sannerstedt, 1992:19; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984:87.

In this study, relying on extensive and intensive interviewing, I have as a rule explained my research interests and asked if I could refer to the interviewees. Only two of them said they did not want to be referred to in the text, but that their names could be listed. It was agreed with a few that they should read and comment on the text before publication. For the researcher, this is not all positive because there may be pressure to make reinterpretations or to leave out some useful results also established elsewhere, the source of which was kept secret for ethical reasons.

Having legitimate interests in being able to give evidence of the results of the analysis, it remains important to be aware of and aim at high ethical standards. Confidentiality has naturally been maintained whenever information was given “off the record.” On such occasions, and also where I have feared that citations might have caused personal problems for the informants, I will make references to private information. This fear was reason enough to let key informants take a look at the text in part or in its entirety before publication.

Had they been aware of the developing controversy of the alliance, some informants had perhaps not been as open as they once were. In retrospect, there is also a feeling that some respondents were more open than they would have been had they not drawn premature conclusions about my political sympathies. Over the years, I have experienced being associated with a party or an ideology only because I have chosen them as my topic of research.

In addition to interviewing key persons, I have been a direct observer at party conferences, EPP Congresses and meetings of the EPP Group. This presence gave me an opportunity to absorb the atmosphere and the patterns of interaction by coming close to the actors involved.

Archival Data and Other Sources

Additional sources of information, such as minutes, news releases and internal documents produced by the EPP and the Conservative and Christian Democrat groupings in the EP, manifestos and programmes, have been used for the sake of documentation. Some of the internal documents had been kept strictly confidential and limited to a short distribution list, including party leaders and heads of government. Private

correspondence is another kind of material used in the study, along with autobiographies, articles, speeches and letters to the editors of newspapers from politicians, officials or persons writing in a personal capacity. Not least, access to private correspondence is most useful for the analysis of motives.⁴⁵

Maintaining contact with key informants, permission to use and refer to confidential information and private correspondence found in archives or elsewhere, was requested and then given. In one case this was not given unconditionally in the beginning. On another occasion the condition was that I must be able to cross-check the information, so that it could not be traced to one single informant. This implied an intensive search for the same information, a search which ended successfully thanks to the kindness of informants and some good fortune. Although I have obtained permission to cite from these sources, they will generally be referred to as confidential in the footnotes, with the exception of some private correspondence which I came across in party archives and which I was given permission to refer to by them granting me access to the archives in the first place.

The newsletter of *Agence Europe* has proved an invaluable and reliable source of information. Media reporting and commentaries are frequently consulted, especially when tracing constraints in the British context.⁴⁶

Having cross-checked the multiple sources of evidence, there were good reasons to rely on information gathered from the different sources. However, when I had established a sufficient knowledge about the case I was able to detect some misunderstandings in media reports about the nature of the practical arrangements within the EPP Group and the relationship between the EPP and the British Conservative Party. Such misunderstandings could also be detected in secondary sources.

The study also builds on secondary sources from the late 1970s or early 1980s in particular.⁴⁷ Although in its infancy, it is noteworthy that there

⁴⁵ Cf Lundquist, 1993:111.

⁴⁶ TV as well as press reports. As to the newspapers referred to, they may be of the international editions rather than the British.

⁴⁷ See the sources introduced in note three above.

were no academic works available on the alliance as of 1992.⁴⁸ Since then, the subject has been referred to in some academic works in addition to a great deal of media attention.⁴⁹

Outline of the Study

Chapter Two introduces the theoretical approaches and establishes a *conceptual framework*. The foundations of *transnationalism* and *neofunctionalism* will be reintroduced and synthesised with each other and with *domestic politics* approaches to the study of international co-operation and integration.

Chapter Three, serving as the empirical basis for the subsequent analysis, explores the processes of alliance-building up to and beyond the implementation of the formal alliance in May 1992. Most attention will be paid to the phase of *formation* from June 1989, but a section will also be devoted to the phase of *evolution*. The chapter will begin with a reconstruction of the *historical and political background* to the request for an alliance.

Chapter Four traces and analyses the *opportunities* which were seized in order to form an alliance. A set of *catalysts* was used by the alliance promoters to overcome divisions and arrive at decisions. I make a distinction between catalysts *internal* to the EC/EU system, including supranational bodies as well as member states, and catalysts *external* to it.

Chapter Five traces and analyses the *motives* for an alliance. Separating

⁴⁸ With the exception of an undergraduate essay by Lea (1992). Professor Michael Fogarty, the eminent student of Christian Democracy, discussed the implications of the alliance in a lecture before the EPP Group in London on 9 September 1992. See Fogarty, 1992.

⁴⁹ An article on the EPP has been published by Hanley (1994b), whereas the alliance is touched upon in separate publications by Andersson and Lindahl (1994), Bogdanor (1996), Burgess (1993), Davies (1995), Duff (1994), Durand (1995), Girvin (1994), Hix (1996), Hix and Lord (1997), Ladrech (1996), Middlemas (1995), Morgan (1996), Raunio (1996) and Westlake (1994ab). It is also mentioned in the indispensable handbook *The European Parliament* by Corbett *et al* (1995). I have also benefited from a manuscript on the history of the EPP prepared for publication by former EPP Secretary-General Thomas Jansen (1996).

motives from each other, a differentiation will be made between motives either related to the building of *transnational channels for access and influence* or to the *maximisation of parliamentary influence* in the EP itself.

Chapter Six traces and analyses *constraints* on the building of an alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European parliamentary arena. Identifying such constraints, *ideological dimensions* and *arena shifts* between European and domestic arenas of party politics will enter into the analysis.

Chapter Seven sums up the main empirical results and discusses *theoretical implications* from the case study. Returning to the central concepts introduced in the two introductory chapters, and then adopted in the analysis, the priority is to *specify the process mechanisms* with regard to the phenomenon of transnational alliance-building among political parties.

CHAPTER TWO

Transnational Party Alliances in Theory

This chapter introduces the theoretical approaches and establishes a conceptual framework for the subsequent analysis. Since this is a study of a transnational party alliance, in which the transnational alliance and the political party are the units of analysis, I rely on theoretical perspectives which can help us identify the factors *promoting*, respectively *impeding*, the formation and evolution of such alliances.

I shall build on some central insights of *transnationalism*, *neofunctionalism* and *domestic politics* approaches. Utilising these theoretical perspectives is an attempt to digress from the reductionist analyses of international cooperation and European integration that focus either on the international, or European, level of activity, or on the nation-states as unitary actors. Such foci tend to gloss over the relational aspects of political processes within nation-states and the linkages between different levels of activity, not least linkages provided by actors other than states.

An analysis of processes by which national actors become transnational, and transnational actors penetrate domestic societies by building alliances, could bring two sub-fields of political science closer together, namely International Relations (IR) and Comparative Politics.¹ The artificial distinction between them is an impediment to an understanding of the nature of both transnationalisation and integration. In short, the study of transnational party alliances invites theorists and analysts to bridge boundaries between the branches of political science.²

¹ Cf Halliday, 1990:516; Putnam, 1988; Rosenau, 1969; Scheingold, 1970:1001; Sundelius, 1990:265.

² Alongside the idiosyncrasies of US politics, the boundaries between IR and Comparative Politics at American universities seem a likely explanation for the “scant attention” the transnationalisation of political parties has received “among scholars molded in the rather unique US political milieu.” Jönsson, 1993:154. See also Goldman, 1983:1; Kaiser, 1969:83; Nye and Keohane, 1971:347.

Bringing Transnationalism Back in

Returning to the early transnationalists, Risse-Kappen has concluded that their subject “withered away, while state-centered approaches to international relations carried the day. Pronouncing the topic of transnational relations dead, we argue, has been premature.”³ One could argue that the poor understanding of *transnationalism* is caused by the unfortunate separation of IR from other political science sub-fields.

Whereas there is a heavy stress on state actors in most of IR theory, the role of transnational and sub-national actors has often been neglected. Particularly American scholarship has by and large adhered to “state-as-actor” approaches.⁴ With neorealism on the increase, followed the revival of the state in IR theory and the relative decline of transnationalism.⁵

Although the theoretical foundations of state-centrism can be traced back to the so-called realists, some of them notably took up transnationalism. Aron spoke in terms of “transnational society” and Wolfers questioned the “states-as-the-sole-actor approach.”⁶ By doing so, Wolfers said that “it may prove useful to analyze the approach and behavior of certain ‘subnational’ actors such as the business community, the trade union leaders, the *Christian Democrats*, or the American *political parties*. Only if it becomes possible to understand and predict typical kinds of nonconformist behavior can theory hope to approach reality.”⁷ Accordingly, he questioned the established billiard ball model:

If the states of today are not monolithic blocs — and none but the totalitarian states are — groups, *parties*, factions, and all sorts of other politically organized groups within such states can take a hand in matters transcending national boundaries. They may do so directly, in

³ Risse-Kappen, 1995:xi.

⁴ Jönsson, 1993:154. Cf Mayer, 1992; Putnam, 1988.

⁵ Cf Nye, 1988:237; Rochester, 1986:797; Smith, 1995:22.

⁶ Aron, 1962/1984:113-119; Wolfers, 1962/1988. For a discussion of Aron’s conception of transnational society, see also Kaiser, 1969:92-95; Merle, 1986:18-23, 98-100; Meyers, 1993. The ways in which realists discuss actors attest to the heterogeneity of realist academic works.

⁷ Wolfers, 1962/1988:18. Emphases added.

negotiating and dealing with similar groups abroad or even with the governments of other states, or they may exert their influence as domestic pressure groups so effectively that foreign statesmen would be ill-advised to ignore them - - - Then, again, there are deviations from the complete impermeability of the nation-states envisaged in the billiard ball model - - - One need only think of the international Communist movement, of international Socialist groups, or of international cartels which have, at times, been able to perform as *transnational actors*.⁸

In contrast to the realist image of states as billiard balls, hard-edged entities that collide with one another without ever interpenetrating, the pluralist image invokes the cobweb metaphor.⁹ This portrays states as being linked together by fine-meshed nets of interdependencies and governments as likely to be pushed and pulled in different directions by influences that criss-cross national boundaries. Transnationalism and interdependence are key concepts within the pluralist image.¹⁰

The interdependence theory has questioned exclusively state-centric approaches and established a conceptual framework for analysing the role of non-governmental actors in IR. One important theoretical argument of the interdependence theory is that relations among nations are established through *multiple channels* and not exclusively through official state-to-state diplomacy.¹¹

The early transnationalists include Keohane and Nye, the interdependence theorists *par excellence*. Building on Kaiser's seminal work on

⁸ Wolfers, 1962/1988:21. Emphases added. See also Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1981:108. The historical family of Communist parties under the central authority of the Comintern is a common illustration of transnational relations. See Allen, 1989:61, 72; Bull, 1977:281; Duverger, 1951/1978:31, 150-151; Kaiser, 1969:107; Kuper, 1995:20; Neumann, 1956: 265-270; Seidelmann, 1993:379-380. Russett and Starr (1981/1996:68) point to political parties as examples of INGOs.

⁹ See John Burton in Viotti and Kauppi, 1987/1993:379-384; Jönsson, 1990b; Little, 1996:67; Meyers, 1993:427; Zalewski and Enloe, 1995:296. The cobweb metaphor and the transnationalist perspective are often applied by students of Nordic co-operation. See Johansson, 1997a.

¹⁰ Hollis and Smith, 1990:32-36; Little, 1996; Russett and Starr, 1981/1996:388-393; Viotti and Kauppi, 1987/1993:Chapter 3; Zalewski and Enloe, 1995:296.

¹¹ Keohane and Nye, 1975, 1977.

transnational politics, and pointing to Wolfers as a scholar recognising “transnational actors”, Keohane and Nye searched for a definition of transnational interactions, differentiating between “interstate” interactions and conventional diplomatic activity on the one hand and other interactions involving “nongovernmental actors” — individuals and organisations — on the other.¹² By “transnational interactions” they meant “the movement of tangible or intangible items across state boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a government or an intergovernmental organization.”¹³

Another representative example of pluralist views of the changing dynamics of world politics is Rosenau, who has developed theories of interdependence and transnationalism by asking how transnational links across national borders make for *penetrated* societies.¹⁴ He defines a penetrative process as one occurring “when members of one polity serve as participants in the political processes of another. That is, they share with those in the penetrated polity the authority to allocate its values.”¹⁵ Rosenau has defined transnationalisation as follows:

More specifically, by the transnationalization of world affairs I mean the processes whereby international relations conducted by governments have been supplemented by relations among private individuals, groups, and societies that can and do have important consequences for the course of events.¹⁶

By stressing the complexity and multiplicity of actors in world politics, Rosenau includes political parties as units “which engage in activities that span national boundaries and contribute to the formation or maintenance of issues on the global agenda.”¹⁷ He points to “workers of

¹² Nye and Keohane, 1971:332. Cf Kaiser, 1969.

¹³ Nye and Keohane, 1971:332. See also Keohane and Nye, 1975, 1977:24–25; Montville, 1991; Risse-Kappen, 1995.

¹⁴ See Rosenau, 1969, 1976, 1980, 1990. For a discussion of the penetrated system, see also Kaiser, 1969:90.

¹⁵ Rosenau, 1969:46.

¹⁶ Rosenau, 1980:1.

¹⁷ Rosenau, 1980:84.

certain transnational political parties” as examples of actors establishing linkages in “penetrative processes...”¹⁸ Unlike transnationalism, a weakness of the realist image is that it tends not to capture situations where the supposedly hard shell of states is actually penetrated.

Although the subject of transnationalists withered away as state-centered approaches carried the day, as was pointed out by Risse-Kappen above, it is noteworthy that Waltz, the leading neorealist, at least admits that it “is important to consider the nature of transnational movements, the extent of their penetration, and the conditions that make it harder or easier for states to control them.”¹⁹

Similarly, Bull recognised the existence of transnational organisations in world politics, noting that they serve “to establish links between different national societies, or sections of these societies.”²⁰ He also pointed to different ways in which political groups within states, such as political parties, may affect world politics other than the influence they may have on their own state’s foreign policy:

First, they may enter into relations...with political groups in other states; business enterprises, trade unions, *political parties*, professional associations, churches, all have their being partly within the transnational nexus that bypasses the level of state-to-state relations. Second, they may enter into relations with foreign states....Third, they may enter into direct relations with an international organization....²¹

However, both Bull and Waltz, working within the realist image, stressed the pertinence of national sovereignty and the states system.²²

Here, it must be emphasised that the study of transnational relations as such does not imply that states and national governments are done away with as central actors in IR.²³ Rather, the aim is to offer a clearer

¹⁸ Rosenau, 1969:46. See also Deutsch *et al*, 1957:150-151.

¹⁹ Waltz, 1979:95. See also Clarke, 1992:3-4; Walt, 1987:46-48.

²⁰ Bull, 1977:270.

²¹ Bull, 1977:277. Emphasis added.

²² Bull, 1977:150, 275; Waltz, 1979:95. See also Allen, 1989:71-72; Clarke, 1992:3-4; Huntington, 1973:368.

²³ Cf Risse-Kappen, 1995:15; Rosenau, 1980:3.

picture of the complexity of IR by elucidating the ongoing activities of transnational actors alongside state actors, as well as the inter-relationship between them.

Refining transnationalism, one could argue that this approach has been somewhat vague regarding the factors which drive non-state actors to build transnational channels in the first place. Clarke claims that in the past transnational relationists have offered insufficient explanation of the transnational units studied and the way in which they act.²⁴ This serves as a lesson for present and future students of such phenomena.

But while recognising that states remain central actors in world politics, why should their primacy over other actors be taken for granted? Even if we accept the assumption that states remain the principal actors in world politics, research catching up with 'reality' must place more emphasis on non-state actors and transnational interactions than is the case in realist or neorealist analysis.²⁵

Still, however, the formation and evolution of transnational alliances can hardly be understood without a reliance on the concepts of power and interest in the realist image. Discussing the nature of alliances among nation-states, Morgenthau, the greatest exponent of this image, suggests that "[a] purely ideological alliance, unrelated to material interests, cannot but be stillborn; it is unable to determine policies or guide actions and misleads by presenting the appearance of political solidarity where there is none."²⁶ Or, in the words of Walt, "ideological alliances will be rather fragile if they are subjected to serious conflicts of interest among the members."²⁷

Alongside a tendency to idealise the solidarity within transnational movements, transnationalists sometimes tend to write as though they thought that their subject is a new or recent development. This is certainly not the case.²⁸ In addition to political parties, one could point

²⁴ Clarke, 1992:4.

²⁵ Cf Clarke, 1985; de Senarclens, 1992:161-162; Halliday, 1990:507; Keohane, 1986:193; Sundelius, 1990.

²⁶ Morgenthau, 1948/1993:200.

²⁷ Walt, 1987:215.

²⁸ Cf Bull, 1977:278; Clarke, 1985:149-150; Halliday, 1992:444-445; Hollis and Smith, 1990:35; Huntington, 1973:334; Northedge, 1976:23; Smith, 1995:22; Strange, 1976:334.

to the Catholic Church and business groups as examples of long-standing transnational movements. Actors such as these could influence not only the conduct or norms of partners within the respective movements, but those of states as well.

The building of transnational coalitions, or alliances, among similar groups in different countries, constitutes one type of transnational lobbying strategy.²⁹ In one way or the other, such coalitions aim at affecting policy, thus power and influence are key elements. Specifically, one strategy of influence is to “helping sympathetic political parties win elections.”³⁰ Insofar as political parties are involved in policy-making processes, they have a unique access to the corridors of power and should therefore be distinguished from other types of transnational actors.

Entering a transnational alliance, political parties are likely to be driven by strategic motives in the non-national arenas of politics, just as they are as strategic actors in the domestic arenas.³¹ Reasoning by analogy, the basic goal for political parties entering a transnational parliamentary arena is likely to remain the *maximisation of parliamentary influence* and the influence objects to remain the groupings of other parties.³²

Participation in a transnational alliance or coalition is thus a way of strengthening the *capacity for action* insofar as this opens up new avenues of *influence*.³³ As with firms, at a time of internationalisation, the general strategic alliance motives for political parties can be expected to be to secure *access* (“to markets”) and *resources*.³⁴ Seen from the point of view of the national party, a general goal in the international arenas overall,

²⁹ Cf Allen, 1989:77; de Senarclens, 1992:161; Evangelista, 1995; Jerneck, 1990, 1994, 1996; Merle, 1986:12, 23-25, 157; Mingst, 1995:240; Montville, 1991; Peterson, 1992: 381; Risse-Kappen, 1994ab, 1995; Rosenau, 1969:46; Sundelius, 1990:257-263; Zorgbibe, 1993:Chapter 3.

³⁰ Peterson, 1992:384.

³¹ Cf Sjöblom, 1968:43; Sjölin, 1993:138.

³² This terminology is excerpted from Sjöblom, 1968. For a description and analysis of a series of transnational parliamentary assemblies, see the volume edited by Jun and Kuper, 1997. Cf Kuper, 1991.

³³ A corresponding situation applies at the domestic level. Cf Hadenius, 1981:18; Mattson, 1996:211; Sannerstedt, 1992; Sjölin, 1993; Stubbergaard, 1996. See also the section on domestic politics below.

³⁴ Cf Lorange and Roos, 1992:6-10, see also p 16.

or the European arenas as in this study, is to link up with like-minded parties in non-national settings in order to maximise influence over the course of events.³⁵ By articulating common interests and ideas, they can jointly shape political agendas and decision-making.

The conception of “party diplomacy” has been suggested for the activities in which national party representatives engage beyond national borders.³⁶ Through transnational party alliances, a governing party has *alternative channels* at its disposal, whereas parties which are in opposition domestically have access to useful platforms. Thereby, opposition parties can influence policies and build transnational coalitions against national governments.

Transnational alliances could be more or less formalised insofar as they “operate on the basis of both implicit and explicit rules based on informal understandings as well as formal agreements.”³⁷ The informal understandings among elites may be of such a nature that the arrangements in practice are close to those of a formal alliance. If so, the partners have become engaged, eventually leading to a marriage. Striking a formal alliance, the partners have undertaken some degree of commitment within the alliance. There is a potential for confusion if the mutual *alliance commitments* have not been unambiguously defined.³⁸ As Walt, analysing the origins of alliances among nation-states, has pointed out with regard to alliance commitments, “the true meaning of either formal or informal arrangements is likely to vary from case to case.”³⁹ Whatever the alliance commitments are, they are not necessarily known to activists and members below the elite level of interaction.

Since alliances are formed essentially against rather than for something, they may dissolve once they have achieved their objective. The endurance and dynamics of transnational alliances must be seen in the light

³⁵ Sjöblom (1968) first put forward his conception of party arenas in a doctoral thesis presented at Lund University. Later on he would bring the international arena into the picture. See Sjöblom, 1989. See also Bjereld and Demker, 1995:20; Jerneck, 1990; Johansson, 1993, 1996, 1997c; Karlsson, 1995:19-20. Heidar and Svåsand (1995), Hix and Lord (1997) and Pedersen (1996) use the concept of the European arena.

³⁶ Jerneck, 1990, 1994, 1996.

³⁷ Risse-Kappen, 1995:10. Cf Walt, 1987:12.

³⁸ Cf Rothstein, 1968:50.

³⁹ Walt, 1987:12.

of *threats* posed by *countervailing forces*.⁴⁰ Here, alliance ideologies may be important insofar as they create a “sense of community” and thus may reinforce alliance cohesion. However, it has been argued that alliances seldom are brought into existence by such a “sense of community”, but rather that they are formed “to achieve some desired objective” by decision-makers weighing “the costs and rewards of alignment. A decision to join an alliance is based upon perception of rewards in excess of costs.”⁴¹ Crucially, however, the replacement of one team of decision-makers, or political leaders, for another could mean that this balance of rewards and costs may be perceived and defined differently.

In order to qualify as a transnational alliance, or coalition, the interaction has to occur with regularity over time.⁴² Various transnational arrangements, ranging from informal networks to formal organisations, differ in the degree of their institutionalisation, or vertical integration.⁴³ The higher the degree of mutual alliance commitment, the more integrated is an alliance.⁴⁴ International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) are among the most highly institutionalised forms of transnational relations.⁴⁵ As far as party international non-governmental organisations (PINGOs) are concerned, these are, generally speaking, less hierarchical than a national party organisation.⁴⁶

Given the internationalisation of domestic politics, as suggested by the pluralist image, it becomes more urgent to study linkages provided by those political actors who connect national and non-national settings.⁴⁷ As vehicles for the politicisation of issues in different arenas, and for the

⁴⁰ Cf Rothstein, 1968; Walt, 1987.

⁴¹ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1981:449. In this particular context these authors relied on the theories of alliances, or coalitions, developed by George F Liska and William H Riker. See Riker, 1962. See also Rothstein, 1968:47, 60; Walt, 1987.

⁴² Cf Risse-Kappen, 1995:10.

⁴³ The same situation applies to strategic alliances between firms in international business. See Lorange and Roos, 1992:Chapter 1.

⁴⁴ Niedermayer (1983:15) makes a distinction between three stages of transnational party interaction, namely those of contacts, co-operation and integration.

⁴⁵ Risse-Kappen, 1995:10.

⁴⁶ The acronym of PINGO originates with the present author. See Johansson, 1996.

⁴⁷ Cf Goldmann, 1989; Jerneck, 1990, 1994, 1996; Mingst, 1995; Nye and Keohane, 1971:339; Risse-Kappen, 1994a:187; Rosenau, 1969; Stenelo, 1990:298-299, 1991:241; Sundelius, 1990:269; Viotti and Kauppi, 1987/1993:232, 240; Westberg, 1993:8.

provision of multi-level linkages, political parties are perfect examples of such actors. As Neumann, a comparativist, pointed out already in the 1950s, political parties — the “great *intermediaries*” — had become “international forces that must be studied...”⁴⁸ As examples, he gave the Christian Democrat movement and the Socialist International. He further argued that these “movements ought to be studied not only as potential powers of the future but also in their direct and indirect *influence* on national policy decisions at the present time.”⁴⁹

So, in sum, a modern political party is a more complex unit than the “within system” channel of upward and downward political communications otherwise depicted in textbooks in Comparative Politics. There is also an “out of system” dimension through the transnational channels of outward and inward political communications.

Bringing Neofunctionalism Back in

Transnational channels of communication are central in *neofunctionalism*, a traditional integration theory formulated in the 1950s and early 1960s, and revised in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and then abruptly abandoned in the mid-1970s. It is a process and action-oriented theory.⁵⁰ This rich body of theory cannot be dealt with in detail here, but some of its central arguments, especially those related to political parties and the catalysts for transnational alliance-building among actors such as these, will be elaborated upon.⁵¹

Having been formulated by Haas, and his disciples, neofunctionalism laid the intellectual foundations for theories of interdependence and transnationalism. All too often this intellectual lineage has gone unrecognised.

⁴⁸ Neumann, 1956:416, see also p 421. Emphasis added. See also Deutsch *et al*, 1957:150-151.

⁴⁹ Neumann, 1956:417. Emphasis added.

⁵⁰ Revising his theory against developments in European integration, Haas (1970:629) insisted that the “strength of neo-functional theory is its closeness to the actors.”

⁵¹ Neofunctionalist theory is presented in Cram, 1996; George, 1996:Chapter 3; Harrison, 1974, 1990; Kelstrup, 1990; O’Neill, 1996:37-53; Pedersen, 1992; Pentland, 1973; Taylor, 1983. For original neofunctionalist work, see primarily Haas, 1958ab, 1964ab; Lindberg, 1963.

Writing in the mid-1970s, Keohane and Nye did, however, recall Haas's contribution:

Haas's "neofunctionalism" stressed the interests of elites and institutions and the extent to which they altered their behavior through learning - - - Transnational interactions not controlled by central foreign-policy organs of governments were no longer ignored. To the contrary, they were regarded as often being of crucial importance to the integration process.⁵²

That this intellectual lineage otherwise often has gone unrecognised must be seen in the light of the bad reputation of neofunctionalism, due to its alleged lack of predictive ability. Indeed, Haas himself gave this as his main reason for declaring neofunctionalist integration theory obsolete.⁵³ This admission of failure "weakened neofunctionalism's academic credentials."⁵⁴ Still, however, I would like to argue that neofunctionalism was pronounced dead prematurely.

Instead of integrating the central insights of neofunctionalism into the study of IR, specialists moved away from this body of theory with the revival of state-centric neorealist and intergovernmentalist approaches, which both build on the realist image. There was, at the same time, a trend towards 'grand' theorising that aimed to predict global developments.⁵⁵ This occurred at the expense of the refinement of middle-range theory, such as integration theory.⁵⁶

⁵² Keohane and Nye, 1975:365. See also Nye, 1970, 1988; Puchala, 1970ab.

⁵³ Haas, 1976. Ironically, Haas (1964b:77) had pointed out that the spill-over process was far from automatic. Nor had Lindberg (1963:292), Haas's disciple, excluded the prospect that the process of political integration could be slowed down and perhaps arrested. Still, the main critique of neofunctionalism concerns its alleged determinism. For a critique of neofunctionalism in general, and its limited predictive value in particular, see Bellers, 1993; Bulmer, 1983, 1991; George, 1996; Harrison, 1974, 1990; Hix, 1994; Hoffmann, 1965, 1966; Kelstrup, 1990; Keohane and Hoffmann, 1991:9; Milward, 1992/1994:Chapter 1; Milward and Sørensen, 1993/1994:2-4; Moravcsik, 1991, 1993:475-477; O'Neill, 1996:37-53; Pentland, 1973; Viotti and Kauppi, 1987/1993:243.

⁵⁴ O'Neill, 1996:46.

⁵⁵ See Haas, 1976:199, and pp 170, 178, 208; Rochester, 1986:793; Viotti and Kauppi, 1987/1993:243.

⁵⁶ Jönsson, 1993:152.

It was theoretically illogical that neofunctionalism, which incorporates supranational institutions and transnational actors, should have been abandoned, rather than further revised, at a time when interdependence theorists stressed the role of channels provided by non-governmental actors.⁵⁷ Like interdependence and transnationalism, neofunctionalism is associated with the pluralist image of IR.⁵⁸ Breaking the state-centric focus of IR theory, these are closely related analytical frameworks.⁵⁹ Presenting neofunctionalism and transnationalism as alternative approaches to European integration, alongside intergovernmentalism, thus serves to confuse rather than to clarify how close the first two approaches are to each other.⁶⁰

Just like transnationalism, the traditional integration theory of neofunctionalism has, in fact, been brought back in recent years.⁶¹ The return to neofunctionalist writings must be seen in the light of the new dynamics of European integration in the 1980s.

It is ironic how close critics of neofunctionalism may be to this integration theory without being aware of it.⁶² Primarily, there is a tendency to ignore the contribution neofunctionalists made when it comes to actor

⁵⁷ Cf Haaland Matláy, 1993:121.

⁵⁸ Like transnationalism, neofunctionalist integration theory is associated with pluralist interest-group liberalism. See Harrison, 1990:147; Pentland, 1973:123; Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991:5; Streeck and Schmitter, 1991; Viotti and Kauppi, 1987/1993:243; Webb, 1977:12.

⁵⁹ Cf Clarke, 1985:155; Meyers, 1993:421.

⁶⁰ Webb (1977:7) made this mistake in her oft-quoted introduction to theories of European integration. Likewise, the presentation by Corbey (1995:258) of neofunctionalism and supranationalism as two separate categories serves to confuse, not to say mislead, rather than to clarify, in that neofunctionalism ascribed a vital role to supranational institutions like the High Authority and the Common Assembly.

⁶¹ See Corbey, 1995; Cram, 1996; George, 1996; Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 1997: 254-255, 279; Kelstrup, 1990:177; Keohane and Hoffmann, 1991:9-10; Ladrech, 1993; O'Neill, 1996; Pedersen, 1992; Pryce and Wessels, 1987:2; Schmitter, 1996; Taylor, 1989:23-24; Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991. See also Muttimer in O'Neill, 1996:283-287. Ironically, the very Hoffmann now returning to the precepts of neofunctionalism tried to massacre this body of theory in the past by, for one, pointing to its predictive aspirations. See Hoffmann, 1965, 1966, 1982.

⁶² See e.g. Sandholtz and Zysman, 1989; Webb, 1977.

socialisation and learning, to which neofunctionalists devoted much of their writings.⁶³

Introducing the concept of ‘spill-over’, neofunctionalism studied the inter-relationship between transnational channels and formal institutional arrangements as well as between the related concepts of transnational socialisation, learning and trust.⁶⁴ While focusing on processes, neofunctionalism owes much to Deutsch’s transactionalist studies of the conditions for the creation of political communities through mutual trust and shared values.⁶⁵ Trust, an element of mutual alliance commitments, must be considered as important both for the formation and for the evolution of a transnational party alliance.⁶⁶

In his role as founding father of neofunctionalism, Haas believed that political parties and interest groups, alongside supranational institutions, would be significant actors in the integration process. Interest groups and political parties were “singled out as the significant carriers of values and ideologies whose opposition, identity or convergence determines the success or failure of a transnational ideology.”⁶⁷ And among these groupings, Haas concluded that “[b]ecause of their appeal to an overlapping and diffuse group constituency political parties are far more crucial carriers of political integration or disintegration than even supranationally organised interest groups.”⁶⁸

Haas assumed that as integration ‘spilled-over’ from one field to another elites would shift their activities to the new centre beyond the nation-state. As a result of his study of the transnational party groupings in the ECSC Common Assembly, Haas emphasised the process by which

⁶³ See e.g. Haas, 1958b, 1970, 1976, 1982, 1990; Lindberg, 1963; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970; Nye, 1971; Schmitter, 1970:864–865. See also Harrison, 1974:244, 1990:144; O’Neill, 1996:42; Taylor, 1983:28; Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991:5.

⁶⁴ The concept of trust is explicitly mentioned in Haas, 1970:643.

⁶⁵ See e.g. Deutsch *et al*, 1957.

⁶⁶ Studying “political alliances” and coalition building at the domestic level, Sjölin (1993:141–142) points out that “all coalition formation, in fact, presupposes at least some minimal degree of trust” and goes on to argue that trust, or distrust, “in party relations can be interpreted as a result of a learning process.”

⁶⁷ Haas, 1958b:5. See also Haas, 1964a; Harrison, 1974:76, 1990:140.

⁶⁸ Haas, 1958b:437.

“continuing supranational communications channels are established physically and ideologically, probably ‘spilling over’ eventually into the ranks of national parliamentarians not regularly deputised to go to Strasbourg. It is in this connection that the role of European supranational political parties becomes crucial.”⁶⁹ Although the latter did not function as parties, Haas noted that it is “clear that they do function as centres of communication facilitating contacts and value sharing....”⁷⁰

Building on Haas’s original work, Lindberg also reflected on the processes under way in the political groups in the Common Assembly. In Lindberg’s view the political groups had already “contributed to the spill-over process and to political integration.”⁷¹ He had found that members saw the political groupings as the precursors of “European” political parties, but suggested himself that a precondition for this was “the introduction of direct popular elections for the Assembly.”⁷² In other words, political parties were expected to respond to institutional changes. Significantly, Lindberg pointed out that different groups “may alter their political strategies, turning for example to *transnational* lobbying activities.”⁷³ This thinking illustrates how close neofunctionalism and transnationalism are to each other.

Writing three decades later, Tranholm-Mikkelsen, returning to the precepts of neofunctionalism, suggested that as far as political parties are concerned “there is some evidence of pressures towards political spill-over.”⁷⁴ But he also observed that “this area is insufficiently charted and firmer conclusions must await further research.”⁷⁵ Hoping to contribute to firmer conclusions, I would like to argue, in the tradition of neofunctionalism, that actors such as political parties respond to catalysts

⁶⁹ Haas, 1958b:41, see also pp 419, 438.

⁷⁰ Haas, 1958b:391-392. See also Spinelli, 1966:160-161.

⁷¹ Lindberg, 1963:258, see also pp 87-90. Lindberg (1963:88) noted that “the Assembly has a significant long-range potential for influencing policy.” See also Spinelli, 1966:154-161.

⁷² Lindberg, 1963:90-91.

⁷³ Lindberg, 1970:709.

⁷⁴ Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991:15. He noted that “the most striking developments have taken place within the Danish Social Democratic Party and the British Labour Party.” See also Haahr, 1992, 1993; Ladrech, 1993.

⁷⁵ Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991:15.

connected to changes in the powers, and decision-making procedures, of supranational bodies.

Revising neofunctionalism, Nye himself suggested the concept of “*catalyst*”, adding that of the different types of catalysts more attention should be paid to “outside environmental factors of world politics.”⁷⁶ He included the active involvement of external actors as one of the “*process mechanisms*” in his revised neofunctionalist process model.⁷⁷ It is significant that Haas himself, when abandoning neofunctionalism, would stress the neglect of the external environment in original neofunctionalism.⁷⁸ Recent theorising recognises “the vital *catalytic role played by changes in the international environment.*”⁷⁹

Another factor neglected by original neofunctionalism, but integrated in its revised versions, was the role of national leadership.⁸⁰ Leadership, or leadership changes, at different levels, is another catalyst which could either promote or impede integration processes themselves, or transnational alliance-building among political parties as in this study.

As for the effect of institutional changes on actors such as interest groups and political parties, it is important to emphasise that this catalyst was an integral part of neofunctionalism from the very beginning. It was assumed that such actors would form alliances across national boundaries with actors from other member states in order to benefit from new opportunities in new arenas.⁸¹

Haas had himself originally pointed out that integration “is a two-way process in which the central institutions affect and are affected by the subject groups...”⁸² Having concluded that group pressure adds to the

⁷⁶ Nye, 1965:883-884. Emphasis added. See also Keohane and Nye, 1975:385-387; Nye, 1971:74; Schmitter, 1970, 1996.

⁷⁷ Nye, 1971:Chapter 3. Emphasis added. See also Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1981:441; Nye, 1970.

⁷⁸ See Haas, 1976.

⁷⁹ Cram, 1996:51. Emphasis added. See also George, 1996; Harrison, 1974; Pedersen, 1992; Sandholtz and Zysman, 1989; Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991.

⁸⁰ Cf George, 1996:45, 279; Harrison, 1974:88.

⁸¹ A similar assumption is made by those who study the EU as a system of “multi-level governance.” See George, 1996:52-54; Marks and McAdam, 1996.

⁸² Haas, 1958b:xii. See also Haas, 1958a:628; Puchala, 1970b:135.

integrative impulse, Haas, when refining his theory, made a useful distinction between “the early and the later phases of the integration process” in order to uncover which forces remain of equal importance during various phases and “which forces drop out of the picture as the process goes forward.”⁸³

Taking a long-term perspective on the phases of integration, I would like to argue that transnational channels of communication could act both as a result and a cause of integration. Eventually, they could drive integration by initiating various measures in the early phases of policy-making processes.

Discussing integration, Keohane and Nye have noted that at “the private level, the desire to reap promised benefits and the practical problems of influencing central institutions stimulate the formation of a variety of *formal* and *informal* transnational organizations...”⁸⁴

Similarly, Wallace has pointed out that formal institutions are important in shaping the informal flows of interaction.⁸⁵ Differentiating between *formal integration* and *informal integration*, he suggests that informal integration consists of those patterns of interaction which develop, amongst others, through political movements.⁸⁶

As critics of neofunctionalism stressed that integration came to a halt, they failed to see this differentiation. Throughout the history of European integration, non-governmental actors have tended to invest heavily in processes of informal integration to compensate for their relative exclusion from processes of formal integration.⁸⁷

The advantages with the differentiation between formal and informal integration is that the automaticity and determinism generally ascribed to the concept of spill-over, as well as the obsession with intergovernmental relations in recent efforts to develop integration theory, can be avoided. Informal integration covers long-standing flows and exchanges across national boundaries, between actors such as parliamentarians and party elites.

⁸³ Haas, 1970:640. See also Haas, 1958b:xiii, 1964a:111.

⁸⁴ Keohane and Nye, 1975:385. Emphases added.

⁸⁵ Wallace, 1990:83, see also p 69.

⁸⁶ Wallace, 1990:54. See also Budden, 1994.

⁸⁷ Cf Middlemas, 1995.

Leading politicians participate in transnational party alliances within the EU, and many who are active at this level are those who combine the posts of party leader and head of government.⁸⁸ What is special about the “nascent” European parties is precisely that they provide links bridging governmental and non-governmental elites. In this way, there are communication channels for socialisation and learning, with possible implications for policy formulation at the European and national levels.⁸⁹ Considering the seniority of the politicians in attendance at the European level of representation, it is remarkable how little attention EU specialists have paid to such actor socialisation and its implications. This omission can only be explained by the excessive focus of the European integration literature on the state, that is, on the official negotiating positions and policies of governments.⁹⁰

Given the existence of multiple channels in the EU, more emphasis should be placed on the alternative channels to the conventional governmental. There are various expressions of unconventional diplomacy alongside conventional diplomacy, which sometimes seems to be the only kind of diplomacy known to realist intergovernmentalists.

In short, the EU consists of more than intergovernmental relations.⁹¹ Focusing on state actors, intergovernmentalism has a less dynamic approach to changes in how opportunities and interests are defined, or

⁸⁸ Christian Democrat party leaders and heads of government have caucused since 1983. See Germain, 1996:65; Jansen, 1996:128-129. Having been the informal practice over the years, all the emerging European parties have nowadays formalised such get-togethers.

⁸⁹ Cf Jerneck, 1990:189, 209; Kuper, 1991:634, 1995:28-29; Ladrech, 1993, 1996; Lécureuil, 1996:195; Pridham, 1982:323; Sjöblom, 1989:67-68.

⁹⁰ As I have shown elsewhere (Johansson, 1997c; see also Budden, 1994) this blind-spot is well illustrated by interpretations of the making of the Internal Market Programme and the Single European Act (SEA). See for instance the analyses by Moravcsik (1991) and Sandholtz and Zysman (1989). Given their specialist knowledge of European integration it is all the more surprising that scholars like Bulmer and Wessels (1987:121) and Taylor (1983:49, 300, 1996:148-150) have tended to downplay the real and prospective influence of transnational party caucuses. In this respect, Middlemas (1995) is a welcome contribution on the informal politics of European integration.

⁹¹ For criticism of intergovernmentalism, see Bulmer, 1983:356, 1991:71; Bulmer and Wessels, 1987:6; Garrett and Tsebelis, 1996:293; Haaland Matlary, 1993:119; Laursen, 1992:232-235.

redefined, than transnationalism and neofunctionalism.⁹² As Haas himself has put it, “[a]ctors change their minds, redefine their interests, see new opportunities, and respond to new institutions at home and regionally.”⁹³

There is, in sum, a strong case for bringing back neofunctionalism as well as transnationalism, both of which focus on processes and allow a central role for non-state actors. Yet, these approaches do not clearly explain the structural constraints on the autonomy of individual and collective actors. They must, therefore, be complemented by analysis of relevant domestic structures. So must intergovernmentalism given its reductionism.⁹⁴ In short, we must lift the lid on the ‘black box’ of domestic politics if we are to understand processes of international co-operation and European integration as well as processes of transnational alliance-building among political parties.

Bringing Domestic Politics Back in

Developments in the European arenas of party politics can no more be understood without reference to the domestic arenas of party politics, than EU policy-making can be explained without reference to *domestic politics* more generally. Insofar as governments in EU member states are *party governments*, they rely on parties for political survival. Hence, we must acknowledge the party dynamics which in the short or long term, directly or indirectly, influence the policies of national governments toward European integration.⁹⁵

In general, there is a belated but most welcome consensus emerging in IR theory about the need to undertake more research at the domestic level.⁹⁶

⁹² Cf Haaland Matláy, 1993:112; Hix, 1994:7; Laursen, 1992:230, see also p 232.

⁹³ Haas, 1970:639.

⁹⁴ Cf Hix, 1994:8; Laursen, 1992:233. Admittedly, the intergovernmentalist Moravcsik (1991, 1993, 1994) at least recognises, primarily at a theoretical level, the need to delve deeper into domestic politics.

⁹⁵ Haahr, 1993:5-6. See also George, 1996:46, 55, 278; Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 1997:24; Hix and Lord, 1997.

⁹⁶ See e.g. Evans *et al*, 1993; Haggard and Simmons, 1987:513; Keohane, 1993:295; Keohane and Hoffmann, 1991:17; Milner, 1992; Milner and Keohane, 1996; Putnam, 1988; Risse-Kappen, 1994a, 1995; Skidmore and Hudson, 1993.

In its sub-field of foreign policy analysis, attention had been paid to “domestic sources” at an early stage.⁹⁷

As national, or sub-national, actors go transnational, logic requires us to make a theoretical synthesis between transnationalism on the one hand and domestic political approaches, originating in the sub-field of Comparative Politics, on the other. In laying out his *domestic politics approach* to the study of European integration, Bulmer suggests that it “corresponds most closely to the *transnationalist approach* of international relations theories.”⁹⁸ But while Bulmer attacks neofunctionalism, I prefer to add its rich and process-oriented insights to the domestic politics approach. For, as Bulmer himself admits, the latter on its own is “less dynamic” than traditional integration theory.⁹⁹

Bulmer points out that the domestic politics approach recognises that the same political organisations, such as political parties, interest groups and parliaments, are involved at the European level. The methodological implication of this, Bulmer argues, is that EU policy-making should be examined in a similar way to domestic politics.¹⁰⁰

In short, theories and analyses of European integration, concerned with deeply political processes, should take domestic structures into account to avoid the danger of superficiality. The same applies to theories of transnational relations. As Risse-Kappen has put it, the ability of transnational actors to build domestic coalitions is “determined by the *domestic structure* of the target state, that is, the nature of its political institutions, state-society relations, and the values and norms embedded in its political culture.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ See Rosenau, 1967; Snyder *et al*, 1962. See also Hagan, 1995; Russett and Starr, 1981/1996; Skidmore and Hudson, 1993.

⁹⁸ Bulmer, 1983:363. Emphasis added. However, Bulmer overstates the extent to which transnationalism studies international political economy. Instead, one could argue that both transnationalism and neofunctionalism pay too little attention to such phenomena. Cf Kelstrup, 1990:178; Sandholtz and Zysman, 1989:95; Smith, 1995:22; Viotti and Kauppi, 1987/1993:243.

⁹⁹ Bulmer, 1983:363.

¹⁰⁰ Bulmer, 1983:351. See also Bulmer, 1991, 1992; Bulmer and Paterson 1987; Cram, 1996:50; George, 1992, 1996:277-278; Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 1997:271-273; Laursen, 1992:234; Wallace *et al*, 1977.

¹⁰¹ Risse-Kappen, 1994a:187. Emphasis added. See also Müller and Risse-Kappen, 1993; Risse-Kappen, 1994b, 1995.

The metaphor of the “*two-level game*” may be applied to the behaviour of actors other than states.¹⁰² The relationship between a transnational alliance, or organisation, and a national party organisation can be seen as a “two-level game”, or perhaps even as a “multi-level game” insofar as the sub-national structures are brought into the analytical framework. Participation in transnational party alliances provides another dimension to the tendency for political games to be “*nested*” one inside another.¹⁰³

Differentiating between European-level party activity and that at the national level, Pridham suggests that the latter is predominant. As examples he gives “the influence of individual party ideology and tradition, and the government versus opposition roles, as well as of national political coalitions or alliances.”¹⁰⁴

Once established, the original ends and values giving a party its *identity* are not easily redefined.¹⁰⁵ Throughout their life cycles, political parties, institutions tending to live long, are deeply affected by social cleavages, or *ideological dimensions*.¹⁰⁶ The latter also determine the ideological distance between individual parties within party systems.¹⁰⁷

Cleavage structures, or ideological dimensions, and how they cross-cut each other, are relevant when identifying constraints on transnational party alliances. Explicitly mentioning the “alliances” of party groups in the EP and the transnational party federations, such as the EPP, Lijphart pointed particularly to the relative importance of the classical, left-right, *socioeconomic dimension* as well as the *religious dimension*.¹⁰⁸ Although these

¹⁰² The metaphor was suggested by Putnam, 1988. See also Evans *et al*, 1993; Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 1997:23, 250, 271; Keohane, 1993:295. Bulmer (1991:78) was to associate his “two-tier bargaining approach”, drawing on the German “cooperative federalism”, with the work of Putnam. See also Bulmer and Wessels, 1987:10.

¹⁰³ The metaphor of “nested games” was suggested by Tsebelis, 1990.

¹⁰⁴ Pridham, 1982:323. See also Gresch, 1978; Pridham and Pridham, 1981. Stressing the importance of domestic politics, Lord (1994:16) has pointed out that “the EP consists of a ‘two-level’ party politics.” Attinà (1992) speaks in terms of “split-level” politics. See also Bardi, 1996.

¹⁰⁵ Cf Panebianco, 1988.

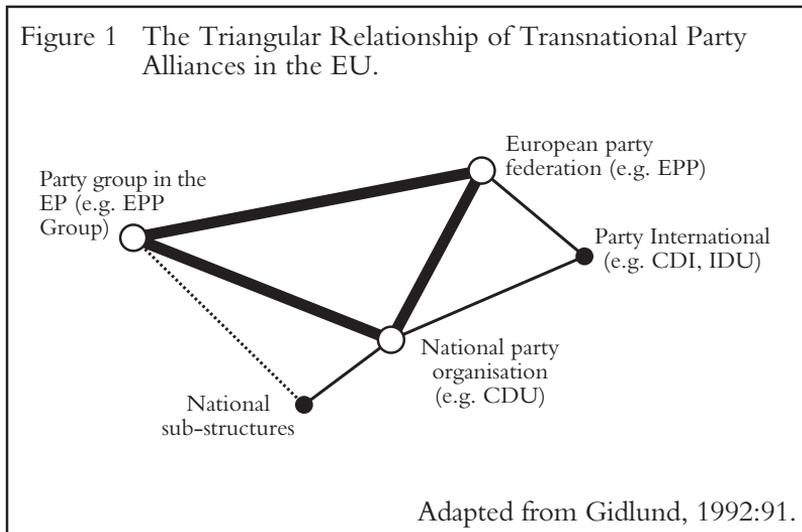
¹⁰⁶ Cf Lipset and Rokkan, 1967.

¹⁰⁷ Cf Duverger, 1951/1978; Sartori, 1976.

¹⁰⁸ Lijphart, 1981:47. See also Gallagher *et al*, 1995:Chapter 9; Girvin, 1994:722; Hix and Lord, 1997:Chapter 2. Studying party groups in the EP, Abélès (1992:364, see also p 421) stressed the member parties’ ideological dimensions and “les clivages politiques hérités du passé.”

dimensions must be considered the most important, they can naturally be complemented by others, such as the increasingly salient *European dimension*, that is, the fault line of national sovereignty versus supranational integration. Examining ideological dimensions is essential when analysing eventual threats to national party identity, posed by the policies and ideological identity of the transnational movement with which a national party is associated.

Against the background of the transnationalisation of party politics, national and transnational party identities are becoming increasingly mixed up. Given the “triangular relationship” between national parties, transnational party federations and party groups in the EP “these three previously separate *arenas* of activity can no longer be considered in isolation from each other.”¹⁰⁹



Just as the metaphors of “two-level game” and “multi-level game” imply some degree of conflict in the linkage between the national and inter-

¹⁰⁹ Pridham, 1982:319. Emphasis added. Cf Bardi, 1992; Gidlund, 1992; Gresch, 1978; Hix and Lord, 1997; Hrbek, 1988; Ladrech, 1996; Niedermayer, 1983; Pridham and Pridham, 1981.

national levels, the metaphor of *arenas*, used in the theory of party politics, draws attention to conflicts and constraints within and between the various theatres in which party politics are staged. In addition to the *parliamentary arena*, which was introduced in a previous section, there are the *internal arena* and the *electoral arena*. The basic goals of a political party correspond to the various arenas. Along with *maximisation of parliamentary influence*, the basic party goals are party cohesion, programme realisation and vote maximisation, in accordance with the analytical framework developed by Sjöblom.¹¹⁰

The line of argumentation to be advanced in the following is that these basic party goals affect party behaviour toward transnational party alliances. Pondering on the methodological implications of the shift of arenas following the internationalisation of parties, Sjöblom has himself suggested that such *arena shifts* may reinforce the “*problem of congruence*” between declared and implemented policies at different levels of decision-making.¹¹¹

Entering a transnational alliance, a political party faces a *credibility dilemma* if the policies in the new, non-national, arenas are not congruent with those propagated in the domestic arenas.¹¹² Where the policy stands of alliance partners, as well as the basic programme of the alliance itself, are incompatible with the programme and identity of the national party, this could affect negatively its cohesion in the internal arena. This, in turn, could damage its credibility and prospects for vote maximisation, or minimisation of losses, in the electoral arena, lose its votes and ultimately damage also the prospects for the maximisation of influence in the parliamentary arena. Elections impose a time constraint on political parties and their leaders.¹¹³

Moving beyond the limiting assumption of parties as largely unitary actors, alerts us to the importance of intra-party dynamics.¹¹⁴ To maintain cohesion in the internal arena, party leaders must consider whether commitments made in the international, or European arenas are likely

¹¹⁰ Sjöblom, 1968:74. Cf Downs, 1957:35; Riker, 1962:33.

¹¹¹ Sjöblom, 1989:70–72. Emphasis added.

¹¹² Cf Pedersen, 1996:31–34; Sjöblom, 1989:69.

¹¹³ Cf Sjöblom, 1987.

¹¹⁴ Cf Graham, 1993; Panebianco, 1988; Rose, 1964.

to inflame intra-party dissent. In short, stress caused by conflicts between these arenas and those at the domestic level may have disruptive effects on the unity of an individual party.¹¹⁵ In this context, Pedersen, discussing transnational arena co-ordination, communication and conflict resolution, has raised the strategic question, “[h]ow shall the party handle intra-party conflicts between the national and the European *arenas*?”¹¹⁶

Congruence problems originating in the European or wider international arenas of party politics may interact not just with intra-party politics, but may also upset the balance of power within a government. Insofar as members of governments also are party politicians they are constrained by the nature of party management, that is, “the ‘game’ which is played between governments and supporting parties....”¹¹⁷

Political parties which participate in government, or form informal parliamentary coalitions with a governing party, may be far more interested in supporting a domestic government and acting in support of national sovereignty and interests than in solidarity with counterpart parties from other countries.¹¹⁸ Parties associated with government, formally or informally, may therefore be severely “sovereignty-bound” rather than “sovereignty-free”, which is a category of actors in which Rosenau, strangely enough, places political parties.¹¹⁹

It has been stressed that political parties, first and foremost being national actors, are reluctant to commit themselves to a supranational decision-making structure.¹²⁰ Suffering domestic constraints, it has been suggested that they struggle for their *autonomy* and are less likely than

¹¹⁵ This line of reasoning draws on revised neofunctionalism, suggesting that stressing demands could “undermine the initial congruence between the European and the national systems.” Scheingold, 1970:992. See also Lindberg (1967), who relied on ‘Eastonian’ systems theory when discussing stress in the emerging EC political system.

¹¹⁶ Pedersen, 1996:34. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁷ Blondel, 1993:39. See also Blondel and Cotta, 1996. As to the influence of Conservative party management on foreign policy-making in the UK, this has actually been a moot point. See Bulpitt, 1988; Clarke, 1992:207.

¹¹⁸ Cf Jerneck, 1990:190–191, 1994:236; Seidelmann, 1993:379. The breakdown of the Second International in the context of the First World War is a case in point. See Joll, 1955; May, 1977; Zorgbibe, 1993:Chapter 3.

¹¹⁹ Rosenau, 1990:36. See also Rosenau, 1980:151. Cf Hix, 1996:321; Johansson, 1993, 1996:205.

¹²⁰ Ware, 1986:125.

other groupings “to have strong, institutionalized transnational links.”¹²¹ In general, a distinctive characteristic of a transnational organisation is, except for its broader-than-national perspective, that even though working for a common cause, its sub-units retain a significant degree of autonomy.¹²²

In short, a political party faces an *autonomy dilemma* when making the strategic choice of entering a transnational alliance, and perhaps also whether it shall remain in it. This dilemma implies a conflictual relationship between strengthening the *capacity for action*, on the one hand, and maintaining the *freedom of action*, on the other.¹²³

Being within a transnational alliance, a political party may be under pressure to compromise some freedom of action and perhaps also some of its distinctive identity. Given that it is in the domestic arenas that a party’s identity and credibility are principally determined, these can, however, be expected to take over the international, or European arenas. As this is a problem that is more or less shared by all party leaders, they can be expected to help each other deal with it, and to return favours that improve the ability of each to satisfy their domestic constituencies and thereby to play the “two-level game.”

As Hanley emphasises, with special reference to the EPP, even though the national party leaders may agree on the very fundamental aspects of policy and consult regularly, “these leaders remain first and foremost national politicians, *responsible to national electorates*.”¹²⁴ Like democracy itself, parties are “essentially *nation-bound* institutions” and thus “*inherently constrained* in their ability to organise, aggregate and communicate across political frontiers.”¹²⁵ Paradoxically, therefore, every substantial increase in the powers of the EP is likely to provoke national parties — particularly those that are in government in the member states — to “whip members of their party in the European Parliament into towing the party

¹²¹ Willets, 1982:8. Cf Horner, 1981:88.

¹²² Cf Huntington, 1973:340.

¹²³ In this way, a broader conception of “autonomy” relates capacity for action and freedom of action to each other. See Lundquist, 1987:37-38; Sjölin, 1993:179; Stubbergaard, 1996:Passim.

¹²⁴ Hanley, 1994b:197. Emphasis added. See also Harrison, 1974:215, 1990:146; Taylor, 1983:300.

¹²⁵ Hix and Lord, 1997:15. Emphases added.

line, and would tend to weaken the development of European parties....”¹²⁶

So, in sum, domestic structures, which also may be of an enabling kind, can be expected to impose constraints on the freedom of action of individual political parties and their leaders, and therefore on transnational alliance-building among political parties alike. Precisely what these domestic structures are remains ultimately an empirical question that may vary from case to case. This is one of the questions to be addressed in the subsequent analysis.

Conceptual Framework

Having introduced the theoretical approaches, and discussed their relation to each other, the final task of this chapter is to bring together the concepts central to this work. Thus, a conceptual framework will be established for the subsequent analysis. In view of the factors *promoting*, respectively *impeding*, processes of transnational alliance-building among political parties, I shall attempt to link the central theoretical arguments to the *opportunities*, *motives* and *constraints* with regard to such alliance-building.

By bringing in the process and action-oriented approaches of transnationalism and neofunctionalism, I have illuminated their shared concern with the transnational channels built among non-state actors such as political parties. These approaches capture factors *promoting* transnational activity.

On the basis of theoretical arguments within these approaches, the *opportunities* for transnational alliance-building can be analysed in terms of catalysts. Especially neofunctionalism devotes much attention to how informal flows of interaction, beyond the nation-state, are established in response to formal supranational institutions. In addition to this catalyst, revised versions of neofunctionalism point to the catalytic role of outside environmental factors and to the factor of leadership.

¹²⁶ Taylor, 1996:150. See also Harrison, 1974:215; Johansson, 1996:218, 1997bc; Smith, 1972/1989:301; Taylor, 1983:48.

It follows that three catalysts can be identified, namely those of *leadership changes*, *institutional changes*, and *changes in the international environment*. Of these catalysts, the latter is *external* to the EC/EU system, whereas the others are *internal* to it, including supranational bodies and member states.

As to the *motives* for transnational alliance-building, it has been shown that non-state actors such as political parties, or rather their leaders, can be expected to avail themselves of opportunities in order to exploit new avenues of influence in non-national arenas, strengthening their capacity for action. A differentiation can be made between two categories of motives, namely those of *transnational channels for access and influence* and *maximisation of parliamentary influence*. The latter category refers to the transnational parliamentary arena in which political parties join like-minded parties, and have the groupings of other parties as their objects of influence.

By bringing in domestic politics approaches, I have attempted to show that political parties can be expected to suffer *constraints* rooted in domestic structures when they engage in transnational activities. Such structures thereby provide factors *impeding* processes of transnational alliance-building among political parties. Although domestic structures also can be of an enabling kind, an initial assumption is that there are fundamental constraints on the formation and evolution of transnational party alliances since these are sets of national political parties.

As was mentioned above, it remains an empirical question as to what the precise domestic structures are that constrain the freedom of action of individual political parties and their leaders. Nevertheless, one can identify domestic constraints under the broad labels of *ideological dimensions*, that is, social cleavages, and *arena shifts* between European and domestic arenas of party politics.

Building a Transnational Party Alliance

This chapter explores processes of transnational alliance-building among political parties within the families of European Conservatism and Christian Democracy, focusing on the alliance built in the European parliamentary arena. The chapter thereby serves as an empirical basis for the subsequent analysis of factors promoting, respectively impeding, such alliance-building.

As previously outlined, the phases of alliance-building can be divided into those of *formation* and *evolution*. Most attention will be paid to the formative phase, which was initiated soon after the 1989 European elections and concluded with the implementation of an alliance, in the EP, in May 1992. The alliance was renewed after the 1994 European elections. A section on the evolution of the alliance will take up remaining questions about its future. In short, this is an ongoing process of transnational alliance-building among political parties. At this point it is necessary to reconstruct the *historical and political background* to the alliance.

Historical and Political Background

The more noteworthy aspects of the historical development, prior to the final request for a formal alliance in 1989, relate to the informal transnational alliances among the parties themselves as well as within the EP. Primarily, this brief background will show that there were close links between British Conservatives and German Christian Democrats at different levels.

Informal Transnational Alliances Among Political Parties

From the 1960s the British Conservatives took an active part in what they called the “*period of the like-minded parties of Europe*” and cultivated transnational relations mainly with the Germans, whom they considered the closest of the Continental Christian Democrats.¹ Considering both the CDU and the CSU as their nearest allies, the Tories worked quite closely with them in parliamentary assemblies such as the Council of Europe and the WEU.²

The like-minded party meetings involved Conservative parties and those parties on the Christian Democrat side which could live with a Conservative party. More commonly these meetings are referred to as the *Inter-Party Conference*. The consequence of these informal get-togethers was the setting up of a joint organisation, the *European Democrat Union* (EDU), in 1978.³

The links among national parties were sustained by links among youth, student and women sections. Composed of women members of Conservative, Christian Democrat and other like-minded parties, the *European Union of Women* (EUW) acted as one mainspring for closer party relations.⁴ The EUW was indirectly represented in the Inter-Party Conference through its Chairman, Lady Elles. She was namely Chairman also of the International Office of the British Conservative Party. Within the EUW, relations were also close between the British Conservatives and German Christian Democrats.

The same could be said of the non-governmental youth organisations (NGYOs) assembling representatives of the student and youth sections

¹ Interview with Lord Fraser, London, 9 February 1994. The late Lord Fraser recalled that the Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, and other senior Ministers attended along with the Party Chairman or his Deputy, meaning Michael Fraser himself.

² Interview with Sir John Peel, London, 7 February 1994. Cf Ashford, 1980:119, 1992:135-136; Haungs, 1983:183.

³ See Ashford, 1992:135; Horner, 1981:80; Kempf, 1983:304; Kleinmann, 1993:487; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:198-200; Kunz, 1980:236-237; Kuper, 1995:283; Lodge and Herman, 1982:173; Pridham, 1982:336.

⁴ Interview with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994. It is noteworthy that the EUW also included representatives of the Italian Christian Democrat party as well as of the Portuguese and Spanish centre-right parties. Cf Lodge and Herman, 1982:173-174.

of Conservative and some Christian Democrat parties. Such sections were represented in the Inter-Party Conference through the *Democrat Youth Community of Europe* (DEMYC) and the *European Democrat Students* (EDS) respectively. They acquired these names in 1975, dropping the word Conservative.⁵ A concrete initiative for a closer transnational party alliance was, in fact, taken at a meeting of the student and youth sections in London in 1972.⁶

Following skilful lobbying by the British Young Conservatives and Conservative Students, the Party Conference of October 1975 debated and passed a motion urging “the Conservative Party to work more closely with our political allies in Europe towards the formation of a moderate *centre-right alliance* (a European Democrat Party)....”⁷

The Shadow Cabinet, under Margaret Thatcher, was to formulate a policy for a European anti-Socialist alliance. There were negotiations behind the scenes with the full understanding of Reginald Maudling, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, who was very concerned about relations with like-minded parties in Europe.⁸ So was Douglas Hurd, who in the capacity of opposition spokesman on European affairs was in a position to co-ordinate what was happening in the party contacts pursued by the party’s International Office.⁹

As new Leader of the Conservative Party, Thatcher was herself pursuing party contacts, committing herself to a transnational anti-Socialist

⁵ DEMYC’s former name had been *Conservative and Christian Democrat Youth Community* (COCDYC), and that of EDS, from 1970, *European Union of Christian Democratic and Conservative Students* (ECCS). At the time of the name changes, Carl Bildt was Chairman of ECCS, whereas his fellow Swede Per Unckel was Chairman of COCDYC. Both of them took part in the Inter-Party Conference. Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Lars F Tobisson, Stockholm, 13 March 1995; Per Unckel, 26 October 1995.

⁶ Ashford, 1980:121-122. See also Ashford, 1992:136; Gresch, 1978:275.

⁷ Quoted in Ashford, 1980:120. Emphasis added. See also Ashford, 1992:136; Jansen, 1996:108; Lodge and Herman, 1982:173; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:197.

⁸ *The Times*, 10 October 1975. See also Maudling, 1978:221-223.

⁹ Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Lord Fraser, London, 9 February 1994; Sir John Peel, London, 7 February 1994. See also Hurd, 1978; Maudling, 1978:221. In addition to Lady Elles, Sir John Peel and Douglas Hurd, the heavyweight William Whitelaw appears in the lists of participants on behalf of the British Conservative Party as do Lord Fraser, Christopher Tugendhat and Thatcher herself. Inter-Party Conference/Copenhagen, 11-13 June 1976; München, 7-8 June 1975.

alliance.¹⁰ She made a series of visits abroad to argue for such an alliance. Having met with CDU heavyweights, including the CDU Leader, Helmut Kohl, in Germany in June 1975, she went there again in May 1976 to address the CDU Congress in Hannover.¹¹ In her speech Thatcher said: “I am convinced that the Christian Democratic, Conservative and Centre Parties in Europe should now join together in an effective *working alliance*. I believe that this is a task of historic importance, and one in which we should invest all our energies.”¹²

Courting parties less enthusiastic about an alliance with the British Conservative Party, Thatcher then went to the Hague and Rome for talks with leading Dutch and Italian Christian Democrats, calling for their involvement in the nascent EDU.¹³ These visits also aimed at improving the rather sparse bilateral links the British Conservative Party had established with other Christian Democrat parties than the German.¹⁴

For the subsequent analysis, it is important to emphasise Thatcher’s unequivocal commitment to an alliance between Conservative and Christian Democrat parties at the time. She was kept informed about the talks in the Inter-Party Conference, and was herself closely involved and described as most interested and constructive.¹⁵ Similarly, Poul Schlüter, the Leader of the Danish Conservative Party, involved himself in the preparations for the EDU.

So did Helmut Kohl. He suggested that the party leaders should institutionalise the meetings and that a European organisation should be set-up as soon as possible, countering the tendency towards a Socialist Europe.¹⁶

¹⁰ See Thatcher, 1995:337-344. See also Lodge and Herman, 1982:176; Pridham, 1982:337.

¹¹ Thatcher, 1995:341, 344. See also Ashford, 1980:120-121; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:197. Foreign Christian Democrat politicians attending the CDU Congress were Amintore Fanfani (DC), Leo Tindemans and Wilfried Martens of the Belgian CVP and Jean Lecanuet of the French CDS. See Kleinmann, 1993:373. Lecanuet had also been invited to the Inter-Party Conference.

¹² Quoted in Ashford, 1980:120-121. Emphasis added. See also Bethell, 1994; Lodge and Herman, 1982:178.

¹³ Thatcher, 1995:345-346. See also Ashford, 1980:121; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:197.

¹⁴ Cf Ashford, 1980:119-121, 1992:136; Irving, 1979:251; Pridham, 1982:337; Rose, 1982:113; Wallace, 1984:70.

¹⁵ Interview with Jens Karoli, Copenhagen, 21 October 1993.

¹⁶ See *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 & 10 September 1975; *Die Welt*, 10 September 1975. See also Ashford, 1980:122; Irving, 1979:251; Lodge and Herman, 1982:173.

Visiting Thatcher in London, he said that he wanted ever closer contacts between the CDU and the British Conservative Party.¹⁷ As Thatcher herself would put it, the German Christian Democrats and the British Conservatives “were bound to be the two key elements” in the EDU.¹⁸

Kohl and Thatcher were present at the launching of the EDU in Salzburg on 24 April 1978, along with Jacques Chirac, Franz Josef Strauß and leaders of Nordic Conservative parties. Successive leaders of the Austrian ÖVP would hold the chairmanship of the EDU, which was logical given their own interest in the EDU as a party of a non-EC country. For the same reason, the Swiss CVP was keen on the EDU. It was one of the Christian Democrat parties to join the EDU, originally as an observer.¹⁹

Whereas the Belgian and Dutch Christian Democrat parties had sent their apologies to the Inter-Party Conference, and declined to join the EDU, the Luxembourg CSV had actually been represented and would even link up with the EDU as a permanent observer. Indeed, the Luxembourg party was positive and there was no common Benelux position.²⁰

Of the historic parties within European Christian Democracy, the French CDS would become indirectly affiliated to the EDU through the UDF, which became an observer of the EDU.²¹ The Italian DC had

¹⁷ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 July 1976.

¹⁸ Thatcher, 1995:342.

¹⁹ Parties from non-EC countries to join the EDU as full members or observers were — except for the Austrian and Swiss Christian Democrats and the Nordic Conservative parties — the Greek ND, the Portuguese CDS and the Spanish UCD as well as the DR of Cyprus and the Maltese PN. The information on membership is gathered from various EDU publications, particularly Bulletin 18. See also Kuper, 1995:283.

²⁰ Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995; Lars F Tobisson, Stockholm, 13 March 1995. Lijphart (1981:47) is but one of the many scholars who wrongly lumps together the Benelux parties as one more generally and in the light of opposition to Conservatives specifically. See also Chapter Six.

²¹ Horner, 1981:80-84; Kempf, 1983:308. The French situation was special given that the parties forming the UDF confederation were involved in different transnational alliances. The CDS was a founding member of the EPP, whereas the RI/PR and the Radical Party formed part of the Liberal party federation and group in the EP. See Horner, 1981:78; Kempf, 1983:304-307; Mallet, 1982:40. The French RI, which did not take part initially, was invited to the Inter-Party Conference in Copenhagen in June 1976 for the first time, following suggestions from Lady Elles, but this was controversial given the RI's affiliation with European Liberal parties. Inter-Party Conference/Copenhagen, 11-13 June 1976. Bilateral meetings were held between the Tories and the RI.

been present at an Inter-Party Conference meeting, but declined to join the EDU initially.²² However, Italian Christian Democrats visited EDU Conferences and the party was adopted as an observer in 1981.²³ Significantly, it later withdrew and would remain nervous about a formal alliance with Conservative parties in general and the British in particular. So would also the Belgian, Dutch and Irish parties within the Christian Democrat movement.²⁴

The Irish FG had been invited to the Inter-Party Conference, but sent an apology. Building transnational links, Garret FitzGerald, the FG Leader, belonged to those who insisted that the German Christian Democrats “had to be *headed off from forming an alliance* with, among others, the British Tories.”²⁵ He has defined the FG as a party, within the Christian Democrat movement, which was “on the left wing with the Benelux parties and with some of the French and Italians.”²⁶

The German CDU/CSU, accused of bigamy, were at odds with Christian Democrat sister parties over the issue of the EDU.²⁷ The Christian Democrat parties which refused any association with the EDU regarded it as a rival and as a threat to the EPP’s cohesion.²⁸ After all, European Christian Democrat parties had a common background in the *European Union of Christian Democrats* (EUCD) and its predecessor, the *Nouvelles Equipes Internationales* (NEI). Within the EUCD, there was pressure on the Germans not to form an alliance with Conservatives.²⁹ Significantly, the Flemish Christian Democrat Tindemans, the first EPP President and

²² Inter-Party Conference/Blackpool, 9 October 1975. Since the Italian DC was represented at the Blackpool Conference, Irving (1979:251) was wrong in concluding that “the Italian DC has never sent representatives....”

²³ See Haungs, 1983:183; Horner, 1981:89; von Beyme, 1985:99.

²⁴ In this matter those parties would act as an “Interessenkoalition” in Gresch’s (1978:275) words. However, he omitted the Irish FG.

²⁵ FitzGerald, 1991:343. Emphasis added. Interview with Garret FitzGerald, Dublin, 10 May 1996.

²⁶ FitzGerald, 1991:343.

²⁷ See Jansen, 1996:109; Kleinmann, 1993:487; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:200.

²⁸ Interviews with Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Lars F Tobisson, Stockholm, 13 March 1995. See also Ashford, 1980:123; Lodge and Herman, 1982:180; Pinto-Duschinsky, 1983:114; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:166.

²⁹ See Brouwer, 1991:17; Gresch, 1978:100, 128; Lodge and Herman, 1982:177; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:167.

a former EUCD Secretary-General, even wrote a letter to Kohl protesting against the EDU's formation.³⁰

For their part, the Tories had been concerned that all the Christian Democrat parties would unite around the position of the Belgians, the Dutch and the Italians, thereby leaving the Conservatives in limbo. Despite the position adopted by these parties and despite the formation of the EPP, the Tories had hoped that a majority of Christian Democrat parties would wish to form the EDU.

Given the divisions within the Christian Democrat movement, it was not possible for the British Conservative Party to join the EPP, which was an embryonic European party based on Christian Democrat foundations. Significantly, its coming into being had been delayed due to controversy over its name and scope of membership.³¹

The very choice of name was a sensitive question insofar as it had implications for future alignments. The CDU/CSU preferred a name that would not alienate Conservative parties and even suggested that these should become members.³² The Germans wanted a less closed and less confessional party federation.³³ Having given in concerning the membership issue, they insisted that the word *Volkspartei* should form part of the name but not the word Christian. With reference to the British and Scandinavian parties it was argued that the very word Christian might be confused with clerical or papist.³⁴ The Belgian, Dutch and Italian Christian Democrats were again on the other side of the argument over the issues of name and membership.³⁵

A compromise was reached according to which the ideological label Christian Democrat appeared first in the sub-title and the full name of the new organisation became *European People's Party — Federation of*

³⁰ Lodge and Herman, 1982:177; Pridham, 1982:335, 344 (n 42). In an interview, Tindemans pointed out that resistance to an alliance with Conservatives was intense in the 1970s. Interview with Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

³¹ See Gresch, 1978:177-178; Jansen, 1996:100-102; Pridham, 1982:322.

³² See Jansen, 1996:100; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:197; Kuper, 1995:259-260; Lijphart, 1981:47; Lodge and Herman, 1982:153; Pridham, 1982:322.

³³ Gresch, 1978:175-178; Niedermayer, 1983:68.

³⁴ Horner, 1981:74. See also Chapter Six.

³⁵ Jansen, 1996:101. See also FitzGerald, 1991:343; Kuper, 1995:259-260.

Christian Democrat Parties of the European Community.³⁶ As could have been expected, the name would seldom be referred to in full.³⁷ In the talks over the name, the CDU/CSU wanted to signal at least a future openness towards Conservative parties.³⁸ An article in the EPP statutes kept membership open to all who “share its fundamental concepts and subscribe to its political programme.”³⁹

While the Germans thus were in favour of integration of Conservatives in the EPP, the opposition to this from other Christian Democrat parties implied, in the words of the Pridhams, that an opening-up of the EPP for Conservatives “was in effect shelved at least until after direct elections, if not permanently.”⁴⁰ Another noteworthy prediction, made by Gresch, was that the German member parties would play a key role in the ongoing talks about opening up the EPP for Conservative parties.⁴¹

Faced with “the principle of not dividing its transnational loyalty”, the CDU leadership was aware that the EDU should not appear to be a rival to the EPP in the context of the 1979 European elections.⁴² In return, the Germans would call for the involvement of other Christian Democrat parties in the EDU, suggesting that there must be more “transnational co-operation. Owing to its broad territorial basis EDU could be a very important link.”⁴³

For the subsequent analysis, it is important to emphasise that German Christian Democrats were active in both circles and that there were

³⁶ See Brouwer, 1991:6; Horner, 1981:73; Irving, 1979:244; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:199; Kunz, 1980:237; Niedermayer, 1983:68; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:157-158; Pridham, 1982:323.

³⁷ Jansen, 1996:102.

³⁸ Ashford, 1980:251; Haungs, 1983:181.

³⁹ Ashford, 1980:121. See also Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:199; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:158.

⁴⁰ Pridham and Pridham, 1981:158. See also Ashford, 1980:121; Irving, 1979:259; Pridham, 1982:322.

⁴¹ Gresch, 1978:275. See also Haungs, 1983:184; Irving, 1979:Chapter 8; Pridham, 1982:Passim; Weidenfeld, 1982:92-93.

⁴² Pridham and Pridham, 1981:166-167. See also Ashford, 1980:123.

⁴³ The quotation is from a report drafted by an EDU committee chaired by the German Ernst Albrecht, then Deputy Chairman of CDU and Prime Minister of Lower Saxony. EDU/Bulletin 3, 1979.

important bilateral links between the British and the German parties, also at the top where politicians knew each other.⁴⁴ For the development of such links, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation — the CDU's think tank — has been of importance by organising conferences, seminars, etc. Outside Germany the Konrad Adenauer Foundation operates through a branch of offices, serving as CDU 'embassies', and the London office was set up in the early 1980s.⁴⁵ Its role for the building of party links and eventually a formal alliance in the EP will be discussed in further chapters.

Informal Transnational Alliances Within the European Parliament

At the time of the 1973 EC enlargement, the British and Danish Conservatives had to consider alliance strategies in the EP. Against the background of the party links with the CDU/CSU, as well as with the French centre-right parties, the British Tories examined alternative options before they decided to set up the Conservative Group together with their Danish friends.⁴⁶ There were three existing centre-right groups of which the Tories might have requested membership: the Christian Democratic Group, the Liberal Group, and the Gaullist-dominated Group of the European Democratic Union.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Interview with Thomas Spencer, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993.

⁴⁵ Interview with Ludger Eling, London, 11 February 1994. See also Wallace, 1984:70. Also the long-standing Königswinter Conferences organised regularly by the Anglo-German Association must be mentioned in this context. These have brought together British and German politicians, academics, business people and journalists. See Wallace, 1984:71; *The Economist*, 9 March 1991; *Financial Times*, 11 April 1994.

⁴⁶ See Fitzmaurice, 1975:145; Kempf, 1983:302; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:200; Lea, 1992:16; Lodge and Herman, 1982:176; Scalingi, 1980:126. Taking their seats in Strasbourg on 16 January 1973, the 18-strong Tory delegation was joined by two Danish Conservatives and later on by one Danish Centre Democrat, thus the new Conservative Group was only binational. See Rutschke, 1986:14; Westlake, 1994b:132, 151 (n 61). The Danish Centre Democrats moved to the EPP Group in 1983. Brouwer, 1991:20. The Tories had originally hoped to be joined also by the Norwegian Conservatives.

⁴⁷ The group of the European Democratic Union was founded in the EP in 1965, when the French Gaullists abandoned the Liberals. See Jacobs *et al*, 1992:57.

Of these groups, it seemed most likely that the Conservatives would align themselves with the Christian Democrats. Although there was an effort to join them it was not very strong, however.⁴⁸ Crucially, the party back home — under Heath, then Prime Minister — preferred that there should be a separate group instead of joining the Christian Democratic Group.⁴⁹

Given the dialogue between British Tories and German Christian Democrats in the Inter-Party Conference, it was logical that the Germans asked the Tories to join the Christian Democratic Group, seeking their support and expressing a willingness to collaborate whenever possible.⁵⁰ Specifically, Hans August Lücker (CSU), Chairman of the Christian Democratic Group (1969-75), was interested in the closest possible co-operation. Having met with Lücker, Peter Kirk, the first Leader of the Conservative Group, made clear that there would be close liaison between the two groups.⁵¹ That a German was Chairman of the Christian Democratic Group seemed a precondition for the co-operation that would take place between them.⁵²

However, this co-operation declined during the chairmanship of Alfred Bertrand (1975-77), a Belgian Christian Democrat and trade unionist.⁵³ Along with the Dutch and the Italians, the Belgians had been opposed to co-operation with the Conservatives in a formal group.⁵⁴

The next Chairman of the Christian Democratic Group was another German, Egon Klepsch, whose interest in co-operation with the Conservatives was consistent with his own long involvement in such co-operation since the 1960s through youth organisations and the Inter-Party Conference.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Lord Plumb, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993.

⁴⁹ Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Derek Prag, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

⁵⁰ Interview with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994.

⁵¹ *The Times*, 12 January 1973. Pridham (1982:341) suggests that Kirk “was a strong advocate of de facto cooperation with the Christian Democrats from the beginning.” See also Irving, 1979:251.

⁵² See Ashford, 1980:121, 1992:134; Irving, 1979:251-252; Lodge and Herman, 1982:176; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:47.

⁵³ Pridham and Pridham, 1981:47.

⁵⁴ Interview with Sir John Peel, London, 7 February 1994.

⁵⁵ Cf Ashford, 1980:121, 1992:134; Irving, 1979:251-252; Lodge and Herman, 1982:176; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:47.

He was to remain Chairman until 1982, and then again from 1984 until his election to the EP Presidency in early 1992. In the interval period, the chairmanship was held by the Italian Paolo Barbi, who was strongly opposed to the idea of a formal alliance with the Conservatives.⁵⁶

Although a merger between the two party groups did not seem realistic, German Christian Democrats and British Conservatives were constant advocates of some kind of centre-right alliance. In the mid-1970s, the leadership of the Conservative Group discussed with Christian Democrats the ways and means of forming a group.⁵⁷

In connection to the 1979 European elections, the Conservative Group changed name into the *European Democratic Group* (EDG). The word Conservative was dropped in a move to appease Christian Democrats, thus clearly indicating how keen the Tories were on attracting allies.⁵⁸ The word Conservative had unfortunate right-wing connotations in much of Europe, including the countries applying for EC membership.⁵⁹ It is interesting to note that also the name of the Christian Democratic Group was changed. Following the foundation of the EPP, and in view of the European elections, the party group took the name *Group of the European People's Party*. Arguably, also the Christian Democrat label was played down to attract allies.

The name of the EDG was adopted in line with that of the *European Democrat Union* (EDU) and, originally, the *European Democrat Students*

⁵⁶ Interview with Paolo Barbi, Athens, 13 November 1992. See also Chapter Six.

⁵⁷ See *The Times*, 10 October 1975; Irving, 1979:251; Maudling, 1978:221-222. For his part, the former delegate to the EP Hugh Dykes "said that he hoped for a practical operational alliance in Europe...." Quoted in *The Times*, 10 October 1975. See also O'Hagan *et al*, 1978. Interview with Hugh Dykes, London, 7 February 1994.

⁵⁸ Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Kent Kirk, Stockholm, 9 March 1994. See also EDG/A Guide to the EDG, 1982; Ashford, 1992:134; Butler and Jowett, 1985:23; Lodge and Herman, 1982:183; Pridham, 1982:341; Rutschke, 1986:14; Wood and Wood, 1979:33-34. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (14 March 1991) would comment that the EDG made an attempt to establish a closer partnership with the EPP Group in the context of the formation of the first directly elected Parliament.

⁵⁹ The Tories tried to convince the Greek ND to join the EDG. However, the ND joined the Christian Democrats instead. Also this party has eschewed the word Conservative. See Clogg, 1987:Passim. For historical reasons the words Conservative and right were discredited in Spain too. Cf Garcia Cotarelo and Lopez Nieto, 1988:81; Heywood, 1995:204-206; Marquina Barrio, 1982:146-147; Montero, 1988.

(EDS), which had put constant pressure on mother parties to unite.⁶⁰ Although the political realities behind the names are important, the name change was not sufficient to appease the Christian Democrats.⁶¹ In the words of the Pridhams:

Several points arise from this case. Although the change of name by the Conservative group does have a major symbolic importance with regard to a broader centre-right alliance, in practice those original factors which prevented the fusion of the two groups in the past are likely to continue to inhibit the formation of a longer term and more formal alliance. However, the two groups may well continue to hold regular common meetings and to appoint common spokesmen on an increasing number of issues and to develop practical forms of co-operation on an anti-left basis.⁶²

The relationship between the two groups concerned co-operation in committees, consultation before plenary voting and question time, sometimes even having joint spokesmen and joint meetings, and invitations to observe each other's study days.⁶³ In short, there was an "informal co-operation" between the two groups.⁶⁴ They had co-operated as a single group in the economic committees.⁶⁵ There was a working alliance in practice, but it was one between two "proud groups."⁶⁶

Under the EDG chairmanship of Plumb (1982-87), the Tories discussed the possibility of a formal alliance with the Christian Democrats, having been flirting with the idea over the years, but concluded that there was no need because of their own strength.⁶⁷ The coherent EDG

⁶⁰ Interview with Thomas Spencer, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993.

⁶¹ Interview with Thomas Spencer, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993.

⁶² Pridham and Pridham, 1981:48.

⁶³ See Ashford, 1980:121, 1992:134; Broughton, 1988:195; Cohen, 1979:57-58; Kleinmann, 1993:489; Morris, 1996:129-130; Palmer, 1981:77. See also EDG/The First Year: July 1979-July 1980, 1980. Kohler and Myrzik (1982:215) estimated that judging "from the observations of participants, agreement is reached in 90 per cent of cases."

⁶⁴ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

⁶⁵ Interview with Ben Patterson, Brussels, 23 June 1992.

⁶⁶ Interview with Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

⁶⁷ Interview with Lord Plumb, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993.

was big enough to stand on its own.⁶⁸ In the victorious 1979 European elections the British Tories had won 60 out of 78 seats. With altogether 64 members — including one member from Northern Ireland, two Danish Conservatives and one Danish Centre Democrat — the EDG was the third largest party group in numerical strength.⁶⁹

Due to its British dominance, a merger with the EPP Group was unworkable because it would have made the Tories too dominant and would also have shifted the political balance in favour of the Germans.⁷⁰ Still, however, questions were asked as to why the EDG and the EPP Group did not enter into a formal alliance or merge given the degree of informal contacts between them.⁷¹ They seemed natural allies.

The EDG obtained status as a permanent observer of the EDU in 1981, deepening relations with EDU member parties, which were spread out over no less than four different party groups in the EP.⁷² For the British Conservatives, the EDU was helpful in drawing them closer to German Christian Democrats and thus with the EPP Group. Eventually, this would lead to a “*Fraktionsgemeinschaft*”, that is, a formal parliamentary alliance.⁷³

Formation of the Alliance

The negotiations on a formal alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats were intense and extended in time to a period of almost three years. The initiative was taken in June 1989 and the alliance was finally implemented on 1 May 1992. During those years, a number of

⁶⁸ Interviews with Ben Patterson, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

⁶⁹ See Palmer, 1981:76-77.

⁷⁰ Interview with Ben Patterson, Brussels, 23 June 1992. Cf Palmer, 1981:77; Wood and Wood, 1979:33.

⁷¹ See Palmer, 1981:77.

⁷² In addition to the EDG and EPP Group, also the Gaullist-dominated European Progressive Democrats, to be relaunched into the EDA. The PR of the French UDF confederation belonged to the Liberal Group.

⁷³ Horner, 1981:82. Cf Haungs, 1983:181.

contacts were taken by the initiators and promoters of the alliance. The most noteworthy is perhaps the determination and intensity with which the Tories pursued the application for allied membership of the EPP Group.

British Tories Requesting an Alliance in June 1989

After the European elections of June 1989 the British Tories considered alliance strategies against the background of a disastrous result.⁷⁴ The outcome was a severe setback for the Tory MEPs, losing 13 seats of their former 45, down to 32. Also representing a governing party, the Danish Conservatives lost two of their four seats. Adding to the misery of the Conservatives, the Spanish members left the EDG and joined the Christian Democrats instead.

The Tory MEPs were now set to search for an alliance with another party group, with the EPP Group being seen as the closest.⁷⁵ The electoral result implied that the Tories' crucial position from the years of the first directly-elected EP had gone and that the centre-right would become weaker.⁷⁶

Discussing their immediate strategies, the diminished Tory MEPs met in London on 27 June 1989.⁷⁷ At this meeting MEPs expressed a deep antagonism towards Thatcher, feeling betrayed by the party leadership.⁷⁸ They felt defeated and unloved.⁷⁹ Two main options were aired; either to join the EPP Group or the Gaullist-dominated EDA and thus build an Anglo-French alliance.⁸⁰ Whereas a few advocated the Gaullist op-

⁷⁴ Cf Butler and Westlake, 1995:22; Campbell, 1993:771; Davies, 1995:363-364; Franklin, 1990:13; George, 1994:256; Oakley, 1989.

⁷⁵ Interview with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994.

⁷⁶ Interview with Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

⁷⁷ Interviews with Christopher Beazley, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994. Beazley said that all but one of the elected Tory MEPs were present.

⁷⁸ Interview with Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994. Teasdale was present at the meeting.

⁷⁹ Interview with John Fitzmaurice, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

⁸⁰ Interview with Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

tion on balance the argument confirmed the desire to come into the EPP Group and a decision to join was made.⁸¹

Did Tory MEPs have the backing of Thatcher? It is supposed that Sir Christopher Prout, EDG Chairman since 1987, asked her if she had any objection and that she supported the decision to join the EPP Group “theoretically”, but that she showed no great enthusiasm.⁸² But, whatever her degree of enthusiasm, Thatcher did give her support.⁸³ At the same time, it is understood that there was a more or less implicit understanding never to formalise the arrangement.⁸⁴

The EDG Chairman had been authorised by his fellow Conservative MEPs to make an application to join the EPP Group and an application was made already the day after the London meeting.⁸⁵ The application concerned allied membership under the provisions of Article 5b of the Rules of Procedure of the EPP Group:

The members of the European Parliament may become allied members of the Group if they subscribe to the basic policies of the Group of the European People’s Party and if they accept the Rules of Procedure.⁸⁶

Writing to his Christian Democrat counterpart, EPP Group Chairman Klepsch, Sir Christopher noted that the two groups had “enjoyed a very

⁸¹ Officially, all the Tory MEPs were in favour of joining the EPP Group. Interview with Christopher Beazley, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993. In practice, they were not quite unanimous. Interview with Derek Prag, Brussels, 25 June 1992. It is known that Bryan Cassidy, a Thatcherite MEP, was sceptical about a formal association with the Christian Democrats. See Lea (1992:29), who also suggests that James Moorhouse had mixed feelings initially.

⁸² Interview with Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

⁸³ Interviews with Laura Adshead, London, 8 February 1994; Sir Fred Catherwood, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994; Derek Prag, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Harald Rømer, Brussels, 23 June 1992. See also Lea, 1992:22; *The Times*, 1 July 1989.

⁸⁴ Interview with Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994.

⁸⁵ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992. Prout, 1989a.

⁸⁶ EPP Group/Handbook of the European People’s Party (CD Group) in the European Parliament 1993, p 19.

good and fruitful period of cooperation during the life of the second directly-elected European Parliament.”⁸⁷ Indeed, the two groups had voted closely together and would continue to do so.⁸⁸

This move took Christian Democrats by surprise.⁸⁹ They were even “embarrassed” by it.⁹⁰ The manifesto adopted by the British Conservative Party for the 1989 European elections was so different in tone and content from the EPP manifesto. Faithful to its ideological pillars, the EPP manifesto called for a “United States of Europe.”⁹¹ Before the elections a joint publication by the EDG and the Conservative Research Department had made it clear that Britain is not becoming part of a “United States of Europe” and that “[t]he Conservative Party is not a federalist party.”⁹²

EPP Rebuffs the Tory Request, but not Outright

For reasons that will be further analysed in Chapter Six, the EPP, meeting on 7 July 1989, decided to defer the application. This was an Enlarged Presidency meeting, indicating that the Tories’ application was not only a matter for the EPP Group, but for the national parent parties as well. Although the EPP came out against the request, it was not an outright rejection.

The EPP Group was recommended to “begin a dialogue with the British Conservatives in order to examine if and to what extent it is possible to arrive at agreement on a programme in the medium to long term” and, accordingly, “to try to find means of parliamentary cooperation which would promote the process of programmatic and political *rapprochement*.”⁹³ Asked

⁸⁷ Prout, 1989a. See also *Agence Europe*, 29 June 1989.

⁸⁸ Their close voting behaviour has been shown by Raunio, 1996, 1997. See also Westlake, 1994b.

⁸⁹ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

⁹⁰ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997.

⁹¹ See EPP/EPP-Manifesto for the European Elections 1989.

⁹² See EDG/50 Questions and Answers on the European Community, p 3.

⁹³ EPP/On the wish expressed by the British Conservative European deputies to join the European People’s Party, Meeting of Enlarged Presidency of EPP with Presidents of Member Parties, Brussels, 7 July 1989.

to search for a common ground with the Conservatives, the EPP Group would report back to the EPP on the technical and programmatical progress.⁹⁴

The EPP also recommended the EPP Group to organise appropriate technical co-operation with the Socialist Group. As a German Christian Democrat, Klepsch was likely to support the application from the British Tories, but was aware that he must be on friendly terms with the Socialists and also keep the EPP Group together. Still, however, he entered into a dialogue with the EDG Chairman regarding the prospects for a closer collaboration between the two groups.

After their meeting at the end of July, the two Chairmen held a joint press conference at which questions were asked about Tory moves for closer collaboration “or even a link-up.”⁹⁵ Klepsch recognised that major differences remained, but noted that the time had come to discuss those differences and to search for common positions. For his part, Sir Christopher admitted that he was disappointed by the EPP having decided not to accept Tory MEPs as allied members. At the same time, he welcomed that co-operation would become systematic as from September. The groups were now *engaged*, he said.⁹⁶

A Tory MEP had approached the EPP Group to discuss membership on an individual basis in order to facilitate closer links between the two groups.⁹⁷ Once the press found out that the Tory MEP in question was Ben Patterson he issued a press statement, clarifying that such a move would have been taken with the full approval and knowledge of both the EDG and the Conservative Party and that the whole negotiation process until then had been specifically agreed to by the British Prime Minister.⁹⁸ Following a discussion within the EDG as well as the party in London, this option never materialised. Apparently, Thatcher was consulted and kept

⁹⁴ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992. See also *Agence Europe*, 8 July 1989; Lea, 1992:23; Wood, 1989:62–63.

⁹⁵ Wood, 1989:61. See also Butler and Westlake, 1995:29; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1989.

⁹⁶ See *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1989.

⁹⁷ Confidential information.

⁹⁸ Patterson, 1989. See also *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1989.

informed of the opening of negotiations between Tory MEPs and the EPP Group.⁹⁹

Klepsch was reluctant to give any premature promises publicly, but, given the striking optimism on the part of the EDG Chairman, it seemed as if the two Chairmen had made a tacit agreement behind the scenes with a view to some kind of future alliance.¹⁰⁰ Seemingly thinking there was something deterministic about Tories linking up with the Christian Democrats, Sir Christopher, on behalf of the group he led, played this game with enormous patience and tenaciously pressed on with the application. He was present at the EPP Group's study days at Funchal/Madeira and would be present on similar occasions during this Parliament.¹⁰¹

Position of the Danish Conservatives

As EDG members, the Danish Conservatives were kept informed about the negotiations. In turn, they briefed Schlüter, the Danish Conservative Prime Minister. He gave his warmest endorsement to the idea of an alliance.¹⁰²

The Danish Conservatives might have been accepted by the Christian Democrats already in the 1979-84 Parliament, but preferred to stay in the EDG because they had a good co-operation with their British colleagues.¹⁰³ At this point, the Danes could have been accepted to join the EPP Group before the Tories, but still wanted to show solidarity with their British friends.¹⁰⁴ However small in the EDG, the Danes were disproportionately very much favoured economically as well as politically.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Cf Prout, 1991a.

¹⁰⁰ See *Agence Europe*, 10/11 July 1989.

¹⁰¹ *Agence Europe*, 13 July 1989. A similar occasion was his presence at the EPP Group's study days at Sirmione on Lake Garda 2-4 October 1991. See *Agence Europe*, 4 October 1991.

¹⁰² Interviews with Niels Pedersen, Brussels, 26 June 1992; Christian Rovsing, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

¹⁰³ Interview with Kent Kirk, Stockholm, 9 March 1994.

¹⁰⁴ Interviews with Jens Karoli, Copenhagen, 21 October 1993; Harald Rømer, Brussels, 9 January 1997.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Jens Karoli, Copenhagen, 21 October 1993.

Thus, reports that the Danes were likely to abandon their British colleagues, and follow the Spaniards into the EPP Group, proved unfounded.¹⁰⁶ A close partnership and solidarity had developed between the Danish and British officials and MEPs in the EDG, the successor to the Conservative Group to which their parties had belonged since 1973. As EDG partners they stayed in close contact during the negotiations on EPP Group affiliation. When the Tories were rebuffed, the Danish Conservatives would live through a period of engagement as well, eventually consummating a political marriage. Once the British Tories applied for allied membership the Danes had no real alternative but to go along as the British were so keen on the alliance.¹⁰⁷

Conservatives Courting Christian Democrats

Building momentum and searching for a common ground with Christian Democracy, the British Conservatives set up an internal working group at an early stage.¹⁰⁸ Offsprings from this group were the essays *What is British Conservatism?*, by Ben Patterson, and *Moral Aspects of Conservatism*, by Lord Bethell.¹⁰⁹ Also, there was a paper with the title of *Judaeo-Christian Elements of Conservative Policies*.¹¹⁰ This paper embraced Christian Democratic values to the full and was unequivocally pro-European. It expressed the views of Conservatives embracing One Nation social philosophy, quite compatible with Christian Democratic thinking.

During the spring of 1990, EDG managers intensified their pressure on Christian Democrats, strategically lobbying those Christian Democrat parties which traditionally have been more or less anxious about a closer

¹⁰⁶ See *The Times*, 1 July 1989.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Marie Jepsen, Strasbourg, 24 June 1993. See also Lea, 1992:35.

¹⁰⁸ Aably assisted by EDG officials, the key figures were Lord Bethell, Sir Fred Catherwood, Ben Patterson and Amédée Turner.

¹⁰⁹ Having written to both Lord Bethell and Patterson, only the latter was kind enough to answer, but instead of the paper requested he sent his pamphlet from 1973, indicating that his more recent paper was actually an updated version of the pamphlet, which is firmly anchored in the strand of Disraelian One Nation Toryism. See Patterson, 1973.

¹¹⁰ EDG/Judaeo-Christian Elements of Conservative Policies, New Thoughts for Conservatism in the 1990s. This paper was drafted by Stephen Biller of the EDG secretariat.

relationship with the British Conservative Party.¹¹¹ As for the visits and contacts, leading figures from all the member parties were contacted, mostly in person and in capitals, such as Brussels, the Hague, Paris and Rome. Strategically, the EDG organised study days in Rome.

Courting Christian Democrats across member states, Sir Christopher was accompanied by the Danish EDG Secretary-General, Harald Rømer.¹¹² In an interview, Rømer said that the decision first of all was one for the national parties and that the EDG tried to make national parties understand that the Conservatives were not so fearsome.¹¹³ For his part, John Biesmans, Deputy Secretary-General of the EDG, who was responsible for negotiations between the two party groups, described the party leaders as the dynamo, stressing that the decision would depend on them at the end of the day.¹¹⁴ He said that EPP Secretary-General Jansen was very supportive.

Contacts with Thomas Jansen were established at an early stage and later on with the Belgian Prime Minister, Wilfried Martens, who succeeded Santer as EPP President in May 1990.¹¹⁵ The EDG Chairman met with the new EPP President in June 1990.¹¹⁶ Santer himself met Sir Christopher “several times.”¹¹⁷

Also in the EP, EDG managers acted through personal contacts and these proved to be important.¹¹⁸ Tory MEPs were present at the EPP Group’s study days on Crete.¹¹⁹ And in June 1990 members of the EDG and the EPP Group met in Copenhagen.¹²⁰ A joint colloquium was held

¹¹¹ On the basis of confidential information and letters exchanged between people involved.

¹¹² Interviews with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994; Niels Pedersen, Brussels, 26 June 1992; Sir Christopher Prout, Athens, 12 November 1992; Harald Rømer, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Amédée Turner, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

¹¹³ Interview with Harald Rømer, Brussels, 23 June 1992.

¹¹⁴ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

¹¹⁵ See EPP/EVP Bulletin, Nr. 3 Juni 1990; *Agence Europe*, 11 May 1990.

¹¹⁶ See EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 4 1990; Prout, 1990b.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

¹¹⁸ Interviews with Jens Karoli, Copenhagen, 21 October 1993; Niels Pedersen, Brussels, 26 June 1992.

¹¹⁹ *Agence Europe*, 4 & 5 May 1990.

¹²⁰ On the basis of confidential and private information.

on the theme of ‘The Nordic countries and the developments in Europe’.¹²¹ This was a clear indication of the strong will of some Christian Democrats, not least the Germans, and the EDG to be on speaking terms. At the same time, the Dutch remained less friendly towards the Conservatives.¹²²

British Conservative Party Becomes Intensively Involved

Initially, EDG managers handled the negotiation process without much assistance from the national party.¹²³ However, a series of meetings between Tory MEPs and the Party Chairman contributed to the Central Office becoming more closely involved in the negotiations from spring 1990. The British Tories would thereby approach Christian Democrats from more than one front.

As Party Chairman, Kenneth Baker had been to Strasbourg to discuss with MEPs.¹²⁴ He was personally involved in talks with leading German Christian Democrats, paying visits to Germany as he was “keen to *forge a closer link* between the Conservative Party and our German counterparts, the Christian Democratic Union.”¹²⁵ His CDU counterpart was Volker Rühle, whose help was sought “in securing for British MEPs their membership of the European People’s Party group in the European Parliament.”¹²⁶ Baker also addressed the Konrad Adenauer Foundation — “the ‘Embassy’ of the CDU around the world” — whose London office had helped with the arrangements.¹²⁷

During his visit to Germany, Baker invited Rühle to give a lecture at

¹²¹ The seminar was attended by leading representatives of the Nordic Conservative parties, including the Leader of the Swedish Moderate Party Carl Bildt. See *Agence Europe*, 9 June 1990; Bildt, 1991:146. The following day, a seminar was arranged on the situation in the Baltic countries in the presence of Baltic Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers.

¹²² Private information.

¹²³ Interview with Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994.

¹²⁴ See Baker, 1993:348; Tebbit, 1990.

¹²⁵ Baker, 1993:348. Emphasis added. See also Beloff, 1996:106.

¹²⁶ Baker, 1993:351.

¹²⁷ Baker, 1993:349.

the Conservative Party Conference in Bournemouth in October 1990.¹²⁸ In his speech, Rühle said that he wanted a closer partnership between the CDU and the Tories and noted that the Tory MEPs “always receive *close co-operation* from their German partners.”¹²⁹ He suggested “that the relationship between Britain and Germany has been a *silent alliance*. It functions quietly, but effectively. I think this is also true of the relationship between the Conservatives on the one hand and the Christian Democratic Union on the other — assisted by the excellent work of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in London....”¹³⁰

Following the downfall of Thatcher, contacts between the CDU and the British Conservatives intensified. As CDU Secretary-General, Rühle would stay in close contact with the new Conservative Party Chairman, Chris Patten.¹³¹ The formation of a formal alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats would turn out to be a matter of great priority for Patten, pushing Major just as he is understood to have done with Thatcher.¹³² In a much-quoted interview in *Marxism Today*, Patten underlined his Christian Democrat thinking.¹³³ Although this interview primarily must be seen in its domestic context, there was an external dimension to it. As will be further discussed in the next chapter, the Christian Democrat orientation of the new party leadership made it easier to negotiate with Christian Democrats.

Supporting the Tory MEPs’ efforts to become allied members of the EPP Group, the Party Chairman embarked on a tour of centre-right Europe: “It was a journey that took Chris Patten from rooms over bicycle sheds in Belgium to marble palaces in Rome....”¹³⁴ Of the different parties courted, the “CDU was much the most important stop....”¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Baker, 1993:351.

¹²⁹ Rühle, 1990:11. Emphasis added.

¹³⁰ Rühle, 1990:16. Emphasis added.

¹³¹ In a portrait of Rühle, *Financial Times* (10 February 1995) would recall that he “as CDU general secretary developed close relations with the UK Conservative party....” See also *The Economist*, 26 September 1992; Hogg and Hill, 1995:78; Middlemas, 1995:189.

¹³² Interview with Edward Steen, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994.

¹³³ See Patten, 1991a. See also Patten, 1983 and the next chapter.

¹³⁴ Hogg and Hill, 1995:78.

¹³⁵ Hogg and Hill, 1995:78.

It is stressed that the Tory Party was closely involved at this stage of negotiating an alliance.¹³⁶

In late 1990, Tory MEPs reconfirmed how keen they were on co-operation with the Christian Democrats.¹³⁷ A series of contacts were then taken by the EDG throughout the first quarter of 1991.¹³⁸ Downing Street and Central Office co-ordinated between themselves and with the EDG. At 10 Downing Street Judith Chaplin — the late Political Secretary running the political office — was involved. And at the *Bundeskanzleramt* in Bonn — the Chancellor's office — contact was taken with Staatsminister Lutz Stavenhagen.¹³⁹ Contacts were again taken with Martens and with Klepsch, whom Sir Christopher met regularly.¹⁴⁰

A further meeting — organised by Ludger Eling at the London office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation — was held between Patten and Rühle.¹⁴¹ In London, Eling and EPP Secretary-General Jansen met with Patten, who was invited to Brussels to meet the EPP President. Jansen and Patten met at the EPP secretariat in Brussels on 18 March 1991.¹⁴² Then they went to see Martens at the Prime Minister's residence, having

¹³⁶ Interviews with Laura Adshead, London, 8 February 1994; Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994.

¹³⁷ See *Agence Europe*, 7 December 1990. The last week of November 1990 there were the Parliamentary Assizes in Rome, bringing together 173 MPs and 85 MEPs. See EP/ The New Treaties: European Parliament Proposals, 1993, p 203. For a discussion of the Assizes, see Corbett, 1992:274–275, 1993:21; Duverger, 1992; Jacobs *et al*, 1992:276–277; Westlake, 1994a:55–56. The British Conservatives were also represented at the EPP's Dublin Congress in November 1990. See Jansen, 1996:127.

¹³⁸ The presentation of contacts is on the basis of confidential information.

¹³⁹ Stavenhagen, then Staatsminister at the Foreign Ministry in Bonn, had chaired the EPP's programme committee in view of the EPP Congress in Luxembourg in November 1988. See Jansen, 1996:123.

¹⁴⁰ Cf Wahl, 1992:12.

¹⁴¹ *Agence Europe* (21 March 1991) reported that Chris Patten met with CDU leaders in March 1991 and that the British Conservative Party had stepped up its contacts with Christian Democrat politicians. Possibly, Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, took part in the meeting between Patten and Rühle. I have not been able to confirm Hurd's involvement, however. Given his background and interest in building party links in the 1970s I assume that he was involved in this process. Also, Hurd and Patten were close to each other.

¹⁴² Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 7 December 1993. Cf Patten, 1991b.

lunch also in the presence of the EDG Chairman and Secretary-General.¹⁴³

To be sure of their active support, the EDG Chairman visited the leading figures of the EPP member parties in France, Greece and Portugal. And to promote the Tories' application, the EPP President made special trips to Rome and the Hague.

Major was visited in London by EPP Group Chairman Klepsch and one of its Vice-Chairmen, Raphaël Chanterie. In an interview, Chanterie said that Major had commented that his generation and the younger ones were more committed to the EC than the older generations and that his aim was to co-operate closely and bring the UK into "*the heart of Europe*."¹⁴⁴

The generation factor and the aim for Britain in the EC to be "*at the very heart of Europe*" was publicly expressed by Major in a speech — his first outside the UK since becoming Prime Minister — in Bonn on 11 March 1991.¹⁴⁵ The speech was held at the CDU headquarters and again it was the Konrad Adenauer Foundation which had organised the arrangements.¹⁴⁶

If not the whole speech had been written by Patten, he had definitely influenced its contents. Significantly, one of the aims of the speech was to promote Conservative entry into the EPP Group with the clear knowledge that the CDU and Kohl personally were keys to a successful outcome.¹⁴⁷ In the words of Major: "As like-minded Parties we can

¹⁴³ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Raphaël Chanterie, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993.

¹⁴⁵ Major, 1991. Emphasis added. See also Ashford, 1992:135; Beloff, 1996:106; Butler and Kavanagh, 1992:29-30; Butler and Westlake, 1995:29; Campbell, 1993:794; Clark, 1993:11; George, 1994:237; George and Sowemimo, 1996:256; Hogg and Hill, 1995:77-79; Kavanagh and Seldon, 1994:465; Paterson, 1996:59; Wallace, 1994:285; Young, 1993:162. For press reporting, see *The Economist*, 9 & 16 March 1991; *Financial Times*, 12 March 1991; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 March 1991; *The Times*, 12 March 1991; *Die Welt*, 13 March 1991.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997.

¹⁴⁷ Much was made of this aim in the press. See *Financial Times*, 12 March 1991; *The Times*, 12 March 1991. In advance of the Bonn bilateral summit *The Economist* (9 March 1991) had speculated, or had perhaps come across inside information, that the EPP link would be on the agenda.

achieve great things together in Europe and for Europe. Our MEPs *co-operate ever more closely* in the European Parliament: I would like to see that relationship develop further. It must surely make sense for our MEPs to *work together in the same team*.”¹⁴⁸

It was at their Bonn meeting in March 1991 that Kohl and Major “sealed their relationship.”¹⁴⁹ The personal chemistry worked well between the two of them. Major had paid a visit to Germany in February 1991 for talks with the Chancellor.¹⁵⁰ They had also met separately at the Rome European Council in December 1990. In that context it had been reported that they had “agreed to discuss ways in which their two politically conservative parties could work more closely in future.”¹⁵¹

After Major’s Bonn speech, there were clear indications that Kohl had given a promise of marriage, that is to say, that the engagement between the EDG and the EPP Group, entered into in July 1989, might result in a wedding. Both Kohl and Major were clearly committed to the cause of a formal alliance.

April 1991 EPP Conference — A Defining Moment

The early months of 1991 would prove decisive for the ongoing processes of transnational alliance-building among Conservative and Christian Democrat parties. The EPP Conference of Party Leaders and Heads of Government would meet in Brussels on 13 April 1991.

Prior to this, there was a special European Council in Luxembourg, holding the EC Presidency, on 8 April 1991 in the presence of the six heads of governments who also met regularly at the EPP Conference.¹⁵² Looking back, Santer recalled that the matter of an alliance with the

¹⁴⁸ Major, 1991:11. Emphases added. See also *Financial Times*, 12 March 1991.

¹⁴⁹ Hogg and Hill, 1995:77. See also Chapters Four and Five.

¹⁵⁰ See Hogg and Hill, 1995:77.

¹⁵¹ *The Guardian*, 15 December 1990.

¹⁵² The six were Giulio Andreotti, Helmut Kohl, Ruud Lubbers, Wilfried Martens, Konstantin Mitsotakis and Jacques Santer, the acting President-in-office. The summit was called to discuss foreign policy co-ordination, following the far from united front of EC countries during the Gulf crisis. See *Keesing’s Record Of World Events*, April 1991, p 38154.

Conservatives was discussed among Christian Democrats on this occasion.¹⁵³ However, he could not remember whether it was discussed with Major and Schlüter. Most likely it was considering the timing of the summit and that Major and his fellow Danish Conservative colleague recently had been briefed about the attitudes of the EPP member parties and their leaders, including the heads of government, towards a prospective alliance.¹⁵⁴

Having participated at the Luxembourg summit, Martens went to Santiago de Compostela, where the EPP Group held study days.¹⁵⁵ The EDG Chairman and his Gaullist counterpart were present on this occasion. They were expected to discuss with their Christian Democrat colleagues “the issue of strengthening bonds among the main centre-right groups....”¹⁵⁶

An increasingly impatient EDG Chairman had written to both the EPP Group Chairman and the EPP President to ask for a final decision on the application.¹⁵⁷ In a letter to the EPP President, dated 5 April 1991, Sir Christopher embraced the federalist policies of the EPP: “As is clear from our voting record in the European Parliament, we fully share the basic policies which underpin the declarations of Luxembourg (‘On the People’s Side’ 1988) and Dublin (‘For a Federal Constitution of the European Union’ 1990).”¹⁵⁸ On behalf of his colleagues he claimed that they “fully support” individual measures in the EPP programmes and “[t]he institutional development of the Community into a European Union of a federal type with due application of the principle of subsidiarity....” Getting down to basics, he said they supported Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), including a central bank and a single currency, rural policy and,

¹⁵³ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

¹⁵⁴ Major was briefed by Sir Christopher Prout and Schlüter by Marie Jepsen, the Danish Conservative MEP. For the attitudes of the individual parties, see Chapter Six.

¹⁵⁵ *Agence Europe*, 12 April 1991.

¹⁵⁶ *Agence Europe*, 12 April 1991. The Gaullist EDA Chairman, de la Malène, was more pro-joining up with the Christian Democrat-dominated EPP Group than the RPR leadership. Private information.

¹⁵⁷ Prout, 1991ab. See also *Agence Europe*, 15/16 & 21 March 1991. These letters will be further commented upon in Chapters Four and Five.

¹⁵⁸ Prout, 1991b. See also *Agence Europe*, 15/16 April 1991; Lea, 1992:24-25.

with reference to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), measures of social compensation, the concept of “Social Market Economy” and the “social dimension” as well as environmental policy.¹⁵⁹

Sir Christopher’s letter had been preceded by another letter to Martens. The tone in this letter, dated 28 February 1991, was considerably harsher.¹⁶⁰ The two of them had met in early February. Clearly, the EDG Chairman was running out of patience. The time had come to ask for a settlement, Sir Christopher said, concluding that a mutual understanding had been created between the two groups. They had now reached a stage where further relations only could be developed through integration into the EPP Group. Within the EP there had been fruitful cooperation in committees as well as plenary sessions, Sir Christopher noted, pointing to common voting patterns, day to day work and to agreement over EMU and EPU. He stressed that the EDG had given its complete support to the Herman, Martin and Colombo reports.¹⁶¹ Thus, there was a high degree of political agreement and convergence between the two groups and the difference between them was by no means greater than that between the Christian Democrat parties themselves, Sir Christopher suggested.

Patten, too, wrote to the EPP President, stating “once again that this application enjoys my full support and that of the Prime Minister as Leader of the Conservative Party.”¹⁶² Aware of the duly EPP Conference, Patten remarked that both he and the Prime Minister “attach importance to the decision on 13th April and will be watching the outcome with interest.” If less outspokenly federalist than the letters from the EDG

¹⁵⁹ See also *The Guardian*, 17 September 1991. In 1990 the same Sir Christopher (1990a:7) had said: “I happen to take the view that the Common Agricultural Policy, as adopted by the Community in the nineteen sixties, was a mistake.”

¹⁶⁰ Prout, 1991a. I have this letter in Danish and German versions. The letter was summed-up in *Agence Europe*, 15/16 April 1991.

¹⁶¹ Those reports were drafted by two Christian Democrat MEPs, Fernand Herman and Emilio Colombo, and by the Labour MEP David Martin. The Tories’ support for those reports was overwhelming, but not complete however. See Corbett, 1992:273–274; Jacobs *et al*, 1992:276; Westlake, 1994b:234–236, 255. The reports are outlined in EP/ The New Treaties: European Parliament Proposals, 1993 and EPP Group/Towards European Union, Texts and Documents, 3/1991.

¹⁶² Patten, 1991b. See also *Agence Europe*, 15/16 April 1991.

Chairman, it is noteworthy that the Party Chairman expressed “full support for a social dimension to the Social Market....”

Given that these letters committed the British Tories to the fundamental points of the EPP’s federalist programmes, they were of the utmost importance for the negotiation process, as we will see in the next chapter. They would also have implications for the politics in the Tory Party’s internal arena, as will be shown in Chapter Six.

A meeting between John Major and the Leader of the Irish FG, John Bruton, was scheduled for 10 April 1991.¹⁶³ Insofar as the FG was one of the EPP member parties likely to present problems for the British Tories, for reasons to be analysed in Chapter Six, this meeting made a great deal of sense from the EDG’s horizon. It was hardly a coincidence that it would take place only days before the EPP summit, to which Bruton was invited.

Going back to the EPP’s Enlarged Presidency meeting in July 1989, the time had arrived for leading Christian Democrats to take a decision in the light of how things worked out in practice in the EP. Indeed, the April 1991 EPP Conference was a *Sondersitzung* with the sole purpose of agreeing on a recommendation to the EPP Group.¹⁶⁴ In the run-up to the meeting the views against the application were said to be so strong that it appeared unlikely that a definitive decision could be taken on this occasion.¹⁶⁵

Except for a series of party leaders, the Conference was attended by five heads of government: Helmut Kohl, Ruud Lubbers, Wilfried Martens, Konstantin Mitsotakis, and Jacques Santer.¹⁶⁶ Also Colombo, the EUCD President, and Klepsch, the EPP Group Chairman, were among those present.

The decision was in favour of the Tories’ request for allied membership of the EPP Group. A resolution was adopted according to which a “Community of Groups” — a *Fraktionsgemeinschaft* based on the model of the joint

¹⁶³ Confidential information. In an interview, Bruton did not deny that he had met with Major. Interview with John Bruton, Brussels, 10 December 1993.

¹⁶⁴ Cf Jansen, 1996:132.

¹⁶⁵ *Agence Europe*, 23 March 1991.

¹⁶⁶ *Agence Europe*, 15/16 April 1991. For his part, Andreotti had to stay in Rome because of the formation of a new Italian Government. This explains why Forlani was absent too.

parliamentary grouping between CDU/CSU — would be created during the first quarter of 1992.¹⁶⁷ The group was also recommended to establish a “Coordination Committee” with the purpose of seeking common positions “on the following crucial political questions”: the Christian vision of man and its political implications, family policy, social policy, environmental policy, agricultural policy, monetary policy, security policy, and federal Europe. The EPP’s Dublin and Luxembourg documents would form a basis for further discussions on common positions. It was decided that the EPP, at the end of the 1989–94 Parliament, would review “in the light of experience and of the electoral programme, the usefulness of continuing or of developing this decision.”¹⁶⁸

EPP Conferences, June and December 1991 — Maintaining the Momentum

Following up the April 1991 EPP Conference, another conference was held at Château de Senningen in Luxembourg in the evening of 21 June 1991.¹⁶⁹ Officially, those attending the conference met to prepare the European Council, concluding the Luxembourg Presidency at a crucial stage of the 1991 IGCs.¹⁷⁰ However, there was another item on the agenda; the decision of 13 April concerning an alliance with the Conservatives.¹⁷¹

All heads of governments representing EPP member parties were present, including Andreotti.¹⁷² As will be further commented upon in the

¹⁶⁷ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991; Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference of Heads of Government and Party Leaders of EPP, Brussels, 13 April 1991.

¹⁶⁸ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991; Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference of Heads of Government and Party Leaders of EPP, Brussels, 13 April 1991.

¹⁶⁹ See EPP/Sommet du Parti Populaire Européen, Luxembourg, le 21 juin 1991. Prior to this conference meeting the EPP Bureau had met on 8 May 1991. On this occasion there was an “extensive debate” on the results of the EPP Conference in April 1991. EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991.

¹⁷⁰ *Agence Europe*, 20 & 24/25 June 1991.

¹⁷¹ On the basis of confidential information.

¹⁷² The leading party figures attending the meeting included José Maria Aznar (PP), John Bruton (FG), Gérard Deprez (PSC), Josep A Duran i Lleida (UDC), Arnaldo Forlani (DC), and Wim van Velzen (CDA).

following two chapters, Kohl expressed his complete commitment to the idea of a closer co-operation between centre and centre-right parties. For his part, Klepsch reported that the eight working groups had begun their work and that they would report on their results by the end of October. He looked forward to the implementation of a community of groups, *Fraktionsgemeinschaft*, in the period January–April 1992. He also informed those present that the Danish Conservatives had followed the negotiation process.

The eight working groups, covering as many separate issues, discussed key themes of Christian Democracy over which it was necessary to agree.¹⁷³ When they had concluded their work, the documents produced by each and every one of them were submitted to the EPP, which would give a new recommendation to the EPP Group later on.

The results of the discussions within the working groups were raised by Klepsch at the EPP Conference convened in the Hague in early December 1991. The aim was still to form a *Fraktionsgemeinschaft* between Christian Democrats and Conservatives. For now, however, the concentration was upon the Maastricht summit, with the EPP agreeing unanimously that it must be a success.¹⁷⁴

Divisive Maastricht

During the final stages of the 1991 IGCs, there were clear indications that London was not quite as positive to further European integration as appeared by Major's Bonn speech in March 1991 and by letters from the Party Chairman and the EDG Chairman. A general election had to be called in the UK in the spring of 1992 at the latest.

Visiting Paris for the EDU Party Leaders' Conference in September

¹⁷³ Interviews with Christopher Beazley, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Sir Fred Catherwood, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Ben Patterson, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

¹⁷⁴ EPP/Communiqué, EVP-Konferenz der Regierungschefs und Parteiführer, Den Haag, 6. Dezember 1991.

1991, Major also met with President Mitterrand.¹⁷⁵ A report from a press conference following their meeting suggested that the British were attempting “to dilute discussions leading to agreements on monetary, political, and economic union, which are due to be signed at the end of the year. There is a fear that Mr Major’s enthusiasm for western European integration is being tempered by Conservative general election tactics....”¹⁷⁶

Major’s remarks in Paris sent alarming signals to Brussels, from where it was reported that the “[c]onfidential negotiations on a merger between Conservative members of the European Parliament and the powerful Christian Democrat parties have been threatened by the Government’s opposition to European political union.”¹⁷⁷ Sir Christopher, who had been present at the EDU Conference in Paris, said that there were few remaining differences between his colleagues and the Christian Democrats, adding: “I accept however that not everybody is equally enthusiastic....There will be those who have an eye to the Maastricht summit and will play up any difficulties which there appear to be with the British government.”¹⁷⁸ Maastricht was seen to be a stumbling block in the way to an alliance.

February 1992 EPP Conference — Reconfirming the Alliance

The EPP was to take another decision on the Tory application for allied membership of the EPP Group. One of those invited to meetings of the EPP Conference was the Chairman of the EPP Group. With Klepsch elected to the EP Presidency, in January 1992, he was replaced as EPP

¹⁷⁵ On behalf of the British Conservative Party Major attended along with Sir Geoffrey Pattie, the Vice-Chairman, whereas Lord Beaverbrook was present in the capacity of EDU Treasurer. Also the Danish Conservative Prime Minister, Schlüter, was present. As host, the RPR was represented by both Chirac and Juppé. The German CDU was represented by Volker Rühe, Bernd Fischer and Elmar Brok. Two regular participants at EPP Conferences included José Maria Aznar (PP) and Konstantin Mitsotakis (ND). See EDU/EDU Yearbook 1991.

¹⁷⁶ *The Guardian*, 13 September 1991.

¹⁷⁷ *The Guardian*, 17 September 1991. Report by the as usually well-informed John Palmer.

¹⁷⁸ *The Guardian*, 17 September 1991.

Group Chairman by Tindemans.¹⁷⁹ In the light of history, it was somewhat ironic that Tindemans — a Belgian Christian Democrat, who as EPP President had objected to the German Christian Democrats' closeness to British Conservatives by writing a letter of protest to Kohl — was seen as “a strong supporter of the Tory application.”¹⁸⁰ In an interview, Tindemans said that negotiations were intense and that there was a strong pressure to align, also on him personally.¹⁸¹

In short, there was a go ahead in early 1992.¹⁸² The Tory application was on the agenda at the EPP Bureau meeting in Brussels in early February.¹⁸³ The Maastricht Treaty was also discussed at this meeting, which was held in preparation for an EPP Conference convened at Château de Val Duchesse in Brussels on 14 February 1992 to discuss inter-party relations, with special reference to the Tory application.¹⁸⁴ Whether or not this conference would take a decision in favour of the Tories' request was uncertain.¹⁸⁵

The summit was attended by several party leaders and by all Christian Democrat heads of government at the time, with the exception of Andreotti. In practice, this conference confirmed what had been agreed in April 1991. Accordingly, the EPP Group was recommended to allow entry of all EDG members. The arrangement would be that of a *Fraktionsgemeinschaft*, which would have to be reviewed in the context of the 1994 European elections.¹⁸⁶ The recommendation was linked “to the requirement that the EPP programme (in particular its Dublin decisions) continue to determine the policy and position of the ‘Community of Groups’.”¹⁸⁷ The most sceptical Christian Democrats are understood to

¹⁷⁹ EPP Group/Report on the Activities July 1991-July 1992.

¹⁸⁰ *The Guardian*, 15 January 1992.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

¹⁸² Interviews with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Raphaël Chanterie, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993.

¹⁸³ *Agence Europe*, 8 February 1992.

¹⁸⁴ See EPP/The Conference of EPP Heads of Government and Parties, Val Duchesse, 14th February 1992; EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 April/May 1992; EPP Group/Report on the Activities July 1991-July 1992, p 311; *Agence Europe*, 17/18 February 1992; *The European*, 20-26 February 1992; *The Times*, 19 February 1992.

¹⁸⁵ See *Agence Europe*, 8 & 12 February 1992.

¹⁸⁶ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 April/May 1992; *Agence Europe*, 17/18 February 1992; *The European*, 20-26 February 1992; Henschel, 1992:263.

¹⁸⁷ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 April/May 1992. See also *The Guardian*, 12 February 1992.

have pressed for a critique of the “negative position” adopted by Major at Maastricht “regarding European Political Union and more particularly regarding a common social policy....”¹⁸⁸ Still, however, it was noted that the EDG had a different approach.

EDG’s Response

Responding to the EPP’s decision, the EDG Chairman had a memorandum drawn up and distributed to colleagues in the EDG, attaching an unofficial English translation of the resolution adopted by the EPP.¹⁸⁹ Having said that it was “good news” that the EPP had confirmed that the joint working groups had now “successfully concluded their work”, Sir Christopher regretted and repudiated the criticism of the Prime Minister but argued that this “critical paragraph appears to have been the price which Chancellor Kohl and his allies had to pay in order to secure the agreement of the Dutch and Belgian Walloon leaders to the rest of the text.”¹⁹⁰ As to the remark in the resolution about the Dublin decisions, the EDG Chairman pointed out that they “are really self-evident since the EPP Members will automatically be in a majority in the ‘Fraktionsgemeinschaft’.” In the official news release he noted that the “model on which we have agreed, a harmonious one these days, is that of the CDU and Bavarian CSU in the German Bundestag.”¹⁹¹

Concluding Negotiations

The EDG Chairman had also commented on the deadline set out by the EPP for the two groups to reach an agreement on the common structure. This deadline was set to 31 March and the date for the imple-

¹⁸⁸ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 April/May 1992. See also *The Guardian*, 12 February 1992.

¹⁸⁹ EDG/Memorandum, 14 February 1992.

¹⁹⁰ In the official news release, issued the next day, reference was made to Belgian Christian Democrats and not to the Wallonians specifically. See Conservatives in the EP/News release, 15 February 1992. See also *The Guardian*, 22 February 1992.

¹⁹¹ Conservatives in the EP/News release, 15 February 1992.

mentation of the alliance to 1 May. This implied that the timetable decided at the April 1991 EPP Conference, with the formation of a “Community of Groups” during the first quarter of 1992, was not fulfilled. In fact, also the decision by the EPP Group was postponed beyond the 31 March deadline. The vote in the EPP Group would not take place until 9 April 1992, awaiting the general elections in Italy and in the UK.¹⁹²

Prior to the vote, and at the insistence of Christian Democrats, Sir Christopher presented Tindemans with a letter listing the signatures of EDG members, submitting to the conditions for accession to the EPP Group.¹⁹³ The Conservatives thereby agreed to the basic policies underpinning the EPP programmes, including its federalist Dublin document.¹⁹⁴ Following this, they were accepted by a two-thirds majority in favour.¹⁹⁵

Unlike the recommendations of the EPP Conference, the new EPP Group leadership did not elaborate on the idea of a *Fraktionsgemeinschaft*. This idea had caused confusion, and was difficult to understand for others than the Germans, and instead the Conservatives joined as individual and allied members.¹⁹⁶ Since the arrangement was due for review, it was not that of a merger.¹⁹⁷ With the EDG dissolved and its former members joining the EPP Group as individual and allied members, the arrangement was that of an alliance. It was officially entered into on 1 May 1992, after nearly three years of intensive negotiations.

¹⁹² See Chapter Six.

¹⁹³ EPP Group/Proces verbal de la réunion du Groupe du 9 avril 1992 à Strasbourg. See also Butler and Westlake, 1995:29. See Chapter Six.

¹⁹⁴ Interviews with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997; Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992. See also Andersson and Lindahl, 1994:84.

¹⁹⁵ Interviews with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992. See also Conservatives in the EP/News release, 6 May 1992; Andersson and Lindahl, 1994:84; Bethell, 1994; Jacobs *et al*, 1992:65; Lea, 1992:27. Complying with the Rules of Procedure of the EPP Group, a majority of group members had voted in favour and more than half of them had taken part in the vote. See EPP Group/Handbook of the European People's Party (CD Group) in the European Parliament 1993, p 19. At the time, the EPP Group had 128 members.

¹⁹⁶ Interviews with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Raphaël Chanterie, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993.

¹⁹⁷ Interview Harald Rømer, Brussels, 23 June 1992. Westlake (1994b:215, 237) consistently refers to the arrangement as one of a “merger.” So does Lea (1992:29).

Evolution of the Alliance

It is recalled that the alliance would be reviewed in the context of the 1994 European elections. This was an important moment for the evolution of the alliance, as well as for the ongoing processes of transnational alliance-building among political parties of the European centre-right. The final task of this chapter is to examine the remaining questions concerning the alliance within both the Conservative and the Christian Democratic camp.

Alliance Commitments

As far as alliance commitments are concerned, a certain ambiguity was part of the deal and there was a potential for confusion. However, the British and Danish Conservatives had actually joined the EPP Group with a commitment to agree with the Christian Democrats on fundamental questions.¹⁹⁸ In a news release, the Tories had also presented the arrangement as something much more than a loose alliance, with the EDG described as having “consummated its political *marriage*.”¹⁹⁹

Nevertheless, it seemed that Christian Democrats were expecting more of the Tories in terms of alliance commitments than the latter themselves. On his part, Tindemans was concerned that the Tories would separate themselves within the EPP Group, just like the Labour MEPs did in the Socialist Group.²⁰⁰ For this reason, he thought it would be a good thing to change the group’s name to *Group of the European People’s Party: Christian Democrats and Allied Members*. However, this did not come about as there was opposition to the idea from MEPs representing parties against the alliance in the first place, which was paradoxical.²⁰¹

From the outset, the Tories had been anxious about their independence

¹⁹⁸ Interviews with William Newton Dunn, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Harald Römer, Brussels, 23 June 1992. See also *The European*, 20–26 February & 30 April–3 May 1992; Hanley, 1994b:193; Jacobs *et al*, 1992:65; Westlake, 1994b:271.

¹⁹⁹ Conservatives in the EP/News release, 6 May 1992. Emphasis added.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

²⁰¹ Interview with Leo Tindemans, Athens, 14 November 1992.

and how it could be maintained given the expected alliance commitments within the multinational EPP Group.²⁰² As will be discussed further in Chapter Six, the Strasbourg Tories would become under intense pressure from the home front. Being forced to justify why they were sitting in the EPP Group at all, they would play down their commitments vis-à-vis the EPP and would strongly distinguish between the EPP Party and the EPP Group. As Leader of the Tory MEPs, Sir Christopher would emphasise that the “common group is an alliance, *not a marriage*.”²⁰³

However, the Conservatives were fully integrated in the group’s decision-making bodies and secretariat. Therefore, the alliance was in reality one group and a matter of a complete integration.²⁰⁴

Also, it is understood that at least some of the Tory MEPs had signed up for individual membership of the EPP Party.²⁰⁵ As EPP Group members, however allied, the Tories were also involved in the drafting of a programme in view of the EPP’s November 1992 Congress in Athens.²⁰⁶ Several of them attended the Congress and although they had no right to vote, since the British Conservative Party was not an EPP member, they were occasionally asked to take the floor to explain various amendments they had put forward.²⁰⁷

Alliance Due for Review

Since the alliance was due for review it would be raised anew by the EPP Conference and Bureau as well as by the EPP Group. Its continuation in the 1994-99 Parliament could in no way be taken for granted.²⁰⁸ Christian Democrats had been deeply unhappy with the ways in which Tory MEPs explained away their commitments

²⁰² Cf Lea, 1992:29-30. See also Chapter Six.

²⁰³ Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993. Emphasis added.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Edward Steen, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994.

²⁰⁵ Interview with Timothy Bainbridge, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Derek Prag, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

²⁰⁷ Author’s direct observation. See also *Agence Europe*, 14 November 1992.

²⁰⁸ See *Agence Europe*, 25 May 1994; *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 June 1994; *The Independent*, 14 June 1994.

²⁰⁹ *Financial Times*, 14 June 1994. See also *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 June 1994.

vis-à-vis the EPP as well as with the Euro-sceptical tone adopted by the British Conservative Party and Government during the election campaign.

Nevertheless, Tindemans hinted that some new alliance might still be possible despite the anti-European tone.²⁰⁹ Significantly, he said that the Tory MEPs are individual members who “fully accept the programme and the rules of the game.”²¹⁰ He pointed out that any party applying for allied membership must share the “fundamental political positions” of the EPP.²¹¹

Alliance strategies were also shaped against the background of the arrival of new political forces in Strasbourg. They included Forza Italia and the anti-Maastricht campaigners favouring a Europe of nations, including Sir James Goldsmith, who was close to Tory Euro-sceptics. The link between the Forza Italia contingent and the EPP was unclear, as it was between the EPP and the Portuguese Liberals elected on the PSD list.²¹² It was also unclear whether the French neo-Gaullists would hold to the agreement they had reached with UDF, their domestic coalition partner, to join the EPP Group.

British Tories Reconsidering the Alliance

Having lost 14 of their seats, down to 18, the diminished Tory MEPs met in London on 17 June 1994 to decide whether or not to renegotiate the terms of their affiliation to the EPP Group. Conscious of the need not to commit the mother party too hastily, they had initially said they would keep all options open until it was clear what routes other parties would embark upon.²¹³

However, Tory MEPs were open to co-operation with Forza Italia

²¹⁰ Quoted in *Agence Europe*, 16 June 1994.

²¹¹ Quoted in *Agence Europe*, 16 June 1994.

²¹² Interview with John Biesmans, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994. See also Corbett *et al*, 1995:76; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 July 1994. The PSD joined the EPP Party and the EPP Group in late 1996.

²¹³ Interview with John Biesmans, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994. See also *Financial Times*, 14 June 1994.

despite Berlusconi's coalition with Fini's neofascists.²¹⁴ As after the 1989 European elections, the option of an eventual alliance with the French Gaullists was raised.²¹⁵

Whereas a majority of Tory MEPs favoured the option of rejoining the EPP Group as allied members, some of them had problems swallowing the loyalty to the EPP's avowedly federalist programme.²¹⁶ One of them was Giles Chichester, who had promised to oppose a continued EPP link if he was elected.²¹⁷

In an interview, Chichester confirmed that he had undertaken to oppose the EPP link.²¹⁸ Opposed to the formula of allied membership, he had asked for a formal vote to be taken within the section. He found himself in a minority of one, whereas all the other Tory MEPs voted in favour of reapplying for allied membership of the EPP Group.²¹⁹ Having held to his pre-election promise, he decided that he would join the rest since he understood the logic of the alliance. Committing himself to take the whip, Chichester said: "I can entertain a working alliance, this is practical policies."

Instead of renewing the alliance, Chichester had initially proposed that the Tories should consider the options of linking-up with Forza Italia, the Gaullists, Goldsmith's grouping or even with the Liberals.²²⁰ And after the French Gaullists had decided to remain in the EDA and Forza Italia, with 27 members, set up a group on its own, Chichester hoped that

²¹⁴ As commented by Tory MEPs Graham Mather and Edward McMillan-Scott on BBC's *Newsnight* on 16 June 1994. Interview with Graham Mather, London, 17 January 1996.

²¹⁵ As Leader of the Tory MEPs, Sir Christopher had expressed the hope that also the Gaullist MEPs would join the EPP Group as allied members. Prout, 1994a. Having narrowly lost his seat, he was present at the London meeting, presenting several strong arguments in favour of rejoining the EPP Group. See Butler and Westlake, 1995:285. We will return to these arguments in Chapter Five.

²¹⁶ See *The Independent*, 14 June 1994.

²¹⁷ Interviews with Graham Mather, London, 17 January 1996; Edward Steen, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994.

²¹⁸ Interview with Giles Chichester, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994.

²¹⁹ Interviews with Giles Chichester, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994; Graham Mather, London, 17 January 1996; Edward Steen, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994. See also Butler and Westlake, 1995:279.

²²⁰ Interview with Giles Chichester, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994.

they all would join the EPP Group later on, along with Conservatives from the applicant countries. In that case, the centre of gravity within the group would shift in favour of the Conservatives, Chichester said.

In the end, the more Euro-sceptical Tory MEPs had been forced into line by colleagues, pointing out that relations with the EPP had been built after long negotiations, and that the Tories should remain allied members of the EPP Group and sign a declaration accordingly.²²¹ For now, the EPP could look forward to an application from the Tory contingent.

EPP Reconsidering the Alliance

In view of the European Council at Corfu, the EPP Conference was convened in Brussels on 22 June 1994. On the agenda were party links to the British Tories and other prospective allies, along with the delicate matter of trying to unite over a common Christian Democrat candidate to succeed Delors as Commission President.²²² Four heads of government were present: Jean-Luc Dehaene, Helmut Kohl, Ruud Lubbers, and Jacques Santer.²²³

At the close of the summit, Martens issued a statement on party links in view of the composition of the EPP Group.²²⁴ According to this statement, discussions had been lively. The February 1992 decision by the EPP Conference to review the alliance with the Tory MEPs in the context of the 1994 European elections was recalled. With reference to the overall positive experiences of co-operation with the British and Danish Conservatives, the conference recommended a continuation of this co-operation. It also recommended the EPP Group to invite as

²²¹ Interview with Edward Steen, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994. See also Butler and Westlake, 1995:280.

²²² See *Agence Europe*, 10 May, 13/14 & 24 June 1994; *Financial Times*, 18/19 June 1994; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 June 1994.

²²³ The Belgian Dehaene and the Dutch Lubbers were among the favourites to replace Delors.

²²⁴ EPP/Erklärung des Präsidenten der EVP, Wilfried Martens, im Anschluß an die EVP-Konferenz der Partei- und Regierungschefs am 22. Juni 1994 in Brüssel. See also *Agence Europe*, 24 June 1994.

members MEPs elected on joint lists with representatives of EPP member parties, provided that they accept the group's political programme and Rules of Procedure.²²⁵ Recalling the April 1991 decision by the EPP Conference, the EPP was prepared to co-operate closely with those people's parties, or *Volksparteien*. However, they must accept the principles and basic programme as well as the statutes of the EPP. At his press conference, Martens confirmed that the conference recommended the group to renew the alliance with the British and Danish Conservatives.²²⁶

With reference to the recommendation, by the EPP Conference, there would be a formal vote in the EPP Group and the next step would be for the EPP Bureau to discuss the matter. Prior to this, the European Council had met at Corfu, where the British Conservative Prime Minister vetoed the Christian Democrat frontrunner Dehaene's candidacy to the Commission Presidency. This move by Major, appeasing his Euro-sceptic faction, enraged Christian Democrats. Indeed, both the Leader of the Wallonian PSC, Deprez, who was re-elected to the EP, and the Wallonian Vice-President of the EPP, Bertrand, now questioned whether there could be a continued link to the British Tories.²²⁷

The risk that Christian Democrats would block the Tories from re-joining the EPP Group was aggravated by the support Tory MEPs, including new members such as Chichester and Mather, gave to the Prime Minister's use of the veto.²²⁸ There were "backstage" rumours that a Dutch Christian Democrat questioned whether Mather was a suitable member of the EPP Group.²²⁹

Against this background, Tory MEPs met with Christian Democrat colleagues during the EPP Group's study days in Estoril. It is understood that Tories and Christian Democrats clashed over the British veto.²³⁰ The question of a renewal of the alliance was discussed.²³¹

²²⁵ In accordance with Article 5a of the Rules of Procedure of the EPP Group. This invitation was thus extended to candidates on the joint RPR/UDF-list.

²²⁶ *Agence Europe*, 24 June 1994.

²²⁷ See Bertrand, 1994a; *Le Monde*, 28 June 1994. See also Bertrand, 1994b.

²²⁸ See *The Times*, 28 June 1994.

²²⁹ Interview with Graham Mather, London, 17 January 1996.

²³⁰ See *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 July 1994. See also *The European*, 1-7 July 1994.

²³¹ Interview with Fernand Herman, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994.

Formally, decisions at the level of the EPP Conference over party links were mere recommendations to the EPP Group. In practice, however, it was unlikely that the group would confront party leaders and heads of government in this matter. So, at any rate, the group cannot be regarded as autonomous over its composition. This time, however, the Tories did not have to go through the same procedures as they had during the “complicated” process of the Tory application for allied membership.²³²

At a meeting in Brussels in early July 1994, the EPP Group would decide on applications, referring to the recommendation by the EPP Conference.²³³ The applications for allied membership were from Lord Plumb, who was elected Leader of the Tory MEPs, and his fellow 17 British Tories, from the sole Ulster Unionist member, and from Schlüter on behalf of the three Danish Conservatives.²³⁴

The application from the British Conservatives provoked a number of members to take the floor. The vote was in favour, however. Of 91 votes cast, 76 voted for, 11 against, with two abstentions and two blank votes.²³⁵ With regard to the applications from the three Danish Conservatives and the sole Ulster Unionist, a vote by acclamation was unopposed, with one abstention.

Although the group had voted overwhelmingly to renew the alliance, there were thus 11 votes against. Those were from representatives of the Christian Democrat parties of Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands, which traditionally have all opposed a formal alliance with the British Conservatives.²³⁶ Both MEPs representing the Wallonian PSC voted against.²³⁷

²³² Interview with John Biesmans, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994.

²³³ EPP Group/Minutes of the Group Meeting of 4 July 1994 in Brussels.

²³⁴ The Ulster Unionist MEP moved from the EPP Group into Goldsmith’s relaunched grouping in early 1997.

²³⁵ EPP Group/Minutes of the Group Meeting of 4 July 1994 in Brussels; Info der EVP-Fraktion im Europäischen Parlament, 21 July 1994, vol 9/no 6. See also *Agence Europe*, 6 July 1994; Butler and Westlake, 1995:279.

²³⁶ Interviews with Fernand Herman, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994; Edward Steen, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994. See also Butler and Westlake, 1995:279.

²³⁷ At the meeting, Deprez, the PSC Chairman, drew attention to the attitude of the British Prime Minister with regard to the EPP candidate for the Commission Presidency and called for a vote against membership of the EPP Group for the Conservatives. EPP Group/Minutes of the Group Meeting of 4 July 1994 in Brussels.

The 11 dissenting votes were generally considered to be mainly for internal consumption. Crucially, the Tories could still rely on their German colleagues, who with in total 47 seats formed the dominant national delegation in the EPP Group along with the Spanish.

That the EPP Group had complied with the recommendation by the EPP Conference, to renew the alliance, was welcomed by the EPP Bureau.²³⁸ The decision at the EPP Group level was now ratified *post festum* at the EPP Party level.²³⁹ Like the resolution adopted by the conference, this one pointed out that parties willing to co-operate closely with the EPP, must accept both its basic programme and statutes, in accordance with the April 1991 decision.

Of all the decisions traced in this chapter, the one by the EPP in April 1991 was undoubtedly the most important, both for the formation and the evolution of the hard-won alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European parliamentary arena. This decision would thereby have implications also for transnational alliance-building among parties of the wider European centre-right.

²³⁸ EPP/Entschließung des EVP-Vorstandes Sitzung am 13. Juli 1994 in Brüssel.

²³⁹ Letter from Thomas Jansen, 8 September 1994.

CHAPTER FOUR

Opportunities for Transnational Party Alliances

The aim of this chapter is to trace and analyse the *opportunities* which were seized in order to build the alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European parliamentary arena. Through this analysis an attempt will be made to present evidence and provide answers regarding factors *promoting* processes of transnational alliance-building among political parties.

As was shown in the previous chapter, the application from the British Tories for allied membership of the EPP Group was subject to ongoing discussions and intensive negotiations at different levels of party activity for almost three years. As key promoters of an alliance, Tory MEPs, the EPP leadership and German Christian Democrats, in particular, saw a political window of opportunity. Defining and seizing different opportunities, the alliance promoters were able to bring home the momentum the process had developed and around which attitudes toward an alliance would eventually converge at the level of the EPP Conference of Party Leaders and Heads of Government.

Bringing home the momentum, the alliance promoters made use of a set of *catalysts*. Catalysts are forces, which, through an intermediate cognitive process of perception, could result in changing definitions of opportunities.¹ Accordingly, catalysts could shape patterns of interaction and sustain processes of integration and alliance-building. The analysis will show how the key actors involved in the processes at work perceived different catalysts.

Extracting them from the conceptual framework, three catalysts can be identified, namely *leadership changes*, *institutional changes* and *changes in the international environment*. The latter catalyst is *external* to the EC/EU system, whereas the others are *internal* to the system, including both

¹ As Russett and Starr (1981/1996:21) have put it, “[o]ppportunity is the possibility of interaction because of objective conditions that may be perceived in varying ways by decision makers.”

supranational bodies and member states. Studying catalysts at different levels, I will structure the chapter in accordance with this differentiation between internal and external catalysts.

Internal Catalysts

Leadership Changes

In this study, having a dynamic approach to the analysis of integration and transnational alliance-building, the catalyst of leadership changes refers to the catalytic effect of the change of political leaders at the national level. As was argued in the theoretical chapter, the replacement of one team of decision-makers, or political leaders, for another could mean that the balance of rewards and costs of transnational alliance-building may be perceived and defined differently. Such leadership changes could therefore create changing conditions for the establishment of trust, an element of alliance commitment, between the personalities involved in the processes at work and add an impetus to the momentum gathered so far.

As will be shown below, the British leadership change in November 1990, with John Major becoming Leader of the Conservative Party, would make Christian Democrats reconsider their attitudes toward the prospect of an eventual alliance. In British politics, a new Conservative Party Leader normally appoints a new Party Chairman. The choice of the 'Tory Christian Democrat' Chris Patten as the new Party Chairman would reinforce the catalytic and spectacular effect provided by the replacement of Margaret Thatcher, and thereby reinforce also the opportunities for a transnational party alliance. The shift in personalities, at the top level and immediately below it, was part of the same catalyst, that of leadership changes. It provided space for those arguing in favour of an alliance.

The EPP rebuff of the Tory application, in July 1989, was primarily caused by the negative image of Thatcherism. Thatcher's Bruges speech of September 1988 was anathema to federalist-minded Christian Democrats. As we shall see in Chapter Six, other ideological dimensions than the European also made it difficult for Christian Democrats to accept a formal alliance as long as Thatcher was in power.

Shortly before her downfall, Thatcher had been “ambushed” at the October 1990 Rome European Council by Christian Democrats raising the stakes in the search for a federal Europe, including a single currency. The European Council had been preceded by an EPP summit in Brussels, which resulted in the date of 1 January 1994 for the second stage of the EMU.² Thatcher had been “unprepared for this show of solidarity by the Christian Democrats because her advisors had underestimated the importance of the party federation meeting.”³ This is also confirmed in her memoirs.⁴

In the intervening years between the ratification of the Single European Act (SEA) and the 1991 IGCs, Christian Democrats were instrumental in raising the stakes in the game that was now taking place between Britain’s Prime Minister and the original member states.⁵ Having been represented as observers at the EPP’s November 1990 Dublin Congress, Tory MEPs had been reminded of the deep gulf between governments. The federalist Congress document would serve as the EPP’s contribution to the 1991 IGCs and as a basis for the EPP Group and in a way also for the Christian Democrat heads of government. The latter would meet at the European Council in Rome in December 1990 and throughout the IGCs.

Leading Christian Democrats hoped that the new British Government would go along towards further European integration. Wilfried Martens, the Belgian Prime Minister and EPP President, commented as follows on the replacement of Thatcher: “I hope it will bring faster progress on

² See EPP/Réunion au Sommet-PPE des Chefs de Gouvernement et de Parti Démocrates Chrétiens à Bruxelles le 25 octobre 1990; PPE Bulletin, No. 1 février/mars 1991; *Agence Europe*, 22/23, 24, 25, 27 & 29/30 October 1990; *Keesing’s Record of World Events*, October 1990, p 37782 and November 1990, p 37839. The EPP summit was attended by six heads of government — including Andreotti as acting President of the European Council — out of twelve to attend the Rome European Council two days later. For a discussion of the Rome I summit and its implications, see Butler and Westlake, 1995:33; George and Sowemimo, 1996:255; Grant, 1994:148; Hix, 1993:19, 1995:545, 1996:319; Hogg and Hill, 1995:71; Jacobs *et al*, 1992:86-87; Johansson, 1993; Nicoll and Salmon, 1994:158-159, 259; Watkins, 1991/1992:141-142; Young, 1989/1991:575-579; Young, 1993:160. See also *The Economist*, 3 & 24 November & 8 December 1990.

³ Hix, 1995:545. See also Middlemas, 1995:167-168.

⁴ See Thatcher, 1993:765-767.

⁵ Cf George, 1994:194.

European union.”⁶ Chancellor Kohl was equally hopeful and following his special meeting with Major at the December 1990 Rome summit, it was reported that the party links to be developed “may open the way for Conservative members of the European Parliament to join the centre-right grouping led by the Christian Democrats in the Strasbourg assembly. Tory MEPs were prevented from joining under Mrs Thatcher’s leadership.”⁷

Insofar as an alliance with the British Conservatives could never be accepted by Christian Democrats as long as Thatcher was Leader of the British Conservative Party, her downfall was good news also for the Strasbourg Tories.⁸ At the time of her resignation, there was practically an almost complete breakdown in communication between them and 10 Downing Street. Like Christian Democrats, Tory MEPs were concerned about the attitude of their Party Leader and Prime Minister towards further European integration.⁹ As was shown in the previous chapter, Tory MEPs and EDG managers had established close contacts with the EPP and its parliamentary grouping.

In Strasbourg, the Tories’ behaviour was interpreted as a sort of punishment for Thatcher because of her negative campaigning in the 1989 European elections.¹⁰ And as Lord Cockfield, the former Conservative European Commissioner, has pointed out, centre-right colleagues “began to look upon the British Conservatives as innocent victims of Mrs Thatcher’s misplaced views and there was a great deal of personal sympathy for them.”¹¹

⁶ Quoted in *Financial Times*, 23 November 1990.

⁷ *The Guardian*, 15 December 1990. Learning from the lesson of the Rome I summit the Foreign Minister, Douglas Hurd, acted so that there would be — in the words of *The Economist* (8 December 1990) — “no repeat of the ambush of Mrs Thatcher” at the Rome II summit on political union in December 1990.

⁸ Lea, 1992:24. See also *Financial Times*, 21 & 23 November 1990; *The Times*, 20 November 1990.

⁹ See the open letter, published in *The Times* on 17 November 1989, from all but two of the Tory MEPs in criticism of Thatcher’s attitude to Europe. Prout *et al*, 1989b. See also Bogdanor, 1996:216.

¹⁰ Interview with Jens Karoli, Copenhagen, 21 October 1993. For his part, Lord Tebbit (1990) had suggested that the behaviour of Tory MEPs must be seen in the light of their being “eager to prove their European credentials to their colleagues in Strasbourg...” See also *Agence Europe*, 11 January 1990 and Chapter Six.

¹¹ Cockfield, 1994:121.

Still, however, the Tory MEPs had been outsiders until the change of leadership.¹² For negotiations on the alliance, the replacement of Thatcher, who had supported the application for allied membership of the EPP Group “passively, not actively”, was the single most important factor and “a big boost.”¹³ Everything changed when Major came in.¹⁴ Major, supporting the idea of an alliance, was more enthusiastic than Thatcher, at least initially.¹⁵ Christian Democrats became far more positive from now on and many things would happen.¹⁶ In short, there was a difference after Thatcher left.¹⁷

The definite breakthrough came with the speech Major delivered in Bonn in March 1991. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, this speech, and the new Prime Minister’s attitude towards European affairs in general, was much influenced by Patten’s Christian Democratic approach.

It should be recalled from the previous chapter that Major, in his Bonn speech, had said that he wanted a role for Britain “*at the very heart of Europe*.”¹⁸ It was certainly no coincidence that he thereby picked up the catch phrase of the EPP, which happens to be “*at the heart of Europe*.”¹⁹ Much was made of the “similar philosophies” and “shared values” in the CDU — referred to as a “sister Party” — and the British Conserva-

¹² Interview with Sir Fred Catherwood, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

¹³ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

¹⁴ Interview with Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994. One could actually sense a feeling among the Conservatives in the EP, used to be patronised by Thatcher, that Major was a friend of theirs. Interview with William Newton Dunn, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993. See also Elles, 1992:20–21.

¹⁵ Interview with Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994. Why he said at least initially will become evident in the subsequent analysis.

¹⁶ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

¹⁷ Interview with Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994.

¹⁸ Major, 1991. Emphasis added. Upon becoming Prime Minister Major had lost no time signalling his intention of keeping Britain at the heart of Europe. See *Newsweek*, 10 December 1990. Looking back in May 1993, Major (1993a:5) said: “Two years ago, I said I wanted to put Britain *at the heart of Europe*. And *the heart of Europe* is where I still want us to be.” Emphases added. By now his actions spoke another language than his rhetoric, however. See Chapter Six.

¹⁹ Interviews with Christopher Beazley, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Derek Prag, Brussels, 25 June 1992. See also Lea, 1992:27.

tive Party.²⁰ Echoing Patten's Christian Democratic approach, Major suggested that the "philosophy in the Conservative Party has much in common with the basic tenets of Christian Democracy."²¹

Once again, it is stressed that Patten was instrumental in forging closer party links and in creating the very environment facilitating the alliance. In his meetings with senior Christian Democrats across Europe, Patten outlined the history of Toryism.²² For him, the whole project had historical dimensions in terms of an ideological reorientation of British Conservatism post-Thatcher.²³ His knowing and being close to Christian Democratic philosophy, stressing its similarities to one strand of Toryism, made it easier to negotiate with Christian Democrats.²⁴

In the interview in *Marxism Today*, referred to in the previous chapter, Patten himself stressed his closeness to Christian Democracy:

But I find myself very much at home talking to German Christian Democrats. It does seem to me that with notable effect they've constructed a political philosophy which works and delivers not only in terms of the prosperity which it helps to produce but also in terms of — to use a rather Christian Democratic word — the solidarity which it establishes — — — So I would hope that whatever else the future holds, working closely and successfully with other European politicians like that is at least part of the mix. And if in the process *we can learn from them* and they perhaps from time to time *can learn from us*, it's one of the better effects of being a part of the Community.²⁵

²⁰ Major, 1991:6, 11.

²¹ Major, 1991:9. See also Paterson, 1995:59; Wallace, 1994:284.

²² Interview with Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994.

²³ Cf Butler and Westlake, 1995:287.

²⁴ Interview with Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994. Having recruited Chris Patten to the Conservative Research Department in the 1960s, Lord Fraser said he was helpful since he is a Catholic, which "makes it easier" to understand the Continental tradition. Interview with Lord Fraser, London, 9 February 1994. Patten was later appointed Director by Edward Heath, with whom Patten was closer in thinking than with Thatcher. Cf Butler and Kavanagh, 1992:31–32.

²⁵ Patten, 1991a:23. Emphases added. See also Patten, 1983. For comments on the interview, see Butler and Kavanagh, 1992:31–32; Butler and Westlake, 1995:29; Garner and Kelly, 1993:61, 95; Hutton, 1991; Middlemas, 1995:736–737; Riddell, 1991:239; Seldon, 1994:63; *The Economist*, 9 March 1991.

The appointment of Patten as Party Chairman was taken as a clear break with Thatcherism. Significantly, questions were asked whether the new attitude underlined a shift from Friedman, the monetarist guru, to Erhard, the German Christian Democrat who embodies the concept of the social market economy.²⁶ Linking domestic politics to the need for an effective transnational alliance with like-minded parties, Patten underlined those values which were not associated with the Tory Party after a decade with Thatcherism, but which were close to European Christian Democracy.

As head of the London office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Ludger Eling was pleased about Patten becoming Party Chairman. Looking back, he pointed out that Patten was appointed because of his closeness to Major's thinking.²⁷ As a Catholic, Patten also understood the Pope's way of thinking and was keen on the concept of solidarity, Eling said, adding that Thatcher's economic guru was Friedman and that the image of Thatcherism was not well-received in Germany.

Although reluctantly, Eling could not but admit that he had contributed to embedding the link between the CDU and the British Conservative Party in an atmosphere of "trust." He characterised the period from late 1990 as one of ripeness and said that any success could come first with Major, building on what was achieved by then. He added that it proved very useful that top politicians like David Hunt, a Christian Democrat-minded Cabinet Minister, and Volker Rühle, the CDU Secretary-General, knew each other from youth organisations.

This confirms the importance of transnational actor socialisation, at different levels, for transnational alliance-building among political parties.

²⁶ See Campbell, 1993:793-795; Garner and Kelly, 1993:61. Much was made of the fact that Major was surrounded by people sharing a Catholic conviction. See Hutton, 1991; van Kersbergen and Verbeek, 1994:221 (n 2); *The Guardian*, 4 November 1992.

²⁷ Interview with Ludger Eling, London, 11 February 1994. In his Bonn speech, Major (1991:11) had actually saluted "the work of the Foundation's representative in London, Ludger Eling...He has done as much as anyone to cement the relations between our two Parties and our two countries. Let us build on this." He also said that politicians of his own generation knew their German Christian Democrat colleagues well thanks to the work of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, expressing "gratitude for its achievements in bringing our Parties closer at every level, particularly among our younger members." See also Clarke, 1994; Rühle, 1990.

Indeed, non-governmental youth organisations (NGYOs) have brought generations of politicians together, influencing inter-party relations as well as personal attitudes.²⁸ Intimate contacts and conversations shape world views and one could even argue that the EU is organised on “known-you-forever” relations.²⁹ In any case, they may reinforce the opportunities for transnational party alliances.

Significantly, also Patten and Rühle had known each other for many years.³⁰ Mutual trust existed between them and they stayed in close contact with each other during the negotiations on the alliance. Thus, links at the party level were sustained by links at the personal level, and vice versa.

There was also direct contact between Patten and the EPP. Having met Patten, Martens explained the decision by the April 1991 EPP Conference, coming out in favour of an alliance, with reference to the shift in attitude following Thatcher’s replacement by Major. The new British Prime Minister and Conservative Party Leader was said to have “a very open attitude towards the Intergovernmental Conferences...There is a *fundamental change* in approach. It is clear that our decision today has been motivated by this *change*.”³¹

In justifying the decision, reference was made to the *rapprochement* overall and, crucially, to letters written by Patten and Sir Christopher, the EDG Chairman. In terms of opportunities for an alliance, article four of the resolution was the most important because therein the EPP...

...welcomes the *rapprochement* which has brought the British Conservatives closer to the European and social policies of the EPP, con-

²⁸ Interviews with Ludger Eling, London, 11 February 1994; David Hunt, London, 2 February 1994; Gunnar Hökmark, Stockholm, 19 April 1993; Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 26 June 1992; Göran Lennmarker, Stockholm, 25 May 1992; Harald Romer, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Ian Taylor, London, 8 February 1994; Per Unckel, 26 October 1995. Letter from Anders Björck, 27 October 1995. Letter from Birger Hagård, 23 October 1995. Cf Ashford, 1980:120; Brouwer, 1991:14–22; Lodge and Herman, 1982:173–175; Pinto-Duschinsky, 1983:114; Pridham, 1982:335.

²⁹ Interview with Thomas Spencer, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993. Tom Spencer was ECCS Chairman 1971–73 and he had also been a Vice-President of Young European Federalists (YEF).

³⁰ Interview with Göran Lennmarker, Stockholm, 25 May 1992.

³¹ Quoted in *Agence Europe*, 15/16 April 1991. Emphases added.

firming thus the strength and attractiveness of the EPP. Has noted with much satisfaction that over the course of the last two years, following intensive dialogue and constructive cooperation, the MEPs belonging to the EDG accept not only the “basic policies of the EPP Group” but also the fundamental points of the EPP-Programme adopted in Luxembourg (“On the People’s Side”) and the document of the Dublin Congress (“For a Federal Constitution for a United Europe”). The EPP takes note of the fact that this is clearly confirmed by the letters of the 5th of April from Sir Christopher Prout and of the 11th of April from Mr. Chris Patten.³²

Time and again, the EPP leadership, acting in tandem with the German CDU, pointed to the change of leadership of the British Conservative Party. The *EPP Bulletin* of June 1991 suggested that there was a substantive change, ideologically and politically, following the replacement of Thatcher:

Since the *change in leadership* in November, 1990, the programme line of the Conservative Party of Great Britain has altered considerably. The *new leadership* is making a resolute, systematic effort to give the party both europolitically and, in particular, economically and socio-politically a new profile which tends towards that of the EPP. It would be a mistake and certainly against the interests of the EPP not to support these efforts.³³

The Conservatives did not approach the EPP to make it Conservative, but to “strengthen the unified action of Christian Democrats and also, in a certain way, to become Christian Democratic.”³⁴ Indeed, the EPP noted that the Tory MEPs wished to join the EPP Group “because of its special Christian Democratic and European federalistic identity, with which they themselves and, in the medium term, their party wish to

³² EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991; Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference of Heads of Government and Party Leaders of EPP, Brussels, 13 April 1991. See also *Agence Europe*, 15/16 April 1991.

³³ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991. Emphases added.

³⁴ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991.

identify.”³⁵ Referring to the letter from Patten to the EPP President, it was even claimed that “the *new party leadership* does not exclude the possibility that, in the long term, with their political programmes coming closer together, integration in the EPP may occur.”³⁶ For the time being, they would not apply for membership of the EPP Party, however.

Master-minding the moves of gathering support for an alliance with the British Conservatives, the German EPP Secretary-General Jansen explained the EPP’s willingness to open up by saying...

...it is — I believe — in the interest of the British Conservatives to break out of the isolation in which they have been locked throughout the eighties. It seems to me that the reason for their isolation was an ideological fixation which really did not sit well with the British Conservative tradition and which clouded people’s minds about what was really going on in the rest of Europe. As a result, many Conservatives did not perceive that the era of the “sovereign national state” had been overtaken by historical and technological developments. By seeking to stem the tide of the growing “europeanisation” of political, social and economic life and holding on desperately to the fiction of more or less absolute national sovereignty, they cut themselves off from the European mainstream.

Whatever the reasons, I’m quite sure that in spite of rearguard skirmishes this phase is definitely reaching its end.

I am convinced that the Leader of the Conservative Party, Prime Minister John Major, is working in this direction and that he will succeed.

It is no accident that it should have been the Conservative members of the European Parliament, led by Sir Christopher Prout, who recognised, long before most of the Party back home, that the future of the United Kingdom lay in “*the heart of Europe*”. It was they who suggested the need for a rapprochement with the EPP.³⁷

In an interview, Jansen said that he had much confidence in the new

³⁵ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991.

³⁶ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991. Emphasis added.

³⁷ Jansen, 1991. Emphasis added. See also Jansen, 1992bc, 1996:335.

party leadership.³⁸ He described the period from late 1990 as an “overture”, with Major and Patten invited to take part in a dialogue and with regular meetings between party leaders.

For his part, Santer pointed out that Major and Patten were very positive and that the Christian Democrat leaders wanted to give Major, whom Santer described as “European-minded”, some time at Maastricht as he had to manage his party.³⁹ And Kohl was delighted about the change in leadership of the British Conservative Party.⁴⁰ Having sensed a changing attitude to European integration, the German Chancellor rewarded his British counterpart with a promise to put pressure on fellow Christian Democrats to support an alliance.⁴¹

Leading Christian Democrats thus seemed to think that a government led by Major would bring significant changes not only to the tone but also to the substance of British policy. His “*heart of Europe*” speech was “considered to be significant”, and his policies were not as “right-wing” as Thatcher’s and not “incompatible” with Christian Democracy.⁴²

This was how Christian Democrats perceived the catalyst of the changing leadership of the British Conservative Party, offering an opportunity to the builders of a transnational party alliance. Its key promoters were successful in using this catalyst to build a consensus over the definition of opportunities among participants at the level of the EPP Conference of Party Leaders and Heads of Government. In effect, also the sceptics of an alliance with the British Tories would change their attitudes. And there were other catalysts which would have a similar effect.

³⁸ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

³⁹ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

⁴⁰ See *The Economist*, 9 March 1991; *Financial Times*, 11 March 1991; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 March 1991; *The Times*, 12 March 1991; *Die Welt*, 13 March 1991.

⁴¹ Interviews with Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994; Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994; Christian Røvsing, Brussels, 24 June 1992; Harald Rømer, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Edward Steen, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994. See also *The European*, 30 April-3 May 1992 and next chapter.

⁴² Interview with Katherine Meenan, Dublin 11 May 1996.

Institutional Changes

In this study, the catalyst of institutional changes refers to the catalytic effect of changing powers and decision-making procedures of formal supranational bodies at the European level. An initial, and theoretically deduced, assumption was that such changes pose opportunities for transnational alliance-building among political parties. Having the EP as their most important political world at the European level of politics, it was specifically argued that parties are expected to respond to its enhanced powers. Such actors thereby establish patterns of informal integration. The powers of the EP have, in fact, increased considerably over the decades, however gradually.

The decision in favour of European elections, in practice taken by the Paris summit in 1974, served as a catalyst for national parties to build closer transnational alliances.⁴³ Christian Democrats, Liberals and Socialists transformed their co-operation into transnational party federations.⁴⁴

Significantly, the British Tories pursued contacts with like-minded parties in Europe in view of the 1979 European elections, which were at the focus of the debate on Europe within the party.⁴⁵ Their initiatives to build closer party links in the mid-1970s should also be seen in the light of the prediction that the EP was likely to have its powers enhanced in the near future in order to increase its democratic control over the European Commission.⁴⁶

However, the powers of the EP would remain limited for the immediate future, therefore it was not considered necessary for the Conservatives to be part of a big group there.⁴⁷ In this way, the prospects

⁴³ Cf Irving, 1979:251; Layton-Henry, 1982:7.

⁴⁴ Hix, 1996:313; Hrbek, 1988:456-457; Johansson, 1996:214; Smith, 1996:279; Stammen, 1980:199.

⁴⁵ See Hurd, 1978; Maudling, 1978:221-222; Thatcher, 1995:338. *The Economist* (9 October 1976) reported that the historical party document *The Right Approach* — published before the 1976 Tory Party conference — proposed on the section on foreign affairs that there should be direct elections to the EP, hopefully in 1978, and “an *effective centre-right alliance* of parties in Europe.” Emphasis added.

⁴⁶ See *The Times*, 10 October 1975.

⁴⁷ Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Lord Plumb, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; Harald Römer, Brussels, 23 June 1992.

for an eventual formal alliance, or even a merger, between the Conservative and Christian Democratic party groups seemed to depend on the eventual development of the EP into a body with significant formal legislative powers in the EC's institutional balance. Or, in the words of Irving, "the extent to which that body develops as a 'motor' of integration."⁴⁸ Likewise, Lijphart predicted that "[i]f and when the European Parliament becomes a true legislature and if socioeconomic problems constitute its principal dimension of ideological conflict, it is likely that drastic party realignments will take place."⁴⁹

These predictions, implicitly pointing to the importance of the catalyst of formal institutional changes, would be proven right. This was shown by the party responses to the EP's enhanced powers, following the coming into force of the SEA in July 1987. Indeed, the SEA, signed also by Thatcher, was something of a watershed in the history of alliance-building in the EP. By introducing the need for absolute majorities of all MEPs in second readings, to amend or reject proposals, the co-operation procedure, established by the SEA, resulted in growing links between the political parties represented there. The assent procedure would have a similar effect.⁵⁰ The need for absolute majorities was to be reinforced by the co-decision powers in the Maastricht Treaty.⁵¹

Requesting allied membership of the EPP Group, the EDG Chairman, Sir Christopher, referred to the implications of the SEA in his letter to EPP Group Chairman Klepsch: "We believe that the need for unity among political groups in the European Parliament is all the greater since the implementation of the Single European Act."⁵² And at the press conference held jointly by the two Chairmen in July 1989, both of them "pointed out how the political game in the Parliament had changed as a result of the Single European Act because 260 votes are now required at second reading and neither the centre-left nor centre-right can achieve

⁴⁸ Irving, 1979:250-251.

⁴⁹ Lijphart, 1981:50.

⁵⁰ See Johansson, 1997b.

⁵¹ See Corbett *et al*, 1995; Dinan, 1994:282; Earnshaw and Judge, 1996; Garrett and Tsebelis, 1996; Hix and Lord, 1997; Johansson, 1996, 1997b; Tsebelis, 1994; Westlake, 1994a.

⁵² Prout, 1989a. See also *Agence Europe*, 29 June 1989.

those votes on their own.”⁵³ And when the EPP Conference, in which the EPP Group Chairman was represented, later came out in favour of an alliance with Conservatives, it was noted that one of the developments explaining this decision was “the increasing importance of the European Parliament...”⁵⁴

As this analysis could give the impression that political parties were merely responding to forces beyond their control, it should be emphasised that the EPP and the Christian Democrat-led governments had actively pushed strongly for both the SEA and the Maastricht Treaty to increase EP powers. Thereby, they had contributed to a restructuring of the institutional conditions for transnational party alliances, including the traditional alliance between the Christian Democrats themselves. As will be further discussed in the next chapter, it seemed that this restructuring was a conscious political act. In fact, the party article (138a) in the Maastricht Treaty was very much the result of lobbying behind the scenes by the EPP leadership. In short, political ‘spill-over’ has active agents advancing integration and alliance-building.

In sum, the institutional change of the need for absolute majorities, as outlined in the co-operation procedure of the SEA, was perceived as a powerful catalyst behind the search for a formal parliamentary alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats.⁵⁵ As will be further discussed in the next chapter, this catalyst of institutional change must be seen in the light of power-political motives. Here it can be safely concluded that endogenous institutional developments pose opportunities for transnational party alliances. These developments have been seized by the initiators and promoters of the particular alliance covered in this study.

External Catalysts

The set of catalysts included the catalytic role provided by the international environmental pressure of external party actors. Just like Euro-

⁵³ Wood, 1989:62-63.

⁵⁴ EPP/Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference of Heads of Government and Party Leaders of the EPP, Brussels, 13 April 1991. See also EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991.

⁵⁵ Interviews with Sir Fred Catherwood, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

pean integration and security alliances, transnational alliance-building among political parties could be driven by external factors, adding a new momentum.

For the alliance-building studied here, these factors concerned the changes in the international environment connected to the future enlargement of the EC/EU. This scenario presented European Conservatism and Christian Democracy with a new set of challenges insofar as enlargement would bring in new centre-right parties, meaning that both Christian Democrats and Conservatives had to consider how to relate to those newcomers. Once perceived, the external catalyst of enlargement coalesced with the internal catalysts, reinforcing the opportunities for transnational party alliances.

Changes in the International Environment — Conservatives and External Party Actors

Having requested allied membership of the EPP Group, and being somewhat impatient, the Strasbourg Tories grasped the opportunity offered by the challenge of enlargement. With enlargement in sight, the Tories were aware that Conservatives from the prospective member states were already building bridges to the EPP and had even encouraged them to do so. Defending the alliance in 1993, the Tories pointed out that it should be seen in the context of the future enlargement to include Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden.⁵⁶

As EDG Chairman, Sir Christopher drew the EPP leadership's attention to the negative consequences if the opportunity offered by enlargement was not seized. As will be further discussed in the next chapter, his political point was that the parties of the European centre-right must overcome their historic divisions since, just like Britain, most of the applicant countries in question had practically no or only small Christian Democrat parties, but strong Socialist or Social Democrat parties. In the most critical stage of the negotiations on the alliance, Sir Christopher heavily emphasised this point in letters to EPP President Martens and EPP Group Chairman Klepsch. Of these letters, the one of 28

⁵⁶ Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993.

February 1991 to Martens is most revealing with regard to the factors promoting an alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats.

In the letter, the EDG Chairman argued that “it would not be wise to underestimate the power of the other forces working with a view to the political regrouping of parties in Europe outside the Christian Democratic parties.”⁵⁷ He added that in the context of enlargement “it is possible to set up a group outside the EPP group of the European Parliament of around the same size as the European People’s Party. Such a group...would surely exercise, through the Conservative parties, a strong attraction on the parties of any possible new Member States, whether in Scandinavia or Eastern Europe.” If such a group came into being, it might also attract parties among the present members of the EPP Group, Sir Christopher argued. He pointed out that “one might say that it is solely because our group has pressed on with its measures aimed at obtaining the group’s membership in the EPP that this new group has not already been established. We hope not to be placed in a situation where this *pressure* could become irresistible.”⁵⁸

This line of argumentation needs some comments. The opportunity posed by enlargement came most convenient for the British and Danish Conservatives. However, it verged on blackmail to claim that like-minded parties of prospective member states were interested in joining a regrouping outside the EPP. Arguably, the EDG Chairman overstressed this scenario for tactical reasons.

The party contacts pursued by the British Tories, and the preparations for and the message of Major’s Bonn speech, indicated that they had made up their mind and dropped any alternative to linking up with the Christian Democrat-dominated EPP grouping, if there ever existed a serious alternative in the first place. Also, the Austrian leadership of the EDU, of which the British and Nordic Conservative parties were members, along with the Austrian and German Christian Democrat parties, continually pressed for Conservative membership of the EPP.⁵⁹ Thus, external party actors pushed for an alliance which they could join later.

Of the individual Nordic Conservative parties, the Finnish KOK had

⁵⁷ Prout, 1991a. See also *Agence Europe*, 15/16 April 1991.

⁵⁸ Emphasis added.

⁵⁹ See EDU/Yearbook 1991; Yearbook 1992.

shown an interest in associating itself with the EPP/EUCD.⁶⁰ The Swedish Moderate Party was in the process of pre-negotiating an eventual link-up with the EPP and its Leader, Carl Bildt, was discussing the matter with Kohl and Major.⁶¹ Both Bildt and Kohl were actively working for an opening up of the EPP.⁶² Given the close relationship between them, it is unlikely that the Moderate Party seriously considered the option of embarking on any other route than linking up with the Christian Democrats. The personal chemistry between the two men worked well and was helpful for party links between the Moderates and the CDU.⁶³ By now, it was evident that Sweden would apply for EC membership, so the Moderate Party was brought closer to the EPP and there was already co-operation in the EFTA context.⁶⁴ In contacts with Bildt and other leading Swedish Moderates, the EDG Chairman and Secretary-General had suggested that they should aim at the EPP.⁶⁵

Closely involved in processes of transnational alliance-building over the years, leading Swedish Moderates were keen on building links to the Christian Democrat movement at a time when a Moderate-led government would negotiate EU membership. They had been pushing for a “joint Christian Democrat grouping” and had defined “the triangle Stockholm-Bonn-London” and relations between “Kohl-Major-Bildt” as important.⁶⁶ Leading Moderates could proudly conclude that the Scandinavians, not least the Moderates themselves, constituted a factor behind “the formation of this broad European non-Socialist alliance....”⁶⁷

Still, however, it is important to emphasise that there would have been two big non-Socialist groupings had the Christian Democrats not accepted the Conservatives in their ranks.⁶⁸ Once the alliance had been won

⁶⁰ Jansen, 1996:174.

⁶¹ See Bildt, 1991:177.

⁶² Interviews with Bernd Fischer and Renate Stuth, Bonn, 13 May 1993.

⁶³ Interview with Göran Lennmarker, a) Stockholm, 25 May 1992, b) Lund, 18 March 1993.

⁶⁴ Interview with Lars F Tobisson, Stockholm, 13 March 1995.

⁶⁵ On the basis of private correspondence and internal briefing notes as of January 1991.

⁶⁶ Interview with Per Unckel, 26 October 1995. Unckel was Secretary-General of the Moderate Party from 1986 until the formation of a new Swedish Government in October 1991, when he was appointed Minister for Education.

⁶⁷ Bildt, 1991:177. Interview with Gunnar Hökmark, Stockholm, 19 April 1993.

⁶⁸ Interview with Harald Rømer, Brussels, 9 January 1997.

by the British Conservatives, the way was cleared also for other Conservative member parties of the EDU to join in this alliance, including the Nordic ones.

Changes in the International Environment — Christian Democrats and External Party Actors

Having chosen to argue the case for an alliance with Conservatives, the EPP leadership also grasped every opportunity they found in order to bring home the momentum the process had developed. They would energetically respond to the opportunity created by enlargement and it is significant how close their own argumentation was to that of the Tories in this respect.

Except for the increasing importance of the EP, the resolution adopted by the April 1991 EPP Conference noted that the decision to open up for Conservatives also was made in view of the “future *enlargement* to the Scandinavian countries and the countries of Central Europe....”⁶⁹ Regarding the consequences for the EPP, resulting from enlargement, this resolution bore a striking resemblance to the recent letter from the EDG Chairman to the EPP President.

Building consensus within the Christian Democrat movement, the EPP leadership thus exploited the scenario of future enlargement. As we shall see in the next chapter, Christian Democrats were made aware that Socialists would gain strength in the context of enlargement, gradually convincing them that opening up for Conservatives was an investment for the future.

Of individual Christian Democrat leaders, Santer said that they had all thought an alliance made sense in view of enlargement.⁷⁰ And Alan Dukes, Vice-President of the EPP until 1996, noted that when Kohl made the point that the EPP had to look for other parties, it was against the background of the fact that there was not a very strong Christian

⁶⁹ EPP/Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference of Heads of Government and Party Leaders of the EPP, Brussels, 13 April 1991. Emphasis added. See also EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991.

⁷⁰ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

Democrat movement in the Nordic countries and that the same questions arose in relation to the Central and Eastern Europeans.⁷¹ When the EPP Conference was assembled in Luxembourg in June 1991, Kohl, strongly arguing the case of a closer co-operation between centre and centre-right parties, pointed out that the future adhesion of such political forces to the EPP must be seen in the light of enlargement to include the EFTA members and Central European countries.⁷²

The EPP's German Secretary-General, Jansen, shared the basic perceptions as Kohl concerning the challenges of enlargement. In a speech in November 1991 — entitled 'The future role of Christian Democracy in a greater Europe' — Jansen stressed the wider and long-term implications for inter-party relations if the Conservatives and Christian Democrats could set up a joint party group in the short term:

Should this succeed, as I hope it will, we will be sending an important signal regarding the readiness of Christian Democrats and Conservatives to work together. That is the kind of unity we need if we are to ensure that the forces we represent can act as the driving force behind the unification process and contribute to the shaping of Europe, a task of particular significance when one considers the impending deepening and *broadening of the European Community* and the *changes* taking place in Central and Eastern Europe.⁷³

Alongside the Tory application to join the EPP Group, the matter of future relations with Nordic Conservative parties, eventually joining the EPP in the context of enlargement, was then raised at the meetings of the EPP Bureau and the EPP Conference in February 1992.⁷⁴

Along with the EPP President, Jansen was instrumental in brokering the compromise implying that the Nordic Conservative parties, interested

⁷¹ Interview with Alan Dukes, Dublin, 9 May 1996.

⁷² On the basis of confidential information.

⁷³ Jansen, 1991. Emphases added. See also Jansen, 1992c; Martens, 1994:86-87, 166-167.

⁷⁴ See EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 April/May 1992; EPP Group/Report on the Activities July 1991-July 1992, p 311; *Agence Europe*, 8 & 17/18 February 1992; *The European*, 20-26 February 1992; *The Times*, 19 February 1992. See also Henschel, 1992:263.

in joining the EPP, would become permanent observers. This step was formally agreed upon at the November 1992 EPP Congress in Athens. Addressing this Congress, both the EPP President and the EPP Secretary-General raised the question of relations with Scandinavian parties.⁷⁵ Significantly, Jansen pointed out that the decision by the April 1991 EPP Conference was also an answer to the necessity to reach out to the Scandinavian countries.⁷⁶

Thus, the negotiations on the more immediate alliance between the British and Danish Conservatives and the Christian Democrats were influenced by international environmental pressure. Enlargement implied that the EPP itself had to be prepared for the inclusion of Conservative parties. As will be discussed further in the next chapter, there were powerful motives for the alliance. For the time being, it can be concluded that the external catalyst of the pending enlargement provided another opportunity for those arguing the case of an alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European parliamentary arena.

In sum, both internal and external catalysts were used by the initiators and promoters of the alliance when bringing home the momentum the process had developed. Having perceived the catalysts, the alliance promoters opened a political window of opportunity. The definitions of opportunities for an alliance changed as a result of political changes at different levels. In addition to the changes in the international environment, there were the leadership changes as well as the institutional changes in the supranational political world in which the process was embedded.

⁷⁵ Author's notes. See also Martens, 1994:166-167.

⁷⁶ Jansen 1992b.

CHAPTER FIVE

Motives for Transnational Party Alliances

The aim of this chapter is to trace and analyse the underlying *motives* for the alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European parliamentary arena. By looking into motives, it is possible to present evidence and provide answers regarding factors *promoting* processes of transnational alliance-building among political parties.

Just like opportunities and the catalysts behind them, motives could help the alliance promoters to bring home the momentum the process has developed. However, opportunities and motives must be distinguished from each other. Even where opportunities conducive to the process have been defined, they should preferably have a connection to some more or less powerful motives, motive powers, to make those involved willing to avail themselves of these opportunities.¹ A combination of opportunities and motives could then lead to the formation and eventually also to the evolution of a transnational party alliance.

With reference to theoretical arguments, when laying out both transnationalism and neofunctionalism, the building of transnational party alliances must be seen in the light of the powers of formal institutions and the strategy of establishing alternative and multiple channels to the conventional intergovernmental ones. Alliances with like-minded parties in government or in opposition in other countries establish *transnational channels for access and influence*. While such transnational platforms provide governing parties with additional channels, they are perhaps of even greater importance for opposition parties, not being in control of the governmental machinery. In short, alliances strengthen the *capacity for action* by offering *access and resources*.

In this way, motives for transnational party alliances can also be related

¹ In the words of Russett and Starr (1981/1996:21): "Willingness is concerned with the motivations that lead people to avail themselves of opportunities. Willingness deals with the goals and motivations of decision makers and focuses on why decision makers choose one course over another."

to the party-theoretical conception of basic goals in various arenas, such as the maximisation of influence in the parliamentary arena. Reasoning by analogy, a basic goal for parties in the EP is likely to remain the *maximisation of parliamentary influence*. Since this study deals with alliances on a transnational basis, I add a transnational dimension to the study of motives in traditional party research.

As the “key elements” in the Christian Democrat and Conservative party families, special emphasis will be placed on the German CDU and the British Conservative Party, alongside that placed on the strategical considerations of the EPP, as a transnational actor and European party in the making. Tracing motives, the analysis will show that some arguments in favour of an alliance were more forward-oriented than others and that there seem to be strong incentives for political parties to involve themselves in transnational alliance-building.

Transnational Channels for Access and Influence

Conservatives

In opposition in the 1950s, the British Conservatives had “argued for closer co-operation with continental parties and governments.”² Their getting in contact with other parties and organising conferences, with Prime Minister Macmillan and other senior Ministers attending, had then coincided with the application bid by the British Conservative Government to join the EEC.³ And throughout the “period of the like-minded parties in Europe”, or the Inter-Party Conference, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Tories were closely involved.

During their period of opposition, 1975–79, the Conservatives, not least Margaret Thatcher herself, had been very active in forging party links. Pursuing party contacts, she was very well aware of “the importance of the CDU itself, which was, with the British Conservative Party, the other largest right-of-centre European party.”⁴ As Thatcher

² Haas, 1958b:444.

³ Interview with Lord Fraser, London, 9 February 1994.

⁴ Thatcher, 1995:342.

herself has commented, the two parties were “both in opposition but both preparing for power...”⁵

The EDU provided the British Conservatives, as well as the French Gaullists, with links to Christian Democrats, notably the Germans.⁶ Looking back, Thatcher suggests that the EDU was “a *useful platform* at an important time.”⁷ In short, the British Conservatives were keen on establishing transnational channels in response to the realities of power politics.⁸

Regarding British Conservative motives for participation in such alliances, they could emanate from a desire to control the federal impetus of European integration.⁹ This impetus has been sustained by Continental Christian Democrat parties. The desire to control it becomes more relevant for a British party in government.

Channels established through transnational party alliances add to the diplomatic armoury of a governing party. This point was made by the former Conservative Party Chairman, Kenneth Baker, when recalling the links he had forged with his CDU counterpart, Volker Rühe, communicating “by establishing an *alternative channel*.”¹⁰ He noted that this channel was important also insofar as relations were bad between Thatcher and Helmut Kohl. What would emerge was that the party links gave an added impetus to the relationship sealed between her successor, John Major, and the German Chancellor. Throughout 1991, up to the Maastricht summit, they met frequently.¹¹ Being at the top of party

⁵ Thatcher, 1995:344.

⁶ Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994.

⁷ Thatcher, 1995:347. Emphasis added.

⁸ As commented by Edward Mortimer of *Financial Times* (8 April 1992): “Always sensitive to the realities of power politics, she [Thatcher] was keen for her party to team up with the Christian Democrats...back in the 1970s when she [Thatcher] was leader of the opposition and when political parties throughout the EC were preparing to fight the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979.”

⁹ Cf Haas, 1958b:440.

¹⁰ Baker, 1993:349. Emphasis added.

¹¹ See Chapter Three. According to media reports, Major and his German counterpart telephoned each other weekly. *The Economist*, 9 March 1991; *Financial Times*, 11 March 1991; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 March 1991. Following a series of meetings in spring 1991, the two also met on 9 June 1991. See *Keesing's Record of World Events*, June 1991, p 38296. It is believed that Major on this occasion put pressure on Kohl to agree with Mitterrand and others that the Luxembourg European Council should not attempt to enforce binding decisions on the EMU and other sensitive issues. Cf Beloff, 1996:107; Pryce, 1994:48.

governments, they were party politicians besides being heads of government.

Major clearly made a personal effort to transform the atmosphere both between the British and German Governments and between the Conservative Party and the CDU.¹² His closest advisers at the time recall that his visit to Bonn on 11 March 1991 “was a day of courtesies and *political alliances*.”¹³ They characterise the dominant feature of British diplomacy in Europe at the time as the “German strategy”, that is, the “*powerful alliance*” built with Germany.¹⁴

To join forces with an outspoken federalist like Kohl was risky in terms of intra-party politics — as will be shown in the next chapter — but seemingly sensible in view of Britain’s strategy for the IGCs. Striking a pro-European chord, and thereby pleasing Kohl, was the price Major had to pay if Britain was to break into the Franco–German axis, which had been allowed to shape much of the agenda with Britain on the sidelines.¹⁵

Soon after Major’s appointment, the Conservative Central Office had held briefings with him on the need to change the embarrassing tone towards Germany.¹⁶ This priority was shared by the Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, who had been involved in the Inter-Party Conference in the 1970s and who was close to Chris Patten, the new Conservative Party Chairman.¹⁷ As we have seen in previous chapters, the determination to improve relations with Germany was pursued by Major under the guidance of Patten.¹⁸ Visiting party headquarters of centre-right Europe, that of the CDU in particular, Patten was “endeavouring to support his Prime Minister with Europe-wide *political alliances*.”¹⁹ The transnational party channels provided an effective complement to intergovernmental channels.

¹² Cf Paterson, 1996:59; Wallace, 1994:285.

¹³ Hogg and Hill, 1995:77. Emphasis added.

¹⁴ Hogg and Hill, 1995:76, 147. Emphasis added. See also Chapters Three and Four.

¹⁵ Cf *The Economist*, 9 March 1991; *The Guardian*, 13 September 1991; *The Times*, 11 March 1991.

¹⁶ Interview with Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994. See also Hogg and Hill, 1995:75–76.

¹⁷ Cf Young, 1993:162.

¹⁸ Cf Paterson, 1996:59; Wallace, 1994:289; Young, 1993:162.

¹⁹ Hogg and Hill, 1995:78. Emphasis added.

In his Bonn speech in March 1991, Major had supported Conservative MEPs joining the German Christian Democrats inside the EPP Group.²⁰ There were clear indications that he and his Party Chairman were open to the idea of a future membership of the EPP Party. In any case, their promotion of bringing the Tories closer to the EPP Group attests to the need for a modern political leader to establish alternative channels of communication across state borders to other party governments as well as to European institutions and a transnational actor like the EPP. As Major himself has put it: “We must operate a network of little threads to make most use of the *influence* we do have. And the European Community is a handful of threads for the pursuit of our domestic and foreign interests.”²¹

Major and Patten wanted to end the self-defeating isolationist attitude of the Thatcher years, most notably exposed by the humiliating “ambush” of Thatcher at the Rome summit of October 1990. The new style and statements such as the one Major delivered in Bonn “signalled that the British government *wished to seek allies* for its negotiating objectives rather than to polarise the argument on institutional reform.”²²

If not before, the Tories had become aware of the importance of the EPP and its Conference of Party Leaders and Heads of Government following this “ambush” of Thatcher. Indeed, the EPP summits were discussed at the meeting of Tory MEPs in London in late June 1989, favouring an application to join the Christian Democrats.²³ One Tory MEP asked why the Conservative Party Leader should not attend the EPP Conference meetings along with Kohl and others, pointing out that Thatcher turned up when agreements had already been made in the EPP summits.²⁴ Another MEP insisted that the main reason for the alliance, more important than being part of the EPP Group, was that this was a way to get Major in.²⁵ In this view, their own alliance, inside the EPP Group, was seen as a means to open the doors to the EPP Party, with

²⁰ See Chapter Three.

²¹ Major, 1993a:9. Emphasis added.

²² George and Sowemimo, 1996:257. Emphasis added.

²³ Interview with Christopher Beazley, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993.

²⁴ Interview with Christopher Beazley, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993.

²⁵ Interview with John Stevens, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994.

joint representation at EPP Conference and Bureau meetings along with the Continental Christian Democrats and other related centre-right parties. To exercise political influence to the full it therefore made sense, as an EDG memorandum had put it, to aim at the “farthest possible integration in the EPP organization.”²⁶ Strasbourg Tories considered it important to assure that the national Conservative Party was close to the EC as well as to the EP.²⁷

The Tories suggested that the EPP link may be especially useful if they were voted out of office, again attesting to the value of transnational channels for parties in opposition. In an anonymous statement, one Tory MEP pointed out that “[i]f by some disaster we find ourselves in opposition, it would be really important to have this arrangement: it will *keep us in the corridors of power*.”²⁸ Significantly, Sir Christopher is reported as having said that “the new parliamentary line-up will *add an extra dimension to British Prime Minister John Major’s diplomatic armoury*, which will certainly be used in the future.”²⁹ In short, a motive behind the alliance was to “promoting closer links with the parties of centre-right governments throughout Europe.”³⁰

As was shown in the previous chapter, one of the first fruits of Major’s “political and diplomatic calculation” to establish a close partnership with his German counterpart, was Kohl’s “wedding present” in the form of his determination to bring the Conservatives into the EPP Group.³¹ Another fruit was the concessions the British Prime Minister won in the context of the Maastricht Treaty negotiations, with Kohl supporting “his young protégé in negotiating an acceptable compromise....”³²

Thanks to his close relationship with the German Chancellor, the British Prime Minister could claim significant victory at Maastricht, indicating that transnational party contacts “are extremely important” in that you need allies and that there was a tactical and power-political dimen-

²⁶ Confidential information.

²⁷ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

²⁸ Quoted in *The Independent*, 9 April 1992. Emphasis added.

²⁹ *The European*, 30 April-3 May 1992. Emphasis added.

³⁰ Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993.

³¹ Interview with Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994.

³² Wallace, 1994:292. See also Grant, 1994:201; Hogg and Hill, 1995:147; Paterson, 1996:59; Young, 1993:163.

sion to the establishing of EPP contacts.³³ Major was very keen on making a success of the alliance and of forming further alliances with centre-right colleagues.³⁴

Keen to maintain links with German Christian Democrats, as the Tories' most important allies, a Cabinet heavyweight, the pro-European Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke, went to Bonn in late June 1994. In his speech, before Christian Democrats, Clarke stressed the "*close political alliance*" with the CDU and that "Conservatives intend to be at *the heart of Europe* and expect to work closely with Christian Democrats...."³⁵ The Tories were aware that the CDU was the key to a continual EPP link. Several other Tory heavyweights, in and out of the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Employment Secretary, had committed themselves to the alliance in terms of influence and the need to have allies.³⁶

In short, the EPP link provided important transnational channels for access and influence. British Conservatives were also concerned about the maximisation of parliamentary influence in the EP, as will be shown subsequently. Until then, we shall also see how Christian Democrats consider transnational channels as a means to access and influence.

Christian Democrats

In addition to the motives of individual Christian Democrats and Christian Democrat parties, this analysis will also consider the underlying

³³ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

³⁴ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

³⁵ Clarke, 1994. Emphases added. See also *Agence Europe*, 30 June 1994; *The Economist*, 2 July 1994; *Financial Times*, 29 & 30 June 1994; *The Times*, 30 June 1994. Peter Riddell of *The Times* (30 June 1994) pointed out that the speech should be read "in conjunction with a matching lecture, also under the auspices of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, delivered five weeks ago by Volker Ruhe, the German defence minister, and the pro-European Tories' favourite Christian Democrat."

³⁶ Interviews with David Hunt, London, 2 February 1994; Ian Taylor, London, 8 February 1994. See Fowler, 1992; Hunt, 1993, 1994; Hurd, 1994b; Taylor, 1993. See also BBC TV/On the Record, 24 October 1993; Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993; *Agence Europe*, 12 September 1992; *The Times*, 19 February 1992.

motives and strategic considerations of the EPP, as a transnational organisation, for supporting transnational channels and party alliances. As was argued in the theoretical chapter, one strategy of a transnational organisation is to reach out to national polities by building links to political elites. Through transnational channels, a European party like the EPP can gain access to key decision-makers. As will be shown below, the EPP, and leading party figures represented in it, made conscious efforts to build channels to that end, that is to have access to governing or prospective governing parties in present or future member states.

Those Christian Democrats who had participated in the Inter-Party Conference were seeking to reach out to Britain and the Nordic countries. Looking back, Santer said it was about building links, or “bridges”, to the Nordic and British parties to help them to know “our thinking.”³⁷

The EPP was searching for partners in Britain as well as in the Nordic countries, notably in the EC member state of Denmark. In the early 1980s, there had been preparatory talks with the Danish Christian People’s Party (KrF) about its eventual inclusion in the EPP.³⁸ These talks came to nothing, primarily because of the basically Euro-sceptic stance of the Danish party. With no British Christian Democrat party, there had been several informal contacts in 1988 between EPP managers and the Brussels branch of the British Social Democratic Party (SDP) as well as with its Leader, David Owen, on the possibility of an SDP affiliation with the EPP.³⁹ In the end, however, the SDP made no formal application to join the EPP, but was understood to be anxious to develop personal contacts.

Having had “quite a lot of contact” with the SDP, the EPP was never seriously “interested” as the SDP was not likely to govern.⁴⁰ To be more

³⁷ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

³⁸ Jansen, 1996:286.

³⁹ Given Owen’s commitment to the idea of the ‘social market’, such an affiliation seemed to make sense. See Owen, 1992:Passim. See also Garner and Kelly, 1993:215; Webster, 1989:283. Although Owen was not a committed European federalist himself, his party was regarded as being very committed. At the same time, the SDP expressed concern that a relationship between the EPP and the SDP would be hard to explain because of the Tories’ transnational links with Chancellor Kohl’s CDU.

⁴⁰ Interview with Katherine Meenan, Dublin 11 May 1996.

precise, the leaders of EPP member parties were not interested.⁴¹ Although the SDP could have materialised the EPP's desire to reach out into Britain, not least in connection with the European elections, in terms of influence the British Conservative Party was a more attractive partner as it was a government party.

By integrating the Greek ND and the Spanish PP, the EPP secured access to prospective governing parties. That this was a salient motive in the EPP Secretariat-General was confirmed by Katherine Meenan, who worked there from 1987 until 1989. Referring to the Greek ND, she said that being "a potential party of government" this party, not a traditional Christian Democrat party, offered an attraction for the EPP.⁴² With the EPP "interested in political power" and searching for "a real political role to play", it was prepared to do business with any "party in power", such as the Spanish PP prospectively. According to Meenan, this was more important than to "hold fast to" a distinctive Christian Democrat party, indicating that the EPP is "a pragmatic political party" rather than "a storehouse for Christian Democratic ideas."

A saying in the EPP secretariat, according to Meenan, was that the choice of defending the profile and identity of the EPP instead of inviting parties not sharing a tradition of Christian Democracy, meant an EPP being "klein aber rein." Especially German Christian Democrats said that those who advocated this choice were "purists."⁴³ Along with the Germans, the EPP leadership opted for the choice of searching for new allies. By making this choice, they had, in the words of former EPP Secretary-General Jansen, embarked on a "Strategie der Öffnung."⁴⁴

With reference to the Nordic Christian parties, a German Christian Democrat, Elmar Brok, said that since these parties are all "very small", Christian Democrats instead have to ally themselves with the leading forces in the different countries.⁴⁵ Very much in favour of a broader EPP,

⁴¹ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997. This was with the exception of Méhaignerie, the French CDS Leader, Jansen said.

⁴² Interview with Katherine Meenan, Dublin 11 May 1996.

⁴³ Interviews with Bernd Fischer and Renate Stuth, Bonn, 13 May 1993.

⁴⁴ See Jansen, 1992b, 1993, 1996. Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997.

⁴⁵ Interview with Elmar Brok, Strasbourg, 23 June 1993.

the Germans wanted all EDU member parties, including the French Gaullists, to become members.⁴⁶

There was a clear indication that the CDU, the dominant EPP member party, was primarily interested in having access to a party in power, rather than an ideologically pure party. This was the fact that the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in London more or less ignored the cross-party Movement for Christian Democracy (MCD).⁴⁷

In establishing an EPP link with the British Conservative Party, there had been close contacts between the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the EPP Secretariat-General, as was shown in Chapter Three. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation thereby provided a transnational communication channel and an interesting example of transnational penetration. In this, the most important access point for Christian Democrats in the top echelon of the target state in question, was the 'Tory Christian Democrat' Patten.

Regarding the very alliance built with the British and Danish Conservatives, the EPP's strategy was to integrate related political powers to become more influential and to assume responsibility of leadership in all countries of the Community and in the Community as a

⁴⁶ Interviews with Bernd Fischer, Bonn, 13 May 1993; Ingo Friedrich, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994. It is interesting to note that Fischer, addressing the EPP Bureau on 5 September 1989, said that the CDU regarded the Christian Democrat movement as its family and the EDU/IDU as close friends. See EPP/Minutes of the Meeting of the Political Bureau of the EPP, 5 September 1989, Brussels.

⁴⁷ Private information. Just before the April 1991 EPP Conference, deciding on the Tory application for an alliance, a letter had been sent to the EPP President from Robert Song and Christopher Graffius, Chairman and Secretary-General of the steering group of the MCD, asking the EPP to reject the application. They argued that a formal link between the EPP and the British Conservative Party — depicted as the rich man's party — would damage the cause of Christian Democracy in Britain. Cf Elmer, 1994. Keeping in touch with the EPP leadership, EDG managers had been irritated by the interference of the MCD, which also presented problems for the EPP and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation insofar as the MCD was building links and was close to the Christian Democrat parties which were opposed to Conservative parties. The MCD had established contacts with Dutch and Nordic Christian Democrats. Interview with Christopher Graffius, London, 2 February 1994. Links would also be established between the MCD and the EPP. Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997.

whole.⁴⁸ Claiming a position at the top among the parties with which it competes, the EPP naturally wanted to realise its policies as extensively as possible.

In a speech in 1991, EPP Secretary-General Jansen laid out the EPP's political strategy when raising the matter of an alliance:

Since the word "European" features in the name of the EPP, our credibility and *influence* demands that we be represented in all the countries which belong or will belong to the European Union. That also applies to countries where, for historical and cultural reasons, there have been no Christian Democratic parties, or where the political culture has prevented the emergence of a broad-based People's Party with Christian Democratic orientation. This explains the EPP's interest in forging closer ties with the British Conservatives.⁴⁹

In another context, Jansen noted that the EPP had been represented neither in Britain nor in Denmark, which was why an alliance with the Conservatives opened up extraordinary interesting perspectives for the EPP in terms of the possibility to be present in Britain and be able to *influence* British politics.⁵⁰

In an interview, Jansen said that he believed that the alliance with Conservatives in the EP would be helpful in reorientating the Tory Party.⁵¹ He thought that both the British and Danish Conservative parties would become members of the EPP, and that there will be one single party family of Christian Democrats and Conservatives in the future.

Looking back in 1997, Jansen noted that the EPP wanted "allies" in Britain and Scandinavia, where it had "a deficit."⁵² Another "strong ar-

⁴⁸ As EPP President Martens (1994:166-167) put it in his speech on the occasion of the November 1992 EPP Congress in Athens: "Pour sa part...le PPE souhaite pouvoir saisir cette chance d'intégrer de nouvelles forces politiques apparantes, afin de redevenir plus influent dans la réalisation de son projet fédéral européen." See also EPP/Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference of Heads of Government and Party Leaders of the EPP, Brussels, 13 April 1991; EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991; Jansen, 1991, 1992abc, 1993. Cf Abélès, 1992:414.

⁴⁹ Jansen, 1991. Emphasis added. See also Jansen, 1992bc; Martens, 1994:86-87, 166-167.

⁵⁰ Jansen, 1992c:252.

⁵¹ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

⁵² Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997.

gument” for an alliance concerned the ambition in the EPP’s “inner circle” to create “a strong supranational European party” contributing to the “shaping of Europe.”⁵³ Unlike most Tories, the “big watershed” for the EPP was not the situation in the EP, following the implementation of the SEA, but developments connected to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Jansen said, pointing to German reunification and the Maastricht Treaty. Seemingly, and as was discussed in the previous chapter, the EPP made a conscious effort to change the formal treaty basis in order to restructure the very conditions for transnational party alliances.

On his part, Santer, EPP President 1987–90, noted that Christian Democrat leaders, including Lubbers and others, saw that a “closer link” to the Conservatives would make sure that the UK was “not isolated.”⁵⁴ Tindemans, another former EPP President, said that it was very important to have political friends also in countries where there are no strong Christian Democrat parties, as in Scandinavia, or none at all, as in the UK.⁵⁵ And Dukes, a former EPP Vice-President, said that one motive for the EPP’s decision to open up for Conservative parties was that it was important to have “access”, not least in the context of enlargement so as to be “up-dated” by parties on their countries’ negotiations on EU membership.⁵⁶

By building wider transnational alliances, and reaching out to the top echelon in new target states, the EPP aimed to influence the political agenda in those states, not least with regard to European policies. It was an end in itself for the EPP to be represented by parties from all member states, to be able to reach out and spread their message to all of them.⁵⁷

⁵³ It is noteworthy that both the 1978 programme (article 140) of the German CDU and its 1994 programme (article 127) call for European parties and refer to the EPP explicitly. See CDU/Freiheit, Solidarität, Gerechtigkeit, 1978; Freiheit in Verantwortung, 1994. German Christian Democrats thought that a German-type party system would be best for the EC as well. Interview with Bernd Fischer, Bonn, 13 May 1993. In an illuminating article, Hix (1993) points out the similarities between the party system at the European level and that at the German national level. Cf Pappi, 1984; Smith, 1979/1986:175–176.

⁵⁴ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

⁵⁵ Interview with Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

⁵⁶ Interview with Alan Dukes, Dublin, 9 May 1996.

⁵⁷ See Jansen, 1992c; Martens, 1994:86–87, 166–167; Tindemans, 1992.

An alliance with the British and the Danes was thus a way to influence opinions and politics in all countries.⁵⁸

In the Christian Democratic camp, the underlying motives for an alliance were thus very forward-oriented. However, in 1991 there was also an immediate concern about the negotiations on the Treaty on European Union. Presiding over the European Council during the second half of 1991, Lubbers, the Dutch Christian Democrat Prime Minister, is understood to have thought that it could be easier to get the Maastricht Treaty through by integrating the Tories in EPP activities.⁵⁹ It is significant that even Dutch Christian Democrats thought an alliance with the Tories would help in making them less nationalistic as a party.⁶⁰

Whatever opposition there had been to an alliance, it is interesting to note the emerging consensus among politicians at the top level, whereas there was, as I will show in the next chapter, remaining opposition among party activists at the more basic levels. To take the Dutch CDA, “basis people” were less enthusiastic than internationally experienced people like Lubbers and CDA Chairman van Velzen, who both were in favour of the Tories joining the EPP Group in the end.⁶¹ It is noteworthy that the Dutch also came to accept the majority view within the EPP concerning opening up to Conservatives from the applicant countries.⁶²

Like Lubbers, Andreotti surrendered to the strong pressure within the EPP Conference from Kohl, Martens and others to ally with the British Conservatives.⁶³ In the end, also the Leader of the Irish FG, John Bruton,

⁵⁸ Interview with Georgios Anastassopoulos, Athens, 13 November 1992.

⁵⁹ Private information. EDG managers had reported that Lubbers had a more open attitude to the application than his party. In the end, he gave in to Chancellor Kohl, with whom Lubbers had problems at the time. Representatives from the German CDU and EPP President Martens had visited the Hague and had detected a slight opening in the position of the Dutch CDA. Confidential information.

⁶⁰ Interview with Jean Penders, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993.

⁶¹ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

⁶² Interviews with Alf Svensson, Västerås, 30 June 1995; Lars F Tobisson, Stockholm, 13 March 1995; Klaus Welle, Stockholm, 12 March 1995.

⁶³ It is recalled that EPP President Martens, remaining convinced and committed to the Tories' request for allied membership, had made a special trip to Rome to promote the Tories' cause. Writing to Martens, Sir Christopher thanked the EPP President very much for the strong and persistent support he had given. Prout, 1991c, 1992a. Kohl mentioned the Tory application to Andreotti at a holiday retreat, and the Italian Prime Minister had an open mind, tending towards a positive attitude. Confidential information.

would embrace the motives for an alliance with the Tories.⁶⁴ In short, a fundamental consensus developed at the level of elite interaction, sustaining theoretical arguments about transnational actor socialisation.

As noted by other participants at EPP summits, Kohl was very much in favour of an alliance.⁶⁵ That the alliance could be consummated at all was because Kohl “used his considerable influence to squash opposition to the arrangement.”⁶⁶ Initially, Kohl even gave the alliance “a historic dimension.”⁶⁷ As will be discussed further when analysing motives specifically related to the situation in the EP below, Kohl “played this card for strategic reasons.”⁶⁸

In short, the EPP wished to influence the Tory Party in a more pro-European direction. Leading Christian Democrats seemed convinced that an effect of an alliance would be “that what the British Conservatives in the EP say today, the Tory Party in the UK will say tomorrow.”⁶⁹ This was considered to be *the* chance for the Kohl and Martens generation to seek to reconvert the British Conservatives to a positive attitude to European integration at last.⁷⁰ Meeting regularly at EPP and European Council summits, leading Christian Democrats were determined to build on the new relationship and keep the British Government on the right track for a successful conclusion of the 1991 IGCs.

Against the background of “the isolation of the British” in the EP, which was seen to play a “mediating role” by “introducing politicians to European politics”, Meenan said that there was now a strong argument for allowing the Tories in also as a “contribution to the European process.”⁷¹

Although disappointed with the British vacillation on EMU and the

⁶⁴ His predecessor said that Bruton “had agreed” with Kohl. Interview with Alan Dukes, Dublin, 9 May 1996.

⁶⁵ Interviews with Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Alan Dukes, Dublin, 9 May 1996; Alf Svensson, Västerås, 30 June 1995.

⁶⁶ *The European*, 30 April-3 May 1992. See also Bethell, 1994; Duff, 1994:157.

⁶⁷ Quoted in *Financial Times*, 8 April 1992. See also Wahl, 1992:12, 56.

⁶⁸ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997.

⁶⁹ An anonymous German MEP quoted in *The Guardian*, 12 February 1992. See also Lea, 1992:26.

⁷⁰ Private information.

⁷¹ Interview with Katherine Meenan, Dublin 11 May 1996.

opt-out from the Social Chapter, negotiated at Maastricht, the EPP agreed in February 1992 that the British Conservatives could join the EPP Group.⁷² And although disillusioned with the growing Euro-scepticism within the British Conservative Party and Government, it was equally significant that the EPP renewed the alliance after the 1994 European elections. By now, there was no longer any illusion that the British Conservative Party and Government would be able to convert to a Christian Democratic agenda for deeper European integration this side of a UK general election.

In the longer term, however, there was still an argument to the effect that there should be a continued link to the British Conservative Party. Indeed, EPP Secretary-General Welle partly explained the EPP's decision to open up for the Nordic Conservative parties, all of them EDU members, by saying that the British Conservatives should now consider that the Danes have joined the EPP.⁷³ Feeling they were drifting apart, there was a concerted move by German Christian Democrats to make Britain return to "the heart of Europe."

Maximisation of Parliamentary Influence

Conservatives

When analysing party strategies and motives, it is recalled that maximisation of influence can be regarded as the basic goal for parties in the parliamentary arena. There, the influence objects are the parliamentary groups of other parties. Reasoning by analogy, a salient motive for transnational party alliances is the perceived need to unite vis-à-vis political opponents, or common enemies. This implies that party strategies are also shaped in the light of threats posed by countervailing forces.

The British Conservatives have been most concerned about the influence of the Socialists in Europe. Pursuing party contacts in the 1970s, they were aware of the close dialogue between the Socialist statesmen

⁷² See Chapter Three.

⁷³ Interview with Klaus Welle, Stockholm, 12 March 1995. See also *Financial Times*, 29 March 1995.

Willy Brandt, Bruno Kreisky and Olof Palme and insisted they had to do something to counteract the Socialist International.⁷⁴ Although an 'International' by name, the Socialist International was mainly run by Europeans.

More specifically, the Conservative parties in the EDG, the British and the Danish, were anxious about Socialist dominance in the EP. Following the end of the British Labour Party's boycott of the EP in 1975, the Socialist Group had become the largest for the first time ever.⁷⁵ In response to the arrival in Strasbourg of Labour members, the British Conservatives moved to build closer party links, countering the Socialists.⁷⁶

A motion tabled at the 1975 Conservative Party Conference was crystal-clear about the political point underlying the drive for a closer alliance. It called for the formation of a centre-right alliance "able effectively to *oppose the Socialist grouping* in the European Parliament and able to take positive initiatives in the development of Europe."⁷⁷ The Socialist Group should not be allowed to become dominant because the centre-right was divided.

Similar arguments appeared in the talks from 1989 over an alliance. To counter the Socialists, it was again argued that political forces of the European centre-right must unite. Although ideologically at odds with Christian Democracy, and although the relations were strained between Number 10 and Tory MEPs, it is significant that Thatcher supported the application for an alliance back in 1989. She did so because the arguments made sense to her as there was a need for a diminished Conservative grouping to look for allies against Socialism and also to co-ordinate tactics in the EP.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Interview with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994. See also Thatcher, 1995:338; *Financial Times*, 29 March 1995.

⁷⁵ The Labour Party, under Harold Wilson, had decided to boycott the EP initially, disappointing Continental Socialists hoping for additional members. This implied that only 21 instead of 36 British members were sent to Strasbourg in 1973. See Butler and Kitzinger, 1976:21-22; Fitzmaurice, 1975:145; *The Economist*, 6 January 1973.

⁷⁶ See Irving, 1979:251; Maudling, 1978:221; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:197; *The Times*, 10 October 1975.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Ashford, 1980:120. Emphasis added. See also Chapter Three.

⁷⁸ Interview with Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994. See also Bethell, 1994; Lea, 1992:23.

Requesting allied membership of the EPP Group, the EDG Chairman, in his letter to the EPP Group Chairman, argued “that together we have a much better chance of achieving our goals. We believe that joining the European People’s Party will strengthen our joint work towards an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe.”⁷⁹ At the press conference held jointly by the two Group Chairmen in July 1989, Sir Christopher “tactfully but correctly emphasized that as a group of 34 in a Parliament of 518 members, putting up their hands on their own in relation to every issue was rather useless politically. The *influential* decisions of the Parliament would be shaped by decisions taken by other like-minded parties.”⁸⁰

As was shown in the previous chapter, the application for allied membership of the EPP Group must be seen in the light of the enhanced powers of the EP following the implementation of the SEA. The Tories’ application bid was a move generally appreciated to end their isolation at a time when the EP was flexing its muscles. The co-operation procedure of the SEA, the need for absolute majorities of 260 votes as it was at the time, was referred to as a motive for their search for an alliance with Christian Democrats to avoid becoming marginalised.⁸¹ The EP had won powers to influence a broader field of EC legislation so it became more important for national delegations to really care about their input.

Identifying where powers lie in the EP, the British Conservatives had been anxious about greater marginalisation in a Parliament where majorities continued to be negotiated between Christian Democrats and Socialists, fearing more left-leaning overall outputs than if they were to harmonise with Christian Democrats from within the EPP Group. Aware that few matters are decided without the tacit acceptance of the Socialists and the Christian Democrats, the “British Conservatives took this argument to its logical conclusion by dissolving their own group and joining the Christian Democrats.”⁸²

⁷⁹ Prout, 1989a. See also *Agence Europe*, 29 June 1989.

⁸⁰ Wood, 1989:62-63. Emphasis added.

⁸¹ Interviews with Sir Fred Catherwood, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

⁸² Westlake, 1994a:187. See also Abélès, 1992:152; Attinà, 1992:69, 73; Corbett and Jacobs, 1989:175; Fitzmaurice, 1988:393; Dinan, 1994:276; Duff, 1994:159; Johansson, 1993, 1996, 1997b; Quermonne, 1993:44; Thomas, 1992:15; Tsebelis, 1994:131, 138; Westlake, 1994b:130, 264.

To avoid isolation, and to counteract Socialist measures, the Conservatives wanted to influence policies from within the largest centre-right grouping.⁸³

Also the Danish Conservatives thought they would benefit from an alliance in terms of parliamentary influence, despite becoming a proportionally even smaller force than they were within the EDG.⁸⁴ And when the Spanish members decided to move from the EDG to the EPP Group, one of the reasons was the calculation that they would become more influential by this move.⁸⁵ When they defected, after the 1989 European elections, the EDG was demoted to the fourth largest group, which implied that those remaining in the EDG would have less political clout. This had contributed to the Tories' determination to join the Christian Democrats.⁸⁶

Although the application to join the EPP Group was rebuffed by the EPP in July 1989, the Tory MEPs persisted in pressing for a *rapprochement* with the Christian Democrats, indicating how keen they were on making a success out of this.⁸⁷ The EDG Chairman "tenaciously pushed the idea...."⁸⁸

Also those few Tory MEPs, at least one of whom was a Thatcherite, who initially had been sceptical about an alliance with Christian Demo-

⁸³ Interviews with Christopher Beazley, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Lord Inglewood, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Derek Prag, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Amédée Turner, Brussels, 25 June 1992. See also Andersson and Lindahl, 1994:84; Ashford, 1992:135; Lea, 1992:31; Westlake, 1994b:208; *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 1989; *The Economist*, 9 March 1991; *Financial Times*, 23 November 1990 & 12 March 1991; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1989; *The Times*, 1 July 1989 & 12 March 1991.

⁸⁴ Interviews with Marie Jepsen, Strasbourg, 24 June 1993; Jens Karoli, Copenhagen, 21 October 1993; Niels Pedersen, Brussels, 26 June 1992; Christian Rovsing, Brussels, 24 June 1992; Harald Rømer, Brussels, 23 June 1992.

⁸⁵ Interview with José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993.

⁸⁶ Interviews with Christopher Beazley, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Lord Plumb, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; Derek Prag, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Harald Rømer, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994. See also Ashford, 1992:135; Ladrech, 1996:298; Wood, 1989:6.

⁸⁷ Interviews with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

⁸⁸ *The European*, 30 April-3 May 1992. See also *The Guardian*, 12 February 1992; *The Times*, 19 February 1992.

crats changed their minds when they realised that it would take the Tories from the periphery of EP politics to the heart of the centre-right.⁸⁹ The Conservatives calculated that they would have a disproportionate influence because of the lack of discipline and poor record of attendance among some national delegations within the EPP Group, notably the Italian.

Having joined the EPP Group, Tory MEPs were no longer doomed to strike informal deals on a group-to-group basis with the Christian Democrats, but were able to argue their case *tête-à-tête* within different EPP Group bodies. These included the meetings between heads of delegations, the pre-meetings in the Bureau before session votes, the secretariat as well as occasions such as study days. Whereas the Tories had been outsiders before, they were now part of a power structure.⁹⁰ As Clark has put it:

The alliance with the European People's Party has given the Conservatives a much stronger base in European politics. Whereas they used to be fourth in the batting order, they are now in the second largest group...No longer "the lost tribe", as some journalists called them, the Conservatives have a new effectiveness in working out joint policy with the Christian Democrats.⁹¹

Confirming that the motive behind the alliance primarily had to do with the lure of power politics, attention should be paid to a news release issued by the Conservatives in the EP on 6 May 1992, in which it was stated that the alliance "would give the Conservatives *far more clout*."⁹² The Leader of the Tory MEPs, Sir Christopher, said in the release that the Tories' "*influence* is magnified by being part of a larger family."⁹³ He insisted that the alliance would help "to organise the centre-right more effectively against the collectivist forces whose philosophy now dom-

⁸⁹ See Lea, 1992:30.

⁹⁰ Interview with Sir Fred Catherwood, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

⁹¹ Clark, 1993:11.

⁹² Conservatives in the EP/News release, 6 May 1992. Emphasis added.

⁹³ Emphasis added.

inates the Parliament.”⁹⁴ Similarly, the Tory MEP Lord O’Hagan argued that the alliance was “part of a movement towards a wider, more imaginative realignment of the centre-right in the European Community.”⁹⁵

Under pressure to justify the alliance in 1993 and 1994, Tory MEPs and pro-European MPs would unveil, in very clear terms, its underlying motives. The Strasbourg Tories even had a leaflet produced — mainly for internal party consumption — to explain why the alliance had been initiated and why it should be sustained. The alliance gave them “an *influential* say in the negotiations which take place between the political groups on issues coming before the European Parliament, both in committee and in plenary session.”⁹⁶ The alliance was thus explained as a move to “*maximising the influence* of British Conservatives in the European Parliament”, why the “Conservative MEPs will continue to develop this important approach of *building an alliance of like-minded parties to maximise their political influence* and success.”⁹⁷ This is why the alliance also should be seen in the context of enlargement:

The EPP Organisation already boasts many of the centre-right parties of the EFTAn applicants as “observer” members. Linking up with the EPP Group is thus an excellent investment by the Conservative MEPs in *maximising their future influence* in the European Parliament.⁹⁸

Also the Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, explained the decision to ally with the Christian Democrats in terms of influence, insisting that the “alliance *maximises the influence* of British Conservatives....”⁹⁹ He even defended the alliance in a letter to Conservative MPs:

⁹⁴ See also Prout, 1993ab; *The European*, 30 April-3 May 1992 and the interview with Sir Christopher on BBC’s *On the Record* on 24 October 1993. In the news release, Sir Christopher said that the alliance “also consolidates us against the extreme Right.” Another Tory MEP said that the alliance was linked to the question of keeping extreme nationalists out of power in France, the Federal Republic and Italy. Interview with Christopher Beazley, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993.

⁹⁵ See also *The European*, 30 April-3 May 1992.

⁹⁶ Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993. Emphasis added.

⁹⁷ Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993. Emphases added. See also *Agence Europe*, 23 October 1993; *Financial Times*, 19/20 February 1994.

⁹⁸ Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993. Emphasis added.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993. Emphasis added.

This arrangement, which is surely sensible, enables our MEPs to work with other centre-right parliamentarians in an *effective alliance* against the left-wing majority in the European Parliament - - - A centre-right majority in the European Parliament will strengthen our hand in building the free market, deregulated and decentralised Europe to which all Conservatives are committed.¹⁰⁰

Committing himself to the alliance with Christian Democrats, Sir Norman Fowler, who replaced Chris Patten as Conservative Party Chairman, had equally remarked that “we can now put forward our ideas as part of a wider coalition - - - Above all, we have *a common enemy* in Euro-socialism. That makes it vital that we co-operate together to achieve our free-enterprise vision of Europe.”¹⁰¹ Another leading pro-European Conservative, Ian Taylor, said that Tory MEPs must *maximise the influence* of the centre-right.¹⁰²

Likewise, William Newton Dunn, Chairman of the British section in the EPP Group, said that in the EP you have to “work with *allies*” and that “the EPP are our best *allies*”, adding that it is in the interest of Britain that the Tories work with the Christian Democrats.¹⁰³ He pointed out that Conservatives are in opposition, at the European level, and have to “regain control” and power in the battle against Socialism.

In similar terminology, Lord Bethell, defending “*a hard-won alliance*”, remarked that the Tories “now work much more effectively in what we believe to be Britain’s interest - - - It is now much easier for us to win votes.”¹⁰⁴ He pointed out that both Conservative Prime Ministers had recognised that “the alliance was *an absolute political necessity*.”¹⁰⁵

Looking ahead to the 1994 European elections, Christopher Beazley said that the proposal that they should leave the EPP Group was “ab-

¹⁰⁰ Hurd, 1994b. Emphasis added. See also Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993.

¹⁰¹ Fowler, 1992. Emphasis added. See also Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993.

¹⁰² Interview with Ian Taylor, London, 8 February 1994. See also Taylor, 1993.

¹⁰³ BBC TV/Breakfast with Frost, 20 February 1994. See also Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993; Scott-Hopkins, 1994:24; Simmonds, 1994.

¹⁰⁴ Bethell, 1994. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁵ Emphasis added.

surd”, adding that if at the very best 50 Tory MEPs are elected at the elections, they would be “without *influence*.”¹⁰⁶ In the end, they lost 14 seats, down to 18, which implied they would have been isolated on their own.

This point was forcefully made by the new leadership of the British section in the EPP Group, with Lord Plumb saying: “With 18 members in a parliament of 567, our *leverage* depends more than ever on an effective alliance with our Conservative and Christian Democratic friends across Europe.”¹⁰⁷ He pointed out that the “challenge is for the centre-right to unite round a positive and coherent strategy, and we are working with our *allies* in the EPP Group to that end.”¹⁰⁸

In terms of influence, the Strasbourg Tories were keen on the link to German Christian Democrats in particular. This very link was one of the most important arguments in support of a reapplication for allied membership of the EPP Group.¹⁰⁹ Tories in Strasbourg wanted to see the Anglo-German relationship re-established, and argued that it was important to be close to the German Christian Democrats because of their overall influence and their sharing a commitment to free trade unlike the protectionist French neo-Gaullists.¹¹⁰

Whereas the German Christian Democrats strengthened their position, that of the Tories, losing seats, diminished. As stated in the EP’s Rules of Procedure, they were too few to set up a group on their own, but they could have re-established a joint group with the three Danish Conservatives.¹¹¹ Regarded as being too few, there was no real prospect for any change, however.¹¹² Biesmans, the Deputy Secretary-General of the EPP Group, argued that the advantages of being part of the EPP Group by far outweighed the disadvantages as the first thing they would

¹⁰⁶ BBC TV/On the Record, 24 October 1993.

¹⁰⁷ Plumb, 1994c. Emphasis added. See also Plumb, 1994ab; Conservatives in the EP/ News release, 11 October 1994; *The Independent*, 10 October 1994.

¹⁰⁸ Plumb, 1994c. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁹ See Butler and Westlake, 1995:280.

¹¹⁰ Interviews with Edward Steen, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994; John Stevens, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994. See also Moorhouse, 1995.

¹¹¹ See EP/Rules of Procedure, October 1993, 8th edition.

¹¹² Interviews with Edward McMillan-Scott, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994; Edward Steen, Strasbourg, 20 July 1994.

have to do, if the Tory MEPs were on their own, would be to negotiate informal alliances with the Christian Democrats.¹¹³

Arguing that they would win a lot more in the EPP Group than any other option, the Tories decided to reapply for allied membership. This seemed logical given that they had once applied and tenaciously had pushed for the alliance in order to become more influential. Significantly, it was reported that Ministers who had tried to distance the Tories from the EPP during the recent election campaign “have accepted that Conservative MEPs will have no *parliamentary influence* unless they resume the link.”¹¹⁴

It follows that a powerful motive for building an alliance with Christian Democrats was the strategic consideration of maximising the Conservatives’ influence in the European parliamentary arena. Looking back in 1997, Rømer, the former EDG Secretary-General, said that the “*political influence*” in the EP itself was “the most important motive” for the Conservatives.¹¹⁵

The alliance must be seen, in the words of Westlake, as “a marriage of practical convenience rather than the result of any ideological imperative....”¹¹⁶ It was, on balance, for the Conservatives mainly formed against rather than for something. This corresponds to some basic arguments in alliance theory, as brought into light in the theoretical chapter.

At the same time, however, there was an element of shared ideology involved. Beyond the strategic motives, it should therefore be added that there was a basis for a common alliance ideology insofar as there was some degree of ideological convergence. There was also an emotional attachment to the alliance on the part of some Tory MEPs. They knew and were close in the way of thinking to their Christian Democrat

¹¹³ Interview with John Biesmans, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994.

¹¹⁴ *The Guardian*, 6 July 1994. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Harald Rømer, Brussels, 9 January 1997.

¹¹⁶ Westlake, 1994b:271. Asked if the arrangement was one of convenience, the Tory MEP Lord Bethell replied: “But I don’t object to the term ‘marriage of convenience’. I think it’s extremely convenient.” Quoted in *The Independent*, 9 April 1992. See also Bethell, 1994. For his part, the Leader of the Labour MEPs, Glyn Ford, said, in the same report, that the alliance was “not so much a marriage of convenience as a cynical process of living in sin.”

colleagues. Not least, Sir Christopher had personally invested a lot in the alliance in order to find a home for the Tories among Europe's powerful Christian Democrats.¹¹⁷ Having felt isolated the alliance was, for the Tories, a way of being recognised.

As a transnational alliance, it had a broader-than-national perspective and concerned also some common European interests. In other words, there was a community of interests insofar as self-interests were considered compatible with the interests of the wider European centre-right. The balance of power that had been tipped in the Socialists' favour at the 1989 European elections would be redressed by the Conservatives together with the Christian Democrats. In short, there was a shared concern that there had to be a counterweight to the Socialists in particular.

Christian Democrats

Having identified threats posed by countervailing forces, Continental Christian Democrats have also been most concerned about the increasing influence of Socialists. This is where successive enlargements of the EC/EU come in. With the British Labour Party ending its boycott of the EP in 1975, the Socialist Group grew bigger than the Christian Democratic Group for the first time, ever, since party groups were set up in the ECSC Common Assembly. In fact, every enlargement has implied that Christian Democrats have lost ground. To this must be added the growing secularisation in West Europe and the weakness of Christian Democracy in most applicant countries. In short, Christian Democrats have been anxious about the prospect of a diminished standing in an enlarged EC/EU.¹¹⁸

Every single enlargement affects the balance of power within, as well

¹¹⁷ Interview with Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994.

¹¹⁸ Cf Bainbridge and Teasdale, 1995:39. The EPP had accepted, as members of its parliamentary group, those representing the Greek ND and, in the context of the 1986 enlargement, those of the Portuguese CDS, the Spanish PDP, the Basque PNV and the Catalan UDC. Then, in 1989, the moment had arrived for members representing the Spanish PP, the relaunched AP, to join the EPP Group as well.

as between, party groups. There are strong institutional imperatives for Christian Democrats and Socialists to negotiate informal and issue-specific coalitions. And the bargaining strength of each and one of these groupings depends on the number of seats they command.¹¹⁹ Negotiating with the Socialists, the outcome could be less left-leaning if the parties of the European centre-right could combine into a bigger grouping. Having the Socialist grouping as their main object of influence, the Christian Democrats were naturally keen on new non-Socialist allies to maximise their influence.

In short, an argument in favour of the alliance was that the EPP Group would become more influential.¹²⁰ Although a diminishing force, the seats offered by the British Conservatives were tempting for Christian Democrats. They were also aware that the Italian Communists, changing their name into the Democratic Party of the Left, were approaching the Socialists.¹²¹ And at the press conference he held jointly with the EDG Chairman in July 1989, EPP Group Chairman Klepsch also pointed out the need for unity following the implementation of the SEA.¹²²

It should be brought to mind that the EDG Chairman, in correspondence with the EPP leadership, had expressed the viewpoint that an alliance with the British Tories was an investment for the future. In threatening that the Scandinavians and, in the longer term, the Central and Eastern Europeans, might prefer to set up their own grouping together with their British and Danish Conservative sister parties, Sir Christopher had explicitly linked the issue of the more immediate alliance with the issue of preparing the EPP and its parliamentary group to become more inclusive. This line of argumentation was most effective in convincing Christian Democrats, used to powerful roles in different arenas, of the need to strike an alliance with the Conservatives.

In one of his letters to EPP President Martens, Sir Christopher had pointed out that when Christian Democrat parties work as coalition partners with Socialists in West European governments, they do so from a position of strength, while the Socialists are the dominating force within

¹¹⁹ See Johansson, 1997b.

¹²⁰ Interview with Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993.

¹²¹ See Jansen, 1992c.

¹²² Wood, 1989:62-63.

the EP.¹²³ Conservative membership would redress the balance of power within the EP and therefore be in the interest of Christian Democrat parties, Sir Christopher affirmed. Or, in his own words: “A regrouping outside the EPP would be a hard blow to the positions of the centre parties, to the benefit of the Socialists.” A political alignment without the EPP would serve the Socialists in that the centre-right parties would appear divided.

At the same time, however, the EDG Chairman emphasised that membership of the EPP Group was not requested just as a counterweight to, or front against, Socialists. The latter point must be seen against the background of the patterns of coalition behaviour, both in the European and the domestic parliamentary arenas. That Christian Democrats have often entered into coalitions, both formal and informal, with Socialists, will be discussed further in the next chapter, tracing constraints in the domestic arenas of party politics.

German Christian Democrats have proved to be most eager in their quest for new allies to counter the influence of Socialists in European politics. In the 1970s, the CDU/CSU pushed the viewpoint — “along the lines of straight *power politics*” — that it “was essential to institutionalise co-operation with the European Conservatives in order to become the strongest group in the EP, and if possible to achieve an absolute majority.”¹²⁴ Adopting the role of initiator and motivator for transnational party alliances, the direct elections to the EP were very much in the Germans’ mind.¹²⁵ Maximising votes in the European electoral arena was a means to maximise influence in the European parliamentary arena.

Having taken part in transnational alliance-building in view of the first European elections in 1979, Kohl’s motives, for the Christian Democrats to open up for Conservatives, were basically the same in the 1990s. At the June 1991 EPP Conference he pointed out that the future adhesion of centre and centre-right political forces to the EPP must be seen in the light of the 1994 European elections, along with enlargement to

¹²³ Prout, 1991a.

¹²⁴ Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:200. Emphasis added. See also Kleinmann, 1993:487.

¹²⁵ Weidenfeld, 1982:93. See also Broughton, 1994:102; Kleinmann, 1993:491; Pridham, 1977:230.

include the EFTA countries as well as Central European countries.¹²⁶ The Socialists must not be allowed to dominate the EP, the Chancellor said.

Kohl's argument thus was that the EPP should maximise its strength, becoming bigger and stronger than the Socialists.¹²⁷ As Dukes, a former EPP Vice-President, put it, "the philosophy of Kohl", who has a very strong position and who pointed to the "strong Socialist Group" and "presence", was that the EPP must look for other parties in order to "try to construct a very strong centre."¹²⁸

Along similar lines, EPP President Martens, addressing the November 1992 EPP Congress in Athens, raised the matter of relations with Scandinavian parties.¹²⁹ He stressed that Christian Democrat governments were strong in the original six member states but less so since the first enlargement.

The EPP leadership and especially German Christian Democrats remained keen on some kind of alliance after the 1994 European elections.¹³⁰ Beyond the motive of building transnational channels, Chris-

¹²⁶ On the basis of confidential information.

¹²⁷ Interview with Alf Svensson, Västerås, 30 June 1995. Svensson said that the Leader of the Spanish PP, Aznar, put forward similar arguments. Asked about his most important goals for the EPP, its German Secretary-General said that one was to make sure that the EPP is "not the second force" to the Socialists. Interview with Klaus Welle, Stockholm, 12 March 1995.

¹²⁸ Interview with Alan Dukes, Dublin, 9 May 1996. Dukes also noted that the fragmentation of the party system in France was another reason for the decision to open up the EPP, along with the motive to ward off the re-emergence of strong right and populist parties in France, Belgium and Germany. Although the countervailing force of the extreme right concerned Christian Democrats, it was seldom referred to in interviews or in documents. Hence, it must be considered a less important motive behind the alliance. Having said that, it may be added that the point about the challenge of the extreme right was made by Giscard d'Estaing, the former French President, who led his team into the EPP Group in late 1991. See *Financial Times*, 8 April 1992. Having himself requested membership of the EPP Group, he also pointed out that there must be a strong centre-right group to counterbalance the Socialist Group. See *Agence Europe*, 14 May 1992.

¹²⁹ Author's notes. See also Martens, 1994:166-167.

¹³⁰ See *Agence Europe*, 27/28 June & 6 July 1994; *Financial Times*, 14 June 1994; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 & 30 June 1994. Interview with Ingo Friedrich, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994.

tian Democrats were deeply interested in numbers as a means of warding off the dominance of the Socialists.¹³¹

Although there were sceptical elements, who still had misgivings about an alliance with Conservatives, it is significant that those sceptics remained within the alliance. This was because they were aware that only by staying together could the Christian Democrats counter the Socialists and strengthen their bargaining positions.¹³² If the historic Christian Democrat parties would set up a group on their own and Liberal-Conservative EDU parties, including the Nordic, move in the other direction the situation would be awkward for the CDU/CSU.¹³³ This was the very situation the German Christian Democrats had done their best to avoid and so far with great success.

Having considerable influence within the EPP Group, German Christian Democrats had been the driving force for an alliance with the Tories.¹³⁴ The Germans played a similar role vis-à-vis the Nordic Conservatives. Keen to maximise numbers, the EPP Party and its parliamentary group would welcome them as well. Also the preparations for integrating Central and Eastern European Conservative as well as Christian Democrat parties were well under way.

From the point of view of the EPP and the EPP Group, it was a great priority to secure the allegiance of centre-right forces to counter the influence of the Socialists. Insofar as the European parliamentary arena is where the essentials of the EPP's programmes are to be carried out, Christian Democrats are naturally concerned about their power basis. In sum, therefore, it was a powerful motive behind the alliance to fulfil the basic goal to maximise parliamentary influence.

¹³¹ See *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 June 1994; *The Guardian*, 14 June 1994; *The Independent*, 13 & 14 June & 6 July 1994. Such concerns also explain why the EPP in late 1996 accepted the Portuguese PSD to join both the EPP Party and, in effect, the EPP Group. Private information.

¹³² Interviews with John Biesmans, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994; Fernand Herman, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994; Harald Rømer, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994.

¹³³ Interview with Harald Rømer, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994.

¹³⁴ Interviews with Ingo Friedrich, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994; Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994; Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

CHAPTER SIX

Constraints on Transnational Party Alliances

The aim of this chapter is to trace and analyse *constraints* on the building of an alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European parliamentary arena. By looking into constraints, this chapter seeks to present evidence and provide answers regarding factors *impeding* the processes of transnational alliance-building among political parties.

Whereas previous chapters have identified arguments in favour of an alliance, this chapter will identify arguments against both its formation and its evolution. The very fact that it took almost three years from the request for an alliance until it was implemented, in May 1992, indicates that its key promoters were faced with a set of constraints. This was also indicated by the fact that there were remaining questions about the continuation of the alliance in the context of the 1994 European elections.

From the point of view of the EPP and its member parties, the questions raised by the challenge of an alliance with Conservatives must be seen in the light of its two ideological pillars, as stated in the preamble of its statutes. These were the “*Christian view of man and the Christian Democratic concept of society deriving therefrom*”, and “*the common will to found the United States of Europe as a union of free peoples and responsible citizens.*”¹ According to the statutes, the member parties should be Christian Democrat parties accepting these statutes and subscribing to the political programme.

There were differences, both within European Christian Democracy and between individual parties of this family and those of European Conservatism, over the essence of these ideologies. When analysing such differences, I rely on the notion of *ideological dimensions*. Specifically, I use the classic left-right *socioeconomic dimension* as well as the *religious di-*

¹ EPP Group/Handbook of the European People’s Party (CD Group) in the European Parliament 1993, p 343. Emphases added.

mention.² I add the *European dimension*, which concerns the fault line of supranational integration and national sovereignty.

As Pridham has pointed out, there is, often, both in transnational and domestic politics, a strong interlinkage “between party *identity* or ideological orientation and coalition or alliance preferences.”³ Where a national party’s ideological identity, or that of an ideological movement, differs from that of an alliance partner at the European level, this poses a *problem of congruence and credibility dilemma*. Ideological questions could thereby give rise to strategic questions with implications for politics in the domestic party arenas.

Political parties have multiple goals, which relate to different arenas. *Arena shifts* between the domestic and European arenas of party politics could also pose a *problem of congruence and credibility dilemma* if the basic goals and policy stands presented in the domestic arenas are incompatible with those in the European arenas. This could lead to conflicts in the domestic *internal arena* and loss of credibility in the domestic *electoral arena*. In other words, incongruities between the European and national levels of party activities could damage party cohesion — through the perceived threat to programme realisation — which also could damage the prospects in the electoral arena — through domestic party competition — and eventually damage also the influence in the domestic *parliamentary arena*.

As we have seen, political parties involve themselves in transnational party alliances to strengthen their *capacity for action*. In this chapter, I shall attempt to show that a political party could suffer an *autonomy dilemma* by balancing this concern with the concern to maintain its *freedom of action*. Although political parties, or rather their leaders, may embrace the motives and see the opportunities for transnational party alliances, the constraints may limit what they are able or likely to do.⁴

In the Christian Democratic camp, most attention will be paid to the parties most strongly against an alliance with the British Conservatives. The opposition had come mainly from the Belgian, Dutch and Italian

² Cf Lijphart, 1981.

³ Pridham, 1982:332. Emphasis added.

⁴ To quote, once again, from Russett and Starr (1981/1996:22), it is important to emphasise that “the opportunities of international actors are constrained in various ways and that these constraints affect the willingness of decision makers to act.”

member parties of the EPP. Initially, there was also opposition from the French and Irish parties. One difference when we come to the Conservative camp is that almost all attention will be focused on one party, the British Conservative Party, and that the analysis more extensively concerns itself with the evolutionary phase, that is the time after the implementation of the alliance. During the formative phase, the formation of an alliance was not known to many Tories.

Throughout the chapter, I will return to the historical background to the alliance. Also, I will fragment the unitary actor approach to the study of political parties by taking into account sub-groups, or factions, notably the parliamentary party in the case of the British Tories. When we come to them, the parliamentary arena will therefore be treated under the same headline as the internal arena.

Ideological Dimensions and the Problem of Congruence

Socioeconomic Dimension and Christian Democrats

At the outset, it is stressed that the consensual approach of Christian Democrat parties is closely connected to Christian Democracy as an ideology, inspired by Catholic social teachings and seeking a means to avoid class conflicts. As self-proclaimed people's parties, with close links to the so-called social partners, including the workers, Christian Democrats have been reluctant to enter into a formal alliance with particularly the British Conservatives, seen as more class-based. The socioeconomic dimension entered into the argument against an alliance insofar as there are several expressions of Christian Democracy as a centrist political force.

In the early 1970s, Christian Democrats, especially the Belgians, the Dutch and the Italians, opposed a Conservative entry into the Christian Democratic Group.⁵ Along with the French, they thought that the British Conservatives were "too right-wing, and too class-based."⁶ Such

⁵ Interviews with Sir John Peel, London, 7 February 1994; Derek Prag, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Harald Römer, Brussels, 23 June 1992.

⁶ Ashford, 1992:134. See also Ashford, 1980:119-129; Fitzmaurice, 1975:145-146; Scalingi, 1980:126.

questions of party-political identity also surrounded the birth of the EDU.⁷ Again, the pejorative right-wing connotations of the word Conservative came to the fore.⁸ Whatever the real ideological differences between Christian Democracy and Conservatism, the reactionary or even fascist overtones of Conservatism in much of Europe inhibited a formal alliance between the two.⁹ The EDU was clearly to the right of the EPP.¹⁰

Within the Christian Democrat movement, the German CDU/CSU and the Austrian ÖVP had been very active in the preparations for the EDU. This indicated that there was a proximity between them and the Conservatives on the socioeconomic dimension.¹¹ Conversely, the anti-Socialist alliance, spoken openly about by Austrian and German Christian Democrats, was too pragmatic for other Christian Democrats. Given the internal lines of ideological conflict, Irving even predicted that “Christian Democrats are unlikely to fuse with Conservatives at the European level, although on balance they are more likely to co-operate with Conservatives than with the more ‘collectivist’ parties of the Left.”¹²

An alliance also seemed unlikely as long as the Tories were associated with Thatcherism, not least after Thatcher had held her Bruges speech

⁷ Pridham, 1982:338-339. See also Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:216; Lijphart, 1981:47; Lodge and Herman, 1982:171-172. Calling for their friends within the EPP/EUCD to join the EDU, the German Christian Democrats were aware of the constraints to this. See EDU/Bulletin 3, 1979.

⁸ Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Sir John Peel, London, 7 February 1994. Maudling, 1978:221-222; Thatcher, 1995:345-346.

⁹ Cf Broughton, 1988:195; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:200; Kunz, 1980:237; Layton-Henry, 1982:16; Lodge and Herman, 1982:182; Pridham and Pridham, 1981:166.

¹⁰ Steed, 1982:184.

¹¹ Lijphart, 1981:47. See also Hanley, 1994b:191; Irving, 1979:251; Müller, 1988:113; Pelinka, 1983:263-265; Whyte, 1981:100-101. CSU Leader Strauß personally wanted an alliance with Conservatives and “not only chemically clean” Christian Democrats. Quoted in Andersson, 1979:37. Strauß regretted that the word Conservative in many Continental countries was synonymous with reactionary or fascist.

¹² Irving, 1979:259. See also Gresch, 1978:177; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:200; Palmer, 1981:77.

in September 1988.¹³ And during the 1989 European elections campaign, her language brought back memories of that speech.¹⁴ She said that the Social Charter was “Socialist”, even “Marxist.”¹⁵

Thatcher’s attacks on the social dimension to the internal market were consistent with her policies at the domestic level. For Christian Democrats, she embodied the very view that consensus was somehow suspect in politics. They were alienated by her confrontational attitude towards the trade unions and her opposition to the social dimension. Christian Democrats stressed consensual politics at both the European and national levels.¹⁶

Against this background, it was logical that the EPP, in July 1989, decided to defer the Tory application for allied membership of the EPP Group. The communiqué drafted in connection with this meeting went to the core of the socioeconomic dimension. Pointing out that the “EPP defines itself as a *force of the Centre* inspired by Christian Democracy”, it was stated that “the EPP insists on the rapid achievement of the Internal Market, which is neither conceivable or possible without a *social dimension*.”¹⁷ It was even said that the “EPP considers that the leaders of the

¹³ Cf Butler and Westlake, 1995:29; Wood, 1989:61. For the speech, see Thatcher, 1988. For analyses of the contents and implications of the speech, see Ashford, 1992:125; Cockfield, 1994:160; George, 1994:194–195; George and Sowemimo, 1996:251–252; Grant, 1994:89; Nicoll and Salmon, 1994:257; Young, 1989/1991:547–551; Young, 1993:155–156. In her memoirs, Thatcher (1993:746) mentions that on the evening of her speech she “had a vigorous argument over dinner in Brussels with M. Martens, his Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign minister.” This was the very Martens who would become EPP President in 1990.

¹⁴ See *Agence Europe*, 24 May 1989; George, 1994:215; Oakley, 1989; Webster, 1989.

¹⁵ Quoted in Oakley, 1989:36. Cf Clarke, 1992:245; George, 1994:194–195; Grant, 1994:84–85; Lodge, 1990:7; Wood, 1989:6; Young, 1993:157. See also Thatcher, 1993:750. At the Madrid European Council in June 1989, Thatcher voiced strong criticism of the proposal for a Social Charter. See *The Economist*, 1 July 1989. In his memoirs, Lord Howe (1994:456–457) calls attention to an argument between Thatcher and Andreotti at the Luxembourg European Council in December 1985 over social and labour market measures.

¹⁶ Interviews with Arie M Oostlander, Strasbourg, 22/24 June 1993; Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992; Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993. See also Gresch, 1978:177; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:200.

¹⁷ EPP/On the wish expressed by the British Conservative European deputies to join the European People’s Party, Meeting of Enlarged Presidency of EPP with Presidents of Member Parties, Brussels, 7 July 1989. Emphases added.

British Conservative Party in the essential questions of *economic* and *social* policy and *agricultural* policy have requirements dramatically opposed to the objectives of the EPP.”¹⁸

At the time, Santer was EPP President. Looking back, he said that there was “opposition” for several reasons, confirming that *social policy* was one of them.¹⁹ For his part, EPP Group Chairman Klepsch said that there was dissensus with regard to *social policy*.²⁰ Asked about the Bruges speech, he replied that the EPP had criticised it.²¹

Immediately after the Tories made their application, Klepsch had referred to Thatcher’s negative stance on the social dimension, including workers’ co-determination, adding that his “group will ensure there is real progress on the *Social Dimension*.”²² Within the joint working group on social policy, there were differences between Conservative and Christian Democrat MEPs over the Social Charter on workers rights.²³

Dutch Christian Democrat MEPs even argued publicly that an association with the British Conservatives would be a threat to the *social dimension* of Europe.²⁴ In short, the importance of social policy was explained as a reason why Christian Democrats opposed the Tories, who were said not to be as committed to social responsibility as Christian Democrats are.²⁵

¹⁸ Emphases added. See also Jansen, 1990:49. It is noteworthy that the CSU differed from the British Conservatives over agricultural policy. Interviews with Elmar Brok, Strasbourg, 23 June 1993; Ingo Friedrich, Strasbourg, 22 July 1994.

¹⁹ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995. See also *Agence Europe*, 8 July 1989.

²⁰ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1989. Emphasis added. Klepsch stressed the “technical co-operation” with the Socialist Group. Quoted in *The Times*, 1 July 1989. See also *Agence Europe*, 28 July 1989.

²¹ Wood, 1989:61.

²² Quoted in *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 1989. Emphasis added. See also *The Times*, 1 July 1989.

²³ Private information. See also *The Times*, 19 February 1992.

²⁴ *Agence Europe*, 11/12 June 1990. Emphasis added. See also *Agence Europe*, 21 March 1991.

²⁵ Interviews with Raphaël Chanterie, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993; Jos van Gennip, Athens, 13 November 1992; John Joseph McCartin, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993; Jean Penders, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; Wim van Velzen, Brussels, 10 December 1993; Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993. See also *Agence Europe*, 23 March 1991 & 30 April 1992.

One of the party leaders who objected to an alliance at the time was Gérard Deprez of the Wallonian PSC.²⁶ In an interview, he pointed out that *social policy* is at the heart of Christian Democracy and that the PSC is a socially oriented party.²⁷ Explaining his party, Deprez said that “we are not Conservatives” and that their trade union people cannot present themselves as Conservatives. He noted that the PSC was totally against the application, whereas the Flemish CVP was divided since Martens himself was in favour.

Like the CVP, the PSC “almost immediately took up the centrist position with which it has subsequently been identified.”²⁸ As a centrist party, having a trade union wing, the PSC stresses solidarity across the classes.²⁹ Being a broad party in the centre, some members are actually seen as being more to the left than the Socialists.³⁰

The tradition of consensual politics was an important explanatory factor also for the CVP’s opposition; a party of the centre which had taken part in coalitions either to the left or the right.³¹ The coalition government headed by Martens at the time consisted of the Flemish and Wallonian Christian Democrat and Social Democrat parties.³² Significantly, there were intense discussions in the CVP about Christian Democracy in the context of the Tories’ application for an alliance in the EP.³³

²⁶ Cf Brouwer, 1991:38. Deprez, who was PSC Chairman from 1982 until 1996, has been described as a left-winger within the PSC. Fitzmaurice, 1996:174.

²⁷ Interview with Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993.

²⁸ Hearl, 1987a:247-248.

²⁹ Interview with Fernand Herman, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994.

³⁰ Interview with Jean-Claude Eeckhout, Brussels, 25 June 1992. At the time of writing, it seemed that the Wallonian PSC was to be located on the left of the Flemish CVP. This is consistent with the empirical finding of Huber and Inglehart (1995:92). Castles and Mair (1984:76) had found the reverse result, however. Huber and Inglehart even suggested that the PSC was the most left-wing Christian Democrat party in the EC. In the survey conducted by Castles and Mair (1984:80), the Italian DC had this position.

³¹ Interview with Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993. Cf Covell, 1988:119. In March 1991 took the Bureau of the Flemish CVP a position against the Tory application, despite the fact that Martens was in favour and could report on a positive impression from his recent meeting with Chris Patten, the Chairman of the British Conservative Party. See *Agence Europe*, 21 March 1991.

³² See Lucardie and ten Napel, 1994:66. Also the Volksunie took part in the 1988-1991 coalition government.

³³ Interview with Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993.

Also the Dutch CDA is an inter-class people's party. It has governed by consensus by incorporating the social partners into the decision-making process.³⁴ Dutch Christian Democrats do not think of themselves as Conservatives, which as a word has pejorative connotations.³⁵ As a party in the centre, the CDA has formed coalitions with either Socialists or Liberals, which used to represent the two alternative streams, or pillars, in Dutch politics along with the Protestant and Catholic.³⁶

Representing one of the more principled parties within the EPP, Dutch Christian Democrats regarded the British Conservative Party as very pragmatic. Accordingly, their opposition was on the basis of ideological principles, insisting that the Tories on certain points were on the "right" and very far apart.³⁷ One Dutch Christian Democrat pointed out that Thatcher's attitude towards the trade unions "irritated us enormously" and that they were against an alliance because they thought it was too pragmatic and that too many central issues were at stake.³⁸ Another feared that Christian Democracy will become "just a nuance within the right", and that a strengthening of the Conservative stream in some EPP member parties and the EPP as such would be "at the cost of the Christian Democrat mainstream..."³⁹

Like the other Benelux Christian Democrat parties, the Luxembourg CSV is a consensual people's party appealing to all classes.⁴⁰ Having confirmed that there was "some pressure" from the Belgians and the Dutch to oppose the Tory application, Santer said that the CSV is "more pragmatic", adding that the matter had been discussed also within the CSV.⁴¹ However, there was no Benelux position over the matter.

³⁴ Interviews with Jean Penders, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; Jos van Gennip, Athens, 13 November 1992. Cf Andeweg and Irwin, 1993:175; Dittrich, 1987; Heidar and Berntzen, 1993:138; Lucardie, 1988:88, 95; Lucardie and ten Napel, 1994; Smith, 1989:164; Wolinetz, 1988:149, 1991.

³⁵ Interview with Theo Brinkel, the Hague, 8 April 1993. See also von der Dunk, 1982:183; Lucardie, 1988:78.

³⁶ Interviews with Theo Brinkel, the Hague, 8 April 1993; Arie M Oostlander, Strasbourg, 22/24 June 1993.

³⁷ Interview with Arie M Oostlander, Strasbourg, 22/24 June 1993.

³⁸ Interview with Jos van Gennip, Athens, 13 November 1992.

³⁹ Oostlander.

⁴⁰ Interview with Romain Kirt, Lund, 5 September 1995. Cf Stronck, 1996:163.

⁴¹ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

Compared to the Belgian and Dutch sister parties, the Luxembourg CSV has been described as more “middle-class” in its social composition and as more “conservative” and more unreservedly “committed to the market economy.”⁴² The Luxembourg party system is essentially similar to the German. The “strongest influence” on the CSV comes from the German CDU.⁴³

Also the German CDU/CSU supported the Social Charter and defined themselves as people’s parties, with the CSU generally being more to the right.⁴⁴ Back in the 1970s, some CDU people could not easily support the notion of an anti-Socialist alliance; a notion which was embraced by CSU Leader Strauß.⁴⁵

It was the German Christian Democrats who once introduced the word *Mitbestimmung*, co-determination, for the workers and who gave the world the concept of the *social market* economy.⁴⁶ The broad consensus in Germany around the conception of the social market has imposed a constraint on any German political party. As was mentioned in Chapter Four, the image of Thatcherism was not well-received in Germany.

Although the word Conservative is, to some extent, historically discredited and has had negative connotations also in Germany, the CDU has nevertheless explicitly associated itself with Conservatism as well as with Liberalism alongside Christian Democracy in its programmes.⁴⁷ On balance, both the CDU/CSU remained more pragmatic parties than their Belgian, Dutch and Italian sister parties.

Like the Germans, the Portuguese EPP member party was ideologically mixed. As its Chairman, Lucas-Pires had looked upon the CDU and tried to make his party a Christian Democrat, Conservative and Liberal party at the same time.⁴⁸ Sitting in the EPP Group, he was in favour of an

⁴² Hearl, 1987b:255.

⁴³ Interview with Romain Kirt, Lund, 5 September 1995.

⁴⁴ Castles and Mair (1984:79) suggested that the CSU was the most right-wing Christian Democrat party in Europe.

⁴⁵ See Andersson, 1979; Gresch, 1978:179-180. See also von Beyme, 1985:94.

⁴⁶ Cf Broughton, 1994:113; Hofmann, 1993:206-215; Irving, 1979:46-50 and Chapter 4; Kleinmann, 1993:Passim; Klingemann, 1987:Passim; Pridham, 1977:32.

⁴⁷ Mintzel (1982:131) has pointed out that, historically, “to be conservative was to be regarded as reactionary, fascist and anti-democratic.” See also Klingemann, 1987:296.

⁴⁸ Interview with Francisco Lucas-Pires, Strasbourg, 12 October 1995.

alliance. So was the CDS as a party, having adopted a less distinctive Christian Democrat ideological approach and instead a more Liberal one.⁴⁹

Also the French CDS has placed less emphasis on state interventionism, whereas an increasing degree of emphasis has been placed on the free market.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, it could have been damaging to be associated with a party seen as so right-wing as the British Conservative Party. The very word right in French politics has namely been so thoroughly discredited historically that even today no “self-respecting moderate conservative will admit to being a Man of the Right, preferring to take refuge in the ‘centre’.”⁵¹

On ideological grounds, French Christian Democrats were at odds with Thatcherism. Through transnational channels, the German concept of the social market had been absorbed also by the French.⁵² In due course, however, the French CDS agreed to a formal alliance with the British Tories. Following strong pressures from the Germans, and from Chancellor Kohl personally, the French accepted the Tories as there was no possibility of saying no, but had initially shared the reluctance to an alliance and even been against it.⁵³ Having been divided, the CDS was quite positive in the end.⁵⁴ Although at arm’s length from the EDU at its foundation, it should be remembered that the CDS for many years had been indirectly affiliated with the EDU through the UDF.

A party unwilling to establish a formal link to the British Conservatives was the Italian DC. Having a Social-Christian basis and a tradition of being an inter-class people’s party in centre-left coalitions, the DC’s self-

⁴⁹ Cf Bruneau and Macleod, 1986:87-89; Magone, 1996:150, 154. The CDS was expelled from the EPP in 1993 because of its anti-federalist position.

⁵⁰ See Cole, 1990:122; Elgie, 1994:166; Frears, 1991:4; Irving, 1979:46; Stevens, 1992:206.

⁵¹ Cole, 1990:120. See also Demker, 1993:35; Stevens, 1992:207. Generally repudiated, the term is nowadays attached to the extreme right, that is, Le Pen’s Front National.

⁵² See Cole, 1990:123; Dreyfus, 1988:405-407.

⁵³ Interview with François Froment-Meurice, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993.

⁵⁴ Interviews with Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

image was basically as a centrist party.⁵⁵ Unlike Germany, the situation was very different in Italy. It is stressed that the DC was allied with the Socialists, just as in the Benelux countries.⁵⁶ Therefore, they did not like being called Conservatives, which as a word had negative overtones also in Italian political language.⁵⁷

An Italian Christian Democrat, the former EPP Group Chairman Paolo Barbi, belonged to the most outspoken critics of a formal alliance with the British Conservatives. Remaining very active within the EPP, he even wrote an open letter to Tindemans to express his condemnation of the decision to accept the British Tories.⁵⁸ Barbi said that it was “alarming” that so many favoured the admission of the Conservatives as a step towards the European-wide establishment of a “permanent coalition of all forces opposed to social democracy.” He feared that the way was being paved for the transformation of the EPP “into a conservative right-wing party interested purely and simply in administering and managing power.” He said that this was to play into the hands of the Socialists

⁵⁵ Interview with Anton Giulio M. de’ Robertis, Rome, 3 November 1993. See Hine, 1993:129-130; Leonardi and Wertman, 1989:3, 13-14; Mastropaolo, 1987:351. For discussions of the location of the DC as a catch-all people’s party in the centre, see also Amyot, 1988; Castles and Mair, 1984:74; Daalder, 1984:103-105; Sartori, 1976:138. De Gasperi himself had said that he wanted a DC party government “of the centre, but looking to the left.” See Caciagli, 1982:264; Donovan, 1994:82; Irving, 1979:65; LaPalombara, 1987:280; Pasquino, 1980:89; Ventio, 1988.

⁵⁶ Interview with Paolo Barbi, Athens, 13 November 1992. When the newly elected Italian Christian Democrats met in Rome on 5 July 1989, under the chairmanship of Forlani, they responded negatively to the Tories’ request to join the EPP Group and expressed instead their wish that the technical co-operation with the Socialist Group in the EP should continue. *Agence Europe*, 6 July 1989.

⁵⁷ Interview with Anton Giulio M. de’ Robertis, Athens, 12 November 1992. See Ashford, 1980:120; Caciagli, 1982:264; Donovan, 1992:5; Leonardi and Wertman, 1989:10, 247; Mastropaolo, 1987:351; Pasquino, 1980; Pinto-Duschinsky, 1983:113-114. Having met with Aldo Moro and other DC heavyweights in Rome in June 1977, Thatcher (1995:346) had herself become aware that “the word ‘conservative’ had a different and pejorative significance in Italy....”

⁵⁸ The open letter was published in *Il Popolo* — the nationwide newspaper of the Italian DC — and then summed-up in *Agence Europe* on 30 April 1992. In response, EPP Secretary-General Jansen, also by means of an open letter published in *Il Popolo*, justified the decision to accept the Conservatives as allied members. See *Agence Europe*, 17 July 1992.

and all others attempting to present the EPP as “the expression of the conservative and reactionary right.” In an interview, Barbi said that the politics of Christian Democracy is different from the politics of Conservatism, at least in its English version.⁵⁹ He pointed to the Germans as being in favour of co-operation with all parties that are against the Socialists.

The Irish FG was another EPP member party which stressed the ideological differences from British Conservatism. Although the socio-economic dimension is less important in Irish politics because of the predominant national issue, to be discussed later, it entered into the argument for the Irish FG as well. Thatcherism was generally regarded as unattractive by the Irish people. Since some people within the FG even considered themselves to be “Social Democrats”, they were therefore against.⁶⁰

One person within the FG who considers himself to be “more of a Social Democrat”, in his own words, is its former Leader and former Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald.⁶¹ He explained the opposition to an alliance with the British Conservatives in the 1970s by saying that it was an “ideological issue” since the FG was not Conservative. We govern “by consensus” with trade unions and have a “consensus approach”, whereas the British had a “confrontation attitude” to trade unions, FitzGerald said. Pointing to “the extreme Liberal approach of the British Conservatives”, he noted that the emphasis on the market has not developed in the same way in Irish politics, nowadays with the exception of the Progressive Democrats, and that there was not the class hostility unlike the “Thatcherite ideology.”

The FG has governed together with Labour and still does at the time of writing.⁶² It claims to be a “centrist” party, but it is not a “classical” Christian Democrat party.⁶³ Although increasingly sympathetic to free

⁵⁹ Interview with Paolo Barbi, Athens, 13 November 1992.

⁶⁰ Interview with John Joseph McCartin, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993. McCartin was in favour, however.

⁶¹ Interview with Garret FitzGerald, Dublin, 10 May 1996.

⁶² Cf Carty, 1988:239; Mair, 1993.

⁶³ Interview with Katherine Meenan, Dublin, 11 May 1996. Cf Hanley, 1994b:191; Mair, 1993:88-89.

market philosophy, it can be concluded that there were ideological aspects related to the socioeconomic dimension in Irish politics which also has made the FG unwilling to ally with the British Tories.

Socioeconomic Dimension and Conservatives

Ideological aspects related to the socioeconomic dimension have also concerned the British Conservatives when confronting Christian Democracy, and also other ideological tendencies for that matter. Entering the EP in 1973, the Tories considered both the Liberal and Gaullist groupings as ideologically distant.⁶⁴ The Liberals were regarded as too libertarian and the Gaullists as too right-wing.⁶⁵ Although it seemed more likely that the Tories would ally with the Christian Democrats, there were some differences in beliefs to overcome before a joint group could be formed.⁶⁶

Stressing free-market philosophy, British Conservatives have objected to the interventionist approach of Christian Democrats generally and their support of a social dimension to the internal market in particular. Especially the Thatcherites have put forward such arguments and have attacked the EPP link by also attacking the policies of the dominant EPP member, that is, the German CDU.

Free of the constraint of office, Lady Thatcher has herself moved to disassociate the Conservative Party from Christian Democracy in recent years. With experience from negotiations with Christian Democrats she had realised how different their ideological foundations were from her own.

⁶⁴ Cf Fitzmaurice, 1975:145; Kempf, 1983:302; Kohler and Myrzik, 1982:200; Lea, 1992:16; Lodge and Herman, 1982:176; Scalingi, 1980:126.

⁶⁵ *The Times* (11 January 1973) reported that there was a conflict between the British Conservatives and the French Gaullists over the seating in the Strasbourg hemicycle: "The Conservatives, under Mr Peter Kirk, had no desire to take over the right wing..." See also *The Times*, 12 January 1973. For the Tories, also the Gaullists' alliance with the Irish Fianna Fáil has presented a problem. Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

⁶⁶ Cf Lea, 1992:21-22; Palmer, 1981:77; Wood and Wood, 1979:33.

In *The Downing Street Years*, Thatcher distances her own thinking from that of Kohl, arguing that, as a Christian Democrat, he “sees the world from a perspective far closer to that of the Socialist President of France than would any British Conservative.”⁶⁷ Attacking the consensual approach to politics in general, she associates consensus with corporatism.⁶⁸

In *The Path to Power*, Thatcher points to the German concept of the ‘social market’ and comments that Germany’s “[i]ndustrial consensus has degenerated into a more rigid corporatism....”⁶⁹ In this book, she also makes a more elaborate attack on Christian Democracy, while recalling the party contacts pursued in the 1970s:

In retrospect, I can see that the Italians were quite right in thinking that they and we saw the world very differently. Christian Democracy served a useful purpose in many European countries, where it was important for all shades of moderate opinion to combine in order to resist fascism and communism. Catholic social teaching provided a valuable framework — for Protestants as well — in societies where no strong secular centre-right political tradition existed. The trouble was that, whatever their merits as a view of life, such ideas were not in themselves sufficient to give an ideological basis for the practical policies required in the late twentieth century. This was particularly true of economic policy, where anything from full-blooded free enterprise on the one hand to corporatism on the other could be dressed up in the language of Christian Democracy. Some Christian Democrat parties, like the German CDU, have gone at least part of the way towards making up for such deficiencies by adopting free-market rhetoric (if not always free-market policies). Others, like the Italian Christian Democrats, have gone the way of all dinosaurs.⁷⁰

Having on her agenda to curb the size of the state, Thatcher even said, in a speech in early 1996, that the views of Christian Demo-

⁶⁷ Thatcher, 1993:552. Ironically, this was the man with whom she wanted to establish a transnational anti-Socialist alliance of like-minded parties in the 1970s. See Chapter Three.

⁶⁸ Thatcher, 1993:167. See also Campbell, 1993:730.

⁶⁹ Thatcher, 1995:595.

⁷⁰ Thatcher, 1995:346.

cracy, just like Socialism and Social Democracy, “hold that the State, rather than individuals, is ultimately responsible for what happens in society.”⁷¹

Also Lord Tebbit, a former Cabinet Minister and Conservative Party Chairman (1985–87), and an ideological soulmate to Thatcher, has attacked the EPP link by stressing ideological differences with regard to the socioeconomic dimension. In an interview, he said that the Tories “very foolishly” had entered into a formal alliance with the Christian Democrats.⁷² He pointed out that the Conservative tradition is vastly different from thought on the mainland where there is no party quite like the Conservative Party. As Party Chairman, Tebbit had built links with right-of-centre parties, discovering that there were “big differences.” Also the German Christian Democrats were different, Tebbit said, arguing that they are not Conservative but “corporatist” and do not believe in free markets. He argued that also their French friends, the Gaullists, are corporatist where British Conservatives are “free-marketeters.” Specifically, Tebbit pointed out that the EPP believes in the Social Chapter.

The point about the EPP’s support of the Social Chapter was also made by other British Conservatives attacking the EPP link.⁷³ It was reported that the programme adopted by the EPP at its November 1992 Athens Congress “alarmed” right-wing Tories, including Tebbit, “because of its Catholic and continental commitment to ‘social solidarity’, which makes it more sympathetic to trade unions and the Maastricht treaty’s social chapter than Thatcherite free-market Conservatism finds tolerable.”⁷⁴

Within the alliance, socioeconomic issues proved to be divisive. Remaining differences of opinion concerned social policy, employment policy and agricultural policy.⁷⁵ And after the 1994 European elections,

⁷¹ Thatcher, 1996. See also Thatcher, 1988.

⁷² Interview with Lord Tebbit, London, 9 February 1994.

⁷³ See e.g. Cash, 1994a; *The Guardian*, 8 July 1994.

⁷⁴ *The Guardian*, 8 July 1993.

⁷⁵ Interviews with Timothy Bainbridge, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; Lord Inglewood, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Ben Patterson, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Niels Pedersen, Brussels, 26 June 1992; Derek Prag, Brussels, 25 June 1992. See also Clark, 1993:25; Lea, 1992:33–34; *The Guardian*, 22 February 1992. Specifically, references were made to the 48-hour working week.

the Tory section was not only more Euro-sceptic, but equally more free-market oriented.

Having worked for Tebbit, one of the new members, Chichester, opposed a continued EPP link, as was shown in Chapter Three. He even opposed the formula of allied membership on the grounds that the Tories and Christian Democrats have “significantly different philosophies and policies.”⁷⁶ As one of the differences, he referred to the EPP’s support for the Social Chapter. Similarly, Mather, also a new Tory MEP, attacked the German system of workers’ co-determination of company decisions.⁷⁷

Religious Dimension and Christian Democrats

With their histories as *Christian* Democrat parties, their ideological identities have been closely linked to religion. This dimension must still be taken into account, despite growing secularisation and the decline in religious voting as a major indication of dealignment, the weakening bonds between voters and parties.⁷⁸ In short, the religious dimension has added a further constraint on the search for a transnational alliance with *secular* Conservative parties.

Feeling that the Tories were too secular and not enough Christian, Christian Democrats opposed Conservative membership of their party group in the 1970s.⁷⁹ This also explains the fact that some Christian Democrat parties stayed away from the EDU. As Lijphart has pointed out, “it is significant that the EDU unites the conservative and Christian CDU-CSU with the non-Christian Conservatives from Britain and Denmark. Proximity on the socioeconomic dimension evidently outweighed distance on the *religious dimension*.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Interview with Giles Chichester, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994.

⁷⁷ Mather, 1994cd. Interviews with Graham Mather, London, a) 10 February 1994, b) 17 January 1996. Mather, President of the EPF, was formerly General Director of the Institute of Economic Affairs.

⁷⁸ Also by Christian Democrat leaders, even if they personally might have, and often seem to have, a relaxed attitude to religion. See FitzGerald, 1991:581.

⁷⁹ Interview with Sir John Peel, London, 7 February 1994. See Ashford, 1980:119-129, 1992:134; Catterall, 1994:670; Fitzmaurice, 1975:145-146.

⁸⁰ Lijphart, 1981:47. Emphasis added.

For Dutch Christian Democrats, the religious dimension has very much entered into the argument against an alliance with the British Conservatives in particular. In the 1970s, the three Dutch parties of the Catholic People's Party, Christian-Historical Union and Anti-Revolutionary Party — taking their Christian labels seriously — were in the process of merging into the CDA. This influenced the transnational strategies of these parties insofar as it made them more aware of their identities.⁸¹ Of them, the Catholic party was seen as more against association with Conservative parties, mainly the British, than the other ones.⁸² In recent years, the reverse is said to have happened, that is, the Catholics within the CDA have turned out to be more positive.⁸³

There were differences between Conservative and Christian Democrat MEPs in the joint working group in matters relating to theology, where the main opposition had come from the Dutch, for whom everything had to be theologically correct.⁸⁴ For his part, Oostlander argued that the Tories could not be taken seriously when they “refer to Jewish-Christian elements in their policy (mostly in an amateuristic and not very credible way)....The Conservative party does not intend to be Christian inspired. Therein lies the crux of our irremediable objection and that also has important political consequences.”⁸⁵ Explaining why there “must be opposition”, Oostlander said it was because of “the discussions on the *Christian basis of our movement* and the measure of importance attached to this in political practice....”⁸⁶

Despite growing secularisation also in the Netherlands, the religious dimension is still important and the gospel is expressed in CDA program-

⁸¹ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995. The merger into the CDA should also be seen in the light of the three parties' membership of the EPP. See Jansen, 1995b:158.

⁸² Interview with Lars F Tobisson, Stockholm, 13 March 1995.

⁸³ Interview with Klaus Welle, Stockholm, 12 March 1995.

⁸⁴ Interview with Sir Fred Catherwood, Brussels, 25 June 1992. Sir Fred was chairman of this working group.

⁸⁵ Oostlander. Ironically, Oostlander is a Protestant like almost every Tory MEP. It was equally paradoxical that the Tory MEP most against an alliance with the Christian Democrats, Bryan Cassidy, is a Catholic.

⁸⁶ Emphasis added.

mes.⁸⁷ It was even said that religion plays “an enormous role” for the CDA, which is philosophical and programmatic in its approach.⁸⁸ Against this background, the opposition to the British Tories was logical. In the words of Fogarty:

CDA takes the Bible witness...as the foundation, the source, against which its policies have to be tested. The test is meant to be used, and is; it is not merely a “dash of Christian gravy” on top of pragmatic politics. A major — indeed, *the* major — objection by CDA to full affiliation of the British Conservatives to the European People’s Party has been that, whatever coincidences of policy may happen to exist, the Conservative Party has no such final criterion against which to test its policies.⁸⁹

The situation was similar for the Italian DC, which used to be influenced by its link to the Catholic Church.⁹⁰ However, the very crisis of Italian Christian Democracy, at least in part, must be seen in the light of the growing secularisation.⁹¹ And it seems that the religious dimension played a lesser role for the attitudes of Italian Christian Democrats than for the Dutch towards an alliance with the British Tories. Having said that, it is noteworthy that Barbi expressed the fear that the way was being paved for the transformation of the EPP “from a party of *Christian inspiration*....”⁹²

The religious dimension played an even lesser role for French Christian Democrats. They were already part of the UDF together with the

⁸⁷ Cf Dittrich, 1987; Lucardie, 1988:94; Lucardie and ten Napel, 1994; Smith, 1989; Wolinetz, 1988, 1991. Having noted that most of the Christian Democrat programmes begin with a general statement of Christian values, von Beyme (1985:92) has suggested that the CDA is “the most ‘clerical’....”

⁸⁸ Interview with Theo Brinkel, the Hague, 8 April 1993.

⁸⁹ Fogarty, 1995:143-144. See also Duff, 1994:156-157.

⁹⁰ Interview with Anton Giulio M. de’ Robertis, Rome, 3 November 1993. Cf Dufferger, 1951/78:13; LaPalombara, 1987:11, 61-63, 218; Magister, 1996.

⁹¹ For a discussion of the crisis of Italian Christian Democracy, see Magister, 1996; Morlino, 1996.

⁹² Quoted in *Agence Europe*, 30 April 1992. Emphasis added.

Radical Party, which has anti-clerical origins.⁹³ Although there is still a significant correlation between religious practice and the propensity to vote for parties of the centre-right, France too “has become an increasingly secular society.”⁹⁴

For the Irish FG’s position towards the Tories, the religious dimension also proved less important than other dimensions. Although overwhelmingly Catholic, and with a very high rate of church attendance, there was no tradition of organised Christian Democracy in Ireland.

Throughout this century, European Christian Democracy has become increasingly open and less confessional.⁹⁵ With some exceptions, the religious influence on today’s politics should not be exaggerated. To take but one example, the Luxembourg CSV, it is precisely an “open” and “non-confessional” party although their voters are Christian.⁹⁶ In short, Christian Democrats draw inspiration from Christianity but are not clerical.⁹⁷

Religious Dimension and Conservatives

The religious dimension has traditionally been raised when the British Conservatives have built transnational alliances with Christian Democrats. For secular Conservatives, a movement calling itself *Christian Democrat* appeared clerical or papist. One reason for the Conservatives to set up their own party group in 1973, instead of joining the Christian Demo-

⁹³ Cf Cole, 1990:114; Frears, 1991:24, 52; Irving, 1979:231. Irving (1973:12) points out that historically the quarrel between Catholics and Republicans goes back to “the State’s expropriation of the Church’s property in 1790.”

⁹⁴ Frears, 1991:3-4. See also Arbøl, 1992:177.

⁹⁵ Cf Martens, 1994:86. For an illuminating analysis of the development of European Christian Democracy from “closed” to “open” parties, see Whyte, 1981.

⁹⁶ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

⁹⁷ Interview with Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992. See also the interview with Tindemans in *Kristdemokraten*, 30 April 1993. There, Tindemans expressed a more pragmatic approach than Belgian and Dutch Christian Democrats usually do. However, during the campaign for the 1994 European elections Tindemans’ message was the need to return to the “Christian values” of the CVP. Quoted in *The Independent*, 3 June 1994.

cratic Group, was that the latter was seen as being composed precisely of clerical parties.⁹⁸ Having pursued party contacts in the 1970s, Maudling, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, noted that “it was hard to see how we could adopt the title of Christian Democrats in a Party that is not tied to the Church, and indeed has over the years embraced and still embraces many distinguished non-Christians.”⁹⁹

The Christian vision of man, forming a core ideological pillar in the EPP statutes and programmes, presented problems for the Tories in the negotiations on an alliance in the EP. In the words of Catterall:

Religion has no formal role within the Conservative Party. In recent years this lack has been regarded as one of the main obstacles preventing Conservative MEPs from joining the European People’s Party, the Christian Democratic grouping in the European Parliament.¹⁰⁰

Having chaired the joint working group on theology, Sir Fred Catherwood admitted that the criticism of the Dutch was right in that the Tory Party is not a Christian party.¹⁰¹ The Conservatives could not understand why religion and politics should be mixed up with each other.¹⁰²

Although the Church of England has been described as ‘the Tory Party at prayer’, religion has not played the same role in the development of the British Conservative Party as it generally has for Continental Christian Democrat parties. Christian Democrats tended to see the tradition of British Toryism as individualist and materialist. However, in 1990-92 the British Conservative Party had a Chairman, Chris Patten, who not only echoed Christian Democratic values, but who was also a Catholic.¹⁰³ This served to neutralise the constraint traditionally provided by religion on the building of a formal alliance.

⁹⁸ Cf Lea, 1992:21-22; Palmer, 1981:77; Wood and Wood, 1979:33.

⁹⁹ Maudling, 1978:221-222. Cf Rose, 1982:113.

¹⁰⁰ Catterall, 1994:637. See also Duff, 1994:156; Fogarty, 1995:144.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Sir Fred Catherwood, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

¹⁰² Interview with Harald Rømer, Brussels, 9 January 1997.

¹⁰³ Cf Patten, 1983.

European Dimension and Christian Democrats

Posing as parties of Europe, Christian Democrats still devoted themselves to ancestor worship of the Christian Democrat Founding Fathers of European union, such as Adenauer, De Gasperi and Schuman. The Euro-federalist image of European Christian Democracy was so divergent from the Euro-sceptical image of Thatcherism. Christian Democrats interpreted Thatcher's Bruges speech as a response to growing federalist pressure, and as negative in tone. Deferring the Tory application for allied membership of the EPP Group, the EPP pointed out that the "development of the Community to a *federal political union*, with a Monetary and Security Union is an objective of the highest priority for the EPP."¹⁰⁴ Looking back, Santer explained the "opposition" with reference to the approach to *European union* more generally, along with social policy as already mentioned.¹⁰⁵ A personal adviser of his said that the objections at this stage were because of Thatcher's policy on European integration.¹⁰⁶ Alongside social policy, Klepsch said that there was dissensus with regard to institutional questions and the goal of "*Political Union*."¹⁰⁷

In the speech he delivered in November 1991, EPP Secretary-General Jansen pointed out that "the EPP can only agree to join forces with the Conservatives if this does not mean renouncing the Christian Democratic principles of the EPP, and in particular its backing for a *European federation*."¹⁰⁸ In April that year, the EPP Conference had, provisionally, come out in favour of an alliance. The resolution adopted then noted that parties of other traditions and orientations were invited "so far as they accept the Christian Democratic, European *federalistic* programme... of the EPP."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ EPP/On the wish expressed by the British Conservative European deputies to join the European People's Party, Meeting of Enlarged Presidency of EPP with Presidents of Member Parties, Brussels, 7 July 1989. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Romain Kirt, Lund, 5 September 1995.

¹⁰⁷ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1989. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁸ Jansen, 1991. Emphasis added. See also Jansen, 1990:49, 1992c, 1996:312.

¹⁰⁹ EPP/Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference of Heads of Government and Party Leaders of the EPP, Brussels, 13 April 1991. Emphasis added. See also EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991.

The political objective of federal union was referred to by several Christian Democrats as a reason for coming out against the Tories' application for an alliance.¹¹⁰ In the joint working group discussing a federal Europe, including institutions, there were difficulties over federalism.¹¹¹

Although the Tory MEPs committed themselves to the EPP programmes, including references to a federal Europe, there were remaining doubts as to whether their acceptance of federalism was seriously meant, or merely tactical.¹¹² Whereas the common project for EPP member parties is to create a European federation, it was suggested that the Tories were just presenting economic arguments.¹¹³ Christian Democrats want a European government and openly favour a United States of Europe.¹¹⁴ In short, it is a contradiction in terms to be against a federal Europe and be a member of the EPP at the same time.¹¹⁵

Christian Democrats deplored the way in which the universal principle of subsidiarity was misinterpreted by British Conservatives seeing it as a way to take power away from the EU.¹¹⁶ As central ideas of Christian Democracy and Catholic social teachings, the principle of subsidiarity is linked to the concept of social personalism.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ Interviews with Theo Brinkel, the Hague, 8 April 1993; Fernand Herman, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994; Jean Penders, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; Anton Giulio M. de' Robertis, Rome, 3 November 1993; Wim van Velzen, Brussels, 10 December 1993. See also *The European*, 30 April-3 May 1992.

¹¹¹ Private information. See also *The Times*, 19 February 1992.

¹¹² Interviews with Arie M Oostlander, Strasbourg, 22/24 June 1993; Jean Penders, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993.

¹¹³ Interviews with Pier Antonio Graziani, Strasbourg, 11 October 1995; Anton Giulio M. de' Robertis, Rome, 3 November 1993; Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993.

¹¹⁴ Interviews with Theo Brinkel, the Hague, 8 April 1993; Pier Antonio Graziani, Strasbourg, 11 October 1995; Fernand Herman, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994. Already Haas (1958b: 24-25) and Lindberg (1963:289) pointed to the unity among Christian Democrats with regard to the commitment to a united Europe. See also Lindberg, 1967:384; Spinelli, 1966:158.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993.

¹¹⁶ Interviews with Fernand Herman, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994; Anton Giulio M. de' Robertis, Rome, 3 November 1993; Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993.

¹¹⁷ Interviews with Fernand Herman, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994; Anton Giulio M. de' Robertis, Rome, 3 November 1993. The intimate link between personalism and subsidiarity has also been recognised in recent academic writings on the principle of subsidiarity. See Loughlin, 1993; van Kersbergen and Verbeek, 1994. See also Richter, 1987. For a discussion of personalism, see Fogarty, 1957:Chapter 3; Grant, 1994:12-14; Irving, 1979:30-31; Mounier, 1949/1978.

Oostlander insisted that the Tories' selfish approach "is completely different from the Christian Social concept and the quest for a better arrangement of public justice which, via subsidiarity thinking, leads to national self interest being put into perspective and to the development of *supranationality*. For Christian Democrats Europe also means common values."¹¹⁸ He thereby showed how strongly the two ideological pillars of the EPP were related to each other.

In the context of the Maastricht Treaty negotiations, the Tory MEPs had problems with the Dutch Christian Democrats in particular.¹¹⁹ Significantly, the Dutch CDA Chairman, Wim van Velzen, asked for a written confirmation of the EDG's acceptance of the basic principles of the EPP programme, which was the requirement for allied membership.¹²⁰ In Dutch politics, the CDA is identified as very pro-European.¹²¹

Before the EPP Group proceeded to a vote on the Tories' request for allied membership, the head of the French delegation, Pierre Bernard-Reymond, also insisted on assurances from all the Tory MEPs that they were committed to the federalist line of the EPP's Dublin document.¹²² Going back to its predecessors, the identity of the CDS in French politics was that of a pro-federalist party.¹²³

Although divided, the remaining opposition from Italian Christian Democrats to an alliance with Conservative parties must be seen against the background of the federal position of the DC and its heirs.¹²⁴ Italian Christian Democrats generally wish "to have a *political union*."¹²⁵ The European policy of the Tories was said to be the most important factor explaining the DC's opposition.¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ Oostlander. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁹ See *The Guardian*, 17 September 1991 and Chapter Three.

¹²⁰ Confidential information.

¹²¹ Interviews with Theo Brinkel, the Hague, 8 April 1993; Arie M Oostlander, Strasbourg, 22/24 June 1993; Jean Penders, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; Wim van Velzen, Brussels, 10 December 1993.

¹²² EPP Group/Proces verbal de la réunion du Groupe du 9 avril 1992 à Strasbourg.

¹²³ Cf Abélès, 1992:165; Cole, 1990:122; Dreyfus, 1988:280-291; Germain, 1996:57, 80; Irving, 1973:198; Palmer, 1981:75; Spinelli, 1966:158; Stevens, 1992:206.

¹²⁴ Cf Guizzi, 1996:129.

¹²⁵ Interview with Pier Antonio Graziani, Strasbourg, 11 October 1995.

¹²⁶ Interview with Anton Giulio M. de' Robertis, Rome, 3 November 1993.

The European dimension very much entered into the argument for the Belgian CVP and PSC, which, as parties, had opposed a formal alliance with the Tories. Both of them shared the political objective of European union along federal lines.¹²⁷ Deprez actually said that his first concern was that the Tories are not a *federalist* party.¹²⁸

As Leader of the Irish FG at the time when the EPP deferred the Tory application, Alan Dukes was also “very much opposed.”¹²⁹ Looking back, he said it would be difficult for a *federal* party to include an anti-European party. With reference to Thatcher’s Bruges speech, a formal alliance with the British Conservatives could not have been supported by the Irish FG at the time since it is *the* “European party” in Irish politics.¹³⁰ Identifying themselves with the Christian Democrat movement “as a Christian Democrat party”, the Irish FG was opposed to an alliance on the grounds that the British Conservatives did not embody the European values of EPP member parties.¹³¹ In short, the FG also advocates federal union.¹³²

As indicative of the strength of the European dimension, there were even German Christian Democrats, with the CDU being an explicitly pro-federalist party, who were not enthusiastic about an alliance with the British Tories.¹³³ Being in favour of the alliance as a party, it is said that the one real constraint in the case of the German CDU was over European integration.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ Interviews with Raphaël Chanterie, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993; Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Fernand Herman, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994; Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993.

¹²⁸ Interview with Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993.

¹²⁹ Interview with Alan Dukes, Dublin, 9 May 1996.

¹³⁰ Interview with Katherine Meenan, Dublin, 11 May 1996.

¹³¹ Interview with Simon King, Dublin, 9 May 1996. See also Lea, 1992:34-35; *The European*, 30 April-3 May 1992. For discussions of the FG’s identification with European Christian Democracy, see Fitzgerald, 1993; Gallagher *et al*, 1995:193; Holmes, 1996:201; Mair, 1993:88-89.

¹³² Interview with John Joseph McCartin, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993.

¹³³ Interviews with Elmar Brok, Strasbourg, 23 June 1993; Jean-Claude Eeckhout, Brussels, 25 June 1992; Arie M Oostlander, Strasbourg, 22/24 June 1993. See Rinsche, 1992.

¹³⁴ Interview with Klaus Welle, Brussels, 9 January 1997.

European Dimension and Conservatives

For historical reasons, British Conservatism and Continental Christian Democracy have drawn contrary conclusions concerning the need to submerge nationalism in supranational institutions.¹³⁵ Crucially, the word ‘federal’ has centralist connotations in Britain. The Euro-Gaullist stance evident in British Conservatism has resulted in a deeper ideological gulf between parties.

Ironically, however, one reason why the British Tories never joined the Gaullists in the EP in 1973 was that these were seen as too nationalist by Tories, at the time posturing as representatives of Britain’s party of Europe.¹³⁶ But the Tories’ approach to Europe was generally speaking not federal, which explains why the EPP from the very outset was regarded as overly federalist.¹³⁷

Against this background, it was somewhat remarkable that both Thatcher and Major supported the Tory MEPs’ request to ally with the EPP Group. One Tory MEP, Lord Bethell, even felt that he was suffering from schizophrenia as both leaders had encouraged him to associate himself with the EPP, which aims to create a federal Europe, although they have both renounced this aim as a “threat to our constitution.”¹³⁸

However, Lady Thatcher pointed out the differences over Europe in her memoirs, saying: “Christian Democracy has also shown itself incapable of shedding light on the great question of the post-Cold War world — the long-term relationship between nation states and supranational institutions.”¹³⁹

In similar terms, Lord Tebbit has questioned the alliance with Christian Democrats, saying it was “problematic”, by referring to the EPP as a federalist party which wants a “centralised European State” in which the present nation-states are nothing but “provinces.”¹⁴⁰ When I inter-

¹³⁵ Bogdanor, 1996:215.

¹³⁶ Cf Fitzmaurice, 1975:145; Kempf, 1983:302; Scalingi, 1980:126.

¹³⁷ Cf Gresch, 1978:246–247; Lodge and Herman, 1982:180–181; Rose, 1982:114.

¹³⁸ Quoted in Lea, 1992:33. See also Bethell, 1994.

¹³⁹ Thatcher, 1995:346.

¹⁴⁰ BBC TV/On the Record, 24 October 1993. See also Tebbit, 1990, 1993, 1994 and Kinch, 1993.

viewed him, he pointed out that the CDU supports a federal solution to the EC and a single currency, adding that also the federalist EPP believes in a single currency.¹⁴¹ We are not federalist but the EPP clearly is, Tebbit said. As one of the greatest exponents of 'Tory Gaullism' over Europe, he wanted to "bring de Gaulle back."

Likewise, the indefatigable anti-Maastricht campaigner Bill Cash noted that Tory MEPs were associated with a federalist organisation.¹⁴² In an interview, he pointed out the incongruities between the Tory Party's European policies and those of the EPP as outlined in the Athens Declaration.¹⁴³ The key element is that the EPP wants a federal state in Europe according to their constitutions, Cash said. Contrasting the EPP's policies from Major's message in his *The Economist* article of September 1993, Cash said that there is no compatibility at all.¹⁴⁴ In a note to fellow Tory MPs, he commented: "The EPP is a Trojan Horse for a *federal Europe* and the Social Chapter, a Single Currency, a European Central Bank, a common immigration policy, a defence policy which downgrades NATO and enhances the EU/WEU and a party which demands a European Constitution."¹⁴⁵

Reportedly, Cash and Tebbit were among those who were "alarmed" about the federalist "basic programme" adopted by the EPP in Athens.¹⁴⁶ This concern was shared by Sir Teddy Taylor, a former Minister.¹⁴⁷ In an exchange of letters with the author, Sir Teddy pointed to the controversy over the EPP link because of the issue of "*Federal Europe*", adding

¹⁴¹ Interview with Lord Tebbit, London, 9 February 1994.

¹⁴² BBC TV/On the Record, 24 October 1993.

¹⁴³ Interview with Bill Cash, London, 3 February 1994.

¹⁴⁴ Major (1993b) had set out the European policies of the government in an article in *The Economist* on 25 September 1993. Reminiscent of Thatcher's Euro-Gaullist Bruges speech, Major pointed to the "false transatlantic analogy" of creating a "United States of Europe." He said that successive Conservative governments "have opposed the centralising idea. We take some convincing on any proposal from Brussels. For us, the nation state is here to stay."

¹⁴⁵ Cash, 1994a. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁶ *The Guardian*, 8 July 1993.

¹⁴⁷ See *The Guardian*, 10 December 1993. See also *Financial Times*, 19/20 & 24 February 1994. Like Bill Cash, Sir Teddy was building links across Europe to reach out to like-minded anti-federalists. See *Agence Europe*, 22 October 1993; *Svenska Dagbladet*, 28 October 1993.

that it is understood that the Conservatives were present when the Athens programme was drawn up.¹⁴⁸

Yes, Strasbourg Tories were present then. They said that the programme adopted in Athens was acceptable.¹⁴⁹ Their involvement promised a clash in the internal party arena, as we shall see later.

Thatcher's younger followers have in the same way underlined the differences in beliefs from Continental Christian Democracy over Europe. After Kenneth Clarke had made his Bonn speech in late June 1994, claiming there was a very substantial shared agenda between British Conservatives and German Christian Democrats, there was a sharp reaction from Bernard Jenkin, a Thatcherite backbencher:

The German CDU is committed to the development of a *federal Europe*, they support the Social Chapter, and as a full member of the European People's Party, are fully committed to the Basic Programme of the EPP. This sets out the EPP's objective as a European super state. How does it help British objectives in Europe to pretend we are more in agreement than we are?¹⁵⁰

The differences in beliefs were evident when the CDU/CSU presented their policy document 'Reflections on European Policy', which among other things urged the 1996 IGC to draft "a quasi-constitutional document...oriented to the model of a *'federal state'*..."¹⁵¹ This provoked an angry response from Tories, including Graham Mather, who attacked the German federal approach.¹⁵² He was intent on "toughening up" the government line and he himself thought his warnings had this effect.¹⁵³ Indeed, Major would subsequently distance himself from European ideas advocated by the CDU.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Letter from Sir Teddy Taylor, 23 November 1993. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁹ Private information.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in *The Guardian*, 8 July 1994. Emphasis added. See also Jenkin, 1994; *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 April 1994.

¹⁵¹ CDU/CSU/Reflections on European Policy, CDU/CSU-Fraktion des Deutschen Bundestages, 1. Sept. 1994. Emphasis added. See also *Agence Europe*, 2 September 1994.

¹⁵² Mather, 1994ab.

¹⁵³ Interview with Graham Mather, London, 17 January 1996.

¹⁵⁴ See Major, 1994, 1995.

Like Mather, the new Tory MEP Chichester had problems with the EPP's federalist approach. He said that he had undertaken to oppose the EPP link because of the EPP's support for the *federalist* issue and the single currency.¹⁵⁵

It should finally be mentioned that the Danish Conservatives also present evidence regarding constraints connected to the European dimension. Initially, the Danes had actually preferred to stay away from the EPP as it was regarded as too federalist.¹⁵⁶ Just like in Britain, the word federal has centralist connotations in Denmark.¹⁵⁷ Danish Conservatives distance themselves from a federal development, defend the sovereign nation-state and the role of national parliaments, while rejecting the two-chamber solution.¹⁵⁸ In no way would the party be able to sell the federal ideas of the EPP to a sceptical Danish audience.¹⁵⁹ Having joined the EPP as a full member in March 1995, it is significant that the Danish Conservatives voted against the federalist document adopted at the EPP Congress in Madrid in November 1995.¹⁶⁰

Congruence, Identity and Credibility — Factors of Constraints

Stressing the incongruities between Conservatism and Christian Democracy, elements within these families have singled out threats to the *identity* and *credibility* of individual parties and to the *familles spirituelles* as such. In short, *problems of congruence* impose *constraints* on the building of transnational party alliances.

Contrasting themselves to Thatcherism, Christian Democrats initially opposed an alliance with reference to ideological differences. Having

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Giles Chichester, Strasbourg, 21 July 1994.

¹⁵⁶ Confidential information.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Harald Rømer, Brussels, 23 June 1992. Cf Christoffersen, 1992:43.

¹⁵⁸ Interviews with Kent Kirk, Stockholm, 9 March 1994; Christian Røvsing, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

¹⁵⁹ Interviews with Marie Jepsen, Strasbourg, 24 June 1993; Jens Karoli, Copenhagen, 21 October 1993.

¹⁶⁰ Interviews with Jens Karoli, Copenhagen, 9 December 1996; Henrik Toremark, Brussels, 10 January 1997. The Swedish Moderate Party abstained.

decided to defer the Tory application in July 1989, the EPP recommended that its parliamentary group “should not accept the application of the British Conservatives European deputies for reason of the *credibility* of our programme...”¹⁶¹ EPP President Santer said that “at the moment the conditions were not right for the membership of the British Conservatives.”¹⁶² He noted that it was a question of “*identity*.”¹⁶³ Furthermore, Tindemans, of the Flemish CVP, said of the compatibility between Christian Democracy and the policies of Thatcher’s party that “the general climate within the EPP tended to conserve and defend the *Christian Democratic identity*.”¹⁶⁴

Deprez, of the Wallonian PSC, pointed out that the *Christian Democratic identity* had been discussed, as in the 1970s.¹⁶⁵ Also the French CDS was wary of its own *identity*.¹⁶⁶ Sharing a reluctance to an alliance initially, the French thought it would be damaging to the orientation of the Christian Democrats, fearing it would kill their “*cleanness*” and jeopardise the *Christian Democratic identity*.¹⁶⁷ It is also noteworthy that Forlani, then DC Secretary-General, at the EPP Conference in June 1991 stressed that the consequences of an alliance could be negative with regard to *confusing identities* for some parties.¹⁶⁸ Likewise, the Dutch CDA feared that the substance of the Christian Democratic ideals could be watered down.¹⁶⁹

Like Belgian and Italian Christian Democrats, the Dutch still considered the EDU as more right-wing and of being in competition with the EPP.¹⁷⁰ Oostlander even argued that contact with “right of centre”

¹⁶¹ EPP/On the wish expressed by the British Conservative European deputies to join the European People’s Party, Meeting of Enlarged Presidency of EPP with Presidents of Member Parties, Brussels, 7 July 1989. Emphasis added.

¹⁶² Quoted in *Agence Europe*, 8 July 1989.

¹⁶³ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in *Agence Europe*, 10/11 July 1989. Emphasis added.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997. Cf Cole, 1990:113; Elgie, 1994:158.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with François Froment-Meurice, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993.

¹⁶⁸ Confidential information. Emphasis added.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

¹⁷⁰ Interviews with Paolo Barbi, Athens, 13 November 1992; Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Wim van Velzen, Brussels, 10 December 1993.

EDU/IDU member parties “can lead to shame and problems of conscience.”¹⁷¹

Given the ideological differences, the EPP leadership, belonging to the key promoters of the alliance, had to convince those negative to its formation that it would not damage the identity of Christian Democracy. In this regard, the strategy of the EPP leadership was to associate a widening of the EPP’s membership with a deepening of its programme.

The viewpoints of the sceptics were incorporated by the EPP in the resolution drafted in connection with its conference in April 1991. It stated that the EPP “will make special efforts for the safeguarding and the development of its *Christian Democratic identity* and its policy programme to face the challenges of the future.”¹⁷² Conceiving the EPP “as a broad, open, Christian-Democratically oriented *people’s party*”, representatives from other traditions and orientations were invited insofar as they accept the “programme and do not endanger the historical, cultural *identity* of the EPP.”¹⁷³

Although officially unanimous, there were Christian Democrats who still had strong reservations about opening up the EPP for Conservatives. The matter remained a delicate balancing act for the EPP leadership, being at some pains to justify the decision to promise an alliance. In his keynote speech in November 1991, EPP Secretary-General Jansen emphasised that “we are not prepared to abandon either the *Christian Democratic identity* or the function of the EPP as a *centrist people’s party*.”¹⁷⁴ A similar message appeared in the text agreed upon at the EPP Conference in February 1992.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Oostlander.

¹⁷² EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991; Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference of Heads of Government and Party Leaders of EPP, Brussels, 13 April 1991. Emphasis added.

¹⁷³ EPP/Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference of Heads of Government and Party Leaders of the EPP, Brussels, 13 April 1991. See also EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 June 1991. Emphases added.

¹⁷⁴ Jansen, 1991. Emphases added. See also Jansen, 1990, 1992c, 1996:312-313. Having contributed to the opening up of the EPP for Conservative parties, Jansen, resigning as EPP Secretary-General in October 1994, was genuinely concerned about the future identity and cohesion of the EPP. Informal conversation with Thomas Jansen, Lund, 27 October 1995. See also Jansen, 1994, 1996:260 and Fogarty, 1995:154.

¹⁷⁵ EPP/EPP Bulletin, Nr. 2 April/May 1992. Emphases added.

This text was referred to in a statement presented by EPP President Martens at the close of the June 1994 EPP Conference.¹⁷⁶ Having rein- vited the British and Danish Conservatives to become allied members of the EPP Group, provided that they accepted its political programme and Rules of Procedure, the conference was convinced that “the *Christian Democratic identity*” of the EPP would not suffer from co-operation with them.¹⁷⁷ At the same time, however, it was admitted that discussions had been lively. There were those who feared that the centre of gravity would shift in a more Liberal-Conservative direction and also in favour of the German CDU/CSU and the Spanish PP.¹⁷⁸

There is an internal left-right conflict within the EPP — a self-pro- claimed people’s party of the centre — because member parties to varying degrees reflect the socioeconomic dimension.¹⁷⁹ More united over the European dimension, Christian Democrats thought that the identity of the EPP and of Christian Democracy as a movement would suffer if there was a formal link to the British Tories, widely perceived as Euro-sceptical.

Conversely, British Conservatives have objected to a formal alliance with Christian Democrats on the grounds that the latter were seen as Euro-federalists. In terms of credibility and identity, a formal link to the Christian Democrat EPP, committed to a “United States of Europe”, has remained sensitive for the British Conservatives.

For the Conservative identity of the kind advocated by Thatcherites, it was not helpful to be associated with Kohl’s pro-federalist party, which in turn was a powerful member of the EPP. And that the German CDU, with which Major and Patten had built close links, supported the Social Chapter, was one of the reasons why those links would stall and why the alliance was fragile from the very beginning.

¹⁷⁶ EPP/Erklärung des Präsidenten der EVP, Wilfried Martens, im Anschluß an die EVP-Konferenz der Partei- und Regierungschefs am 22. Juni in Brüssel. See also *Agence Europe*, 24 June 1994.

¹⁷⁷ Emphasis added.

¹⁷⁸ This fear was publicly expressed by Marc Bertrand (1994ab), a Wallonian Christian Democrat and then EPP Vice-President and EYCD Secretary-General.

¹⁷⁹ Writing in the late 1950s, Haas (1958b:431) had noted that “each of the national Christian parties is split into wings identified with labour, the peasantry or business.”

As mentioned, one of the Tories opposing the EPP link, Cash, insisted that there is no compatibility at all between the EPP's policies and those set out by Major in his *The Economist* article. This "real political problem" must be clearly resolved, Cash argued, otherwise "Conservative voters will be deceived and our party's *integrity irreparably undermined*."¹⁸⁰

Cash was aware that the Tory MEPs may have been isolated and less influential.¹⁸¹ Nevertheless, he expressed some anxiety that the ideas of the party would be compromised by its co-operation with Christian Democrat parties. Those Conservatives who wanted the party to adopt an unequivocal anti-federalist and free-market position were anxious that there might be a spill-over from the EPP into party policies. This would have diluted the identity in a way of which they disapproved.

It was difficult for Conservative Central Office to disguise the fact that there were differences between the tradition of Toryism and that of the EPP, such as the drive to integration in addition to the Social Chapter.¹⁸² Party officials admitted that there were "considerable areas of policy" where they disagreed with the EPP.¹⁸³ Particularly the European dimension presented problems for the British Tories in the context of British party politics.

Having considered another title, before joining the EPP Group, the Tory MEPs adopted the one of *Conservatives in the European Parliament*. Although the word Conservative still had unfortunate connotations in much of Europe, not using it could have upset Conservatives in Britain.¹⁸⁴

It follows from the discussion above of the ideological dimensions, that *problems of congruence* and *arena shifts* could be potentially damaging for a party if its *identity* becomes diluted and if the voters' identification with it diminishes. The *credibility dilemma* could tempt domestic competitors

¹⁸⁰ Cash, 1993. Emphasis added.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Bill Cash, London, 3 February 1994.

¹⁸² Interview with Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994. See also Hurd, 1994b. Cf Bogdanor, 1996:215-216; Davies, 1995:367; Lécureuil, 1996:193; Morgan, 1996:11.

¹⁸³ Quoted in *The Times*, 21 January 1994. See also *The Times*, 31 January 1994.

¹⁸⁴ Coming under fire, Tories in Strasbourg would add the word Conservative to the EPP or EPP Group when writing letters to British newspapers. See Bethell, 1993; Biesmans, 1994; Jackson, 1994; Moorhouse, 1994. Cf Patterson, 1994.

to exploit the opening flanks of the party concerned. Against this background, the electoral arena at the domestic level must be brought into the analysis. So must the internal arena insofar as this is where policies and strategies are decided.

Arena Shifts and the Problem of Congruence

Domestic Arenas of Christian Democrats

It should be recalled that the issue of a formal alliance with the British Tories had been discussed within Christian Democrat parties, having trade union wings. The trade-union input within individual parties explains why some Christian Democrat parties stayed away from the EDU in the 1970s. Significantly, Tindemans, the Belgian Prime Minister and Flemish Christian Democrat, had made it clear that he could not afford to lose the trade union vote.¹⁸⁵ And more recently, it has proved hard to explain for the party's labour group, asking the CVP to stay in the centre and not to become a Conservative party, how the alliance with Conservatives could be accepted.¹⁸⁶

Pointing out that there are Socialist as well as Christian Democrat unions, Deprez said that the trade union people voted for his party, which has a labour class vote.¹⁸⁷ It is argued that the trade union influence in the PSC is greater and more radical than the one in the CVP.¹⁸⁸

Also the Luxembourg CSV has a strong trade union link and appeals to all classes.¹⁸⁹ Santer himself confirmed that the unions were more reluctant to form an alliance with the British Conservatives.¹⁹⁰ He pointed

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994. Having said that resistance to a merger was more intense in the 1970s, Tindemans drew my attention to the fact that there is a Christian trade union in Belgium. Interview with Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Paul Willems, Brussels, 9 December 1993. Cf *The Economist*, 28 May 1994; *The European*, 10–16 June 1994.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993.

¹⁸⁸ Fitzmaurice, 1996:174.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Romain Kirt, Lund, 5 September 1995.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Jacques Santer, Strasbourg, 10 October 1995.

out that both he and his successor as Prime Minister, Juncker, are from the trade-union wing. I was actually told that Juncker, then CSV Chairman, unlike Santer, was against the alliance.¹⁹¹ Juncker has been closely involved in the European Union of Christian Democratic Workers (EUCDW).

As far as the German CDU is concerned, the influence of its social wing, the *Sozialausschüsse* or Social Committees, has decreased.¹⁹² In the 1970s, the Social Committees “had cultivated informal links with the trade-union orientated Belgian Christian Democrats and held less preconceived notions against a possible alliance with socialists in the European Parliament.”¹⁹³ Still, however, there were some CDU members with a background in the social grouping within the party, linked to the trade unions, who did not have a friendly stance towards co-operation with Conservatives.¹⁹⁴ But on the whole, the CDU, just like the French CDS, was less influenced by Christian trade unionism than Benelux Christian Democrats.

Christian trade unionism was the more relevant in the Dutch case. Having significant support from working-class voters, the CDA has worker councils.¹⁹⁵ Combined with the pejorative connotations of the word Conservative, the trade union influence explains why Dutch Christian Democrats politicians “do not get votes” by flirting with Conservatism.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Interview with Gérard Deprez, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993. Juncker replaced Santer as Prime Minister in early 1995. For Juncker’s background and ideological orientation, see interviews in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 February 1995 and *Die Presse*, 28 March 1995.

¹⁹² Interview with Klaus Welle, Brussels, 9 January 1997. Cf Broughton, 1994:106; Irving, 1979:49, 148, 256; Kleinmann, 1993:468–470; Pridham, 1977:294. See also *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 September 1996. It is important to emphasise that the influence of the *Sozialausschüsse* depends on whether the CDU is in government or in opposition. Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 13 January 1997.

¹⁹³ Pridham, 1982:337. The Bavarian CSU has traditionally had less friendly relations with the main German trade union confederation than the CDU has had. Irving, 1979:150.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994. Donnelly referred to Norbert Blüm, Minister for Labour, and Heiner Geißler, the former CDU Secretary-General, in this context. Blüm had been leader of the Social Committees.

¹⁹⁵ Interviews with Jean Penders, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; Jos van Gennip, Athens, 13 November 1992.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Theo Brinkel, the Hague, 8 April 1993.

Dutch Christian Democrats very much feared that a formal alliance with the British Conservatives could damage them in the eyes of the voters. Having objected to a strengthening of the Conservative element within the EPP, Oostlander pointed out that “[o]ur own *voters* would see that and their *identification* with the party would of course diminish.”¹⁹⁷ Putting the British Conservative Party in a Dutch context, he argued that a party...

...so one-sidedly nationalistic and non-European does not exist outside extreme left and minor fundamentalist parties. Economically the Tories are closer to the VVD [=People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy: Dutch Liberal/Conservative party], but the Dutch liberals differ also on that point in a positive way from the Conservative programmes. The Conservatives in their programmes are further from us than outspoken rivals in our country.

The Dutch CDA must maintain some distance to the Liberals “in order to prevent its *working-class voters* from switching to the Dutch Labour Party.”¹⁹⁸ Dutch Christian Democrats also have to take into account that there is competition in the electoral arena with the smaller Christian parties: “If the CDA moves away from its Christian tradition, becoming a more liberal conservative party, it will *lose voters* to the small Christian parties.”¹⁹⁹

Christian trade unionism was relevant also in the Italian case. As a deeply factionalised party, the DC tended to see relations towards the British Conservatives in the light of its left *correnti* — faction — and its link to trade unions of Christian workers.²⁰⁰

Striving to safeguard its centrist position from its competitors, the DC was concerned that an alliance with the British Conservatives at the Eu-

¹⁹⁷ Oostlander. Emphases added.

¹⁹⁸ Lucardie, 1988:95. Emphasis added.

¹⁹⁹ Lucardie, 1988:91. Emphasis added.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Anton Giulio M. de’ Robertis, Rome, 3 November 1993. For a discussion of the *correnti* and DC factionalism, see Amyot, 1988:35; Caciagli, 1982:266; Donovan, 1992; Hine, 1993; Irving, 1979:76–85; LaPalombara, 1987:121–125, 223; Leonardi and Wertman, 1989; Pasquino, 1980; Sartori, 1976:138; Ventio, 1988; Zuckerman, 1979.

ropean level could have serious implications for the claim that the party still occupied centre ground at the national level.²⁰¹ Not least the Liberals, on their right, could be tempted to exploit a perceived move to the right by the DC.

It was hardly a coincidence that the vote in the EPP Group on the Tories' application for allied membership did not take place until after the Italian general election of 5-6 April 1992, beyond the 31 March deadline set by the EPP Conference. There were those who considered "this initiative to be inappropriate before the elections which are soon to take place, notably in Italy...."²⁰² Had the EPP Group voted to accept the Conservatives before the election, the issue of an alliance with the Tories could have become sensitive to the Italian Christian Democrats insofar as their political adversaries had been able to exploit it. But since there was no final agreement by then, the question of the alliance was not part of the electoral campaign and did not disturb them at all.²⁰³ Such a 'pact with the devil' could have lost the Italian Christian Democrats votes.

Prior to the April 1991 EPP Conference, proceeding a decision on the Tories' application, EDG managers reported that Andreotti and his party might find themselves in a very delicate political situation because of the resignation of his government.²⁰⁴ In the light of the domestic arenas of party politics, not least the internal, Andreotti suffered constraints when he met his counterparts at the European level, just as Lubbers did on behalf of the Dutch CDA and also the leaders of the Irish FG.²⁰⁵

The Irish FG offers strong empirical support to the argument that the

²⁰¹ When the party groups in the EP were to move because of the alliance, the Italians reacted fiercely to the decision by the EP Bureau to move the Liberal Group towards the centre of Strasbourg's hemicycle. See *Agence Europe*, 14 May 1992. This would have given the impression that the Christian Democrats were more rightist than the Liberals. Tindemans pointed out that also the Gaullists suggested that the EPP Group members should move to the right, adding that a compromise was reached implying that the EPP Group would become part of the centre. Interview with Leo Tindemans, Brussels, 24 June 1992.

²⁰² *Agence Europe*, 8 February 1992.

²⁰³ Interview with Anton Giulio M. de' Robertis, Rome, 3 November 1993.

²⁰⁴ Confidential information.

²⁰⁵ I was told in private that Lubbers, attending EPP summits, had put up a good fight with Chancellor Kohl regarding relations to the Tories. The same source said that the Irish FG Leader, John Bruton, was "brutal" in the context of an EPP Conference meeting against thoughts of approaching the Tories. Private information.

European arenas of party politics must be linked to the domestic arenas if we really are to understand transnational alliance-building among political parties. Under FitzGerald's leadership, the FG had a Social Democrat appeal and "recorded substantial gains among *working-class voters* in the late 1970s and early 1980s."²⁰⁶ However, the major concern of the Irish FG was specifically related to the national issue, which historically has explained this party's domestic party competition with Fianna Fáil.²⁰⁷ In short, the national issue rather than left-right issues is dominating Irish politics.²⁰⁸ This situation has made it difficult to locate Irish parties in terms of the conventional European party families.²⁰⁹

With the British Conservatives regarded as a unionist party, the FG feared that Fianna Fáil might have exploited an alliance with them.²¹⁰ Accordingly, the FG tended to see the Tory application in a purely Anglo-Irish context.²¹¹ With reference to Thatcher and Northern Ireland, it was suggested that "to be associated with Mrs Thatcher would have been very damaging for Fine Gael domestically."²¹² Fianna Fáil is understood to be tempted to link the FG with anything British, calling the FG "west Brits."²¹³ Allegations of Irish Toryism is a serious charge, which could have been damaging for the FG's electoral prospects. Having negative connotations, Toryism was seen in Ireland as a "pragmatic materialism of a nationalist kind."²¹⁴

²⁰⁶ Mair, 1987b:40, see also pp 221-222 and Mair, 1993. Emphasis added.

²⁰⁷ Cf Mair, 1987b:9, 1993. The split between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael goes back to the Treaty of 1921. See Busted, 1990:17; Lijphart, 1981:40; Mair, 1987b:16.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Garret FitzGerald, Dublin, 10 May 1996. Cf Busted, 1990:41-46; Castles and Mair, 1984:79, 86; Heidar and Berntzen, 1993:128; Mair, 1986:459, 1987a, 1993.

²⁰⁹ Mair, 1987b:9, 1993:86-89.

²¹⁰ Interviews with Alan Dukes, Dublin 9 May 1996; Simon King, Dublin, 9 May 1996; John Joseph McCartin, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993; Katherine Meenan, Dublin, 11 May 1996. Reportedly, Fianna Fáil declared after the 1989 European elections that they would rather leave the EDA than sit in the same group as the British Tories. See *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 1989; *The Times*, 1 July 1989; Laffan, 1996:266.

²¹¹ Confidential information. Introducing their request for allied membership of the EPP Group, the Tories hoped that the Irish FG would not object to this. See *The Times*, 1 July 1989.

²¹² Interview with Katherine Meenan, Dublin, 11 May 1996.

²¹³ Interview with Alan Dukes, Dublin 9 May 1996.

²¹⁴ According to a FG politician asking to be anonymous. See also *Financial Times*, 8 April 1992.

Such concerns had come to the fore in the 1970s, when FitzGerald was opposing an alliance with the Tories. In an interview, he pointed to the national issue in Anglo-Irish relations and to the British Conservative Party as being “imperial” and resisting Irish independence in the past.²¹⁵ FitzGerald said that British Conservatism “never had much attraction for Irish people” and that a Tory link could have been “damaging” at home. When asked if there was any fear that Fianna Fáil might have exploited such a link, he answered, “very much so”, adding that it was “politically dangerous.” Like the present FG Leader, John Bruton, FitzGerald said that Fianna Fáil would have liked to join the Christian Democrats but that the FG had blocked them.²¹⁶

Domestic Internal Arena of Conservatives

For the British Conservatives, representation in the European arenas of party politics, from the outset, has added to the conflictual pressures in the domestic arenas, especially the internal arena. In the words of Ashford:

Since Britain’s entry into the Community, further factors have undermined the hierarchical view, with the development of semi-autonomous decision-making by the European Conservative Group, the creation of a new institutional structure for the European elections and the need to take account of potential centre-right allies in the European Parliament. The growth of these new interests will inevitably make coalition-building in the Conservative party more difficult in the future.²¹⁷

Preparing the foundation of the EDU in the 1970s, the British Tories made it clear that they could not undertake a supranational decision-making structure, that is, to commit themselves to a common policy

²¹⁵ Interview with Garret FitzGerald, Dublin, 10 May 1996.

²¹⁶ Interview with John Bruton, Brussels, 10 December 1993.

²¹⁷ Ashford, 1980:124. See also Ashford, 1992.

agreed by a majority vote.²¹⁸ Thatcher herself pointed out that the British Conservatives were “not aiming at a single monolithic Party, but an alliance of *autonomous* Parties co-operating for a common purpose.”²¹⁹ Reflecting a British pragmatic outlook, the Tories have been interested in building alliances without restraining the party’s independence.²²⁰ For this reason, the EPP was something the Tories could not join even if they had been invited.

Likewise, the main reason for setting up a British-dominated Conservative party group in 1973, and for the Tory MEPs to stay there for many years to come, was that they thereby could retain their independence and follow party policies.²²¹ These were very desirable aims in terms of intra-party politics.

Along with other leading Tories — the Foreign Secretary, the Employment Secretary and successive Party Chairmen — Major had committed himself to the alliance despite the persistence of Thatcherite sentiments in the party.²²² Given the positive attitude in EPP documents, it is inferred that Major had signalled an open mind concerning EPP membership for his party.

Initially, Tories in Strasbourg actually expected the British Conservative Party to join the EPP some time in the future.²²³ Although agreeing that transnational party co-operation is a “*two-level game*”, Biesmans, the Deputy Secretary-General of the EPP Group, did not foresee any trouble with the party leadership.²²⁴ However, it did not take long until they

²¹⁸ Maudling, 1978:221-222.

²¹⁹ Quoted in Lodge and Herman, 1982:178. Emphasis added. The authors comment that Thatcher “neither envisaged nor favoured the establishment of a federal party”, but a “looser, broader alliance of like-minded European parties.”

²²⁰ Cf Catterall, 1994:670; Horner, 1981:82; Lodge and Herman, 1982:158; Rose, 1982:113-114.

²²¹ Cf Fitzmaurice, 1975:146; Lea, 1992:22; Lodge and Herman, 1982:175; Palmer, 1981:77; Scalingi, 1980:126; Wood and Wood, 1979:33.

²²² See Fowler, 1992; Hunt, 1993, 1994; Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993; *Agence Europe*, 12 September 1992; *The Times*, 19 February 1992.

²²³ Interviews with John Biesmans, a) Brussels, 25 June 1992, b) Athens, 12 November 1992; Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994; Derek Prag, a) Brussels, 25 June 1992, b) Athens, 12 November 1992; Sir Christopher Prout, Athens, 12 November 1992.

²²⁴ Interview with John Biesmans, Brussels, 25 June 1992.

realised that it was not politically possible for the party to join the EPP. Originally in favour of EPP membership, both the Chairman of the Tory contingent, Newton Dunn, and Lord Plumb came to this conclusion. They argued that given Major's problems with his Euro-sceptic right-wing and the small majority he held in the Commons, the question of an EPP membership or observership should be postponed, at least until after the next general election.²²⁵

While the EPP link was a priority in 1991, it became less important for the party.²²⁶ The option of joining the EPP was gone as the Maasticht debate opened.²²⁷ With the Euro-sceptics becoming more influential, Patten's hope that the Tory Party would also become a member of the EPP seemed to evaporate.²²⁸ Whereas the party leadership in 1991 had been keen to establish an EPP link, they would stay away from the EPP for party-political reasons.

Being a member of the EPP would have some significant disadvantages for the British Conservative Party in terms of internal party politics, as noted by Timothy Bainbridge, a British Conservative and official in the EPP Group secretariat.²²⁹ He said that before the Tories joined the Christian Democrats, they were told that Major could attend the pre-summit meetings of Christian Democrat leaders and that he had been invited after the alliance had come into being, but had never taken part. Although it was important to attend these pre-summit meetings, Bainbridge pointed out that since the results were so public it could be revealed that national interests had been negotiated away. This was a tactical problem, given the dynamics of the House of Commons, Bainbridge said. He would therefore be surprised if the party applied for EPP membership. He even found it surprising that the Tories had been let into the EPP Group considering Britain's "semi-detachment." Giving advice, Bainbridge said that "*it must all be seen against the party-political context of Britain.*"

²²⁵ Interviews with William Newton Dunn, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Lord Plumb, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993.

²²⁶ Interview with Brendan Donnelly, London, 10 February 1994.

²²⁷ Interview with Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994.

²²⁸ Cf Butler and Westlake, 1995:287; *The Independent*, 10 October 1994.

²²⁹ Interview with Timothy Bainbridge, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993.

For Major, determined to keep his party together, the EPP link added to the already heavy burdens on his shoulders. This weak spot helped the Tory Euro-sceptics to shape the agenda. With the Thatcherites still influential within the party, and with a diminishing parliamentary party, the Tory high command ruled out the option of requesting EPP membership, at least for now.

This happened on the occasion of the EPP Group's study days in London in September 1992. Then, EPP President Martens and EPP Secretary-General Jansen were told by Major and the new Party Chairman, Sir Norman Fowler, that they could not raise the issue of EPP membership now, given their domestic problems with the issue of Europe.²³⁰

The way in which Major handled the ratification process of the Maastricht Treaty itself, making a deal with his sceptics to postpone UK ratification until after the second Danish referendum, made Christian Democrats disenchanted.²³¹ The deal left the flank open for the Euro-sceptics to capitalise on the Maastricht battle. If anything, this battle offered "much evidence of the nature and depth of penetration of the 'Thatcherite' revolution in the party."²³²

Already when the negotiations on an alliance were concluding, in spring 1992, there were indications that the EPP link could damage the cohesion in the internal arena. *The Guardian* reported that Central Office feared "that any step, however tentative, linking the party with the pro-federalist Christian Democrats might anger Margaret Thatcher, Nor-

²³⁰ Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 7 December 1993. Informal conversations with Thomas Jansen, Brussels, 18 May 1995 and Lund, 20 June 1995. When Major was in Sweden for an official visit in August 1993, he was asked about the EPP link by a journalist at a press conference he held together with the Swedish Prime Minister, Carl Bildt, at Harpsund, Sweden's Chequers. Major reportedly said that the co-operation in the EP is a loose arrangement and not about a marriage or demands for uniformity and standardisation. We are a Conservative Party and will remain Conservative, Major said. See *Kristdemokraten*, 20 August 1993.

²³¹ Cf Butler and Westlake, 1995:43, 51; Paterson, 1996:59. See also Tindemans, 1992. Christian Democrats, such as EPP Group Chairman Tindemans and former Vice-Chairman Chanterie, felt disenchanted, if not betrayed, by Major's new approach as expressed in his *The Economist* article and elsewhere. Interview with Raphaël Chanterie, Strasbourg, 16 December 1993; BBC TV/On the Record, 24 October 1993; *Financial Times*, 3 June 1994; *The Sunday Telegraph*, 13 March 1994.

²³² Baker *et al*, 1994:57.

man Tebbit or other anti-federalist Tories and lead to *embarrassing infighting* in the run-up to the general election.”²³³ In an up-date of this report, *The Guardian* commented that there were signs that some anti-federalist Tory MPs in Westminster were angered by having federalist “fifth column” in their ranks and suspected collusion between the Tory MEPs and Cabinet Ministers.²³⁴

It was even suggested that there were “vociferous objections from many Conservative MPs.”²³⁵ The relationship between the Strasbourg Tories and Westminster had always been an uneasy one. People like Tebbit and Thatcher regarded the MEPs as having “gone native” and being loyal neither to Britain nor to the Conservative Party.²³⁶ *The Guardian* noted that the British Tory MEPs had become affiliated to the EPP Group “as individuals, not as a group so as not to upset Westminster colleagues who regard them as having ‘gone native’ in Strasbourg.”²³⁷

The opposition to the EPP link from high-profile Euro-sceptic backbenchers made the alliance increasingly fragile.²³⁸ At the centre of the attention was the programme which the EPP had adopted at its Congress in Athens in November 1992. Given the controversy over their representation then, and the EPP link in general, one understands why Tory MEPs stayed away from the EPP Congress in Brussels in Decem-

²³³ *The Guardian*, 12 February 1992. Emphasis added. See also *The European*, 30 April-3 May 1992; *The Times*, 15 & 19 February 1992.

²³⁴ *The Guardian*, 22 February 1992.

²³⁵ Westlake, 1994b:271. One of the high-profile Tory backbenchers who, then, was on record as objecting to the alliance with federalist-minded Christian Democrats was Nicholas Budgen, one of the MPs to lose the whip in November 1994 for having voted against the government on a crucial vote related to Europe.

²³⁶ See Tebbit, 1990; Thatcher, 1993:749. See also Anderson, 1991:28; *Agence Europe*, 11 & 31 January 1990.

²³⁷ *The Guardian*, 8 July 1993. The report failed to distinguish between the EPP Group and the EPP Party.

²³⁸ Of the Tory Euro-sceptics on the warpath, Bill Cash was the one who most energetically moved to disassociate the British Conservative Party from the EPP. Other Tories insisting that the EPP link was best left to history were John Biffen (1994), a former Minister, along with Bernard Jenkin and Sir Teddy Taylor. There was a series of interventions from Conservatives and non-Conservatives alike in the British press, pointing to the incongruities between the policies of the British Conservative Party and the EPP. See Collett, 1994; Corbett, 1994; Kinch, 1993; Stroud, 1994.

ber 1993.²³⁹ The programme adopted by the EPP on this occasion would form the basis for its 1994 European elections manifesto. Its adoption was — as Lord Cockfield has remarked — “set fair to produce real difficulties once again.”²⁴⁰

Whether they liked it or not, Tories in Strasbourg claimed they were not bound by the EPP manifesto.²⁴¹ They even tried to hide the fact that they had been represented when it was adopted in February 1994.²⁴² For their part, EPP managers said that for the alliance to be renewed after the June elections, the Tory candidates must submit to all objectives of the EPP manifesto, except for the policy areas where the British Government obtained opt-outs from the Maastricht Treaty, that is, the Social Chapter and the third stage of the EMU.²⁴³ They also clarified that the EPP Party and the EPP Group were working in the same direction.

Following mounting pressure from Cash, the Tory high command, including Sir Norman, distanced the party from the EPP manifesto.²⁴⁴ So did David Hunt, a self-proclaimed ‘Tory Christian Democrat’ in the Cabinet, even though he still thought the centre-right alliance in the EP made sense.²⁴⁵

In Central Office, they again excluded the option of joining the EPP

²³⁹ Author’s direct observation.

²⁴⁰ Cockfield, 1994:121-122. See also Beloff, 1996:87, 138; Girvin, 1994:724.

²⁴¹ See Bethell, 1994; Donnelly, 1994; Prout, 1993a, 1994ab. See also *The Guardian*, 25 & 31 May, 4 June 1994; *The Sunday Telegraph*, 13 March 1994; *The Times*, 8 June 1994.

²⁴² Prout, 1994bc. See also *The Guardian*, 9 March 1994; *The Sunday Telegraph*, 13 March 1994. EPP Secretary-General Jansen pointed out that Tory MEPs were present as observers when the manifesto was accepted, but that they did not vote. *Financial Times*, 26/27 February 1994. He confirmed this in an informal conversation with the author. The minutes from the EPP Bureau meeting in Brussels on 3 February 1994 show that the manifesto was adopted unanimously and that Tory MEPs were present but had no right to vote. EPP/Compte rendu de la réunion du Bureau politique le 3 février à Bruxelles.

²⁴³ See *Agence Europe*, 26 February 1994; *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 February 1994; *Financial Times*, 26/27 February 1994; *The Times*, 26 February 1994. See also Cash, 1994a.

²⁴⁴ See *Agence Europe*, 25 February 1994; *Financial Times*, 19/20 & 24 February 1994.

²⁴⁵ Interview with David Hunt, London, 2 February 1994. In his Presidential Address delivered to the Tory Reform Group on 3 July 1993, Hunt said he welcomed the EPP link and associated British Conservative thought with Continental Christian Democracy. See Hunt, 1993, 1994.

in the near future, with reference to both intra-party constraints and ideological differences.²⁴⁶ Sir Geoffrey Pattie, the Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party, said that the alliance was “tricky” and noted that Cash and other Euro-sceptics had great fun because of the alliance.²⁴⁷

In fact, the EPP link even reached the floor of the House of Commons. At the Prime Minister’s Question Time there on 10 February 1994 a question on the EPP manifesto was put to Major by Cash from the backbenches over the Prime Minister’s shoulders:

Has my right hon. Friend seen the manifesto adopted by the European Peoples party on 3 February? Is he aware that it contains a commitment to a single currency, a central bank, the social chapter, a common immigration policy and a constitution for the whole of Europe? Does he agree that Conservative Members could not possibly accept those proposals, and repudiate them explicitly?²⁴⁸

The Prime Minister replied:

Neither do we have to accept them; nor will we. The Conservative party at the European elections is in agreement and will contest those elections on a distinctively British Conservative manifesto on the future of Europe.²⁴⁹

Speaking here was a man who did his best to combine the job of being Prime Minister with that of being Leader of the Conservative Party, plagued by internal divisions and factionalism.

Major’s repudiation of the EPP manifesto was a clear indication of an increasingly Euro-sceptic stance and of his decision to sacrifice the EPP link — in the short term at least — to appease the Euro-sceptics. Reportedly, pro-European MPs were dismayed.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Interview with Laura Adshead, London, 8 February 1994.

²⁴⁷ Interview with Sir Geoffrey Pattie, London, 11 February 1994.

²⁴⁸ Hansard, Oral Answers, 10 February 1994. See also *Financial Times*, 11 February 1994; *The Times*, 11 February 1994.

²⁴⁹ Hansard, Oral Answers, 10 February 1994.

²⁵⁰ *Financial Times*, 11 February 1994.

One of them, Hugh Dykes, said that the right-wingers were a constraint and that the government had “appeased them” for reasons of party unity.²⁵¹ He added that it was not likely under these circumstances that the party would become a full member of the EPP. His soulmate, Sir Edward Heath, the former Prime Minister, regretted that the party was disassociated from the EPP, saying that in the EP you must work with other people so “why make a fuss.”²⁵²

Although a former aide of Heath’s, and like him a pro-European, Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, distanced the party from the EPP manifesto. In a letter to Conservative MPs and MEPs, Hurd emphasised that the 32 Conservative MEPs were only “allied members” of the EPP Group, whereas the “Conservative Party is not, and never has been, a member of the EPP organisation, a transnational centre-right party, and nor has it applied to be.”²⁵³ This being the case, the party was not bound by “any manifesto produced by the EPP organisation. Much of it we could support. But other elements we do not: for example, we oppose the Social Chapter and we are committed to a national decision over a single currency.”

In response, Cash, in a three-page note to his fellow Conservative MPs, stressed that “[t]he links are admitted.”²⁵⁴ Having welcomed Hurd’s statement that Conservative candidates will fight wholly and exclusively on a British Conservative manifesto, Cash noted:

This might seem encouraging, providing it is clear, but in view of the contradictions and confusion which are inherent in “links” with the EPP, it is surely essential that, in our Conservative Party Manifesto,

²⁵¹ Interview with Hugh Dykes, London, 7 February 1994. Addressing a seminar at the LSE on 31 January 1994, Dykes said it was interesting to hear how Tory people justify the alliance in the EP. Referring to the EPP, Dykes noted that in official language the Tory MEPs are not really members, only half-members. He pointed out that the EPP uses the word federalist in the sense of decentralisation and regretted that federalism is misunderstood in Britain. I myself attended this interesting seminar.

²⁵² BBC TV/Breakfast with Frost, 27 February 1994. See also *The Times*, 28 February & 1 March 1994.

²⁵³ Hurd, 1994b. See also *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 April 1994; *The Times*, 26 February 1994.

²⁵⁴ Cash, 1994a.

we specifically repudiate (as was urged on the Prime Minister on 10th February at Prime Minister's Questions and as he was understood to agree) all the EPP commitments...which appear in their Manifesto, including the federal commitment and a European Constitution. And why does Douglas Hurd's letter...refer only to *these* by way of example and deliberately avoid reference to the EPP Manifesto's commitments on immigration, defence and the European Constitution (including federalism)?

In his note, Cash pointed to the letter from Patten, the former Party Chairman, to EPP President Martens on 11 April 1991, committing also Major to the alliance. Cash also referred to the press release 'May Wedding for European Conservatives' issued by Conservative MEPs on 6 May 1992, saying they had entered a "political marriage" and were "fully integrated with the EPP."²⁵⁵

In an interview, Cash equally pointed to Patten's letter and read aloud from the press release just mentioned.²⁵⁶ He said that he was certain that Tory MEPs were intimately involved in the EPP, adding that they were now caught in a trap of their own making. Having said that the Tory-EPP relationship was "a jungle", and that there was a huge amount of "camouflage", Cash suggested that the relationship had a long history. He argued that the matter was at the very centre of British politics and a millstone around Major's neck. Quoting from his copy of Patten's letter, Cash pointed out that it referred to Major's Bonn speech of 11 March 1991 and that the letter was written very close to this speech and the EPP's decision on 13 April 1991. Raising the issue of the Social Chapter, Cash noted that Patten's letter stressed the Tory Party's social commitments. This was the beginning of the leadership's strategic mistakes leading to Maastricht and was now a millstone around their neck, he said, adding that they too were now caught in a trap of their own making.

²⁵⁵ In his letter to *The Times* in October 1993 Cash (1993) had pointed to the release but not to Patten's letter.

²⁵⁶ Interview with Bill Cash, London, 3 February 1994.

Hence, the EPP link, carefully built over a long period of time, had become a central issue of the politics in the Tory Party's domestic internal arena. That a leading Tory Euro-rebel like Cash had found out about Patten's letter gave the Euro-sceptic faction additional opportunities for blackmail.²⁵⁷ Had Cash chosen to publish the contents of that letter, which he safely kept in a locker at his office at the European Foundation, it would have embarrassed Major, who had negotiated an opt-out from the Social Chapter. After the 1994 European elections, the strategy of the European Foundation was to keep reminding the Conservative Party, the press and the country of the allegedly inappropriate alliance by writing articles and referring to it whenever they could.²⁵⁸

Cash, Tebbit and their like, in association with the nationalist press, undermined the Tories' EPP link.²⁵⁹ Significantly, the Euro-sceptics associated the EPP link and the 1996 IGC with each other.²⁶⁰ They remained suspicious of the longer-term intentions of Downing Street and the Foreign Office. In this, the EPP link was exploited to put down a marker in view of the Maastricht Treaty review as well as the more immediate European elections.²⁶¹ The Tory Euro-sceptics wanted a contest on a distinctively anti-federalist Conservative manifesto. Hence, there was a strong interlinkage between the internal and the electoral arenas.

²⁵⁷ As pointed out by Anderson (1994), Major's biographer, the difficulty for Major was that "as his majority will soon fall to 15, his disillusioned colleagues have endless opportunities for blackmail."

²⁵⁸ Letter from David Matthews, 19 July 1994. See also Cash, 1994b.

²⁵⁹ The media was a powerful constraint on its own. See *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 February, 8 March & 28 April 1994; *The Economist*, 5 February 1994; *Financial Times*, 11, 19/20, 24 February & 28 April 1994; *The Guardian*, 25 May, 4 & 7 June 1994; *The Independent*, 10 October 1994; *The Observer*, 27 February 1994; *The Sunday Telegraph*, 13 March 1994; *The Sunday Times*, 29 May & 5 June 1994; *The Times*, 21 & 31 January, 8, 25, 26 & 28 February, 1 & 11 March, 1 April, 6 & 8 June 1994. See also BBC TV/Breakfast News, 3 February 1994; Breakfast with Frost, 20 February 1994; On the Record, 24 October 1993; BBC Fax, 5 June 1994.

²⁶⁰ See Cash, 1994a; Duncan-Smith, 1994; Jenkin, 1994; A Conservative Europe: 1994 and Beyond.

²⁶¹ Cf *The Guardian*, 27 January & 15 February 1994; *The Times*, 11 March 1994.

Domestic Electoral Arena of Conservatives

Back in April 1992, the concluding negotiations on the alliance with Christian Democrats had coincided with the general election in the UK, which was sensitive in terms of electoral politics.²⁶² Proving that the politics of the Tory MEPs was a minefield, the position was to abstain in the EP voting on the resolution on the Maastricht Treaty on 7 April 1992, since it criticised the British Government for the opt-out from the Social Chapter.²⁶³ The EPP Group voted in favour and during the debate its Chairman, Tindemans, said: “We quite understand that not all MEPs should have approved of criticism of a government on the eve of an election.”²⁶⁴

The opposition parties did not orchestrate much fuss about the Tories’ EPP link at the time.²⁶⁵ However, in the run-up to the 1994 European elections the opposition heavily exploited the EPP link, playing party games to embarrass the Conservatives.

For the Tory high command, the temptation to run a Euro-sceptical campaign was overwhelming.²⁶⁶ For their part, Strasbourg Tories claimed that the party’s deeply sceptical line on Europe cost it support in the 1989 European elections.²⁶⁷ They seemed to think that a message other than being “at the heart of Europe” risked their future in the EPP Group.

Although a negative campaign would not be helpful to the alliance,

²⁶² See *The Guardian*, 12 February 1992; *The Times*, 15 February 1992.

²⁶³ See Andersson and Lindahl, 1994:100 and Westlake (1994b:255), who shows that 19 Tory MEPs were absent from this vote whereas 12 followed the Whips and abstained, with one MEP voting against.

²⁶⁴ EPP Group/The Maastricht Treaty, June 1992.

²⁶⁵ Lea, 1992:31.

²⁶⁶ For a detailed study of the 1994 European elections in Britain, see Butler and Westlake, 1995. See also Boyce, 1995; Nugent, 1996; Pinder, 1994; Smith, 1995; Webster, 1994.

²⁶⁷ Bethell, 1993; Prout, 1993ab. See also BBC TV/On the Record, 24 October 1993; Newsnight, 25 March 1994; BBC Fax, 24 March 1994; *Financial Times*, 29 April & 4 May 1994; *The Guardian*, 8 July 1993, 8 & 21 March, 7 June 1994; *The Independent*, 9 October 1993 & 25 March 1994; *The Times*, 9 October 1993 & 25 March 1994. Tory MEPs were understood to be unnerved by ongoing rumours of attempts to replace some of them with anti-Maastricht right-wingers. Baker *et al*, 1993:165. See also *Agence Europe*, 1, 13 & 15 October 1993; *The Guardian*, 20 November 1992.

the German Christian Democrat residing in London, Ludger Eling, remarked that a “national” European election campaign in Britain was not too irritating to Christian Democrats since they all realised the constraint of electoral politics.²⁶⁸ He added that the long-term prospects were more interesting. Having said that parties want to win elections, he was fully aware of the nationalist and confrontational nature of British electoral politics.

One difference between the British and Continental party-political contexts concerns precisely the intensity of domestic party competition and the degree of confrontation. This is because of the electoral system and the nature of Westminster-style politics.

It would have been troubling for the Prime Minister and Leader of the Conservative Party to attend EPP summits in advance of European Council meetings. He would then have to put his cards on the table and reveal his negotiating position, thus making it easy for the opposition to prove he had failed were the negotiation position compromised away beyond all recognition.²⁶⁹

In the election campaign, the EPP link was a weak spot, serving to dry up the Tories’ ammunition. For Foreign Secretary Hurd, chairing the Tories’ manifesto committee, the EPP link was problematic.²⁷⁰ Being represented in the committee, MEPs could notify the party back home of the differences in proposals with the EPP programmes.²⁷¹

Strasbourg Tories repeatedly emphasised that federalism means decentralisation rather than centralisation.²⁷² To avoid alienating their Christian Democrat allies, they recommended leading Conservatives to replace federalism by centralism. They did so in order to avoid confusion about

²⁶⁸ Interview with Ludger Eling, London, 11 February 1994.

²⁶⁹ Interview with Timothy Bainbridge, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993.

²⁷⁰ See *The Economist*, 5 February 1994; *The Guardian*, 10 December 1993 & 27 January 1994; *The Independent*, 15 February 1994; *The Observer*, 27 February 1994; *The Times*, 3 & 28 February, 11 March 1994. See also Hurd, 1993, 1994a.

²⁷¹ As Sir Christopher Prout said on BBC’s *On the Record*, 24 October 1993. Cf *The Guardian*, 25 May 1994.

²⁷² See Bethell, 1994; Jackson, 1993ab; Prout, 1990a, 1992b, 1993a. See also BBC TV/*On the Record*, 23 October 1993; *Breakfast News*, 3 February 1994; *The Guardian*, 25 May 1994; *The Independent*, 7 June 1994; *The Sunday Times*, 29 May 1994.

different interpretations of federalism, and also to avoid embarrassment in relations with Continental partners.²⁷³

As a rule, the Tory high command followed this recommendation.²⁷⁴ However, conforming to the British discourse, centralism and federalism are generally regarded as synonymous. Therefore, the Tories' message that they were the "anti-centralist" party, opposed to the European super-state which they accused Labour and the Liberal Democrats of wanting, was clouded by the EPP link.

Still, however, Foreign Secretary Hurd said of Labour and the Liberal Democrats that they "do have a more centralising approach, do believe for example in the social chapter and are prepared to move more towards majority voting and removal of the veto."²⁷⁵ And in his letter to Conservative MPs and MEPs, he suggested that "[t]his election will show clearly the real divide between the Conservative Party and our opponents in the development of the European Union. The interventionist and centralist manifestos of our opponents document a dogmatic and damaging course for Europe that would be bad for Britain. They cannot hide the fact that they are signed up to it — however hard they will try."²⁷⁶ Since the Tories were only allied to the EPP's parliamentary group, the Foreign Secretary claimed that this "is fundamentally different from the position adopted by our political opponents. The Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats are *full* members of the Party of European Socialists [PES] and the European Liberal Democratic and Reform Party [ELDR] respectively and as such are *wholly bound* by these parties' manifestos."²⁷⁷

Referring to the PES manifesto, the Conservative European manifesto emphasised: "The old truth holds good: only the Conservatives can be trusted to defend Britain's interests."²⁷⁸ The manifesto made it clear that

²⁷³ See *The Guardian*, 25 May 1994.

²⁷⁴ See *The Economist*, 5 February 1994; *The Guardian*, 27 January, 8 March, 25 May 1994; *The Times*, 3 February 1994; *The Times*, 8 February, 11 March, 1 April 1994.

²⁷⁵ Hurd, 1994a. See also *Agence Europe*, 13 April 1994; *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 April 1994; *Financial Times*, 15 February, 31 March, 30 April/1 May 1994; *The Times*, 1 April 1994.

²⁷⁶ Hurd, 1994b.

²⁷⁷ See also Prout, 1994a; *The Guardian*, 15 February 1994; *The Times*, 15 February 1994.

²⁷⁸ Conservative Party/The Conservative Manifesto for Europe, 1994.

the Tories “oppose the idea of a federal European State.”²⁷⁹ In his foreword and during the campaign, Major played the patriotism card and echoed a Euro-Gaullist message, while attacking the opposition.²⁸⁰

Tory spin-doctors castigated Labour for signing away British interests by subscribing to policy proposals of the PES. Labour had opened their European flank to Tory exploitation when John Smith, the late Labour Leader, in November 1993 agreed to and signed the PES manifesto, which pledged support for the Social Chapter and called for a 35-hour working week as a means of cutting unemployment through work-sharing.²⁸¹ Tory strategists could not resist the temptation to exploit this, accusing Labour of betraying Britain’s interests.²⁸² Countering claims that they were committed to a 35-hour week, Labour noted that even German Christian Democrats never considered an opt-out from the Social Chapter.²⁸³ To ward off Tory attacks, the Labour Party was distanced from the PES just as the Tory Party was distanced from the EPP.

As for the Liberal Democrats, they were aware that their more federalist-minded orientation could be exploited by Tories playing the patriotism card. However, the Liberal Democrats had got a hold on the Conservatives thanks to the alliance between Tory MEPs and outspoken federalist Christian Democrats. In a separate move, the Liberal Democrats put down an Early Day Motion in the Commons, pointing out the nature of the Tories’ EPP link by saying:

²⁷⁹ See also *Agence Europe*, 13 April 1994; *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 April 1994; *Financial Times*, 31 March 1994; *The Times*, 1 April 1994. In a BBC interview Foreign Secretary Hurd, chairing the manifesto committee, said: “We do not believe in a United States of Europe.” BBC TV/On the Record, 22 May 1994.

²⁸⁰ See Conservative Party/The Conservative Manifesto for Europe 1994; BBC TV/Breakfast with Frost, 5 June 1994. *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 May 1994; *Financial Times*, 3 June 1994; *The Times*, 24 May 1994. See also Butler and Westlake, 1995:175–184; Webster, 1994:12.

²⁸¹ See *The Sunday Times*, 7 November 1993.

²⁸² See *Agence Europe*, 25 February 1994; *Financial Times*, 11 & 24 February 1994; *The Guardian*, 10 December 1993, 24 February, 25 May 1994; *The Independent*, 24 February, 6 May 1994; *The Sunday Times*, 7 November 1993; *The Times*, 19 February 1994. See also BBC TV/Newsnight, 23 May 1994.

²⁸³ BBC TV/Newsnight, 4 February 1994. See also *Financial Times*, 24 February 1994.

That this House notes with interest the Conservative Government's links with the European Peoples Party, further notes article 2 of the Statutes of the European Peoples Party which states "The European People Party pursues the process of unification and federative integration in Europe and works towards the realization of United States of Europe"; further notes the location of the London headquarters of the European Peoples Party which is Conservative Central Office, Smith Square and calls upon the Conservative Party to either admit their support for the Statutes of the EPP or evict their tenants.²⁸⁴

The timing of the motion was carefully planned to take the edge off any attempt from the Tories to attack the Liberal Democrats for being federalists. The Liberal Democrats launched a report on Europe the day after they had issued the news release on the Tories' EPP link.²⁸⁵

In an interview, Kishwer Khan, International and European Affairs Officer of the Liberal Democrats, said that she had let the EPP statutes lie on her desk until the right moment had arrived; in the context of their own manifesto to neutralise Tory attack.²⁸⁶ The Liberal Democrats exploited this link to the EPP so that the Tories could not attack them for being federalist, she continued. She said that it would be hard for them to attack the Liberal Democrats after this, adding that the EPP calls for a United States of Europe.

The leadership of the Liberal Democrats moved to embarrass the Tories by pointing to differences between what they said in Britain and how Tory MEPs behaved in Europe, having voted for a federal Europe.²⁸⁷ Paddy Ashdown, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats, even called the Strasbourg Tories Major's "federalist fifth column."²⁸⁸ It is

²⁸⁴ Liberal Democrats/Press release, 7 February 1994. See also *The Times*, 8 February 1994. Those tabling the motion included the then Party Chairman Charles Kennedy.

²⁸⁵ See *The Times*, 8 & 9 February 1994.

²⁸⁶ Interview with Kishwer Khan, London, 10 February 1994.

²⁸⁷ See *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 May 1994; *Financial Times*, 23 February 1994; *The Guardian*, 27 May 1994; *The Sunday Times*, 29 May 1994. See also Kennedy, 1994.

²⁸⁸ Quoted in *The Guardian*, 27 May 1994. At the October 1993 Conservative Party Conference, Major had referred to the Liberal Democrats as "fanatics of federalism" and even as "federalism's fifth column." Quoted in *The Guardian*, 9 October 1993; *The Independent*, 9 October 1993. Those words were now thrown back upon the Prime Minister by the Leader of the Liberal Democrats.

understood that press reports “were derived in part from Labour and Liberal documentation on the voting records and policy pronouncements of Conservative MEPs.”²⁸⁹

Stressing the federalist approach of European Liberals, the Tories moved to exploit also the Liberal Democrats’ ELDR link. Ironically, over the years the Tories have considered the option of joining the Liberal party group in the EP, but this option has never been politically possible because of the domestic party competition with the Liberals.²⁹⁰

Likewise, the Danish Conservatives, being in competition with Venstre, the main Liberal party, have never requested membership of the Liberal grouping.²⁹¹ Nor could the Danes have joined the Gaullist-dominated grouping, of which the Progress Party (Fremskridtspartiet) had been a member.²⁹² And as the Danish Centre Democrats were in the EPP Group, it was seen as problematic for strategic and pedagogical reasons to explain domestically how they could end up in the same transnational grouping when they were competitors in domestic politics.²⁹³ However, Danish politics are more consensual than British politics. Unlike the UK, Denmark “has developed means of creating multi-partisanship and is more at ease with the coalition-building system in the EU.”²⁹⁴

All the major British parties tried to sweep their transnational links under the carpet and in the Conservative manifesto one can search in vain for a reference to the EPP. In short, the confrontational style of British politics inhibits working alliances on a transnational basis between supposedly like-minded political parties.

²⁸⁹ Butler and Westlake, 1995:195.

²⁹⁰ Interviews with Lady Elles, London, 3 February 1994; Anthony Teasdale, London, 3 February 1994. Cf De Clercq, 1994.

²⁹¹ Interview with Kent Kirk, Stockholm, 9 March 1994.

²⁹² Interview with Kent Kirk, Stockholm, 9 March 1994.

²⁹³ A breakaway party from the Social Democrats the Centre Democrats have been described as “extremely pro-integrationist.” Faurby and Kristensen, 1982:99.

²⁹⁴ Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 1997:260.

Congruence, Autonomy and Credibility — Factors of Constraints

Stressing the incongruities between Conservatism and Christian Democracy, elements within these families have added to the *autonomy dilemma* for those responsible for the choice of either entering into transnational alliances to strengthen the capacity for action, or maintaining the *freedom of action*. The *problems of congruence*, following from the *arena shifts*, could damage the *credibility* of a party and thereby limit what the actors are able or likely to do. Once again, it is stressed that *problems of congruence* impose *constraints* on the building of transnational party alliances.

Any incongruity between the European and domestic arenas of party politics could be exploited by dissidents in the domestic internal arena and by competitors in the domestic electoral arena. Even where parties are close or loyal to each other in domestic politics, perhaps having formed informal or formal coalitions, beyond a certain point their leaderships have to contradict each other in view of party competition and maximisation of votes in the electoral arena and cohesion in the internal arena. In short, the European arenas add to the conflictual pressure from traditional party arenas.

As we have seen, Christian Democrats had their freedom of action limited by trade unionist influence in the internal arena and by domestic party competition in the electoral arena. Although these factors of constraints are of a general kind, they have turned out to be more relevant in the formative phase than in the evolutionary phase for EPP member parties.

Conversely, the factors of constraints on the British Tories' search for a closer partnership with Christian Democracy have been more acute in the evolutionary phase. Indeed, the intensity and strength of those factors have even served to undermine not only the EPP link, but also Major's initial talk of a place for Britain "at the very heart of Europe."

Day by day, Major, determined to keep his party together, moved his policies closer to the case argued by Euro-sceptic factionalism and further away from that of Continental Christian Democracy. There could be no genuine meeting of minds because of the influence of the Euro-sceptic right-wing, straining the evolution of the alliance with Christian Democrats. With leading people from this wing pointing to the incon-

gruities between Toryism and Continental Christian Democracy, the leadership of the Conservative Party as well as the Strasbourg Tories remained trapped in an *autonomy dilemma*.

Having opted for the choice of increasing their capacity for action, the Strasbourg Tories were aware that the alliance commitments expected of them within the multinational EPP Group could decrease their freedom of action. With an eye on Westminster, they had searched for a solution whereby they could tell potential critics back home that the alliance was a loose arrangement and that they could still maintain a significant degree of independence. They claimed that they did not have to take the group whip and instead vote as a national section if they wanted to.

As was mentioned in Chapter Three, the Tory MEPs had pledged support to the basic policies underpinning the EPP programmes and had committed themselves to agree with the Christian Democrats on fundamental questions. Contrary to these more or less informal agreements, the Strasbourg Tories would play down their alliance commitments, instead arguing that they were *autonomous* since they only were allied members.²⁹⁵ The alliance was no longer a marriage.

Having expected more of the Tory MEPs, there were Christian Democrats who thought their colleagues were hypocritical.²⁹⁶ At the same time, they were aware of the domestic pressures on their British colleagues. Despite their personal attachment to the alliance, the Strasbourg Tories had to give priority to domestic party politics. Facing conflicts of loyalty, because of multiple foci of representation, Tory MEPs were, as one of them put it, like “the nut in the nutcracker.”²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ Interviews with Lord Inglewood, Brussels, 23 June 1992; William Newton Dunn, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993; Ben Patterson, Brussels, 23 June 1992; Lord Plumb, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; Richard J Simmonds, Strasbourg, 14 December 1993. See also Simmonds, 1994; Conservatives in the EP/European Conservative Brief No. 5, 1993.

²⁹⁶ These Christian Democrats included the Dutch MEPs Oostlander and Penders. Interview with Jean Penders, Strasbourg, 15 December 1993; BBC TV/On the Record, 24 October 1993; *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 February 1994; *The Sunday Telegraph*, 13 March 1994.

²⁹⁷ Tory MEP Lord Bethell quoted in *New Statesman & Society*, 13 August 1993. See also Bethell, 1994; *The Guardian*, 10 August 1993.

In the electoral arena, it was not really credible to attack the opposition parties for being federalists and favouring the Social Chapter since the EPP itself favoured such policies.²⁹⁸ Insofar as federalism meant centralisation for the British electorate, the Tory Party simply had to be disassociated from the federalist EPP to make credible the claims that Labour and the Liberal Democrats were centralist. Once Major had negotiated an opt-out from the Social Chapter, he experienced that it implied a *credibility dilemma* to pursue further contacts with European Christian Democracy, including the CDU, an allegedly corporatist party in the world-view of Thatcherite-minded Conservatives.

The Tories moved to exploit a monopoly for Euro-scepticism as the opposition parties struck a pro-European chord. Also for this reason was it out of the question that the British Conservative Party would apply for membership of the federalist EPP before the general election. So intense were the constraints suffered by this particular party when building transnational alliances. To understand such alliance-building, we must, in conclusion, take into account ideological dimensions as well as arena shifts between the European and domestic arenas of party politics.

²⁹⁸ See EPP/EPP Bulletin, Manifesto of the EPP for the European elections 1994, April 1994. See also *The Observer*, 27 February 1994; *The Times*, 31 January 1994.

Understanding Transnational Party Alliances

Traditionally categorised by political scientists as two separate *familles spirituelles*, the hard-won alliance between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European parliamentary arena was indeed a historical event. Once the British Conservatives had won the alliance, other secular Conservative parties joined the Christian Democrats as well. In this, the study has identified a clear pattern.

Having traced the processes of transnational alliance-building among political parties within these families, in this concluding chapter I shall purport to bring together the “bits and pieces of evidence into a pattern” and explain the final outcome of the historical processes at work in this specific case. The in-depth analysis of the specificity, the contextual features of the case, has provided answers and presented evidence of the generality of the principal research problem.

By explaining the causal pattern, the overall aim is thereby to contribute to the understanding and the growth of knowledge of transnational alliance-building among political parties. Combining empirical and theoretical aims, the study gives credibility to the theoretical perspectives of *transnationalism* and *neofunctionalism* as well as *domestic politics* approaches to the analysis of international co-operation and integration. The main empirical results, related to the aim to increase the knowledge of European Conservatism and Christian Democracy, will be presented throughout the chapter.

On the basis of the research question formulated in the introductory chapter, I shall draw conclusions regarding the factors that promote, respectively impede, the *formation* and *evolution* of a transnational party alliance such as the one selected for analysis in this study. I will thereby specify the process mechanisms which can explain *how* and *why* such alliances are built and thus discuss the theoretical implications of the case study, pointing out areas where research on transnational party alliances should be developed. I will bring to mind the differentiation between three categories of process mechanisms by the causal roles they play, namely *opportunities*, *motives* and *constraints*. Specifying these mechanisms,

I shall attempt to show how they worked together and assess their strength and relative importance. This remains a delicate task given the complexity of the research problems.

Theoretical Implications — Specifying the Process Mechanisms

Opportunities

When tracing and analysing opportunities, I made a distinction between *internal catalysts* and *external catalysts*. Three catalysts were identified, namely those of *leadership changes*, *institutional changes* and *changes in the international environment*. Of these catalysts, the latter is external to the EC/EU system, whereas the others are internal to it, including supra-national bodies and member states.

It was shown that the changing leadership of the British Conservative Party, and thus automatically of the British Government since the Tories were in power, had a catalytic effect on alliance-building. That the EPP rebuffed the Tory application for allied membership of the EPP Group in July 1989 depended primarily on the image of Thatcherism. Given the differences in ideology and political style more generally, a formal alliance never seemed likely as long as Margaret Thatcher was in power. Before her downfall, she had been “ambushed” by Christian Democrats raising the stakes in the search for a federal Europe, including a single currency.

Influenced by Chris Patten, the new Conservative Party Chairman, who as a Catholic was familiar with Christian Democracy, John Major clearly made an effort to transform inter-party relations and fully committed himself to the application for allied membership of the EPP Group. The major breakthrough came with him telling a Christian Democrat audience in Bonn in March 1991 that he wanted Britain “at the very heart of Europe.” This promised the strong backing of Chancellor Kohl for a formal alliance.

The catalytic effect of leadership changes and the role of leadership more generally has been a weakness in previous studies on transnational party alliances, not to mention in the theoretical perspectives of neo-functionalism and transnationalism. This study suggests that leadership is

an important factor behind transnational alliance-building among political parties. This implies that domestic structures not only provide constraining factors, but also enabling factors. As new party leaders, both Thatcher and Major pursued party contacts to establish personal relations beyond the national borders. Leadership changes, at the domestic level, could thereby create opportunities for transnational party alliances.

In addition to the internal catalyst of leadership changes, a catalytic effect was also provided by institutional changes. It was shown how party actors strategically responded to the catalyst of changes in formal institutional powers and decision-making procedures by building closer links. Specifically, the Single European Act (SEA) has had this catalytic effect by introducing the need for absolute majorities through the co-operation procedure. I shall return to this institutional change when I discuss motives below.

As for the external catalysts creating opportunities for transnational party alliances, they were provided by the changes in the international environment connected to enlargement of the EC/EU. External party actors thereby imposed outside international environmental pressure. The future enlargement to include Nordic as well as Central and Eastern European countries convinced those involved in the processes at work that the opportunities really were historic and had to be seized. In this way, enlargement had an instrumental, operative, function in the context of the negotiations on a more immediate alliance. Thus, external catalysts could add a new momentum and serve to wield alliance partners together.

In sum, both internal and external catalysts were used by the alliance promoters when bringing home the momentum the process had developed. It follows that an analysis of transnational party alliances, as well as of transnational relations and European integration more generally, should enter into the catalysts that initiate and sustain such processes. Of the catalysts traced and analysed in this study, I deem the institutional changes as the most important for the building of the alliance in question. This conclusion will be further explained below.

Motives

Tracing and analysing motives, I differentiated between *transnational channels for access and influence*, on the one hand, and *maximisation of*

parliamentary influence, on the other, covering activities both within and outside the EP. Factors within both categories of motives showed how parties seek to reap benefits by acting jointly with like-minded parties in transnational alliances, thereby gaining *resources* and strengthening their *capacity for action*.

With the CDU as their prime target, the British Conservatives had a useful alternative channel to those at the intergovernmental level. The links to both the CDU and the EPP were forged to provide channels with a view to the conclusion of the 1991 IGCs at the level of the European Council. Major pointing out that he wanted Britain “at the very heart of Europe” also promised the strong backing of Kohl in the European Council.

The EPP link was not only presented as an alternative diplomatic channel, but also as a way of securing a place in the corridors of power if the Tories were voted out of office. In short, the transnational channels provided by alliances with like-minded parties are important for opposition parties since they are not in control of the governmental machinery.

If not before, the Tories realised the strength and relevance of the EPP after the “ambush” of Thatcher at the Rome summit in October 1990. Prior to this, and throughout the 1991 IGCs, the EPP Conference met in the presence of several heads of government.

For the EPP, a high priority was to be represented by relevant parties, reaching out to the top echelon in different countries and indirectly to wider audiences. By opening up to Conservatives, also in view of enlargement, leading Christian Democrats thought that integrating them in EPP activities would make them come around to being in favour of a federal Europe.

Whatever the prospects for genuinely integrated “parties at the European level”, we can thus conclude that existing transnational party federations, such as the EPP, provide transnational channels for access and influence. Such channels may give access to the top echelon of nation-states, which is important in order to influence political debates and agendas alike. Penetrating domestic societies, a transnational actor like the EPP, as well as individual member parties, could exercise significant influence.

An argument behind the alliance concerned the need to establish a

counterweight to the Socialists. This was particularly applicable to the situation in the EP, where the Socialist Group had become bigger than the Christian Democratic Group in the mid-1970s and has gained more from successive enlargements. Also, Christian Democrat parties were smaller than Conservative parties in the Nordic countries due to join the EU. Although Christian Democrats have a tradition of consensus-building with Socialists in national politics and the EP alike, the Socialists provided the main *countervailing force* drawing Conservatives and Christian Democrats together.

The Tory MEPs' request in 1989 to join the Christian Democrats was explained with reference to the extension of the EP powers following the entry into force of the SEA, of which the co-operation procedure has had an obvious effect on relations between and inside party groups. Unlike the situation in the 1970s, it became more urgent for the Christian Democrats and Conservatives to unite and exploit the EP powers to the fullest to influence EU-wide legislation. This tendency was reinforced by the co-decision procedure in the Maastricht Treaty. Likewise, the party article (138a) in that Treaty has stimulated the evolution of European parties. It is also noteworthy that in the 1970s alliances were built and transnational party federations, including the EPP, founded in view of the future European elections.

Striking an alliance, and de-emphasising the differences between them, attests to the assumption that European Conservatism and Christian Democracy would enter into a formal alliance the day the EP became a body with significant powers to influence EU legislation. The extent to which national delegations are willing to compromise their own *freedom of action*, by seeking transnational alliances to increase their *capacity for action*, is thus affected by institutional imperatives.

Strategic considerations and political calculation of the kind mentioned above entered into the argument. But although the drive behind the alliance primarily must be explained with reference to the lure of power politics, there was also an ideological element involved. On the basis of shared values, an alliance between Conservatism and Christian Democracy would counter Socialism. They had a common interest in balancing the *threat* of a left-leaning EP. On balance, the strategic alliance was essentially formed against rather than for something.

It is important to emphasise that some motives for an alliance were

more forward-oriented than others. In 1991, there was an immediate concern about the Maastricht Treaty negotiations. Although both Strasbourg Tories and Christian Democrats were keen on the alliance as a kind of long-term realignment of the European centre-right, thereby changing the party-political landscape, it seems that the motives of the Christian Democrats and of the EPP itself had a more distant horizon. The EPP made a conscious effort to restructure the very conditions for transnational party alliances by calling for more EP powers and for the formation of European parties. Indeed, the party article in the Maastricht Treaty was very much the result of backstage lobbying by the EPP leadership.

Hence, there were clear indications that Christian Democrats were more keen on an alliance in the perspective of European party formation, whereas the Conservatives were more concerned about the situation in the EP itself, where they had become increasingly isolated. Anyway, the maximisation of parliamentary influence was a shared motive, and it became more relevant as the powers of the EP were enhanced.

In short, formal institutions are important in shaping the informal flows of interaction, and vice versa. This finding also sustains central arguments in neofunctionalist integration theory. Spill-over has active agents advancing integration and alliance-building.

Constraints

Tracing and analysing constraints, I introduced the notions of *ideological dimensions* and *arena shifts* between European and domestic arenas of party politics. I thereby showed how ideological differences as well as perceived differences between the policy stands of an individual party and those of a European partner pose *problems of congruence*. This could dilute the *identity* both of a political party and of an ideological movement as such, thereby creating a *credibility dilemma*.

The ideological dimensions were divided into the classic left-right *socioeconomic dimension*, the *religious dimension* and the *European dimension*.

With their trade union wings and working class support, Christian Democrats considered the British Conservatives as right-wing and feared that a link to them might diminish voters' identification with Christian

Democrat parties. This might lose them votes. The persistent and strong arguments against such a link must be seen in the light of historical social cleavages. The word Conservative had unfortunate right-wing connotations in much of Europe. Thus, left-right analysis still has value when studying also party alliances on a transnational basis. At the same time, there are indications that EPP member parties have come increasingly closer to each other and to Conservatives over the socioeconomic dimension in recent years.

The religious dimension was raised by Christian Democrats, committed to the EPP's ideological pillar on a Christian vision of man and the concepts of society derived therefrom. However, with the possible exception of the Dutch CDA, this dimension was less important than the socioeconomic as a constraint on transnational party alliances between European Conservatism and Christian Democracy. In the interviews and documents it did not come to the fore to the same extent as arguments related to the socioeconomic dimension or the European dimension.

The European fault line between supranational integration and national sovereignty was important insofar as the identity of European Christian Democracy is pro-federalist. The second ideological pillar in the EPP's statutes actually called for a United States of Europe. An association with the Tories, as a party widely seen as Euro-sceptical, risked diluting this pro-European identity.

For the Irish EPP member, also the national issue, or dimension, contributed to its objections to an alliance with the Tories. It was mainly for this reason that the Irish FG tended to see the matter of an alliance in an Anglo-Irish context.

The extent to which party rivals can exploit transnational party alliances depends on factors such as political culture, coalition politics and the ideological distance between individual parties. Where the socioeconomic dimension is salient, Socialist, or Social Democrat, parties could be tempted to exploit links between Christian Democrat and Conservative parties to win over working-class voters. Where the religious dimension is salient, more confessional parties, where such exist, notably in the Netherlands, could be equally tempted to exploit the association with Conservative parties insofar as these are seen as secular, materialist and individualist.

The identity and integrity of the British Conservative Party with regard to the socioeconomic and European dimensions in particular, limited its

freedom of action when building alliances with Christian Democrat parties. Especially the free-market and Euro-sceptic wing of the party was at odds with the social-market and Euro-federalist orientation of the EPP and its member parties. Such differences implied that there was a real problem of congruence, serving to impede the evolution of the alliance.

The leadership of the British Conservative Party were ensnared in a web of constraints, which emanated from broader political arenas. These constraints limited what they were able or likely to do, thereby affecting party behaviour. Dissidents in the internal arena, notably the parliamentary party, provided a constraint, as did party competition in the electoral arena. Against the background of electoral politics and domestic party competition, a political party will contemplate defection from policies within a transnational alliance where these are incongruent with those advocated in its own programme.

The EPP link provoked infighting in the internal arena, with the Euro-sceptics undermining the link along with the nationalist press, and animosity in the electoral arena, with the opposition parties moving to embarrass the Tories over their alliance with federalist-minded Christian Democrats. Indeed, the EPP favoured policies, notably the Social Chapter, which the Tories, playing the patriotism card, attacked the opposition parties for being in favour. This took the edge off claims that only the Tories could be trusted to defend British interests.

This was a perfect example of conflictual pressure arising from different arenas. As a governing party, the Tories were further constrained by the nature of party government. Participation in transnational party alliances further complicates the problem of congruence for a governing party and provides another dimension to the tendency for party-political games to be *nested* one inside another. In short, the formation and evolution of transnational party alliances should also be explained with reference to the dynamics of party government, along with ideological dimensions and arena shifts between the European and domestic arenas of party politics.

Facing multiple loyalties and foci of representation, with the European arenas adding to the domestic arenas of party politics, a political party could thus suffer a severe *autonomy dilemma*. Whereas the European arenas add communication channels and thus resources, strengthening a party's *capacity for action*, they could limit a party's *freedom of action* by adding new commitments.

Given the adversarial style of Westminster politics, British political parties are perhaps more constrained than parties elsewhere when engaged in transnational alliance-building. Compared to other European democracies more generally, the British political culture is less coalition-reliant and less consensus-oriented. The nature of government formation makes for a crucial difference between the experience of British Conservatives and Continental Christian Democrats. In short, political culture and political institutions, such as the electoral system, impose constraints on transnational party alliances by reinforcing the congruence problems following from arena shifts.

Such differences in style and political culture have resulted in a limitation of the freedom of action. This also applies to the Tory MEPs vis-à-vis the party back home. And the British Conservative Party has avoided supranational commitments for itself as well as for Britain as a nation. Just as the Tories were keen to stress autonomy and oppose majority voting in talks concerning an anti-Socialist alliance in the 1970s so as not to undermine the authority of the party leader, so has the party in recent years been distanced from the EPP.

Suffering constraints because of the incongruities between what the ideologies and policies which British Conservatism and Continental Christian Democracy stood for, there was no real choice for the leadership of the British Conservative Party other than to disassociate the party from the EPP. This indicates that the domestic arenas of party politics have primacy over the European arenas and that party leaders — having to satisfy domestic constituencies and thereby play *two-level*, or *multi-level*, games — are *sovereignty-restrained* when building transnational party alliances.

Anyway, I conclude that it is rare for any political party that engages in transnational activity to be entirely sovereignty-free, not least where it also suffers constraints from the nature of party government. Crucially, party leaders and heads of governments are accountable to domestic electorates. This is a central factor serving to impede processes of alliance-building among political parties — essentially nation-bound institutions — across the national borders of EU member states.

As was assumed initially, there are fundamental constraints on transnational party alliances precisely because such alliances are sets of national political parties, which have their roots at the domestic level of politics. This is where their identities are principally determined. Once

again, it is stressed that the European arenas must be related to the domestic arenas of party politics if we are to fully understand the phenomenon of transnational alliance-building among political parties in general and the processes of *rapprochement* between Conservatives and Christian Democrats.

In sum, the study has shown that the strength and intensity of relevant constraints on such alliances must be traced at the domestic level. Both the Tories' problems with their EPP link and the opposition to the alliance in Christian Democrat quarters attest to the need for *domestic politics* approaches. In the past, studies on transnational party co-operation have focused too heavily on the horizontal interactions, while not paying sufficient attention to the vertical dimension linking the European level to the domestic level. These levels must be linked to each other because when the activities of political parties cross state borders, their representatives are not suddenly transformed into free-floating elites. They remain constrained by factors emanating from the domestic arenas of party politics.

Opportunities Outweighing Constraints?

A number of constraints have thus impeded both the formation and the evolution of the alliance. It should be recalled that the negotiations on the alliance in question took almost three years and a successful outcome of the historical processes was by no means inevitable. Nevertheless, this alliance, however hard-won, actually came into effect and was renewed when subject to a review. In the final analysis, it can therefore be concluded that the historic opportunities were perceived, by party elites, to outweigh the constraints, however intense and of varying importance for different parties.

I would like to argue that the institutional changes must be deemed the most important factors for the causal mechanisms behind transnational party alliances. My point is that since there are mechanisms at work which promote transnational alliance-building, analyses that ignore them will understate the prospects for transnational party alliances and perhaps also for European party formation and the further developments of the embryonic party system at the European level.

Weighing the costs and rewards of a transnational party alliance, de-

cision-makers seized the opportunities for the formation of such an alliance. Building a consensus around the momentum the process had developed, the alliance promoters time and again made those involved aware of the opportunities and stressed the powerful motives, motive powers, to convince the more reluctant partners. Of the EPP member parties, the German CDU/CSU acted as the key promoters of such an alliance, and the EPP leadership went along with the Germans. Eventually, attitudes converged also at the level of the EPP Conference of Party Leaders and Heads of Governments, opening a political window of opportunity.

The degree of consensus in favour of an alliance among politicians at the top level was significant. It provides supporting evidence to central arguments in the neofunctionalist approach to political integration. Top politicians are aware of their personal contacts, which could create a better understanding and thus mitigate intergovernmental relations. Indeed, processes of informal integration and transnational alliance-building among political parties, opening up alternative channels to the conventional diplomatic, tend to involve politicians who know each other well, having established contacts through non-governmental youth organisations (NGYOs) or party international non-governmental organisations (PINGOs). Based on long-standing contacts, these people approach each other in an atmosphere of mutual trust and corporate identity. Once stressed by transnationalists and neofunctionalists, more attention should again be paid to such processes of transnational socialisation, establishing trust as a crucial element in alliance-building. Regarding the alliance selected for analysis in this study, mutual trust between key persons helped the alliance promoters to bring home the momentum that the process had developed.

It is equally significant that both the British Conservatives and Christian Democrats decided to remain in the alliance. This suggests that it was internalised in the sense that its existence was not generally questioned by those making up the alliance, with some exceptions. After the 1994 European elections some members remained against it, notably Belgian, Dutch and Italian Christian Democrats, but this was mainly because of internal consumption. Suffering constraints rooted in domestic arenas, they had to signal reluctance. The same happened when the EPP decided to take on board the Nordic Conservative parties.

Whatever the costs in terms of a dilution of Christian Democratic

identity, the historical processes at work predicted that the EPP will remain open to Conservatives. In this, a pattern has been established in European party politics along the lines of the “bits and pieces of evidence” analysed and brought together in this study. This historical development promised far-reaching consequences for the party-political landscape in the EP as well as for the nascent European parties. It could also have implications for domestic party system change, not least where Christian Democrat and Conservative parties exist side by side as in the Nordic and the Central and Eastern European countries.

In addition to the situation in the EP, the transnational organisational convergence between European Conservatism and Christian Democracy applies to PINGOs as well as NGYOs, involving future decision-makers and alliance-builders. To what extent this organisational convergence will result in an ideological convergence between European Conservatism and Christian Democracy must, however, remain a matter for future analysis.

ANNEX ONE

Membership of the European People's Party (as of 1 March 1997)

Full Member Parties

Austria:	Österreichische Volkspartei	(ÖVP)
Belgium:	Christelijke Volkspartij	(CVP)
	Parti Social Chrétien	(PSC)
Denmark:	Det Konservative Folkeparti	(KF)
Finland:	Kansallinen Kokoomus	(KOK)
France:	Force Démocrate*	(FD)
Germany:	Christlich Demokratische Union	(CDU)
	Christlich Soziale Union	(CSU)
Greece:	Nea Demokratia	(ND)
Ireland:	Fine Gael	(FG)
Italy:	Centro Cristiano Democratico	(CCD)
	Cristiani Democratici Uniti	(CDU)
	Partito Popolare Italiano	(PPI)
Luxembourg:	Christlich-Soziale Volkspartei	(CSV)
Netherlands:	Christen Democratisch Appèl	(CDA)
Portugal:	Partido Social Democrata	(PSD)
Spain:	Partido Popular	(PP)
	Partido Nacionalista Vasco	(PNV)
	Unió Democrática de Catalunya	(UDC)
Sweden:	Kristdemokratiska Partiet**	(Kd)
	Moderata Samlingspartiet	(M)

* Former Centre des Démocrates Sociaux/CDS

** Former Kristdemokratiska Samhällspartiet/KdS

Associate Members

Cyprus:	Democratic Rally of Cyprus	(DR)
Malta:	Partit Nazzjonalista	(PN)
Norway:	Høyre	(H)
Switzerland:	Christlich-Demokratische Volkspartei	(CVP)

Observers

Czech Republic:	Křestanská a Demokratická Unie- Ceskoslovenska Strana Lidová Obcanska Demokratická Aliance	(KDU-CSL) (ODA)
Italy:	Südtiroler Volkspartei	(SVP)
Lithuania:	Lietuvos Krikscioniu Demokratu Partija	(LKDP)
Romania:	Partidul National Taranesc, crestind i democrat	(PNT-cd)
Slovakia:	Křestansko-demokratické Hnutie	(KDH)
Slovenia:	Slovenski Křcanski Demokrati	(SKD)
Switzerland:	Evangelische Volkspartei	(EVP)

ANNEX TWO

Membership of the Group of the European People's Party (as of 1 March 1997, number of seats in brackets)

Austria:	Österreichische Volkspartei/ÖVP (7)
Belgium:	Christelijke Volkspartij/CVP (4) Christlich Soziale Partei/CSP (1) Parti Social Chrétien/PSC (2)
Denmark:	Det Konservative Folkeparti/KF (3)
Finland:	Kansallinen Kokoomus/KOK (4)
France:	Force Démocrate/FD (5) Parti Populaire Démocratique Français/PPDF (1) Parti Républicain/PR (4) Union pour la Démocratie Française/UDF (2)
Germany:	Christlich Demokratische Union/CDU (39) Christlich Soziale Union/CSU (8)
Greece:	Nea Demokratia/ND (9)
Ireland:	Fine Gael/FG (4)
Italy:	Centro Cristiano Democratico/CCD (3) Cristiani Democratici Uniti/CDU (1) Partito Popolare Italiano/PPI (7) Patto Segni/PS (3) Südtiroler Volkspartei/SVP (1)
Luxembourg:	Christlich-Soziale Volkspartei/CSV (2)
Netherlands:	Christen Democratisch Appèl/CDA (9)
Portugal:	Partido Social Democrata/PSD (9)
Spain:	Partido Popular/PP (28) Partido Nacionalista Vasco/PNV (1) Unió Democràtica de Catalunya/UDC (1)
Sweden:	Moderata Samlingspartiet/M (5)
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