

CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

IAN RICHARDSON

**The dynamics of third dimensional power in
determining a pre-orientation to policymaking: an
exploratory study of transnational elite interactions in the
post-Cold War period**

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Supervisor: Professor Andrew Kakabadse

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary political setting, the emergence of transnationalism represents a significant challenge to traditional state-centred depictions of international relations and raises many questions concerning its purpose, legitimacy and effects. This study is concerned with one aspect of the transnational debate: the dynamics of power that drive consensus formation within informal, and collaborative, elite transnational networks.

Situated in debates related to international relations, political economy, policy science, political sociology and social network theory, this study identifies the role played by transnational elites in articulating, as well as interpreting, structural determinants of policy. In short, transnational elite interactions are responsible, often unconsciously, for the legitimisation of pervasive social constructs within the wider elite community. The process of legitimisation within such settings is highly contested and, as a consequence, power relations are critical to our understanding of eventual consensus.

Utilising Steven Lukes's (1974) third dimensional form of power, this study considers the discrete mechanisms of preference formation at play within transnational elite networks. Exploring processes of socialisation, acculturation, familiarisation and fraternisation within such communities, the complex, and highly personal, demands of elite membership are revealed. The study suggests that these demands have a considerable bearing upon the nature and substance of consensus formation activity within elite networks. It also makes clear, however, that any resulting consensus is far from absolute and highly idiosyncratic.

This qualitative study is the first of its kind concerned with the interactions of transnational elites. It reports the findings of interviews conducted with sixteen members of the Atlantic transnational network – arguably the most powerful and interconnected of all transnational networks. In presenting an analysis of the first-hand accounts of these individuals, and exploring the dynamics of power within such a context, this study represents an original contribution to knowledge in the field.

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“There is really no reason for supposing that the powerful
always threaten, rather than sometimes advance, the interests
of others; sometimes, indeed, the use of power can benefit all,
albeit usually unequally”

(Steven Lukes, 2005a)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary political setting, the emergence of transnationalism represents a significant challenge to traditional state-centred depictions of international relations. The absence of a global regulatory framework, and the persistent failure of collective action initiatives to transcend protectionist agendas in international politics, has seen the gradual emergence of many informal, multi-stakeholder, transnational networks. While the notion of a policy elite is nothing new (see Hunter, 1969; Mills, 1956), the development of these transnational policy networks, comprised primarily of elite representatives from the worlds of business, finance and politics, has received scant scholarly attention. Recent journalistic coverage (see Rothkopf, 2008) has ignited popular interest in the subject but, whether social scientists can overcome a collective reticence to entertain ideas of a global elite or ruling class (Sklair, 2001), remains to be seen. It is hoped that this study of the dynamics of power within elite transnational networks during the post-Cold War period will prompt others to recognise the significance and importance of further scholarly inquiry in this area.

This chapter outlines the rationale for a study of the dynamics of power in the elite transnational setting and details the research context, objectives and methodology. It also describes the key findings and contribution of the study before presenting an overview of the chapters.

1.1 Research rationale

Broadly speaking, there are two components to the research rationale for this study: a personal perspective; and a literature perspective. Each has played a significant role in defining the eventual form of the research.

1.1.1 A personal perspective

I came to the PhD process after spending several years as a senior executive in the European media and internet sectors. Although it was clear to me that something was

driving my interest in the development of regulation in the area of digital media, it took some time for me to recognise, and articulate, the underlying emancipatory aspects of my interest. The seeds of this interest emerged from having worked in a truly transformational industry during its most expansive period of growth. For many people involved in the “internet revolution” during this period of the mid-1990s, anything seemed possible. For me, the internet promised to transform many traditional relationships and, chief among them, the relationship that existed between government and citizen. In a remarkably short period of time, however, this promise became little more than a rhetorical device for the preservation of existing relationships and processes. Moreover, the shape and tenor of regulation related to the internet began to reflect the interests of those who stood most to lose from any such transformation.

Although my first degree was in the subject of government, I would never have been described by those who knew me as a political radical. And, after many successful years in the media sector, and the completion of a Cranfield MBA, it’s fair to suggest that my political views were reasonably benign. It was interesting, therefore, that my experiences of the internet sector acted as a catalyst for an interest in the political dimensions of change in society. In academic terms, what began as an investigation into the public policy relationship that exists between business and state in the digital information sector quickly broadened into a macro level interest in the structural interdependency that exists between politics and markets in liberal democracies. In specific terms, I began to concern myself with the question of how objectives are defined by collaborative elites for the purposes of public policy intervention.

1.1.2 Literature perspective

The rationale for this study also emerged out of an iterative process of discovery related to the development and understanding of philosophical perspective and the identification of significant theoretical questions in the multi-disciplinary literature domain. The emergence of a literature gap was implicitly related to my increased understanding of ontological perspectives and, in particular, that of social constructionism (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Indeed, it is fair to suggest that without

such a philosophical approach it would have been difficult to conceive of the research opportunity. It has enabled an understanding of profound conceptual challenges within, and between, a number of literature domains.

In the policy sciences field there are significant theoretical issues related to questions of policy initiation and change. Understanding of the origins of public policy within the domain have evolved over the past fifty years from decisional and system based heuristic devices (Lasswell, 1956; Easton, 1957) through structural (Hofferbert, 1974; Simeon, 1976) and institutional depictions (Kiser & Ostrom, 1982; Immergut, 1998) and, most recently, into post-structural descriptions of issue definition and causes of change (Kingdon, 1984; Fischer & Forester, 1993; Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). The latter have been complimented by a considerable amount of interest in policy agendas and the question of how issues are framed prior to processes of policy formation and change.

As with systems theory contributions elsewhere, however, system based transformational change is viewed as practically inconceivable by policy theorists. A longstanding tradition, within the field, of viewing policy change as inherently incremental (see Lindblom, 1959) has, to an extent, continued to influence the work of post-structuralists (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). While there is significant empirical support for this contention, it has resulted in a belief that structural determinants, while exposing the policy system to a broader set of influences, are largely irrelevant to a consideration of day-to-day policy processes. As Sabatier (1993:20) suggests, the scope of broader system determinants overwhelmingly “discourages actors from making them the object of strategising behaviour”. For post-structuralists, policy change has little to do with exogenous structural forces; it is brought about when system based definitions of political problems fall out of kilter with environmental demands (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993) or when one advocacy coalition replaces another as the dominant referential within the system (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993).

These theories of initiation and change within the policy sciences domain are invariably linked to conceptions of pluralism in liberal democracies. Such systems, frequently characterised as being in a state of equilibrium, exhibit an inherent resistance to change and a set of policy processes that are bound by incrementalism, checks and balances, and a host of incoherent relationships and conflicting demands that, at times, defy both logic and explanation. Against this backdrop, the market functions within a largely predictable regulatory framework, content, where able, to influence the direction and detail of government policy. The extent of this ability, however, is governed by factors that serve to protect the overall stability and integrity of existing socio-economic arrangements. The structural interdependency of politics and markets in liberal democratic societies has, for some time, been the subject of intense theoretical debate in the field of political economy (Lindblom, 1977).

With the development of the neo-liberal globalisation agenda, the state's traditional boundaries have come under attack from the politics of market organisation (White, 1993) and, as a consequence, politics is increasingly market driven (Leys, 2003). This interrelationship of economic and political activity is, more than ever, critical to a consideration of social mechanisms and systems. In all accounts of the liberal democratic model, it is clear that the notion of separated spheres of economic and political activity is, by and large, discounted. The resulting mode of governance, characterised by incrementalism, ensures that the interests of the market are protected from demands for more transformational forms of change.

In recent years, multi-stakeholder collaboration has emerged as a pragmatic response to complex societal problems and, in many spheres of contemporary politics, has succeeded in displacing traditional forms of hierarchic governance (Clarence & Painter, 1998; Kooiman, 1999; Midttun, 1999). An unusual aspect of the discourse related to inter-organisational relationships is that it tends to emphasise the functional aspects of multi-stakeholder collaboration (Hazen, 1994) and reflects a general preoccupation with process, rather than governance, outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This concentration on process overlooks the socio-political dynamics that drive the nature of collaboration and its outputs. The significance of underlying power relations (Hardy & Phillips,

1998), and an acknowledgement of such factors as leadership (Ozawa, 1993; Huxham & Vangen, 2000), are essential to a broader appreciation of collaboration. In political terms, multi-stakeholder collaboration is very much a product of the pervasiveness of neo-liberal conceptions of the role and limitations of government in modern society. Proponents of collaborative “ideology” see it as providing support and legitimacy for consensual processes and relationships that are already an embedded feature of policy related activity within, and between, liberal democracies.

The theoretical origins of consensus, as a basis for political action, appear, once again, to stem from pragmatic and pluralistic conceptions of the role of the state in mediating a plurality of interests in society. Community power debates of the 1950s and 1960s between elite theorists (Hunter, 1969; Mills, 1956) and pluralists (Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1963) were, ultimately, inconclusive but even ardent pluralists were moved, by the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, to concede that certain groups in society could be seen to hold disproportionate levels of power (McFarland, 1987).

C. Wright Mills’ (1956) seminal work, *The Power Elite*, described how US national politics had become dominated by a concentrated power elite and, importantly, stressed the degree of elite homogeneity that underpinned coordinated action within the elite group. The significance of wealth and social status were emphasised as was the importance of socialisation and conformity within elite circles. More recently, Stone (1989a) has argued that, out of mutual interest and interdependency, economic and political elites form “coalitions” or “regimes”. This depiction is distinct from earlier power elite contributions in so far as it less concerned with who makes decisions than how elites influence political priorities. The emphasis on the shape and tenor of political agendas, rather than the detail of specific policies, is a defining feature, therefore, of elite interactions.

Theoretically distinct from earlier descriptions of the definition of issues (Blumer, 1971), their attendant causal stories (Stone, 1989b) and “world views” (Surel, 2000); the formation of consensus between elites is a product of a purposeful and contested dialogue. It concerns the social legitimisation of consensual constructs that underpin the

very foundations of subsequent public policy discourse. By applying Steve Lukes's (1974) conception of third dimensional power to a system wide depiction of calls for transformational change, one function of elite interactions and consensus formation activity becomes clear. It represents a mechanism for unlocking or reinforcing structural resistances to more dynamic forms of change. This capacity for transformational change in political or societal terms, is only made possible at the structural level. In order to unlock this capacity, structural determinants must be reinterpreted, redefined and reinforced in order to influence the normative predisposition of policymakers. Moreover, these structural articulations must be transmitted throughout society in order that policymakers retain essential legitimacy.

1.2 Research context

Since the context for elite consensus formation will likely have a significant bearing upon the distinction between processes that are considered to be internal and external to the formal policy design process, it is important that the focus of this study provide a clear example of elite interactions that are, at once, separate from day-to-day policy activities and are, yet, capable of influencing the shape and tenor of widely-held assumptions that bear down upon them. It is also important to explain how the dynamics of power related to such elite interactions result in the formation of a consensus that has wider relevancy and legitimacy.

An obvious example of multi-stakeholder elite interactions, in the contemporary political setting, is that provided by informal transnational policy networks. While international cooperation and conflict between states has traditionally been the focus of studies in international relations, transnational political activity transcends the formal boundaries of national sovereignty and incorporates a much wider, and collaborative, policy community. Indeed, some have argued that these networks not only represent non-state interests, and the needs of capital in particular, but they were created precisely for this reason (Van Der Pijl, 1998). Notwithstanding debates related to the purpose of elite interactions in the transnational setting, there is little dispute that the members of a vast array of interconnected groups, forums and networks represent a transnational

policy community whose ranks are drawn from the most senior levels of government, finance, business, media, academia, and policy research institutes.

The role played by globalisation, and transnational corporations, in the development of this elite transnational network is widely acknowledged but very little data exists to support the suggestion of a homogenous international business community or transnational class. One obvious exception exists in the analysis of interlocking directorates at the national (Useem, 1984; Scott, 1997; Domhoff, 2002; Murray, 2006) and international levels (Fennema, 1982; Carroll & Fennema, 2002); but a shortcoming of such empirical work is the singular focus on corporate interlocks as evidence of class homogeneity (Carroll & Fennema, 2002). The incorporation, in subsequent analysis, of informal elite planning groups, has led to the belief that a global corporate elite has, indeed, formed and that a “few dozen cosmopolitans” bind the corporate-policy network together (Carroll & Carson, 2003:97). This view of the elite network suggests an instrumental depiction of a transnational elite superstructure responsible for coordination and communication of prevailing hegemonic culture, namely, economic neo-liberalism. A dependence upon quantitative analysis of interlocks, rather than evidence related to the qualitative substance of elite interactions, has resulted in a rather two dimensional representation of such activity. This is a considerable weakness in the current literature.

Likewise, the general paucity of data available on specific transnational groups and networks represents a significant scholarly oversight. When one considers the elite composition of such groups, and the fact that they are credited with considerable geopolitical influence, this omission is astounding. An analysis of mainly archival and historical material provides an insight into the most preeminent and influential of such networks from the Second World War, and through to the end of the Cold War; but there has been no qualitative scholarly assessment of the role of these groups and networks in the post-Cold War period.

Equally, there appears to be no empirical material related to the dynamics of power within transnational policy networks. Aside from obvious empirical challenges, one

explanation might rest with the perception that such contexts lack conflict. As Steven Lukes (1974:23) observes, however, “the most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place”. In other words, a lack of conflict, and the appearance of consensus, does not equal the absence of power relations. Those subject to power can be manipulated or socialised into a false appreciation of their real interests, and thereby act against them, while, at the same time, believing that they are acting according to their preferences (Young, 1978). Exploring the dynamics of power within elite transnational interactions can provide a substantial insight into underlying processes of consensus formation in such settings. In particular, discrete processes of elite communication, socialisation, acculturation and fraternisation are central to any understanding of consensus within such arenas.

This study is, therefore, concerned with the dynamics of power within transnational elite consensus formation processes during the post-Cold War period. To this end, it utilises Steven Lukes’s (1974) conception of “third dimensional power” to more fully understand the implications of power dynamics within such settings. Lukes’s (1974) depiction of how desires and beliefs are shaped in given contexts, by discrete mechanisms of power, provides a radical conceptual mechanism for exploring the question of whether, and how, the preferences of elite participants have been influenced without their knowledge.

1.3 Research objectives and question

In simple terms, this research aims to explore the role of discrete third dimensional power mechanisms in determining consensual and legitimate policy orientations among the transnational policy elite. By focussing on the post-Cold War period, the study recognises that traditional alliances in international relations, based primarily on issues of security and ideology, have given way to a more fluid period of international cooperation during which consensus has emerged as a key requirement of political action. This study considers the veracity of the consensus formation label, the meaningful nature of transnational elite collaboration, the purposeful extent of such activity and, finally, processes of communication, socialisation, acculturation and

fraternisation within such communities. The pivotal focus for the study is the question of how discrete power relations have shaped transnational elite thinking related to political problems and acceptable public policy responses in the post-Cold War period.

The study is exploratory in nature and aims to provide insights into the significant questions of “why” and “how” the dynamics of power in elite interactions are central to our understanding of consensus within such communities.

1.4 Research methodology

This study explores the accounts of elite participants related to networked interactions in the transnational setting. Given the fundamental nature of consensus formation, a social constructionist ontological perspective is employed with an interpretivist epistemology. A qualitative methodology is considered to be the most appropriate and effective means of addressing the objectives of the research. While multiple data collection methods are utilised, the principle mechanism is that of elite interviewing. An inductive, thematic, discourse analysis is adopted and theory is tentatively developed.

1.5 Findings

There are a number of key findings to the study.

Mirroring constructivist depictions of international relations activity, transnational elite interactions represent a contested process for the legitimacy of paradigmatic constructs within such settings. An understanding, therefore, of power relations within elite transnational networks is critical to any understanding of consensus and legitimacy as a basis for action. Importantly, consensus formation is a misleading description of the purpose of elite networked interactions although it might broadly be applied to the momentum and consequence of such activity. It remains unclear what the overriding motivation for elite interactions actually is but this study suggests that self interest is as pivotal to an understanding of such activity as any sense of civic mindedness.

The evidence of this study also suggests that multi-stakeholder collaboration in elite transnational networks is essentially characterised by the relationship of business and political elites. Participants who are not explicitly from the fields of business and politics exist, for the most part, at the periphery of the network and, it is suggested, do not enjoy equal standing within it. The existence of an “old boy” network, within the transnational elite, plays a significant role in the organisation and orientation of certain elite networks. This inner-core group is disproportionately powerful within the network and has, consciously or otherwise, considerable influence on peripheral and aspirant members. Transnational elite networks represent institutionalised arrangements against which entrants must successfully navigate the social and personal requirements of group membership.

Finally, despite the boundary spanning activity of key interlockers, transnational elite networks remain firmly regional, rather than truly global, entities. The discourse of the regional network is biased at source and, through the conscious or unconscious activity of its members, has the effect of amplifying its biases. The successful application of Lukes’s (1974) third dimensional power finds that elite processes of communication, socialisation, acculturation and fraternisation within such settings, play a sizable role in the perpetuation of group logic and the development of a peculiar brand of legitimacy. This process is largely unconscious and its effects are both highly idiosyncratic and far from absolute.

1.6 Contribution

Broadly speaking, there are a number of key contributions to knowledge represented by this study.

In terms of theory, the research represents an original contribution to our understanding of the purpose and possible implications of elite interactions in the transnational setting. It is the first to qualitatively analyse the purpose, and effects, of transnational elite interactions in the post-Cold War period and suggests that such interactions are significantly more nuanced and idiosyncratic than suggested elsewhere. It extends our

understanding of processes of social construction to the largely uncharted territory of transnational elite networks and, in so doing, presents a conceptual model of the social construction of legitimacy, as a basis for action, in transnational politics. And, crucially, it highlights the socio-political dimensions of social construction within such settings.

The study also extends interest of policy elites beyond consideration of local and national politics and into the domain of transnational politics. In so doing, it provides an original theoretical contribution to consideration of the structural dynamics of pre-policy formation activity. In challenging essentially reactive portrayals of issue definition and policy initiation in the policy sciences literature, the study suggests that the structural determinants of policy discourse are not as ethereal as previously imagined. Instead, they are within the grasp of a coordinated policy elite.

In methodological terms, the study represents the first application of Lukes's (1974) theoretical lens within the context of an elite setting and, in so doing, extends our understanding of the value of such an approach to an interpretation of complex processes of consensus formation and legitimacy building within such environments. It should also be noted that the application of a qualitative, and interpretive, methodology is, in itself, a contribution to an otherwise quantitative empirical understanding of elite interactions and networks in the post-Cold War transnational arena.

Finally, a key contribution to policy practice is the highlighting of influences related to normative policy prescriptions embedded in the underlying worldview of policymakers. These prescriptions are not the product of institutional influences; rather they are constituted through an appreciation of more ethereal forms of common sense. The relationship between this common sense and policymaker preference is critical to any understanding of choice within policy settings. This study suggests that policymakers should consider how their preferences are shaped by such common sense and, as a consequence, whether their preferences are ultimately aligned with their interests.

1.7 Summary of chapters

The thesis is presented in six chapters. This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the rationale and context for the research as well as outlining the objectives, methodology, findings and contribution. The following provides a brief summary of the remaining chapters.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature and is divided into four thematic sections. The first, *theoretical perspectives on policy initiation and change*, reviews contributions from the policy sciences field and identifies profound conceptual questions concerning the origins of public policy, the boundaries of the policy process and the mechanics of transformational change. The second, *politics and markets*, describes the interdependency of business and politics in liberal democracies and considers the consequences of this relationship for public policy and governance. The third section, *the transnational power elite*, situates transnational elite networks within a tradition of community power debates and against a broader scale depiction of transnational policy processes. Finally, *power relations* reviews power debates and considers the application of Steven Lukes's (1974) "third dimensional power" to an understanding of elite interactions.

The chapter ends with a discussion of the research opportunity, an outline of its objectives and, finally, the research question is introduced.

Chapter 3 presents the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research and the rationale for a qualitative study of elite interactions. Furthermore, it details the data collection and analysis methods adopted for the study.

Chapter 4 describes the findings of the research and presents them in five interrelated thematic categories: the structural context of elite interactions in the transnational setting; collaboration in the transnational arena; transnational networks and networking; consensus formation and the narrowing of differences; and hierarchies of influence.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the research and presents a conceptual model of the social construction of legitimacy as a basis for action in transnational politics. Of particular interest are the bi-directional and mutually constitutive arrangements that cement the process of social construction within the transnational elite context. The complex, and highly dynamic, nature of consensus formation activity within this setting reveals a fundamental relationship between structure and articulation with elite contexts.

Chapter 6 presents the contribution to knowledge represented by the study and outlines the limitations of the research. Opportunities for future research are described and, finally, a short postscript details personal reflections on the PhD process.

1.8 Introduction summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the rationale and contextual setting for the study as well as having briefly outlined the research objectives, methodology, findings and contribution. Although it was designed to provide an abridged appreciation of the study, the more extensive review of literature presented in Chapter 2 will provide a greater understanding of the contextual setting for the research.

2.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In exploring the dynamics and consequences of power relations within elite transnational communities, it is essential to recognise the multi-disciplinary nature of the subject. It encompasses literature domains as diverse as policy science, political sociology, political economy, international relations, public administration, social psychology and organisational theory. Moreover, the field is explicitly normative which means that philosophical predisposition, personal motivation and values are inextricably entwined with the creation and interpretation of knowledge within the domain; to deny this would be both futile and misleading. The key challenge, therefore, given the breadth of possible contributions and an acknowledgment of the role of such influences, is to establish credible boundaries for such a review.

The most obvious difficulty is that the boundaries of the field exist in a contested form between a number of literature domains. This means that a straightforward review of pre-existing and well defined supportive constructs has not always been possible. In the case of the policy process literature, for instance, the review set out to understand conceptions of the policy process for the purposes of understanding the role of elite interactions within it. It became clear, however, that the role conceived in this study existed largely outside the discussion related to formal policy processes; instead, it was situated within a broader theoretical debate with significant touch points in the areas of policy initiation and transformational change. It is only through an understanding of debates within the policy process literature, however, that this discovery, and the theoretical foundations of the research, is made possible.

Throughout the development of the study, decisions have had to be made concerning the overall scope and direction of the research which has meant that literature within certain domains has received more attention than others. These decisions, which are largely functional but undeniably subjective, leave the study vulnerable to criticism. In the final

analysis, however, the argument outlined in this chapter provides an appropriate and substantive platform for consideration of the research question.

2.1.1 Chapter overview

The chapter is divided into four thematic sections: theoretical perspectives on policy initiation and change; politics and markets; the transnational power elite; and power relations.

Theoretical perspectives on policy initiation and change reviews debates within the policy process literature, a substantial multi-disciplinary domain in its own right. Within the field, responses to the question of how public policy is initiated have evolved in recent years from explanations rooted in notions of objective identification and rational decision making to post-positivist explorations of how we define issues for the purposes of policy intervention. The latter have been accompanied by a wealth of interest in policy agendas and, specifically, the inter-subjective manner in which problems are framed prior to the more formal processes of policy formation and change. This interest is, in turn, related to notions of power and, more fundamentally, the ongoing academic debate concerning structure and agency in political decision making. This summary of debates within the field highlights the existence of profound conceptual questions concerning the origins of public policy, the boundaries, physical or otherwise, of the policy process and the mechanics of transformational change within such systems. These questions are of particular relevance since elite consensus formation activity might best be viewed as operating between the realms of structural determinism, in particular, structured political economic arrangements, and conceptions of initiation in the policy process.

Next, *Politics and markets* presents a review of literature concerned with the structural interdependency that exists between politics and markets. The implications of this relationship for public policy and governance, especially within the global context, are considered. Once again, the role of elites is central to any understanding of such a relationship and the development, within liberal democracies, of a culture of

collaboration is of particular significance to the research question. The balance of state and non-state actors in matters of public policy has altered substantially in recent years - underpinning this transition, and providing much of the intellectual legitimacy for it, is the development of “collaborative ideology”.

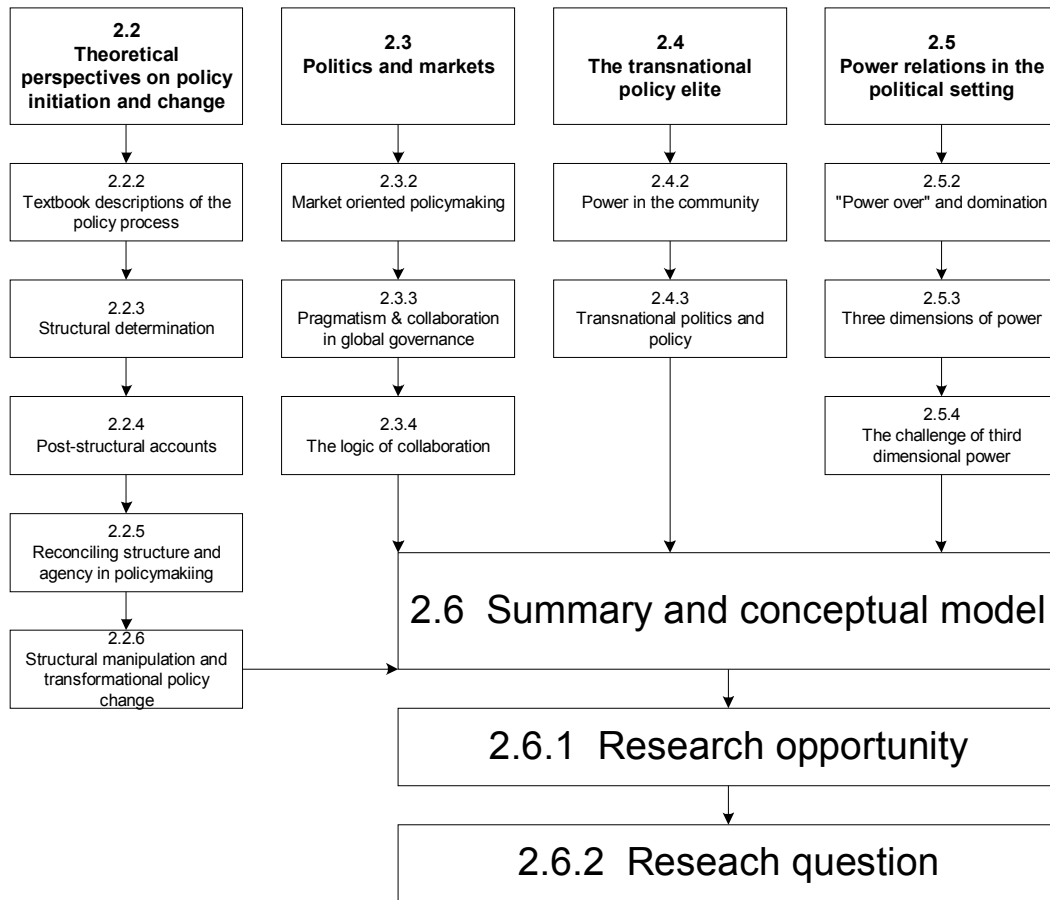
The next section, *The transnational power elite* explores traditional “community power” debates of the 1950s and 1960s and considers the emergence of a transnational policy elite. It places the development and activities of elite networks and forums within a broader scale depiction of transnational policy processes and, in doing so, reflects a growing appreciation of the need to break with state centred depictions of international relations. A review of contributions from the fields of international political economy and global systems theory provides a largely structural and instrumental account of such activity. A significant strand within this literature emphasises hegemonic influence which offers a compelling, if somewhat deterministic, account of the role of consensual forms of power. Such power has been the focus of considerable attention within the field and it offers a useful starting point for consideration of elite network interactions. A specific, but sparse, literature relating to elite networks and forums is further reviewed and provides a useful, albeit partial, account of the function of transnational policy communities. It also reveals considerable research opportunities.

Finally, *Power relations* presents a brief review of power debates within the political sociology field and, specifically, considers the application of Steven Lukes’s (1974) “third dimensional power” to an understanding of elite interactions. It surveys critiques levelled at the approach and considers Lukes’s subsequent amendments to the original framework. Despite significant issues related to the application of third dimensional power, it is argued that it provides a valuable theoretical mechanism for an understanding of power and influence within elite communities.

While these thematic categories reference dominant literature domains, they are significantly interconnected which means that some debates are explored or referenced in more than one category. In order to facilitate readability and establish a coherent interrelated critique of the literature, a narrative is established throughout the review

rather than simply placed at the end of it. A summary of this critique is presented at the end of the chapter and the research opportunity is defined. The exploratory themes of the research are outlined and the specific research question under investigation is introduced.

Figure 2.1 Structure of the literature review



Source: Compiled by the author

2.2 Theoretical perspectives on policy initiation and change

2.2.1 Introduction

Policymaking is a highly complex process. This complexity appears to provide a caveat for any argument related to part or all of the policy system. Indeed, *complex* may now be the most over used word in the field of political science (Hale, 1988). This acknowledgement, and acceptance, of complexity has led to a variety of theoretical responses that, to date, have fallen some way short of providing a comprehensive and widely agreed upon view of the policy process. Without such a model, however, there is no way of understanding how partial theoretical explanations, or aspects of the complex system, can be judged relevant (Jones, Sulkin & Larsen, 2003); moreover, “no one part (of the larger political canvas) can be fully understood, without reference to the way in which the whole itself operates” (Easton, 1957:383). As a consequence, and depending upon one’s predisposition, scholarly advances in the field might be characterised as insufficiently ambitious in the development of a systematic generalised theory (Hill, 1997) or, alternatively, as

“possessing mountain islands of theoretical structure, intermingled with, and occasionally attached together by foothills of shared methods and concepts, and empirical work, all of which is surrounded by oceans of descriptive work not attached to any mountain of theory.” (Schlager, 1997:14)

The descriptive accuracy of early models of the policy process was first called into question in the 1980s and, ever since, there has been a strong and persistent call for more sophisticated theory building in the field (Nakamura, 1987; Moe, 1990; Sabatier, 1991; Sabatier, 1999). In recent years, several new and challenging theories of the policy process have emerged that still appear to be some distance from providing a full explanation of the processes of policy formation and change (Schlager & Blomquist, 1996). This is partly a result of scope but is also a product of a recent focus in the policy sciences arena upon systematic explanation and the observation of ordered patterns. Political change that exists beyond such parameters is considered irrelevant or unnecessary to a model of political order or, alternatively, too vague to be the subject of

systematic explanation (Lieberman, 2002). Others argue that the scientific study of politics may have improved but it is non-neutral (Danziger, 1995) and frequently focused on smaller questions that have had the effect of marginalising it “from social science to say nothing of public discourse” (Petracca, 1990:567).

2.2.2 “Textbook” descriptions of the policy process

The “textbook” policy process literature (Nakamura, 1987) presents an overwhelming conception of inputs as external stimulants to the policy or political process. Within such depictions, policymaking is presented, on the whole, as distinct from the demands that are placed upon it. Part of the reason for this may lie with a longstanding theoretical distinction between political activity and public administration in the policy sciences arena (Goodnow, 1900; White, 1926; Wilson, 1941)¹. Another possible explanation rests with the apparent longevity of ideas expounded in early decision and system based depictions of the policy process. Harold Lasswell’s decision process² (Lasswell, 1956; Lasswell, 1963), for instance, which has inspired many iterations (Jones, 1970; Mack, 1971; Anderson, 1975; May & Wildavsky, 1978; Brewer & deLeon, 1983; Howlett & Ramesh, 1995; Norton, 2005), presents a lineal, staged and cumulative depiction of decision activity which takes, as its starting point, an intelligence gathering phase where those involved collect and prepare information pertinent to the decision. Critically, from the perspective of understanding how policy proposals enter the process, it provides a somewhat limited and value neutral conception depending, as it does, upon the objective identification of political problems and issues.

¹ This assumption was significantly challenged by post-war contributions (see Appleby, 1949) and, as a consequence, the “separate spheres of authority” model was effectively discounted (Svara, 1985). Interestingly, in later work, Svara (2001) suggests that the persistent view that the politics/administration dichotomy represented a meaningful conception during the 1920s and 1930s was a myth.

² Lasswell’s “decision process” informed various interpretive models including analyses of agency decision making (Boyer, 1960) and legislative activity (Polsby, 1969) before receiving its most significant adaptation when having its functionally distinct stages expressed in terms of subsystem activities (Jones, 1970). By focusing attention on the stream of policy rather than on an analysis of institutional contributors – the executive, legislative or judiciary – Lasswell provided a conceptual map that transcended the limitations or boundaries of formal administrative activities. Furthermore, the framework helped to rationalise a problem-oriented perspective which was markedly different from earlier conceptions of the process (deLeon, 1999); it enabled a highly complex process to be sub-divided into identifiable stages and provided a mechanism that, even ardent critics concede (see Sabatier, 1999), led to a considerable amount of high quality research in the 1970s and 1980s.

David Easton's (1957) model of input/output exchanges, on the other hand, presents an open policy process conceived as an extension of an overall system of influences; "analytically separated" but, fundamentally, exposed to other social systems in which it is embedded (Easton, 1966:144). Easton's analytical separation³ of the policy process sees neighbouring environmental systems such as ecology, economy, culture, and social structure as ultimately responsible for the demands placed upon the political system (Easton, 1957). Demands or "inputs", in models of this kind, are then subject to the mediating effects of system based determinants before being converted into policy outputs that are, in turn, passed back to neighbouring environmental systems (Easton, 1957; Straayer, 1971; Simmons, Davis, Chapman & Sager, 1974). Easton's conception of an open system, buttressed by neighbouring social systems, clearly delineates endogenous and exogenous system-based determinants but, ultimately, Easton's policy system defines permeable boundaries by those actions that are related to the making of binding decisions. As such, it is possible to view the policy process as encompassing any antecedent, indirect or direct influence on the eventual exchange.

2.2.3 Structural determination

Structural accounts have tended towards causal perspectives of the policy process. A process so constrained or, depending upon the viewpoint, enabled by structural context and conditioned behaviour, that the very idea of a radical policy departure seems practically inconceivable. "Funnel of causality" descriptions of the policy process, for instance, present a political setting in which the scope of policy conversion, and that of political actors, is defined, and greatly restricted, by a progression of filtered and concurrent contextual pressures. These include historic and geographic conditions, socio-economic composition, mass political activity, institutional forces and elite

³ Public policy is, therefore, the product of a combination of environmental pressure and internal system characteristics. Each system receives its inputs from neighbouring systems and, in turn, passes most of its outputs onto them (Susser, 1991). In short, the effect of all environmental conditions is mediated by the political system (Boyne, 1985) and policy choice is a collective output created by the push and pull of numerous conditions. The system itself, does not exist in any "real" or "essential" sense; it is an artificial construct with purely heuristic value (Easton, 1965). Despite the value of Easton's contribution, it has been noted that ambiguity, and a certain degree of contradiction, are a feature of Easton's protracted theory development (Astin, 1972).

behaviour (Hofferbert, 1974) as well as socio-economic conditions, power, culture⁴, ideology, institutions and activity within the decision process itself (Simeon, 1976). The approaches present a policy domain bounded by a largely inescapable set of system parameters and, in so doing, link policymaking to a much broader conception of political influences. Moreover, they provide a contextual setting for the policy process; a setting that dictates entry terms and subsequent limitations on the design and crafting of policy at each and every stage of development. In effect, structure and agency become competitive forces at opposite ends of the causality funnel. There is an acceptance of overwhelming contextual pressure but, at the same time, a degree of autonomy is granted. In both accounts, however, it is difficult to comprehend where, and more importantly why, structure ends and agency begins.

The same fundamental issue is at the heart of institutional contributions in the field and, in particular, the interplay that exists between institutional arrangements and ideational influences. Seen through the institutionalist lens, individual and collective patterns of behaviour are viewed as a direct function of a constructed set of institutional constraints and policy feedback structures (Skocpol, 1992; Immergut, 1998). Institutional arrangements serve to reinforce the development of “policy paradigms” (Hall, 1992; Hall, 1993) or “road maps” (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993), underlying normative and cognitive frameworks that determine action in the policy domain and through which policymakers view the world. These collective ideas are both social and holistic and have an inter-subjective quality that transcends individual ideas, belief systems, cognition, and psychology. Such ideas are usually embodied in symbols, discourse and the institutions themselves (Legro, 2000). Institutional socialisation is seen, therefore, as imparting the dominant institutional paradigm and, when subjected to it, individuals habitually reproduce prevalent patterns of that social context. In short, social life is

⁴ The importance of dominant or orthodox ideas on levels of social conformity is a factor that has been widely considered (Kuran, 1995). “Cultural theory”, for instance, is premised upon the notion that social structures create cultural biases that, in turn, support prevailing social structures. A typology of biases has been developed and elaborated in the field: hierarchy; egalitarianism; individualism; fatalism; and autonomy (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983; Thompson, Ellis & Wildavsky, 1990). These biases, it is argued, are the source of structural predisposition and, as such, have a significant bearing upon the policy process. Despite a guttural appeal, early studies discovered a poor relationship between cultural bias and risk perception (Sjoberg, 1996; Sjoberg, 1997; Brenot, Bonnefous & Marris, 1998) and, coupled with difficulties related to empirical testing of the theory, modified instruments have failed to provide stronger affirmation (Rippl, 2002).

viewed as fundamentally structured and, as a consequence, the choices made by individuals reflect that structure (Hays, 1994). The relationship, therefore, between institutions and ideas, and the prevalence of dominant ideational structures, is a critical one for understanding the nature of the introduction and direction of government policy. The development of a new ideational structure must take place if policymakers are to craft policies informed by it (Jenkins & Eckert, 2000). Furthermore, the role of elites is critical to any understanding of how ideational structures are adapted within such environments; after all

“governments operate within the bounds of the conventional wisdom of their elites...(and) cannot operate if policymakers stop to consider first principles.”
(Wallace, 2004:281)

An important question then, given the significance of ideational structures, relates to whether the institutional arrangements that shape policy discussions are capable of facilitating challenges to the existing ideational structure that might, in turn, lead to radical new policy departures. Kiser & Ostrom’s “three worlds of action” (1982), depicts an institutional policymaking setting with three levels of decision activity in which the institutional arrangements, or rules, of one decision making level are predetermined by the rule setting activities of the higher level – the highest being that of constitutional-choice. Institutional arrangements, in the broadest sense, are formal and informal rules

“governing the number of decision makers, allowable actions and strategies, authorised results, transformations internal to decision situations, and linkages among decision situations.” (Kiser & Ostrom, 1982:191)

Within this system, bi-directional feedback is seen as responsible for evolutionary adaptations to ongoing institutional arrangements. In order to allow for the feedback to exist, and change to take place, variances in behaviour are explained by a lack of consistency in the way that individuals interpret rules. As with earlier incremental characterisations of the policy process (Lindblom, 1959; Braybrooke & Lindblom, 1963), and subsequent attempts to reconcile explanations of incremental and

transformational change (Etzioni, 1967; Schulman, 1975), it remains difficult to understand how radical policy departures are possible within such an institutionalised, and paradigmatic, setting. After all, the closer the demand for change gets to the “hard core” values of the paradigm, the non-negotiable, inexorable, values that dictate strategy, the greater the resistance to such change from the policy system (Capano, 2003).

2.2.4 Post-structural accounts

Baumgartner and Jones (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993), recognising the characteristic resistance to change and an incremental pattern of behaviour that serves to protect the status quo of policy subsystems, examined the expansion and contraction of policy issues over time to produce the punctuated-equilibrium theory of long-term agenda change and policymaking (True, Jones & Baumgartner, 1999). In short, fundamental change requires mobilisation, and implies conflict, if entrenched positions are to be challenged. Within such a model, major policy changes, set against a backdrop of subsystem incrementalism or gradualism, are viewed as “policy punctuations”⁵. Jones et al (2003), citing Herbert Simon’s (1996) contention that the output of an efficient system should perfectly reflect information flows emanating from its environment, go on to demonstrate that, in less-than-perfect human systems, the more friction imposed by institutional and social processes in the collective decision-making situation, the more punctuated the outcome. The depiction of punctuated equilibrium presented in the model is, therefore, one of subsystem stability, prevailing over long periods of time, and eventually falling out of step with environmental influences that dictate issue definition and, consequently, subsystem arrangements. When existing subsystems are disturbed in this way, new subsystems emerge to take their place and a pattern of stability and incrementalism is established in the newly defined policy domain. The conception of environmental responsiveness and transformation presented in the model highlights the boundary spanning composition of subsystems and, importantly, suggests that dynamic political change is a product of a collective challenge to the prevailing subsystem’s

⁵ The “punctuated equilibrium” metaphor is borrowed from theoretical developments in the field of evolutionary biology.

definition of issue. A critical question, however, is where the origins of such a challenge lie.

Building on the issue-attention work of Downs (1972) and Schattschneider's (1975) theory of conflict expansion, Baumgartner & Jones (1993) present political attention, created by widespread positive enthusiasm or a heightened negative awareness, as the catalyst for the development or dissolution of a subsystem. Existing subsystems are vulnerable to criticism of policies and failure. Group mobilisation, media exposure, and the activities of policy entrepreneurs are all capable of accelerating the process of subsystem disturbance. The enthusiasm, therefore, that challenges existing subsystem arrangements, and leads to the creation of new ones, is of particular interest when considering the origins of new policy ideas⁶.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988; 1993) provides an alternative conception of subsystem politics based upon competition between advocacy coalitions. Such coalitions are comprised of stable groups of actors from public and private institutions, at every level of government, functioning across multiple interacting policy cycles. Coalition membership is seen as stable over long periods of time since members are bound together by core beliefs (Sabatier, 1988). They are ascribed a learning function, primarily concerned with environmental effects and intergovernmental interventions, in order that they can fulfil their goals over time. The specific nature of the policy subsystem is critical to the notion of policy change as "coalition members mediate the exchange of interests and ideas in public policymaking" (Howlett & Ramesh, 1998:469). Policy change is seen as a function of three variables: the interaction of competing advocacy coalitions within a subsystem; changes exogenous to the subsystem in socio-economic factors, system-wide coalitions, and activity in other policy subsystems; and, finally, the effects of stable system parameters on the constraints and resources of policy actors. A fundamental change in public policy is seen as taking place when one dominant coalition is replaced by another, or more indirectly, when one set of core beliefs succeeds in displacing another as the dominant

⁶ Baumgartner and Jones's (1993) contribution owes a considerable amount to the earlier work of Kingdon (1984) in which the activities of policy entrepreneurs and the significance of temporal opportunities are highlighted.

referential in the subsystem. Such a transition results primarily from changes that occur outside of the subsystem; for instance, when there are disturbances in macroeconomic conditions or system-wide governing coalitions.

Both punctuated-equilibrium and advocacy coalition framework approaches to subsystem behaviour present a significantly different conception of group cohesiveness than that suggested by earlier models concerned with interests, iron triangles (Cater, 1964), issue networks (Hecló & Wildavsky, 1974; Hecló, 1978), “sub-governments” (Richardson & Jordan, 1979), and policy networks (Knoke, 1990; Marsh & Rhodes, 1992; Smith, 1993). The elegant integration of endogenous and exogenous system components into a wider conception of the political whole provides a more holistic depiction of political processes than scholars have traditionally posited. Sabatier’s (1993) acknowledgement of Hofferbert (1974), and the incorporation of stable system parameters providing constraints in the form of social, legal, and resource features, links subsystem activity to a broader political and societal context. This, by implication, suggests that structural determinants, such as socio-cultural values and basic social structure, provide, at the very least, a basic contextual setting for the scope of competing belief systems upon which the framework is based. This explains the fundamental obstacle within the framework to system generated transformational change as the scope of the broader system overwhelmingly “discourages actors from making them the object of strategising behaviour” (1993:20); such change isn’t impossible but, given that it would take decades to produce, is seen as far more likely to come from external events.

2.2.5 Reconciling structure and agency in policymaking

As with earlier depictions of political decision making⁷, notions of rational-choice and concepts such as utility have played an important and deterministic role in behavioural

⁷ Herbert Simon’s (1948) vision of administrative decision making, in which goals were a given and decision making was, effectively, the process of implementation required to fulfill those objectives, had provided the dominant reference point for scholars. The limitations of such rational decision making models in explaining the legislative process were called into question, however, because of the complexity and ambiguity of political processes (Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan & Ferguson, 1962) with some arguing that the application of social-psychological models should vary from context to context (Eulau, 1976). Lindblom responded to the rational-comprehensive view of policymaking, which posited that a policymaker should have a synoptic view of the problem before making policy decisions, with the notion of “successive limited comparisons”. Not only did Lindblom suggest that the limits of knowledge within which policymakers operated fell well short of this ideal but, by limiting the focus of policymaking

theories of the policy process. Moe (1990), for instance, highlights the significance of economic rationality in institutionalist contributions and argues that such approaches need to be complemented by a political theory that treats institutional adjustment as the product of political processes involving conflicts over power. In positing this political theory of public organisation, he suggests that the political decision becomes two-tiered: one part concerned with the internal hierarchy of the agency; and the other dealing with the “political control structure linking it to politicians and groups” (1990:122). Similarly, in the organisational theory literature, the heuristic value of economic rationality has been the subject of considerable debate since the 1970s. It has been forcefully argued that behaviour and institutions are so constrained by ongoing social relations that viewing them as independent of one another is a grievous misunderstanding (Granovetter, 1985). Structural “embeddedness”, the social context surrounding economic exchange, is critical to an understanding of the nature of the relationship and an ongoing refinement of the transaction cost model (Jones, Hesterly & Borgatti, 1997).

Early institutional theory contributions tend to emphasise the significance of rules, myths and beliefs, and, specifically, the shared reality that they represent for those within the institutional setting (Selznick, 1957; Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The formal structures of many organisations were seen to dramatically reflect the myths of the institution rather than the demands of the economic setting. By incorporating these rules, myths and beliefs over time, organisations gained legitimacy, attracted resources, engendered stability and “enhanced survival prospects” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977:340).

efforts to small adjustments in pursuit of marginally redefined policy goals, the goals of short term implementation took precedence over long-term objectives (Schulman, 1975). Within such a system, “policy is not made once and for all; it is made and remade endlessly”; the whole notion of political ends is called into question as policymaking becomes “a process of successive approximation to some desired objectives in which what is desired itself continues to change under reconsideration” (Lindblom, 1959:86). It has been argued by others that Lindblom is describing an administrative realm in which rational-comprehensive decision-making still remains the goal of administrators. “Successive limited comparisons” may explain the limitations of such rationality but, ultimately, it still depicts a policy administrator whose only constraints are intellectual; the administrator within such a model is relatively immune to politics (Hale, 1988). Lindblom subsequently acknowledged limitations of the approach and a number of decision situations, specifically “large” ones, in which it did not apply (Braybrooke & Lindblom, 1963); but he continued to defend incrementalism against critics (Lindblom, 1979) who sought to discredit the approach on the grounds of its dysfunctional justification for the malaise in policymaking or as providing theoretical-ideological support for an actual situation which, in fact, stems from inertia and a priori bias (Dror, 1964). Despite the debate concerning innovation and justification, the descriptive value of incrementalism has been extremely influential. Scholars have sought to modify the approach in order to resolve its limitations by distinguishing between incremental decisions and fundamental decisions or “mixed scanning” (Etzioni, 1967); while others have used the dominant paradigm to emphasise important alternative exceptions or “non-incremental, indivisible policies” (Schulman, 1975).

The emphasis on legitimisation as a sustained and driving force among organisational actors is a cornerstone of the institutionalist movement in organisation theory (Selznick, 1996) and the greater the degree of social legitimacy perceived to be attainable from conformity to institutional pressures, the lower the likelihood of organisational resistance (Oliver, 1991). The notion of legitimacy seeking behaviour, as a principal motivator of action, provides a useful, if ultimately partial, explanation of individual behaviour; in the political context, it echoes earlier incrementalist contributions (Lindblom, 1959) and raises practically the same questions concerning explanations of transformational change.

The omission of individual agency from earlier and more positivistic contributions, while not unusual at the time, is curious since the structures within which individuals are assumed to be constrained were created by human beings and could not continue to exist without their willing or unwilling and conscious or unconscious participation (Hays, 1994). Furthermore, without ascribing a meaningful or realistic depiction of the role of individuals within the policy process, it is difficult to explain the presence of ideas or innovation. Interestingly, this highlights a fundamental contradiction within such theories, after all, individuals ultimately provide the raw material upon which institutional theories are based. Lieberman (2002:697) describes this raw material as

“the goals and desires that people bring to the political world and, hence, the ways they define and express their interests: the meanings, interpretations, and judgments they attach to events and conditions; and their beliefs about cause and effect relationships in the political world and, hence, their expectations about how others will respond to their own behaviour.”

Acknowledging the ability of individuals to “engage in deliberate and creative transposition is one way to inject agency into structural explanations and develop a more refined and dynamic theory of action” (Campbell, 1998:383); after all, “the capacity for desiring, for forming intentions, and for acting creatively – is inherent in all humans.” (Sewell Jr., 1992:20)

In contrast to earlier depictions of the policy process, post-positivist approaches have been primarily concerned with the way in which situations are defined by human actions and are, therefore, made amenable to human intervention (Stone, 1989b). They are concerned with the way in which public policy is constructed by language in the sphere of public and private deliberation and discourse (Hawkesworth, 1988; Roe, 1994; Danziger, 1995) and reflect the “context-specific rhetoric character of analytical practices” which includes the nature of language symbolism, consideration of audience, and the nature of problem construction and definition (Fischer & Forester, 1993:7). This view contrasts with the idea that societal problems are objective and identifiable and suggests that social problems exist in terms of how they are defined and conceived in society, where collective definition takes place (Blumer, 1971; Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). The consequences of such an approach for theories related to agenda setting and pre-agenda definitional activity are, therefore, profound – a theme that is considered in more detail in section 2.5.3 *The three dimensions of power*. Such issues are at the very heart of governmental processes, regardless of issue, level, or institutional arena, and are critical to any understanding of policy change (Rocheffort & Cobb, 1993). In short, general laws of society are elusive, the objectives of policy rarely represent a clear and uncontested specifiable group, and, at any point, the intentional actions of individuals can subvert causal predictions of behaviour (Dryzek, 1993).

The complex role played by language and metaphor has been slow to challenge more orthodox conceptions of the policy process⁸ but it has influenced some theory development within the field. The role of the individual in the Advocacy Coalition Framework, for instance, is especially interesting. Within the framework, goals are viewed as complex and the role of individual cognitive biases is central to the consideration of actions. As Sabatier himself claims (1999:130), the framework’s “instrumentally rational” actor owes more to social psychology than economic dictates. Reconciling the tensions, therefore, that exist between structural determination and individual agency, where both are “the medium and the outcome of the practices which constitute social systems” (Giddens, 1981:27), has become key to making sense of the nature of complexity that exists within the policy process. Seen through Giddens’s lens

⁸ It has been noted that a critical component of the characteristic hegemony of orthodox theory lies in the discursive substructure of policy studies in general and public administration in particular (Kochis, 2005)

of structuration (1981), structures shape human practices but, at the same time, human agents discursively and recursively create rules, practices, and routines that, over time and space, constitute and reproduce structure. The interplay that exists between the inter-subjective knowledge that defines actions and the interpretive significance of individuals is central to the process of adaptation and change; individual actions are defined by an inter-subjective understanding of structure but the meaning that individuals interpret from that structure can, itself, be the catalyst for change.

2.2.6 Structural manipulation and transformational policy change

A major problem with structural accounts of policy design is that they appear to deal in “absolutes” when most post-structural depictions of policy activity over the past thirty years have demonstrated the enormous vagaries of a process that is highly complex and multi-dimensional. Within this quagmire of policy related activity, overarching descriptions of political determination have become somewhat outmoded and unfashionable; in their place, rich descriptions of policy activity have demonstrated how political power has played out differently in different domains contingent, as it is, upon many factors. Not least of these are those that depict post-structural accounts of individual power and the often overlooked significance of a temporal dimension (see Kingdon, 1984). Recent interest in the macro determinants of comparative political economy, specifically, the institutional and ideational arrangements that result in varieties of capitalism with divergent national economic structures and regimes (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Hay, 2006a), has further highlighted the dangers of viewing structural influence as reliably deterministic in terms of outcome. Hay (2006a), for instance, demonstrates how countries with common reform trajectories can develop divergent policy paths; in the case of welfare systems, providing evidence of “de-globalisation” rather than globalisation.

While such contributions are extremely valuable, they have tended to be more concerned with the reasons for comparative advantage and divergence rather than the nature, purpose, and essence of the structural prompt. There are, nonetheless, parallels that can be drawn between the conception of institutional influence that Hall and

Soskice (2001:13) advocate, in which the role of informal rules and shared understandings is critical to the securing of equilibrium in the “strategic interactions of the political economy”, and the exogenous function of shared understanding that can be seen to underpin the global structural context. They suggest that

“institutions central to the operation of the political economy should not be seen as entities that are created at one point in time and can then be assumed to operate effectively afterwards. To remain viable, the shared understandings associated with them must be reinforced periodically by appropriate historical experience.” (2001:13-14)

In this depiction, of course, the “common knowledge that leads participants to coordinate on one outcome, rather than another” (2001:13) is based upon elemental shared understandings. Changes to the assumptions that underpin these shared understandings result in the capacity for institutional change and, in so doing, enable the institution to adapt to revised environmental demands. This process is conceived as historical and based upon collective experience, and it is largely consistent with Baumgartner & Jones’s (1993) description of “punctuated equilibrium” brought about by the failure of the policy subsystem to efficiently mirror environmental influences that dictate issue definition and, consequently, subsystem arrangements.

As stated previously, the enthusiasm that challenges existing subsystem arrangements, and leads to the creation of new ones, is of particular interest when considering where new policy ideas come from. For, as much as the punctuated-equilibrium theory describes the interrelationship between gradual and transformational change, its dependence upon events, circumstance, and timing as causal stimulants for political attention, and conflict between issue definitions, suggests that the definitions are, themselves responses, rather than pre-existing stimulants, to contextual prompts. As such, it overlooks the possibility that pre-definition advocacy might have already defined what constitutes an event, circumstance, or temporally significant occurrence.

Likewise, the Advocacy Coalition Framework of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988; 1993), which views fundamental transitions in public policy as taking place when one

set of core beliefs succeeds in displacing another as the dominant referential in the subsystem, fails to acknowledge the role of elites, possibly at the fringes of its own networked coalitions, in creating the kind of exogenous disturbance to macro environmental conditions that might facilitate transformational change at the subsystem level. As currently constituted, the linking of wider structural determinants to subsystem activity within the framework might explain the fundamental obstacle to system generated transformational change, as actors are effectively discouraged from attempting such activity, but in viewing wider structural determinants as largely beyond the control of individuals, transformational change becomes an almost accidental consequence of competing coalition activity in space and over time. And while this might be an appropriate characterisation for much of what passes for activity at the policy domain level, the contention that transformational change would take decades to produce severely underestimates the ability of coordinated elite activity to manipulate the structural tolerances of change in the contemporary political setting.

2.2.7 Conclusion

The various contrasting views of the policy process provide, collectively, a sense of the complex issues that have divided and tormented policy process scholars over recent years. Assertions related to the existence and proximity of system boundaries have, in anything other than textbook devices, given way to a broader and more interrelated sense of the system and environmental whole. As with system theory developments in other fields, the role of the environment is seen as central to an understanding of adaptation (Emery & Trist, 1965) and systems are seen as largely incapable of self-generated transformational change. Ultimately, the extent of adaptability to environmental turbulence is viewed as a function of ability to learn and to perform in line with changing exogenous contingencies (Terreberry, 1968).

Theories concerning the initiation of policy have evolved from straightforward descriptions centred upon an objective consensus concerning problems and issues into a more complex debate regarding the inter-subjective nature in which issues are defined, framed, and, subsequently, managed within the policy process, a theme that is returned

to, in more detail, later in the review – see 2.5.3 *The three dimensions of power*. Staged depictions of the policy process, with inputs entering at one end and leaving at the other as policy outputs, have been superseded by a multi-dimensional depiction in which inputs can enter the process anywhere and at any time. The only bar is the extent to which the input can be sufficiently well purposed for the stated scope and objectives of the policy domain. Likewise, the only meaningful obstacle to the promotion of inputs onto the wider political agenda is not an intractable sense of what needs to be done but, instead, an ever shifting attempt to define political inputs in terms of structural and normative requirements that are, themselves, the subject of interpretation, definition, and articulation. The demand for more radical, system-wide, transformational change, given the enormous structural, institutional, and normative resistance it is likely to encounter, requires a type of political activity capable of subtly redefining the very substance of these pre-agenda structural and normative patterns – a theme that is returned to in section 2.5.3.1 *Shared understanding and transformational change*.

2.3 Politics and markets

2.3.1 *Introduction*

The structural interdependency of politics and markets in liberal democratic societies has been the subject of renewed, and intense, theoretical debate in recent years. Much of this is related to the seemingly irresistible forces of neo-liberalism and the globalisation project which have had the effect of significantly blurring traditional definitions of public and private. As early observers noted, it has become increasingly difficult to know where public government ends and private business begins (Nigro & Nigro, 1973); the increasing “incoherence” of modern governments (Sharkansky, 1979) raises important questions concerning the “public” nature of public policy activity. This section of the literature review seeks to explore the nature of this relationship in the contemporary political setting and, specifically, the development of a legitimising “collaborative ideology”.

2.3.1.1 *The role of elite shared understanding*

The importance of the politics/market interdependency to theories of political change should not be underestimated and, neither therefore, should the role of business and political elites in defining the nature of such a relationship. It is argued that the shared understandings of political and economic elites reinforce and lend purpose to existing structural norms and may, where necessary, represent a deliberate attempt to redefine structural tolerances for the purposes of facilitating more dynamic political change.

The requirement for dynamic change stems from a paradoxical market driven imperative that is enshrined in liberal democracies, namely, that they should provide political and economic stability. Such systems, frequently characterised as being in a state of equilibrium, manifest an inherent resistance to change and a policy process bound by incrementalism, checks and balances, and a myriad of countervailing processes and relationships that defy satisfactory explanation. Against the backdrop of such a deep-rooted model of intransigence, the market functions within a largely

predictable, and satisfactory, regulatory framework, content, where able, to influence the direction and detail of government policy. The extent of this ability, however, is governed by factors that serve to protect the overall stability of existing structured socio-economic arrangements. In order to facilitate change that calls into question these existing modes of governance, a new shared understanding of political objectives must firstly be created and structural norms must be re-interpreted and defined for the purposes of supporting a revised political and economic agenda.

This theoretical perspective challenges a prevailingly reactive theme in the policy sciences literature concerning political inputs and the identification of problems. It suggests that political agenda setting, far from representing the beginning of the formal policy process, is a function of prior political processes embedded in the articulation, and not just interpretation, of structural and normative conditions. In doing so, it calls into question the notion of structural determination as a largely pre-defined contextual arrangement and seeks, instead, to emphasise the role of elite networks in lending purpose to its form and, thereby, manipulating the discursive and deliberative parameters that serve to determine action at the domain level of the policy process. Within such a depiction, structural context is a pliable phenomenon given tangible and immediate form through the creation of shared elite understanding.

2.3.2 Market oriented policymaking

In Charles Lindblom's seminal work *Politics and Markets* (1977), the common origins of polyarchy and market, as systems of popular control, are cited as a chief reason for the two to be linked together:

“the association between liberal constitutional polyarchy and market is clearly no historical accident. Polyarchies were established to win and protect certain liberties: private property, free enterprise, free contract, and occupational choice. Polyarchy also served the more diffuse aspirations of those elites that established it. For both the specific liberties, and for the exercise of self-help, markets in which the options can be exercised are required.” (1977:164)

Historically, polyarchal societies have been characterised by favourable measures of economic and social development and provide the setting for the conception of the modern dynamic pluralist state (Dahl, 1989). Furthermore, and fundamentally entwined with our understanding of such development, markets are part of the very fabric of the constitution of the modern capitalist nation-state and contemporary world order (Cerny, 1990). Against a backdrop of international capital flows, and the setting of the price of money across borders, the allocation of all goods in society is subject to the disciplines of the global financial marketplace; in short, this financial system represents “the infrastructure of the infrastructure” (Cerny, 1994).

The development of globalisation has brought with it an intense pressure to reconcile political and economic tensions related to domestic and international policy; this has led to a rescaling of traditional governance systems (Brenner, 1998), the increasing dominance of private authority in areas such as international finance (Pauly, 2002) and the proactive participation of neo-liberal institutions shaping relations between state and market in the contemporary era (O' Riain, 2000). In brief, the state's traditional boundaries have been under attack from the politics of market organisation (White, 1993) and politics, everywhere, is now market driven (Leys, 2003). The interrelationship of economic and political activity is, more than ever, critical to a consideration of social mechanisms and systems; in the words of Lindblom (1997:8), “much of politics is economics and most of economics is politics”.

Despite strong pluralist convictions, Lindblom (1988) was keen to highlight the role played by “advantaged segments of society” in narrowing diversity of opinion and discussion in order to protect their advantages from slow erosion. These concerns for the discursive foundations of democracy, despite the obvious absence of a class dimension, hint at a process similar to that of Gramsci's “cultural hegemony” (1971); where the scope for ideological political conflict is, in effect, limited at source. The presence of the market control paradigm, for instance, hardwired into the structural and ideological consciousness of polyarchal systems of governance, ensures that the scope of political discursiveness is guided by the dictates of certain inalienable constructs. The extent of the pervasiveness of these constructs is evidenced not only in terms of limited

political debate and decisional incrementalism (Lindblom, 1959; Braybrooke & Lindblom, 1963) but also in the many philosophical justifications that have characterised political commentary during the latter half of the twentieth century. Drucker (1962), for instance, in a contribution that prefaces many later debates on regulation and voluntarism, notes that if we accept that public policy and economic performance are not separate⁹, and do not have their own distinct logic, we must also accept that the business enterprise, as an institution for economic performance, will, out of necessity, have public policy powers and responsibilities. The subtlety and seductiveness of this argument is, undeniably, compelling and it succeeds in disguising some fundamental questions related to formal legitimacy. Indeed, for Drucker (1962) and many pragmatists like him, such legitimacy is practically self-evident. It is for this reason that the subsequent development of a meta-narrative of neo-liberal micro-economics, the silent “grand theory” that governs contemporary reason (Van Der Pijl, 2005), has such profound implications for the bounds of political discourse in liberal democracies.

In all accounts of the liberal democratic model, it is clear that the notion of separated spheres of economic and political activity is, by and large, discounted. The various interpretations of the relationship between politics and markets reflect a substantial agreement over the structurally advantaged position of business. Even if the relationship is far from static and stable (Vogel, 1983), and the role of the state, and state actors, has been significantly underestimated (Nordlinger, 1983; Mann, 1984; Weir & Skocpol, 1985; Skocpol, 1985), we are still some way from the pluralist depiction of community power in which political and economic processes are considered to have a high degree of autonomy – see section 2.4.2 *Power in the community*. Furthermore, it is difficult to

⁹ An obvious example of the consequences of this relationship can be found in the accountability of public officials for economic performance – an area where they have little control over certain key determinants of market activity i.e. private investment. There is evidence to suggest that a poorly performing economy, and deflated business confidence, are bad for prospects of political reelection (Tuftes, 1979). In a similar vein, evidence has suggested that governments attempt to manipulate economic performance prior to elections in order to secure favourable outcomes (Schultz, 1995). Moreover, the strength of business/government relations continues to grow as global economic pressures increasingly lead to a situation where governments are acting as representatives of their national business communities (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Sell, 2003).

escape the conclusion that control of resources lies at the heart of conceptions of the state and notions of coercion and power in the policy making process.

Resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), a contribution from the organisational theory field, suggests that organisations are comprised of internal and external coalitions that emerge from social exchanges for the purpose of influencing and controlling behaviour (Ulrich & Barney, 1984); external organisational links are essentially power relationships based upon exchange resources. Demands are constantly placed on the organisation but it responds most acutely to those upon which it is most dependent for resources and survival. Where organisations are dependent for stability upon one another, mutual interdependencies can lead to increased coordination and mutual control over each others resources. Policy network contributors have utilised resource dependency, and the explanatory driver of exchange relationships, to provide support for descriptions of intergovernmental relations (Rhodes, 1979) while, elsewhere, it has been suggested that, as a consequence of mutual resource interdependency, economic and political elites form coalitions or regimes. The broad direction setting nature of such activity distinguishing it from the “retail politics” of lobbying and policy networks¹⁰ (Stone, 2005).

In a system where boundaries are vague, where the distinction between governmental and quasi-governmental activity is blurred, where a structural relationship between economy and state is hardwired into the system of governance, and where non-state actors play a significant role in providing information, expertise, and support to those in positions of political power, a huge array of political resource interdependencies have, no doubt, been established. The resulting networks ensure that relationships develop a

¹⁰ By the mid-1990s in the UK, policy network theory had influenced three Economic and Research Council programmes, the Intergovernmental Relations Initiative, the Relations Between Government and Industry initiative and much of the local governance programme (John, 2004). The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) introduced by the Conservative government in the early 1990s was later embraced by the Labour government which has subsequently introduced numerous examples of state/private sector collaboration or public-private partnership (PPP). There is considerable concern about the intrusion of private interest into areas of public policy such as education and health. The unprecedented, and largely seamless, erosion of previously protected state provision has raised questions about the nature of such collaboration in Britain.

routine and predictable quality; the most resistant to change being those networks with a dominant economic or professional bias (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992).

The extent of economic determinism is, of course, a fundamental question and, its relevance is more acute given the advent of globalisation and the lack of a coherent global regulatory framework. The polyarchal nation-state, structurally dependent upon its domestic business interests, now finds itself subsumed within a global and structurally interconnected neo-liberal market paradigm. Within such a paradigm, the alternative to adherence is politically unthinkable; and the processes that are shaping the development of the new world order will, almost certainly, only accelerate. The demands placed upon government are, therefore, increasingly influenced by international considerations and market demands have assumed greater, and more urgent, primacy. Fundamental and rapid change cannot be brought about, however, without the ongoing and willing participation of the sovereign state; a participation that cannot be provided unless governments maintain their legitimacy in the face of structural and normative resistance to change. While Mitchell's "calculated heroism" (1997:219) goes some way to explaining policymaker resistance to business influence along these lines, the manipulation of public preferences can, and does, play a critical role in securing downstream legitimacy in the policy debate – see section 2.5.3 *The three dimensions of power*. Indeed, where business is unified, its most effective form of influence is not through a direct approach to policymakers but, rather, through the more indirect influence of public opinion (Smith, 2000). In this sense, the ideological and structural strands of Lindblom's (1977) view of the privileged position of business in policymaking become inextricably intertwined.

2.3.3 Pragmatism and collaboration in global governance

It almost goes without saying that the pervasiveness of the Washington Consensus in recent years, coupled with the absence of a global regulatory framework, has ushered in a period of unprecedented market expansion and global trade liberalisation. The support given to such a cause by certain governments, notably that of the United States, and global financial institutions in pursuit of unfettered and open markets, with seemingly

little interest in the societal or environmental impact of such demands, has sparked a significant political response and the emergence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) networks desperately seeking to fill the regulatory vacuum (Hirschland, 2006). Such networks, which take a variety of forms but, in essence, conform to multi-stakeholder collaborative or partnered governance¹¹ depictions, have sought to redress the perceived imbalance of transnational corporation power and the lack of regulatory constraint by ensuring that social and environmental considerations become an embedded feature in the ongoing and informal development of global economic standards and “soft” regulation.

While few, with the obvious exception of ardent advocates of free markets, would argue with the necessity for such activity, the motivation, composition, and conduct of such networks is largely overlooked. In its place is to be found a widespread acknowledgement of the failure of government and collective action initiatives at the intergovernmental level and a pragmatic realisation that complex and unbounded global problems require an immediate and collaborative response. Questions related to accountability and legitimacy are increasingly addressed by a subtle reframing of the problem rather than a genuine attempt to grapple with the conceptual difficulties presented by an underlying deficit in both areas. As a consequence, such questions are ignored, as naively idealistic, in the clamour to achieve what are, essentially, consensual, non-binding, accords between public and private actors. Such pragmatism may be a realistic response to the complex problems of global governance but it comes at a price and that price is a loss of clarity related to core principles and the downstream ambiguities that will, no doubt, accompany it.

¹¹ Collaborative governance, despite some subtle definitional differences, usually depicts a scenario in which public and private actors are brought together with public agencies for the purposes of reaching consensus-based decisions. Partnered governance refers to the mix of legal regulatory and “soft” governance accords that have the combined effect of regulating action; the term is increasingly used to describe the type of governance applied in the transnational setting to business corporations. Such corporations find themselves subject to domestic regulation at the nation state level but, in the transnational arena, where such regulation is largely unenforceable, are constrained only by a raft of multi-stakeholder agreements and accords.

2.3.4 *The logic of collaboration*

Collaboration has long been seen as a solution to problems associated with complexity in the contemporary political setting; in particular, where such problems are viewed as beyond resolution by a single organisation. In order to satisfactorily address such problems, organisations must come together and

“collaborate at the domain level of common concern... (they must) share an appreciation for the problem, identify their areas of shared concern, determine the direction of their actions, establish the boundaries of collaboration, and develop an inter-organisational structure that accommodates both shared and conflicting interests.”
(Trist, 1983)

In the past thirty years, collaboration has supplanted traditional forms of hierarchic governance as the most appropriate means of dealing with complex political and societal issues (Clarence & Painter, 1998; Kooiman, 1999; Midttun, 1999). In doing so, it has become “this “era’s source of imagined hope...(and) underpins today’s utopian visions of social organisation” (Zadek, 2005). Furthermore, collaboration has become a principle mechanism for tackling complex problems related to the issue of public goods in areas as diverse as economic development, regulation and administration, globalisation, the environment, poverty, education and health. And at practically all levels of administrative activity, from local partnerships through to transnational forums and networks, examples of collaborative governance are to be found¹². The types of activity vary substantially and reflect different challenges as well as differing regulatory contexts but the engagement of non-state actors, most especially in the transnational arena, reflects the reality that a large percentage of world population lives in areas of weak state control, that there has been a significant loss of confidence in state-centred governance, and that collective tasks “in a complex, interconnected, information dense world – knit together and energised by powerful market forces – simply cannot be accomplished (well, or at all) by government acting alone.” (Donahue, 2004:1)

¹² In their forthcoming paper, Ansell & Gash (2008) review evidence from 137 cases of collaborative governance across a range of policy sectors

A peculiar aspect of the discourse surrounding inter-organisational relationships is that it tends to emphasise the functional aspects of collaboration (Hazen, 1994). By bringing together stakeholders from different organisations, public and private, proponents argue that stakeholders are able to create an inclusive form of transparency and understanding and, thereby, improve the potential for problem-solving. This rather managerial depiction of the role of collaboration, however, misses a crucial point:

“collaboration between organisations is not necessarily ‘good’, conflict is not necessarily ‘bad’, and surface dynamics are not necessarily an accurate representation of what is going on beneath.” (Hardy & Phillips, 1998)

It emphasises a preoccupation with process outcomes, rather than governance outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008) and, therefore, threatens to distort our understanding of its value. In short, the concentration on process, and more functional aspects of collaboration, has tended to overlook the socio-political context that frames the emergence of such activity, determines its purpose, structures its agenda, shapes its parameters of acceptable discourse, selects participants, and fundamentally drives its output, tangible or otherwise. The significance of underlying power relations (Hardy & Phillips, 1998), and an acknowledgement of such factors as leadership (Ozawa, 1993; Huxham & Vangen, 2000), are essential to a broader appreciation of the collaborative exercise; moreover, without understanding the motivation for collaboration among individual participants, and the direct and indirect consequences of such activity for those parties, we are left with an instrumental and, somewhat, romantic depiction of its purpose.

Despite these observations, there can be little doubt that the balance between state and non-state actors in the political activities of advanced industrialised communities has shifted considerably in recent decades and is likely to shift still further (Florini, 2000; Josselin & Wallace, 2001). What should not be overlooked, however, is the emergence of a collaborative “ideology” that has provided much of the intellectual legitimacy for this transition. In the case of global business regulation, for instance, we have witnessed the development of an era of “global civil regulation” (Hirschland, 2006) in response to an earlier, and concurrent, period of de-regulation based upon the demands of market efficiency (Eisner, 2000). Significantly, this emergent form of “soft”

governance, which has frequently taken the form of direct partnerships between NGOs, the self-appointed representatives of civil society in the transnational setting, and transnational corporations, has spawned its own legitimising and guiding discourse: that of corporate responsibility. The failure of the OECD's Multilateral Investment Agreement (MAI) in 1998, cited by some as the turning point in the shifting balance between capital and citizen interest at the global level (Smythe, 2000; Walter, 2001), may have led governments to

“rethink their whole approach to negotiating international liberalisation agreements. Re-branding and re-legitimising their liberalisation process (was) likely to involve opening it up to much greater NGO participation, both at the domestic and international levels” (Walter, 2001:150),

but how much of a “backlash”¹³ to government and pro-trade business collusion over global market liberalisation, and its impacts, the subsequent corporate responsibility project represents is highly debatable¹⁴.

Corporate social responsibility networks in the transnational setting do, of course, provide just one example of how the logic of collaboration has permeated the underlying basis of rationality in policymaking. They are of particular interest, however, because the governance vacuum they are designed to fill is, in a sense, maintained by the logic of such an approach.

¹³ When the Global Compact was proposed to the World Economic Forum in January 1999, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan warned delegates that global unease about poverty, social inequality and marginalisation was reaching a critical mass: “I was concerned that unless global markets were embedded in shared values and responsible practices, the global economy would be fragile, and vulnerable to backlash” (2004:1). OECD members were, themselves, concerned at the prospect of a political “backlash” to the globalisation project during the MAI negotiations in 1998 (Smythe, 2000); and this concern has continued to date. Commenting on the annual OECD Employment Outlook in June 2007, Angel Gurría, the OECD's Secretary General, stated that “millions are benefiting from globalisation but at the same time there's a feeling something's wrong with the process” (see <http://www.stwr.net/content/view/1995/36/>).

¹⁴ It has not curtailed further attempts to reach agreement on the subject of global investment regimes; even if the tone of such debate has softened to emphasise the importance of “educating” opponents as part of the globalisation agenda (Smythe, 2003)

2.3.5 Conclusion

The structural interdependency of politics and markets is critical to any understanding of political, or societal, change; and the relationship between political and economic elites represents a key mechanism of structural readjustment. For the most part, the overall integrity of existing socio-economic arrangements is preserved by such interdependency but, when demands for more dynamic forms of change are required, the shared understandings of political and economic elites are pivotal to establishing the cognitive latitude likely to facilitate such change – this theme is returned to in section *2.5.3.1 Shared understanding and transformational change*.

The emergence of collaboration, a pragmatic response to the challenges of complexity in the contemporary era has, in many ways, avoided many serious questions related to the legitimacy or efficacy of the approach. A normative preoccupation with process rather than outcomes has tended to reinforce functional philosophical arguments and such a seemingly sensible and moderate doctrine has had the effect of making extremists of its critics. Ultimately, however, multi-stakeholder collaboration might best be viewed as a product of the pervasiveness of neo-liberal conceptions of the role and limitations of government. Collaborative “ideology” provides a supporting narrative, and considerable legitimacy, for processes and relationships that are already an embedded feature and reality of political activity within, and between, liberal democracies.

2.4 The transnational power elite

2.4.1 Introduction

It is not possible to discuss the existence, or otherwise, of a transnational power elite without reference to earlier community power debates of the 1950s and 1960s and, specifically, C. Wright Mills’s (1956) seminal contribution “The power elite”. These debates, with their central concern for the distribution of power in society, have provided a contested backdrop to many subsequent lines of theoretical and empirical

inquiry. And, further, they are of considerable relevance to the consideration of collaboration in matters of global governance.

Formal and informal elite interactions in the transnational setting form part of a much broader and complex depiction of political and economic processes than that posited by traditional, state-centred, theories of international relations. In the post-Cold War period, these processes have moved beyond earlier ideological and political constraints and reflect a much greater concern for consensus and legitimacy. The interplay between economic and political forces within such a context is of particular interest when considering the nature of a transnational “power elite”.

2.4.2 *Power in the community*

2.4.2.1 Elite theories

The “community power” debate of the 1950s and 1960s really began with Floyd Hunter’s 1953 study of elite power in Atlanta (1969). It was the first of many studies to identify the existence of a cohesive social group that appeared to have disproportionate amounts of power and influence in society. According to Hunter (1969:113),

“the top group of the power hierarchy has been isolated and defined as comprised of policy makers. These men are drawn largely from the businessmen’s class in Atlanta. They form cliques, or crowds, as the term is more often used in the community, which formulate policy.”

Hunter (1969) suggested that this group were comprised of corporation owners, senior executives and corporate lawyers of the largest banks and other businesses in the city. They lived in the same neighbourhoods, belonged to the same clubs, and were on interlocking boards of directors. Importantly, they played a crucial role in initiating policy through these informal networks. This depiction of a businessman class formulating policy through informal discussions and networks was subsequently

replicated in Atlanta¹⁵ and mirrored in a number of other US cities. For instance, Scott Cummings and Edmond Snider's (Cummings & Snider, 1988) case study of Dallas, demonstrates how local development and real estate interests, in cooperation with city officials, orchestrated a revitalisation and redevelopment plan for the city. This alliance, between factions of the local business elite and City Hall led to a potent political force that crushed opposition voices. Similarly, Joe Feagin's (1988) case study of urban development policy in Houston showed how a dogma of free enterprise caused development chaos in the city and seriously compromised quality of life. He concluded that Houston's business elite appeared to have an unrestrained capacity to formulate development policy in the city (Feagin, 1988). In short, elites were using public authority and private power as a means of stimulating economic development and enhancing their own interests (Cummings, 1988).

More recently, it has been argued that, out of mutual interest and interdependency, economic and political elites form "coalitions" or "regimes". Clarence Stone's study of Atlanta (1989a) provides an "urban regime" approach that is distinct from earlier elite contributions because of its focus on who influences priorities rather than who makes decisions. But regime analysis emphasises the role that social stratification plays in underpinning social and economic parity; politics is primarily accessible to those who meet substantial threshold tests (Stone, 2005). Stone's study of Atlanta (1989:219) provides evidence of how business interests were able to "shape a city's policy agenda by becoming an integral part of a system of civic co-operation"¹⁶. An agreement on fundamental values ensures longevity and sustains the regime through periods of changing personnel and leadership (Dowding, Dunleavy et al, 1999).

Elite theories of power were given their most significant articulation with the publication of C. Wright Mills's "The power elite" (1956). In it, Mills (1956) described

¹⁵ William Domhoff (2005a) highlights a study produced by pluralist scholar M. Kent Jennings (1964) that he claims completely vindicates the work of Hunter and, specifically, his highly criticised "reputational method". Domhoff concludes that "the fact that this simple truth has never been acknowledged is a commentary on the power of pluralism within the political science fraternity."

¹⁶ A more recent study of regimes in London (Dowding et al., 1999) suggests an eight point characterisation for identifying their existence. These include the observation that a regime has a distinct policy agenda, it operates beyond formal structures, it creates public-private modes of interaction and it mobilises external resources.

how national power in the US resided in the economic, political and military domains. He suggested that nobody could have power unless they had access to the command of major institutions,

“The power elite is composed of men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences. Whether they do or do not make such decisions is less important than the fact that they do occupy such pivotal positions: their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, is itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions they do make. For they are in command of the major hierarchies and organisations of modern society. They rule the big corporations. They run the machinery of the state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy the strategic command posts of the social structure, in which are now centred the effective means of the power and the wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy.”(Mills, 1956:3-4)

Mills’s (1956) characterisation of US national politics as being dominated by a concentrated power elite suggested a form of group coherence that was not entirely in line with the earlier findings of Floyd Hunter (1969) although the central emphasis was the same. Mills’s (1956) contribution went considerably further, however, in explaining the origins of, and access to, elite membership. The significance of wealth and social status are emphasised as is the significance of socialisation and conformity within elite circles. These themes are further highlighted by William Domhoff (2002) who has forcefully demonstrated the significance of wealth in supposedly democratic states. He summarises his position in the following way (Domhoff, 2005b),

“The rich coalesce into a social upper class that has developed institutions by which the children of its members are socialised into an upper-class worldview, and newly wealthy people are assimilated. Members of this upper class control corporations, which have been the primary mechanisms for generating and holding wealth in the United States for upwards of 150 years now. [And] there exists a network of non-profit organisations through which members of the upper class, and hired corporate leaders not yet in the upper class, shape policy debates in the United States.”

It is important to note that Domhoff attempts to espouse a theory of elite rule that is distinct from Marxist conceptions of institutions and class but the task is “bedevilled by terminological difficulty” and complex problems related to conceptions of economic and non-economic organisation (Bendix, 1991:90). And, while Robert Michel’s (1962) “iron law of oligarchy” goes some way to explaining oligarchic rule in non-economic terms, or at least quasi-economic terms, it presents considerable difficulties for those elite theorists, such as Domhoff, who have emphasised class stratification and domination (Bendix, 1991:90).

2.4.2.2 The pluralistic conception of power dispersal

The classic pluralist perspective views power as dispersed throughout society into many different and competing groups; political decisions are the product of government mediating between these competing forces. For pluralists, groups are essential to the political process; they are the means of representation for the interests of various sectors of society (Smith, 1993). The role of government, therefore, becomes that of arbitrating and bartering between the multitude of competitive forces that exist within society. Indeed, the form of government is dynamic and reflects the nature of its response to these forces; in the words of Truman (1951:508),

“the total pattern of government over a period of time thus presents a protean complex of criss-crossing relationships that change in strength and direction with alterations in the power and standing of interests, organised and unorganised.”

For Truman (1951), therefore, the overall direction of state policy is a function of the various countervailing influences that government is exposed to and out of this barrage of requirements, state policy develops. Truman’s description of the complex texture of decentralised bargaining was readily assimilated into Robert Dahl’s pluralist view of power (McFarland, 1987). Dahl (1961) argued that democratic rights would be protected within such a system primarily because of the huge diversity of interest that exists within society. In stark contrast to Floyd Hunter’s research (1969), his study of New Haven city politics observed that power was disaggregated and non-cumulative and, although he found evidence of political resource inequality, he described the

political system of New Haven as one of “dispersed inequalities” (1961: 89). In short, Dahl (1961) concluded that in less than a century, a political system dominated by a patrician based elite had disappeared and been replaced by a system of many different sets of leaders, each with access to a different combination of resources.

For Dahl (1961), and other pluralist theorists, influence was best conceived of as specialised, that is, that those with influence in one domain are unlikely to be influential in another. Despite considerable criticism of this stance, there has been more recent empirical support for the claim. For instance, in their study of Washington Representatives, Heinz et al (1990) looked to establish whether evidence of an “inner circle” of private interest representatives could be established. Their findings indicated that the acquaintance network structures of Washington Representatives do not have central “cores” or authoritative mediators; in other words, they could find no evidence of an identifiable group of “core actors”. They concluded that the acquaintance networks of Washington Representatives might be viewed as resembling a sphere with a “hollow core” (Heinz, Laumann et al, 1990).

It is important to note, however, that such findings do not preclude the existence of elites within specific domains. Pluralists do accept that some inequalities exist within, and between, groups but do not believe that power is accumulated. In a similar vein, resource inequality is seen as no guarantee of power within the domain. Business interests, for instance, while well resourced, were initially viewed as primarily concerned with direct business legislation and, therefore, only marginally affecting other policy domains. Finer’s (1958) study of the types, strategies, and tactics of lobby groups in Britain, for example, presented a classic pluralist perspective in which the wealth of certain groups was not seen to deliver any special resources over those of less resourced groups because of the myriad of ways available to poorer associations to influence government policy. The influence of all groups, therefore, is primarily the product of resource availability. Wealth is just one resource that can affect a group’s ability to influence state policy

There has been substantial criticism of the pluralist perspective of power dispersal in contemporary politics. For instance, policy network activity has provided significant evidence of elite representation; in short,

“the policy network metaphor does suggest that policy in Britain is the product of an elitist power structure, albeit one fragmented between functional areas.”
(Marsh & Rhodes, 2002:101)

Commenting on a number of British case studies, Marsh & Rhodes (2002:101) note that,

“in each area, a limited number of groups enjoyed privileged access to policy making, shaping both the policy agenda and policy outcomes. There is little evidence that a plurality of groups is involved in policy making.”

Similarly, Browne (1990) observed how agricultural issue representation was increasingly organised around the accommodation of more and more players; evidence, he suggests, of a fragmented elite dominance among the interest groups of the policy domain. Contrary to the pluralist ideal of competing interests within policy domains, and given the discrete forms of influence that are employed by certain groups, the reality is that a huge amount of policy activity goes uncontested (Baumgartner & Leech, 2001). The issue of discrete practices is inextricably entwined with a broader debate related to pluralist and elitist conceptions of power, a theme that is returned to in section *2.5.3 The three dimensions of power*.

Perhaps the most vociferous of all critics of pluralism is Theodore Lowi (1969). In particular, of its faith in a system built primarily upon groups and bargaining as self-corrective devices. Lowi (1969) draws a parallel between equilibrium in market theory and political theory and suggests that,

“pure pluralist competition, similarly, might produce political equilibrium, but the experience of recent years shows that it occurs at something far below an

acceptable level of legitimacy, or access, or equality, or innovation, or any other valued political commodity.” (Lowi, 1969:57-58)

2.4.2.3 The inconclusive state of the power debate

Although the debate between pluralists and elite theorists continued throughout the 1960s, the credibility of the pluralist argument was ultimately called into question by common experiences of politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s (McFarland, 1987). Although, it should be stated, that the empirical debate between the two groups was, ultimately, rather inconclusive. Whether the elite is a concentrated class or a rotating populace is a quantitative issue; it might be both, but no metric of the degree of concentration has been applied to make any statement rigorous (Bauer, Pool & Dexter, 1972).

The issue of power distribution, therefore, is clearly unresolved although the differences between the two poles are, for some, not as great as they might first appear. Some have argued that a middle ground, “flawed pluralism” or “biased participation” (Greenwald, 1977), is a more likely description of actual power distribution; while others have argued that it is possible for multiple models to exist in the same political system (Kennedy, 2005). There is, however, no definitive or widely accepted description of the distribution of power or, for that matter, any agreement on the nature of power itself. This underlying deficit, a theme that will be returned to in section 2.5.1 *Power relations in the political setting/Introduction*, is something that is unlikely to be satisfactorily reconciled.

2.4.3 Transnational politics and policy

2.4.3.1 Defining transnational processes

Before considering the role and impact of transnational politics it is important to define the meaning of three core terms: international, transnational and global. These terms are often used interchangeably but their meanings, within the contexts of international

political economy and global system theory¹⁷, are quite different. Leslie Sklair (2001) provides a useful working distinction that will serve as the basis for my own analysis: *international* relates to “forces, processes, and institutions based on the pre-existing (even if changing) system of nation states” (2001:2); *transnational* “refers to forces, processes, and institutions that cross borders but do not derive their power and authority from the state” (2001:2); and *global* has a more narrow definition as “the goals to which processes of globalisation are leading...(namely) the establishment of a borderless global economy, the complete denationalisation of all corporate procedures and activities, and the eradication of economic nationalism”(2001:3).

2.4.3.2 *Transnational politics and the transnational policy elite*

While international cooperation and negotiation between states has traditionally been the focus of international relations and foreign affairs studies, transnational political activity transcends the formal boundaries of state sovereignty and interaction and draw in participants from outside of the formal political sphere. Indeed, in the case of transnational forums and networks, it has been argued they are initiated by non-state interests and, specifically, the interests of transnational capital. Neo-Marxist scholars have, for some time, suggested that these networks are evidence of the development of a transnational phase of capitalism and, critically, the formation of a transnational capitalist class (Van Der Pijl, 1998; Robinson & Harris, 2000; Sklair, 2001).

Drawing upon Robert Cox’s earlier work on social forces and world orders (Cox, 1987), and lending additional support to the then contentious view that America’s hegemonic power was expanding rather than receding (Strange, 1987), Stephen Gill (Gill & Law, 1989; Gill, 1990) cites the transition of global capital from national to transnational form as an explanation of the United States’ sustained hegemonic presence in international affairs. This, he contends, has resulted in the development of an

¹⁷ Global system theory is premised on the existence of transnational practices; practices that cross boundaries but do not originate with state actors or agencies. Sklair (1999; 2001) views the global system whole as comprised of transnational practices within three spheres: economic, political and cultural-ideological. He contends that “the global system, at the end of the twentieth century, is not synonymous with global capitalism, but the dominant forces of global capitalism are the dominant forces in the global system” (Sklair, 1999:436).

international elite, whose members are drawn from leading industrial nations and whose existence represents the formation of an “historic bloc”¹⁸ of social forces centred in the United States. Elsewhere, links between the United States “multinational bloc”¹⁹ (Ferguson, 1984) and their European counterparts, is seen as having led to the strengthening of a transatlantic community in the post-war period. The congruence of forces that led to, and sustained, the emergence of a transatlantic class represents, it is argued, a coherent international historic bloc (Van der Pijl, 1985; Gill & Law, 1989; Robinson & Harris, 2000).

There exists a widespread appreciation of the role played by globalisation in the development of this emergent transnational class and, critically, an almost universal appreciation of the central role of transnational corporations in the wider globalisation project. Sklair (2001) views the transnational class as comprised of four groups: corporate executives, globalising bureaucrats and politicians, globalising professionals and consumerist elites. While Robinson and Harris (2000:40) suggest that the transnational capitalist class is,

“comprised of the owners and managers of the transnational corporations and other capitalists around the world who manage transnational capital. The bloc also includes the cadre, bureaucratic managers and technicians who administer the agencies of the TNS [transnational state], such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO, the States of the North and South, and other transnational forums. And membership in the hegemonic bloc also includes politicians and charismatic figures, along with selected organic intellectuals, who provide ideological legitimacy and technical solutions.”

¹⁸ See Gramsci (1971)

¹⁹ Ferguson charts the development and composition of the emergent “multinational bloc” in the first half of the twentieth century and identifies the source of its advantage vis-à-vis other blocs. He states “The multinational bloc included many of the largest, most rapidly growing corporations in the economy. Recognised industry leaders with the most sophisticated managements, they embodied the norms of professionalism and scientific advance that in this period fired the imagination of large parts of American society. The largest of them also dominated major American foundations, which were coming to exercise major influence not only on the climate of opinion but the specific content of American public policy” (Ferguson, 1984:68).

Given the role accorded to transnational corporations by such analyses, surprisingly little empirical data appears to exist that identifies the existence, or otherwise, of such a homogenous business community or transnational class. One exception to this occurs with the, now established, analysis of interlocking directorates at the national (Useem, 1984; Scott, 1997; Domhoff, 2002; Murray, 2006) and transnational levels (Fennema, 1982; Carroll & Fennema, 2002).

In an attempt to better understand the existence, or otherwise, of a transnational class Carroll and Fennema's (2002) work on interlocking directorates provides a unique insight into patterns of ownership and transnational board interlocks. Mirroring Fennema's (1982) earlier study of 176 leading international corporations (135 industrial corporations and 41 banks), this second study delivered firm evidence of a transnational network albeit one that resembled "a superstructure that rests upon rather resilient national bases" (2002:414). This network, which had consolidated during the period between the two studies, drew in large corporations and was comprised mainly of "thin, secondary interlocks and outside corporate directors" (2002:415). Furthermore, there was strong evidence in support of the Atlantic network thesis (Van der Pijl, 1985) with a clear concentration of ties within and between the United States and Europe.

Preliminary results from follow-up research on the Global 500²⁰, looking at the period 1996-2004 (Carroll, 2007), suggest a further concentration of asset accumulation in the United States and Europe and points to a significant expansion of transnational interlocking. While national interlocks had declined in the period, transnational interlocking had increased significantly with almost half of the Global 500 having at least one transnational interlocker on their board. The largest increases were in the area of intra-regional interlocks; with Europe, in particular, witnessing a significant expansion of activity along these lines. This contrasted with more modest growth in the United States and elsewhere. More recent work on European integration suggests that, as German capital has become increasingly pivotal within the continental European network, the composition of the Atlantic network has altered to reflect a greater number of links by German firms into the United States network. To the East, it has created

²⁰ See Fortune magazine's Global 500

stronger ties with Russian firms and, in particular, those in the energy sector (Van Der Pijl & Raviv, 2007).

One of the shortcomings of early studies on interlocking directorates, itself acknowledged by Carroll and Fennema (2002), is the singular focus on formal corporate interlocks as vehicles of transnational class formation; a fault partially addressed by the inclusion, in subsequent analysis, of formal and informal elite policy planning groups (Carroll & Carson, 2003). By situating five such planning groups, perceived to be engaged in elite consensus building – the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the Bilderberg Group, The Trilateral Commission, The World Economic Forum (WEF) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) – within the context of a broader structure of transnational interlocking corporate power, the authors attempt to provide evidence of the role such organisations play in the formation of a transnational class and, importantly, their role in the creation and diffusion of a transnational neo-liberal hegemonic culture. With the exception of the ICC, which is viewed as performing an integrative role between the centre and its fringes, the groups are seen as,

“deeply enmeshed within the global corporate elite. They are substantially interlocked with each other as well as with common corporate boards, a small number of which account for two-fifths of all the corporate policy links” (Carroll & Carson, 2003:97-98).

The research supports the contention that a global corporate elite has, indeed, formed and that a “few dozen cosmopolitans” (Carroll & Carson, 2003:97), mainly from the United States and Europe, bind the corporate-policy network together²¹.

These contributions, from the fields of international political economy and global systems theory, present a view of transnational forums and networks as essentially the

²¹ The research on policy-group affiliations demonstrates how a nucleus of six “transnational linkers”, and seventeen corporate directors in total, “create a plethora of relations among the policy groups”. The authors claim that “the network is highly centralised in terms of the individuals and organisations that participate in it. Yet, from its core it extends unevenly to corporations and individuals positioned on the fringes of the transnational network” (2003:97).

coordinative and communications infrastructure of a transnational elite; an elite, if not dominating in any clear sense, then certainly responsible for the creation, perpetuation, and projection of a prevailing hegemonic culture, that of economic neo-liberalism.

Whether the historical development of such networks and forums has been as deliberate or purposeful as some of the descriptions suggest is the subject of some debate and, furthermore, the question whether such an elite really represents a transnational capitalist class is, in the words of Carroll and Carson (2003: 67), “a matter partly of semantics and partly of substance”.

2.4.3.3 Transnational forums and networks

While there is a considerable literature related to the activities of formal inter-governmental and quasi-governmental groups in the transnational setting such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the general paucity of material available on informal transnational groups and networks is striking. A free-text search of academic databases²² on groups such as the Bilderberg Group and the Trilateral Commission demonstrates how such groups have largely escaped the attention of scholars over the past fifty years (see Appendix A. *Informal transnational groups/free text search*). When one considers the elite composition of such groups, and the fact that they are credited in some quarters with considerable influence, this is an astounding scholarly omission. Such an omission is almost certainly the product of a broader reluctance on the part of social scientists to engage in research related to elite groups or dominant classes. As Leslie Sklair (2001: ix-x) notes,

“It is somewhat surprising to discover that of all the social classes, however defined and categorised, the group that has attracted the least serious research is the class at the very top of the pile. Terms like elite, ruling class, and capitalist class have been out of favour in the social sciences for some time and the idea of a ‘global ruling class’ appears, frankly, ridiculous to many capable scholars.”

²² JSTOR, EBSCO, Proquest, CSA, Social Science Citation database

Notwithstanding this general scholarly reluctance, there has been a recent surge of popular interest in the notion of a global power elite and journalistic contributions such as Rothkopf's "Superclass"²³ (2008) have spawned considerable media interest in the subject.

In academia, it has also been noted that the growth of interest concerning intellectual input into the foreign policy activity of the US administration had led to a sudden increase in the number of books concerned with the activities of one elite policy forum - the Council on Foreign Relations (Parmar, 2001). The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), along with the Royal Institute of International Affairs (now Chatham House), is one of a small number of groups, including the Bilderberg group and the Trilateral Commission, that are seen by many as forming an ultra-elite policy community in the transnational setting. They are seen to represent the pinnacle of an elite business and political network that is interconnected with various prestigious policy institutes and numerous regional and bi-lateral elite networks. For the more conspiracy oriented, this small group of interconnected elite networks represents a sinister cadre leading, a largely ignorant, global citizenry irreversibly in the direction of a new world order (see, for example, Villemarest, Villemarest & Wolf, 2004; Estulin, 2007).

Such charges have done little to increase the serious scholarly appeal of the subject but there are a small number of contributions, mainly historical and archival, that shed some light on the nature of the development and activities of such groups. Valerie Aubourg's (2003) excellent paper, for instance, on the post-war development of the Atlantic community and, specifically, the formation of the Bilderberg group and the Atlantic Institute, provides a fascinating insight into the convergence of events and personalities that led to the creation and preservation of such groups during a period of heightened Cold War tension. As well as casting some doubt on a number of well trodden

²³ David Rothkopf's "Superclass" defines a global power elite comprised of approximately 6000 individuals from all walks of life. He claims that this elite "as a group, because of their influence, play a big part in defining the tenor of our times, determining which views are accepted and which are not, and what our priorities are. The influence of this transnational superclass is often amplified as the members act in clusters knit together by business deals, corporate boards, investment flows, old school ties, club memberships, and countless other strands that transform them if not into the conspiring committees of legend then at least into groups that are proven masters at advancing their own aligned self interests" (2008: xvii).

conspiracy theories related to the funding and control of such networks, Aubourg (2003) demonstrates how the main thrust of both groups shifted subtly from solidarity against Soviet ideological propaganda to a more immediate concern with European anti-Americanism. Furthermore, the importance of the Netherlands and Belgium to the spirit of the Atlantic community is emphasised as a means of preserving a “liberal democratic tradition not sufficiently rooted in Germany, Italy or France” (2003:103). The promotion of an “Atlantic consensus” is seen, therefore, as mirroring the efforts of other groups such as The Congress for Cultural Freedom, an institute that fostered an international anti-Soviet consensus between intellectuals that was linked, in turn, to the notion of “end of ideology” discourse (Scott-Smith, 2002), and demonstrated a blurring of public/private boundaries at the transnational level. As Aubourg observes,

“the Atlantic Institute and the Bilderberg group show a complex combination of private initiatives and official encouragement through which a shared experience in the war or the immediate after-war years was more important than distinctions between State and private groups.” (Aubourg 2003:103)

Using this shared experience, and the complex interrelationship of participants, as a starting point, Hugh Wilford (2003) explores the early years of the Bilderberg group with a view to addressing the question of which of the chief conspiracy theory claims it most closely represented: a CIA plot; a socialist conspiracy; or an attempt to develop a new world order. Pushing the conspiracy theories to one side, for the purposes of the study, he explores archival evidence, primarily from the C.D. Jackson and Hugh Gaitskell papers²⁴, to provide a narrative of the formative years of the group. Providing some hitherto unpublished information, the paper explores the relationship between the United States and European representatives and considers the role played by each. Like Aubourg (2003), Wilford concludes that claims relating to ongoing CIA involvement and control have been overstated and overlook the interplay that existed between various key players at that time. Equally, and acknowledging the enthusiastic and intelligent participation of revisionist Labour Party representatives such as Hugh

²⁴ C.D. Jackson’s papers are held at the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas; the Gaitskell papers are held by University College, London

Gaitskell and Denis Healey²⁵, he concludes that latent American power and revisionist empathy with the American position make the socialist conspiracy thesis an improbable account. And, finally, he suggests, in an extremely qualified fashion, that of all the conspiracy claims, the new world order theory is the closest depiction of actual outcomes. Citing Kees Van Der Pijl's (1998) conclusion that in order to emphasise transnational societal development, we must first move beyond the traditional, state-centred conception of politics, Wilford, finding a parallel between the formation of the group and its chief architect, provides the following description of how best to conceive of the Bilderberg group,

“[it is] neither an entirely European nor American invention, but rather the result of a highly complex process of Atlantic interaction. For that matter, it is equally difficult to tell whether Bilderberg was the creation of state agencies, specifically the Western intelligence services, or non-government actors. In the curious person of its principal founder, the wandering scholar Joseph Retinger, the distinction between the private and official realms, civil society and the state, seems to collapse altogether, as indeed does the very concept of nationality.” (2003:79-80)

The desire for the creation of a new world order needs, of course, to be set against the context of the loss of enormous human life during the Second World War and the ever increasing tensions of the Cold War. A peculiar aspect, for instance, of the British contingent at Bilderberg was the ever-increasing presence of internationalist, revisionist, Labour Party politicians which, for some, represented a “strain in Labour's anatomy (which) mistrusted the people and countenanced an elitist, expert approach” (Black, 2001:55). By the time of Harold Wilson's electoral victory in 1964, he had been sufficiently persuaded, by revisionists within the party, of the importance and significance of the Bilderberg group to call for, or support the call for,²⁶ a Commonwealth Bilderberg scheme (Murphy, 2005). This, despite the fact that he was,

²⁵ For a fuller account of revisionist activity during this period see Lawrence Black's “The bitterest enemies of Communism”(Black, 2001).

²⁶ Murphy (2005) details the rather sketchy account of how the initiative was first brought about. A set of proposals, drafted jointly by Lord Mountbatten and Prince Philip, provide the first official documentary support for the proposal although it is suggested that the actual initiative came from Wilson and, his then secretary of State for Defence, Denis Healey.

by no means, aligned with the Gaitskellite faction of the Labour Party and that he was likely to encounter internal party opposition should the requisite royal involvement have become public. In the event, the proposal was eventually dropped in the wake of political events elsewhere in the world but it, nevertheless, provides a useful insight into the perceived international value of such networks and forums among national elites of the time.

Adding weight to this assessment, Thomas Gijswijt (2007; 2008) has also highlighted the historic geopolitical significance of Bilderberg, notably in relation to debates concerning the inception of the European Union and concerning its influence in establishing, and maintaining, transatlantic relationships. He notes that,

“the Bilderberg group has contributed both to the cohesion and longevity of the Atlantic Alliance and to the vast increase in commerce and investment across the Atlantic in the post-war period. The group has done so in part through the informal exchange of information, the establishment of relationships of trust among members of the transatlantic elite, and the strengthening of common values and beliefs [...] the transatlantic proliferation of ideas, contacts, information and trade stimulated by the Bilderberg meetings has had a cumulative impact that any serious student of transatlantic relations should at least be aware of.” (Gijswijt, 2008)

The distinctive North Atlantic bias to transnational network membership during the 1960s and early 1970s did, however, lead to considerable resentment in certain quarters, most obviously among the Japanese and Chinese, and reflected a more general acknowledgement of changing geopolitical realities and priorities. Calls for a broader representation of Japanese attendees at Bilderberg were led by David Rockefeller and met with some resistance. They coincided with, what Stephen Gill (1990:55) calls, a “crisis of hegemony [...] and] the unravelling of post-war political settlements within and between the advanced capitalist states” driven by the forces of internationally mobile capital. In particular, it represented a rejection, in Western and Japanese policy circles, of the Nixon-Kissinger world-view which “was considered to be outmoded and therefore dangerous for the evolving liberal international economic order” (1990:133).

In response, and with the support of a number of prominent Bilderberg members, the Trilateral Commission was formed with David Rockefeller very much the driving force behind the group. As Gill states (1990:140),

“[his] unique international influence was mentioned in most of the interviews I conducted with Commissioners, and he was always cited as the key figure. Indeed, at least initially, Rockefeller recruited virtually each member personally.”

Gill's (1990) research involved interviews with one hundred Trilateral Commission members and was endorsed by the then Director of the Commission, Charles Heck. It provides a graphical, historical, account of the development and activities of the group between its inception in 1973 and the late 1980s. More specifically, Gill (1990) contends that it provides evidence of the need to move beyond traditional conceptions of waning American political hegemony in the late twentieth century and consider the consequences of a more profound, less observable, hegemonic economic influence in world affairs. His argument is well made and supported with considerable amounts of supportive data; much of it clearly emanating from interviews with Commission members. However, the research has been criticised for its failure to support its contention of consensual hegemonic power (Reich, 1991) and also failing to adequately explain how the activities of the Commission have influenced government policy (Watt, 1991). It is also notable for its absence of published interview material and while this possibly reveals something of the terms of access for the research, it also suggests that the interview data was sought, less for the insight it might provide concerning individual attendees, and more for the purpose of hypothesis testing Gill's stated belief in a Gramscian form of hegemonic American influence. This is, nevertheless, a personal frustration with the book and does not detract from the, otherwise, powerful case that is presented for the role of such policy councils in the shaping of world affairs. As Gill (1990:122) states,

“private councils are part of a much wider international process of elite familiarisation and fraternisation, mutual education and, broadly speaking, networking. This process involves both consciousness-raising and social intercourse. It is relatively indirect with respect to the precise contours of policy but it is nonetheless significant. Private councils provide forums for developing or reinforcing concepts of international relations and foreign policy which may diffuse within the nations represented.”

As stated previously, recent academic interest in the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) has highlighted the involvement of the group members in matters of US foreign policy. This emphasizes the, at times, quasi-governmental relationship that existed between the organisation and foreign policy mandarins within the US administration. Most accounts of the group are historical and hark back to a heyday of CFR influence during the Second World War and, in some instances, through to the breakdown of foreign policy consensus over the Vietnam conflict.

Despite the organisation’s repeated insistence that it is non-partisan, Schulzinger (1984) demonstrates that the early years of the CFR were typified by a kind of Wilsonian internationalist diplomacy and Wala (1994) also observes that internationalist opinion was, and remains, a strong vein within the membership of the group. Two “insider” studies, published by the Council itself (see Bundy, 1994; Grose, 1996), highlight the pluralistic, meritocratic and idiosyncratic nature of group composition in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. These contributions, it is argued by Parmar (2001), are more than self-congratulatory commemorative publications²⁷; they also constitute a call for a renewal of faith in liberal internationalism, in the face of emerging neo-isolationism in the US, and a statement concerning the ongoing relevance of the group to world affairs.

The role of the group in state activities has been the subject of some speculation and Parmar (2001) compares and contrasts the various perspectives in order to introduce his own conception of the nature of the relationship. He argues that Domhoff’s (1990) depiction of CFR activity is consistent with the suggestion of a weak state with few

²⁷ Formed in 1921, 1996 represented the 75th anniversary of the group

interests or goals of its own. Domhoff's rather instrumental account of how the Council influenced government decisions concerning post-War reconstruction, and specifically the formation of the Bretton Woods institutions, is cited by Parmar (2001) as evidence of this inclination. Similarly, Santoro's more ambiguous account of Council/State relations (1992) also suggests a weak state although the function of the Council is tempered and viewed as that of intellectual advisor. Citing developments during the period 1939-45, Santoro's depiction is, according to Parmar (2001), more akin to a neo-Gramscian model with its focus on the creation and development of ideology. Finally, Parmar (2001) compares the "corporatist" approach of Wala (1994), where the role of the Council is presented very much as a respected advisor to the State, with outright "statist" approaches (Parmar, 1995), where the state is seen as having special advantages that maintain its dominance in the relationship. He concludes that both are inadequate as explanations of the nature of CFR influence; instead it is more useful to think in terms of a "power shared by forces that transcend the public-private divide" (2001:37). Drawing on the earlier work of Eisenach (1994), Parmar (2004) introduces, therefore, the concept of "parastate" organisations to describe the nature of the relationship that the Council on Foreign Relations and Chatham House hold with respect to their own governments.

2.4.4 Conclusion

Elite and pluralist theories of power dispersal are of continuing relevance to our understanding of elite interactions in the transnational setting. The parallels that can be drawn between early depictions of elite activity within the policy domains of the state and national politics in the United States and the activities of the policy elite in the transnational setting are striking. The same issues of accountability and legitimacy are at play as are questions related to the precise nature and contours of the plurality of interests in the setting. What is missing, of course, is the sense of a formal policymaking or legislative arena.

Contributions from the fields of international political economy and global systems theory have presented a rather instrumental account of the purpose of elite networks.

They are, in essence, viewed as a communications infrastructure, for the mobility of capital interests, and the development of a transnational network is seen as evidence of the shift towards a transnational phase of capitalism. Studies of interlocking boards and elite group membership demonstrate a complex interweaving of membership and interests held together by key organisational hubs and members within the network.

Academic literature on the transnational policy elite is sparse and largely concerned with the historical role and development of certain elite groups. Much of this literature concerns the activity of such groups in the Second World War and through to the end of the Cold War. The influence of elite groups is, in the main, inferred rather than proven and the mechanisms of power and influence, in particular more consensual mechanisms, have not been satisfactorily demonstrated.

2.5 Power relations in the political setting

2.5.1 Introduction

In any discussion of power, Steve Lukes's (1974:9) frequently cited observation that it is "an essentially contested concept", must be highlighted. There is, after all, little denying the enormous debate that exists over the form that it can take. Haugaard (2006) argues that much of the difficulty stems from the fact that power is a "multi-scalar" concept that is subtly complicated because the "various oppositions which characterise the power debate are not necessarily mutually exclusive" (2006:10). Gaventa (2006:23-24) elegantly outlines the central definitional problem of the concept in this way,

"Some see power as held by actors, some of whom are powerful while others are relatively powerless. Others see it as more pervasive, embodied in a web of relationships and discourses which affect everyone but which no single actor holds. Some see power as a 'zero-sum' concept – to gain power for one set of actors means that others must give up some power. Since rarely do the powerful give up their power easily, this often involves conflict and 'power struggles'. Others see power as more fluid and accumulative. Power is not a finite resource; it can be used, shared or created by actors and their networks in many

multiple ways. Some see power a ‘negative’ trait – to hold power is to exercise control over others. Others see power to be about capacity and agency wielded for positive action.”

Notwithstanding the differences that exist between more consensual appreciations of power or “power to” (see, for instance, Parsons, 1963; Arendt, 1970) and those who view power as inherently conflictual or as “power over” – see section 2.5.2 “*Power over*” and *domination* – there is considerable value in recognising the value of a more holistic approach to the concept (Haugaard, 2003; Gaventa, 2006). Indeed, and in stark contrast to his earlier publication on power as domination, Lukes (2005b) himself, recognises the value of drawing a distinction between “power to” and “power over” and accepts that some forms of power can be productive and transformational. For this reason, Lukes’s radical or third dimensional power (1974) is really one subset, power as domination, of the notion of “power over” which is itself a subset of a much broader “enabling” notion of “power to”. In short, domination is not equal to power in the broadest sense. In the words of Lukes,

“What is clear is that the underlying concept here defined is not ‘power’ but rather the securing of compliance to domination. The text [of *Power: a radical view*] addresses the question: ‘how do the powerful secure the compliance of those they dominate?’ – a narrower question than that suggested by its snappy title.” (Lukes, 2005b:109-110)

Furthermore, more ultra-radical conceptions of power, where power is viewed, for instance, as a constitutive force (see the work of Foucault, 1980), a theme explored further in section 3.3.4.2 *Discourse and discourse analysis*, have come to inform a much fuller account of power. This review of the literature does not seek to provide a comprehensive insight into the exhaustive nature of the power debate; instead, the focus of its attention is on the form of power conceived by Max Weber (1962), the agent centred notion of power “as domination”. And, more specifically, the various forms that it can take.

To that end, this section of the literature review considers the application of power as domination in the political context. Furthermore, it considers the implications of what Steve Lukes (1974) calls the “three dimensions” of power for the types of activity likely to be successful at various points of the policy process. This extension of Lukes’s typology provides a key insight into the function of elite interactions within the context of a much broader policy process.

2.5.2 “Power over” and domination

For the most part, depictions of political power portray a classic Weberian relationship with the emphasis on one party realising its own will even when faced with the resistance of others (Weber, 1962); within such a conception, the powerful are, unsurprisingly, “those who are able to realise their will even if others resist it” (Mills, 1956). While Weber’s conception of power does not preclude willing consent in the relationship; it does imply the capacity for coercive power based, ultimately, on domination of the subject. This presentation of power as “power over” underpins practically all empirical contributions on political influence in the policy sciences field although there are marked differences in the form that this coercion can take.

Steven Lukes’s (1974) typology of the three dimensions of power is a useful mechanism for demonstrating a fundamental distinction drawn between decisional and non-decisional exercises of power as domination in the political sphere. Furthermore, utilising the typology as a metaphor for a hierarchy of system-wide exercises of power provides a crucial insight into the nature of political influences and, specifically, the relationship between politics and markets in polyarchies²⁸.

²⁸ The use of Lukes’s (1974) typology to describe the macro interactions between those inside and outside of the formal state policy apparatus is, of course, simply one application of the typology; it is important to stress that the various dimensions might be found operating at all levels of government and in all social interactions.

2.5.3 The three dimensions of power

The first dimension of power is that typified by pluralists with their emphasis upon actual, rather than potential, power; and, as a consequence, their focus on observable behaviour (Dahl, 1957; Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1963). In empirical terms, the unit of analysis is the decision situation and exercises of power are a product of conflict of interests over political preferences. Despite recognising the resource advantages of business (Truman, 1951; Dahl, 1961), and viewing resource availability as a primary determinant of influence, pluralists have tended to view business as part of a much broader depiction of interest group politics; and, in terms of empirical enquiry, political theory has focused primarily on the wider role of groups within society. The specific activities of business have been largely ignored (Hart, 2004) and, moreover, without a comprehensive analysis of corporation activity we remain some way from a complete understanding of political influence (Salisbury, 1984; Baumgartner & Leech, 1998). The pluralist tendency to view business political influence as interest group pressure has also led to a curious paradox: at a time when interest group proliferation is seen to have destabilised the policy making system and weakened the overall impact of interest groups (Salisbury, Heinz, Laumann & Nelson, 1990), the overall influence of business in political affairs appears to have accelerated substantially (Gais, Peterson & Walker, 1984; Calhoun, 1992; Crenson & Ginsberg, 2002; Leys, 2003). One possible reason for this is that the pluralist conception of power requires a conflict of interest but, given the scope of discrete lobbying practices employed by business interests, an enormous volume of policy activity goes uncontested (Baumgartner & Leech, 2001).

Another major criticism of this conception of power, levelled by Lukes (1974), is that it assumes the bias of the system under observation. In other words, it is blind to control of the political agenda. Lukes (1974) defines, therefore, a second dimension of power based upon the earlier work of Bachrach and Baratz (1962) which draws attention to the exercises of power which may have already determined the observable instances of control which represent the pluralist view of power. Adopting Schattschneider's (1975:69) belief that "organisation is the mobilisation of bias" and his view that "some

issues are organised into politics while others are organised out”, Bachrach and Baratz go further,

“power is also exercised when *A* devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to *A*.” (1962:948)

In doing so, they introduce the concept of non-decision making; a means by which demands for change

“can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision implementing stage of the policy process.” (Bachrach and Baratz , 1970:44)

The most obvious exercise of such an activity in the political sphere is that of agenda-setting; where the agenda takes on a strategic form since it is grounded in matters outside of the policies at hand and beyond the more immediate scope of policymakers (Mouw & Mackuen, 1992). Like the constitutional-choice decisions found in Kiser & Ostrom’s institutional contribution (1982), such pre-decisional activities are of critical importance in determining the decisions that will, ultimately, be made down the line (Cobb & Elder, 1983; Long & Rose-Ackerman, 1986).

Following McCombs & Shaw’s (1972) seminal study of the relationship between public and media agendas, a good deal of attention has been focused on correlations between levels of saliency in different domains and, in particular, between media, public, and policy agendas (Rogers & Dearing, 1988). Since there is evidence to support the contention that media agendas, and the activities of the media, have an influence on the policy agenda (Gilberg, Eyal, et al., 1980; Cook, Tyler et al., 1983; Wanta, Stephenson et al., 1989) and the public agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Funkhouser, 1973; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987), the role of the media must be considered in any discussion of power relations and policy initiation. Relative saliency on the media agenda is central to

the formation of the public agenda which, consequently, influences the activities of policymakers (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). Closer analysis of the concentrated ownership of media assets and, furthermore, the actual sources of media stories provides evidence that the commercial imperative and information dependency of the media results in an inherent bias to the selection and depiction of events; a bias that informs the public agenda and serves the needs of corporations, politicians, and bureaucrats alike (Gandy, 1982; Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Furthermore, the growth and role of public policy research institutes or think-tanks (Weaver, 1989; McGann, 1992) and an analysis of the supply of technical and professional policy expertise at all levels of government (Brint, 1990) suggest both an agenda-setting role and a degree of informal capture by professional experts. Ultimately, all information is mediated in some way but the extent to which the dynamics of political decision making are being defined by information bias has potentially profound implications for the shape and tenor of policy debate.

To these first two dimensions of power, Lukes adds a third:

“*A* may exercise power over *B* by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants. Indeed, is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have?” (1974:23)

The notion of latent conflict is central to this approach; created by a contradiction between the interests of those who exercise power and the real interests of those who are dominated. With echoes, once more, of Gramsci’s cultural hegemony (1971), the third-dimensional form of power might best, within the macro context of political influence, be seen as operating at the level of ideological or normative predisposition; at work somewhere within, and between, the structural determinants of society and the issue definition and agenda setting activities of the policy process.

2.5.4 The challenge of third dimensional power

Since the publication of Lukes’s *Power: A Radical View* (1974) a number of important criticisms have been levelled against his notion of third dimensional power (see Clegg,

1975; Bilgrami, 1976; Hindess, 1976; Young, 1978; Digesser, 1992; Hayward, 2000). Not least of these are those that apply to the underlying assumptions of such power and, with specific relevance to the empirical task at hand, questions of how to satisfactorily verify its existence.

It is worth pointing out that Lukes's (1974) contribution must be set against the context of debates concerning community power in the 1950s and 1960s between elite ((Hunter, 1969; Mills, 1956) and pluralist theorists (Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1963). These fierce debates, with their concern for the fundamental nature of power structures and the empirical challenges facing political scientists, were fuelled further by Lukes's (1974) notion of power through consent. Not only did he challenge the pluralist conception of observable power but he maintained that Bachrach and Baratz's (1962) depiction of non-decisional power was also flawed in its dependency upon pluralist mechanisms and methodology. Critically, he suggested that, given the approach, non-decisions were still very much decisions on the part of A to limit the decision making possibilities of B; but, as Lukes states (1974:21)

“decisions are choices consciously and intentionally made by individuals between alternatives, whereas bias of the system can be mobilised, recreated and reinforced in ways that are neither consciously chosen nor the intended result of particular individuals' choices.”

Furthermore, both first and second dimensions of power assume that *B* is aware of his interests in the face of demands to conform to the will of *A*; which presupposes that *B* accepts the will of *A* in full knowledge that to do so is not in his interests. If *B* has no particular interest in the outcome, and there exists an absence of conflict, pluralist and non-decisional advocates alike suggest that he has not been subject to the influence of power. But, according to Lukes (1974:23), “the most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place.” In short, a lack of conflict, and the appearance of consensus, does not equal an absence of power.

This distinction has implications for the focus of empirical inquiry. Whereas pluralists locate power in the decision process and elitists situate it in controlled preferences,

Lukes (1974) looks to a distortion in the interests of the subject and this requires a fundamental dissociation of interests from preferences. In other words, subjects can be manipulated or socialised into a false appreciation of their interests, and thereby act against them, while at the same time, can be seen to be acting according to their preferences (Young, 1978). Since subject preferences are, therefore, inherently unreliable as an indicator of interests, it is necessary to identify the subject's real interests in some other way. While providing the mechanism for empirical lines of inquiry, after all, real interests can be compared with stated preferences to provide evidence of distortions or manipulation, the notion of ascribing real interests, or identifying the counterfactual, has spawned significant criticism of the approach. Aside from the highly subjective and political nature of such ascription, the suggestion of real interests raises a significant problem of regress as Young (1978:647) notes,

“one must assume a society which does not distort the individuals perception of his interests; that is, in the radical view, a system uncontaminated by power. Interests are framed with reference to this ideal. Such a system can only be an ideal, for to create or act truly in it, it would be necessary for power never to have been exercised and constraining structures never set up. Otherwise, if power dissociates preferences from interests, all preferences (even the ones which drive us toward this other world) are arguably distortions born of distortions.”

2.5.4.1 Recent debate and revisions of third dimensional power

Returning to the subject, thirty years after publication of the first edition, Lukes (2005b) continues to defend the issue of real interests while, at the same time, attempting to relax the implications of this most contentious of empirical issues,

“the claim that compliance to domination can be secured by the shaping of beliefs and desires must invoke cognitive and evaluative judgments that are distinct from the relevant actual beliefs and desires of the actors alleged to be subject to it. In other words, the very idea of power's third dimension requires an external standpoint. Power as domination, I have argued, invokes the idea of constraint upon interests, and to speak of the third dimension of such power is

to speak of interests imputed to and unrecognised by the actors...[The difficulties associated with identifying real interests] become less serious if one simply takes what count as ‘real interests’ to be a function of one’s explanatory purpose, framework, and methods, which have in turn to be justified. There is no reason to believe that there exists a canonical set of such interests that will constitute ‘the last word on the matter’ – that will resolve moral conflicts and set the seal on proffered explanations, confirming them as true.”

This clarification and easing of the nature of real interests has important consequences for the utilisation of third dimensional power moving forward. No longer is it necessary to struggle with Lukes’s original, and vague, prescription for identifying real interests²⁹; researchers are now able to focus on the phenomena without becoming embroiled in endless discussions related to the ascription of counterfactuals. From a purely pragmatic perspective, not to address issues of domination and discrete power simply because there is no reliable empirical means of identifying real interests could hardly be said to make sense. And, while others had attempted to supplement the third face of power in order to circumvent some of these theoretical and empirical issues (see Komter, 1989; Fletcher, 1992), Lukes’s response provides a more elegant and faithful, if not entirely satisfactory, re-working of the concept.

Furthermore, the revised version of third dimensional power re-situates Lukes’s conception of “power-over” as a sub-set of “power-to”³⁰ and, in so doing, recognises the critical importance of power’s capacity. It also represents a significant departure from the earlier depiction of unitary interests in favour of recognition of the existence of multiple, often competing, interests. In his own words (2005a),

“[*Power: A Radical View*] offers a very partial and one-sided account of the topic. For one thing, it focuses entirely on the exercise of power and, for another, it deals only with asymmetric power – the power of some over others – and, moreover, with only a sub-type of this, namely the securing of compliance

²⁹ Lukes (1974) suggests a number of ways to identify real interests including comparison with other cases, a focus on core values or “abnormal times” (i.e. when subjection ceases), and by drawing attention to those who, while subject to power relations, find ways to resist it.

³⁰ Derived from Spinoza’s distinction between power as *potestas* and power as *potentia*

to domination. Furthermore, it treats only of binary relations between actors who are assumed to have unitary interests. Plainly a fuller account must obviously relax these simplifying assumptions and address power among multiple actors with divergent interests [...] a better definition of power in social life than that offered in PRV is in terms of agents' abilities to bring about significant effects, specifically by furthering their own interests and/or affecting the interests of others, whether positively or negatively.”

In his revised edition, Lukes is at pains to depict a far more nuanced set of processes and outcomes than his original edition suggests. For instance, he restates his position on intentionality in this way (Lukes, 2005b:136),

“As I have repeatedly insisted, to focus on ‘manipulation’ by defining the concept of power as deliberate intervention is to unduly narrow its scope. Power can be at work, inducing compliance by influencing desires and beliefs, without being intelligent and intentional.”

And tellingly, in a response to criticism of his later edition, Lukes again finds it necessary to clarify this point (Lukes, 2006:171),

“it is that I propose viewing the power of agents broadly, and so not requiring when instantiated, explicit intentions, actual foresight or positive intervention. Power, in other words, does not, when it is at work, need to involve deliberate and strategic manipulation [...] Viewing power in this broader way, one is significantly less inclined to see social arrangements that induce powerlessness and failures to solve collective action problems as unconnected to the powerful, as merely structural or attributable to ‘luck’, though sometimes one may conclude that they are.”

The issue of intentionality remains contested even among those who would defend Lukes's third dimension of power (Dowding, 2006) and, it must be stated, it is not the only issue in Lukes's revision of the model to engender criticism. That said, like Avery Plaw (2007) I do not believe the critiques of Morriss (2006), Shapiro (2006) or

Hayward (2006)³¹, notwithstanding the significance of certain of their arguments, to detract from an ongoing appreciation of third dimensional power; even if this appreciation is more limited in its scope as “power over” or “power as domination”. And, with specific reference to its empirical flaws,

“the appropriate standard for assessing the continued salience of Lukes’s three-dimensional model of power should not be whether it offers a perfect method for illuminating the insidious operations of third-dimensional power. A more sensible standard is whether these power effects do indeed exist and whether anyone else has offered a more compelling approach to tracing them [...And,] while there remains extensive controversy among scholars regarding how best to identify and analyze third-dimensional power, Lukes’s revised approach is plausible, and in some respects more promising, than its competitors.” (Plaw, 2007:498-500)

Whatever the difficulties related to third dimensional power, it is clear that many of its most ardent critics are unwilling to fully discount the approach. Indeed, while power may continue to be an “essentially contested” concept, Lukes’s third dimensional form has, theoretically at least, become one of the established conceptual mechanisms for its interpretation. Seeking to affirm or negate its existence is, in a sense, a pointless exercise; we should instead look to better understand the nature of its being. In the words of Ian Shapiro (2006:149),

“saying that the third face of power sometimes operates in society is – by itself – trivially true, even though some scholars have sought to deny this. When, where, how and why it does operate are the interesting questions. They can be fruitfully tackled only by working from the problem to the theoretical account,

³¹ Peter Morriss (2006) asserts that Lukes’s revision of third dimensional power no longer accurately represents power at all; instead, it is a more narrow depiction of domination and might more accurately be titled *Domination: a radical view*. Ian Shapiro (2006: 149) attacks weaknesses related to Lukes’s shift on the issue of multiple real interests arguing that “[Lukes] seems not fully to appreciate the radical implications of affirming an anti-reductionist understanding of real interests. Making this move – which I agree with Lukes that we should – commits one to the view that there is no ex-ante reason to prefer one type of explanation to another, and therefore no way of knowing in advance of empirical research whether some putative real interest is in fact at stake”. While Clarissa Hayward (2006) points to the absence of one of the most significant forms of social control, that produced by social structures and contexts, as a significant weakness in Lukes’s conception of power. For an excellent overview of the arguments see Avery Plaw’s (2007) analysis of the discussion.

not the other way around. In this sense looking for a theory of power's third face is akin to looking for a theory of holes."

Equally, it is fair to say that there are many configurations of power that are not addressed by Lukes's third dimensional form. Unpicking these various influences and focussing on the specific elements of third dimensional power is a critical challenge for this research. Furthermore, it will be necessary to address a key argument raised by Barry Hindess (2006) concerning the nature of political power and governmentality. Drawing firstly on the writings of Locke and, then, the ideas of Foucault, Hindess (2006) emphasises the constitutive role of power relations in order to suggest that Lukes's form of power is not appropriate to an understanding of certain configurations of contemporary government, among them formal and informal networks, because they are not easily reduced to notions of competing factions and interests. Indeed, he argues (2006:120), "with the partial exception of the economic sphere, it is far from clear who benefits and who loses from this style of government." Moreover,

"government is a configuration of power that helps to make us who we are and many of its effects at this level precede the formation of interests." (2006:120)

This is an important argument because, as Hindess (2006) points out, and Lukes' concedes (2006), the idea that power might be at work even where there is a lack of overt conflict is as applicable to his view of "government" as it is Lukes's view of domination. But, notwithstanding Lukes's own acceptance of this point, Hindess's characterisation of the configuration of government power preceding interest formation surely overlooks the role of certain interests, conscious or otherwise, in the development and nurturing of certain forms of governmental activity. As Lukes (2006: 164) observes, "every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing" and a key challenge with this research, if it is to reliably identify third dimensional influences within the context of transnational networks, will be to ascribe interests and factional roles. If Hindess is right, we might expect to see very little factionalism within such forums and interests are likely to be the product, rather than the stimulus, for such gatherings. Conversely, if Lukes is right, we might be able to observe subtle changes in preference not out of a

sense of becoming but, instead, because of very real mechanisms of third dimensional power. As Lukes (2006: 167) states,

“we have to discover whether three-dimensional power is at work and, if so, in respect of which interests, to what extent, and through what mechanisms.”

2.5.4.2 *In search of third dimensional power*

As will no doubt have become apparent from this discussion, identifying third dimensional power and satisfactorily demonstrating the extent of its influence is not a straightforward empirical exercise. As John Gaventa (1980) notes, all studies of power require assumptions to be made concerning three key concepts: interests, consciousness and consensus. And, since Gaventa’s study of inequality and power relations in a Central Apalachian valley is frequently seen³² as the “most sustained and sophisticated attempt to apply Lukes’s ideas to empirical material” (Haugaard, 2002:38), his approach may provide clues about how best to approach this study of third dimensional power. Certainly Gaventa’s (1980:29-30) discussion of key concepts appears to have significantly prefaced many subsequent empirical debates,

“the observer’s interpretation of what appears in a given context to be in B’s interest may be used as a methodological tool for discovering whether power relationships are such as to have precluded the active and conscious choice by B about such interests, regardless of what the outcome of that choice actually would be. What B would choose (were B free from the power of A to do so) would be B’s real interests – but they do not require identification for the study of power. That B is prevented from acting upon or conceiving certain posited interests is sufficient to show that the interests that are expressed by B are probably not B’s real ones.

The stance has ramifications for the consideration of consciousness. The unfortunate term ‘false consciousness’ must be avoided, for it is analytically

³² Gaventa’s (1980) study is universally agreed to be the definitive empirical application of Lukes’s original conception of power and statements to this effect are to be found throughout the literature concerning third dimensional power. Examples include Hayward (2000) and Shapiro (2006).

confusing. Consciousness refers to a state, as in a state of being, and thus can only be falsified through negation of the state itself. If consciousness exists, it is real to its holders, and thus to the power situation. To discount is as 'false' may be to discount too simply the complexities or realities of the situation. What is far more accurate (and useful) is to describe the content, source, or nature of the consciousness – whether it reflects awareness of certain interests and not of others, whether it is critical or assuming, whether it has been developed through undue influence of A, and so on.

To argue that existing consciousness cannot be 'false' is not to argue the same for consensus. 'Real' consensus implies a prior process of agreement or choice, which in a situation of apparent consensus may or may not have been the case. The process may not have occurred; it could have been shaped or manipulated; the 'consensus' could be maintained by power processes, etc.”

This outline concerning core assumptions will provide the conceptual starting point for my own analysis of elite power relations in the transnational setting. However, Gaventa's (1980:27) inclusion of “processes of communication, socialisation [and] acculturation” as mechanisms, while being faithful to Lukes's own conception of the workings of third dimensional power, has been the cause of some debate. Danziger (1988:24), for instance, argues that,

“socialisation is more relevant to discussions on ideology rather than inquiries into the exercise of power. *A* and *B* can be located in the socialisation framework only in so far as *A* is the individual or group which benefits from the ideology into which a given community is socialised, while *B* loses out. *A* cannot be identified, however, as the agent which is causally responsible for the perversion of the given ideology, since socialisation is a diffuse phenomenon whose sources and perpetrators range throughout society and history. A discussion on the exercise of power in which the exerciser of power cannot be identified becomes meaningless [...] In the case of socialisation, even if *A* could be identified, in order to determine empirically that *A* had exercised power over *B* it would be necessary to strip *B* of its *Weltanschauung*. The manufacture of this counterfactual evidence would be an unworkable means for

studying the exercise of power over *B*, is so far as lifting *B* out of its ideological context would be tantamount to discussing an actor other than *B*.”

Danziger (1988) chooses, instead, to focus attention on harder mechanisms such as the control of information and, in so doing, largely ignores the essence of third dimensional power. The argument that socialisation processes are diffuse and that *A* cannot be held causally responsible does not necessarily stand up to close scrutiny; it largely depends upon the impact of different influences and the relationship between a prevailing organisational culture and its processes of reinforcement and change. To what extent these processes are controlled, and how they function, are both critical questions in this regard; socialisation and acculturation processes may well be difficult to grasp but this does not mean that they cannot serve as instruments or mechanisms of third dimensional power. In some senses, the problem is solved if we accept that these processes are just one part of an overall depiction of socialisation processes; it is not necessary to see them as influential in an absolute sense. As Lukes (2005b:150), himself argues,

“power’s third dimension is always focussed on particular domains of experience and is never, except in fictional dystopias, more than partially effective.”

For his part, Gaventa (1980) draws attention to a number of types of evidence that might be supportive of third dimensional power. He points to the historical development of apparent consensus and suggests that it may be possible to identify whether the current situation has been influenced by power relations and, in addition, whether “key symbols, cues, or routines” may form part of a discrete “language of power without knowledge of their antecedents” (1980:27). As already stated, he identifies processes of communication, socialisation and acculturation as a possible source of the relationship between those that exercise power and those that do not. Specifically, Gaventa (1980) highlights the possibility that conditions, such as identifiable barriers to the development of *B*’s actions and consciousness, may exist that prevent challenges to the power of *A*. He also suggests, where possible, that speculative or actual challenges might be made to the status quo in order to gauge the responses of members of the population. Such responses may help to demonstrate how power mechanisms prevent

the emergence of such challenges. Finally, he points to Lukes's own prescription as possible further sources of evidence before concluding,

“if after following such guidelines, no mechanisms of power can be identified and no relevant counterfactuals can be found, then the researcher must conclude that the quiescence of a given deprived group is, in fact, based upon consensus of that group to their condition, owing for instance, to differing values from those initially posited by the observer.” (Gaventa, 1980:28)

2.5.5 Conclusion: Conceptualising third dimensional power in elite interactions

Despite the considerable revisions made by Lukes to the 1974 edition of *Power: A Radical View*, Swartz (2007:108) correctly identifies that he

“offers no new model empirical studies that illustrate what he is proposing. More disconcerting is that it is not clear what an empirical study following his framework would look like. The book offers no methodological suggestions for the researcher interested in following Lukes's conceptual framework in both choosing and analyzing an empirical object of power. Just what kind of empirical research would his framework lead to? Lukes does not say.”

In itself this observation is problematical for anyone attempting to apply the framework but the problem is compounded when the selected empirical domain provides a more nuanced example of power relations than might otherwise be the case. At first glance, interactions within elite communities do not appear to provide an ideal setting for the analysis of power as domination; after all, such interactions, by their very nature, take place between recognisable power holders, rather than between the powerful and the powerless. The absence of an obvious *B* category, to use the parlance of power theorists, might render such an analysis irrelevant. But, as tempting as it is to view a lack of factionalism or overt interests within elite networks as evidence of consensus and homogeneity or, as Hindess (2006) suggests, to view many of the effects of such activity as preceding interest formation altogether, it is only by applying lenses such as

Lukes's third dimension of power that we are able to test the veracity of these assumptions.

2.6 Summary and conceptual model

Theories of initiation and change in the policy process literature have tended to reflect systems theory developments in other fields where the system is seen as, ultimately, incapable of self generated transformational change. Such change is seen, therefore, as exogenous to the system based determinants of the policy process and largely beyond the scope of policymakers. The depiction of the role of elites within the policy process is that of a group that is largely responsive to contextual pressures and events; agents who are, at best, only capable of interpreting and identifying opportunities presented by determinants that are out of their control. This representation reflects a prevailing view of structural context as some kind of extant reality rather than a social construct given form and function through the shared understanding and articulation of elites. Such a conception is, therefore, limited and significantly underestimates the collaborative ability of elites to articulate and diffuse broad forms of consensus that serve to act as a structural referential for the downstream policy process.

A significant body of literature demonstrates how the structural interdependency of politics and markets is central to any understanding of political change in liberal democracies. By utilising Steven Lukes's three dimensions of power typology, it is possible to provide a conceptual model of such influence and, in so doing, situate the role of collaborative elite interactions.

2.6.1 Elite shared understanding and transformational change: a conceptual model

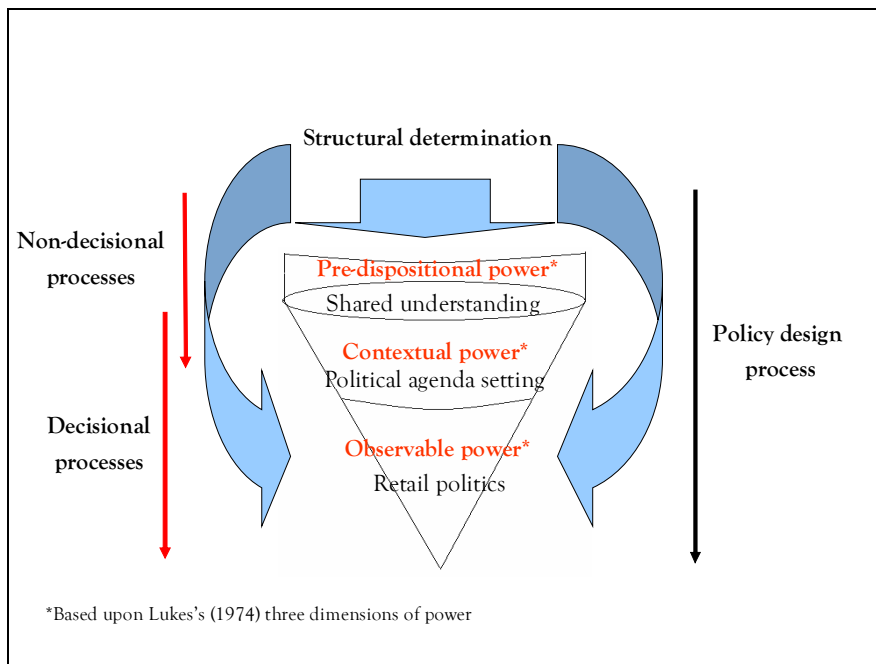
The use of Steven Lukes's (1974) typology of power as a hierarchal framework for understanding macro level political influence raises a very important line of inquiry related to the strategic options available to those seeking dynamic change. If, as has been suggested, a fundamental market-driven requirement for economic and political

stability results in a political process that is highly resistant to demands for transformational change; what happens when it's the market that demands the change?

Attempting to introduce radical policy initiatives at the level of "retail" politics (Stone, 1989a) - see figure 2.2 - is unlikely to yield results since the definition of the issue is pre-defined, there are dominant existing coalitions informing debate, and significant institutional constraints governing the scope and substance of policy discussions. This is not to suggest that significant gains or losses are not achievable; simply that the scope of such gains or losses is largely defined by pre-existing terms of reference.

Likewise, attempting to introduce a radical policy departure at the agenda-setting level requires a sizable shift in perceptions of a given issue. Agenda-setting is, itself, a function of institutional patterns and a prevailing discourse surrounding the attractiveness and political feasibility of new proposals. This political discourse "delineates the accepted boundaries of state action [...] and defines the context in which many issues will be understood" (Hall, 1993:289). Of course, actors may seek to exercise power in pursuit of their desire to see proposals appear on the policy agenda but unless such proposals are framed within existing structural parameters, and promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and remedy (Entman, 1993), it is unlikely that they will be able to enter, or survive, the policy process. Change that requires a more fundamental punctuation can only take place at the structural level; structural determinants must be reinterpreted, redefined and reinforced in order to influence the ideological predisposition and normative values of those charged with consideration of political agendas. Moreover, these structural articulations must be transmitted throughout society in order that policymakers retain essential legitimacy.

Figure 2.2 Power relations and policy initiation



Source: Compiled by the author

Critical to the comprehension of how structural determinants are purposed by political activity at the pre-agenda stage of the policy process is the creation of elite shared understanding. Theoretically distinct from earlier constructivist descriptions of the definition of issues (Blumer, 1971), their attendant causal stories (Stone, 1989b) and coherent systems of normative and cognitive elements that define “world views” (Surel, 2000); shared understanding is the product of purposeful dialogue between elites. It concerns the formation of shared structural assumptions that underpin the very foundations of public policy activity, relating to, among other things, the role that the state sees for itself in the pursuance of its duties, the nature of the relationship that exists between politics and markets, and conditions that lead to the overall betterment of society.

Given that shared understanding concerning these first principles is the foundation upon which the discursive parameters of polyarchies are based, it is essential to recognise the role played by it in regulating demands for transformational change. Such change may not always be initiated by elites, but it will, out of necessity, require their support if it is

to find its way onto the policy agenda. The development of elite shared understanding represents a structural shift that will, in time, facilitate access to the policy agenda in both political and societal terms.

Transformational change takes time but, if it is to occur, the requirement for it must enter into collective consciousness at the level of shared understanding between elite groups. Shared understanding is by no means assured but when consensus is formed, and that consensus starts to act as a structural referential within the policy process, it is argued that the homogeneity of the economic and political elite and, in particular, the role of economic forces in forging such homogeneity, has profound implications for the discursive and deliberative parameters of policymaking. In short, it is argued that when the market needs transformational change, it seeks to affect the structural tolerances that prevent it from taking place. When the call for change emerges elsewhere, the market deploys its resources in order to protect existing socio-economic arrangements.

In the absence of a formal global governance framework, the implications of elite consensus formation activity in transnational circles, for policy related activity at the national, regional and global level, are potentially far reaching. Interconnected elite groups in the transnational setting could be said to resemble a global communications network of elite interests but the limited depiction of elite interactions available in the literature is overtly instrumental. Such networks, informal as well as formal, are not reliable transmitters and do not necessarily represent a clearly defined homogenous interest. The most powerful of these groups do, however, appear to be engaged in a form of activity responsible for the ongoing construction, and dissemination, of beliefs and ideas related to complex global problems. When formed, and accepted within the wider group, these beliefs, or shared understandings, can provide a powerful contextual framework for the consideration of many issues.

2.6.2 *Research opportunity*

The literature review demonstrates a significant gap in the area of elite interactions and pre-agenda policy activity. Specifically, overly functional depictions of collaboration and consensus formation activity have largely overlooked the socio-political context and dynamics of power that have framed the emergence of such activity, shaped its parameters of acceptable discourse, selected its participants, and fundamentally driven its output, tangible or otherwise.

The consensual nature of elite interactions requires an approach to the interpretation of power relations within such groups that looks beyond more observable and coercive forms. Lukes's (1974) third dimensional power lens provides a key mechanism for exploring more discrete dynamics of power within such settings. In particular, for understanding whether the interests and preferences of elite participants have been influenced, from what they might otherwise have been, by processes of elite communication, socialisation, acculturation and fraternisation within such communities. Empirical difficulties with the approach have meant that there are very few examples of a faithful application of third dimensional power and, most notably, none within the context of elite communities.

Finally, the subject of informal transnational elite communities has received scant attention in the literature and there is very little data related to the post-Cold War period. Given the significance of the end of the Cold War to formal international relations activity, this is a glaring omission.

The pivotal question addressed by this research is, therefore:

How have discrete power relations shaped transnational elite thinking related to political problems and acceptable public policy responses in the post-Cold War period?

In order to address this fundamental question, two sub-themes will need to be considered:

How accurate and meaningful a description of the product of transnational elite interactions is the notion of consensus formation?

How coherent is the transnational policy elite?

2.6.3 Research question

In straightforward terms, this research aims to explore the role played by discrete third dimensional power mechanisms in the determination of a general policy orientation among the transnational policymaking elite. In order to do this, it will consider transnational elite interactions in the post-Cold War period, an era in which traditional security-based alliances have, it has been argued, given way to a more fluid depiction of international cooperation. The title of the study is, therefore, defined as,

“The dynamics of third dimensional power in determining a pre-orientation to policymaking: an exploratory study of transnational elite interactions in the post-Cold War period”

In broad terms, this exploratory research will seek to better understand the nature and dynamics of elite consensus formation activity in the transnational arena. It will consider the veracity of the consensus formation label, the nature of transnational elite collaboration, processes of communication, socialisation, acculturation and fraternisation within such communities, the purposeful extent of such activity and, finally, elite perceptions concerning the effects of such interactions.

3.0 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Having identified a research opportunity and question, it is necessary to consider the methodological, and underlying philosophical, choices that inform the study.

It is widely acknowledged that situating the research within the context of an appropriate philosophical framework is a necessary precondition for rigorous and successful social science research (Blaikie, 1993; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 2002; Gill & Johnson, 2002). In the words of Roger Trigg (2001:252),

“the practice of social science cannot be detached from philosophical assumptions about people’s nature and the way that society is formed and changed [...] empirical social science must itself start from a properly articulated philosophical base if it is to be successful. Quantitative analysis, and measurement, of whatever kind, is of little use without an understanding of what is being measured and why it matters. The philosophy of the social sciences...is the indispensable starting point for all the social sciences.”

This chapter will present the ontological and epistemological foundations of the research and the rationale for a qualitative study of elite interactions. It will also provide details of the data collection and analysis methods adopted for the study.

3.2 Ontological perspectives

Broadly speaking, there are two interrelated philosophical treatments of the term ontology: the first is concerned with the rather abstract question of “being” itself and, the second, is concerned with the more specific assumptions that underpin our sense of reality; assumptions, for instance, related to the nature, essence and characteristics of an object. For the most part, certainly within the context of its political application, the latter, more narrow, interpretation is the most prevalent to be found in the literature (Hay, 2006b).

This, more directed, reading of ontology is concerned with the underlying structure of reality (Crotty, 1998) and, more specifically, “with articulating the nature and structure of the world” (Wand & Weber, 1993:220). It refers to the

“claims or assumptions that a particular approach to social enquiry makes about the nature of social reality – claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up, and how these interact with each other.”(Blaikie, 1993:6)

Fundamentally, within the context of social research, it relates to the role of the researcher in defining the nature of the phenomenon that is to be the subject of the study and, critically, acknowledging the implications of this account of reality. In short, in comprehending our view of the world, assumptions are made concerning the intrinsic nature of things; these assumptions reflect our individual understanding of what constitutes reality.

Ontological philosophical positions are usually presented and differentiated by use of some kind of continuum; a continuum that typically has a variant of classical positivism at one end and a form of interpretivism (see Blaikie, 1993) or constructionism (see Crotty, 1998; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002) at the other. Ontological labels, and the meanings attributed to such labels, vary by author, and reflect a raft of perspectives and nuanced positions, all of which makes the task of identifying and describing ones own ontological position somewhat difficult. What is undeniably clear, however, is that the various perspectives along the contested continuum represent a largely successful challenge, made during the past fifty years, towards the once dominant paradigm of the natural sciences, positivism, and its appropriateness to many areas of interest in the social sciences. Before describing the ontological distinctions between these various dominant perspectives, however, it is important to note that the claims of one ontological tradition are unlikely to ever satisfactorily displace the claims of any other; as Colin Hay puts it (2006b:82),

“Ultimately, no amount of empirical evidence can refute the [ontological] claims of the atomist or the structuralist; neither can it confirm or reject the assumption that there is no separation of appearance and reality [...] Whether

we like it or not, and whether we choose to acknowledge it or not, we *make* ontological assumptions – in Wendt’s terms, we *do* ontology. These assumptions profoundly shape our approach to political analysis and cannot simply be justified by appeal to an evidential base.”

The positivist ontology in the social sciences is premised on a belief that society, like nature, exists in a scientifically observable form; a form that is independent, or external, to the individual and represents, therefore, an objective reality. Research is conducted on the basis of observation and purports to objectively measure phenomenon for the purposes of creating, confirming or falsifying theoretical claims (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). In a similar vein, realism, usually presented as a kind of half-way house between the poles of positivism and constructionism, argues for the existence of an extant reality, independent of our knowledge of it, and while accepting fundamental differences between the natural and social sciences, suggests that the core principles of scientific observation in the natural sciences are essential if we are to comprehend the nature of social reality (Blaikie, 1993). The critical point within this is that realists recognise a distinction between the way the world is and the meaning and interpretation of that world held by individuals (Snape & Spencer, 2003). For realists, therefore, individuals are preceded by the social structures into which they are born (Hodgson, 2004). The classic articulation of this worldview is provided by Bhaskar (1979),

“People do not create society, for it always pre-exists them and is a necessary condition for their activity. Rather, society must be regarded as an ensemble of structures, practices and conventions which individuals reproduce and transform, but which would not exist unless they did so. Society does not exist independently of human activity (the error of reification). But it is not the product of it (the error of voluntarism).” (Bhaskar, 1979:36)

This point is critical to an understanding of the realist position and, importantly, the fundamental distinction that is drawn between realism and social constructionism. It suggests that social structures are real, in an objective sense, while all the while accepting that they could not exist independent of human activity. In other words, it is the human acceptance of structure in a deterministic or voluntary manner that confirms

its very existence. For social constructionists, it is impossible to conceive of how such a reality might exist in anything other than the minds that created it and given that this study is concerned with elite consensus formation activity, where individuals are conceived as consciously or unconsciously constructing reality through their social interactions and inter-subjective meanings, the social constructionist perspective is clearly the most appropriate philosophical foundation for the research.

3.2.1 A social constructionist ontology

It is important, at the outset, to recognise a confusion of terms at the social constructionist end of the ontological continuum. A preoccupation with different ontological questions and applications has led to a proliferation of descriptive labels. All such accounts, if not rooted in post-modern thinking then certainly encouraged by it, reflect a rejection of the positivist conception of a knowable external reality but there is considerable debate concerning the creation of meaning and knowledge. The relationship between two terms, constructivism and social constructionism, in particular, requires further consideration.

Both constructivism and social constructionism are predicated on the belief that knowledge and meaning, the constructed representations of reality, are the product of experiences and interactions between individuals in given social contexts. For constructivists, however, such processes take place internal to the individual where knowledge, or meaning, is either integrated into pre-existing cognitive schemes or results in adapted schemes to fit the nature of the environment (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). For social constructionists, it is through social interaction and discourse that meaning is created and shared and may, in time and space, attain a structural quality (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Knowledge is not objective or external, it is the product of a continuous negotiation between individuals and reflects an inseparable link between subject and object (Sandberg, 2005). Social constructionists point to the “primacy of relational, conversational, social practices as the source of individual psychic life” (Stam, 1998:199) and, with a focus on constructed identities over essential selves, social constructionism rejects the idea of a inherent human nature and suggests that we are

composed of multiple identities that are defined within different relationships and cultural contexts (Raskin, 2002). In general terms,

“social constructionism contends that knowledge is sustained by social processes and that knowledge and social action go together. It is less interested, or not at all interested, in the cognitive processes that accompany knowledge.”
(Young & Collin, 2004:376)

This distinction between constructivism and social constructionism is not always accurately reflected in the literature and the terms are frequently used interchangeably. For some, this reflects the fact that the terms are not as inseparable as proponents of one or the other might have us believe (Raskin, 2002) but the vagaries of the concepts necessitate some clarification of how social constructionism is conceived within the context of this study. In broad terms, social knowledge is inter-subjectively interpreted and defined by individuals within given social contexts where meaning is established and disseminated. Over time, these meanings can emerge as established rules or norms that come to represent the social context of ongoing individual interactions.

Drawing upon Giddens’ theory of structuration (1984), I intend to apply a social constructionist ontology which has, at its core, a number of interrelated assumptions concerning structure and agency: firstly, inter-subjectively defined knowledge creates the structure which simultaneously constrains and enables action; secondly, structure and agency, therefore, mutually interrelated. Agents’ actions are defined by structure but the inter-subjective meanings that they interpret from structure can, themselves, be the mechanism by which structure itself is changed; thirdly, social or political order is a product of normative prescriptions that are embedded within structure.

The power of these prescriptions, in the form of social routines and practices, “lies in their capacity to reproduce the intersubjective meanings that constitute social structure and actors alike” (Hopf, 1998:178); the politics of identity within such an approach is conceived, therefore, “as a continual contest for control over the power necessary to produce meaning in a social group” (Hopf, 1998:180). This power, to control inter-subjective understanding, has obvious relevance to consideration of consensus

formation activity in elite communities. It is entirely consistent with the notion of third-dimensional power outlined in the literature review and, significantly in recent years, has underpinned significant insights in the field of international relations (see Wendt, 1992; Wendt, 1999).

3.2.2 *An interpretivist epistemology*

Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, is concerned with how social science theories are constructed, evaluated and justified (Gill & Johnson, 2002). It concerns “what can be known, and what criteria such knowledge must satisfy in order to be called knowledge rather than beliefs” (Blaikie, 1993:7). Given the ontological perspective described previously, an interpretivist epistemology is, unsurprisingly, applied to this study. After all, such an approach implies an ontology in which social reality is the product of socially negotiated interpretations and represents “a complex of socially constructed meanings” (Blaikie, 1993: 96). Interpretivism rejects

“any view which attributes to the social world a reality which is independent of the minds of men. It emphasises that the social world is no more than the subjective construction of individual human beings who, through the development and use of common language and the interactions of everyday life, may create and sustain a social world of inter-subjectively shared meaning.” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979:260)

The central objective for interpretivists, therefore, is to make sense of the “individuals’ and groups’ lived experience of their reality” (Prasad & Prasad, 2002) which represents a logical extension of the social constructionist ontological paradigm. Such inquiry is

“principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live. It attempts to articulate common forms of understanding as they now exist, as they have existed in prior historical periods, and as they might exist should creative attention be so directed.” (Gergen, 1985:266)

In order to satisfy the demands of such an approach, it will be necessary to interpret the meanings implicit within participant accounts of their social world and, using inductive logic, tentatively reconstruct these meanings into social scientific language and theory (Blaikie, 1993). The key challenge, therefore, lies in the soliciting of participant accounts; the collection and analysis of these accounts will lead to an understanding of the rules that underpin behaviour (Harre & Secord, 1972).

3.3 Methodology

While it is true that social scientific enthusiasm for qualitative methods based upon interpretive approaches has increased significantly in recent years (Flick, 2002; Prasad & Prasad, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), the choice is, by no means, assured. Neither should the issue of methodology be reduced to a simplistic distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches; it is crucial, instead, to recognise that real methodological distinctions lie in the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research (Symon & Cassell, 1998; Alvesson & Kaj Skolberg, 2000). In the case of qualitative research, for instance, a multitude of interpretive philosophical perspectives make use of the approach (Prasad & Prasad, 2002) but, ultimately, the qualitative form is guided by very different methodological considerations that influence the conceptualisation, design and implementation of the project (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

3.3.1 An exploratory qualitative approach

Despite the many differences that exist within the interpretive research tradition they are, nevertheless, unified through a belief in the relationship between subject and object and, crucially, the rejection of an objective reality that exists independently of the individual. The subjects, and their world, are intimately related; the world is an experienced phenomena and knowledge is formed through experience of this individual reality. This has very real implications for methodology, in the words of Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3),

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.”

Qualitative techniques have undoubtedly emerged as the most widely adopted exploratory mechanism for probing individual experience and meaning (Geertz, 1973; Alvesson & Kaj Skolberg, 2000; Gill & Johnson, 2002; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). They are particularly relevant when dealing with emergent themes and the discovery of new issues (Robson, 1993; Symon & Cassell, 1998) and, although a crude and overly simplistic distinction, qualitative methods are frequently characterised as hypothesis “building” rather than hypothesis “testing” devices. This study is concerned with processes and practices that are, by their very nature, nuanced and discrete; it is extremely unlikely that quantitative techniques could be employed to meaningfully explore such underlying, and often unconscious, mechanisms.

3.3.2 Methodological choices

At heart, the research process should represent a logically ordered set of choices and, in large part, is guided by whether it is exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. In the case of exploratory research, the key objectives are to discover the nature of things, to seek insights and to probe and assess, typically through the application of qualitative techniques (Robson, 1993). The combination of choices and approaches means that a bewildering array of options for the researcher (Cresswell, 2007) but, in practical terms, the main methods utilised by qualitative researchers are observation, textual analysis, interviews and recording/transcribing. And these four approaches are often combined in some way (Silverman, 2001).

The choice of qualitative methods for this study is influenced by two considerations: firstly, the philosophical concerns that are implicit in the ontological and epistemological perspectives; and, secondly, the obvious challenge of researching private interactions between transnational elite members within organisations that have well observed rules of non-disclosure. The study of elites is, in general terms, hampered by issues of access and reliability but it is difficult to imagine a more discrete example of elite activity than that represented by private interactions in transnational elite communities. With this in mind, the selection of methodological techniques is guided, for the most part, by the necessity for gathering as much “rich” data on such interactions as possible.

Since the study is concerned with the personal accounts of participants, observation techniques were not considered appropriate; besides which, it is extremely unlikely that an invitation to one of the more exclusive of elite gatherings would have been proffered by any of the groups concerned. Analysis of text, documents and recordings might be relevant if such material were to present accurate and reliable accounts of the reflections of elite members on the nature of transnational elite interactions. What limited, and available, secondary interview data that does exist has been analyzed in detail for the purposes of this study. Ultimately, personal interviews were considered the most likely and appropriate vehicle for eliciting substantive accounts from elite participants and, in the event, provided the bulk of interview data for the study.

In summary, this study utilises a multiple method qualitative approach which incorporates an analysis of available secondary data, whether from interviews or published accounts, along with data collected from the principle method, that of elite interviewing.

3.3.2.1 Elite interviewing

An interview provides an interactive opportunity for the researcher to explore ideas, themes and experiences with a participant subject. Moreover, the researcher is instrumental, and actively involved, in enabling the participant to explore, in detail, their

opinions and personal beliefs (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Elite interviews do, however, come with something of an empirical health warning with problems related to sampling, researcher bias, participant validity, reliability and ethics. They are, nevertheless, widely recognised as a “crucial methodological tool” (McEvoy, 2006:189) and “one of the most potent, high-yield ways of studying political elites” (Peabody, Webb et al., 1990:454). If properly addressed, the utilisation of an elite interviewing method can provide a unique insight into the functioning and workings of elite groups. This insight simply cannot be discovered through documentary or historical evidence alone (Seldon, 1996; Davies, 2001). Dependency upon documentary sources can be misleading since, not only might they omit significant aspects of the debate (Herman, 1995), but deliberate attempts to manipulate the official record make reliance upon them questionable (Glynn & Booth, 1979).

In order to address the potential pitfalls of elite interviewing, it is appropriate to deal with them, in turn, and consider how they may impact the design and output of this study.

3.3.2.1.1 Issues with elite interviewing: sampling

Defining the sample is, of course, a major concern with any research but a critical consideration with elite interviewing is the issue of random error; such error will “be introduced if researchers only get access to certain types of respondents” (Goldstein, 2002:669). While acknowledging these dangers, and the disadvantages of a dependency on personal connections, Goldstein (2002:671) recognises, nonetheless, the great difficulty posed by the scheduling of elite interviews; ultimately, stating that “completing elite interviews involves a fair bit of luck [...] I think it would be foolish not to take advantage of any points of access that one has.” Likewise, Woliver (2002:678) highlights the importance of embracing serendipity and pragmatism in elite interview scenarios,

“although it is probably a sin in political science to admit it, luck plays a big role in fieldwork and interviews. If you are interviewing someone and they ask

you if you would like to accompany them to their next meeting, or ride in the taxi with them [...] make sure that you do so.”

Notwithstanding these contributions, the most obvious means of addressing the issue of sample error is to interview as many people as possible from the sample group (Lilleker, 2003; Goldstein, 2002) and to ensure that systematic lists of potential participants from a variety of backgrounds or sympathies are used for selection purposes (Seldon, 1996). Given that members of transnational elites represent a defensive community³³, where information is likely to be guarded or unforthcoming, it is appropriate to highlight the problem of access and the likely outcome of non-probability sampling³⁴.

3.3.2.1.2 Issues with elite interviewing: researcher bias

Researcher bias is another important consideration with elite interviewing since the study of elites, by implication, constitutes a number of normative predispositions; for instance, “[it challenges] some conventional and widely shared assumptions about modern western societies [and raises] some fundamental questions about the way society ought to be organised and the roles of the individuals who comprise it” (Moyser & Wagstaffe, 1987:2). Such a predisposition might certainly influence the shape and tenor of the research and its findings but, with the exception of self awareness and methodological rigour, there is little one can do to entirely satisfy claims that the research is, itself, the product of such a normative framework. Indeed, becoming preoccupied with such concerns is arguably counterproductive; after all, it is worth bearing in mind that all social science research, and most certainly research in the policy sciences, is a product of an explicitly normative process (Lasswell, 1951). In order to guard against too partisan a representation it is essential, where possible, to triangulate data and constantly question the interpretation one is placing upon participant accounts.

³³ See Paul Arthur’s case on defensive elites in Northern Ireland (1987)

³⁴ For an example of the rationale for such an approach see Werning Rivera et al (2002)

3.3.2.1.3 Issues with elite interviewing: validity

The issue of participant validity and reliability is a particularly important consideration when relying upon individual accounts of events. A number of researchers highlight the importance of recognising participant related problems such as excessive discretion (Seldon, 1996), exaggeration (Seldon, 1996; Lilleker, 2003), and selective or partial recollection (Seldon, 1996; Davies, 2001). Another problem, this time related to the interviewer, is also highlighted: that of power inequality, an overly deferential researcher (Berry, 2002), and the difficulty of getting prestigious, well-informed, people to hew to a “standardised line of discussion” (Dexter, 1970:6). Ultimately, problems of this kind are not easy to discount with explanations of methodological rigor. One can, of course, attempt to triangulate data and ensure that there are multiple sources for accounts that seem too improbable to be credible. But, it is important to accept the very real role played by the researcher in the interview; self awareness, honesty, and an acknowledgment of the transactional nature of the elite interview are pivotal to eventual success with the research project (Dexter, 1970). Certain aspects of the interview can be prepared for, such as a well stated letter of introduction (Goldstein, 2002; Aberbach & Rockman, 2002) and thorough background research on the interview subject and field of discussion (Leech, 2002; Werning Rivera, Kozyreva et al., 2002; Lilleker, 2003), but, ultimately, interviewing elites is “both an art and a craft” (Peabody et al., 1990:451). According to Leech (2002:665), “what you already know is as important as what you want to know. What you want to know determines which questions you will ask. What you already know will determine how you ask them.”

3.3.2.1.4 Issues with elite interviewing: ethical considerations

Finally, the question of ethics needs to be addressed, especially, given that the group being approached is, most definitely, defensive in character. Discussing the interaction of political and economic elites with participant subjects will likely produce a wealth of material, some of it specific to individuals and groups, and almost all of it achieved

through a commitment to the Chatham House Rule³⁵. Participants are unlikely to go “on the record” with their accounts and will, almost certainly, require clarification and further confirmation of precise disclosure rules. Any notice of the objectives of the research, along with details of the areas of interest, may be taken as an ethical commitment and, although this doesn’t require disclosure of a theoretical perspective, it is important to recognise that the ethical dimension will have an

“inevitable bearing on access, methodology, and, above all, interpretation of data and publication. This is because one of the most important ethical considerations relates to the intentions of the research and the researcher.”
(Phillips, 1998:9)

Thus, the ethical commitment extends beyond assurances made to participants and can manifest itself in terms of a general commitment to the type of work one wishes to produce. An interesting example of this approach is provided by Woliver (2002:677) who observes that,

“in group politics, conflicts are sometimes important since they add to the fragile nature of a group’s mobilisation. Thus I mask the conflict and discuss it in another way. I do not name the people who hate each other, or who feel that someone is hogging the spotlight or using the group for his or her political career or personal agenda. But, I do write about factions within the group if it is an important part of the group dynamics. If it is just gossip, I don’t use it. It is up to the judgment of the interviewer to know when these conflicts are a serious part of the story and when they are just part of the complexities of people’s personalities and relationships.”

³⁵ Chatham House, formerly known as the Royal Institute of International Affairs, is an independent organisation which promotes research and discussion on international affairs. It is a meeting place for policymakers, media representatives, researchers and industrialists. The rule was created to facilitate free speech and confidentiality at meetings. Under the terms of the rule, information obtained in meetings may be used but the source of the information will not be revealed, unless express permission is granted. Furthermore, no data that reveals or implies the identity of the participant will be used. Broad profiles may be used to support the interview data i.e. business participant/multiple attendee, but care will be taken to ensure participant anonymity at all times.

The final point is, of course, key. Demonstrating the extent and nature of gossip or conflict within elite communities is, in itself, an important finding; to nullify or temper such findings might be detrimental to the impact of the overall study. A balance, therefore, has to be struck and decisions must be taken. The approach adopted in this study is that such decisions should relate to the preservation of participant identity and a more general inclination to avoid humiliating or discrediting participants and their associates.

3.3.3.2 The degree of interview structure

According to Dexter (1970:23), “the best way to interview in a concrete situation depends upon the situation (including the skills and personalities of the interviewers).” While not particularly instructive, the point is well made: there is no right or wrong way to interview and an adherence to methodological dogma might well prevent the best results in a given situation. Generally speaking, and accepting that “there are many types of interviews with many styles of questions, each appropriate in different circumstances” (Leech, 2002:665), interviews are divided into two types: structured and unstructured. It is worth pointing out, however, that structure is really a question of degree with a “broad, grey area of “semi-structured” interview strategies” in between (Davies, 2001:76).

Structured, closed response, interviews are most commonly associated with quantitative approaches where there is little dispute over granularity in the field and where the primary objective is a count of some kind. Unstructured interviews are frequently seen as following a conversational order rather than conforming to a predefined schedule; even the topic of conversation may adapt or change as the interview develops. The disparate, undirected, nature of such interviews does mean, however, that they are largely unsuitable for comparative research purposes; instead, they are best used as a source of insight (Leech, 2002).

Semi-structured interviews are appropriate when it is important to understand the constructs that underpin opinions and beliefs (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002) and they are,

by far and away, the most utilised form of interview in the policy sciences arena. Despite problems with the expansive nature of such an approach, and the consequential volumes of data that are produced, semi-structured and open-ended interviews are viewed as the most potentially valuable, and workable, solution to elite interviewing (Berry, 2002; Leech, 2002; Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Werning Rivera et al., 2002).

While providing some structure, in the form of broad themes for discussion and questions for consideration, the interview schedule is sufficiently flexible so as to allow deviation from the path; it also enables a deeper insight through more extensive use of open and probing questions. Indeed, drawing on earlier ethnographic interview work (see Spradley, 1979), Beth Leech (2002:668) suggests that,

“used in combination, grand tour questions and floating prompts are sometimes enough to elicit almost all of the information you need in a semi-structured interview.”

Furthermore, a semi-structured interview protocol allows the interviewer to respond to the interviewee and the situation in a way that is less threatening and more contextually driven; this is particularly important when discussing sensitive matters where the introduction depends upon a timely and discrete delivery (Leech, 2002; Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). Most importantly of all, however, from the perspective of elite interviewing, the semi-structured format enables a professional and sound footing for the interview while, at the same time, allowing the researcher to develop the trust and confidence of the interviewee based upon a more personal and potentially confident interaction. As Berry (2002:679) makes clear,

“the best interviewer is not one who writes the best questions. Rather, excellent interviewers are excellent conversationalists. They make interviews seem like a good talk among old friends.”

A semi-structured elite interview approach is used as the primary methodological tool for this research project. While an interview protocol, detailing primary themes and secondary areas of interest, was used as a memory aid in the pilot phase of the research

(see Appendix B. Interview themes), interviews for the full study involved preparation of no more than four or five thematic questions. These were specifically tailored according to the profile of the participant and enabled a conversational style of interview. The format provided significant opportunities to cover themes and areas of interest in ways that were both direct and tangential.

3.3.3 Data collection

Prior to conducting research for the main study, a pilot study was carried out in order to establish whether the claims and assumptions of the literature review were supported by first-hand evidence and would, therefore, represent a satisfactory research opportunity. In order to pilot the research, however, it was first necessary to clarify a key issue: how to treat the transnational policy elite for the purposes of this study.

3.3.3.1 Defining the sample population

An important consideration when approaching the issue of transnational elite interactions is whether to treat such activity in the broadest sense or, conversely, to identify an example of such activity. An obvious problem with the former approach is the difficulty of satisfactorily defining the limits of such activity; after all, elite groups and networks are interconnected with other groups and networks which, in turn, have a multitude of personal connections with many others. At what point, therefore, does such activity cease to represent a set of transnational elite interactions?

One possible solution to this problem is to identify a number of elite networks and organisations that might be defined as “more elite” or “more transnational” than others but, such a prescription, is inherently subjective and runs the risk of over simplifying significant differences that exist in group composition and purpose. Another obvious drawback to such an approach is that, despite interconnections between groups, the accounts of activity provided by participants might vary considerably depending upon which groups or networks they are describing. In order to gain a more panoptic account of such activity, it is important, therefore, to identify and interview elite members who

have a grasp of the various different types and levels of transnational elite interaction. This, by implication, necessitates access to the most connected and powerful of elite members, people at the very heart of the transnational elite network.

Of all the formal and informal transnational policy forums and networks, one group, Bilderberg, is considered to be the most exclusive and private. With the regular attendance of recognisable power brokers, and the longstanding support of notable European royalty, Bilderberg continues to attract select participants from the upper transatlantic echelons of business, politics, media, academia, and prestigious policy institutes. Given that Bilderberg attendees are frequently active in numerous other elite transnational groups and forums, they are able to provide a unique perspective of the purpose and effects of such activity and the significance of interconnections between elite communities and networks.

This exploratory study of transnational elite interactions is, therefore, based on the accounts of Bilderberg attendees during the post-Cold War period. A comprehensive list of almost a thousand attendees between the years 1991-2008 has been compiled and represents the sample population for the study (see Appendix C: Bilderberg attendees 1991-2008).

3.3.3.2 The pilot study

As stated previously, the pilot study was considered necessary for the purpose of testing the claims and assumptions of the literature review. Its function and relevance was primarily that of providing background information that might direct the objectives and design of the main study. As a consequence, it is not necessary to provide an exhaustive account of the data collection methods and findings generated by it. Instead, a short summary is provided.

3.3.3.2.1 Overview

The pilot study sought to elicit data through the use of interviews from three separate groups of participants: policymakers, informants and Bilderberg attendees. In interviews with policymakers, the researcher was looking for personal accounts of structural, institutional and political constraints placed upon the initiation and consideration of public policy alternatives. Through interviews with informants, or expert witnesses, the researcher sought to understand more about the purpose and activities of transnational elite networks and, where possible, attempted to acquire, previously unseen, secondary interview data. This data collection activity was complemented by analysis of further secondary data: media interviews with Bilderberg attendees. In total, secondary data from eight interviews was identified and transcribed for analysis purposes. Finally, the researcher contacted a small number of Bilderberg attendees for the purposes of understanding whether such access was possible, on what terms it would be granted and how reliable interview data from such sources was likely to be.

3.3.3.2.2 Pilot study - Policymakers

Three senior policymakers were interviewed face-to-face. Two were, or had been, senior civil servants in the UK government or European Commission. The third was a private sector member of various UK policy networks who had personally advised government ministers and had been present on numerous consultation and advisory committees. The sectors represented were defence, housing, and equal opportunities. All interviews were conducted according to the Chatham House Rule but, in each, permission was granted to record the session. Interviews were personally transcribed and inductively coded in a freehand fashion.

The findings of this small study of policymakers were broadly in line with empirical conclusions in the policy sciences literature and support the central contention that transformational policy change exists largely beyond the capacity of policymakers. The study was, by no means, comprehensive but did provide a sense of the everyday concerns experienced by those with knowledge of the policy initiation and design

processes. The process is, indeed, complex and multi-layered. The actual impact of individuals is often limited but political entrepreneurship is a prized characteristic; each of the policymakers cited timing and opportunism as important aspects of the process. All depictions were, however, limited to the observable functioning of state processes; questions related to the formation of ideas and agendas were viewed, in the main, as a result of events and wider saliency. At no point, were such assumptions fundamentally challenged by interviewees.

3.3.3.2.3 Pilot study – Informants

A small number of expert witnesses, or informants, were seen as having had special access to, or expert knowledge of, elite transnational networks. Justification for the use of such witnesses can be made on the grounds of difficulties likely to be encountered in accessing actual members. Furthermore, it helps

“the investigator to acquire a better picture of the norms, attitudes, expectations, and evaluations of a particular group than he could obtain solely from less intensive observations...naturally, it will often be preferable to combine the use of informants with other interviewing and with other methods of data collection.” (Dexter, 1970:8-9)

Five people, three journalists and two academics, were contacted but two declined to participate. One academic source provided substantial background information on transnational elite networks and two respected journalists provided data including three complete interview transcripts from Bilderberg attendees. The content of these transcripts is included in the main study.

3.3.3.2.4 Pilot study – Bilderberg attendees

The researcher wished to gain an understanding of whether, and on what terms, Bilderberg attendees would consider participating in the study. Initially, since each recipient required a bespoke letter of introduction, it was decided that only a small number of attendees would be contacted directly by email. After a considerable effort to

discover the addresses of certain attendees, it became clear that the email approach was not working. Rather than proceed with a blanket email to potential respondents, the decision was taken to replicate the approach with twenty further attendees; this time using formal letters of introduction. Again, no responses were received. While it is feasible that follow up letters and telephone calls may have yielded a response of some kind, the researcher was unwilling to upset the possibility of future interviews by clumsily approaching potential participants. Instead, it was decided to approach attendees through the use of referrals and introductions of one form or another. Since the objective was simply to discover whether access was feasible, in as short a period of time as possible, sampling was convenience based. In short, two interviews were conducted with Bilderberg attendees.

The first interview was the result of a journalist suggesting the name of an attendee he felt would be willing to participate in the study. An introduction was made and an interview followed some time afterwards. The second interview was also the result of a personal introduction; this time via someone known to the researcher. While the process of gaining access was somewhat protracted and required use of intermediaries, it was concluded that the difficulties were not insurmountable. The terms of access were not overly burdensome and the interviews appeared to be remarkably open and frank. Data collected in these interviews was used for the purposes of the main study.

3.3.3.3 Main study

Given the findings of the pilot phase of the research, a decision was taken to proceed with the main study. The process of data collection and the methods utilised are outlined here.

3.3.3.3.1 Sampling

The non-probability sampling method used to secure interviews was a combination of convenience and “snowball” approaches. The necessity for convenience sampling stems from the obvious challenge of reaching transnational elite participants - a process that is

largely dependent upon the use of intermediaries. The selection of intermediaries in this study was, ultimately, based upon two factors: who it was possible to reach directly; and who might be able to make introductions to members of the Bilderberg group. In some instances, it was necessary to use an additional intermediary to reach the desired intermediary, in effect, two degrees of separation from the eventual participant. In the final analysis, however, the sampling of intermediaries was based upon convenience and this clearly has some implications for the eventual sample. And the incorporation of “snowball” sampling, which calls upon eventual participants to make further participant introductions, may be seen to compound these issues. While snowball sampling has emerged as an important qualitative tool for understanding power relations, social capital and social networks (Noy, 2008) it is long known that it is vulnerable to the introduction of sample bias (see, for example, Goodman, 1961). Given the difficulties associated with securing interviews with elite participants of this kind, however, it was felt that such bias was an unavoidable consequence of such activity. In short, this study makes no claims concerning statistical validity; it is a qualitative exploratory study designed to better understand the nature of elite interactions. The specific comments of one participant are as potentially valid to the findings as comments repeated by the whole group.

In the event, the only purposeful aspect of the sampling process was a mild attempt to ensure representation of participants from the fields of business, politics, media, academia and policy institutes. Of the intermediaries who assisted with introductions, none are known to be familiar with each other although such a possibility could not be discounted. It is significant, however, that when presented with a list of possible Bilderberg contacts there was very little cross over, in terms of possible introductions, between intermediaries.

3.3.3.3.2 *Interviews*

In total, interview data from sixteen Bilderberg participants was gathered from two sources: thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with attendees of the group over a period of twelve months, and a further three, unpublished, interview transcripts

with Bilderberg participants were made available for analysis by respected journalistic sources. Twelve of the semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher were face-to-face and one had to take place, at short notice, over the telephone. Of the interviews provided by journalists, one was conducted face-to-face while two were telephone interviews.

Of those interviews conducted by the researcher, introductions via intermediaries were necessary in all cases. Meetings and introductions were required with all but one of the intermediaries, often on the pretext of understanding their own views of such activity before the request for further introductions could be made. It became apparent throughout the process of meeting with intermediaries that the “screening” of personal introductions was fairly commonplace; with many people willing to make introductions once they were satisfied that their own personal credibility was not going to be called into question. In the course of the study, eight intermediaries were used in order to secure the final Bilderberg interviews. Further intermediaries were contacted and, in turn, offered to assist but these, unfortunately, did not result in interviews. It should be noted that, of the intermediaries, five might be described as being part of a policy elite while three were elite members of the business community. Three Bilderberg contacts declined to participate on the grounds of being too busy; three further contacts agreed to be interviewed but, at the time of writing, had still to make themselves’ available for a meeting. Two contacts did not respond to the introduction.

Interviews were conducted with European participants from the UK, Germany, Spain, Turkey, Belgium and Switzerland. All interviews were conducted according to the Chatham House Rule and care has been taken to ensure participant anonymity during the analysis stage. While it might have been desirable to tabulate participant details with descriptions such as nationality, sector, and years of attendance; presenting just a small amount of such correlated data can frequently, and inadvertently, reveal the identity of the participant. For this reason, general descriptive data for the sample will be presented but descriptions in the findings will be restricted to only those that preserve the identity of participants and their associates.

The duration of face-to-face interviews varied from 53 minutes to 90 minutes and all but one of the interviews were digitally recorded. In the case of the latter, the participant asked that his comments not be recorded but he was happy for me to make notes. Notes were, indeed, taken and great care was taken to ensure the accuracy of statements. Within minutes of the interview ending the researcher had revisited the notes and ensured that statements were both readable and an accurate representation of the interview. All interviews were personally transcribed by the researcher. Of the three remaining telephone based interviews, transcripts for two were made available by the journalistic source. The third, conducted by the researcher, was made at short notice, after the cancellation of a meeting, and it was not possible to record the discussion. Notes were taken during the call and immediately revisited after the interview to ensure accuracy. Telephone interviews were shorter than face-to-face meetings, ranging in duration from 15 minutes through to 25 minutes and questions and responses tended to be more direct than those in face-to-face interviews.

3.3.3.3.3 Overview of participants

All of the study's Bilderberg participants are men. In broad sectoral terms, there are five representatives of business, five representatives of politics, two representatives of academia and four representatives of the media sector. Allowing for multiple interests and responsibilities, the sample group comprises (past and present):

- **The editors of three national newspapers and a financial journalist**
- **Two professors**
- **Two foreign ministers**
- **A minister of defence**
- **The head of an international institution e.g. World Bank/IMF/NATO**
- **The governor of a central bank**
- **The chairmen of four international banks**
- **An EU Commissioner**
- **The head of a policy institute**
- **An ambassador**
- **The chairman of a business federation**
- **The CEO of a television network**
- **The chairmen of three international business conglomerates**

There are five one-time attendees and four participants who had attended more than seven times during the period 1991-2008. A further seven participants attended between two and five conferences. On average, study participants attended the Bilderberg conference 4.25 times during the period 1991-2008. The mean number of sample group attendees each year at the conference was 3.77 - see Table 1. In addition to regular invitees, the sample group contains five known members, past or present, of the Bilderberg steering committee and two of this group were, or are, members of the inner advisory group.

Year	Attendees
1991	4
1992	3
1993	2
1994	3
1995	6
1996	3
1997	4
1998	4
1999	5
2000	4
2001	4
2002	3
2003	4
2004	4
2005	4
2006	4
2007	4
2008	3
	Mean
	3.777777778
	SD
	0.878203752

Table 3.1 Sample group attendees at Bilderberg conferences 1991-2008

3.3.4 Data preparation and analysis

3.3.4.1 Transcripts

All interviews, with the exception of those provided by journalists, were subsequently transcribed by the researcher. While this was a painstaking process, it did allow for the data to be revisited and appreciated in its entirety; rather than, as might have been the case with transcription by a third party, a more selective appreciation of the content and contextual references. Clearly, this is a shortcoming with the journalistic transcripts, but the value of the data, which is not in the public domain, coupled with the accuracy of the conversational content of the transcripts, more than compensates for any shortcomings in this area. In the case of the researcher's own interviews, early transcripts attempted to include references to such things as laughter, lengthy pauses and utterances; but, as the process unfolded, it became clear that much of this notation was both tedious and surplus to the requirements of the study. Where such data was felt to have an immediate bearing upon the meaning of the response, notes were taken. For instance, when a respondent was felt to be evasive in his responses, this would manifest itself in a number of audible and non-audible ways. In such instances, the researcher recorded the evasion and, indeed, later returned to such evasions for the purposes of further inquiry.

3.4.4.1.1 Unit of analysis

Establishing the unit of analysis is critical to research concerned with theory building (Eisenhardt, 1989). Furthermore, explicitly defining the unit of analysis is a central component in the effective planning and conceptualisation of the overall research project (Neuman, 2000).

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, transnational elite participants have provided accounts (Harre & Secord, 1972) of their beliefs, experiences, and perceptions of inter-subjective meanings that underpin this form of elite interaction and consensus formation.

3.3.4.2 *Discourse and discourse analysis*

Discursive approaches to qualitative analysis are rooted in the social constructionist movement (Berger & Luckman, 1966) in which language is viewed as central to an understanding of the way in which individuals interpret and reproduce socially constructed reality. While there is no single unifying definition of discourse, the term is used widely in the social sciences and, in its broadest sense, is often taken to comprise “all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987:7) Emphasising the role of language in social construction, Burr (2003:65) suggests that,

“discourses, through what is said, written or otherwise represented, serve to construct the phenomena of our world for us, and different discourses construct these things in different ways, each discourse portraying the object as having a very different nature from the next. Each discourse claims to say what the object really is, that is, claims to be the truth.”

The purpose of discourse is the subject of some debate among post-structuralist contributors with, for many, the subject being inextricably entwined with issues of identity, knowledge and power. Foucault, for example, views power as dispersed throughout all social relations; where individuals are

“always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. They are not its inert or consenting target; they are also always elements of its articulation [...] individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.” (Foucault, 1980:98)

Furthermore, it is in the mutually supportive nature of knowledge and power, of which Foucault (1980) refers to regimes of “power-knowledge” or “discourses”, where the relevance of discourse to the structural means of knowing and exercising power becomes most apparent. The significance of individuals and discourse within this conception of power is critical since

“discourses do not simply produce, transmit and reinforce power relations, they also threaten, expose and render them fragile.” (Knights & Vurdubakis, 1994)

This critical turn, with its emphasis on power relations, has led to calls for a distinction to be made between different discourse approaches. One such distinction, made by Mumby & Clair (1997), is between that of “interpretive” discourse, and its concern for socially constructed meaning, and “critical” discourse, with its concern for issues of power and identity. In the case of the former, interpretive approach, “discourse is the principal means by which organisation members create a social reality that frames their sense of who they are” (1997:181). In the case of the latter approach, critical discourse (analysis) is concerned with the role of discourse in producing and reproducing structures of power and inequality. Since this study is principally concerned with elite interactions and shared understandings, and since the stated epistemological stance is interpretive, the approach taken here, in the broadest sense, is that of interpretive discourse analysis.

Consistent with the breadth of their definition of discourse to include all forms of spoken interaction and written text, Potter and Wetherell (1987:7) maintain that discourse analysis is the “analysis of any of these forms of discourse.” But the question of what constitutes analysis is pivotal to an understanding of what practices fall within the parameters of the discourse analysis. Antaki et al (2002) argue that certain practices definitely do not represent discourse analysis, but they are less inclined, for reasons of inclusiveness, to state which practices they feel do. Their analysis leans towards a more thorough textual interpretation, depending upon a very detailed form of transcription which includes pause timing, laughter, utterances and inflexions, and owes a considerable amount to the approach developed by Jefferson (1985). The distinction, given such a perspective between content analysis, a more quantitative analysis of textual data, and discourse analysis is abundantly clear. The distinction, however, becomes less clear as one moves along the spectrum from content analysis, through thematic analysis, and into what the authors might view as more pure forms of discourse analysis.

Thematic analysis is a widely used method of textual analysis in the social sciences but is largely overlooked, and often confused with, other methods of discourse analysis. As Braun and Clarke (2006:79-80) conclude,

“it can be seen as a very poorly ‘branded’ method in that it does not appear to exist as a named analysis in the same way as other methods do... in this sense, it is often not explicitly claimed as the method of analysis when, in actuality, we argue that a lot of analysis is essentially thematic – but is either claimed as something else (such as discourse analysis or even content analysis) or not identified as any particular method at all.”

In practical terms, thematic analysis, probably best viewed, at this time, as a variation or constituent within the broader definition of discourse analysis activity, involves “identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns [themes] within the data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in [rich] detail” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). Drawing on the earlier work of Boyatzis (1998), Braun and Clarke (2006:79) note that it often “goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic.”

This study utilises an inductive, thematic, discourse analysis; similar, in essence, to a grounded approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), to categorise and interpret data and subsequently build theory.

3.3.4.3 *Coding*

The interpretive coding protocol used for the study is broadly in line with the framework for classification and description of qualitative data manipulation operations outlined by Spiggle (1994); namely categorisation, abstraction, comparison, dimensionalisation, integration, iteration, and refutation. Through the use of these operations “researchers organise data, extract meaning, arrive at conclusions, and generate or confirm conceptual schemes and theories that describe the data” (1994:493). The coding itself is a combination of open, axial and selective approaches based upon the inductive identification of thematic categories. The interview transcripts were initially open coded in a bottom-up fashion starting with interview one and working

through to interview sixteen. By the time that interview twelve was coded, the number of thematic groups was reaching saturation with only a small number of groups being added after this point. Broadly speaking, each category of data is a collection of interview extracts, words, sentences or whole paragraphs, with similar thematic meanings.

In order to manage the sheer volume of data, QSR NVivo 8.0 software was used to assist with open coding. After the initial stage of working through transcripts, approximately 120 thematic categories had emerged from the data with 1444 interview extracts (see Appendix D. Coding/Thematic categories). The largest category of data had as many as seventy extracts associated with it, while others had only one. The abstraction phase of the process was more complicated and required a number of iterations over several days. During this time, the researcher attempted to create higher level thematic abstractions based upon clusters of lower order categories. This was not as simple as creating hierarchal trees and nodes, to use NVivo parlance, since a great many interrelationships existed between categories and, in some cases, questions arose concerning the inclusive nature and relevance of abstractions. In the event, five thematic meta-categories of data emerged:

- The structural context of elite interactions in the transnational setting
- Collaboration in the transnational arena
- Transnational networks and networking
- Consensus formation and the narrowing of differences
- Hierarchies of influence

Within these five meta-categories, initial thematic constructs were once again reconceptualised and a smaller group of higher order themes were created. The meta-categorisation of data and these higher order themes produced the structure of the findings.

3.4 Conclusion

A social constructionist ontological perspective with an interpretivist epistemology is employed for the purposes of this study. A qualitative methodology is considered to be the most appropriate means of addressing the objectives of the research and multiple data collection methods are employed. The primary mechanism, however, is that of elite interviewing.

An inductive, thematic, form of discourse analysis is utilised and, through a process of abstraction, theory is tentatively developed. The key thematic abstractions are presented in the following findings chapter.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study attempts to explore how the dynamics of discrete power, specifically third dimensional power, in transnational elite interactions may have shaped elite thinking related to political problems and public policy responses in the post-Cold War period. It is concerned with the nature of such interactions and the dynamics of consensus formation within transnational elite networks. Moreover, it aims to consider the veracity of the consensus formation label, the purposeful nature of collaboration within transnational elite networks and the processes of communication, socialisation, acculturation and fraternisation that characterise interactions within such settings.

An inductive analysis of data gathered from sixteen interviews with Bilderberg attendees during the period 1991-2008 is presented in this chapter. Extracts from these interviews, which are presented throughout the findings, are labelled *Interview 1* through to *Interview 16*. In addition, a minimal amount of secondary interview data, gathered during the pilot phase of the study, is used to support some points raised by the analysis; such extracts are labelled *Interview 17* through to *Interview 21*. It is important to note that the findings present the main thematic abstractions developed by the researcher during the course of the data analysis; given the sheer volume of data, and the possible extent of interpretative analysis, it is simply not feasible to provide commentary on every aspect of the data provided by participants. In the interests, therefore, of coherence and readability, the extracts used, in a singular and collated sense, support general thematic abstractions and are not analyzed, extract by extract, for the purposes of providing explanations of additional phenomenon. It is intended that such analysis will be the subject of further studies.

The findings are split into five thematic sections reflecting the abstractions identified in the coding stage of the study. Theme 1, which concerns the structural context of elite transnational interactions, considers participant accounts of international relations activity in the post-Cold War period and the role of informal elite networks before, and

after, the fall of the Berlin Wall. It analyses the changing nature of political power and the role of legitimacy in international affairs and considers global governance in the contemporary setting. Theme 2 explores elite collaboration and, specifically, the logic and practice of multi-stakeholder collaboration in the transnational arena; while Theme 3 considers transnational networks and networking activity and, crucially, the changing nature and significance of such activity. Theme 4, on the issue of consensus formation and the narrowing of differences, presents a more nuanced account of transnational elite interactions but, at the same time, identifies considerable sources of bias within such settings. The effects of such bias, specifically its consequences for shared understanding within elite networks, are explored. Finally, Theme 5, which analyses hierarchies of influence within transnational elite groups, considers the role of the individual and individuals within such arenas as well as the seductive lure of such activity to elite participants.

4.2 Theme 1. The structural context of elite interactions in the transnational setting

It is important to state, at the outset, that contemporary elite interactions in the transnational setting do not exist in a structural vacuum; they are as much a product of the complex interweaving of historical, geographical, economic and socio-political forces as one might expect of any other sphere of elite, or human, interaction. What makes them potentially more interesting, however, is the lack of structural homogeneity that exists in the international context. Not only are structural realities more complex, disparate and nuanced, they also represent a fiercely contested discursive backdrop to international relations activity. As a consequence, the formation of elite consensus related to the nature of international challenges should not be viewed simply as an attempt to collectively grapple with complex, and otherwise insurmountable, problems. It must also be seen as a contested process governing the pervasiveness, or otherwise, of certain structural paradigms within the elite transnational community.

4.2.1 Elite transatlantic interactions in the post-Cold War period

This contestedness has become a more prominent feature of transatlantic elite interactions during the post-Cold War period as the relative certainty of earlier alliances, based upon security and economic principles, has given way to a period of much greater complexity in world affairs. In the words of one participant,

“There has been a dramatic change in the post-Cold War system. The Cold War system was a structure and the reason structuralist schools were so successful during the Cold War period was that everything was inside the structure. Nothing could really move outside of the structure in the West and in the Communist countries. Even in the third-world, even though their realities were very different from the industrialised countries of the West or the Communist world, it was still completely absorbed in structure. But now we’re living outside the structure.” (Interview 3)

The decline of the perceived Soviet threat, disquiet concerning the pervasiveness of the Washington Consensus and the globalisation project, significant international disputes over Bosnia and Iraq, major advances in technology and communications and the emergence of, what some see, as multi-polarity in world affairs, have led to the suggestion that traditional transatlantic relationships are declining in importance. For European members of the transatlantic elite, however, it is a mistake to underestimate the residual strength and exclusivity of certain economic, social and cultural transatlantic ties,

“It’s been overstated. I think you’ll find this transatlantic relationship has been transformed by the end of the Cold War in the sense that its automatic reflexes have gone i.e. ‘we’d better hang onto each other otherwise those horrible Soviets may overcome us’. But the need for it is about to make quite a big comeback and, with the US presidential elections, it’s already making a comeback. You can see with President Bush’s trip around Europe right now that it’s all about how we can work together. So I think the period between 2000-2006 will come to be seen as an aberration.” (Interview 12)

“It seems that, whatever their differences, the Europeans and the Americans have a basic need for a World Trade Organisation and that, whatever their other preoccupations, the bigger picture requires them to go beyond their dissenting elements.” (Interview 14)

“There is, of course, the divide that nobody wants to talk about between East and West. Here in Istanbul, this is where East and West meet. But there is still a feeling that a Muslim country shouldn’t be a member of a Christian club. It’s not discussed, but it’s there.” (Interview 6)

The final point, raised by a member of the Turkish business elite, highlights a perceived dividing line that exists between what he sees as participation and full membership of the European, and hence transatlantic, club. This distinction may have as much to do with Turkey’s place in global economic affairs as it has to do with culture or religion, but the perception here is clearly that European and transatlantic affairs exhibit a historical and cultural dimension that reinforces feelings of exclusion. As another Turkish representative commented,

“countries such as France, Holland, many countries, look upon Turkey as the ‘other’ who doesn’t belong in this club.” (Interview 5)

And this tendency towards historical and cultural alliances is mirrored in the composition of transatlantic elite forums and groups as one recent Bilderberg attendee confided

“I was struck by how Western European the whole thing was and I did say that to people. And they said, ‘well, we did try to have East Europeans in before but the size of it became too large’. But it struck me as quite an old style alliance thing, you know, Western Europe and the United States. I mean, I can see the rationale from a scale point of view but, if you’re talking about Europe, you can’t talk about Europe in just West European terms. But clearly that persists here.” (Interview 2)

A former member of the Bilderberg group expressed similar surprise when informed that East Europeans were still largely absent from the annual conference,

“I presumed that they would now have all the Europeans there, I mean, when I was there we didn’t want the Warsaw Pact people because that would have raised all sorts of difficult problems but, nowadays you would expect the Poles and Hungarians and suchlike, I don’t know, I suppose they don’t want it to get too big.” (Interview 4)

While it is clear that formal international relations activity may have been transformed by the end of the Cold War, it seems that informal ties and networks, based largely on prior relationships and a shared understanding of world affairs, continue to reflect traditional alliances. One obvious reason for this in the case of transatlantic elites, aside from considerable economic ties, is the continued significance of organisations such as NATO; especially, once more, in response to the perception of renewed Russian economic and military aggression. During the Cold War, the vacuum left by the absence of a formal international political apparatus, and the failure of member countries of NATO to develop a meaningful political function for the organisation, led to a situation in which informal relationships became a significant adjunct to formal international relations activity. Explaining the void, one participant noted,

“you had an organisation, NATO, that was supposed to be rounded in the sense that they talked on political issues as well as on defence. But they really only talked about defence and I think that was an error. I think it was the only organisation, at that time anyway, in which the Americans and the Europeans got together; there was no other organisation, well there was the European Union but, otherwise, there was no way the Americans had any input into European thinking or that Europeans had input into American thinking.” (Interview 4)

As if to reinforce this point, the political importance of informal elite networking to the cementing of transatlantic relations appears, to this day, to be contingent upon the nature of perceived threats and opportunities. In political terms, this is evidenced by

formal involvement and engagement with informal groups during the period immediately after the end of the Cold War and the resurgence of political interest in the period leading up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003,

“[After the end of the Cold War], the Americans got less interested in it politically; business wise they didn’t. I think they began to think that Europe wasn’t quite as important, there wasn’t going to be a nuclear war and therefore we were a lot of quarrelsome people who didn’t matter very much. And, anyway, they’d rather go to China or wherever.” (Interview 4)

In the months leading up to the second Gulf War, however, informal groups and networks had, once again, become a critical political mechanism for the exchange of views and information, the airing of grievances, the creation of alliances, and the attempted formation of consensus; although, as one participant recalls,

“[on the Iraq invasion], you had two consensuses: on the one hand, a consensus around the position of countries like France and Germany; and, on the other, around the position of the United States and the UK. It divided, polarised, Europe, it polarised the United States, not at that moment but later, and it polarised the Security Council. It was not possible to reach a single consensus. But the consensus building processes, in think tanks and among the elite, continued to operate. It was mainly in these sorts of forums, that we found legitimacy or enough legitimacy. It was a very, very, active period for many think tanks, institutions, foundations, academic circles and media groups. For or against, but especially for, this machinery worked very well for.” (Interview 3)

The suggestion of instrumentalism, implicit within such an account, points to an acknowledgement of the role of such groups in the intellectual legitimisation of foreign policy activity and, moreover, the role of power relations in establishing a sense of what constitutes legitimacy in the first place. One crucial component in such power relationships, is the collective need of participants to contain political disputes and not allow them to spill over into all areas of bilateral cooperation. In this respect, economic interests play a very important role in maintaining dialogue and political relations. As one participant recalled,

“it was clear that during the Iraq saga, relations between some European countries and the United States were not the best in the world and, the fact that the business community felt they would not be distracted from their long term strategy in relation to this, was a very useful element. In other words, you don’t translate a quarrel on Point A into an across the line relationship.” (Interview 14)

The suggestion that political issues can be “ring-fenced” in this way is, of course, overly simplistic but it is interesting to note, all the same, the perceived transcendental quality of business interests - a theme that is returned to in section 4.5.1 *Consensus formation and elite shared understanding*.

4.2.2 States, power and legitimacy

Notwithstanding the obvious involvement of non-state interests in the transnational political sphere, there exists, within the participant group, strong support for the view that government, and the state, is and remains, the key protagonist in international relations activity. As one participant unequivocally stated,

“ultimately, political power rests with nation states and with completely overt national political processes. These meetings are a useful adjunct to that but they’re never a substitute for that.” (Interview 13)

This view is qualified, in the international setting, by the suggestion of power residing, increasingly, with multilateral power structures based upon the collective sovereignty of nation states. It is important to recognise, therefore, that global economic and political developments are being driven by

“governments largely, the shareholders of the international system. The shareholders of the international system are still governments, and they decide collectively, more and more, multilateralism, to do certain things together mainly because these things cannot be done by individual countries. So, in the UN, they decide to do a whole lot of things ranging from climate change to war, aggression, peacekeeping, world health and any number of other things. In the

IMF and World Bank, they decide other things, and in the WTO they regulate international trade.” (Interview 12)

Multilateralism is viewed as essential because the power of the nation state, and political leaders, is believed to have diminished significantly in the contemporary era. Cooperation between governments, and other stakeholders, is seen as the only means of coming to terms with complex global problems.

“The margin of influence that leaders have on events from the political to the economic to the social bears no resemblance to what they had in the thirties. Life has become much more complex. The margin for manoeuvre, the capacity to act of democratically elected governments, has become smaller and the problems have become larger with geographical dimensions that go way beyond anything that anybody could have invented before. So the world runs in a chaotic fashion and will continue to run in a chaotic fashion.” (Interview 14)

“One of the most frightening things, of course, if you are anywhere near people who are in charge of governments or large businesses, is how they too are like corks bobbing around on the stream of what's carrying on. I mean people hugely overestimate the ability of individuals to change the course of history [...] I'm absolutely convinced it's impossible for anybody to rule the world.” (Interview 18)

Of course, such complexity does not preclude political influence; it does, however, have a significant bearing upon the form that it takes. There is broad agreement that the terms under which state power can be exercised in the international setting have changed almost beyond recognition during the post-Cold War period. In an interconnected and interdependent global setting, legitimacy, as a basis for state action, has become a critical pre-requisite. The consequences of acting without perceived legitimacy, or, worse still, losing legitimacy through ones actions, are potentially profound. As one participant sees it,

“you have an asymmetric world at this time. You have moments in which you have to use power but the traditional instruments of international relations, for

instance diplomacy, have completely changed now because of transparency; because of the need to be more accountable. If you use diplomacy, you have to use it in a different way and you have to explain what you are doing, what you are saying, and why you are saying it. When you use the traditional instruments of power, you have to use them in a different way or you cannot use them at all. And, crucially, you have to use new instruments of power. The rules of using power, everyone has to accept them, even the United States, because of this transparency.” (Interview 3)

Given the transparency that exists both, upwards, within the international community itself, and downwards, to a much more informed, and increasingly socially responsible, constituent base, the way that political leaders manage the relationship between forms of “hard” and “soft” power is critical to the question of legitimacy. This depiction of international relations has some parallels with the idea of social capital in which qualities such as trust become vital to ones ability to function effectively.

“There is a necessity to have a minimum of trust. You need to have a capacity not simply to force people to do things because you believe that you are in a position of strength. That is not how the world is run. There is a balance of power and that [way of working] is not sufficient.” (Interview 14)

The idea that there exists a “balance of power” or some kind of equilibrium to power relations represents an important reality for most states, as participant 3 observes,

“very powerful countries, who use traditional instruments, are now talking about soft power; they have hard power, military power, diplomacy, pressure, sanctions and so on, but then they also have soft power. For example, power related to cooperation, culture, development, scientific advances and so on. This is the case for very powerful countries. Then you have a second group of countries: the UK, France etc. These countries have more difficulties when they try to use traditional instruments. Why? Because, let’s argue that the United States is an empire, it isn’t, but given the way it works and acts, it is the number one and it has to protect its position. From this point of view it is an empire. Everyone understands they will use everything to protect this agenda. But the

others, we are not protecting such positions; we are less and less imperial from that point of view. Our societies are not asking us to protect hegemonic positions in the world; they want us to be good players, to be more ethical in our foreign policy. At the same time, however, each sector of society is asking us to protect certain national interests related to them: corporates are asking us to protect their interests from an economic and trade point of view; Europe is making similar demands etc. We will be less and less able to use the hard power instrument and will, more and more, need to have both hard and soft power.” (Interview 3)

This requirement for subtlety in international relations is also leading to the development of different kinds of leaders; leaders capable of managing instruments of soft power and persuasion. Against such a backdrop, those who utilise more traditional instruments of power or “shows of strength” run the risk of alienating wider potential support. This can be a rather subtle process, as one participant notes,

“things have changed. I mean when I reconsider the last ten-fifteen years, and the two Iraq Wars and so on, I know many, including myself, who have, in the process, changed their view. With hindsight, and knowing better perhaps, I think this is an indispensable tool that we must all use, to be critical with ourselves. I’ve always found that those who have a very strong view on something and do not give, despite the world changing around them, were not the best people you’d like to talk to.” (Interview 9)

It is clear that, in the run up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and the perceived failure of “softer” attempts to foster a single consensus, the “harder” line of the neo-conservatives became more pronounced in informal, as well as formal, elite interactions. As one Bilderberg attendee confided,

“d’Avignon³⁶ acknowledged to me the change in the Democrat/Republican relationship abroad. Previously they presented a fairly united front. He suggested that, perhaps now, the neo-cons were too well represented.” (Interview 8)

³⁶ Viscount Etienne D’Avignon is the serving Honorary Chairman of the Bilderberg group

Another participant, recalling an exchange with Richard Perle at that time, provides another interesting example of frustration with the perceived intransigence of the neo-conservative position and personalities,

“We said, ‘what is your objective here? You want to get rid of Saddam, fine, but what are you talking about? Because if you go in there with a huge force and occupational theories, you will open up a Pandora’s box.’ We know from history that all these maps were drawn hastily by our friends from Britain after the first war and they were not natural maps, ethnically or in terms of national essence, it was not there [...] And so, in the context of this, we said all the ethnic tensions will come to the surface, we tried to point out all the difficulties and how these might be managed, what kind of consortium could manage this, and Richard Perle came in and said ‘well, sorry, but you don’t know anything, we have all the intelligence. When our forces go in there, all the Iraqi people will hug them, embrace them, and it will be a waste of time’. And this was a big difference of opinion and we didn’t like his style very much and the way he was.” (Interview 6)

Notwithstanding such differences, it is important to note that a desire to maintain good relations arguably led to a coercive form of consensus in the period leading up to the Iraq invasion; a consensus that was to fall apart again soon afterwards. One of the more profound implications for countries at the centre of heated confrontations in the days leading up to the invasion of Iraq has been the varying degrees of international legitimacy enjoyed in the aftermath of the war. Referring to the position of France, a political participant observed,

“what the world has learned after Iraq is that, in the short term, not accepting a broad consensus is terribly difficult. But, if you are right, in the long term it becomes extremely important and it very much reinforces your position.” (Interview 3)

Conversely, the Bush administration’s perceived loss of legitimacy in world affairs, as well as being disastrous for its reputation and international bargaining power, has had far reaching and unforeseen consequences. These have been undoubtedly compounded

by recent events in global financial markets. Indeed, some view this as a significant turning point in the development of global regulation and the essential subjugation of all countries to such a framework. As one participant suggests,

“The Bush administration has utterly wasted whatever legitimacy it had – whatever power it had economically, politically and militarily. There is a shift from an Atlantic to a Pacific world and America cannot dictate to the rest of the world any longer; it will have to come to the table. The Washington Consensus is out of our way, I think we will have a much more regulated world. The global financial crisis has put the last nail in the coffin. The US is weakened. If you need foreign capital to save your biggest institution, if you have to go to such lengths to save Bear Stearns from falling into foreign hands, you can hardly steer the world in the same direction. We will have to revitalise the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations will require refashioning for this new world. It’s not going to happen overnight but we will get there.” (Interview 8)

The view expressed here was, for the most part, not reflected as forthrightly by other participants but there was, nevertheless, a detectable degree of anti-American sentiment, or general cynicism, to be found in a small number of the interviews.

4.2.3 Global governance – hard and soft regulation

There is considerable disagreement among the wider participant group on the likelihood of a global regulatory framework and, moreover, whether existing power structures, governmental and non-governmental, are capable of delivering such a development. In the words of one participant,

“I think there is a potential real conflict between the interests of multinationals and the interests of governments which, at the moment, is being settled in favour of the multinationals because, with modern communications, they can move around much more easily than they ever could. And, therefore, if they don’t like the way, particularly on tax, that a country is behaving they can simply transfer business, or parts of their businesses, to other countries that will

treat them differently. And I think, therefore, that we're going through a phase when they are in a position to dictate their terms which is, to an extent, not desirable but to which I see no answer. If Europe, the United States, China and India all got together, I suppose they could dictate to the multinationals; but I'm not sure of that. But supposing they could, that would require a degree of political rapprochement between the major economic groupings of a degree it is very difficult to foresee." (Interview 11)

Reflecting a common thread of such "realism" among the participant group, and, at the same time, an interesting acceptance of dominant elite logic, the idea of supranational organisations regulating and policing "hard" global regulation is seen as largely unattainable at this time. As one participant put it,

"I think the idea of getting the United Nations to subject multinational companies to certain rules is, quite frankly, completely "for the birds". It's never going to happen. It was tried in the 1970s and it was a complete flop; it won't work. It's safe to say, there won't be [a global regulatory framework]." (Interview 12)

Against this backdrop, the emergence of "soft" regulation is viewed as critical to the development of a new world order; indeed, some see it as the starting point on a path that leads to the eventual hardening of regulation and formal global governance. This process has been driven by changing conceptions of development partly brought about by the emergence of global civil society movements; as one participant suggests,

"the concept of development has completely changed. In the 1950s and 1960s development was equal to growth, economic growth. Today, we all accept that development is something else. It requires justice, conflict resolution etc. As a response, you also see the role of multinational companies changing, for instance, with the Global Compact framework where many important companies have decided to accept the ten principles. This is only the beginning of a new framework; it is still too weak but I'm sure it is going to evolve." (Interview 3)

Interestingly, perhaps, trade and business regulation are seen as two of the more advanced domains of international “hard” regulation. Part of the reason for this lies with some of the more protectionist aspects of the globalisation project. Confidence and trust, coupled with the creation of favourable business regimes for already successful businesses, ensures that the interests of certain groups are protected in the international setting. The transcendental quality of such regulatory diffusion is seen as taking place almost despite the conflicting demands of government. In the words of one participant,

“I think one outcome of networking, at least that’s the way I always saw it, is corporate governance, or the spreading of governance standards across borders, across continents, even across oceans. I think that had a lot to do with networking and personal experience, by participants much more than by government action. It’s fair to say that business totally accepted globalisation, I mean it’s our daily life. We don’t even discuss it whereas politicians still, at least in this country, continue to discuss whether they should have it or not. As if they could still make such a decision! I doubt it. I think [national] politics is totally at odds with globalisation; [politicians] do not understand how their old confirmed right, that whatever they said was binding within the borders of the national entity, is no longer true. They cannot escape the influence from abroad and this makes them sick and tired.” (Interview 9)

It is through trade legislation, however, and the globalising effects of economic incentives and sanctions administered through key international institutions, that “hard” forms of regulation have really taken hold. As one participant observes,

“trade is an interesting case because it is, of course, the one area in which we’ve probably come nearest to world government. We do have a regulatory framework that regulates international trade and, if you step across it, and you get brought before a panel and the panel rules against you, then compensation may be taken by the offended party against the offending one. So that’s a very advanced form although there is no world government at the WTO. It’s a governmental organisation, an intergovernmental organisation, and the regulatory aspects are pretty hard.” (Interview 12)

As another participant notes, the power of international financial institutions, notably the World Bank and IMF, has enormous direct implications for emerging economies,

“the IMF, of course, was the epicentre, the key agency for imposing, for pushing, for urging, or for advising countries; mainly because, the stability of the financial system, of the whole world economy, could be established if these [Washington Consensus] principles had been applied. So, your budget should be in order. If you’re in deep trouble with your budget deficit it immediately affects your public sector debt, puts pressure on interest rates, which concentrates the problem and you will see pressure on your exchange rate [...] The IMF, and other international organisations, have always said ‘first, clear up your house and then we’ll sit and talk to each other’.” (Interview 7)

This influence has been traditionally focused upon financial indicators but increased civil society pressure and transparency has brought social policy requirements into the frame. As a consequence, we are witnessing a blurring of the lines between economic and political instruments, between hard regulation and soft regulation, and between governmental and non-governmental activity. For some, these developments mark a significant departure from existing conceptions of international relations activity and power relations. As participant 3 reflects,

“as I see international relations in the twenty-first century, I think the state is losing the protagonism it had during the previous system; we are now transitioning to a new system of international relations. And in this new system, there are new actors taking power from the state: upwards to the supranational organisations and institutions and downwards to communities, individuals and, of course, multinational corporations.” (Interview 3)

4.2.4 Summary of theme one

Transnational elite interactions in the post-Cold War period take place against the backdrop of a formal international relations setting that is in a state of considerable flux. The structural certainties associated with traditional alliances have given way to a

period in which legitimacy, and legitimacy building, has emerged as a critical activity between governmental power brokers.

In macro terms, certain ideological tenets continue to underpin such discourse; as participant 14 suggested rather rhetorically,

“this is the reality of the world [...] who contests the market economy today? Nobody.” (Interview 14)

And, furthermore, there is support for hegemonic depictions of American economic influence in world affairs although such support has been called into question by recent events. The lack of a dominant consensus in international relations has created uncertainty and fear; as participant 3 notes,

“many of these actors in the past considered that their survival was linked to the acceptance of a consensus. Now, what Iraq has shown, is that survival is not linked to this broad consensus [...] the landscape of today is that nobody is convinced what is best for their survival. So, we are in a moment where everyone is trying to find the best way to ensure survival and this obviously creates a much more complex scenario. It’s not clear what the best position is and that is why we are in transition. It might be that after a few years there will be one way, one direction, but it will never be the same as it was in the past.” (Interview 3)

Further evidence will be presented (see *Theme 4: Consensus formation and the narrowing of differences*) that suggests a role for informal elite interactions, given global uncertainties and the lack of global policy mechanisms, in the development of shared understandings related to global challenges. Such understandings, however, far from emerging in a structural or rational-choice vacuum, are, instead, the product of a fundamentally contested process. An appreciation of discrete power relations is critical to our understanding of preference formation within such settings.

4.3 Theme 2: Collaboration in the transnational arena

4.3.1 Collaborative ideology

Given the obvious problems of complexity in international relations, it is hardly surprising, perhaps, that collaboration, very much the watchword of political activity in contemporary liberal democratic societies, should have emerged as the principal mechanism for dealing with it. The extent to which such logic has permeated the very foundations of elite discourse within such settings does, however, reveal more than a ready acceptance of the strong case for collaboration. Indeed, the idea that such a case should warrant consideration in the first place is almost inconceivable to many governmental and non-governmental elite members. As one political participant questioned rather incredulously,

“collaboration not being for the public good..? The object of collaboration, I hope, is for the public good but you’re suggesting that collaboration is just an easy way of doing things, everyone agrees, go on and do it... is that it? If there was no collaboration you might not be able to get anything done.”

(Interview 4)

Collaboration between different interests is now seen as so fundamental to getting anything done that to question its legitimacy is, it seems, to be naïve about the ways of the world. For many elite members, it is not only an indisputable truth that collaboration is a force for good, it is also integral to their understanding of democracy,

“when you’re really talking about democracy, it’s about the ‘culture of grey’, a culture of compromise, tolerance and coexistence” (Interview 5)

“You need to bring them together for obvious reasons: business influences society and politics influences society. That’s purely common sense. It’s not that business contests the right of democratically elected leaders to lead; democratic leaders should take the maximum amount of information. They can only work if there’s a sufficient degree of discussion and trust [...] at the end of

the day, if people listen, they must believe what they are being told in good faith.” (Interview 14)

“I would say that there are two important sources of legitimacy: the first is that it’s a more democratic system and the second is that it is a more transparent system.” (Interview 3)

“I’m talking [collaboration] within the context of a Prime Minister getting on with business people to help him run things better [...] When I produced that [report for the government], I used individual business people to help out and I think it’s completely legitimate, if you’re running something, to get anyone. You can get businessmen, academics, trade unionists, it doesn’t matter, as long as it’s properly done [...] I think it’s legitimate, my point is that it needs to be done with some subtlety and thoughtfulness. I don’t think anyone was really worried about the legitimacy of it and I don’t think it’s ever been a political issue. Quite the reverse. The party would say it’s rather good having an independent body.” (Interview 10)

The final point, raised by a member of the financial business elite close to policy circles in the UK, emphasises an interesting aspect related to the general perception of policy collaboration: namely that it is somehow more legitimate and “independent” than policy processes conducted by government ministers and civil servants within the closed circles of formal politics. This reflects an apparent distrust of processes that are perceived to be inherently biased by political or ideological considerations and, importantly, processes that are perceived to have been discredited by the failures of the past. Set against such a backdrop, the exerting of influence from outside of government represents

“a change that is largely for the better I think. I like the idea of it all not being contained in policymaking, not all being taken by government.” (Interview 10)

Within an historical context, such sentiments are nothing new and, indeed, might be viewed as a natural continuation of the distrust of ideology to be found in policy circles

of the post-war era. As one participant, commenting on the failure of political processes and the emergence of international collaborative networks put it,

“As you know, politics should involve people who are not politicians.”
(Interview 20)

The pervasive logic of collaboration, and the language of consensus, in the everyday vernacular of policy elites, nationally and internationally, does however, disguise very real concerns related to legitimacy and accountability. Often these concerns are subsumed within a grander overriding belief in the mutual benefits of such activity such as the avoidance of international disputes, the championing of international causes, or, more typically, the necessity for expert knowledge in certain areas of decision making.

“I think these networks are rather ominous from the point of view of democratic accountability because you don’t know who’s saying what, and why, and to whom they are accountable for what they’ve said. It’s all done in private. I guess that’s the upside of it, because so much talking is done and there are so many informal contacts, the risk of breakdown in the international system into war and protectionism is much lower.” (Interview 15)

“Well, it has [a claim to legitimacy] in exceptional cases. At the end, we say it is so important that we should do something. For instance, the issue of free flow of goods and the Doha round and so on. It was about three years ago when we had a panel on free trade at Davos, the International Business Council. I mean it was so important for the world that we should issue a statement. So we issued a statement and we decided that each one, each member, should get in touch with their national governments to say how important, on behalf of business, free trade would be. That is one I remember.” (Interview 16)

“I think I was very much aware of it and I always regretted it [the lack of legitimacy]. What you are really try to do is influence politicians, tell them what is happening outside of their view with stuff that is normally restricted to the edge of their plate; when we were forced to look beyond that. And so you turn it in very polite ways and try to tell them what you see there, being out

there, what new developments are likely and, whatever they might think, you help them to understand that this is going to hit us or reach us within the next weeks, months, years or whatever. That, if we don't prepare for it, we will be overrun, unable to respond successfully." (Interview 9)

Legitimacy, therefore, is not directly related to questions of right or accountability; it is, instead, related to the value of the exercise. Given this view, democratic considerations can be overlooked and, indeed, must be overlooked, in order to achieve more pressing and immediate global objectives. They are, in a sense, a hindrance to effective global governance since an insistence upon their requirement would mean an almost certain retreat to more formal, and fundamentally flawed, international relations activity. Such activity, based on the representation or defence of constituencies, is seen as incapable of transcending the interests of the state or party. Interactions within transnational networks and forums is seen, therefore, as an indispensable mechanism for protecting states or parties in the international setting from the demands of their own constituencies; or, more to the point, for protecting global constituents from the inevitable, and irreconcilable, consequences of their own demands.

"It is very much in the public interest that powerful people get together in a private environment and exchange views. Are they [elite networks] in the interests of mankind? I think they are." (Interview 1)

"The first one I went to was the Koenigswinter, the Anglo-German one, which I think was quite literally to make sure that such terrific bonds were built up between the elites of both countries and, in so doing, make it less likely a war would happen. Its purpose is to get closer relationships between countries, genuinely and I'm not being cynical. I have taken part in, or listened to, discussions between people of both countries where you see genuine cross over of policies, and thinking, between countries." (Interview 10)

"I think [the claim of global government] is exaggerated but not totally unfair in the sense that those of us in Bilderberg really felt that we couldn't go on forever fighting one another for nothing, and killing people, and making millions

homeless. And to the extent that we could have a single community throughout the world, it would be a good thing.” (Interview 20)

“In this world, that’s why you need global networks, to really get people communicating and trying to find common wisdom, a common understanding; which will, of course, in no way eradicate clashes of countries but will create some methods where clashes, conflicts and wars can be resolved by working out more rational ways of overcoming misunderstandings and conflicts.” (Interview 5)

“I think two years ago I sat between a Palestinian and an Israeli. Now, you know, this is all anecdotal evidence but I would say that these two guys not only got along very well, and had very interesting discussions, but I also started to understand why it is so complex, why it’s not so easy [...] I think it helps in many discussions you are having, and with all the other hundreds of thousands of people on many different levels. So, I think it’s adding to and improving the world, making the world better, overcoming barriers, cultural barriers and religious barriers. I think that when we work together with people from different religions and you start to appreciate each other and understand why certain answers are not as easy as you might think from a distance. It’s quite amazing.” (Interview 16).

It is tempting given the, almost self-evident, merits of such activity, and the support for it among the elite community, to unreservedly accept the logic of collaboration. Elite interactions are, after all, nothing new and, provided that they are demonstrably in the public interest and attract the right kind of elite participant, it seems natural that we should accept such activity as legitimate. As one participant mused,

“usually, most people who are members of elites spend a lot of time denying that they are and saying that elites are a bad thing. But, actually, they love them. I like them but I don’t deny that I’m part of them; neither do I think that they are a bad thing. I’m afraid, I don’t. I think that’s the way the world works, that’s the way. And, as long as they’re meritocratic, that’s the important thing. Are these people members of elites because they’ve got some real knowledge or

because they're prepared to put in some real service to the common cause? If they are, well, what's wrong with elites?" (Interview 12)

To uncritically accept the logic of elite collaboration, however, is to ignore fundamental questions related to the precise nature of elite transnational interactions. Without consideration of their actual purpose, scope and participant composition, we cannot possibly understand the nature of the contribution they make to international relations discourse.

4.3.2 The nature of elite collaboration in the transnational setting

While it's clear that elite participants perceive many obvious justifications for collaboration in the international setting, a curious dimension to such activity is that it tends to be rather limited in scope. The focus of such activity has much more to do with business and political issues, and the relationship between them, than broader societal concerns,

"It seems to me to stand for what it says on the can: it's business and political elites talking together." (Interview 2)

"Well, if the politicians don't deliver on that [the economic imperative], everything else is more difficult." (Interview 1)

"It's business and politics. Strangely enough, these meetings have very little to do with the third big field which I think is culture. That seems to be a different network. There are some [from the field of culture] and you always run into someone who you know is active there, and you might make a meeting over breakfast to discuss something from this cultural view. But, normally, this isn't an official issue in meetings [...so it's the] the economic stroke political I would say. There is no good politics without economic backup. I mean you cannot be successful in politics if you're not successful, if there's not an economy supporting the political side." (Interview 9)

As if to reinforce this point, another participant, who considers himself a member of the “other” category, explains the benefit he derives from such gatherings,

“I’ve always accepted invitations to join. I mean, I went to Koenigswinter, which is the Anglo-German bi-lateral, for many years, and then the Collot, the Franco-British one, Bilderberg, and the Anglo-Spanish one. People ask me why I go and, it might interest you this, they’re fundamentally political gatherings. You have current or recently retired politicians, senior civil servants, political journalists, political academics and I always say there’s a category called miscellaneous. And I’m one of the miscellaneous and my view is that it’s always much more interesting for us in miscellaneous than the rest because they talk to each other all the time about the same subjects.” (Interview 10)

With the exception of media representatives, the inclusion of non-political or non-business representatives is the exception rather than the rule in such settings³⁷. And this exception highlights a very important aspect to elite collaboration in the transnational setting; namely that business and political elites share a sense of each others’ purpose and motivations. Furthermore, each is seen as integral to the activities of the other while representatives of other elites tend to be seen as external, peripheral or just supportive to the core activities of the group. This is not necessarily a conscious outcome, and many elite members enjoy considerable contacts across multiple sectors, but the lack of meaningful discourse between categories is potentially a weakness in the collaboration process. As one participant suggests,

“there are different layers, I wouldn’t say necessarily in importance. But in these layers you have the business layer of the network, then there is a political layer of the network and then there is this cultural layer of the network. There is

³⁷ The World Economic Forum is an obvious exception but the core attendance is still primarily business/political and, while there is an overarching commitment to social development, the focus of most sessions, open or closed, is largely with business and political issues. There are other events, such as the annual Bohemian Grove gathering in California that bring together North American elites from business, politics and the arts but, like the World Economic Forum, the scale of the event means that there is a strong argument for seeing such activities as elite socialising and networking rather more than discursive policy oriented activity. Another, much smaller, example that provides a curious interaction between business, political and faith based concerns is the St George’s House event held at Windsor in the UK. With Prince Philip at the helm, this private “talking shop” has a significant Anglican presence within its participant group.

lots of horizontal networking but maybe not enough vertical, through these different layers to interconnect them. Which I think is sometimes so important.”
(Interview 9)

Another interesting aspect to this lack of representation from non-business and non-political quarters is, perhaps, a belief among some of the elite that cultural or societal issues can be factored into discussions without the necessity for expert contribution. As one participant put it,

“business makes their interests and their challenges more explicit to politicians and politicians, of course, talk about their challenges. And business talks about its challenges what it needs to grow; that is certainly an element and it’s probably more outside the events, where you sit together and have a beer, but I don’t think that it is characteristic of the meetings themselves. You have business people who are very often more political and more cultural; it’s a much more intellectual debate than an agenda debate.” (Interview 16)

The idea that cultural and societal issues are somehow factored into elite discussions has also led to a fervent belief among many participants that elite groups reflect diverse interests. As will be demonstrated later in the analysis (see 4.5.2 *The mobilisation of bias within elite interactions*) this is highly questionable but, nevertheless, the conviction is deeply held and was a recurring theme in interviews,

“I don’t think it’s a global ruling class because I don’t think a global ruling class exists. I simply think that people who have influence are interested to speak to other people with influence. But it can be an influence in business, and influence in research, and influence in education. For instance, we’re going to have at our next Bilderberg meeting a real study on education because that is really a need of society. You need people who can contribute and be listened to by other people. And in a certain fashion, that is how the world works; it’s a logical consequence.” (Interview 14)

“First of all, you have very mixed groups, on purpose. There’s a steering committee and each year they invite many people from NGO’s and you get a

very mixed picture and very critical input. I mean, outside Washington, we had all these protestors standing around for three days and I said, ‘we should invite them into this room, they’d be shocked to hear what we are discussing’. You know, there was more discussion of social issues and environmental issues than these people would ever have thought. So it’s absolutely not the case [that there is not diversity]. Take last week, we had a meeting in Davos on corporate social responsibility; a very, very stakeholder oriented approach.” (Interview 16)

The discrepancy might, in part, be a reflection of the increasingly important role of NGO’s and civil society organisations in the global context and, specifically, their impact on both hard and soft regulation in the international setting. This presence is something that business and political elites are consciously aware of and, to an extent, believe is responsible for substantial parts of the global policy agenda,

“despite the strong position of very important think tanks, over the past few years the decisions now being taken reflect much more what civil societies are saying. This consensus [...] there is probably a technical expression to describe how these groups work, but these lobbies are trying to influence decisions.” (Interview 3)

“It’s an important one [source of influence]. I mean it’s driven, of course, by the fact that there are civil society pressures to live up to commitments; so showing that people haven’t lived up to these commitments will have an indirect effect on electoral politics. It’s not as simple as just shaming them in the sense of a schoolboy, you know, making somebody look bad in front of the rest of the class, it’s more complicated than that, but in the end, it does work. [And, in the international setting,] if you take examples like the landmine convention, that was driven almost entirely by civil society organisations. Now there’s a second example with the cluster bomb convention which is about to be signed by 120 countries, again driven heavily by civil society. So security is certainly not off limits.” (Interview 12)

“A big change, now, in most areas of policy are the not-for-profit organisations who are seen whether it’s age, multiculturalism, youth, third world issues. Government takes very, very, seriously people operating in independent, not-

for-profit organisations covering their patch. I've been involved in some of the developing world ones and, whereas 20-30 years ago we were seen as flower power types, nice lovely people, today I think you will find in Oxfam, for instance, seriously bright people. I see much greater, increased, credibility of organisations that are independent of government but who have enough money to be expert in areas covered by government.” (Interview 10)

While it is true that representatives of NGOs and civil society organisations do attend elite conferences and gatherings, and are often familiar with political and economic elites within other spheres, unlike members of the media and policy communities they do not tend to become longstanding members or invitees of such closed groups. A fairer characterisation of their participation is that they represent expertise brought into such forums for the purposes of encouraging debate among core members of the network. While this might be viewed as encouraging, from the perspective of representation, the lack of actual membership may have a considerable bearing on the overall influence of such participants. This is partly a function of authority and legitimacy within the group but also a reflection, perhaps, of pre-existing shared understandings that may exist between longer-standing group participants. As one participant, recalling the inclusion of trade unionists at an elite meeting, notes,

“some of it was very revealing because you suddenly realised that these people had very little to say. You realised that they had poor arguments which meant that we would come out and say to one another, ‘well, this will not do; you can forget about this.’ This thought would stay with you for some while and you would say the same kind of thing to third parties, not referring to the person but saying, ‘as I see it, this movement of French Labour and the French Unions is not going to make it, maybe a lack of good leadership or whatever.’” (Interview 9)

It is important to understand, therefore, that whatever influence such external participants have is mediated by the shared understandings of the core elite group and, until such external elites become an integral part of the functioning of such communities, it seems unlikely that the issues they represent will become anything more than topical or abstract considerations for the consumption of mainstream elite

members. The wider issue of diversity will be explored further when mechanisms of consensus formation are considered later in the findings – see *4.5.2 The mobilisation of bias within elite interactions*. For the time being, at least, it is sufficient to state that the issue is not restricted to the representation of sectors; diversity within the core business/political group is, itself, a key determinant of the nature of collaborative activity. As one participant puts it,

“The point is that you are not always meeting a lot of people. Even if someone from the poorest area comes along he still tends to be living a good life. So whether he is really representative of the poverty of certain regions is another question. So maybe, you know, maybe you are a somewhat insulated in the people you are meeting.” (Interview 16)

The focus of attention here, however, is on the particular form of elite collaboration that has emerged in the transnational sphere and, specifically, it is the interdependencies of business, government and media that require further consideration.

4.3.3 The inter-relationship of business and politics

In some senses, there is a danger of oversimplifying the relationship between business people and politicians; clearly there are interdependencies, but the relationship is rather more nuanced than is frequently suggested. What is clear is that members of the transnational elite almost universally accept the perceived necessity for inclusion of business representatives in both the consultations that precede policy formation activity and more formal processes of policy formation. In some cases the necessity is borne of a sense of political reality, while, in others it is recognition of the requirement for such things as expertise and implementational support. It is interesting to note, however, a degree of detachment on both sides of the perceived divide,

“the European Commission is obliged under law to make proposals. I believe that if you make proposals you should research them as best as possible. Coming from a national environment, I was struck that what existed at the national level did not exist in the European environment. There was a void in

the system and the justification was an old legal preoccupation that if you discussed with business leaders you lost your objectivity. I felt this was wrong, we didn't hear from the business people what they expected from the Commission. But it's always useful to know where their priorities are and why they are different from ours. You should be big enough to know when to accept their counsel and when to leave it [...] The business side is not the total story but there has to be awareness from politicians of what will be the consequences [of given action]. Politicians build a framework around business, it is important that they have heard from business people." (Interview 14)

"I am a member of the board of this gathering [a collaborative forum in the communications industry]. We try to keep a minimum level of politicians because if you get too many politicians involved it is good but sometimes they don't express their views, and they always want publicity from the press. There were eleven people from leading telecommunications corporations, all of them CEOs, but the moderator was another deputy of the Prime Minister. These people are just taking notes, preparing a report, and they'll later submit it to the Prime Minister." (Interview 7)

"Politicians live in a different network and my suspicion is that when they are amongst themselves they talk differently on different issues. I think we are, coming from business, much more at ease on some of these issues. Foreign policy is a byline for what we do. We want an open market and we're all anti-protectionist and so forth but we're talking very simple lines of thought. While I think politicians, particularly when they are active in their own field, for them it's all very complicated." (Interview 9)

"I do think that politicians and civil servants have always tended to romanticise about businessmen as though they're the answer to everything. I remember once having lunch with a very senior civil servant and explaining to him that the guys who are running the FTSE were the people who failed the civil service exam when he passed it. I do think businessmen have things to contribute to government but I think they need to be handled quite subtly [...] I read in the newspapers that business is getting a bit disaffected with Mr. Brown. The fact is that everyone knows he believes in the market and he is continuing to get

businessmen to do jobs for him of one form or another so I don't think things have changed. I'm just a bit sceptical, I think businessmen have to be used quite subtly." (Interview 10)

Given the interdependency of many business and political decisions, it is surprising, perhaps, that elite participants perceive such a clear distinction between what they see as a business or political issue. This appears to have some bearing upon the inclination of participants to contribute within elite discussions; as participants from interviews 1 and 2 reveal,

"business people tend not to participate in political discussions." (Interview 1)

"The economic elites were slightly quieter than the politics people about politics and vice versa; they weren't heavily weighing in there." (Interview 2)

Curiously, and in contrast to political issues, the interests of business are frequently presented as secondary and rather two dimensional in accounts of elite interaction. This might be because there is a perception that business elites are not primarily interested in issues beyond their sphere of influence or it might possibly be evidence of an accepted stereotype among elite participants,

"The issues that interested participants were primarily political issues; the business sessions were, more or less, an afterthought." (Interview 1)

"Business people are technocrats; they're interested in running their company but they're not interested in talking about Afghanistan, the ageing society in Japan or whatever else. If it's not business related they don't want to come." (Interview 16)

"Business interest, when you look at it from a very objective angle, it's very sane. Nobody wants fights, nobody wants instability, nobody wants a fluctuating currency, nobody wants wars, nobody wants bitter conflicts, nobody wants to create trouble here, there or anywhere." (Interview 5)

“At the most general level, business leaders want stability, they want open markets, they want a generally supportive environment, and, usually, they don’t want to be bothered by too much regulation and a whole host of other things that come up in the political process. It’s perfectly obvious that this is what business leaders want [...] I think the main function of these things [elite networks and forums] for business leaders is to find out what the policy makers, who make the world they live in, think. They want to know how policymakers view the various problems and crises in the world, how they are likely to respond, the extent to which there is agreement among policymakers in different countries. This makes the world in which they live.” (Interview 13)

“Some of these events have politicians and business people together in the sessions; you have just as many Ministers or Prime Ministers who come to these meetings to listen to what business leaders think [...] I mean, basically, we want market liberalisation, free trade, competitive environments with some regulation; I think that’s the structure we want to see at this time. For me to be interested in this is just a natural thing because I believe in private enterprise.” (Interview 6)

An interesting question, if we are to accept the apparent transparency of business interest and the suggestion of business disinterest in non-business issues, is why so many business leaders would take the time to participate in transnational elite forums and networks. Clearly, close proximity to policymakers in the transnational setting can provide significant and beneficial insights into geopolitical thinking, as one participant recalls,

“We went to this one conference, a very good one, run by the American Enterprise Institute. It was a small circle and a little bit right-wing, Republican, but they invited people from other parts. This was under the Clinton administration many years ago when XXXXXX opened the discussion. We talked not about the ‘axis of evil’ but Korea, Iran, Iraq and so on. And, for the first time, as a European, I felt something was going to happen, they were building up a momentum in the United States and this was before Bush. And, you know, to hear that and to get somewhat familiar with this kind of thinking

was very important – to have this feeling in the United States long before anyone talked about it in Europe.” (Interview 16)

Furthermore, transnational forums, very often with their veil of privacy, can provide unique opportunities to discuss market issues in a more informal setting. One participant, questioning the idea that industrial leaders talked to each other frequently, noted,

“well, they don’t really. If you were, say, the chairman of a major oil company, obviously you would occasionally have industry wide functions but very rarely I suspect, because they’re afraid of being accused of colluding over trade practices, cooking up prices or whatever, they would be rather careful from that point of view. And there aren’t all that many functions, industry wide get-togethers, so I think one motivation might be to meet colleagues from competing companies without it being criticised.” (Interview 11)

While the personal motivations of participants will be considered later in the findings (*see 4.4.2 Elite networkers*) it is important to state that the distinction made between business and political issues has, to a degree, been somewhat overstated and oversimplified by some participants. By way of supporting this claim, it is important to note that a number of participants highlighted the interest and involvement of certain business people in political discussions; whether such interest is personal or professional is difficult to determine but, either way, such a clarification is irrelevant to the fact that some business people do, indeed, participate in discussions of a substantive political nature

“There are people who are not interested in that; it’s as simple as that. Who ask themselves is there any benefit, any added value, for me and maybe come to the conclusion it’s not. On the other hand, I must say, if you become part of that it makes you much better informed and it’s a very enriching experience.” (Interview 16)

“I went there and saw the politicians talking over two days; speaking about stuff that was not part of my world and I was quite privileged...I think its

probably a rather good thing that people like me get involved, in a mild way through things like the Anglo-French Collot.” (Interview 10)

“With the 1980s, as the whole world was rolling along with the globalisation bandwagon, Turkey was bound to be left behind if we weren’t part of a liberal economy. Given the previous narrow minded approach to economic problems, you can’t bring about any major changes in the economic structure and life if you’re lost somewhere out there. That’s the point where TUSIAD started forming a good number of committees...[It’s different to a] think tank situation; they’re usually just thinkers, not executors. TUSIAD represents about 50% of the Turkish economy, all the blue chips are here, very heavy boys who can lean quite strongly for some of these things to happen.” (Interview 5)

The final point, raised by a recognised Turkish business leader, emphasises the role of TUSIAD (Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Deneği), Turkey’s most powerful business federation, in influencing government economic, political and social policy in recent years. He went on to explain how TUSIAD had played an important, informal, role in mediating between certain international economic organisations and various governments in Turkey. An interesting dimension to such activity is the increased sponsorship of think-tank activity, and specifically research, designed to support the activities of government and, crucially, add legitimacy to the market oriented demands of TUSIAD. In such a way, the interests of business and politics become inextricably entwined and the notion of coherent demarcation between the interests of one or the other becomes somewhat meaningless. The process was described by participant 8 in this way,

“[TUSIAD] doesn’t drive foreign affairs but it does have quite an impact, for instance, it had a significant impact over the change in policy in Cyprus. [It does this] by adding legitimacy to the decision. When nobody can diverge from existing policy or entrenched positions, they legitimate an alternative direction [...] when 46% of Turkey’s GDP speaks, people listen.” (Interview 8)

While such an example is unique to Turkey, the role of think-tanks in the international arena, and the wider contribution of intellectual thought leaders in such settings, has

become an important defining characteristic of international relations activity and it is a significant factor when considering the definition of elite agendas and perceived parameters of elite discourse.

4.3.4 *The business of research*

The role of policy institutes, private foundations, academics, and intellectuals in elite transnational forums is extremely relevant to consideration of elite collaboration since the collaborative principle is frequently presented as an attempt to deal with issues of great complexity. Within such a framework, one might be forgiven for believing that such voices would be critical to the definition of issues, the quality of discourse and, of course, downstream consensus formation. Between them, however, these voices provide an interesting insight into the significance of dependencies within elite networks. The most obvious point to note is that such voices should not be viewed as independent of the interests of business and politics; indeed, they are highly dependent upon their relationship with such groups. In the case of policy institutes and think-tanks, a number of participants highlighted the courtship of funding and patronage by certain groups and, also, a degree of perceived political determination. What is clear is that the claims of independence and integrity made by certain think-tanks or policy institutes are subject to significant qualification by elite participants in Europe

“Some guys came to see me, a bunch of people from the IPPR, because they wanted to do pamphlets on it. And I suddenly realised they were actually planning to write a pamphlet when they’d never heard of it and three of them, average age 27.5, were going to cover the whole subject. I told them to fuck off and get out [...] I think there’s a great deal of superficiality in sharp contrast to America where all the think tanks are properly resourced, have serious academics, who seriously know what they’re talking about, who aren’t doing it as a short cut to becoming Congressman or whatever [...Over here,] I would observe that there a very good finishing school for men and women who’ve got political ambitions to go onto other things.” (Interview 10)

“There’s a considerable difference inside the Euro sceptic movement. Rodney Leech and Open Europe have two characteristics: one, they are very well placed in the City and are exceptionally well funded; the other is that it is extremely detailed in what you might call the scholarship of Europe. It tends to engage in detailed analysis rather than propaganda in so far as you can distinguish between those two things. I mean, take for example, the Bruges Group, they’re propagandists.” (Interview 11)

“The Centre for European Reform (CER) is a sort of ginger group – it doesn’t have a membership, it has commercial sponsors, it publishes a lot of material, it has a small, highly skilled, staff which organise conferences and publish material, and it is multinational [...] The CER works with its sponsors, often commercial companies and others, to convene conferences on what they want to see discussed. Like cooperation between European defence producers or banking or internet provision, whatever it is. Charles Grant is a brilliant person.” (Interview 12)

“The power of these small circles, these think tanks, is not the same any more. Take, for example, the situation with the Elcano in Spain which was supposed to be a bi-partisan think tank; the socialist party left the Elcano because of what they perceived to be political influence over Iraq. They considered that [what the Elcano reported] was not a cold analysis of the situation but a politically influenced decision.” (Interview 3)

Underpinning the criticism of these think-tanks and institutes is the suspicion that such groups are vehicles for the development of supporting evidence and, importantly therefore, legitimising instruments rather more than forums for the development of independent policy thinking. Academic support, and a reputation for rigorous research, provides considerable kudos that can be harnessed for the purposes of tabling, enhancing or challenging of policy proposals, and elite participants, while respectful of various institutes and think-tanks, are very conscious of differences that exist between them. There was, all the same, a slightly dismissive quality to the discussion of think tanks suggesting that they are less important to elite consideration than one might suppose; as participants from interviews 3 and 10 noted,

“I suppose we thought it was a good idea for there to be a ferment of people thinking up new policies and debating new things at the edge of politics. I’m not that sure, I mean, I’ve not studied it but can one think of any big ideas and real things that have come out of think-tanks in this country, things that have improved the lives of millions of people? I don’t know, I suppose that’s a rhetorical question begging the answer no.” (Interview 10)

“Despite the strong position of very important think tanks, the past few years with this issue [Iraq], the decisions now reflect far more what civil societies are saying than what think tanks are saying.” (Interview 3)

Despite these observations, it is clear that certain organisations appear to transcend such considerations among the elite group. Organisations such as the Brookings Institute, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and Chatham House all received positive endorsements from participants in the study and appear to operate as full member participants within elite circles. And this relationship appears to be reciprocal; many of the Bilderberg participants were, or had been, frequent attendees at CFR and Chatham House events. This reciprocity, in turn, strengthens the perception of quality and trustworthiness and, in so doing, reinforces the status of such bodies within the wider elite group. The relationship, therefore, between policy institutes, academics, and the business/political community provides an important dynamic to elite collaboration; such intellectual members, aside from providing the stimulus and expertise for discussions, can provide the focal point for legitimacy building exercises among other elite members.

The impact of intellectual elite members on other members of the elite group is a theme that will be returned to later in the analysis (see 4.5.2.3 *The role of information and learning in elite networks*) it is important to note, however, that the relationship is bi-directional with considerable benefits available to both parties. The same type of dependency relationship is undoubtedly true of media representatives within the elite community.

4.3.5 Media representation within elite transnational networks

In addition to the activity of policy institutes, academics, and intellectuals, the role of media interests provides further critical insights into the culture of co-dependency that characterises elite collaboration in the transnational setting. An absence, for instance, of coverage relating to the policy activities of certain elite networks and forums is, undoubtedly, critical to the effective management of such groups. In the words of participants from interviews 18, 20, 16 and 17 respectively,

“I don't think it's true to say that we want to keep it out [of the media], we've never wanted to get it in. We don't encourage people to go to the mainstream press because we don't encourage, you know, idle speculation about what we do. We forbid individual attendees to give meetings at our concerts; and we do that not because we're secrecy led but because we want to control the politicians who come. If we let them, they would all give press conferences, [there] on television all day. They're insane.”

“I think the confidentiality of this meeting is another big advantage Bilderberg has. There was one journalist, British, who liked to write about it; he has never been back. Because people said, you know, he's using that for information gathering and then he's writing about it. You cannot do that and I think that's true for others.”

“You can't get people to talk openly to one another, especially in front of political opponents in their own country, if they're going to be quoted. Because people will only talk freely if they know they're not going to be quoted and distorted by prurient, ambitious, journalists.”

“The reason for the confidentiality of the meetings is that attendees can reveal their views without constraints. So that they do not bite on their tongues, worried, ‘How will the media reflect what I say?’ ”

The ability to speak freely, without fear of public disclosure, is clearly central to the functioning of many elite forums and networks and, although leaving such activities

open to obvious criticism, elites not only accept the rationale but see it as a fundamental rule of personal and professional conduct. Not abiding by the rule is seen as a breach of trust and grounds for ejection from the group or network; for some, the fear of ejection is palpable, as one journalistic participant pointedly remarked,

“don’t stitch me up [...] I want to be invited back.” (Interview 1)

By inviting media representatives into the fold, elite groups are able to demand the non-disclosure terms that ensure continued privacy and, additionally, satisfy a perceptual need to be sensitive to the issue of public opinion. For many elite members, media representatives are seen as being in touch with the public and, by default, become a vehicle for the expression of public opinion within elite groups. As participant 14 puts it,

“[We invite them] because they give us a good feel. It’s not that we want them to write but we need to not be disconnected with what is the state of opinion; and media people are the best people to give us that.” (Interview 14)

For their part, media representatives gain access and privileged insight into elite discussions of global issues; access and insight that can be crucial to the ability of the news media to function effectively. This knowledge is designed explicitly as background information and journalists are free to use it as such; they must not, however, cite sources of information. An interesting question, given the suggestion that media representatives serve to express public opinion within such forums, is related to how representative of public opinion such figures actually are; as one former journalist stated,

“I think there’s a good deal of truth [to the view that journalists share a wider consensus]. I mean, for instance, on economic policy, journalists tend to have a basic underlying, open market, analysis; they’re free traders and they believe the system works because markets work.” (Interview 11)

Elite diversity is a theme that will be returned to later in the analysis (*see 4.5.2 The mobilisation of bias within elite interactions*) but journalist participants, while recognising the potential influence of elite consensus, were quick to resist the implication that they were, somehow, disposed towards certain perspectives or consensus positions; as participants 5 and 11 put it,

“No, because all my life I’ve been my own man [...] I hate to repeat other people’s ideas, I try to seek out my own mind. Even if they had such an idea in the back of their minds, it wouldn’t do too much to me because I love to play my own game and speak my own mind rather than being told [what to think...] But, of course, if it’s snowing outside you cannot have summer inside; there is an enormous interaction in the way of thinking.” (Interview 5)

“I think you probably find yourself rather than seeking influence by broad movements of opinion. There are few journalists who don’t [...] I tend to react against this kind of consensus, not only on the subject of Europe, but I’m suspicious of them and I like to form my own views. But, yes, I do think they exist and that they have some influence upon people.” (Interview 11)

This feeling of detachment is interesting because, in a sense, it echoes the precarious path that media interests tread when attracted by the prospect of access and confidence in many areas of journalistic inquiry. For those who find themselves invited into elite networks, any suggestion of conflict or compromise is quickly rebuffed; instead, claims related to the wider benefits of access, along with independence and personal integrity, take the place of any real attempt to reconcile conflicting demands

“From a media perspective, they sometimes have considerable value as a source of information, a source of stories. I preferred, when I was editing XXXXX, to spend time in mixed groups such as Ambassadorial dinner parties or something like that. Obviously the Ambassador has a reason for inviting the guests that he does invite and, no doubt, he hopes that most of them are fairly friendly to his nation but, on the other hand, good Ambassadors are also very interested in getting to know what different currents of opinion are so the groups they invite are likely to have varied views.” (Interview 11)

“For me, they were unique occasions; I’ve never had the opportunity for such sustained exposure. It’s invaluable to my work. I can’t imagine why a journalist would not want to be involved [...] because my job is to be in the know, to be informed.” (Interview 1)

“I’ve gone to meetings of this kind because, as a journalist, it’s useful for me to know what people think. It clarifies. It’s my job to know what people think and then discuss these arguments in public and bring them out. The Trilateral Commission is similar, all these sort of groupings are similar. If you can talk to people informally rather than just read the press releases or see them delivering speeches, talk about what problems are the way they see them, you find that you learn a great deal about these perceptions and what’s driving policy and that makes it easier to write better about them. Ultimately a columnist’s job is to clarify issues and it’s far easier to do if you have some idea what’s actually going on.” (Interview 13)

There is no way of denying the obvious attraction of elite networks to media representatives; a key question, however, is at what cost such access comes. Even if the principle of non-disclosure is accepted as a necessary precondition for open and frank discussion, a potentially more profound compromise exists related to the nature of the dependency between journalists and other elite members. While elite participants are, no doubt, pleased to communicate their points without fear of misrepresentation, they are not, at the same time, desperate for media attention. Conversely, journalists require access above all things and such environments guarantee that access, both at the time and subsequent to meetings. The seductive appeal of elite gatherings, a theme that will be returned to later (see section 4.6.4 *The seductive lure of elite membership*) and the power of prevailing attitudes and views within such groups, might have considerable implications for journalistic interpretation.

4.3.6 *Summary of theme two*

The case for collaboration between elites in the transnational setting is so readily accepted by elite participants that to question the veracity of such logic is to appear

naive in the extreme. A recurring, and somewhat defensive, theme related to elite forums and networks was the notion that this kind of thing happens all the time anyway; that, even without an informal network infrastructure in the transnational arena, collaboration between elites, and in particular business and political elites, would continue unabated

“Do you think they wouldn’t have these conversations in other forums?”
(Interview 1)

“But does anybody [...] suppose for a moment that these people don’t meet all the time anyway.” (Interview 18)

“I should imagine that this happens all the time. I’m sure the head of x bank or x global company can get access to a foreign minister, an energy minister whenever they want and vice versa. I’m not a conspiracy theorist but I’m not naïve either. So, it didn’t strike me as that unusual, in fact, if you want to push me I would say the network I witnessed did not spontaneously come out of this but existed in other ways. I’m sure these people see each other in other fora.”
(Interview 2)

“Of course, there was a higher concentration of important, influential, people than there might otherwise be but I’ve met these people in many other forums and events.” (Interview 8)

“There always has been [collaboration], whatever government is in power [...] but isn’t this really due to information technology? Now everything is so easy and people are so easy to get hold of, isn’t it bound to happen that people collaborate more and more? (Interview 4)

Despite claims to the contrary, it is the relationship between business and politics that is very much the focus of collaborative activity between transnational elites. Events such as the World Economic Forum, which prides itself on its broader concern with global wellbeing, does invite luminaries from societal and cultural fields but it is questionable whether such people enjoy an equal standing within debates related to business and

political issues. They might have views that are pertinent to these discussions and may, indeed, be asked to contribute in order to stimulate new thinking, but such contributions are mediated by existing contexts and relationships. Added to which, the sheer scale of the event means that, not unnaturally, smaller, and more select, gatherings tend to attract more coherent and focused elite participation. Non-business/political elites do play an important role in the flow of information into these more select elite groups, often directly but, more often, through overlapping memberships of allied groups and networks.

The role of policy institutes, think tanks and the media is heavily influenced by a variety of dependency relationships. The larger, and more established, policy institutes have a significant cross-membership with select transnational elite forums and, in the case of institute leaders, enjoy positions of equal standing within the wider elite group. This may be a reflection of the esteem that such institutions are held in, it might be an acknowledgement of their role in providing insights into key issues or it might reflect the source of legitimacy that such organisations can provide for currents of opinion within the wider group. On the whole, however, elite participants are suspicious of the role and motives of smaller, often partisan, think tanks in Europe.

The media, while enjoying considerable access to elite forums and networks, is invited for two primary reasons: their role in reflecting and influencing public opinion and their agreement to respect non-disclosure terms within such groups. The attraction of membership within such groups is very seductive for members of the media elite; it confers access and legitimacy at the highest of elite levels. While media representatives are wary of being seen as anything other than independent, it is unclear how such independence is maintained in the face of a compelling, and overwhelming, broader elite consensus. The suggestion that media interests are consciously co-opted is, perhaps, too strong a description of events although one media participant did suggest that this was the case,

“I’m very old, obviously, and they tend to keep the old hacks at bay. They’re bringing in new people to refresh old ideas and to pass on some of the messages

they want to pass on to the outside world by using them as their messengers.”
(Interview 5)

This view was, however, not a commonly held perception and, although media respondents were often cynical about the reasons for their inclusion within such events, they did tend to emphasise their integrity and the wider benefits of participation. Rather than instrumentally reflecting some kind of coherent agenda, it seems more likely that, through elite fraternisation and socialisation, media elites unconsciously reflect the dominant and pervasive logics of elite opinion.

4.4 Theme 3: Transnational networks and networking

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was that of networks and networking. The terms were used liberally and often interchangeably suggesting that, for participants at least, the concepts were essentially about the same thing, namely, benefits of association.

4.4.1 *A global network*

Broadly speaking, the rationale for international networks is essentially one of communication, in particular, related to global economic affairs. As the globalisation project has taken hold around the world, the necessity for networked relationships has intensified. As participants 3, 6 and 9 suggest,

“The way I see it is more as an adaptation to new economic realities. It has always been the case that when the world becomes wider, companies try to become wider. So, now we have China and India rapidly becoming actors.”
(Interview 3)

“So I think they have created new linkages and new ties for foreign investment into Turkey [...Take the business councils, where there is] some business development and discussion of trade issues with Eastern countries or the Caucuses, Russia, Kazakhstan and all those, it all turns into a business

development function where leaders from both governments come together with their own business communities and try to match projects and investors together. So that influences foreign policy in some respects I would say.” (Interview 6)

“These networks are also active in Asia, maybe not so visible and known to us but they do exist. A typical ‘networker’ there for the last thirty years has been Lee Kuan Yew who is extremely well connected in the Asian world. He has the trust of people who are certainly very different, let’s say the Chinese, the old, and now the new, Chinese leadership certainly have very different views on how to run the country but they trust him. He is extremely well connected with some of the Muslim leaders of the region and all this he makes very good use of. Now the important issue for us is, here we have another regional level, how do we connect our transatlantic network into that Asian or South East Asian network? To interconnect these different patches on the globe is a very important issue.” (Interview 9)

The final point is particularly interesting because, made by one of the most networked member’s of the business/political elite in Europe, it demonstrates a very conscious understanding of the need to interconnect disparate elite networks around the world. The precise composition of such networks is not entirely clear but, aside from Western European and transatlantic relationships, it seems that there are significant elite networks in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, South East Asia and the Pacific region, Central and Eastern Europe and occasionally between countries that do not fall neatly into such groupings. Geographical clustering is clearly still a feature of such networks but, with the relentless advance of globalisation and significant improvements in communication, interconnections and co-dependencies are being formed on a number of levels between groups. Some of these interdependencies are borne of formal trade agreements and membership of international councils of one form or another; but other, more informal, relationships play a not insignificant role in creating the conditions for wider political and economic rapprochement,

“Is it indispensable? My clear answer is it is absolutely indispensable. I think people would live in a different world if there were no exchanges, unofficial

exchanges, of views. I very strongly believe this [...] I know from business that some of the most serious and most important decisions being made were made after a very private, unofficial, discussion, and no [formal] meetings.” (Interview 9)

“I was involved in one of these things in Portugal called Da Arrabida which is tiny; it’s very, very, small. It had a whole lot of people I knew on the steering committee, Brett Scowcroft from the United States, Bauer from France, Otto Landsdorf from Germany, and they had a conference. Quite a small thing, thirty people, in this wonderful monastery on the coast south of Lisbon but they were much more enterprising. They had the Poles, the Russians; Gidar from Russia come along. They invited the Indians and all the rest of it.” (Interview 4)

“It’s a very small community in Turkey, certain people are part and parcel of transatlantic networks and some are becoming involved in Far Eastern networks. Traditionally these people were raised in good schools, the secular elite, but the new Islamic elite is becoming active in this regard whether they believe in it or not.” (Interview 8)

“It’s very striking in the America-Chinese relationship that the Americans have a number of informal contacts with the Chinese as well as the formal ones [where they are] staring each other down in a rather hostile and frosty way. But the informal networks work very well. I think there’s no question that it’s the informal networks that have persuaded the Chinese they’ve got to act in getting the North Koreans to abandon their nuclear weapons program. That is the upside of it but how that conversation took place, what quid pro quo the Americans have offered for it, we will never know. This is the way the current world wags.” (Interview 15)

The idea that informal networks are a force for good in international relations is an accepted truism among elite participants, with many believing that benefits far outweigh the costs of such activity. Much of this is due to an acceptance of free market principles and a general belief that the benefits of market liberalisation are widely dispersed. Given such a worldview, the advancement of market interests is, in effect, an advancement of the interests of all, however poorly distributed the dividend. And while

some recognise inherent dangers associated with informal network interactions, there is a stoical acceptance of this way of doing business; as interview participants 2, 15 and 19 suggest,

“Where does one begin? Very few legislative decisions in the US get taken without enormous shaping by corporations. Large parts of the US tax code, some of the deregulation, in Britain the restructuring of the NHS on market principles very much shaped by informal networks. You've seen in Germany the abuses of co-decision-making in VW where money's been changing hands to get the kinds of deals which are wanted. Almost nothing in China moves without the say-so of the Communist Party and palms being greased. It's almost dignified the Guānxi network. Maybe we in the West need to see these informal networks not being the past but the future. I think it's very difficult to think of any decision which hasn't been influenced by the kind of power networks we've been discussing.” (Interview 15)

“They'll get an up-and-coming politician who they think may be president or prime minister one day, and as globalist industrialist leaders who believe that politics shouldn't be in the hands of politicians, they try and influence them with wise words in the corridors outside sessions.” (Interview 19)

“There weren't huddles of advisors, or things like that, for the politicians and even for the heads of the companies. I would imagine it's rare to be there without somebody else; so the individualised aspects, I imagine it's a useful place to talk about big issues where they can rarely do that, and it is a fairly useful way for them to individually network with each other. And to talk and to do whatever they want to do with those networks, maybe build up things for the future.” (Interview 2)

Elite networking, therefore, provides a unique opportunity to fraternise and socialise one-on-one with other members of the elite network without fear of disclosure. Such networking is still largely conducted within regional elite groups and forums, although interlocking activity at the fringes of the network is slowly bridging divides between, once disparate, global elite activity.

4.4.2 *Elite networkers*

Implicit within the account so far is the suggestion that networking is an activity that is embraced by all within the elite but this is far from being the case. Many within the business and political elite choose not to participate, or are highly selective about what they participate in, for a variety of reasons,

“There are always people who say this is the best one, I like to go here more than there. And, also, it’s true that some people prefer European gatherings, some industry gatherings, and others more global. So there’s a bit of a difference [...And, of course,] not everyone is interested in this kind of broader discussion. It’s really not only skills, it’s also whether you like it or not, and, of course, if you don’t do it, that’s another thing. I mean I got into these circles fairly early because I became CEO here, and then you grow a little older with all the others. If you become CEO at the age of, I don’t know 57 or so, and then you get involved and don’t know anyone, and it takes some time to get to be an accepted member of these circles, maybe you say to yourself ‘I don’t want to do this, I’m not the right person’. And, for politicians, very often language skills, you have to speak English otherwise it is difficult.” (Interview 16)

“When one is talking about transnational things the Bilderberg was the one; that was a very good example. The other one was the Trilateral Commission but that’s much more formal. I have my doubts about some of these organisations. I think the Bilderberg one was successful in the way that I’ve described, I don’t think all of them are. People spend an awful lot of time going around to these conferences and listening to other people. I think they’re a waste of time, a lot of them.” (Interview 4)

“When you are in the middle of a big policymaking machine, the British government, the European Union, the United Nations, whatever it is, and you’re working full-time, you have enormous quantities of information flowing towards you from intelligence, from overt sources, from the public domain, everything, and you’re grossly overworked. If you’re reasonably successful, you are grossly overworked and you have very little time. Regrettably in my view, people in that position, working full-time jobs, tend to be fairly

dismissive of all the penumbra of civil society activity and networks and so on. They just don't have time to do it all, they're exhausted. They have a family life and they don't want to lose all their weekends, so their involvement in these things is not that great."

(Interview 12)

Central to an understanding of the significance of elite networks is the central question of why busy and powerful people should engage in such activity. Notwithstanding the many reasons why senior members of the business and political elite might not attend elite events, it is clear that the most prestigious gatherings have no trouble attracting elite participants who forego days at a time from their busy schedules. As interview participants 12 and 18 point out,

"I've never needed to sell it [Bilderberg] to anybody is all I can say. The only reason I've ever heard somebody say that they didn't want to come was that they couldn't on the dates concerned. I mean people are attracted, I think, by sheer curiosity at being in a group like this and hearing certain things from the 'horse's mouth' as it were. And I think that the personal relations that are formed there, not in the sense of some ghastly freemasonry or some sort of secret society, it is not that at all, it's just the fact that people get the chance to know each other as individuals rather than as people that they come across in their government or business careers." (Interview 18)

"Ditchley³⁸ is a case point. I don't know, you'd have to ask a number of people who go there but they have no lack of takers. And since they take place at weekends, they presumably think it's a worthwhile use of their weekend to do that. They like meeting the other people, they find it intellectually challenging to discuss the subjects that are under discussion, they find it, I think, very

³⁸ The Ditchley Foundation runs conference events several times a year and usually over the course of a weekend. According to the Ditchley Foundation website, it "was established by Sir David Wills in 1958 to advance international learning and to bring transatlantic and other experts together to discuss international issues. Sir David's original objective was to promote Anglo-American understanding. American and Canadian sister Foundations, set up in 1964 and 1981 respectively, remain our most active partners. Since then Ditchley conferences have broadened to include the concerns and participation of nations all over the globe". <http://www.ditchley.co.uk/> (accessed 7/11/08)

welcome to do so in a way that is not on the record, which is completely private.” (Interview 12)

An important question, therefore, is why people find such networks of value and, although the theme will be returned to when considering hierarchies of influence (see *Theme 5*) there are a number of immediate reasons suggested by elite participants.

“I think, first and foremost, it’s a form of self-enrichment. You know more people, you have more people to pick opinions from, you get to know some people better than others and may wish to engage them in some form. So, for instance, if you are on the board of a French company you can say, ‘why not choose someone from Britain for our board? It’s high time we did so with all the business we have there’. And they say, ‘yes, but we don’t know anyone’, so you suggest someone, or two or three, which means, in turn, that you meet more often with these people and on it goes [...] And this very often leads to something that I’ve always regarded as a special phenomenon: someone approaches you and says, ‘I’ve heard from x, who knows you from the Bilderberg meeting, that you’re willing to do this or that or that you’re interested in this and that. How about that, could we talk about it? Or, would you like to join our board?’ I’ve never met this guy before but it comes through some kind of network.” (Interview 9)

“One of the reasons is that the subjects were not only economics; they were different subjects, for example, the green revolution. The President of the Green Party and also three or four professors from the University of California came along and discussed genetically modified food. Plus there were lots of, so called, prominent members: Hilary Clinton on one hand, who I saw several times, or Rockefeller. It was a very good platform for me first of all to learn something and then establish a good relations. Also, they want to establish a good relationship, it’s a two way street, no question about that. And then you get a different kind of atmosphere.” (Interview 7)

“I asked people what they got out of it and, you know, you get very anodyne answers. They get networks out of it, they get contacts. The coffee breaks were very important to them it struck me; that’s probably almost the reason for being

there. I'm sure they got a lot out of it. The abstract chance to discuss world issues is quite rare without the constraints of being free to say what you want to say." (Interview 2)

"Selahattin Beyazit was a member of the Bilderberg management committee. Why? Because Selahattin Beyazit was a graduate of the London School of Economics and, elsewhere, he served the minister of foreign affairs. He was also a private secretary of the late Prime Minister Menderes who was hanged in the 1960s. Selahattin Beyazit's roommate in the London School of Economics was Wolfensson; during this period he was the Head of the World Bank. Always, in international relationships, that kind of good personal relationship can help." (Interview 8)

"I do think an awful lot of the people who make it in these competitive public life things are very... they're actors, and they need stripes on their shoulders, they want to be seen in places and have ticks in the box. We all want a bit of that, I'm not very strong on that. I've got other vanities and weaknesses but I think being seen in those circles [...] I don't know, why do politicians become politicians? They like the buzz of being in Whitehall, the feeling of feeling close to the centre of things, its part of all that." (Interview 10)

While there are clearly perceived benefits associated with networks of this kind, it is possible that some of these benefits are overstated or, at least, relevant to only certain members of the network. As will be discussed later (see section 4.6.4 *The seductive lure of elite membership*) elite participants who exist at the periphery of group activity are more inclined to be seduced by the presence of prominent members and to believe that access to such people is a benefit in its own right. As other participants point out, however, powerful people don't normally have issues gaining access to other people

"[Good connections can help with opening doors?] I don't think so. I really believe that if someone is important doors will open. If somebody needs support he will get it or he won't get it. The fact that he knows somebody can

help him here and there but it is only ten percent of the hundred percent.”
(Interview 14)

“I think some people attach great importance to them, which I never have, partly as a way of making contacts. I haven’t ever found that that was really necessary. I mean if you hold a position where you ought to have access, you have access. If you don’t hold such a position at that point then people may give you time for old times sake, or whatever, but you don’t have a position of influence from which to argue your case. And they have, therefore, no particular reason to be influenced by what you have to say. So I don’t believe that access arises out of having been there.” (Interview 11)

The instrumental notion that such forums provide access is, again, tempered by the issue of individual standing within the group. While some of this is related to personal and professional factors, it is clear that certain individuals enjoy greater prominence than others within elite forums because of specific interests or skills. As a consequence, some members of elite groups are seen as being better equipped than others and inherently more suited to this kind of interaction. Political participants, in particular, were seen as having the combination of knowledge and skills that frequently led to their prominence in networks of this kind,

“So I think the political classes [have an advantage in these networks]. I mean take Peter Mandelson, he always goes to these things and he’s brilliant at them. He’s absolutely spectacularly good. Now why would he carry on going? I guess he gets stuff out of it. Yes, you get an opportunity to relax with people who you don’t normally, and you can talk at great length and talk seriously, backstage gossip; well that’s not me because I don’t do it for a living. I’m not in politics for a living. For me, I get educated. That’s probably a good thing really, it’s probably a very good idea for me to have some idea as to what the guy responsible for world trade is thinking. And Pascale Lamy always used to come.” (Interview 10)

“There are people who are less interested, either they don’t have the academic background or they don’t feel comfortable in this kind of thing. It’s quite an

intellectual discussion that you have. Everybody tries to be as intelligent and as well informed as possible, you know, it's obvious. And you get into this kind of mood where you ask questions that you wouldn't normally do in business circles. And some people find that this is all nice words but there is no action. Or they don't feel comfortable in these kinds of gatherings but the primary thing is that you have to be open to many of these issues. If you are a businessman, running a big company in Texas or wherever, are you really interested in talking about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? Many years ago we had a lot of discussion between the Greeks and Turks about Cyprus. Now, how was this relevant to many of us? They talk now about Georgia and Russia and some people would say, well, you know, I'll leave that to the politicians.”
(Interview 16)

It is important to stress, however, that many business people within the elite are highly interested in global political issues and, moreover, voice their interest when opportunities arise. What these comments demonstrate is the significance of personal interest and motivation to the functioning of elite networks. Members of the elite, while exhibiting certain similarities, should not be seen as a homogeneous whole; they represent a network of like-minded individuals with varying degrees of interest and commitment. And, while interview participants frequently expressed civic minded sentiments, and, on occasion, even a sense of calling, it is clear that a variety of more immediate personal considerations motivate many others within elite networks. This theme will be returned to later in the findings (see section 4.6.4 *The seductive lure of elite membership*).

4.4.3 A dynamic elite or an “old boy” network?

One difficulty that presents itself for anyone concerned with elite interactions is the question of precisely what constitutes the elite, and the problem is compounded still further when one considers the possibility of elites within elites. With literally hundreds of forums, councils, institutions, networks and panels in the transnational arena, applying the term to all those who participate would quickly result in the term ceasing to have any kind of meaningful value. Clearly, there are some forums and networks that have a more elitist orientation than others but there is considerable boundary spanning

activity between organisations with many of the same people appearing on the boards, steering committees or membership rolls of several groups,

“The funny thing is, of course, that unfortunately we’re not talking about a huge group of people. It’s sort of an old boy network; you bump into each other every time. Not all of them, of course, but I have different levels, different types of international connections.” (Interview 5)

“The Trilateral Commission is very much the same, the European Roundtable, there are so many. I mean, there was this ‘Club of Three’³⁹ in which I participated many times but eventually I said to the organiser, ‘it’s too much’. I suddenly realised I was meeting people there who [sic] I’d met on other occasions and so I told the organiser, ‘it doesn’t make sense for me to continue here; I’m not able to add any new input. Why don’t you take somebody from the younger generation?’” (Interview 9)

The final comment is particularly interesting since it certainly appears to be the case that people are reluctant to relinquish positions within such groups, even after they retire from service. As participants 16 and 12 note,

“There is a French-German get together that takes place at the highest levels. Actually I wouldn’t say it’s about levels, it’s more about size. For instance, Davos is very big but there is a group which is called the International Business Council (IBC). This is about a hundred CEOs of the largest companies meeting together, sometimes under the umbrella of Davos. It meets twice a year and normally it has about fifty percent participation, so only fifty people but they are top level, CEO representatives of the largest global corporations. It’s a bit more difficult maybe to get the [politicians together], although even there, with politicians, you have top people in smaller circles. It’s very much tradition. If you started as a young leader in one of these circles you normally stay. There’s

³⁹ The Club of Three was founded by Lord Weidenfeld in 1996 and brought together leaders from the public and private sectors in the UK, Germany and France. It has since changed its name to the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and now invites participation on a pan-European basis.

another one, the ‘Group of Thirty’⁴⁰, for instance, and you are asked to join and then people stay until they die.” (Interview 16)

“When you retire from full-time work, you take up a lot of part-time jobs which still keep you, because you want to, involved in international developments and so on. Then all these meetings become your lifeblood because this is how you keep in touch with people who have full-time jobs, with other people like yourselves, with the literature, because you’re not receiving all that information anymore. So, it becomes your lifeblood which is one of the reasons people who have retired go to these things so regularly.” (Interview 12)

This desire to remain *in situ* has led to accusations that elite groups and networks are largely controlled by elderly, some say geriatric⁴¹, members of the global elite. A common theme of interviews with steering committee members of the Bilderberg group, for instance, concerns the group’s attempt to encourage dynamic participation rather than a more static club for lifetime members. And, while it’s true that approximately sixty percent of all Bilderberg participants are one time attendees of the group, a longer standing core of Bilderberg, approximately 15-20% of all attendees, do resemble something of a private club. As one former multiple attendee noted,

“I’m not sure how up to date it’s kept, as I say, I think it’s a bit on the geriatric side because it has a membership. That is to say, people who go every year from certain countries. And that means that it’s very static, it’s the same people who go year after year. It’s a little bit the same with the Wehrkundetagung⁴² in Munich, the big security forum, which also has a certain sense in which it is rather static.” (Interview 12)

⁴⁰ According to the website of the Group of Thirty, the organisation was “established in 1978, [and] is a private, nonprofit, international body composed of very senior representatives of the private and public sectors and academia [...] It aims to deepen understanding of international economic and financial issues, to explore the international repercussions of decisions taken in the public and private sectors, and to examine the choices available to market practitioners and policymakers. (www.group30.org accessed 11/11/2008).

⁴¹ David Rothkopf (2008):278-280, for instance, quotes the one Bilderberg attendee - a senior US official – as asking the question “who are these old farts?” And another senior US official, a former Trilateral Commission member, as saying “the Trilateral Commission is a joke [...] it’s a bunch of has-beens who do not have power except to convene themselves.”

⁴² Now known as the Munich Conference on Security Policy.

The attraction of this core group to the wider group of participants is a theme that will be returned to later in the analysis (see *Theme 5 Hierarchies of influence*) but it is interesting to note, at this point, that members of this inner group do represent, whether by accident or design, many of the most personally influential and statesmanlike figures within the whole; this, despite the fact that many of them are, in fact, retired or semi-retired from public life. For certain others within the elite group, there is evidence that this is felt to be intrinsically wrong and, moreover, something that is consciously starting to change within elite circles,

“I think it’s a mistake for people who have been things to hang on and go on speaking and boring everyone to sobs with what they’re saying. I think it’s much better that you shut up, go there and listen to the others, and think how awful they are of course, but not to go on taking a part. I think it’s a mistake.”
(Interview 4)

“[On the influence of the European Roundtable of Industrialists] Well maybe a few words from wise old men is considered to be valuable for the [European] Commission but I still think the description would be advisory rather than a working mechanism [...And] people like Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller have been around for years. They are much less influential now; twenty years ago they were much more influential, ten years ago they were still influential.” (Interview 6)

“Not everybody thinks the composition of these groups is ideal. Those who are interested in attending these meetings are very often ‘has-beens’. I mean, Bilderberg has a lot of people, I don’t want to mention names but we all know them, the famous 80-85 year old politicians; well, Davos does not invite them. At Davos, when you’re retired, you’re retired. Which is not a bad thing because then you get the young people moving up as well.” (Interview 16)

It is important to note that none of these criticisms are levelled at the notion of elite networks *per se*; they are, instead, observations related to the perceived sources of influence within them. For most elite groups such as Bilderberg, these sources of

influence have been historically significant and continue to raise questions about the overall purpose and direction of such events,

“I think there probably is an inner group who probably do want to support the ever closer union of Europe, for instance, and they have been there since the beginning whenever that was. Certainly from before the first time I went anyway. On the occasions that I went, Dr Agnelli was, it seemed to me, the key figure in some way; the figure to whom other people were paying attention and deferring. And the second time, there was also the Queen of the Netherlands who obviously played an important role and is a European federalist. But how that inner group works, I don’t know but it had a motive in setting this up and supporting it and this affected [things].” (Interview 11)

The role of the “inner group” within elite networks will be considered later in the analysis (see section 4.6.2 *Elitism within elite networks*) it is sufficient at this stage to say that each group or network has its own idiosyncratic membership dynamics. But while some groups are more consciously dynamic in the area of membership than others, many groups do, nevertheless, share a resistance to the idea of change. Such resistance might be evidenced by the sheer volume of groups performing similar functions with, frequently, overlapping memberships,

“You could merge many of them. They all have their history, they all have their pride, their tradition, their ‘people who care’. You could easily say, ‘why not merge things; it would be far more efficient’. And this question always comes up, to be honest. I mean, every time someone says we will consider that when we talk about succession planning, it’s very often, you know, the people who are involved. It never quite works primarily because of tradition.” (Interview 16)

Tradition, in this sense, has as much to do with the inclinations of longstanding members of the group as any objective notion of preserving institutional identity. Such forums are extremely important to many elite participants who, in a sense, derive some of their own identity from associations of this kind. It is important, therefore, to see elite forums and networks and elite participants as mutually interdependent; neither wishing

to entirely disengage itself from the other. It is also important to recognise, for reasons that are related, that certain members within such networks will continue to wield disproportionate levels of influence. As participant 12 suggests,

“I think the Kissingers of the future are still out there. There are few people as outstanding as he was intellectually but they do exist.” (Interview 12)

The final two thematic sections, on consensus formation and the lure of elite membership, will explore some of these issues further. For the time being, at least, it is enough to state that elite networks should not be viewed as egalitarian forums with dynamic membership processes; they are, instead, highly institutionalised arrangements with a strong sense of tradition and purpose. Nowhere is the embodiment of these principles more evident than in the shared values of the core of longstanding attendees and members. Participants brought into such forums have to contend with such arrangements if they are to succeed within such networks.

4.4.4 The influence of elite networks and forums

Determining the influence of elite networks is an inherently complex pursuit not least because one must distinguish between the power of individual elite participants and the notional power of a collective and purposeful whole. Unpicking the two things is not straightforward and, from an empirical perspective, is complicated further by an obvious issue of sensitivity related to matters of influence. An obvious example of such complexity, for instance, is that of the Business Roundtable organisation of the United States. Here, the heads of the largest corporations meet to discuss responses to market and regulatory issues but, instead of lobbying as an organisation, they lobby individually as heads of their respective corporations. Many other groups, with distinct ideological perspectives and formal lobbying functions, attempt to influence directly but also benefit from the individual activities of participant members. In other instances, the group or network may have no formal lobbying function, or stated ideological position, but may be influencing the actions of its members or participants in more discrete ways. The problem, of course, is not simply one of transparency. At a fundamental level, it has

to do with whether it is the individual or the group that is, in effect, wielding power and, moreover, what form of power is being wielded. As participants 14, 4 and 2 note,

“No, I don’t think the group has power. I think individual people have influence but I don’t think the group has power.” (Interview 14)

“It was a very loose organisation, nothing ever came out of it. It was what you put into it and what you got out of it yourself; the organisation didn’t do anything.” (Interview 4)

“I don’t think there is a story; there’s possibly an interesting study to be written. I don’t know what the story is apart from a gang of high profile people meeting together and having a chat.” (Interview 2)

Taken at face value, these comments tend to suggest that elite networks and groups, with no formal ideological position or lobbying function, are essentially just places or domains in which people exchange information. They reflect a rather observable notion of power and ignore the potential and significance of bias. As a consequence, they overlook more discrete processes of opinion formation and change. Understanding the impact of such processes is pivotal to understanding the broader role and influence of elite networks. If such activity is designed to bring people together with the purpose of narrowing differences, for the common good, it is only correct to question how such processes work and, importantly, whether such processes are effective, in an instrumental sense, in influencing wider outcomes. Certainly the evidence suggests that they are

“I think it happens, but it happens because if people are convinced about something and they participate in another seminar they will hold the same language as they one the held at Bilderberg. But Bilderberg is not decisive in doing that. We don’t plan the multiplication, we leave it to the members, not the members, the participants, and if they felt that something useful was there, then they go out and spread their convictions. And I think that’s the important point; Bilderberg, as such, does not try to have a position. If people who come think

that good sense has been spoken, and that they would like to repeat it in other fora, so much the better.” (Interview 14)

“Everybody goes away with their own learnings, whatever they take from the meeting. And I have a feeling, as I say, that every year when such meetings happen, 10% of the crowd that gets together goes back with a mission of spreading the message. But there’s no force behind it saying the ‘Trilateral Commission wants this, you do this’. I don’t see that pact.” (Interview 6)

“Once you participate to some degree in these networks, you come to hear other things or you come to hear the same story but in a very different way. And, of course, you file that and you return home and maybe your attitude changes; you insert something new back home, not only in your business but also in your national networks, talking to politicians and others.” (Interview 9)

“People can change views slightly after hearing a well informed crowd from the world, so to some degree that might influence policy as it trickles down to these leaders, through words to their own presidents. So that’s the message to me, as far as the message can get. I haven’t seen any radical policy changes that were initiated by such people.” (Interview 7)

“I’m sure there is [some influence]. People share views [...] you can see what the world agenda will be in a couple of years.” (Interview 8)

“My impression is that what was discussed helps to agenda set [...] and I say this from a personal point of view, it does kind of set an agenda that goes beyond the group. It gives you expertise because you’re getting serious people talking about areas they know a lot about, so when the topic comes up I think, yeah, I heard somebody say something, and they were head of that company that is key in that sector, it is probably true [...] These guys pick up that others take it seriously. If the Head of BP and the Head of Shell say it’s serious, then they’ll go away and think it’s serious.” (Interview 2)

These themes will be returned to later in the analysis (see *Theme 5 Hierarchies of influence*) but it is important to state that a number of participants pointed to changes in

the way in which such networks were functioning. The main point, related to the significance of communications technology, was that developments in this area had created the capacity for ever more discrete networks. As interview participants 8 and 15 note,

“It’s probably still very important but not as important as it was. There are so many networks. I’m sure that those that I don’t even know about are more influential, especially in this digital age, a time of instant communication.”
(Interview 8)

“[They were more important] before the internet. Now if people want to network they can do it directly rather than getting on a plane. You’ll notice the kind of people who chair the Trilateral and Bilderberg tend to be former officials [...] at least we knew what they were, they posted their formal agendas and we knew more or less who was going. Now we don’t know who’s talking to who [sic] about what because these institutions have become superseded and it’s all done much more informally [...] If you want to see where real power lies look at the big private equity houses and private investment banks in the US and the kinds of people they recruit to their boards [...] When they buy stakes in Chinese banks, and finance oil exploration, if you imagine that all that is done by market mechanisms, and not by people picking up phones and finding out the background, then you’re living on Planet Zarg [sic].” (Interview 15)

Such innovations may also be helping to overcome one of the most obvious issues related to network diffusion; namely that there is no control over the spread and integrity of networked communications. As participant 9 pointed out,

“There is one thing with networks that you must be aware of. As kids, we would play this game. You write three words on a piece of paper and then pass it on to your neighbour and he adds a fourth, and that goes on as it’s passed around the table and comes back to you. So your original intention is totally reversed. It’s great fun but in networks I’ve found out that, from every knot in the network to the next, your message can be changed and it may be received differently two knots further down, or left or right, and so on. This is very

important, you have to be aware of this. You may say this is black and then after the next knot it's already black and white, totally chequered. There may be some surprises after that, so networks are only as good as the transmitters they have. And some may not transmit the proper message on purpose, you have to know that. It's like in a complicated chip, sometimes it doesn't work as you think it will." (Interview 9)

Leaving aside the problem of control, such an instrumental depiction does, also, imply a form of intent. Some groups and networks have more obvious intentions than others and, indeed, when such intent can be divined, it is important to note that it might be accidental or unconscious. These issues will be explored further in the following two themes.

4.4.5 Summary of theme three

An appreciation of elite networks is critical to an understanding of contemporary geopolitical activity. While many transnational networks tend to be regional rather than truly global, considerable boundary spanning activity between regional networks has created significant linkages on a number of levels. The pattern of such linkages might be seen as a function of a globalising economic imperative but we remain some way from a truly homogenous global elite network.

Elite participants share an almost universal belief in the logic of elite networks and the force for good that they represent. While not all elite members are drawn to such networks and groups, those that are find considerable benefits of association. It is also apparent that certain members of the elite are more suited to such activities than others, and this can affect standing within the group. Crucially, personal interest and motivation is as critical to an understanding of elite interaction and network activity as any sense of objective global civic mindedness, no matter how heartfelt.

Elite groups and networks exhibit a huge degree of interlocking which means that the overall number of elite participants is less than it might first appear. Furthermore, an elite inner group, something that might be seen as resembling an "old boy" network, is

preventing greater dynamism within existing networks and forums. This inner group is disproportionately powerful within the whole, consciously or otherwise, and has a considerable influence on more aspirant members of the elite. Elite networks are highly institutionalised arrangements and entrants into such domains must become skilled navigators if they are to be successful within them.

The influence of transnational elite networks is a contentious area and, in a sense, a continuation of decades old debates related to elite and community power. And, as with earlier discussions, it's clear that the idea of elite influence in global affairs has its detractors,

“There's a general point about humanity which is ideas circulate and resonate and become ruling ideas for a while until they're replaced by some other set of ruling ideas. This is a complicated process which involves books, radio programs, TV programs, political debate, big events like 9-11, the fall of the Berlin Wall, things like that and of course discussions and groupings of this kind [...] It's incredibly difficult, I think, to identify the role in the dissemination of ideas and attitudes of groupings of this kind, but my own guess is that actually they are very, very, minor. I think they tend to echo and reproduce ideas which are being generated elsewhere, often by intellectuals, rather than actually generating them [...] but there are ideas in the air. At the moment, for example, it's the idea of globalisation. It's impossible to identify where that comes from and say it's the World Economic Forum's idea. It clearly isn't.” (Interview 13)

The intangibility of power should not, however, be confused with the absence of it. It is clear that such networks and forums do have some influence. Exactly what form this influence takes requires a more critical examination of underlying mechanisms of power within such groups.

4.5 Theme 4: Consensus formation and the narrowing of differences

It is clear at this point that elite transnational forums do not represent, in any sense, a perfectly balanced and uncontaminated public sphere. Indeed, as participant 1 pointedly observed,

“It doesn’t represent public opinion but that’s not the point.”

(Interview 1)

Instead, they are domains of elite communication and familiarisation; frequently resulting in the development of shared understandings, however broad or vague, related to the nature of global issues and challenges. These understandings result from the perceived legitimacy of arguments or perspectives, which are, themselves, the result of fundamentally contested processes. Since these processes of preference formation are extremely discrete, and do not readily manifest themselves in the form of observable exercises of power, it is necessary to explore the underlying processes of familiarisation, socialisation and acculturation in order to better, and more fully, understand the role of power relations in their creation. These issues are the focus of the remaining thematic categories within the analysis section. Before exploring such issues in some detail, however, it is necessary to better define the process by which participants create some semblance of consensus.

4.5.1 Consensus formation and elite shared understanding

By and large, there is an appreciation among elite participants that elite forums and networks are responsible, consciously or otherwise, for some degree of consensus formation. Some participants present a rather instrumental depiction in which the process is seen as the purpose of such interactions,

“[It creates] some kind of consensus about why some things have to be addressed. However difficult, one can’t just trust to fatality.” (Interview 14)

“You can’t deal with trade, you can’t deal with climate change, you can’t deal with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), you can’t deal with peacekeeping, you can’t deal with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and so on, other than on a global basis. You have to have a global dimension to policy otherwise it won’t work. So, how do you set about that? Well, you set about creating consensuses around certain policy objectives.” (Interview 12)

“You have some forum, the Trilateral or something else, where you have this small world of officials, politicians and managers of public companies meeting, exchanging views. This was the way to create consensus in international relations in the past which is still alive and very important today.” (Interview 3)

“You get access to other decision makers. It’s an opportunity to play a part in, and find out what, the *common sense* is. So, on every issue that might influence your business, oil price, regulation, tariffs, China, you will hear, first hand, the people who are actually making the decisions - and you will play a part in helping them to make those decisions and formulating the common sense. At the moment there are a number of common senses: that the EU needs reform; that it needs more flexible labour markets; that its welfare states hold it back [...] there’s less international common sense about what to do with the Muslim world. In all these areas, the politics and economics have been hammered out in private sessions in these kinds of places. Now sometimes the common sense is right and sometimes it’s wrong, but you can’t deny that there is such a thing.” (Interview 15)

At the same time, other participants describe a softer – and more complex array of processes and outcomes,

“[Consensus formation], or *definition of differences*, I would say. I would observe, and I don’t want to exaggerate, that people narrow differences which is, I suppose, the same as consensus formation. I mean it’s not in so far as it is implied that consensuses are reached on things [...] It was mutual consensus, mutual education, the swapping of ideas. I can’t place a value on it but I think it’s real.” (Interview 10)

“I wouldn’t say a consensus; a consensus implies that everybody subscribes to it but I do think, yes, certain *thinking crystallises*, views emerge from these things. How they emerge, well it’s very difficult to say. They emerge from what people read in the newspapers, what they hear on the radio and television, what they read in books, what they hear when they go to conferences. It’s a process that most human beings would find hard to describe with any degree of precision.” (Interview 12)

“It can help with generating a consensus; it can also help with clarifying and sharpening disagreements. If you disagree, you go away with an even better understanding of why you disagree, and where you agree, you have a better understanding for a basis for cooperation. In a sense, what you’re doing here is making the process of thinking that is driving policy more transparent, and that can be the basis either for better cooperation or more perfect disagreement.” (Interview 13)

It is important, therefore, to recognise that the term *consensus formation* is potentially misleading as it implies that consensus is the objective and the product of elite interactions. Instead, it is arguably more appropriate to use the term as a loose description of the underlying momentum and consequence of elite interactions within such contexts. As these contributions suggest,

“The formation of elite consensus is a bi-product rather than a goal.” (Interview 1)

“I have a little problem with the word consensus. I can’t remember participating in anything we went to in order to reach a consensus. Normally these informal meetings are very good, not because they are consensus building, but because you get to see things on the horizon. This may lead, in the end, to a certain similarity in thinking, within a network and even across borders, but it was not originally intended to build consensus.” (Interview 9)

“Not really, because the problems we deal with are of a general nature and don’t adjust to simple answers. What can come out of it is that it is [the belief

that it is] wrong not to deal with a problem and that we should go home and encourage people not to leave it on the table. But a real consensus with an action plan one, two, three..? The answer is no, people are much too sensible to believe they can do that.” (Interview 14)

It should be noted that such “consensus” in elite circles forms more readily around certain issues than others. This might be a reflection of shared ideological predisposition, for instance, related to unfettered free markets, or a reflection of broader structural influences, as might possibly be the case with civil society pressure in areas such as environmental concerns. Whatever the cause, it would be wrong to conclude that consensus are formed across the board. The strength of consensus in certain areas does, however, provide an interesting potential insight into the motivations, interests and diversity of elite participants within such forums and networks,

“I think the consensus is much greater there [on economic issues], because automatically, around the table, you have internationalists. People who are not internationalists would find they are losing their time and over-playing the importance of the international component of domestic problems. So you have internationalists and from this point of view you need to have a degree of rules, a degree of references, and every business is interested in these type of references [...] I think that there the consensus was always very powerful.” (Interview 14)

“The one area where probably there is the least debate and most consensus is, of course, global warming and environmental issues; there you don’t see a negotiating position except when you get down to specific agreements like Kyoto. But there is a lot of consensus as to what the world should do and what that means for politicians and business leaders. But, when it comes to a situation like the Middle East, Israel, Palestine, there are quite a range of views that come into the picture.” (Interview 6)

“Well, the broadly accepted vision was the market economy, no doubt about it. Absolutely. You may even say the good old traditional values of proper

capitalism which, maybe, fifteen years ago, wasn't a dirty word like it is now.”
(Interview 9)

It is not possible with the limited amount of data gathered for this study to draw too many conclusions about these interests and motivations except to say that market concerns do appear to enjoy a transcendental place in elite engagement. All participants of the study were, undoubtedly, free market advocates and this ideological predisposition must, not unnaturally, have some bearing upon the appreciation of broader geopolitical issues. Given the various interests of the wider group, this doesn't necessarily imply that consensus is any more likely on specific issues; it does, however, provide an important stimulus for such discourse.

The issue of self-interest, and a constantly changing environmental context, led some participants to acknowledge that, even when consensual settlements are reached, they should not be viewed as a static end result. Instead, they are constantly changing and evolving and this adds an important dimension to ongoing elite interactions,

“Politics is about conflict. It's not about consensus, it's not about norms. Politics is about conflict and trade offs [...] we don't get to consensus, we get to settlements and settlements constantly change. It's not static, it's always moving as a result of events and also because those settlements are constantly in flux.” (Interview 2)

“I mean bread has been produced in this world for around six thousand years now, since the inception of agriculture, but they're still experimenting with it: trying to introduce new types; new tastes; new ways to preserve it; better ways to preserve it; healthier breads. There's no end to developing taste and I don't see any harm in testing your ideas with new people and seeing how they react to it [...] seeing the reaction and making some amendments if necessary or adding interesting components to take it further.” (Interview 5)

In summary, therefore, the narrowing of differences between elite participants is not necessarily a consciously intended outcome but it appears, nevertheless, to be a natural consequence of such activity. Elite participants recognise the value of creating common

ground and see it as an extremely valuable result of elite interactions but do not consciously believe that this is why they do it, which, in a sense, begs an obvious, and equally important, question: why *do* elite participants engage in this type of activity? And, again, it seems that very few elite members have given the question any serious thought,

“You never think about it really, I’ve never done so. It’s been an important part of my life but unintentionally. You don’t do these things because you want to be in a network, and you’re not aware that you’ll be entering one or whatever, but you may end up being a part of it.” (Interview 9)

“We’ll it’s an interesting question. I’m the vice chairman of XXXXX [a longstanding and prestigious elite transnational forum] and we’ve only just had the discussion [...] what is the value for members and participants and what is the value for society at large?” (Interview 16)

Whatever the reasons for this lack of inquiry, there can be little denying that elite participants feel themselves very much drawn to such activity. This will be the theme of the final section of the analysis (see section 4.6.4 *The seductive lure of elite membership*) but it is enough to state at this stage that the lack of an obvious function, within many of the more elitist organisations, is clearly of some interest. It is almost as if the benefits of such activity are self-evident, and that to participate is a natural extension of what it is to be a member of the elite. Indeed, participation is how one is defined as a member of the elite. The implications of this process are potentially profound for any notion of eventual consensus; after all, participants are clearly identified, and identify themselves, as having the characteristics that mark them out as members of a select group of often likeminded individuals. It is important to consider, therefore, whether there exists a fundamental bias within agenda and selection processes; and what consequences this entails for group discourse.

4.5.2 *The mobilisation of bias within elite interactions*

As was stated earlier in the analysis (see section 4.3.2 *The nature of elite collaboration in the transnational setting*) elite participants, and core elite members in particular, are

keen to suggest that the composition of elite networks and groups is diverse, reflecting a variety of stakeholder interests. They are equally keen to suggest that many of the most exclusive forums and networks have no “hidden agenda” and that they exist, simply, to facilitate communication between transnational elite members. In the case of one such group, Bilderberg, this is evidenced, it is argued, by a lack of formal settlements and conclusions which is, itself, a consequence of diverse interests within the group

“There is an even smaller elite business group in this country, twenty to twenty-five people, and we once issued a pamphlet on ‘the market’ but I don’t think it had any impact. But that [kind of thing] is very rare. Bilderberg never does that on purpose. That’s a clear decision – they don’t issue any statements. And it’s really not possible at Bilderberg to have one voice because you have so many, as I said, people from different constituencies that would never agree to say something [collectively] about free trade. You would almost certainly have someone from the emerging economies or from Western Europe who is opposed.” (Interview 16)

“There’s no such thing as Bilderberg thinking, we have people from both sides of the political debate. If you take the two steering committee members from the UK, [Martin Taylor] and Ken Clarke, [and they] have diametrically different views on the desirability of British participation in the Euro, for example. Generally speaking, there are more people at the Bilderberg conferences who would be in UK terms highly Europhile, but that isn’t surprising because the elites on the continent are 90% highly Europhile.” (Interview 18)

“It doesn’t have a political relevance and it doesn’t come to conclusions. I mean you have a debate on whatever it might be and that’s the end of that. It doesn’t come to any conclusions; you can draw your own conclusions from it but the organisation doesn’t draw a conclusion [...] that was what it always sought to avoid. The conspiracy theories are terribly difficult to refute because, if you don’t actually produce any results, people think you’re hiding them. In point of fact, there weren’t any.” (Interview 4)

“But we never discussed this as a way to go and have a consensus; all issues were hotly debated. I tell you they were. The most pleasant thing that we could imagine at Bilderberg were two parties up there on the stage almost hitting one another because they had totally different views on what is right, how to deal with the Arabs or I don’t know what. And we specifically looked for people to make speeches with widely different views and there was never an endeavour to reach a common view. It was about opening the mind to two totally different views. And then everyone worked it over in his own brain, what to make of it.” (Interview 9)

“This doesn’t mean that you reach any agreement on policy, that is clearly what this group is not about, but you have a better idea what people are thinking about [...] Bilderberg does not try to reach conclusions, it does not try to say what people should do. Everyone goes away with their own feeling and that allows the debate to be completely open and quite frank. You see what the differences are and the only conclusion is that, whatever the differences, the world works better if the Americans and the Europeans get along than if they do not.” (Interview 14)

The lack of an ideological agenda is something that is disputed, however, by other participants within the group; participants who perceive the existence of clearly defined preferences and ideological biases,

“These forums, they’re not official forums, but they do have organisers or a group of lead people who usually set the agenda. These people tend to be from western economies and they come to the table with an agenda which looks at world issues, whether they’re related to the Middle East problem, the Iranian situation, or the emergence of Russia as a new power and the different angle that Putin brings to it [...] but then, as I said, most of these forums are created by western business or political leaders so the agenda and the views are slanted towards that western view.” (Interview 6)

“I tended not to get invited to these things because I didn’t share this consensus and was vaguely felt to be unsympathetic, and this was certainly true with Bilderberg. The first time I went to Bilderberg, I was a perfectly respectable

European; by the second time I went, I had become increasingly critical of the European consensus as it existed at that time and I've become even more critical since [...] I certainly felt it [bias] and I think the fact that, after the first time I went to Bilderberg they didn't ask me again for some time, and after the second time, they haven't asked me since, reflects the fact that I wasn't one of them. I mean they were perfectly polite and it was very agreeable and I wasn't made to feel that I was being "sent to Coventry" or anything of that kind [...] but I think they did feel that I wasn't one of them and that probably was the reason they didn't invite me back again. They were recruiting, looking for recruits, for a particular kind of view, basically a strong Europeanist view in the case of Bilderberg. And if you didn't hold those views, you were never going to hold them. They sensed it and they were more comfortable with people who were orthodox in that sense." (Interview 11)

"There are certain issues where consensus is formed before they even turn up [...] the people who turn up are almost all the sorts of people who believe in structural reform of the European market. I mean you're not going to get the revolutionary communists there [...] it's not really consensus formation; I would say it's consensus reinforcement." (Interview 1)

The perception, among countries that might be considered peripheral to the North Atlantic network, that the agenda and views are skewed by traditional relationships and perspectives has implications for the sense of standing of certain participants within such groups. This point will be explored in greater detail in the final theme of the analysis (see section 4.6.3 *Dealing with fear and the importance of being interesting*) but it is clear from all three statements that a pervasive bias was felt to be present despite the insistence among longer standing elite members that no such agenda exists.

4.5.2.1 Norms, rules and rituals

For some, the influences described above are institutional and manifest themselves in the norms, rules and rituals of decision making. As a consequence, presenting contentious points of view, or being contentious in the way that you present them, is

part and parcel of the process of learning to adapt and survive within such environments,

“I’ve always been on the inside, not the outside. I’ve pursued my arguments over policy within a policymaking framework whether it’s the government or the European Union. So I’ve always been on the inside but I don’t think that’s deprived my views of their sharpness or edge but you are playing by certain sets of rules. So, you can’t be completely iconoclastic and remain inside; if you are, you won’t be inside for very long. So, to some extent, the people who say these organisations and networks muffle dissent, they have a certain something on their side. But they only muffle what I would call extreme dissent [...] I believe in a consensual approach to things, to dialogue, to talking things through, to try and reach broad agreement on the way ahead [...] I speak diplomatically because I’m a diplomat. I’ve found, funnily enough, very often it works better than speaking in a highly hyped way.” (Interview 12)

“[The debate] was never heated; it’s an extremely urbane and sophisticated lot of people after all. I mean they’re not the sort of people who are going to make a fuss. They’ll probably go out muttering if they disagree [...] ‘did you hear what that fellow said, absolute rubbish’, but they wouldn’t say so in the forum.” (Interview 4)

“I don’t think there was anything people couldn’t say or didn’t feel they could say. But if people did say radical stuff, the others would think, ‘why the hell are they here?’ ” (Interview 1)

These unwritten rules and codes of conduct are particularly interesting with respect to the issue of bias mobilisation, because, consciously or unconsciously, elite organisations are discriminating based upon a collective sense of what, or who, is acceptable, and what, or who, is not. Certain thinking is already enshrined within the collective consciousness of elite networks. It is arguably so unconscious and pervasive that it has become uncontested within the group itself. Instead, it acts as a referential starting point for elite discourse and interaction. Elite participant advancement and survival is based not so much on the acceptance of such bias but a fundamental belief in, and absorption

of, it. These beliefs are extremely discrete and tend to be attitudinal rather than ideological, which is one of the reasons that the membership of many groups can be claimed to be bi-partisan or multi-stakeholder. Of course, with respect to certain issues, there is a closer causal relationship between attitude and ideological position but this is not a given, and certain elite members do appear to succeed in traversing a rather difficult path. For other participants, there is the definite sense, prior to acceptance within the group or network, that one is being tested in some way,

“I just felt my way and learned how the international system works. Firstly, they always look to your knowledge, your approach, your policy direction. Secondly, they look to your power. If you have the two together in the international arena, you will be successful [...] I had been checked by them, of course, for quite some time, because the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in Basel is the training centre for central bank governors [...] they are checking you. We had a formal meeting and then an informal meeting over dinner. First we started with six or seven governors at one table and then it extended to twenty or so, all of us; just choosing a subject and discussing of course. I was checked several times for my intervention, my approach to issues, and also my personal relations.” (Interview 7)

“Yes, I think you are constantly being tested and you will only make it further if those who are already established members, let me say some of the key members of the network, recommend you. They say, ‘you can rely on him, he’ll do a good job, he’s reasonable, he’s going to listen, and he won’t abuse any rules or whatever’. I think there’s something to it. But I think what they want to see is that you’re constantly tested about your independence, not in material terms but in intellectual terms.” (Interview 9)

The final point is extremely interesting and is a theme that will be returned to in the final section of the analysis (see section 4.6.3 *Dealing with fear and the importance of being interesting*). For the time being at least, it is sufficient to suggest that some tension exists between a conscious or unconscious bias within elite groups and a stated desire to cultivate fresh intellectual insights and direction. An obvious example of such tension is in the selection of participants.

4.5.2.2 The selection of elite participants

At first glance, one might be forgiven for believing that the identification and selection of participants for inclusion in elite forums and networks is a straightforward exercise related to merit, expertise, influence and practicality; indeed, these are very often the reasons suggested by group or network organisers,

“People come to one's attention in all sorts of ways. I mean, sometimes, you see them somewhere at a meeting, they're very bright, sometimes you read something they've written [...] We're looking for people who are thoughtful or who are going to be influential. I don't think we're as good at talent spotting as you suggest.” (Interview 18)

“So the way in which we pick people follows two simple principles. Firstly, we have to have enough people who have never been before so that we keep a momentum and don't simply have an old boys club, and [we have to have] enough people who have been before who understand the format i.e. that you speak briefly, that you speak your mind and that nothing will ever be quoted. Secondly, and taking into account the agenda, and knowing that ministers are very occupied and might call off at the last minute, you then try to look for people who would be interested in relation to their own ambition to share thoughts with others [...] I don't think it's an accident because when you ask a German, ‘who do you think would be interested and who is going places in German politics?’ He will make his best assessment of the bright new boys and girls, people who are in the beginning phase of their career and who would like to get known, and the other people who would like to know them.” (Interview 14)

“It's not everyone who goes but there are a group of people who are more active and, of course, if you're one of the guys who is perceived as being interested, and over time you add some value, you are asked and invited by everyone. It's almost a self-fulfilling process.” (Interview 16)

To elite participants, the process of identification is presented as being one almost of natural selection. The most prominent individuals in core sectors are invited based largely upon their respective success, knowledge and interests within a given sector. These core identifying traits are then superimposed with a variety of judgments based, for instance, upon inclination to participate and personal interest in networks of this kind. What is less frequently cited is the importance of personal contacts but, when one looks closely at the statements of participants, it becomes clear that new members are very often known to existing members of elite networks. This factor plays a considerable part in their access to such groups,

“I form an arbitrary committee [to select participants] and I make sure the committee meets [...] I think I play a greater role in this than anyone else. The trouble with these forums is that they get old, the same people go again and again, and you have to be ruthless and disband them. I mean, like this last time, there were half a dozen members of the current cabinet, three or four members of the shadow cabinet, the heads of the security services and editors of the leading broadsheets blah, blah. I mean it’s serious, if you want to talk about power elite. I played a big role. If I wanted to, I could invite everyone but I don’t.” (Interview 10)

“I know perfectly well why I was invited. Because Bilderberg was run by Peter Carrington who I knew and who obviously thought I could contribute. When it ceased to be run by Peter and was run by somebody who I knew less well, Viscount d’Avignon, I wasn’t invited.” (Interview 12)

“You just decided who would be a good person to have.” (Interview 4)

“I was proposed by one of the leading business people in Turkey [whom I knew]. He offered my name and they readily accepted it.” (Interview 5)

“The steering committee member selects who will participate from each country. We have two or three participants. There is a limited number from each country [...] I liked XXXXXX very much for our relationship and for bringing me into the group.” (Interview 7)

As a consequence of this ability, the members of boards and steering committees within such networks and forums wield considerable personal discretion when considering new members. This is important to bear in mind for a number of reasons: firstly, aspiring elite members may wish to ingratiate themselves with such people in return for access to the network; secondly, elite members responsible for selection are likely to invite only those people they feel will reflect positively upon them within the wider group; thirdly, the complex decision related to how new members will fit into existing elite arrangements is left largely to one person whose judgment may well be coloured by his own sense of what the group or network is about. In short, forces of bias on both sides may lead to a perpetuation of dominant group logic and thinking.

The selection of participants within elite networks is not a scientific process and is, instead, arbitrary and highly discretionary, and, crucially, it tends to reinforce group thinking. This aspect of elite interactions will be revisited in the final thematic section (see section 4.6.4 *The seductive lure of elite membership*) but is important to note that, while not necessarily a conscious activity, the downstream consequences are significant for any notion of consensus formation.

4.5.2.3 The role of information and learning in elite networks

Another key area in which bias is mobilised is through the treatment of information and this is particularly relevant to elite forums and networks where information, and learning, is frequently cited as a core benefit to such interaction. Indeed, it is interesting to note that elite participants, while reluctant to concede that elite networks are instrumental in forming opinions, are happy to suggest that the information and learning that they experience in such forums enables them to form new understandings,

“I mean, there’s no consensus forming agenda; it’s more information sharing activity. Everybody leaves with a new sense of understanding.” (Interview 6)

“Nobody is going to change my way of thinking, my approach, my wishes. I learned lots of things. Maybe there are some effects of that but, for my part, I got lots of benefits.” (Interview 7)

“It doesn’t mean that you go left and right and then change your opinion every other day, not at all; but I do think we all must have the ability to learn and to improve our thinking with more information.” (Interview 9)

“What is very difficult to quantify is that you get somewhat familiar with broader topics and you hear, at an early stage, what might happen to water, to energy, to commodities, to geopolitical conflicts and to many other things. So, I think it broadens your horizons at a very early stage. It’s not a direct result but it helps you to better understand different aspects or different interests. That is for me the key.” (Interview 16)

This reluctance to suggest that personal opinions are subject to change may be evasiveness but it seems more likely that it is a function of a certain elite defensiveness, an unwillingness, for instance, to publicly admit to some kind of weakness. It does, however, disguise what is fairly compelling evidence that the processes of elite interaction do, indeed, lead to modified participant opinions. Since new participants within such groups and networks are screened by more established members, and since organisers are responsible for the agenda of meetings and the invitation of speakers, it is fair to suggest that this might have some bearing upon the nature of opinion formation within such networks. Although, again, it seems far from clear that this is the product of conscious intent.

One key area of learning, however, relates to the significance elite members attach to the contribution of other elite participants, and, since these participants are the vehicles of much of the information that is exchanged within such networks, it is important to recognise the social aspects, and personal biases, of elite interaction. These themes will be explored in the next section (see *Theme 5 Hierarchies of influence*) but it is important to note the inter-relationship of information and information deliverer within such contexts,

“There is no objective discussion. A discussion is related to the opinion you have of your interlocutor. Do you think he’s honest, do you think he’s speaking true language and, even if you believe he’s mistaken, do you still believe that

he's somebody that you can speak to? And if one believes that the world is not influenced by how people get along, that is not true; it's true from the simplest aspects of life to the highest. And this is nothing new. If you look through history then you see major mistakes being made because people did not believe the person telling them." (Interview 14)

"They come together and the idea is to exchange views and learn about things. Now, there again you see, I think that it's probably useful because people get to know one another but I'm not sure the discussions are all that useful. Probably sometimes they are and sometimes they're not [...] I think that people are better informed as a result of the discussions. People, particularly business people, come with not much idea about the Middle East problem and they're very much better informed. And I suppose, to the extent that whichever speaker they agreed with, they'd come away feeling that man is right. But that's about all I think." (Interview 4)

Information is not some kind of value neutral commodity; instead, it is mediated by other elite participants and is laden with interpretive meaning and motive. When elite participants talk of the value of information and learning within such contexts, they are describing their experience in the round. Learning who, and what, to listen to is as valuable to the elite participant as learning what there is to know in any abstract sense.

4.5.3 Consensus: a mechanism for change

In the same way that consensus formation activity is perceived by participants to be a very soft and consequential product of elite interactions, the downstream impact of such consensus is even more difficult to interpret,

"These are, in some senses, private discussions. I would assert very strongly that these are briefing meetings and what consequences have followed is not clear." (Interview 13)

“Does this influence the emergence of policy? It’s very difficult to put your finger on it, you know, but just because you can’t put your finger on it does not prove that it doesn’t. Anyway the fact is it’s there.” (Interview 12)

Looking for a direct causal relationship between consensus formation activity and public policy outcomes is likely to be unrewarding since it is impossible to control for other determinants including, of course, the possibility that the consensus was reached elsewhere. Elite consensus is, as has been described, a loose characterisation of general sentiment with, very often, poorly defined boundaries. The process of its formation is often unconscious and invariably discrete, and its transmission is so idiosyncratic that it is difficult to describe the whole process as deterministic in any conscious sense. Of course, there are elite groups with more clearly defined objectives and public policy intervention strategies but, again, the intervention is dependent upon the creation of shared understanding between parties. This is not a standard lobbying practice and requires mutual appreciation of challenges and goals. For some participants, it is clearly difficult to understand how such activity constitutes a meaningful exercise of power

“I think we’re miles from, not even close to any situation where, I mean, I don’t think people are swapping views and coming to new views and saying let’s impose these or something [like that...] there isn’t the possibility of, somehow, a consensus developing which is then implemented because we’ve both got to go back to our political democracies.” (Interview 10)

And, yet, as other participants noted, the existence of transnational elite consensus formation activity can, at the very least, be useful in legitimising and strengthening arguments within the domestic policy setting

“I think that if you put all the groups together you can sort them into core groups which share a sort of common consensus, a common consensus which is, incidentally, very noticeable in the House of Lords. If you take the foreign policy, internationalist, group, not all of them agree, but a majority of them hold certain views about the future development of British policy which are similar to the Bilderberg group and similar to Chatham House and similar, I imagine, to most of the meetings at Ditchley, though those probably are rather more

variable. And, there are common assumptions there. It's partly generational that these are the common assumptions. People who were adult in the early 1970s when Britain joined the European Community, and they have not changed their view that this was the right long term development for Britain." (Interview 11)

"Can it, at the margins of a problem, help to create a consensus? Each government needs support for what it does, particularly in the United States with Congress and so on, and where the action of outside groups on political decision making is much greater than in Europe. Do you need to do that? It can be useful. How useful, I cannot say." (Interview 14)

"Becoming of more importance are some of these country to country meetings which take place, bilateral places where people gather on Friday lunchtime and go through to Sunday. All kinds of people meet and discuss a common agenda and that really is where a kind of bilateral common sense works its way out. And it's very difficult to go against that kind of consensus. Many are there because they've been elected and who can deny them their right to go? But one shouldn't deny the influence of these places." (Interview 15)

And, it is important to note, that exposure to privy information and elite consensus can be very useful in cementing one's own career position, or delivering benefits to the organisation one represents, in certain arenas; which, not unnaturally, means that there are immediate and direct consequences of such access and interaction,

"Just to [be able] to distribute those kinds of ideas, one or two is enough. I remember one new idea in one month is enough, you know, to show that this man is firstly, a knowledgeable man; secondly, a powerful man; and, thirdly, a dependable man. These are the two or three important areas for the central banker." [Interview 7]

"A few weeks ago I was at the Bilderberg conference outside Washington to talk about Afghanistan, Palestine, Georgia and many other things, in a confidential group where you have politicians, academics, business people, and media people. It opens a lot of new aspects and avenues. And that has, implicitly of course, an impact on how you run your business or how you

formulate your strategy. So in that sense, I think, it is very direct.” (Interview 16)

“When you get back, you use this in your own rhetoric, in explaining to people what would be a more sensible way out of an evident crisis [...] If you are a good recipient of messages, you get a good amount of food for thought which you go back and chew over, and then you try to build it into your policies or take assessment of your existing policies, redesign them according to those ideas.” (Interview 5)

“People can change their views slightly after hearing a well informed crowd from [around] the world. So to some degree, that might influence policy as it trickles down to their leaders, [through] words to their own Presidents.” (Interview 6)

“I do [think it’s a bi-product rather than a goal of elite meetings], particularly when such a meeting is international and the participants return to their home country, and, then, under the influence of what they’ve heard, they start networking within their own national environment [in order] to reach a goal. This may be a consensus on an issue with whoever would be necessary to build a consensus; could be competitors, different political parties, or I don’t know what – yes true.” (Interview 9)

Of course, these outcomes are very much driven by individual members or participants and do not necessarily represent the intended consequences of a deterministic force within such groups or networks. But it is important to highlight a critical observation related to such activity, namely that the influential within society have the capacity to amplify what might otherwise be an inconsequential discussion between engaged elite citizens. It is for this reason that a better understanding of the process and its implications is so urgently required.

4.5.4 *Summary of theme four*

Despite frequent use of the word consensus during interviews with participants, there were considerable differences over what was actually meant by it within the context of transnational elite interactions. In short, the term consensus formation is applied broadly in the study as a description of the momentum and consequences of elite interaction. The impetus for such consensus formation is not entirely clear although it is apparent that a combination of economic interest, civic mindedness and self interest do play a part. It should be noted, however, that formation of consensus is not a consciously intended outcome of elite interaction despite being an almost inevitable consequence.

Bias is mobilised within elite forums and networks in three ways: through norms, rules and rituals; through selection and retention processes, and through the treatment of information. Whether by accident, or design, elite organisations discriminate based upon a collective sense of what and who is acceptable; certain beliefs and attitudes are a feature of the collective consciousness of elite forums and groups. These beliefs, often unconscious and largely uncontested, are a referential starting point for elite discourse and interaction. They are at odds with a frequently stated intention of encouraging fresh insights and perspectives along with ever greater dynamism within such environments. In short, forces of bias in the selection process and the participant's desire to be accepted, lead to the continuation of dominant group logic and thinking. And, when elite participants talk of the value of information and learning within such networks, they are not describing some kind of value neutral exercise, learning who, and what, to listen to is a central plank in establishing oneself within the elite network. This theme will be explored further in the final section of the analysis (see section 4.6.4 *The seductive lure of elite membership*).

The consequences of elite discourse and consensus formation are not always clear but it seems appropriate to suggest that they have a subtle bearing upon the actions of elite members. The effects of this influence are themselves often discrete and difficult to interpret,

“Maybe I’ve acted as a little chip here and there with maybe a hundred other chips from a hundred other people. Maybe we’ve contributed to reshape things in some way. And sometimes, we were utterly unsuccessful; in fact, I think this was the more common experience. But I was not waiting for a huge impact that would change the nation forever, never at all. Because, I only sort of changed a little bit, half a degree here or there, to improve things in a certain direction. Something along those lines, I think that was enough.” (Interview 9)

It is important to state that such outcomes are not necessarily the intended consequences of the collective group or network. At the same time, however, the capacity of influential members to amplify the type of consensus created within such forums means that its influence should not be underestimated.

4.6 Theme 5: Hierarchies of influence

It is apparent at this stage of the analysis that elite members feel themselves very much drawn to the activity of transnational networks and forums. Such attraction represents a voluntary, although not always conscious, decision on the part of elite participants; indeed, most have never stopped to consider the implications or consequences of such activity. Elite participants see themselves becoming involved as a natural consequence of the success and standing they enjoy in their everyday lives but, unlike membership of international trade bodies or regional political institutions, membership of informal elite organisations is also based on social and personal criteria. Entrants to the elite transnational network must satisfy existing members of their value and worthiness before they are truly admitted; and this subtle dimension to elite interactions creates a number of unconscious compliance mechanisms within elite communities.

The final analytical theme, *hierarchies of influence* continues with the focus on mechanisms of compliance within such settings and, specifically, those mechanisms emanating from processes of familiarisation, fraternisation, socialisation and acculturation.

4.6.1 *The consequences of elite vulnerability*

Although it is tempting to consider elite networks in terms of a homogenous whole, it is important to remember that members of such networks are individuals; they don't cease to act or respond as individuals the moment they are welcomed into elite circles. It might be that their values and beliefs have subtly adapted to the requirements of elite membership but they remain, fundamentally, individual in the way that they engage with such activity. One of the most interesting observations made during the participant interviews, for instance, was just how disarmingly vulnerable many elite members actually are. Aside from displaying considerable intellectual abilities, it was noticeable that a number of the participants were very guarded and, at times, somewhat defensive during the interviews⁴³. Indeed, some of the participants insisted upon having third parties present in order to observe proceedings. This is not entirely surprising when one considers the weight given to comments that such people might make by, among others, representatives of the media. But it does demonstrate a difficulty that many members of the elite have with issues of openness and trust.

For many elite participants, public life is spent under great scrutiny and the blurring of public and private has meant that it is essential for such individuals to create the private space needed to function effectively and to, crucially, speak without fear of repercussion. It is for this reason that the point raised earlier in the findings (see 4.3.5 *Media representation within elite transnational networks*) concerning the disclosure rules of elite membership, takes on additional significance. Non-disclosure is not just an unbreakable pre-condition of elite membership, it is a fundamental requirement of effective elite personal interaction, and it might, in part, explain the appeal of such forums and networks. As participants 2, 14, 16 and 18 note,

⁴³ The guarded and, somewhat, defensive posture of certain participants manifested itself in a number of ways. The most obvious of these was the visible care taken when answering questions. At times, such precision resulted in an unnatural amount of time spent on what might, for many people, have been a straightforward response. Some participants also became agitated or aggressive when discussing certain subjects; the form that this took was usually dismissive. In one instance, a participant reached across a table for the digital recorder and required further clarification of the disclosure terms. It was not uncommon for participants to ask for clarification, mid-interview, on how the information would be used; with a number of participants clarifying the terms of our Chatham House Rules agreement.

“The interesting thing is not why they come, but why they come back, the first time around, why not? It’s not an expensive exercise, it’s not Davos. They come back because there is no exposure, there are no big statements and nobody can run around and posture. That’s why it’s still running after all these years.” (Interview 14)

“At least you get to talk about things openly. It’s always friendly, it’s not aggressive. In political circles, at official conferences, you have to play a role because you are the representative of Britain, Germany, France or wherever, but here, you can be critical, self critical, and you can try to find new ways. There’s normally no leaks, no coverage, which is very good. The confidentiality of this meeting is a big advantage.” (Interview 16)

“It felt quite isolated from the rest of the world. I suppose, from a security viewpoint, you’re cut off and there is an implicit celebration of that. You can talk about whatever you want to talk about. It’s very comfortable, very nice.” (Interview 2)

“It’s a private organisation, and we live in an age that can’t distinguish privacy from secrecy. Privacy is then seen as secrecy and secrecy is seen as sinister by definition [...] People who are there and talk privately over dinner deserve to have their confidences respected. For me, the value has been building a group of friends, a network if you like, people I’ve come to know and who have come to know me.” (Interview 18)

This aspect of elite interaction is significant for another reason; it reinforces a sense of inclusion and exclusion for both participants and those at the periphery of such activity. Members of the elite are welcomed into a world in which they can, in principle at least, speak freely, and in confidence, to other members of the elite. They also experience a degree of access and frankness that is stripped bare of many layers of formality, something they simply would not enjoy without access to such forums and networks,

“[On a debate related to oil and energy] Lord Brown and Jeroen van der Veer could never have been that open in public⁴⁴. On the European economy, Trichet⁴⁵ was absolutely scathing about European structural rigidity. Now he could never have been so open in front of the media or his own constituents. Seeing Ackermann and Schremp⁴⁶ at loggerheads over ‘off-shoring’ was also very revealing.” (Interview 8)

“All that stuff goes on. I quite enjoyed it really. I mean it was quite amusing and interesting being with all these powerful people because some of them were powerful and amusing and others were very deeply un-amusing and awful. But still powerful [...] I remember Vernon Jordan, a very powerful man in the democratic world – and I forget where we were, Germany I think, somewhere at a conference, he came up to me and said, ‘meet the next President of the United States’ and introduced me to Clinton. Well a) I’d never heard of Clinton, it was well before he ran for President and b) I’d certainly never heard of Arkansas before. I thought Vernon Jordan’s a wise old man, I’ll keep my eye on Clinton, and it was interesting because Clinton was obviously quite something, as, indeed, he proved to be whether you liked it or not.” (Interview 4)

“So you get into all these kinds of conflicting views and feuds but, the more you get into the debates, the more you find out that the politicians who started all this were not prepared at all. And they don’t know what to do now either. This is the kind of learning and sharing that you get into.” (Interview 6)

“I always find it interesting to hear different aspects in small circles; I mean Condi Rice talks about Iraq and then Dick Holbrooke comes – so, you know, it’s completely different. To hear different stories with different views makes you richer.” (Interview 16)

“I got to ‘breathe the air’. I learned a lot. I would like to give a couple of examples [...] We started with the developments in Iraq and went on to discuss China’s place in the world. Would it be a single-polar world or a multi-polar

⁴⁴ Lord Brown stepped down as Chairman of BP in May 2007. Jeroen van der Veer continues in the role of Chief Executive Officer at Royal Dutch Shell.

⁴⁵ Jean-Claude Trichet is currently President of the European Central Bank.

⁴⁶ Dr Josef Ackermann is currently Chairman of Deutsche Bank. Jurgen E. Schremp⁴⁶ resigned from his position as Chairman of Daimler Chrysler in 2005.

one? How Iran's nuclear power would affect all of us was discussed in detail. Concerns on the issue were conveyed. The developments in the United States, what the elections would bring, and how the public opinion in the United States was progressing was deliberated. The most important issues facing the world, from energy policies to expansion in the communication technologies, were reviewed. At the end of the three days, we have learned and discussed the world's most prominent problems with the world's experts.” (Interview 17)

It is important, therefore, that the impact of such access and openness on those entering the network should not be underestimated. It reinforces a feeling of exclusivity and attracts those for whom such exclusivity is important; in short, anyone who aspires to become a fully actualised member of such networks. To be privy to such openness, and be relied upon to respect the integrity of private conversations within such groups, is an important personal accolade that rewards immediately and over time. And for those who are seemingly rejected from such networks, the promise of possible re-entry is usually sufficient to ensure adherence to ongoing codes of conduct. After all, to break such codes would result in an almost certain denial of privileged access in future years.

4.6.2 Elitism within elite networks

Another important aspect to elite networks, and one that should not be overlooked, is the mechanistic role of elitism itself, something that is evident within even the most exclusive of elite communities. It is necessary to consider the impact of elitism not just in terms of the composition of the overall collective but, also, in terms of its internal functioning. Elitist attitudes and behaviour are central to the functioning of elite networks and the most obvious manifestations of this are in the way that participants are selected and, importantly, the way participants make decisions about acceptance,

“They all got something [or should I say] get something out of it. But you need high quality people.” (Interview 10)

“But it was a different sort of person. I mean there were the ‘Nods’: David Rockefeller, Henry Kissinger, Agnelli, those sorts of people, smart Europeans and top people [...] Oh yes, the ‘Nods’ like the ‘Nods’. They wouldn’t come if

they thought the people there were not comparable to them if you see what I mean. So, you had to keep up the quality, quality in that sense, of people who came otherwise it wouldn't have worked at all [...] Is that elitism? I don't know what elitism means [...] I think people felt it was a compliment to be asked. You were joining a rather superior group of people and, I suppose, in that sense, it was elitist. But they were rather superior people.” (Interview 4)

There is, undoubtedly, an elitist undercurrent to the creation and maintenance of elite forums and networks and this is often rooted in a belief that elites are most suited to the demands of such interactions and discourse,

“As long as people get there because they're intelligent, well read, well informed, sensitive etc. I think the world has always been ruled by elites but the question is whether the elites are well qualified [...] Usually, most people who are part of elites spend a lot of time denying that they are and saying that elites are a bad thing. But, actually, they love them. I like them but I don't deny that I'm part of them; neither do I think they are a bad thing I'm afraid [...] Are these people members of elites because they've got some real knowledge or because they're prepared to put in real service to the common cause? If they are, well, what's wrong with elites?” (Interview 12)

Such activity is an expression of belief in one's rightful place at the discursive table; a belief that is frequently accompanied by rather patriarchal attitudes to calling, duty and guidance,

“I definitely have 'pure and ethical' writ large throughout my life. I definitely had views about trying to make the world a better place for the majority even if I'm just 'pissing in the wind', only making a slight dent...so, patrician, I smile, I quite like the idea of being a patrician.” (Interview 10)

“[To believe that we are a small group of Internationalists beset by those who can't see the bigger picture...] would be very vain and arrogant. If they can't see the bigger picture, it's because you've done a pretty poor job of explaining why it's important and why it's significant for their daily life, for development,

for economic growth...to blame people who don't understand, you first have to blame people who can't explain." (Interview 14)

"The older you get, the more developed your capacity to detect very special deformations in another person's personality. Of course, this is true. We all act and react differently and in the world of business, as much as in politics, there are people who think they cannot fail, who think they know it all, who've seen it all and who are, what I call, 'advice resistant'. And they very often fail miserably in the end. There are others who soak up everything like a sponge and try to digest it and, probably, come to better decisions. There may be situations where this 'seen it all' type may do better for short periods because they just do their thing, but that will not carry them through a longer period of time." (Interview 9)

Interestingly, the rather "sage-like" sentiments expressed by participant 9 were echoed elsewhere in the participant group suggesting, perhaps, an elitism that places a value on maturity, patience, pragmatism and reflection over perceived impetuosity, dynamism, idealism or ambition. The elitist attitude of members of such networks is, therefore, borne of a belief in one's own wisdom and worldly experience, and such members are quick to identify those who have not actualised sufficiently to warrant full membership at this stage of their respective careers. Again, it is important to consider the implications of this for aspiring members of the network. Adapting one's behaviour and finding a successful balance between reverence and free-thinking (see section 4.6.3 *Dealing with fear and the importance of being interesting*) becomes critical to establishing oneself within the group.

In contrast, prominent members of the network are largely untouchable within the group and form an "inner core" or "elite within the elite". For such members, rules of association are largely defined by how they conduct themselves and this group of members, whether by accident or design, has a disproportionate influence on wider attitudes and beliefs within the group. For instance, a number of participants highlighted

the vocal and confrontational style of Conrad Black⁴⁷, in the days before his indictment and subsequent imprisonment⁴⁸, and this would almost certainly not have been tolerated from a less well established member of the network. On numerous occasions during the interviews, participants suggested that there was a degree of deferment to established members of the network and, time and again, the same small group of names was mentioned. Whether this reflects intent on the part of “celebrity” members of such networks is not clear; what is abundantly obvious, however, is the degree of influence they wield on those who are keen to impress. The mechanisms of this influence will be explored further in the remaining sections.

4.6.3 Dealing with fear and the importance of being interesting

A common preconception among members of the elite is that they are invited into elite networks and forums because of who, or what, they represent. In other words, it is their position of responsibility that marks them out as a potential participant in elite network activity. As interviewees 4, 5, 10 and 11 suggest,

“I’m not terribly sure whether it’s elite power or statutory power because the people who are there, or in groups like Bilderberg and the World Economic Forum, are not invited because they’re Tom, Dick, Harry or Ahmed. They are invited because of what they represent.” (Interview 5)

“There is a bit of flattery though isn’t there? If you’re asked to join, I mean, if you think about the people concerned, who go to these things, they’re all quite important; particularly in the political and industrial/financial field. You’re flattered if you’re asked.” (Interview 4)

⁴⁷ When individuals of this kind were mentioned, often affectionately, it was usually to demonstrate the “entertainment value” of such people which, itself, might be seen as an indication of “inner group” elitist attitude and membership.

⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that, subsequent to Conrad Black’s indictment, many members of the Bilderberg group were quick to distance themselves from his dealings and activities. Although many remained loyal to him, and still do to this day, there was considerable disquiet at the 2004 conference among those who had been involved with Black’s company Hollinger Inc. As one participant confided, “His board had lots of ‘Bilderbergers’, he liked having these people on his board. People like Kravis, Kissinger and Pearl. Largely political and no experience of business, he liked to be around the political ‘rock stars’ [...] at the 2004 meeting, Pearl was lamenting the legal problems he had through his association with Black.”

“I was a successful entrepreneur. I had my own successful businesses and I was doing a lot else besides [...] I was very famous and everyone read about me. I was the ‘pick of the month’. And when Mrs Thatcher came to power, she held a party and there was I with a small group of other entrepreneurs, various permanent secretaries and the chairmen of numerous nationalised industries, and that was it. It was just the kind of thing that happened to me then. That was my moment.” (Interview 10)

“It had a motive in setting this up and supporting it and this affected things. On the selection of people, it seemed to me on the occasions I went that they liked to select people who were in some way prominent.” (Interview 11)

Given the perception, therefore, that *importance* is a prerequisite to participation within elite transnational networks, being invited becomes an affirmation of one’s own standing, not simply in terms of the industrial, political or national sphere in which one operates but, more specifically, in terms of a higher level sphere of influence: that of transnational elite cooperation. As a consequence, receiving an invitation to join one of the more esteemed elite gatherings or networks is, at once, flattering and humbling, flattering in the sense that one is being recognised as a successful and pre-eminent presence within a particular domain, and humbling in the sense that one is aware of a higher order level of influence within which one must, once again, seek to establish credibility,

“I expressed myself, I spoke, and I asked questions, not only in the formal sessions but the informal ones. It was a channel for increasing the credibility of yourself, your institution and your country.” (Interview 7)

“Everybody tries to be as intelligent and well informed as possible, you know, it’s obvious. And you get into this kind of mood where you ask questions in a way that you wouldn’t normally in business circles.” (Interview 16)

And, while the position one occupies in public life might well be enough to ensure an invitation into such circles, to be truly welcomed is as much a test of how one responds

to the challenge of being oneself, rather than the representative of an organisation or constituency, in the eyes of others within the group. Failing to recognise this and, importantly, failing to reciprocate a degree of openness and free-thinking in elite interactions of this kind, is a key reason, cited by participants, for exclusion from such elite networks,

“In that kind of gathering, you cannot sit on the fence or just stay in line; you have to say something. This something should be a contribution of new ideas or new dimensions that will give other people, the audience, something. Otherwise, going there, having lunch, dinner, sitting around, listening and saying things like, ‘it’s been lovely, what a lovely view’ doesn’t work. You have to be active in this sense.” (Interview 7)

“Well, that’s clear. If you’re not invited again, there are a few things to consider: did you add value and did people feel that you were engaged? If you spend three days and never open your mouth at the conference or in the evening, at dinners or lunches, if you sit somewhere apart, which happens you know, then people say he’s not a very interesting guy. This, in these circles, is what counts. It’s a little bit like university or school, it’s about being an interesting discussion partner; it’s not whether you’re important or rich. It’s a question of whether you are attractive and whether it’s interesting to talk to you. If I were to boil it down to one thing, I would say it’s the intellectual curiosity which is the most important thing, you must be intellectually curious and you must respond to the intellectual curiosity of others. You must at least have some kind of fresh view or your own opinion. If you quote all the time from CNN or comment constantly on what the FT is writing, people are likely to say, ‘well, we don’t need him, he’s not adding any creativity, anything new, no dynamism, nothing that makes him an attractive discussion partner.’ ” (Interview 16)

“If you were not a devoted participant, that is, a participant who opens their mouth and asks, hopefully, good questions or provides good answers or whatever, and participates in the debates in sessions but also out of session, maybe over dinner, they would say, ‘he’s a very dull person, obviously very little to say. We don’t want to see him again.’ ” (Interview 9)

Interestingly, those who were rejected from such gatherings tended to identify the same kind of rationale for their exclusion. Frequently this was accompanied by defensive responses suggesting a lack of interest in networking or socialising,

“Intervening in debates and talking – I’m not good at that [...] I don’t do that. And I doubt whether I talked enough there, I doubt whether I strutted my stuff, such as it was, so I guess they didn’t invite me back because I didn’t contribute very much [...] I’m not very clubbable, I suppose, I wasn’t much good from their point of view.” (Interview 10)

“It wasn’t a world I enjoyed and I didn’t go out of my way to do it [...] and since then, I haven’t sought it and they haven’t sought me out.” (Interview 11)

“Once I’d been there, quite frankly, I thought it wasn’t what I thought it was going to be. I wouldn’t be concerned if I was never invited again. Of course, there’s a higher concentration of important, influential, people that there might otherwise be but I’ve met these people in many other forums and events [...] I personally didn’t get much out of it but I’m sure others did. I’m not good at networking.” (Interview 8)

And for peripheral attendees brought into the group to provide expertise or facilitative support, the intensity of the experience and the challenge of dealing with self-consciousness within such networks is more than sufficient to ensure that they are barely heard at such events. Thus reinforcing the perception that they are uninteresting and not worth inviting next time,

“I didn’t really contribute to any of the panels. I could have done, it wasn’t a decision, I just ended up not doing it. I made a decision which was that I was going to do everything I could there, that this is probably a ‘once in a lifetime’ opportunity for me. It was very hard work, there was very little downtime, in fact, there was no downtime. Every meal was with people, and they went on quite late. There was one afternoon that was supposed to be free or you could go on this organised thing. Someone said that it’s a really nice thing to do so I thought I’ll go and do it but, actually, I just wanted to lie down on my bed and

recover [...] I didn't know a lot of these people and it was actually very hard for me because I'm not part of their networks. I wasn't familiar with them."

(Interview 2)

"I didn't participate in the discussions. Everybody was chatty and open or, at least, they gave you the impression of being chatty and open [...] but I was thinking, 'who the fuck do I talk to?' It's slightly difficult to just sidle up to Kissinger at the bar." (Interview 1)

"I settled in my room with this excitement. I wore my best suit, put on my most stylish tie, and went down. My excitement intensified when I looked around me. I was surrounded by people who almost constantly made it in newspaper and television headlines [...] I was dead-tired at the end of the three days. I got out of one meeting to go into the next. I needed to participate, ask questions, and watch attentively. Everyone took the meetings seriously. Nobody would leave the sessions to go outside, stroll around, and have coffee." (Interview 17)

The expectation, therefore, that aspiring members of such networks should somehow impress at the outset is, perhaps, a little unrealistic for the vast number of first-time attendees. Leaving aside obvious difficulties, where English is a second language for instance, it is clear that such environments can be intimidating and unforgiving. And this sense of intimidation begins well before formal attendance,

"Some woman came to see me, American, terribly flattering and said, 'we want to invite the four ablest people under thirty-five in Europe to come and speak to us. Would you do it?' I felt flattered so I said yes. And then, about a week before, I looked them up and found out they were a really terrifying, prestigious, organisation. The previous speakers had been the President of Turkey and the Deputy PM of India. I completely panicked and spent the whole of the next week with friends trying to think of something to say. And, boy, was I relieved when it was over [...] But I was interested in people so, when an intelligent Ivy League type woman working for the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) came along, I, like a complete idiot, was flattered into saying I'd do it. I've always respected them but I've never been back, never done anything and wasn't a member." (Interview 10)

“I was a bit freaked out. I was asked if I’d heard of Bilderberg and I said, ‘no’. I thought I’d heard of some slightly shady conspiracy theory stuff but that was really hazy. So, yes, I was a little freaked out. In fact, a friend of mine called who I hadn’t spoken to for about three months and said, ‘how are you doing?’ And I said, ‘I’m freaking out, I’ve just been invited to Bilderberg’. And he started laughing and said that’s absolutely fantastic.” (Interview 2)

The consequences of these reputational effects are somewhat difficult to interpret with limited data but it seems fair to suggest that, aside from exciting and intimidating many prospective elite members, the desire to make a good impression, and be respected by the wider group, becomes, not unnaturally, an immediate concern for invitees. After all, full membership of such networks bestows access, connections, recognition, invitations and a sense of personal self aggrandisement. However modest or civic-minded the individual, and leaving aside various justifications for participation, there are few people of ambition in positions of influence that might, or would, resist the seductive quality of elite network participation.

4.6.4 The seductive lure of elite membership

Given the powerful appeal of elite networks to potential members, the critical question is what effect this lure has upon the cognitive predisposition of aspirant participants; or, more specifically, what calculations do prospective members make concerning how best to ingratiate themselves with existing members of the network? It was in this area, that participants were at their most defensive with most denying the possibility that such processes were at play; while others were clearly uncomfortable with the suggestion and its implications,

“One thing I want to state is that I have participated in Bilderberg a number of times. I am not a full member of Bilderberg. I would be happy to just cross out Bilderberg from this, basically, I just used Bilderberg as an example. I’ve been to other forums as well.” (Interview 6)

“Well, I don’t want to go that deep into psychology. I think you just get accepted after two or three years because you are part of the group and each time so many are new. Actually it doesn’t take a lot of time to become one of

the senior people there [...] But I don't think you have to...it's not that a young man has to go through on their knees to be accepted; no, no, you are immediately part of the group. I'm just saying before you really start, well, playing a certain role and you're part of the integration elements it probably takes some years, there's no doubt about that." (Interview 16)

"Nobody is going to change my way of thinking, my approach, my wishes. I learned lots of things. Maybe there are some effects of that but, for my part, I got lots of benefits. I learned lots of things, I met several people, and established good relations, it's an opportunity. It's a golden opportunity. Mark, if you say that this is the Bilderberg meeting and there are some question marks in your mind, and you approach the meeting in this way, it's quite different. But I didn't do that." (Interview 7)

It is possible that this line of questioning was perceived as threatening on a number of levels: firstly, for those attempting to defend the activity of such groups, it was too close to suggesting an actual mechanism of control; secondly, it suggested a form of personal weakness, something that elite participants might find difficult to discuss or concede; and, thirdly, for those not entirely comfortable with their position within the network, it represented a line of enquiry that might elicit criticism of such groups. Whatever the reason, it was clear that interview participants were defensive in this area which, in itself, might suggest that there is some degree of truth to the suggestion that individuals are, indeed, attempting to ingratiate themselves with those they perceive to be established within such networks. And while none of the interview participants in this study admitted to consciously modifying their views in order to curry favour with influential elite members, an unconscious adjustment, in line with what one might consider to be the "common sense" of more respected members of the group, is an almost certain consequence of elite fraternisation. And this, despite the fact that core members of elite networks emphasise free-thinking and independence as key attributes of successful membership.

As if to support the view that participants were aligning their views with those of influence within the network, there was considerable evidence of hierarchal awareness

in the participant interviews, something that, not unnaturally, might lead to a degree of self-consciousness and reverence in discussions with such people,

“You look at them and you get to understand it. Who’s there? Who’s a regular and who’s there for just a year? There’s no problem with that.” (Interview 5)

“Well, I mean, every time a group like this convenes, you look around the room and, for a given time in the world, you can almost say, ‘out of these hundred people, these ten guys are important to me.’ ” (Interview 6)

“Is there a hierarchy? Yes, I’m at the bottom of it.” (Interview 1)

“I got to talk to people I wouldn’t have access to normally [...] or rarely at least. A guy said to me, ‘I wouldn’t talk to you normally’. As I say, it was quite difficult for me because everyone was of a quite high status. It’s difficult to go up to people and say, ‘what do you do?’ And when they say, ‘I’m the Queen of the Netherlands’, it can be pretty hard work.” (Interview 2)

“I do remember the number of recently retired Prime Ministers and Presidents seriously impressed me and also made me feel quite shy. Lloyd Bentsen, for instance, who had been US Treasury Secretary, and I remember thinking, ‘shit, this man in the cowboy boots is the US Treasury Secretary.’ ” (Interview 10)

As stated previously, however, participants were reluctant to admit to modifying their views but, at the same time, they were happy to discuss the significance of learning and information within such settings. Perhaps the implication that they might have been swayed by the personality or stature of those doing the communicating was just too personally difficult to concede.

4.6.5 *Summary of theme five*

The idea that elite forums and networks are, in some way, permeable clubs of elite free thinking simply does not stand up to close scrutiny. No matter what the intention, elite discourse is structurally biased at source and, consciously or otherwise, has the effect of amplifying its biases.

There are a variety of ways in which voluntary and unconscious forms of compliance within the participant group are brought about. Some of these occur out of necessity, for instance, the desire to create private spaces for reflection and interaction among elites creates a sense of detachment and exclusivity, and for those entering the network, “breathing” such “air” is both intoxicating and addictive. Other factors are related to a very human desire to be accepted and welcomed into social networks that one perceives to be of importance. Dealing with personal insecurities, which are no doubt heightened by self-consciousness and a desire to impress with such environments, undoubtedly has a bearing on the predisposition of new entrants to certain personalities and types of thinking. It goes without saying, of course, for reasons already outlined earlier in the analysis (see 4.5.2 *The mobilisation of bias within elite interactions*) that many invitees are predisposed at the outset. Uncoupling the effects of these various mechanisms of compliance is both impossible and unnecessary; it is sufficient, for the purposes of this exercise, to simply demonstrate the existence of such complimentary determinants.

It is important to state, once more, that such predisposition is not necessarily achieved through any form of conscious intent; instead, it is more likely the product of a complex set of processes that unconsciously lead to adapted preferences and beliefs, beliefs that are unquestioningly associated with common sense and enlightened thinking. Establishing oneself when invited into such circles becomes an important concern for aspiring participants for, to do so, becomes a reflection of one’s own worthiness and enlightenedness. Being rejected, no matter how seemingly unconcerned the individual, is a deep personal slight implying unworthiness within such settings. The cold, hard, nature of such rejection is, of course, presented as a desire for dynamism and fresh-thinking but, ultimately, it is a reflection of the collective’s belief that the entrant will not fit in or add value. The frequent characterisation of such people as “dull” is, in many ways, the ultimate elitist dismissal.

Elite networks and forums do not necessarily set out to create private clubs of tightly-knit individuals; indeed, many of the most elite organisations would say that this is precisely what they do not try to do. The fact remains, however, that, consciously or otherwise, private clubs of core members do form over time and this inner-core formation has consequences for group functioning and thinking. In fairness, it is

difficult to know what more such groups could do to facilitate a sense of inclusiveness for new entrants or aspiring members but, at the same time, it is important to recognise the failure all the same.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of an analysis of transcripts of interviews with sixteen, post-Cold War, Bilderberg attendees. The accounts of these transnational elite participants suggest a number of tentative conclusions.

While traditional economic and security alliances remain important in international relations, legitimacy building has emerged as a fundamental activity in the contemporary political setting. Elite consensus formation activity, although largely unconscious, is a contested process governing the pervasiveness, and hence legitimacy, of certain paradigms. A comprehension of discrete power relations is, therefore, crucial to our understanding of preference formation within such settings.

The rationale for collaboration between transnational elites is so readily accepted by participants that to question such logic is seen as incomprehensible. A curious aspect of such collaboration is that it exists primarily between business and political elites; non-business and non-political elites are, very much, the minority within transnational elite networks and it is highly questionable whether such participants enjoy equal standing. Similarly, representatives of policy institutes, think tanks and the media are at a significant disadvantage within such networks because of a dependence upon the patronage and goodwill of both the business and political elite.

Transnational networks, despite considerable boundary spanning activity, are some way from being truly global. There are, however, increasing linkages taking place between regional and national networks. Not all elite members are interested in network or group participation, indeed, not all feel that they like it or are suited to it. That being said, there are clearly significant advantages to such membership and personal interest is as

critical to an understanding of elite interaction and network activity as any sense of civic mindedness.

The number of people involved in transnational policy forums and networks is limited and considerable interlocking between groups exists. An “old boy” network, for want of a better description, appears to play a significant role in the organisation and membership of certain networks. This inner group is disproportionately powerful within the whole and has, consciously or otherwise, a considerable influence on more aspirant members of the elite. Transnational elite organisations are highly institutionalised arrangements and successful entrants are those who can skilfully navigate the requirements of group membership in such settings.

The notion of consensus formation is overly simplistic and misleading as a description of actual processes. Rather than being seen as the purpose and outcome such activity, it should be applied as a description of the momentum and consequence of elite interactions. It is unclear what the stimulus for such activity is but it is suggested that economic interest, civic mindedness and self interest all play a significant role.

Transnational elite discourse is structurally biased at source and, through the conscious and unconscious activities of its members, has the effect of amplifying its biases. Establishing oneself within such networks is an important concern for many aspirant elite members and to be rejected is a considerable personal slight. Processes of communication, socialisation, acculturation and fraternisation play a sizable role in the perpetuation of group logic and the pervasiveness of certain consensus. Much of this effect is unconscious and not consistent with the stated intentions of the groups concerned; it is, nevertheless, critical to any understanding of consensus formation within elite groups and networks in the transnational arena.

The findings of the research will be explored further, and situated within the literature, in the following discussion chapter.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the findings of the research and situates them within the context of a multi-disciplinary literature domain. Its objective is to draw out the meanings and relationships that exist within, and between, the findings presented in the previous chapter. It will consider how such findings fit within the existing body of knowledge and, specifically, whether they are consistent with, or represent a challenge to, current conceptions of such activity. Crucially, it will reflect on how the findings of the research address the pivotal research question (see 2.6.1 *Research opportunity*), namely,

How have discrete power relations shaped transnational elite thinking related to political problems and acceptable public policy responses in the post-Cold War period?

In order to answer this question it is important to consider how accurate, coherent and meaningful the notion of a transnational policy elite actually is; and, furthermore, whether consensus formation is a useful description of the purpose of elite interactions in the transnational setting. This requires special consideration of the nature of elite interactions and collaboration, the purposeful extent of such activity, and how processes of communication, socialisation, acculturation and fraternisation contribute to shared understanding within such networks.

The chapter addresses these questions through discussion of five interrelated themes (see 5.2 *Situating the findings within the current body of knowledge*) and draws upon the contributions of chapters 2 & 3, as well as supportive literature from the fields of international relations and social network theory, to enable a thorough exploration and understanding of elite interactions in the transnational arena. It then considers the relationship between the themes and presents a dynamic conceptual model of structure and agency, and articulation and interpretation, in transnational pre-policy formation

processes. The chapter concludes with a consideration of how such results address and the pivotal research question.

5.2 Situating the findings within the current body of knowledge

In order to provide a framework for consideration of how the findings inform, and are informed by, the current body of literature, this section is divided into five interrelated categories: legitimacy and action in international relations; the politics of collaboration in elite transnational networks; centrality in transnational networks; consensus, power and identity; and the dynamics of third dimensional power in the transnational setting.

5.2.1 Legitimacy and action in international relations

A crucial question related to transnational elite interactions, in particular, informal networked interactions, concerns where such activity fits within the context of a much broader conception of international relations at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. A clue, perhaps, exists in the emergence of legitimacy as a key topic within the field of international relations; indeed, it is very much, an idea whose time has come (Clark, 2005). The findings highlight the significance of transnational forums for the legitimisation of values, perspectives and identities within a structural context that is highly uncertain and dynamic. This is consistent with constructivist depictions of international relations in which

“the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces and [...where] the ideas and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature.”
(Wendt, 1999:1)

Within the international and transnational settings, legitimacy is critical to the notion of shared values and structural context; indeed, within these spheres, the establishment of socially constructed reality (Berger & Luckman, 1966) might best be seen as a product of a contest for legitimacy. It is important, therefore, to recognise that legitimacy cannot be viewed simply in terms of normative prescriptions such as legality and morality;

instead, it is a complex, and inherently more political, condition (Barker, 2001; Clark, 2005). As a consequence, if we are to understand the actions of elite participants within the field of international relations, we must first understand their conceptions of the legitimate. In the words of Ian Hurd (2007:2-3),

“the power of legitimacy to define actors’ goals and interests, as well as construct what actors take for granted, means that observers of the international field need some way to monitor and decipher actors’ senses of the legitimate and illegitimate. To read international relations without paying attention to the competition over legitimacy would leave one with no way to understand such common acts of saving face, offering justifications, using symbols, and being in a position of authority.”

The findings of this study lend additional weight to the suggestion that increased complexity in international relations, in the contemporary setting, has led to a much greater emphasis on legitimacy as a basis for action (Shinoda, 2000). And, while much of the focus of international relations research has been on formal institutions in the international arena, this study suggests that contests over legitimacy are very much a feature of interactions within the wider transnational policy community. Furthermore, such activity is seen as underpinning the formation and adaptation of dynamic cognitive frameworks, or structured realities, within such arenas.

The study also finds that transnational elite interactions take on additional significance when the formal instruments and mechanisms of international relations fail or reach an impasse. In the case of Bilderberg for instance, it is telling that waning interest in such activity, in the years immediately following the fall of the Berlin Wall, was replaced with considerable enthusiasm in the years preceding and during the occupation of Iraq. It is clear that the capacity for private dialogue within such settings provides an important forum for the creation of shared understanding between, otherwise, irreconcilable actors, or, at the very least, provides an effective mechanism for the mobilisation of legitimacy behind one paradigm rather than another. The findings suggest that, aside from the transcendental quality of market-based motivations, this

capacity is made possible through the absence of any immediate need to placate constituents or stakeholders.

What the findings also make clear is that traditional alliances are, by no means, irrelevant to consideration of transnational elite interactions; indeed, they remain critical to an understanding of prevailing paradigms within such contexts. This finding challenges those who see such relationships as increasingly irrelevant to the demands of contemporary world politics (see, for instance, Menon, 2007). Certainly within the context of the European transnational elite, transatlantic alliances, initially based on security and development, have broadened into mutual economic relationships fuelled by a shared appreciation of the neo-liberal globalisation agenda. There are disagreements over the application of this agenda, and considerable fractures in the area of social policy, but transatlantic partners share a mutually advantageous vision of free trade and free markets. This vision is peculiarly transatlantic and we remain some way from what might be described as a, truly global, transnational policy elite. This finding lends support to Kees Van der Pijl's (1985) depiction of an Atlantic ruling class and, at the same time, suggests that the portrayal of a global capitalist communications infrastructure (see, for instance, Carroll & Carson, 2003) is, at best, premature. A primary focus on the quantitative significance of interlocking, rather than the qualitative substance of elite networked interactions, has led to an overstatement of such cases. The findings of this study go some way to redressing this imbalance.

5.2.2 The politics of collaboration in elite transnational networks

This study finds that the logic of collaboration is a pervasive feature of elite transnational networks; indeed, such logic is so cognitively embedded that to question it is to challenge a fundamental precept of elite rationality within the transnational arena. While there is a pragmatic basis to this rationality, based upon a general belief in the benefits of inclusion, it is clear that the legitimacy claims of collaboration have been overstated. Consistent with the observation that literature in the collaboration domain is more concerned with process outcomes than governance outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008), the findings of this study demonstrate how a belief in the superiority of

collaborative and consensual processes among transnational elite participants underpins a much wider, and intrinsically suspect, claim to governance legitimacy. They point to the existence of an implicit political relationship between a belief in the legitimacy of collaboration in the transnational setting and the emergence of legitimacy as a basis for action in international affairs. In other words, since consensual and collaborative approaches are normatively imbued with legitimacy, the product of collaboration is, by definition, imbued with the same characteristic legitimacy. And it is this resulting sense of the legitimate that defines membership and action in the international arena.

The implications of this relationship for those seeking to understand democratic legitimacy beyond the nation state are neatly captured by Schneider (2005:8),

“consensus and legitimacy are mutually constitutive, only consensus on the core principles of legitimacy in a world or global society, that includes state as well as non-state actors, will determine this society as democratic or not.”

Critically, however, such an understanding is absent any consideration of the socio-political determinants of collaboration, consensus and, ultimately, legitimacy itself. An understanding of power relations within such settings is critical, therefore, to an understanding of rightful membership and conduct if we are to,

“understand why, and under what circumstances, democratic procedures matter in international politics as a source of legitimacy; and why certain actors, such as transnational – especially economic – actors or individuals are, together with states, accepted as legitimate participants in decision making.” (Schneider, 2005:11)

The findings of this study suggest that concerns about the nature and substance of collaboration are suppressed by an overwhelming acceptance of the logic that underpins it. In other words, the notion of collaboration has achieved a transcendental legitimacy within the social context of elite interactions, a legitimacy that influences the wider values and beliefs of participants within such settings. It is interesting to note, for instance, that for elite participants, such collaboration is universally held to be in the

public interest; concerns related to democratic accountability and authority are subsumed within a collective inclination to view transnational collaboration and consensus as essential to the development of a more equitable global governance regime. And the suggestion that transnational collaboration is representative of various societal interests adds further weight to the idea that such activity is, in some way, legitimate. As this study demonstrates, however, multi-stakeholder collaboration is an illusion within informal transnational contexts, even where a variety of stakeholders are represented, the socio-political dimensions of such interaction are largely overlooked in participant accounts. Importantly, this finding may have implications for consideration of NGO and civil society influence in formal transnational policy processes where questions of legitimacy and influence are frequently levelled at such activity. Rather than considering the question of legitimacy in terms of state and non-state power, or representation of interests, it is as important, instead, to recognise the significance of “enduring and fair institutions” to questions of legitimacy in transnational affairs (Collingwood, 2006:441).

This research finds that the principal collaboration within informal transnational elite networks is between business and political elites. The complex interweaving of business and political interests in polyarchal systems of governance has been noted for some time (Lindblom, 1977; Dahl, 1989) but contributions in the field of international political economy have demonstrated how the advance of globalisation has brought with it a considerable pressure to rethink the nature of the relationship between market and state in the domestic and international settings. Indeed, it is clear that the politics of market organisation is a fundamental starting point for public policy consideration in the international arena. It represents, to all intents and purposes, the “infrastructure of the infrastructure” (Cerny, 1994) and results in a peculiar, market driven, form of politics (Leys, 2003). The evidence of this study, however, suggests a more nuanced depiction of market determination than that suggested by many in the fields of political economy and global systems theory.

Clearly market interests are of critical importance to policymakers, but the response of international policy elites to a perceived civil society backlash, in the wake of the Rio

Earth Summit of 1992 (Hirschland, 2006), has meant that the management of legitimacy has become as critical to business leaders as it has always been for policymakers. Understanding the various dimensions of consensual legitimacy in the transnational setting and, indeed, participating in the social construction of the legitimate within such contexts, enables business to play a fundamental role in the fashioning of soft governance regimes that will, in time, frame downstream debates related to the social legitimacy of business within given contexts. The question of whether this amounts to a strategic objective for those who participate in such activity, or whether it is an unconscious bi-product of structural collaborative arrangements is unclear; what is clear, however, is that business enjoys “premium partner” status within such consensual collaborations. This status has, undoubtedly, been enhanced in the post-Cold War period as a corporate bias to the management of international organisations has had far reaching consequences related to the relationship between state and non-state organisation within such settings,

“the recent practice of certain international organisations [particularly those involved in economic or market-related and technical functions] of engaging in direct ‘consultations’ with various ‘stakeholder’ groups is the most recent form of organisational activity based on corporate analogies. [It is] undermining the assumption that individuals have no direct access to, or role in, international or transnational governance [...] it establishes a direct and more formalised relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders, thus bringing the organisation closer to the ‘people’ and enhancing the perceived legitimacy of its decision making.” (Heiskanen, 2001:10)

This study challenges those who point to multi-stakeholder collaboration in the international arena as evidence of a form of direct, and more democratic, representation. Such a view significantly underestimates the differences in influence enjoyed by various parties. As Heiskanen observes (2001:12), we are witnessing the emergence of a “corporate democracy” in international and transnational governance, where

“the international organisation’s request to participate in the consultative process is not addressed to the people, nor to the collectivity of universal

citizens, but rather to those that are likely for professional rather than for ideological or personal reasons, to be interested in the subject or issue covered by the process – in other words, the stakeholders.”

Such a depiction, however, continues to emphasise some form of inclusiveness but the findings of this study question the popular suggestion that the number, role and influence of NGOs in transnational policy affairs is as meaningful as it might first appear (Collingwood, 2006). Their presence in informal elite forums such as Bilderberg, The Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission is much more peripheral than the depiction of NGO activity in formal international policy arenas. And, while it is true that senior representatives of civil society groups do attend such gatherings, they are usually present in the capacity of invitee rather than as a regular attendee or member. This raises some interesting questions about the differences that exist between various types of policy discourse that take place in the transnational arena and the findings of this study suggest that caution should be applied to generalisations concerning NGO influence in transnational policy affairs. Any such depiction needs to include consideration of the informal collaboration between transnational policy elites as well as formal consultation processes in international policy settings. The representation and cooptation of multi-stakeholder interests in formal international policy forums has become a prerequisite of legitimacy; it would appear that the same consideration is not entirely true of informal policy communities.

In contrast to the limited presence of NGOs, the cooptation of media interests and the presence of elite representatives from notable think tanks, policy institutes and academic communities are interesting inclusions within informal elite policy circles. The findings of the study suggest significant resource dependency on the part of media and research participants and a considerable role in the legitimisation of elite thinking. Think tanks, policy institutes and academics all play a role in the definition, support and challenging of existing, and emergent, paradigms but, it is important to note that, such input is one aspect of a wider contest for legitimacy within such environments. To view such contributions as value neutral represents a gross misreading of socio-political conditions within such settings. Likewise, the suggestion that the media is invited because of its ability to reflect public opinion, rather than shape it, is a curious cognitive reversal of

the role played by the media in influencing public opinion and, consequently, the policy agenda (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). The findings suggest that the cooptation of media interests into elite policy forums in the transnational setting provides a valuable mechanism for the dissemination and diffusion of elite perspectives related to global issues. The meaningful effects of such dissemination and diffusion are unclear, and far from absolute, but it is suggested that it represents a significant element within the structural milieu of formal policy processes at the nation state level. In this sense, the findings support the view that media interests are biased by resource dependency and serve the needs of a policy elite (Gandy, 1982; Herman & Chomsky, 2002): a policy elite that is less concerned with the detail of public policy than the “broad brush” direction of it.

5.2.3 Centrality in transnational networks

As stated previously, the findings of this study suggest that we are some way from a truly global, transnational policy community. Instead, a more accurate depiction of the transnational policy network is that of an interconnected, and at times disparate, community of business and political elites that are primarily active at the national and regional levels. The findings suggest, however, an increasing degree of boundary spanning activity between such networks – most often at the level of the individual. The objective of building bridges between networks does appear, all the same, to be part of a more general strategy among elite leaders to create greater homogeneity among the wider transnational policy elite. It is suggested that a whole raft of globalising forces, including, of course, improved communications, are creating the preconditions and momentum that are necessary for the emergence of a meaningful global policy network.

While the implications of these developments for an understanding of international relations and pre-policy processes are potentially profound, it is important to also situate the findings within a broad based literature related to network perspectives in organisational theory. Since network organisation has emerged, during the course of this study, as central to an understanding of elite interactions in the transnational setting, it is essential to address the question of how such contributions have informed the findings.

Not least because of the way that power is located within such analyses. Summarising the significance of network contributions to our understanding of power, Nohria (1992:9) observes that,

“Explanations for what gives an individual power in an organisation have usually focussed, among other things, on the individual’s personal characteristics; socio-economic profile; formal position within the organisation; attitudes and values; control over critical resources; and control over critical contingencies [...] However, it has always been recognised that these factors are not sufficient from an explanatory standpoint, and that an individual’s position in various networks of relationships can be a source of power quite independent of other factors.”

The importance of recognising interactions between actors rather than simply considering the attributes of actors has emerged as a key theme in contemporary social network theory (Freeman, 2004). Of particular relevance to this study, given the suggestion that an “inner core” within elite networks holds disproportionate levels of power and influence, are those contributions related to centrality and leadership within networks. A common finding, for instance, in social network analysis is that power and influence are commonly correlated with positions of centrality within networks (Brass & Burkhardt, 1992) as is, unsurprisingly, leadership (Neubert & Taggar, 2004; Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006).

Cook, Emerson et al (1983) were among the first to challenge the more superficial aspects of this observation with evidence to suggest that centrality was not the most important power determinant in exchange relationships. This spawned a considerable amount of debate on the subject and has led, in turn, to more sophisticated understanding and measurement of centrality. Drawing upon this earlier work of Cook, Emerson et al (1983), for instance, Bonacich (1987) suggests that one’s centrality is not simply a product of volume of connections; instead, it is a function of the centrality of those one is connected to. For Bonacich (1987), the status of one’s connections determines one’s own status and centrality within social networks. In essence, one’s influence is determined by the status or value of one’s connections. This is a theme that

has found significant purchase in a number of related fields – and notably that of social capital. And Bonacich's (1987) simple idea holds considerable appeal for consideration of connections and centrality within elite networks. Certainly, the findings of this study support the contention that a desire for increased status is, very much, at the heart of the lure of elite membership. The pursuit of status, and consequential centrality within the network might, therefore, be viewed as a desire for power, value and influence within, and beyond, such settings.

Similarly, when considering the differences in status and power between central and peripheral members of elite networks, the notion of reputational influence must be addressed. The centrality of an actor within a network is strongly influenced by the perception of reputational influence attributed to him by peers within the system; such a reputation reflects a belief in the latent ability of an actor to affect outcomes (Knocke, 1983). This contention was supported by studies of community power in the 1970s which revealed that members and organisations with greater reputational influence enjoyed stronger positions of centrality within local social exchange networks (Laumann & Pappi, 1976; Galaskiewicz, 1979; Knoke & Wood, 1981). Laumann & Pappi's (1976) quantitative findings of elite social structure in Altnestadt is of particular relevance to the findings of this research, and, most especially, their observation that spatially central members of elite networks tended to perform integrative and coordinative functions while peripheral members perform a less important integrative role. They found that the central positions of the elite network were occupied by the most senior members of the business, political and financial communities who were occupied in matters of general problem solving. While peripheral members, including small business, religious, education and research representatives, held more specialised knowledge and were poorly connected with the centre and with each other.

The findings of this research present a similar picture to that depicted by Laumann & Pappi (1976). There is a well integrated business and political elite at the centre of the transnational elite network. Peripheral members do not enjoy equal status with the most senior members of the elite and are not as well integrated within the group as a whole.

This lack of integration reinforces peripheral status and suggests an ancillary role for such members. New entrants to the network are expected to “impress” and it is suggested that it is the well integrated, “inner-core”, members who collectively make judgments concerning individual worth. As interviewee 16 observed, the process of acceptance and integration can take two-three years, if it is to happen at all; thereafter, the entrant emerges as a fully actualised member of the network recognised by peripheral members as having some degree of status (centrality) within the group.

Central to an understanding of how and why certain entrants to such groups and networks, and not others, are assimilated into the fold are considerations of personal liking, trust and cognitive accuracy. Personal liking has emerged as a considerable topic within the field of social psychology and has significant implications for social network analysis because, ultimately, the extent of one’s personal “liking” determines the motivation to create and maintain relationships and move towards more meaningful personal communication (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Furthermore, the incorporation of liking into considerations of social interaction provides greater explanatory value than approaches based upon purely cognitive or economic exchange principles (Abelson, Kinder et al, 1982). The creation of emotional attachment, and an understanding of the “global affective attachment” one person has for another (Nicholson & Compeau, 2001:5) is, therefore, important to any consideration of acceptance into elite forums. Likewise trust, the confidence that parties to an exchange relationship have in one another (Bateson, 1988), is a cornerstone of cooperation within such settings. Indeed, trust is seen as an essential pre-requisite to elite membership. If a transnational elite member loses the confidence of those within the network, contingent upon his resource advantages, it is unlikely that he will be welcomed into such forums again. A crucial aspect, however, of elite assimilation relates to what Krackhardt (1990) describes as cognitive accuracy within network settings. In short, those with the political skills to understand power relations within the network are more likely to accrue power and influence within the informal organisation,

“knowing who the central and powerful actors are in an organisation is essential political knowledge [...] knowing where the coalitions are, how large they are, and where their support comes from gives one an edge in anticipating resistance

and in mobilising support for action or change. An accurate assessment of the network can also reveal the weaknesses in political groups by exposing holes, groups, and locations of lack of support for any particular coalition [...] cognitive accuracy of the informal network is, in an of itself, a base of power.” (Krackhardt, 1990:343)

Since elite networks are essentially social environments, it is unsurprising that the findings of this study should reflect the findings of many studies concerned with personal network interaction. It is possible, however, given the emphasis placed upon personal relationships and trust within elite contexts, that these factors are even more critical. Elite networks are particularly unforgiving and, since one’s credentials are already known in advance, the only reason for rejection can be on personal or social grounds. It is for this reason that the findings of the study emphasise issues of social acceptance and the importance of having the cognitive and political skills to navigate the requirements of elite membership. Even so, assimilation takes time and acquiring a central position within such networks requires a degree of displacement.

The reluctance of influential members of elite networks to relinquish positions of status means that inner elite groups develop a club-like aura and, over time, come to resemble something of an “old boy network”. A danger, of course, is that ties between such members become so strong that they prevent or distort effective communication with extended members of the elite network. Indeed, there is evidence of, at least in terms of group organisation, a significant resistance to the idea of change. That being said, the strength of extensive weak ties enjoyed by inner-elite members ensures the capacity, at the very least, for effective communication and dissemination throughout such networks (Granovetter, 1973). And it is this capacity for leveraging and coordinating weak ties that ensures an inherently personal dimension to elite network activity, a dimension that transcends the idea of group identity and purpose.

5.2.4 Consensus, power and identity

The process of consensus formation outlined in this study is fundamentally different from that depicted in constructivist depictions of issue definition and framing in formal

policy design processes (Blumer, 1971; Stone, 1989b; Entman, 1993). A crucial distinction is that there is no obvious requirement for any form of consensus to be reached in transnational policy circles and, even if there were, the effects of any resulting consensus would be very difficult to interpret.

Consensus formation activity within the context of more formal policy processes is essentially related to the management of political issues and challenges; responding with a degree of immediacy is critical to demonstrating political control in times of uncertainty. Consensus emerges not only because it is important to define the nature of the problem but, out of political expediency, it is critical to agree policy oriented goals related to it. In this sense, consensus formation within formal policy processes is primarily about reaching accords and binding understandings in order that the formal processes of policy formation can take place. It is underpinned by a pluralist or soft-statist conception of the role of policymakers, namely, that they assume either an arbitral role or, alternatively, the role of a stakeholder within the ensuing collaborative framework. Importantly, the output of such consensus formation activity, the bartered accords or shared understandings that are reached, forms the basis of discourse parameters within the subsequent policy design process. In other words, and employing the heuristic device of a politics/administration dichotomy (Wilson, 1941), consensus formation is a broad political process that precedes the more defined administrative function of policy design. In reality, of course, there is no such distinction to be made between politics and administration; the process is not only seamless, but continuously political. Indeed, consensus formation remains a legitimising political activity, normatively imbued with the values of inclusiveness and representation, in many areas of the policy design process. Its purpose is reasonably well understood, even when it is perceived as a device for cooptation, as a mechanism for manufacturing “legitimised” constructs that allow the process to advance.

As this study demonstrates, however, the pretext for consensus formation activity among transnational elites is less clear. Indeed, elite participants do not consider their participation in terms of consensus formation at all; instead, it is viewed as a bi-product rather than an objective of such interactions. And, even then, consensus is too strong a

description of the vague understandings, and often inconclusive dialogue, which characterise the outcomes of such interactions. In short, therefore, consensus formation is a misleading description of the process but one that is recognised by elites as broadly capturing the nature of narrowed differences that frequently result as a consequence of interactions of this kind.

It is tempting, therefore, to view consensus formation as an accidental and natural consequence of elite personal interactions. In a sense, a product of “becoming”, rather than the product of power determinants within such arenas, but the findings of this study suggest that such a conclusion is onerous. This study finds considerable evidence of the discrete dynamics of power that subtly drive shared understandings between elite participants in the transnational setting. In so doing, it fundamentally calls into question Hindess’s (2006) suggestion that Lukes’s (1974) third dimensional power is inappropriate to certain configurations of contemporary government, including informal networks, because they cannot be reduced to competitive factions and interests. If any configuration of informal network is likely to conform to Hindess’s pre-interest model, it is surely that of the transnational elite. Functioning outside of the parameters of the formal state, and comprised, in private capacity, of the most influential of elite members, it is, indeed, difficult to understand such activity in terms of factional interests, competition, winners and losers. But to view interests within such contexts as the product rather than the stimulus for such activity overlooks the crucial driver of networked activity in the first place: namely, the recognition that interests, personal and collective, can be enhanced through such activity. Networks of this kind are not immaculately conceived; they are the product of design. And the dynamics of power within such settings are of critical importance to an understanding of identity and interests within such settings.

In a recent paper, Adamson (2006:10) notes that,

“the emergence of collective identities and constituencies that are non-territorial in nature, but that can still be viewed as exerting corporate agency – as exhibiting the qualities of a collective actor – in international politics, has been an important feature of world politics over time [...] Thus, a focus on processes

of transnational mobilisation by political entrepreneurs can help to shed light on the process by which new actors in international politics are constituted. During the process of transnational mobilisation, political ideologies are deployed as a means of uniting disparate networks and identities into a coherent corporate agent at the level of the international system.”

Adamson’s (2006) analysis presents a highly instrumental depiction of political entrepreneurship in, otherwise, passive transnational communities and, rather narrowly, conceives of coherent corporate agents as formally recognisable representatives, bodies or institutions. The evidence of this study suggests that such agents are only loosely affiliated and far from coherent. Even if we accept the premise of identity formation as a product of networked interactions,

“we have been led by our [social] theories often to underestimate the struggle involved in forging identities, the tension inherent in the fact that we all have multiple, incomplete and/or fragmented identities [and sometimes resistances], the politics implied by the differential public standing of various identities or identity claims, and the possibilities for our salient constructions of identities to change in the context of powerfully meaningful, emotionally significant events.” (Calhoun, 1994:24)

This study suggests that transnational elite participants are fiercely resistant to the idea that their interests, or identities, might have altered or adapted as a consequence of interactions within such settings. While they are, for the most part, prepared to accept the suggestion of influence from exposure to new information and compelling arguments, participants view this form of persuasion as dissociated from any notion of power. The findings of this study suggest that the reason for this is that the dynamics of such power within transnational elite settings are so discrete that those subject to them are largely unaware of their influence. As such, elite participants have a peculiarly uncontaminated sense of their own self-identity and adapt their preferences in accordance with influences they consider to be of their own making.

5.2.5 The dynamics of third dimensional power in the transnational setting

It was stated in section 2.5.4.1 *Recent debate and revisions of third dimensional power*, that a key challenge in utilising the third dimensional power approach was to reliably identify interests and factional roles within the transnational elite network. Aside from the obvious identification of elite participants by various measures of status, it has been relatively straightforward to identify interests ranging from the national and regional to those based upon political, financial, commercial, media, academic, policy institute or NGO orientation. Perhaps the most significant distinction, however, identified by this study is that which exists between those with centrality, those that aspire to centrality, and those that will only ever exist at the periphery of the network. Notwithstanding the fact that centrality within elite transnational networks is largely dependent upon determinants of status, reputation and recognition within such settings, it is in the hierarchy of influence related to central network proximity that we can gain a better understanding of the influence of discrete social mechanisms of third dimensional power.

The lure of elite membership is, indeed, seductive. With very few exceptions, members of national and regional elites feel themselves compelled to participate in transnational networks when invited. To be invited is both flattering and humbling. On the one hand, an invitation is an acknowledgment or affirmation of one's standing, on the other, it represents entry into a higher level of elite interaction in which the participant is most likely at an initial personal disadvantage. Aspiring members of transnational elite networks are acutely aware of the hierarchical implications of membership and, for many, the initial experience of interacting in such settings can be somewhat daunting. It is interesting to note, all the same, that the elevated status of one's connections has an immediate potential bearing upon the participant's wider standing and centrality in the elite social network (see Bonacich, 1987). This provides an important potential insight into the appeal of transnational elite membership and, significantly, its capacity to induce compliance among aspiring members of the network.

Seen in this way, the complex social arrangements that induce compliance are not simply structural or accidental, although they can be, they are implicitly connected with the powerful (Lukes, 2006). This capacity is reinforced by the unwritten norms, rules and rituals of membership. Whether by accident or design, aspiring members feel themselves to be very much “tested” in such environments, and, it is clear, that a large number of network entrants fail this examination. This failure is presented by elite groups as evidence of dynamism, and a reluctance to become staid, but a curious aspect of such dynamism is that it only occurs at the periphery of the network. The inner core of the transnational elite network is both secure and undeniably elitist, and, knowingly or otherwise, perpetuates elitist myths, symbols, norms and rituals within such environments. Of course, this may be part of the appeal for many entrants to such networks: a desire to ingratiate oneself with members of an exclusive, transnational, inner core and, moreover, a desire to become a fully actualised member of the group is, itself, a powerful mechanism of social compliance. Certainly the findings of this study suggest a degree of deferment to established members of the elite and, given the significance of information within such settings, it is critical to recognise the social dimensions of knowledge transfer. Information and opinions emanating from established members of the network are likely to have a greater degree of legitimacy in the eyes of those looking to establish themselves within such settings. A reluctance to question established sources, coupled with a more general lack of confidence, could easily result in elite participants unconsciously aligning their own preferences with those they consider to be more established, and, hence more legitimate, in such settings.

At the heart of elite membership in the transnational setting lies a curious paradox. Many elite participants cite free thinking as a prized asset in such arenas; and those who are perceived to be repeating common views, or not speaking at all, are seen as “dull” and, as a consequence, are unlikely to be invited again. At the same time, however, elite interactions of this kind take place within a structural setting that, to some extent at least, defines legitimate behaviour and thinking. Within such a context, it is important to consider what exactly constitutes an acceptable form of free thinking behaviour. After all, it is possible that this notion of free thinking has more to do with social skills, perceived intelligence, powers of articulation and cognitive accuracy than any ability to

contribute wildly innovative ideas. In short, the findings of this study suggest that the inner core of the elite transnational network has, over time, created a largely unconscious collective sense of its entrance requirement. This requirement, which is epitomised in the self-reflective notion of “free thinking”, has embedded an affirming elitist logic that not only has the effect of self-selecting those with a broad predisposition to certain values but, also, has the effect of subtly inducing further preference and value compliance as members become more ingratiated within the elite network.

It is important to state, at this point, that none of these processes is, in any way, absolute. Neither is it fair or accurate to think of all transnational elite members as having the same views or preferences. Indeed, they do not. What they do share, for the most part however, is a belief in the role of elites and, importantly, their own role within such forums. They unquestioningly accept the logic of elite collaboration and, almost without exception, subscribe to a pragmatic, centrist, market-oriented view of liberal democratic society. The only form of ideological predisposition likely to be encountered within elite transnational arenas is the internationalist commitment to free markets and global trade. The benefits associated with such developments are seen as self-evident and beneficial to all.

As the relationship between states and regions becomes inextricably entwined, certain forms of global governance are seen as emerging and, indeed, have emerged, as a natural consequence of the need to control and regulate market developments and issues within such settings. The role of elite transnational elites might be seen, therefore, as one of cementing relations and “smoothing” the abrasive edges of formal resistance to such change. In this sense, the informal dynamics of consensus formation within transnational elite networks might be viewed as a critical legitimacy building accompaniment to the more formal “club model” of international relations (Keohane & Nye, 2001a). Within such a depiction, largely transparent “clubs” of unaccountable policy mandarins can be seen to have developed in the international sphere, comprised of representatives of national governments, whose role has been that of creating ever stronger frameworks to facilitate the global regime for trade and money circulation.

While the legitimacy of such groups in international relations has been called into question (Keohane & Nye, 2001b), the role of informal transnational elite interactions has gone largely unnoticed.

Gaventa (1980: 27), in his own application of third dimensional power, observes how current consensus may well have been influenced by historical power relations that continue to provide “symbols, cues, or routines [...that form part of a discrete] language of power without knowledge of their antecedents.” The idea of cementing relations through elite interactions in the transnational setting is not new and it is possible that the prescriptions embedded in organisations like Bilderberg, during tensions at the height of the Cold War, continue to have symbolic relevance to the ongoing forms of consensus formation within such groups today. The historical development of an Atlantic consensus, for instance, certainly within organisations such as Bilderberg, the Atlantic Institute and the Council on Foreign Relations might, in part, explain the ready acceptance and proliferation of free market principles throughout the transatlantic community. Certainly, Gill’s (1990) study of the role of the Trilateral Commission suggests precisely this role for the group in facilitating an ongoing hegemonic dominance for the United States in world economic affairs. This study finds considerable evidence of ongoing attachment to principles of security and mutual economic advantage within such settings. The composition and internal dynamics of the Atlantic transnational community continues to reflect past relationships and, notwithstanding the significant internal fractures of recent years, participants still recognise and embrace the notion of a meaningful, and transcendental, Atlantic relationship. Again, the capacity of such structural patterns of membership to induce compliance among elite participants is considerable.

5.3 Considering the relationship between collaboration, power, centrality, consensus and legitimacy

It was suggested at the beginning of this chapter that the themes of the discussion were interrelated. When considered together, it is argued that they provide an insight into the interplay that exists between articulation and interpretation, and structure and agency, in

the formation of legitimacy as a basis for action in international and transnational affairs.

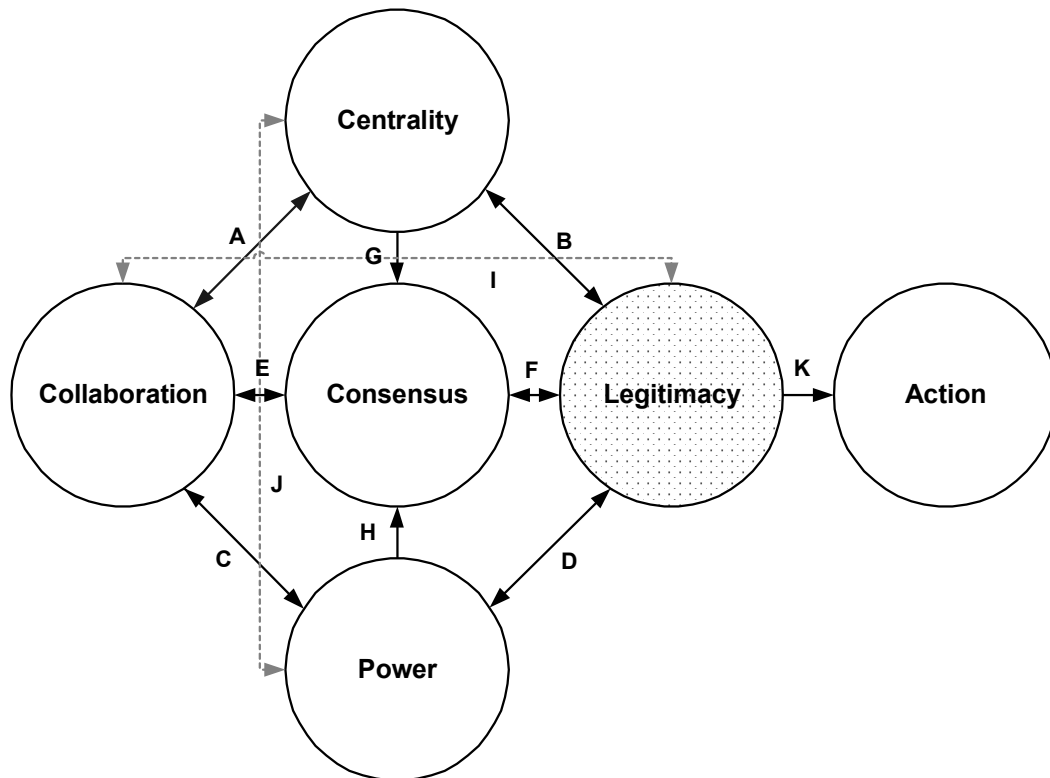
The discursive sphere of the transnational elite network is not a perfect and uncontaminated vision of enlightened social construction. It is a subtly contested sphere in which power relations play a crucial role in determining the social context that defines action as legitimate or illegitimate. More than ever before, the contest for legitimacy in international and transnational affairs has become a critical factor in the determination of action or inaction. The social construction of legitimacy in international and transnational settings is, therefore, an implicitly political activity.

In order to better understand the processes of social construction within the transnational setting, it is important to recognise the existence of a number of significant inter-relationships. A conceptual model of these inter-relationships is presented in Figure 5.1.

The critical inter-relationship is lineal and leads from collaboration through consensus formation and legitimacy to eventual forms of action (E, F, K). Crucially, however, it is the interplay that exists between legitimacy building processes and issues of network centrality (A, G, B) and discrete forms of power (C, H, D), at points along this lineal progression, that highlight the socio-political dynamics of constructionism within such settings. Of particular interest, are the bi-directional and mutually constitutive arrangements that cement this process of social construction. Among the transnational policy elite, for instance, notions of collaboration are normatively imbued with a set of fundamental legitimising constructs (I). As a consequence, the product of collaboration, consensus formation, is, by definition, imbued with the same characteristic legitimacy. It is these legitimisations that define the nature of membership and action within elite transnational communities. Similarly, existing legitimised constructs will have some bearing upon the nature of future collaborative exercises and will likely impact the nature of downstream consensus formation. The strength of the existing, collectively legitimised, construct is the social structural context within which ongoing collaboration and consensus formation activity is defined. Consequently, it is argued that power

relations that define and sustain existing social constructs within elite networks, discretely influence further processes of collaboration (A, C). They also have a considerable bearing, directly and indirectly, on the shape and tenor of eventual consensus (G, H).

Figure 5.1 The social construction of legitimacy as a basis for action



Source: Compiled by the author

Another important relationship determining the nature of eventual consensus is that which exists between legitimacy and centrality (B) and legitimacy and power (D). Existing forms of consensus within elite communities naturally exhibit a transcendental legitimacy. Those who are seen to advocate, and articulate, these consensuses are those with greater familiarity with each other and the network - in short, those with centrality. Central members of the network unconsciously create legitimacy for their views simply by articulating them; peripheral or aspirant members of the network, keen to ingratiate themselves with the inner core, are responding to the inextricable inter-relationship

between the legitimacy of the participant and the legitimacy of the discourse. Likewise, third dimensional forms of power which manifest themselves in various processes of socialisation, acculturation and fraternisation are rooted in conceptions of the legitimate. Indeed, it is the transcendental legitimacy of dominant discourse and setting that unconsciously leads to some degree of preference compliance within elite transnational settings.

The complex, and highly dynamic, nature of consensus formation activity within transnational elite networks exposes a fundamental relationship between structure and articulation within such environments. As one moves from policy processes at the nation state level through policy processes at the regional level to, ultimately, policy processes in the global setting, the structural context of policy discourse becomes more uncertain and dissipated. While there are some undeniable historic, socio-economic, geographic and cultural dimensions and tensions to world politics, there are few universally accepted, or static, structural “realities”. The role of elites within this setting, therefore, is to create certainty, however temporal, where there is little or none. This certainty, which is the result of transcendental legitimisations, is made possible through the interaction and discourse of elites. But legitimised constructs, however vague, are not produced by some kind of mystical and apolitical process of social construction. They are, instead, articulated by the powerful. And the mutually constitutive, and implicitly political, settings of elite social construction ensure that they achieve a meaningful and workable, if not always absolute, structural quality. In short, the relationship between structure and agency within such settings is much closer and immediate than that found in other policy arenas. Meaningful agency within the transnational elite community is not related to the interpretation of structural context, it is related to its articulation.

5.4 Discrete power relations and transnational elite thinking in the post-Cold War period

The end of the Cold War marked a significant shift in the way that consensus was reached in international relations. During the period after the Second World War, and

leading through to the collapse of the Berlin Wall, international consensus was characterised, in Atlantic terms, by structural alliances heavily influenced by issues of ideology and security. Informal elite networks, as well as formal international institutions, were designed to cement relations in the face of mutual threats and challenges. As these perceived threats lessened, the role of elite policy networks and institutions in international and transnational arenas was dramatically called into question. Aside from obvious questions related to purpose and membership, this new era of international relations brought with it considerable issues related to the nature of structural context in the international setting. The certainties of earlier alliances, while not entirely absent, had been replaced by a period of more fluid cooperation and partnership in international affairs. During this period, the formation of consensus and legitimacy, as a basis for action, emerged as a key principle in international relations.

In the absence of a global government, and with the failure of multilateralism to transcend the protectionist agendas of member states, “clubs” and networks of policy elites in the international and transnational arenas have emerged as primary mechanisms for the development of transcendental forms of consensus and legitimacy. In more formal international organisations, this frequently relates to the establishment of common ground or normative regimes in which the basis for more formal agreements can be anchored. In the case of informal transnational elites, consensus formation activity might be seen to facilitate formal international efforts by integrating non-state interests into the policy milieu, or it might take an alternative trajectory altogether. Unburdened by formal constituencies, transnational collaborative elites, in discursive terms at least, are capable of not only transcending the limitations of statehood in international affairs, but legitimising an entirely separate conception of global governance. In this sense, it is important to recognise that transnational elite networks represent something more than the sum total of their international multi-stakeholder members. Consensus formation and legitimacy within such settings has the capacity to challenge and adapt more formal processes of international cooperation.

This capacity, however, has not yet been fully realised. The transnational policy elite has yet to evolve into a truly global entity. Instead, it continues to reflect traditional

alliances with an emphasis on regional cooperation. The recognition, among some members of the transnational elite, that integrating transnational communities should be a priority, reflects the significance that a global transnational policy elite might have in shaping legitimacy as a basis for action in world affairs. While this rather instrumentalist depiction suggests a degree of intent on the part of elite members, much of what passes for consensus formation in elite circles is seen as an unconscious by-product of elite discourse and familiarisation. Any attempt to integrate transnational elite networks is based largely on an unquestioned belief that such a move would be a force for good in world affairs. The requirement for a global transnational policy elite is viewed as a progressive and essential response to the threat of regional protectionism and a means of overcoming structural obstacles to the emergence of ever tighter global integration. It should be noted that the findings of this study are specific to the Atlantic transnational elite; it remains to be seen whether such sentiment is shared by other regional transnational networks.

Although far from homogeneous, this study finds the notion of a transnational policy elite to be a coherent and meaningful one although the policy effects of collaboration are unclear and, it is suggested, highly idiosyncratic. Transnational elite members are not consciously representing or advocating the views of a group or network. In many ways, they feel themselves to be independent agents acting beyond the influence of crude forms of preference formation. All the same, they accept that preferences can change as a consequence of elite interactions and information interchange but, curiously, they hold a rather apolitical view of this process. Likewise, they see consensus formation, or the narrowing of differences, as a natural consequence of familiarisation and interaction within elite settings. Many take issue with the implications of consensus formation as a description of elite activity but, at the same time, accept that it broadly describes the momentum and outcome of such interactions.

The depiction of elite interactions presented by the findings of this study suggests a role for transnational elites in the development of legitimised constructs. A fundamental question, not satisfactorily addressed by this study, relates to the purposeful nature of such activity. It has not been possible to understand the extent to which elite

transnational networks are designed or intended to produce consensus outcomes. That said, there is considerable evidence that inner core members view such an outcome as an obvious and desirable reason for such networks to form and function. In other words, when asked why elite networks exist and what they do, inner core members tended to emphasise the desirability of creating common ground, building bridges and understanding one another. Such benefits are not articulated as part of the rationale for joining elite networks, they are, however, cited as a defence of such activity.

This study suggests that many of the processes that lead to some degree of consensus formation within elite transnational circles are unconsciously deterministic. They are the result of discrete third-dimensional power relations embedded within such settings and, despite the protestations of long standing members of elite networks, such relations have a considerable bearing upon those entering the highest echelons of elite interaction. There is an historic socio-political bias to the Atlantic transnational elite. This bias continues to be mobilised through the norms, rules and rituals of networked interaction in the Atlantic transnational arena. Recognising the, often subtle, implications of these embedded routines is a key requirement for those looking to successfully navigate full membership in such settings. Added to which, an undeniable elitism reinforces bias within the elite group. Entrants must correctly interpret the significance of this elitism if they are to transcend its devices.

A key finding of this study relates to the role of vulnerability and insecurity in elite settings. While flattered and excited by the prospect of being invited, very few elite participants are immediately comfortable with the elevation into transnational elite circles. Reputational influence and network centrality reinforce feelings of insecurity and create mechanisms of compliance within such settings. Elite participants do not conform to prevalent views because they are instructed to do so; they do so because they come to realise that such views are legitimate. It is their understanding of the legitimate within such arenas that leads to preference compliance. If they understand their own preferences to be illegitimate in the face of such overwhelming evidence, the complex nature of conflicting personal preferences will discretely ensure some degree

of compliance. Such compliance is not absolute and, as has been stated, is highly idiosyncratic.

Transnational elite thinking has been discretely shaped during the post-Cold War period by largely unconscious, third dimensional, power prescriptions embedded in the traditions, organisation and processes of elite interaction. These prescriptions have the effect of perpetuating dominant logic within such settings and are reinforced by complex networked relationships. As a consequence, elite transnational participants have, to some extent, had their views of political problems, and acceptable public policy responses, shaped by the dynamics of power within such environments.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings of the study and addressed the pivotal research question. In short, the study finds evidence of the dynamics of third dimensional power in transnational elite networks. It suggests, as a consequence, that transnational elite participants have, to some degree, adapted their view of political problems and public policy responses in line with conceptions of the legitimate within transnational network settings. It highlights the idiosyncratic nature of this alignment and does not seek to suggest that such influences are conscious or absolute. They are, nonetheless, significant to an understanding of the relationship between pre-policy processes in the transnational arena and more formal processes of policy formation in the national, regional and global settings.

The nature of this study's contribution to knowledge will now be considered.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study has explored the question of how dynamics of third dimensional power have shaped transnational elite thinking related to political problems and public policy responses in the post-Cold War period. This chapter summarises the key findings of the research before considering how the study has contributed to existing knowledge in the areas of theory, method and practice. The limitations of the research are then described and suggestions for further research outlined. The chapter concludes with a personal postscript that describes further thoughts and reflections related to the research.

6.2 Summary of key findings

This exploratory study of transnational elite interactions has involved interviews with European members of the Atlantic policy elite. Identified through their participation in Bilderberg conferences, this highly networked group of elite individuals has provided a panoptic view of transnational elite activity during the post-Cold War period. Aside from membership of numerous formal public and professional bodies, the majority of study participants had experience of several of the major informal transnational policy networks and gatherings. Leaving aside country and issue specific organisations, those identified during the course of the study included the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Circle, the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft (Konigswinter), the Anglo-French Callot, The Ditchley Foundation, St George's House, Chatham House, Da Arrabida and various committees of the World Economic Forum.

The notion of a transnational policy elite is, indeed, meaningful although the precise consequences of elite transnational interactions remain unclear. The absence of a binding, and universally enforceable, regulatory regime in the global setting, has led to the emergence of literally hundreds of interconnected policy related organisations and informal networks. The most elite of these organisations are responsible, often indirectly, for the development, or at least reinforcement of, legitimised constructs that

serve to create a basis for action in world politics. These legitimised social constructs are not the product of perfect and harmonious discourse within an uncontaminated public sphere. They are, instead, the product of an inherently political contest. Consequently, the nature of power relations within transnational, as well as international, settings should be of considerable interest to those concerned with constructivist depictions of international relations.

The transnational policy elite is not, yet, a truly global entity and we do not know whether a desire to create links between regional networks, on the part of certain elite members, will translate into a more significant interlocking between informal networks. Traditional alliances, certainly within the Atlantic network, remain crucial to an understanding of legitimacy and power relations within such settings. While earlier relationships based on ideology and security have been replaced with a broader, and less structured, basis for cooperation, this study suggests that the demise of such alliances has been exaggerated in certain quarters.

Consensus formation is a misleading description of the purpose and nature of elite transnational interactions although it broadly describes the momentum and ultimate outcome of such activity. Those at the centre of the elite network highlighted the importance of such interactions for the creation of shared understanding and mutual cooperation while others were clear that it did, indeed, lead to better understanding and more “narrowed differences”. The idea, however, that a consensus exists across the board on policy matters is spurious. While participants were undeniably centrist in orientation, and clearly advocated free trade and open markets, they reflected a diversity of position ranging from more neo-liberal perspectives at one extreme to more social and distributive models of capitalism at the other. Within the European participant group, advocates of more tempered forms of capitalism were the norm.

Elite membership is far from dynamic. While elite groups and networks emphasise the importance of new members and ideas, membership is largely rotated at the periphery of the network. Established members of elite networks, consciously or otherwise, form part of an inner core membership, something resembling an “old boy” network, and have a

disproportionate level of influence within the organisation and functioning of elite groups. Elitism within the inner-core is a feature of such environments and, aside from being part of the allure for aspiring members, has a considerable role to play in the selection of participants and the advancement of aspiring members within the group. New members to the elite network are acutely aware of hierarchies of influence both within the network and in a wider sense. They unconsciously adapt their behaviour and preferences to the demands of the environment.

The dynamics of third dimensional power are a feature of elite interactions in the transnational setting. So insidious are the mechanisms of such power that those subject to them are not only defensive at the suggestion that their preferences may have changed but are, ultimately, unaware of the fact. This is partly the result of multiple, often conflicting, preferences but also the result of a political awareness and sensitivity, on the part of new and aspiring elite participants, to notions of the legitimate within the elite social context. A degree of insecurity and an acknowledgement of hierarchy creates subtle mechanisms of compliance within such environments. This form of compliance is not absolute and is highly idiosyncratic.

Elite thinking, in the transnational arena, has been subtly shaped during the post-Cold War period by third dimensional power relations embedded in the traditions, organisation and processes of elite interaction within such settings. Dominant logic, or legitimised constructs, within this community have been perpetuated, rather than challenged, by complex, and highly personal, networked relationships. The view of political problems and acceptable public policy responses held by members of the transnational policy elite have almost certainly been coloured, to some extent, by discrete power relations within such settings.

6.3 Contribution to knowledge

Scholarly research is expected to make a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the selected field. In order to make such a contribution, doctoral research should

“work at the boundaries of knowledge, and [should be] characterised by a contribution to the conceptual or theoretical development of a research discipline.” (Finn, 2005:14)

It is important, at this stage, to evaluate both the contribution to knowledge and the originality of the contribution represented by this study (Oliver, 2004). For the purpose of this exercise, the evaluation is divided into theoretical, methodological and practical contributions.

6.3.1 *Theoretical contribution*

The theoretical contribution of this study is comprised of two interrelated parts: the first concerned with the nature of consensus formation and collaboration between policy elites in the transnational setting and the second related to the application of Steven Lukes’s (1974) third dimensional power in elite settings. Each is now considered in turn.

6.3.1.1 *Transnational elite interactions*

The findings of the research represent an original contribution to our understanding of the purpose and possible implications of elite interactions in the transnational setting. They are of particular relevance to the literature domains of international relations, international political economy and policy science.

This study is the first qualitative research to specifically analyse the purpose and effects of transnational elite interactions during the post-Cold War period. Historical, mainly archival, accounts of policy elite interactions relate to a period preceding the end of the Cold War and are primarily concerned with the cementing of relations between the United States and Western Europe, as well as the nature of the interrelationship between government and policy networks during that period. While these accounts provide a starting point for consideration of the role of transnational policy forums and networks in contemporary world affairs, it is important to note that the structural context for such activity has altered beyond recognition. In place of earlier ideological and security

based alliances, this new era of international relations has witnessed more fluid forms of cooperation and partnership. Crucially, the importance of consensus and legitimacy, as a basis for action, has emerged as a key requirement in international affairs. This study finds that transnational elite networks are contributing to the definition of consensus and legitimacy in the domain of international relations. Moreover, the inclusion of multiple stakeholders, and business and financial interests in particular, has potentially profound implications for the precise nature of such legitimacy.

Structural, and highly instrumental, depictions of elite networks in the fields of international political economy and global systems theory have tended to emphasise the significance of quantitative links, and the capacity for diffusion of hegemonic neo-liberal ideology, rather than the qualitative substance of elite relationships and interactions. The qualitative findings of this research suggest that this is a considerable oversight and that elite interactions are significantly more nuanced and idiosyncratic than they might first appear. In particular, it is important to recognise that consensus formation within such networks, while characterised by a general move towards greater shared understanding, is more contested than neo-Marxist depictions of the transnational capitalist class appear to suggest. Power relations within elite settings may tend to reinforce and perpetuate dominant logic but it is important to recognise that the legitimised constructions that form the social context of transnational elite interactions, are far from absolute and have a fundamentally dynamic quality.

This study of elite collaboration considerably extends our understanding of processes of social construction within elite contexts. While constructivist depictions of formal international relations activity may have become commonplace, there has been little corresponding application of constructivist inquiry into informal transnational networks. This study therefore extends our knowledge of constructivism in international relations to the largely uncharted territory of transnational elite interactions. In so doing, it presents a conceptual model of the social construction of legitimacy as a basis for action in transnational politics. The crucial contribution of this model relates to the socio-political interplay that exists between legitimacy building processes and issues of network centrality and discrete forms of power. Of critical interest are the bi-directional

and mutually constitutive arrangements that cement this contested process of social construction. Each of the relationships identified in the model will form the basis of further research.

The study also represents an extension of the longstanding tradition of interest in policy elites by elevating the discussion beyond the boundaries of local communities and nation states and into the transnational context. Neo-Marxist interest has centred on the existence of an emergent transnational class and the instruments of class oppression that accompany it. Elite contributions, on the other hand, have only recently begun to empirically address the development of an international or transnational policy elite. Early studies on specific states in the USA, and subsequent interest in national policy elites, have yet to be mirrored by substantial development of empirical material in the transnational arena. This study, therefore, delivers an original contribution to an otherwise sparse literature related to elite interactions and collaboration in the transnational setting. Indeed, Leslie Sklair, Emeritus Professor of Political Sociology at the London School of Economics and a leading contributor on the emergence of a transnational capitalist class, recently described the topic of this research as being “of great importance and interest.”⁴⁹

Finally, the study provides an original theoretical contribution to consideration of the structural dynamics of pre-policy formation activity and, specifically, challenges interpretive portrayals of issue definition and reactive conceptions of initiation in the policy process. Instead, it suggests that the legitimised constructs of policy formation – its structural determinants - are not as ethereal as previously imagined; and neither are they beyond the scope and control of a coordinated policy elite. Consequently, structural manipulation has less to do with interpretation than articulation and represents a contested mechanism for control of system-wide tolerances of change. Given such a depiction, dynamic policy outcomes are viewed as increasingly beyond the scope of policy designers and their collective citizenries. The normative parameters of policy discourse are, instead, defined by elite interactions in the national, international and transnational settings. Demand for change that exists outside of the structural tolerances

⁴⁹ Personal correspondence 19th June 2008

of the policy process will, out of necessity, require the support of elites. Contested arenas of elite interaction, notionally exogenous to the formal processes of policy formation, are a key forum for the preservation and adjustment of the socio-structural determinants of political change. Aside from identifying the role of elites in defining structural legitimacy, this contribution significantly emphasises the function of elite interactions in mediating the role and influence of concurrent structural determinants.

6.3.1.2 The application of third dimensional power

This is not the first study to utilise Steve Lukes's (1974) third dimensional form of power. However, it is believed that it represents the first application of his theoretical lens within the context of an elite setting. Previous applications have tended to concern power dynamics in a variety of contexts that were perceived to exhibit unequal relations between the powerful and powerless. Although Lukes has never placed limitations on the contextual application of his approach, empirical treatments of third dimensional power have consistently reflected a rather literal view of power as dominance. While it is true that elite interactions do not seem to present an ideal context for such an analysis, this study clearly indicates that application of the lens can be invaluable in dispelling myths related to the nature and development of elite homogeneity. Indeed, this study finds that the application of a third dimensional power lens within elite settings helps explain complex social processes related to consensus formation and legitimacy building within such environments. The research, therefore, extends knowledge related to the application of the third dimensional power lens within given contexts.

Another key contribution of the study concerning third dimensional power relates to how meaningful the approach is when applied in its amended form. There are very few faithful applications of Lukes's original approach (1974) and this study is among the first⁵⁰ to apply Lukes's (2005a; 2005b) revised conception of the framework. Given the criticism of the revision levelled by some, it is important to consider whether, in light of its application, it remains a valuable methodological instrument.

⁵⁰ At the time of writing, no other study incorporating the revised form of third dimensional power was identified.

This study adopted a very light treatment of counterfactuals. Indeed, identifying individual counterfactuals was deemed unnecessary to an understanding of preference deviation. While this is unlikely to satisfy third dimensional purists, or those who take a more constitutive perspective of elite interactions, identifying dynamics of third dimensional power within such settings was infinitely more revealing and interesting than endlessly debating the plausibility of real interests. It was sufficient, for the purposes of this exercise at least, to demonstrate how real interests might be influenced by third dimensional power relations within the context of transnational elite interactions. And while the study inevitably falls short in providing evidence of the actual consequences of such activity, it has successfully delivered what was within its empirical grasp: namely, evidence of the mechanisms of preference compliance within such settings.

Steven Lukes has still to provide a working description of how to best apply an empirical examination of his third dimensional power framework. The vagaries of his theoretical perspective allow for some degree of interpretation and flexibility. This study provides one, rather liberal, interpretation of how to apply the theoretical framework within a given context and, in so doing, finds considerable evidence to support the contention that such an empirical approach is not only meaningful, but extremely valuable. The findings of the study provide a timely contribution to current power debates in the field of political sociology.

6.3.2 Methodological contribution

This exploration of the interactions of transnational elites has not sought to develop or utilise an innovative research design although the application of a qualitative and interpretive methodology is something of a novelty within the multi-disciplinary domain. Set against a heavy dependency on quantitative, and highly structural, depictions of elite interconnections, this qualitative study has contributed significantly to our understanding of the precise nature of elite interactions within the transnational arena. As a consequence, a far more nuanced picture of elite membership has emerged: a picture that has enabled a greater appreciation of socio-political dimensions within

such networks. For instance, the finding that consensus formation activity is far from absolute, and highly idiosyncratic, is only made possible through the use of such a methodology.

Similarly, the use of elite interviewing can hardly be described as groundbreaking but there were some extremely interesting discoveries made during the course of the research that extend our understanding of such activity. In particular, those discoveries related to access, disclosure and power. Bilderberg attendees are among the most elite group of policy related individuals in the United States and Western Europe. In addition to being extremely difficult to access, the study had to circumvent problems associated with strict non-disclosure rules. Bilderberg's members are extremely respectful of the group's rules and traditions and are very reluctant to discuss the group, or group matters, outside the confines of the elite network. These constraints present an extremely challenging context for a study dependent upon elite interviews.

The most obvious discovery was that such people did not respond to direct approaches for an interview. It was tempting to interpret rejections at this stage as a reflection of the content of the proposed interviews but, unconvinced of this, I attempted to reach Bilderberg attendees via the introductions of more accessible policy elite members. The key finding, related to the use of intermediaries, was that personal introductions usually resulted in an interview, irrespective of the perceived sensitivity of the subject. Another extremely valuable discovery was that members of the policy elite "establishment" appeared to subscribe to an informal code concerning personal introductions. In the first instance, they evaluated the credibility of the interviewer and then, satisfied that there was no danger of embarrassment, were more than willing to make further introductions. Interestingly, I observed the same process of name selection on three separate occasions: elite participants were willing to make introductions to three further contacts but no more. Even in situations where the interviewee had not warmed to the process, and appeared guarded throughout the interview, a request for introductions usually resulted in an offer of help. This is especially surprising given the nature of the subject under investigation but it demonstrates the importance of asking the question however uncomfortable the circumstances.

While not the focus of this study, a fuller account of the interview experiences encountered during this study will form the basis of a paper concerned with the interviewing of defensive elites. At that point, a more meaningful methodological contribution will have been made.

6.3.3 *Practical contribution*

Although the major contribution of this study is theoretical, the research has considerable implications for policymakers.

The policy process is undoubtedly complex and the relationship between structure and agency is far from satisfactorily explained in the policy science literature. On the one hand, structuralist and institutionalist contributions have highlighted the role of setting and rules to processes of policy formation and change while more recent post-structural contributions have drawn attention to the role of agency in the identification and definition of political problems and solutions. While frameworks such as structuration (Giddens, 1984) succeed in theoretically reconciling the previously irreconcilable in this area, this study implies that agent manipulation and articulation of the legitimate or structural, in a transcendental policy sphere, has potentially profound implications for downstream cognitive reasoning in the more formal processes of policy formation. In essence, the formal policymaker's interpretation of structural influences has, itself, been the subject of discrete forms of influence related to the framing of policy issues and responses. There is a danger of infinite regress with such reasoning but to ignore the possibility of such influences, in favour of more binary conceptions of structure and agency, is to ignore significant implications for those tasked with policy design. The key contribution of this study, therefore, for practitioners, is to highlight the role of influences related to normative policy prescriptions. These third-dimensional influences are embedded in the assumptions that policymakers make related to matters of policy design. They are distinct from institutional influences in so far as they are not constituted of formal rules or symbols associated with appropriate response within such settings. Instead, they are constituted by an appreciation of more ethereal forms of common sense. The relationship between policymaker preferences and these sources of

common sense is critical, therefore, to an understanding of definition and choice within such settings. In short, policymakers should give thought to how the shape of their preferences materially impacts the definition and design of public policy and, moreover, whether such an impact is truly aligned with their real interests.

6.4 Limitations

As with any research, there are limitations to this study. Some of these limitations relate to the more general aspects of qualitative and interpretive analysis but some are, unquestionably, specific to the subject of the study. The most important of these relate to researcher bias, sampling, elite interviewing and the generalisable nature of the findings.

6.4.1 Researcher bias

It would be futile to deny the significance of the possibility of researcher bias to a study of elites. Such a study implicitly reflects a set of normative predispositions, on the part of the researcher, concerned with how society should be organised and who should be organising it (Moyser & Wagstaffe, 1987). In some sense, this bias might be viewed as a strength since it motivates the researcher to conduct, at times, very challenging research; but, equally, it calls into question the possible validity of interpretive results. After all, the social knowledge created as a consequence of this study is the direct result of interpreted meanings derived through personal interactions, individual analysis and highly idiosyncratic coding. The role of the researcher is pivotal, therefore, to an understanding of the eventual findings of the study (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002).

6.4.1.1 Statement of interest

Given the above, I believe it is important to outline how my own interests may have served to bias the interpretation of interviews and interview data. I came to the PhD process having spent several years as a senior executive in the European specialist media and new media sectors and I was, for some time, interested in the development of

public policy related to the internet. In fact, it was because of the disappointment I felt at the direction and tone of regulation within the industry that I first became aware of an underlying interest in the emancipatory promise of the media. In short, I believed that the internet had the ability to transform existing relationships between government and citizenry but, for whatever reason, was fast being dominated by interests that had every reason to resist such transformation. I consider myself, therefore, a democrat with a belief in democracy as it should be, rather than what it has become. There is nothing more to my motivation to explore elite interactions than a desire to understand democratic or undemocratic processes that enable or prevent transformational change in society. And while, at first glance, this suggests a belief that such activity is inherently bad rather than good, I personally do not believe that such an assumption naturally follows.

To the extent, therefore, that I have a political interest in the subject matter, I accept that there is an undeniable degree of normative bias to the research. The suggestion, however, that such a bias might have tainted my interpretation of the value of such activity is one that I would strongly refute. Indeed, I have at all times attempted to understand how transnational elite interactions represent a force for good in society as well as how they are theoretically married with democratic principles. Reconciling these two aspects of elite interactions is not straightforward but it would be naïve, and somewhat foolish, to deny the importance of elite interactions to the wellbeing of society. I believe, for this reason, that the research represents a mature appreciation of the subject matter. It is, no doubt, motivated by an interest in democracy but its assessment of elite interactions in the transnational setting has, at all times, remained circumspect in its appreciation of the value of such activity.

6.4.1.2 Interpretation and validity

This interpretative research is exploratory in nature and elicited a substantial quantity of rich interview data related to transnational interactions in the post-Cold War setting. As previously noted, in this type of research the interpreter is central to any understanding of the social knowledge that emerges. Throughout the research process, therefore, self-

awareness has been essential in order to counter the possible influence of personal bias. A process of self-reflection has preceded, and occurred throughout, all stages of the research process.

The sampling procedure will be covered shortly but significant efforts were made to ensure as faithful a delivery of participant accounts, and as accurate a reflection of those accounts through analysis and reporting, as feasibly possible. In the case of interviews, for instance, the broad semi-structured format utilising “grand tour” questions (Leech, 2002) at the beginning of sessions, and then relying on probing techniques to elicit further details and guide the interview, ensured that transcripts were extremely rich and not overly directed. This resulted in a breadth of material that, at times, was difficult to manage but, ultimately, the interviewer was able to avoid the suggestion that accounts were largely a function of directional and closed questioning. Similarly, the findings section of this thesis has produced extensive, and largely unedited, extracts from interviews with a view to demonstrating contextual support for the conclusions being drawn. It is hoped that this demonstrates, therefore, the self-conscious application of an emergent thematic approach rather than the imposition of a pre-existing normative framework. In short, it is believed that these strategies have enhanced the reliability and validity of the study.

6.4.2 *Sampling*

Although this study makes no claims to statistical validity, it is an exploratory study designed to create tentative understanding of power dynamics in transnational elite interactions, there are some obvious limitations to the sampling design. For the purposes of this research, the accounts of one participant were as valid as any other but, notwithstanding this observation, a number of difficulties related to access may have introduced an unquantifiable degree of bias into the findings. The necessity for convenience sampling, the use of intermediaries and the eventual adoption of “snowball” sampling all ran the risk of introducing bias of some form or another. Attempts were made to reach as diverse a group of participants as possible, both sectorally and nationally, but, ultimately, control of this process was a secondary

consideration to the securing of valuable interviews. In the event, the final sample was reasonably reflective of the general composition of the Bilderberg group but there was no systematic process for ensuring representation. Given the manifest difficulty associated with accessing elite participants of this kind, it was felt that the introduction of some degree of bias was an unavoidable consequence of such activity. Under normal circumstances, the securing of further interviews may have helped to counter sample bias but, since the primary means of increasing interview numbers would have been further “snowball” sampling, it is possible that biases may have been reinforced rather than moderated.

A key limitation, not just of this study but any concerned with identifying the activities and interactions of transnational elites, is related to the difficulties associated with defining the elite itself. In this study, a decision was taken to utilise panoptic accounts of members of the elite Bilderberg group but this raises certain implications for the study and its findings. The most important is that the transnational elite defined by this study is, in fact, comprised of members of the Atlantic transnational network - and, importantly, only European members of this network. Whether the accounts of this sample accurately reflect the views of part, or whole, of the Bilderberg group are unknown at this stage. Also, to what extent Bilderberg members are capable of representing an accurate panoptic sense of elite interactions in the transnational arena, is a matter of some conjecture. Ultimately, however, decisions related to the definition of the transnational elite had to be made and, on reflection, it was felt that there was no better example of this kind of elite interaction than that provided by the Bilderberg group. Since its members are frequently active in other networks, it was decided that they were best placed to provide accounts of a wide variety of elite networking activity. As an aside, when asked to rank the importance or hierarchy of elite networks and groups, elite participants consistently cited Bilderberg as the preeminent network gathering.

6.4.3 *Elite interviewing*

Many of the limitations associated with elite interviewing are covered by considerations of bias but there were some additional factors that are worthy of discussion.

Power relations in the interview situation are clearly not equal. The interviewer is frequently sitting before someone he or she recognises and who is widely regarded as having connections and power of some description. No amount of preparation can enable the interviewer to know exactly how they will respond when confronted by certain individuals. Likewise, a general desire to be respected and liked by the participant, coupled with an acknowledgement that the subject might be able to significantly benefit future research, can lead to an overly deferential interview. I tried throughout the process of meeting with intermediaries, and eventual interviewees, to be as challenging as I might without offending or irritating the interviewee. Mostly, this balance was successful and interviews were generally respectful, informative and open. Occasionally, an overly helpful, or authoritarian, participant might take the interview off at a tangential angle for some time, but it was always possible to bring the discussion back to the general area of inquiry. At no point did I feel that it was impossible to get beyond overly romantic or self-aggrandising recollections and, once reassured about non-disclosure, participants were, for the most part, genuinely open about their experiences.

The final point, related to disclosure rules, raises the important issue of ethics. All interviews held by the researcher were conducted according to the Chatham House Rule. Not all participants insisted on this requirement but, where they were willing to allow free use of the data, approval of copy was demanded. On balance, the less onerous approach was to provide anonymity to all participants and to take care to ensure that corresponding data would not reveal identities. In this way, it was possible to produce a considerable volume of interview material in the findings and avoid complications associated with retrospective approval. All participants were clearly informed of the terms of the use of interview material and agreed to such use both before, and during, the interview.

6.4.4 *The generalisable nature of the findings*

The findings of this research are specific to the sample group of Bilderberg attendees interviewed during the course of this study. While their accounts relate to a panoptic assessment of transnational elite activity, they are not generalisable. This is a limitation leveled at many qualitative studies and the research presented here is no exception.

6.5 Directions for future research

While the findings of this study cannot be generalised in their current form, several further lines of inquiry might significantly increase the applicability of the research. The most pressing, from the perspective of addressing immediate questions related to the sample group, is to conduct a comparative study of post-Cold War, North American, Bilderberg attendees. This would help to provide an understanding of findings that transcend the geographical divide in the Atlantic network and may reveal interesting insights into the peculiar interpretations of American and European elite members. The next stage of the research would be to compare the results of Bilderberg attendees with other elite networks within the Atlantic territory. This is potentially more complicated than it first appears since many members of Bilderberg are, coincidentally, members of other groups. The challenge, therefore, would be to identify senior elite participants of such groups who are not yet members of the Bilderberg network. An ambitious final stage of this research agenda would be to identify comparable non-Atlantic networks and conduct comparative research in order to identify similarities and differences in approach. Ultimately, the objective of such a research agenda would be to provide a truly global, and generalised, view of transnational elite interactions and the dynamics of power that exist within, and between, them. Such an agenda is of critical importance as transnational policy processes assume ever greater significance in the development of a global regulatory framework. The dearth of scholarly contributions in this field represents a substantial research opportunity.

Another significant line of inquiry presented by the findings of this research relates to the socio-political nature of collaboration, consensus and legitimacy, as a basis for

action in transnational and international policy affairs. The conceptual model identified in this study (see Figure 5.1: The social construction of legitimacy as a basis for action) highlights the interdependent and mutually constitutive nature of binary relations that cement the process of social construction within elite contexts. Not only is the underlying legitimacy of collaborative logic highly suspect, but its role in underpinning the creation of further forms of legitimacy, must become the subject of further critical empirical inquiry. The contestedness of legitimacy within such settings, and the relations of power that underpin notions of consensus in elite networks, are areas that demand immediate and pressing scholarly attention. A starting point would be to further investigate the critical binary relations between issues of centrality and power and each of the constitutive stages of consensual legitimacy. A crucial next step, and one that exists outside of the immediate concerns of the agenda outlined above, would be to consider the inter-relationship between informal transnational and formal international policy processes.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the key findings of the research and considered the contribution that the study makes to knowledge in the areas of theory, method and practice. The limitations of the study have been discussed and recommendations for future research presented.

This study explored the role played by dynamics of third dimensional power in shaping transnational elite thinking during the post-Cold War period. In order to do this, it was necessary to consider the coherency of the transnational policy elite and just how meaningful the notion of consensus formation is as a description of transnational elite activity. The findings of this study provide the first qualitative depiction of precisely how mechanisms of discrete power in transnational elite environments have resulted in aligned elite preferences during the post-Cold War period. This cognitive alignment, while naturally indicating narrowed differences, does not imply outright consensus on all matters of policy. The process of consensus formation, such as it is, is highly idiosyncratic and by no means absolute. The study concludes that the transnational

policy elite is, indeed, a coherent policy network comprised of selected members of the national and regional business and political elite. It is some way from representing a truly global network but conscious efforts are being made, at the most senior levels, to establish links between regional networks.

6.7 Postscript

As the PhD process draws to a close, I reflect with a certain degree of sadness that the past four years have disappeared quite so quickly. The decision to abandon a successful career and return to full time studies was not an easy one to make and was greeted, at the time, with surprise, and even derision, by some that I know. But I have never doubted, for one moment, that this was something that I simply had to do. For me, this process has been the most expansive, rewarding and fulfilling of my life. It has also, at the same time, represented an enormous personal struggle.

Adapting to the demands and rigors of an entirely different discipline and culture, after many years in business, has not always been straightforward. There have been moments where I've questioned whether it was going to be possible and, but for the intervention and support of some very close friends and colleagues, I'm certain my ambitions would have remained unfulfilled. As it is, I've been reinvigorated by the PhD process and inspired by the people I've had the good fortune to work alongside. I look forward to the future with optimism and a genuine level of excitement related to my field of inquiry.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Informal transnational groups/free text search

Please note that all results are free text searches which means that even the most tangential inclusion is returned. The total includes press references and, in the case of Bilderberg, a significant volume of scientific articles related to an entirely different phenomenon. As of February 2009, there were less than a dozen scholarly articles that referenced the Bilderberg group. The Trilateral Commission has considerably more coverage than Bilderberg and the Council on Foreign Relations, which isn't included here, produces many reports that garner wide press attention. In all cases, the amount of scholarly material available on the actual functioning of the groups and networks concerned is minimal.

Bilderberg

Results by Resources

Search for "**Bilderberg**" found **127** results

Resource Name	Status	Hits	
ABI/Inform (ProQuest)	DONE	98	View
Business Source Complete (EBSCO)	DONE	6	View
Emerald Fulltext journals (Emerald)	DONE	0	
Social Sciences Citation Index (ISI)	DONE	2	View
SpringerLink journals (MetaPress)	DONE	21	View
Combined Results	First 57 records	127	View

The Trilateral Commission

Results by Resources

Search for "'Trilateral Commission'" found **561** results

Resource Name	Status	Hits	
ABI/Inform (ProQuest)	DONE	323	View
Business Source Complete (EBSCO)	DONE	25	View
Emerald Fulltext journals (Emerald)	DONE	0	
Social Sciences Citation Index (ISI)	DONE	24	View
SpringerLink journals (MetaPress)	DONE	189	View
Combined Results	First 107 records	561	View

Appendix B. Interview Themes/Pilot study

Individual level perspectives on the relationship between economic and state interest

How inter-related are economic and state interest? To what extent, do they depend upon one another?
What justifications do you see for the involvement of business interests in the formation of public policy?
At what point in the process, do you believe, it is appropriate for the interests of business to be taken into account?
To what extent, do you think, that business or economic interests colour the existing thinking of policy actors?

Core assumptions that underpin an existing sense of shared purpose

What are the underlying objectives of public policy?
What is the role of national government?
On what basis might decisions between alternatives be based?
What measures of performance are appropriate to the consideration of public policy effectiveness?
How much consensus, would you say, exists on the overall direction and purpose of public policy?
Leaving aside the detail of public policy, what substantive differences exist in terms of the overall strategic direction or objectives of public policy between parties active at this stage of the process?

Perspectives on who, or what, is driving policy initiation

Why are some objectives/initiatives taken up and others ignored?
Where does the sense of what is and isn't acceptable come from?
How might a radically new policy find its way into the consideration process?
What support would such a policy proposal require to be taken seriously?
What role do the media and key advocates play in this process?

View of personal role and key motivations

How do you perceive your own role in the policy formation process?
What personal or professional influences might have a bearing upon the execution of your role?
To what extent are your activities governed by established rules or practices?
Are formal expectations outlined in advance? If so, by whom?
How able to influence the shape of policy proposals do you feel?

Policy initiation and the political process

How do the parties active at the initiation stage of the process differ from those active in the formal development of public policy proposals, consultation, and the eventual crafting of legislation?

To what extent does a strong and broad consensus of policy objectives between parties facilitate the development of public policy?

How would you describe the nature of this policy initiation activity?

How are the various processes and activities formalized?

Public opinion and public interest

In what sense might a shared understanding related to the objectives of public policy inform political, public, and media agendas?

How is the public interest preserved and furthered in this process?

Do you view public opinion and the public interest as the same thing?

To what extent should public opinion inform policy initiation?

How does the public interest inform or influence policy initiatives?

Appendix C. Bilderberg Attendees 1991–2008

Name	Country	Year	
Aarlsen, Jozias J. van	Netherlands	2005	Parliamentary leader, Liberal Party (VVD)
Abu-Amr, Ziad	Palestine	2005/2006	Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council; President of the Palestinian Council on Foreign Relations
Ackerman, Josef	Switzerland	1995/2004/2005/2008	President, Credit Suisse/Chairman, Group Exec Comm, Deutsche Bank, Member of Sup Board Siemens
Adams, John	Canada	2008	Deputy Minister of National Defence and Chief of the Communications Security Establishment Canada
Adler, Alexandre	France	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/19	Editorial counsel, Le Figaro
Agnelli, Giovanni	Italy	96/1997/1998/2000	Chairman, Fiat
Agnelli, Umberto	Italy	1994/1995/1997/1999/2000	Chairman IFIL
Aguar-Branco, Jose Pedro	Portugal	2006	Former Minister of Justice; MP
Agurru y Gil de Biedma, Esperanza	Spain	1999/2000	President of the Spanish Senate
Aigrain, Jacques	Switzerland	2006	CEO, Swiss Re
Ahlstrom, Krister	Finland	1994	President & CEO Ahlstrom group
Aho, Esko	Finland	1994	Prime Minister
Ahtisaari, Martti	Finland	1994/1995/1996	President of the republic of Finland
Ajami, Fouad	US	2006/2008	Director, Middle East Studies Program, The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies
Alexander, Keith B.	US	2008	Director, National Security Agency
Allaire, Paul	US	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/19	CEO Xerox/Chairman (CFR)
		96/1997/1998/1999/2000/2001	
		/2002	
Alison, Graham	US	2007	Douglas Dillon Professor of Govt, JFK School, Harvard
Almunia, Joaquin	Spain	1998/2005/2008	Sec Gen Socialist Party/Commissioner, European Commission
Alogoskoufis, George	Greece	2005/2006/2007/2008	Minister of Economy and Finance
Alp, Ali Hikmet	Turkey	1994	Ambassador, Permanent representative of Turkey to the CSCE
Alman, Roger C.	US	2008	Chairman, Evercore Partners Inc.
Amaral, Joaquim Freitas do	Portugal	1999	MP
Amaral, Luis	Portugal	1995	Min Energy
Ambrosetti, Alfredo	Italy	1994/2000/2004	Chairman, Ambrosetti group
Amerongen, Otto Wolf von	Germany	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/19	Chairman & CEO, Otto Wolff Industriebertung und GmbH
		96/1997/1998/1999/2000/2001	
		1993	
Amiel, Barbara	UK	1997/2000/2001	Columnist, Sunday Times
Anderson, Bodil Nyboe	Denmark	1992/1993/1994/1995/1996	Governor, Central Bank of Denmark
Andreas, Dwayne O.	US		Chairman, Archer-Daniels-Midland Co
Annenberg, Walter H.	US		Professor in the Natural Sciences, University of Pennsylvania
Argyros, Stelios	Greece	1993	Federation of Greek Industries
Armocost, Michael H.	US	1997	President, The Brookings Institute
Arnault, Bernard	France	1992	Chairman, LVMH
Arsenis, Gerassimos	Greece	1994	Minister of Defense
Aslund, Anders	Sweden	1992/1996/1999	Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Asper, Israel	Canada	2000	Chairman, CanWest Capital Group
Axworthy, Ioyd	Canada	1996	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Auser, Svein	Norway	2004	CEO, DnB NOR ASA
Avery, Graham	INT	2000	Chief Advisor for Enlargement, European Community
Babacan, Ali	Turkey	2003/2004/2005/2007/2008	Minister of Economic Affairs
Bady, Nicholas F.	US	1991	Secretary of the Treasury
Bagis, Egemen	Turkey	2006	MP, Foreign Policy Advisor to the PM
Baillie, Charles A.	Canada	2002	Chairman & CEO, TD Bank Financial Group
Bakoyannis, Dora	Greece	2003	Mayor of Athens
Balkenende, Jan Peter	Netherlands	2008	Prime Minister
Bell, George W.	US	1991//1992/1993	Lehman Brothers (CFR)/Former Under Secretary of State

Balls, Ed	UK	2001/2002/2003/2006	Chief Economic Advisor, HM Treasury/Economic Sec to the Treasury
Prof Balsemao, Francisco Pinto	Portugal	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/19 96/1997/1998/1999/2000/2001 /2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2 07/2008	Academic/Chairman, Soujournal-aurl; Former Prime Minister/Professor Lisbon University
Banck, Maja (Sec. Bilderberg mtgs)	Netherlands	1991/1993/1994	Exec Sec Bilderberg Mtgs
Barnavie, Eile	Israel	2004	Dept of General History, Tel-Aviv University
Barnevik, Percy	Sweden	1992/1993/1994/1995/1996/19 97/1998/1999/2000/2001	President & CEO, ABB Asea Brown Boveri/Chairman, Investor AB
Barnier, Michel	France	2006/2007	Former Minister for Foreign Affairs; Corporate VP, Merieux Alliance
Barone, Michael	US	2007	Senior Writer, US News & World Report
Barraso, Jose Manuel Durao	Portugal	1994/2003/2005	Minister for Foreign Affairs/Prime Minister/President, European Commission
Barrato, Antonio Prof	Portugal	1992	Professor of Sociology, University of Lisbon, Former Minister fo Agriculture
Bartenstein, Martin	Austria	2006/2007	Minister of Economics and Labour
Bartley, Robert L.	US	1991/1997	Editor Wall St Journal (CFR)
Bassett, Isabel	Canada	1997	Parliamentary Asst. to the Minister of Finance, Govt of Ontario
Bavarez, Nicolas	France	2007/2008	Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP
Bayar, Mehmet A.	Turkey	2003	Deputy Chairman of the DYP (True Path Party)
Bayar, Ugur	Turkey	1998	Chairman, Privatization Administration
Bayh, Evan	US	1999	Senator (Indiana)
Becker, Erich	Austria	2003	Chairman & CEO, VA Technologies AG
Beleza, Leonor	Portugal	2007	President, Champalimaud Foundation
Belfrage, Erik	Sweden	2005	Senior VP, SEB
Belot, Jean de	France	2002	Editor-in-Chief, La Figaro
Benedetti, Rodolfo de	Italy	2003/2004	MD, CIR SpA
Bernabe, Franco	Italy	1994/2000/2004/2005/2006/20 07	MD, Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi/Special Representative of Italy/Vice Chairman, Rothschild Europe
Bennet, Douglas J.	US	1994	Asst Sec. of State for International Organisations
Benschop, Dick	Netherlands	2000	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Bentson, Lloyd	US	1992/1995/1996/1997	Former Sec of Treasury
Beregovoy, Pierre	France	1992	Prime Minister
Berger, Samuel R.	US	1997	Asst to the President for NSA
Bergesen, Finn Jr	Norway	2001	Admin Director, NHO (Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry)
Bergh, Maarten A. van den	Netherlands	1997/2002	Group MD, Royal Dutch/Shell
Bergsten, Fred C.	US	1997/2002	Director, Institute for Economic Affairs
Bergstrom, Hans	Sweden	1994	Political editor; Dagens Nyheter
Bernabe, Franco	Italy	1996/1998/2001/2008	MD & CEO, Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi/MD, ENI S.p.A./Chairman, Franco Bernabe Group; International Board of the World Economic Forum; Special representative to the Balkans;
Bernanke, Ben S.	US	2008	Board member of the Petes Center for Peace
Bernander, John G.	Norway	2002	Chairman, Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System
Bernstein, Richard	US	1997	DG, Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation
Bertram, Christoph	Germany	1991/1992/1994/1995/1996/19 98	Book critic, New York Times Editor/Diplomatic Correspondent, Die Zeit; former director, International Institute for Strategic Studies/
Betz, Hans-Georg	Germany	2000	Director, Foundation Science & Policy
Prof Beugel, Ernest van der	Netherlands	1991/1993/1994/1997/19 98	Visiting Professor, European Studies, Columbia and New York Academic/Emeritus Professor International Relations, Leiden University, Former hon Sec-Gen of Bilderberg Europe/Canada
Beyzati, Selhattin	Turkey	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/19 96/1997	Director of Companies
Beytout, Nicolas	France	2001/2003/2004/2005	Editor-in-chief, Les Echos
Biedenkopf, Kurt	Germany	1992	Prime Minister of Saxony
Bierbaum, Rosina M.	US	2007	Professor & Dean, School of Natural Resources and the Environment, Univ of Michigan
Bildi, Carl	Sweden	1992/1993/1996/1997/1999/20 00/2006/2007/2008	Prime Minister/International The High Representative/MP/ Special envoy of the Sec Gen of the Balkans, UN/Former PM/Minister for Foreign Affairs
Bilgin, Dinc	Turkey	1997	Chairman, Sabah Yayincilik A.S.
Birand, Mehmet	Turkey	2007	Columist
Bishara, Ahmad E.	Kuwait	2003	Sec Gen of Kuwait's liberal, National Democratic Party
Bjarnason, Bjorn	Iceland	1991/1993/1995	Politician/MP/Minister of Culture & Education
Bjerregaard, Ritt	Denmark	1991/1995	Politician/Commissioner, European Community
Black, Conrad	Canada	1991/1993/1994/1996/1997/19 98/1999/2000/2001/2002/2003	Chairman, Hollinger/Telegraph Group

Prof Blackwill, Robert	US	1991	Harvard Academic (CFR)
Blair, Tony	UK	1993	Shadow Home Secretary
Blankfein, Lloyd C.	US	2007	Chairman & CEO, Goldman Sachs
Blofeldt, Antti	Finland	2008	Senior Editorial Writer, Helsingin Sanomat
Bokros, Lajos	Hungary	1997	Senior Advisor, The World Bank
Bolkenstein, Frits	Netherlands	1996/2002/2003/2004	Parliamentary Leader VVD/Commissioner, European Commission/Internal Markets Commissioner
Bolton, John R.	US	2003	Under Sec. of State for Arms Control and International Security
Bon, Michel	France	2001/2003	Chairman & CEO, France Telecom
Bonino, Emma	INT	1998	Member of the European Commission
Boot, Max	US	2004	(CFR); Features Editor, WSJ
Borel, Daniel	Switzerland	2004	Chairman, Logitech International SA
Borg, Anders	Sweden	2007	Minister of Finance
Borges Antonio	Portugal	1997/2002	Dean, INSEAD/Vice Chairman & MD, Goldman Sachs
Borjoli, Ferruccio de	Italy	2004	CEO, RCS Libri
Boskin, Michael	US	1991	Economic Advisor to the President
Bosse, Stine	Denmark	2008	CEO, TygVesta
Bottelier, Piefer P.	France	1996	Chief of Mission, The World Bank, Resident Mission in China
Boucher, Eric Le	France	1999	Chief Editor, International, Le Monde
Boyer, Umit N.	Turkey	2006/2007	Member of the Board, Boyner Holding
Boyd, Charles G.	US	1999/2002/2007	Exec Director, National Security Study Group/President & CEO, Business Excess for National Security
Brady, Connor	Ireland	1993	Editor, Irish Times
Brathwaite, Rudric	UK	1993	Foreign Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister
Brands, Maarten C.	Netherlands	1992	Professor of Modern and Theoretical History, Univ of Amsterdam
Bredow, Vendelin von	UK	2006/2007/2008	Paris Correspondent, The Economist/Business Correspondent, The Economist
Bremmer, Ian	US	2007	President Eurasia Group
Bressand, Albert	France	2006	Professor and MD designate, Centre for Energy, Marine Transportation and Public Policy, Columbia Univ
Breuel, Birgit	Germany	1991/1992/1994	Businessman/Chairman, Treuhandanstalt
Brinkman, Eico	Netherlands	1993	Parliamentary leader of the CDA (Christian Democrats)
Brittan, Leon	UK	1992/1998	Vice President of the European Commission
Brock, Gunnar	Sweden	2004	CEO, Atlas Copco AB
Brodie, Ian	Canada	2008	Chief of Staff, Prime Minister's Office
Bronner, Oscar	Austria	2005/2006/2007/2008	Publisher & Editor, Der Standard
Brown, Gordon	UK	1991	Opposition MP
Browne, John P	UK	1996/1997/1998/2004/2005/2006	CEO/BP Petroleum
Bruguere, Jean-Louis	France	2003	First VP, Justice Dept
Prof Brundtland, Ama Ola	Norway	1991	Academic
Brunton, John	Ireland	1998/2000/2001	Leader of Fina Gael/Former Prime Minister, Vice Chair of the EPP and CDI
Bryan, John	US	1995/1996/1997	Chairman & CEO, Sara Lee
Buchanan, Robin W. T.	UK	1997/1998/2000	Senior Partner, Bain & Co
Buckley, William Jr	US	1996	Editor-at-Large, National Review
Burda, Hubert	Germany	1997/1998/2001/2003/2005/2006/2007	Chairman, Burda Media/Publisher & CEO, Burda Media Holding GmbH
Burgmans, Antony	Netherlands	2001/2004	CEO Unilever NV/Chairman, Unilever NV
Builer, Hugo	Switzerland	1997	Ed-in-Chief, Neue Zürcher Zeitung
Butts, Gerald	Canada	2007	Principal Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister of Ontario
Byrne, David	Ireland	2005	WHO Special Envoy on communicable diseases; former Commissioner, European Commission
Cadieux, Jean Louis	Belgium	1991	ECC Foreign Affairs
Camus, Philippe	France	2003/2004/2005	CEO, European Aeronautics Defence and Space Company (EADS)
Candar, Cengiz	Turkey	2007	Journalist, Referans
Cantoni, Giampiero	Italy	1991	Banker
Caracciolo, Lucio	Italy	2004	Director, Limes Geographical Review
Cameiro, Roberto	Portugal	1992	Former Education Minister/consultant to World Bank
Carras, Costa	Greece	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/1996/1997	Director of Companies
Carrilho, Maria	Portugal	1995	Prof of Sociology
Lord Carrington, Peter (Chairman)	UK	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/1996/1997/1998	MP/Banker/former Sec Gen NATO/former Chairman, Chrises
Cartellieri, Ulrich	Germany	1993/1996/1997	Member of the Board of Managing Directors, Deutsche Bank AG
Cary, Anthony J.	INT	2003	Head of Chris Patten's (European Commissioner for Enlargement) cabinet, EU
Castries, Henri de	France	2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007	Chairman, AXA

Cavallini, Luigi G.	Italy	07/2008	Permanent Representative to the European Union
Cavass, Felicia	France	1991	
Cebrian, Juan L.	Spain	1993/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	VC, Sogecable SA; CEO, PRISA
Cem, Ismail	Turkey	1998	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Cemal, Hasan	Turkey	2004	Senior Columnist, Milliyet Newspaper
Cerretti, Adriana	Turkey	1995	
Cetin, Hikmet	Turkey	1995/2007	
Chafee, Sen. John N.	US	1991/1992	Dep Prime Minister/Former Minister for Foreign Affairs/Former NATO Senior Rep for Afghanistan
Chalabi, Ahmad	Iraq	2006	Rhode Island Senator (CFR)(TC)
Chastelain, John A.D. de	Canada	1999	Former Deputy PM
Chretien, Jean	Canada	1996	Chairman, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning
Chretien, Raymond A.J.	Canada	1998	Prime Minister
Chubas, Anatoli B.	Russia	1998	Ambassador to the US
Cipolletta, Innocenza	Italy	1994	Former Vice Prime Minister; Chairman RAO EES
Claes, Willy	Belgium	1994/1995/2003	DG, Confindustria
Clark, Edmund	Canada	2006/2008	Minister of Foreign Affairs/Sec Gen NATO/Minister of State
Clarke, Kenneth	UK	1993/1998/1999/2000/2003/2004/2006/2007/2008	President & CEO, TD Bank Financial Group
Clemet, Kristin	Norway	1999/2008	Chancellor/Home Secretary/MP/Deputy Chairman, BAT
Clinton, Bill D.	US	1991	Dep Dir Gen, Confederation of Business and Industry/Managing Director, Civita
Colakoglu, Nuri	Turkey	2000	Governor Arkansas (CFR) (TC)
Collins, Timothy C.	US	2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	Chairman and CEO, NTV
Collomb, Bertrand	France	08	Senior MD and CEO, Riplewood Holdings LLC (TC)
Comper, Tony	Canada	1991/1992/1996/1997/1998/19	Chairman & CEO, Lafarge/Director, Total Finar; Atco; Supervisory Board, Allianz;
Cope, Jean-Francois	France	99/2000/2001/2002/2003/2005	Director, Credit Commercial de France
Corrigan, E.Gerald	US	2006	President & CEO, BMO Financial Group
Cortines, Ramon C.	US	2003	Sec of State - relations with Parliament; Govt. spokesperson
Corzine, Jon	US	1994	Former President, Federal Reserve Bank of New York
Costa, Antonio	Portugal	1994	Chancellor, New York City Board of Education
Costopolou, Yannis S	Greece	1995/1996/1997/1999/2003/2004	Chairman, Goldman Sachs
Cotti, Flavio	Switzerland	04	
Couchepin, Pascal	Switzerland	2008	Mayor of Lisbon
Coulumbis, Ted	Canada	1993	Chairman, Credit Bank
Courinho, Vasco Pereira	Portugal	1994/1995/1996/1997	Federal Councilor and minister for foreign affairs
Couris, Kenneth S.	Canada	2001/2002/2004/2005	Minister of Economic Affairs; Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Public Economy/Head of Home Affairs
Cox, Pat	Ireland	1995	President, Greek Foreign Policy Institute
Craddock, Percy	UK	1998	Chairman, IPC Holdings
Cranbome, Robert M.J.C.	UK	1993/1998/2001	First VP, Deutsche Bank Capital Markets Asia/VP for Asia, Goldman Sachs; International Research Council
Cravinho, Joao Cardona G.	Portugal	2001	President of the Liberal Democrat Group (ELDR), European Parliament
Crawley, Phillip	Canada	1997	Former Ambassador to China; former foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister
Cristodoulou, Efthymios	Greece	1999	Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords
Crocker, Chester A.	US	2006	Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Territorial Admin
Crockett, Andrew	INT	1991	Publisher & CEO, The Globe and Mail
Cromme, Gerhard	Germany	2000	James R. Schlesinger Professor of Strategic Studies
Cross, Devon	Canada	1995	GM, Bank for International Settlements
Cuthero, Jose	Canada	1995	Chairman, Thyssen Krupp AG
Daele, Frans Van	Belgium	2007	Head, Donner Canadian Foundation
Dahlback, Claes	Sweden	2003	Sec Gen, Western Euro Union
Dahrendorf, Ralf	UK	2002	Permanent Rep of Belgium to NATO
Dakira, Charles H.	US	1991	Chairman, Investor AB
Prof. Dam, Kenneth W.	US	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/19	Member, House of Lords; former Warden, St Antony's College, Ox ford
Daschle, Thomas A.	US	96/1997/2001/2002	Assistant Secretary of International Affairs
David, George A.	Greece	1996/1997/1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006	IBM (CFR)/Max Dam Professor of American and Foreign Law, Univ Chicago; Former Deputy Secretary of State/Deputy Sec designate at the US Department of Treasury

David-Weill, Michel A. Davignon, Etienne	US Belgium	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/19 96/1997/1998/1999/2000/2001 /2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2 007/2008	Chairman, Lazard Freres & Co Chairman, Societe Generale de Belgique; former vice chairman of the Commission of the EC (Hon Chairman Bilderberg Group)/Vice Chairman, Suez-Tractebel
Davis Lynn Day, Robert Deatove, Richard Dehaene, Jean-Luc Dehesa, Guillermo de la De-lamaruz, Jean Delorme, Jean-Claude Delpeche, Therese Dervis, Kemal Descoing, Richard Desmarais, Paul Jr Deulaman, Aage Deutch, John M. Devedjian, Patrick Diamantopolou, Anna Diamondouros, Nikiforos P. Dicke, Gunther F.W. Dieter, Werner H. Dilov-Simonsen, Per Dinh, Viet D. Dion, Stephane Divedjian, Patrick Doctors van Leeuwen, Arthur W.H. Dodd, Christopher Donilon, Thomas E. Domest, Francois Dopfner, Mathias Draghi, Mario Duna, Cem Dunkel, Arthur Dyson, Esther Eaton, Fredrik S. Ederer, Brigitte Edwards, John Edwards, N. Murray Ehrooth, Georg Eisenhower, Susan Eizanstat, Stuart Eldrup, Anders	US US UK Belgium Spain Canada France Turkey France Canada Denmark US France Greece Germany Germany Norway US Canada France US US Belgium Germany Italy Turkey UN US Canada Austria US Canada Finland US US Denmark US Italy Denmark Germany Germany Switzerland Turkey Turkey Norway Turkey Finland US	1995 1992 2007 2004 1993 1995 1991 2002/2004/2006/2007 2006 2006/2008 1991/1992 1998/2000/2002 2006 2004/2005/2007/2008 2000 1991 1991 1991 2002 1998 1993 2005 1999/2000/2001 1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/20 03/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008 1997 2005/2006/2007 1994/1995/2001/2002/2003/20 04/2008 2007 2000/2007 1996 2008 2004 1994 2001 2002 2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/20 06/2007/2008 1991/1992/1993 2005/2006/2007/2008 1993/1994/1995/1996/1997/19 98	Under Sec for Arms Control and Intl Security Affairs Chairman, Trust Company of the West Master, Pembroke College, Cambridge Former Prime Minister; Mayor of Vilvoorde CEO, Banco Pastor VP, Fed Council Econ Min Switzerland Director for Strategic Affairs, Atomic Energy Agency Minister of Economic Affairs/MP; former senior World Bank official/Administrator, UNDP Institut d'Etudes Politiques Chairman and co-CEO, Power Corporation of Canada Editor in Chief, Berlingske Tidende Prof MIT; Former DG CIA; former Deputy Sec of Defence MP MP; former European Commissioner for Social Affairs National Ombudsman Businessman Businessman Asst AG for Office of Policy Development Queens Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs MP (Capital UDP-Hauts de Seine) Chairman, Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets Senator (Connecticut) Partner; O'Melveny & Myers; former Asst Sec of State, and Chief of Staff; US Dept of State/ Senior VP, Gen Counsel and Sec, FannieMae (CFR)/Partner, O'Melveny & Myers Former Minister of Defense; Mayor of Brussels; MP CEO, Axel Springer AG DG, Ministry of the Treasury/President, Economic and Financial Committee, Council EU/ Vice Chairman and MD, Goldman Sachs International/Governor, Banca d'Italia Former Ambassador to the EU UN ATTI/Director, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade/MP Chairman, Edventure Holdings Inc Chairman, Eaton's of Canada Stemens AG Osterreich Senator (North Carolina); Democratic Presidential Candidate Vice Chairman, Candian Natural Resources Limited President & CEO, Metra Group Asst Director, Tufts Univ; President, The Eisenhower World Affairs Institute Covington & Burling Permanent Sec, Ministry of Finance; Danish Govt Rep to SAS/Chairman, Danish Oil & Gas Consortium /Chairman, DONG gas company former US Ambassador/Dean Emeritus, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy Vice Chairman, Fiat SpA MP; Former Minister for Foreign Affairs; co-founder, Council of Baltic Sea States/Chairman, Liberal Party
Engelen-Keter, Ursula Engholm, Bjorn Erber, Fritz Ercel, Gazi Ergin, Sedat Erik, G. Erguder, Ustun Erkko, Aatos Espy, Mike	Germany Germany Switzerland Turkey Turkey Norway Turkey Finland US	1998 1991 1991 1996/1997/1999/2001 1999 1993 1991 1991	Deputy Chairman, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund Head of the German Social Democratic Party Businessman Governor, Bank of Turkey/former Governor; Merkez Bank Ankara Bureau Chief, Hurriyet MD and CEO, Braathens SAFE Rector, Bosphorus University Publisher Secretary of Agriculture

Esbey, William T.	US	1992	Chairman and CEO, Sprint
Fabus, Laurent	France	1994	MP; former Prime Minister; former Chairman of Parliament
Farah, Martha J.	US	2008	Director, Center for Cognitive Neuroscience
Farrant, Stephan	Switzerland	1991	Businessman
Federspiel, Ulrik	Denmark	2004/2007	Ambassador to the US/Perm Sec of State for Foreign affairs
Feinstein, Diane	US	2001	Ex-Mayor San-Francisco
Feith, Douglas J.	US	1996/1998/1999/2001/2002/2003/2005/2006/2007/2008	Under Sec for Policy, Dept of Defense
Feldstein, Martin S.	US	1996/1998/1999/2001/2002/2003/2005/2006/2007/2008	President, National Bureau of Economic Research (CFR)/Prof of Economics, Harvard Univ
Fell, Anthony S.	Canada	2003	Chairman, RBC Dominion Securities
Ferreira, Elisa Guimaraes	Portugal	2008	MP; former Minister of Planning
Fischer, Josecha	Germany	2002	Former Minister of Foreign Affairs
Fischer, Stanley	INT	1996/1998/1999	First Deputy MD, IMF
Fischler, Franz	INT	2001	EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development
Floch-Prigent, Loik Le	France	1992	Chairman, Societe Nationale Elf-Aquitaine
Flood, A.L.	Canada	1996	Chairman, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
Florio, James J.	US	1994	Former Governor of New Jersey
Floris, Majlars A.	Netherlands	1993	Chairman of the Board, Unilever
Ford, Jr., Harold E.	US	2008	Vice Chairman, Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc.
Ford, William C. Jr	US	2005	Chairman & CEO, Ford Motor Company
Foley, Thomas S.	US	1995/2002	Former Speaker of the House of Rep's/Partner, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld
Forester, Lynn	US	1998	President & CEO, FirstMark Holdings
Forstmoser, Peter	Switzerland	2008	Professor for Civil, Corporation and Capital Markets Law, University of Zurich
Fortescue, Adrian	INT	2002	DG, Justice and Internal Affairs, European Commission
Franco, Bernabe	Italy	1999	MD & CEO, Telecom Italia
Frchette, Louise	INT	2000	Dep Sec-Gen, UN
Prof Freedman, Lawrence	UK	1991	Academic
Freeman, Chas W. Jr	US	1996	Former Asst Sec Defense for International Security, Chairman, Projects International Associates
Frehner, Walter	US	1995	Chairman, Swiss Bank Corp
Fredman, Thomas	US	1995/2003	Foreign Affairs journalist, New York Times
Fresco, Paolo	Italy	1999/2000	Chairman, Fiat
Friedman, Stephen	US	1993/1994	Chairman, Goldman Sachs
Fruin, David	Can	1997/2000/2002	Political Commentator/American Enterprise Institute; former Special Asst to President Bush
Furland, Richard M.	US	1992	Director, Bristol-Myers Squibb
Gadash, Orrit	US	1997/1998	Chairman, Ban & Co
Gakleri, Gabriele	Italy	2004	Chairman, Mediobanca
Gallagher, Paul	Ireland	2008	Attorney General
Galvao Teles, Jose M.	Portugal	1997	Lawyer, Member of the Social Party; Member of the Council of State
Galvin, John R.	US	1992/1993	Dist Prof of Nat Security Studies, US Military Academy; Former Supreme Allied Commander Europe SHAPE
Garton Ash, Timothy	UK	1996	Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford
Gates, Melinda	US	2004	Co-founder, Gates Foundation; wife of Bill Gates
Geithner, Timothy F.	US	2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	President, Federal Reserve Bank of New York
Gener, Imregul	Turkey	2005	Board member, Global Investment Holding
Gerber, Fritz	US	1995	Chairman & CEO, Hoffman La Roche
Gergen, David	US	1992/1995	Former advisor to Clinton & Reagan; fellow, Aspen Institute
Gergrain, Jean-Louis	France	1997/1998/2002/2003	Deputy to the Chairman Strategic Coordination, Matra Hachette/Exec VP, Strategic Coordination, EADS
Gerstner, Louie V.	US	1994/1997	Chairman, IBM
Gezgin Eris, Meral	Turkey	1999/2004	President IKV (Economic Development Foundation)
Giazzi, Francesco	Italy	1996/2002/2003/2006/2007/2008	Professor of Economics, Bocconi Univ/Advisor, World Bank and European Central Bank
Gigot, Paul A.	US	08	Washington Columnist, WSJ/Editorial Page Editor, WSJ
Gladly, Eival	Israel	2005/2006/2007	Strategic Advisor to PM Sharon/CEO, Portland Trust Israel
Giscard d'Estaing, Valery	France	2003	French President 1974-81; Chairman of the Convention on the Future of Europe
Gjedrem, Sven	Norway	1995/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	Governor, Central Bank of Norway
Gleeson, Dermot	Ireland	2001	Attorney General of Ireland/Chairman designate, AIB/Chairman, AIB Group
Glickman, Dan	US	2008	Former Sec of Agriculture; Partner, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld LLP
Godwin, Harold	Netherlands	1999	CEO, TomTom
Godsoe, Peter C.	Canada	2008	Chairman & CEO, Bank of Nova Scotia
Gogus, Zeynep	Turkey	2008	Journalist; Founder, EurActiv.com.tr
Goldschmidt, Pierre	Belgium	2006	Former IAEA Deputy DG and former Head of the Department of Safeguards

Gooensens, John J.	Belgium	1992/1995	CEO, Belgium
Gonensay, Emre	Turkey	1992/1996/2007	Minister for Foreign Affairs/Professor of Economics, Isik Univ,
Godlieb, Allen	Canada	1995/1996	Former Canadian Ambassador to US
Gould, Philip	UK	2003	Public Relations Advisor to PM Blair
Gouveia, Tereza Parricio	Portugal	2000	MP (PSD)
Graham, Donald E.	US	1999/2000/2001/2004/2005/2008	Publisher, The Washington Post/Chairman & CEO, Washington Post Co.
Grahame, Katharine	US	1991/1994	CEO Washington Post (CFR, TC)/Chairman of the Exec Committee, Washington Post
Grave, Frank H.G. de	Netherlands	1999	Minister of Defense
Greenberg, Maurice	US	1991	CEO, AIG Insurance (CFR, TC)
Greenspan, Alan	US	2002	Chairman, Federal Reserve
Grierson, Ronald	UK	1992/1998	Former Vice Chairman, GEC
Griffin, Anthony G.S.	Canada	1991/1993/1996	Director of Companies/Hon. Chairman and Director, Guardian Group
Griffiths of Floresflich, Lord	UK	1992	Advisor Goldman Sachs/ex-head PMs Policy Unit
Grilo, Eduardo C. Marcal	Portugal	1999	Minister of Education
Groenink, Rijkman W.J.	Netherlands	2002	Chairman, ABN AMRO Bank N.V.
Gros-Pietro, Gian Maria	Italy	2001	Chairman, ENI S.p.A.
Grossman, Marc	US	1998/2007	Asst Sec, US Department of State/Vice Chair, The Cohen Group
Grydeland, Bjorn T.	Norway	2005	Ambassador to the EU
Gustasson, Stan	Sweden	1991	Businessman
Guetta, Bernard	France	1998	Ed-in-Chief, Le nouvel Observateur
Gusenbauer, Alfred	Austria	2002/2006/2007	MP, Chairman, SDP/Parliamentary leader SPO/Federal Chancellor
Gustafsson, Sten	Sweden	1992	Chair, AB Astra/Ex-Chair Saab-Scania AB
Gutierrez, Antonio	Portugal	2005	Former PM; President, Socialist International
Haas, Richard N.	US	2003/2004/2005/2007	Director, Office of Policy Planning Staff, State Dept./President, CFR
Habib, Philip C.	US	1992	Sr Research Fellow, Hoover Institute; former Under Sec of State
Hadjieleftheriadis	Greece	1993	VP, Elcticon Corp
Hageel, Chuck	US	1999/2000/2001	Senator (Nebraska)
Hague, William	UK	1998	Leader of the Opposition
Hager, William	US	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/1996/1997/1998/1999/2000/2001	Hon Sec Gen for Europe and Canada/Professor of Public Economics, Leiden Univ
Prof Halberstadt V. (Hon Sec Gen for Canada & Europe)	Netherlands	2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	MP
Halefoglu, Vhit	Turkey	1991	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Prof. Halman, Talat S.	Turkey	1993	Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Literature, NYU
Hamalainen, Sirkka	Finland	1994	Chairman, Bank of Finland
Hambro, Christian	Norway	2000	DG, Research Council of Norway
Hamilton, Lee H.	US	1997	Congressman (Indiana)
Hampel, Erich	Austria	2000	Chairman, Creditanstalt-Bankverein
Hannay, David	UK	1995/1998	UK Ambassador to UN/Prime Ministers Personal Envoy for Turkey
Hansen, Jean-Pierre	Belgium	2004/2005/2006	Chairman, Suez Tractebel SA
Harmaja, Jukka	Finland	1995	CEO, Enzo Gutzeit Oy
Harper, Stephen	Canada	2003	Leader of the Opposition
Harris, Michael	Canada	1996	Premier of Ontario
Hart, Peter D.	US	2007	Peter D. Hart Research Associates
Haselsteiner, Hans Peter	Austria	2005	Bauholding Strabag SE (Societas Europea)
Hausmann, Helmut	Germany	1996	MP, Free Democratic Party
Healy, Denis	UK	1992	Former Defense Secretary and Finance Minister
Hedekman, Hans	Switzerland	1995	Vice Chairman, Union Bank of Switzerland
Hedegaard, Connie	Denmark	2005	Minister for the Environment
Hedelius, Tom C.	Sweden	1999/2001	Chairman, Svenska Handelsbanken/Vice Chairman, Ericsson
Heemskerck, Frank	Netherlands	2007	Minister of Foreign Trade
Hegge, Per Egil	Norway	1999	Editor, Aftenposten
Heikensten, Lars	Sweden	2004	Governor, Swedish Central Bank
Heinahoima, Eero	Finland	2006	Minister of Finance
Heinonen, Ollie-Pekka	Finland	2001	Minister of Transport & Communications
Henderson, Nicholas	UK	1994	Former Ambassador to Poland, Germany, France & US
Herkestrater, Cor A.J.	UK	1994	Chairman, Royal Dutch Shell
Hermelin, Paul	Netherlands	2007	CEO, CAP Gemini
Hertog, Roger	France	2003	Vice-Chairman, Alliance Capital Management
Heyerdahl, d.y., Jens P.	US	2001	President & CEO, Orkala ASA
	Norway		

Hills, Carla A.	US	1993/1998/1999/2002	Chairman & CEO, Hills & Co
Hogeland, James	US	1992/1993/1994/1995/1996/19	Senior Foreign Correspondent, Washington Post/Associate Editor
Hoegh, Westye	Norway	97/1998/1999/2001	Chairman, Leif Hoegh & Co AS; Chair, Norwegian Shipowners
Hoeven, Cees H. van der	Netherlands	1998/2001	President, Royal Ahold/Koninklijke Ahold nv
Hoge, James F. jr	US	1998	Editor, Foreign Affairs
Hogg, Christopher	UK	1998	Chairman, Reuters Group
Holbrook, Richard C.	US	1995/1996/1997/1998/1999/20	Asst Sec of State for Europe and Canada/Vice Chairman, Perseus; former Director, CFR
		04/2005/2006/2007/2008	
Hommen, Jan H.M.	Netherlands	2007	Chairman, Reed Elsevier
Honim, Jaakko	Denmark	1991	Former Ambassador to US
Honkapohja, Seppo	Finland	2008	Member of the Board, Bank of Finland
Hoop Scheffer, Jaap G de	Netherlands	2003/2005/2008	Minister for Foreign Affairs/Sec Gen, NATO
Horta e Costa, Miguel	Portugal	1998	VP, Portugal Telecom
House, Karen Elliott	US	1992	VP International, Dow Jones/ex-Foreign Editor, Wall Street Journal
Hubbard, Allan B.	US	2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/20	President, E&A Industries/Asst to the President for Economic Policy; Director of the NEC
		08	
Hubbard, Glenn R.	US	2003	Russell L. Carson Professor of Economics and Finance, Columbia Univ.
Hunkin, John	Canada	2001	Chairman & CEO, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
Hunter, Robert E.	US	1994	US Representative to NATO
Hutchison, Kay Bailey	US	2000/2002	Senator (Texas)
Hutton, Will	UK	1997	Editor, The Observer
Huyghebaert, Jan	Belgium	1993/1994/1996/1997/1999/20	Chairman, Almanijs-Kreditbank Group/Chairman, KBC Group
		00/2001/2002/2005/2008	
Ihamuotila, Jaako	Finland	1994	Chairman, Neste Corp
Ilder, Douglas	US	1991	Governor of Virginia
Itonemi, Jaako	Finland	1992/1993/1994/1995/1996/19	MD, Centre for Finnish Business and Policy Studies; Former Ambassador to the US
		97	
Imbert, Claude	France	1991	Editor, Le Point
Isaacs, Walter	US	2004	President & CEO
Ischinger, Wolfgang	Germany	1998/1999/2002/2008	Political Director; Foreign Office/State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Ambassador to the US
Issing, Omar H.C.	Germany	1997/1998/1999	Member of the Board, Deutsche Bundesbank/Member of the Exec Board, European Central Bank
Jaans, Pierre	Luxembourg	1994	GM, Institut Monetaire Luxembourgeois
Jaaniskainen, Atte	Finland	2007	Director of News, Sport & Regional Planning, YLE
Jacobi, Mary Jo	UK	1997	Head of Public Affairs, HSBC Holdings; former US Asst Sec of Commerce
Jacobs, Kenneth	US	2007/2008	Deputy Chairman, Head of Lazard US, Lazard Freres & Co LLC
Jaffre, Philippe	France	1992/1994/1995	Chairman & CEO, Elf Aquitaine
Jakobson, Max	Finland	1994	Consultant; former Ambassador to UN and Sweden
James, Charles A.	US	2002	Asst AG for Antitrust
Jankowitsch, Peter	Austria	1991/1992/1993/1994	ECC Integration/Joint Parliamentary Committee Austria EC; Former Foreign Minister/Ambassador to the OECD
Janow, Merr L.	US	2004	Prof, International Economic Law and Affairs, Columbia Univ; member of appellate body, WTO
Janssen, Daniel	Belgium	1995/2000	Chair, Solvay
Jeker, Robert A.	Switzerland	1993	MD of the Stephen Schmidheiny Holdings
Jenkins, Michael	UK	1998	Vice-Chairman, Dresdner Kleinwort Benson
Jennings, Peter	US	1995	Anchor, ABC News
Jensen, Siv	Norway	2006	MP
Job, Peter	UK	1996	CEO, Reuters Holdings
Joße, Josef	Germany	1993/2006	Foreign Editor, Sueddeutsche Zeitung/Publisher-Editor, Die Zeit
Johnsson, Leif	Sweden	2000/2001	President & CEO, Volvo
Johnson, James A.	US	1998/2000/2001/2002/2003/20	Chairman & CEO, FannieMae/Chairman & CEO, Johnson Capital Partners/Vice Chairman, Perseus LLC
		05/2006/2007/2008	
Johnston, Bennett	US	1991	Senator Louisiana
Johnston, Donald J.	INT	1997	Sec-General OECD
Johnstone, Tom	Sweden	2008	President and CEO, AB SKF
Prof Jonung, Las	Sweden	1991	Academic
Jordan, Vernon	US	1991/1993/1994/1995/1996/19	Attorney (CFR, TC)/Senior Partner, Akin Gump Strause Hauser & Feld/MD, Lazard Freres & Co
		97/1998/1999/2000/2001/2002	
		/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2	
		08	
Jospin, Lionel	France	1996	First Sec of the Socialist Party; former Ministre d'Etat
Jouyet, Jean-Pierre	France	2008	Minister of European Affairs

Kagan, Robert	US	1998/2006	Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Kalecky, Anatole	UK	1999	Associate Editor, The Times/Editor at Large, The Times
Kamov, Nikolai	Bulgaria	1995	MP
Kann, Peter	US	1998	Chair & CEO, Dow Jones, Wall Street Journal
Karamanlis, Kostas A.	Greece	1996	Leader of the Opposition
Karner, Dietrich	Austria	1991	Chairman, Erste Allgemeine-Generall Aktiengesellschaft
Kastrup, Dieter	Germany	2007	Politician
Katainen, Jyrki	Finland	2000	Minister of Finance
Kayhan, Muhurrem	Turkey	2005	Vice-Chairman, Soktas; Former President, Tusiad
Keane, John M.	US	1992	President, GSI; General, US Army, retired
Keersmaecker, Paul de	Belgium	1995	Former Minister of European Affairs
Keitel, Hans Peter	Germany	1993	Chair, Hochtief AG
Kellenberger, Jakob	Switzerland	1992	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs
Kemoullia, Claude de	France	1992	Str Advisor Groupe Paribas/former Chief Representative to UN
Kendall, Donald M.	US	2007	Chairman & CEO, Peptico
Kennedy, Jason	Canada	2007	MP
Kent, Muhtar	US	2006	President & COO, The Coca-Cola Company
Kerdrel, Yves de	France	2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	Editor, Le Figaro
Kerr, John (Baron of Kinlochard)	UK	2003	Director, Shell, Rio Tinto and Scottish American Investment Trust/Deputy Chairman, Royal Dutch Shell
Kielholz, Walter B.	Switzerland	1995	Former Chairman, Credit Suisse; Exec VP, Swiss Re
Kimmet, Rob	US	2006	Director, Lehman Brothers; former Under Sec State for Affairs
Kimsey, James V.	US	1995	Founding CEO & Chairman, AOL Inc
King Carl XVI Gustav of Sweden	Sweden	1995	Royalty
King, Mervyn A.	UK	2003	Deputy Governor, Bank of England
Kirac, Suna	Turkey	1998/1999	Vice Chairman of the Board, Koc Holdings A.S.
Kiraniotis, Yannis	Greece	1997	Dep Minister for Foreign Affairs
Kirkland, Lane	US	1993	President, AFL-CIO
Kissinger, Henry	US	1991/1992/1994/1995/1996/1997/1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	CEO, Kissinger Associates, (CFR, TC)member, Defense Policy Board/member, JP Morgan International Council
Kist, Ewald	Netherlands	2002	Chairman, ING
Kivinen, Olli	Finland	2003	Senior Editor & Columnist, Helsingin Sanomat
Klaeden, Eckart Von	Germany	2007/2008	Foreign Policy Spokesman, CDU/CSU
Klein, Ralph	Canada	1995	Premier of Alberta
Kleinfeld, Klaus	Germany	2005/2007/2008	President & CEO, Siemens AG
Kleiserke, Gerald J.	Netherlands	2002/2006	President & CEO, Phillips
Knape, Ben	Netherlands	1991	Editor
Knight, Andrew	UK	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/1996	Editor, News International/Executive Chairman News International
Koc, Rahmi	Turkey	1994	Chairman, Koc Holdings A.S.
Koc, Mustafa V.	Turkey	2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	Chairman, Koc Holdings A.S.
Kodmani, Bassma	France	2008	Director, Arab Reform Initiative
Koenders, Bert	Netherlands	2004	MP, President, Parliamentary Network of the World Bank
Kohler, Jarl	Finland	1992/1993/1994	President, Finnish Forestry Industries Federation
Kohnstamm, Max	UN	1991/1992/1994/1995/1996/1998	UN/Former Sec Gen, Action Committee for Europe; former President, European University Institute/Senior Consultant, The European Policy Institute
Kok, Wim	Netherlands	1993/2003	Minister of Finance/Deputy Prime Minister/former PM
Kopper, Hilmar	Germany	1991/1992/1994/1995/1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/2003/2005	Spokesman of the Board of MD's, Deutsche Bank/Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Deutsche Bank
Kopnulu, Kemal	Turkey	2006	Founding Chairman, ARI Movement
Korkman, Sixten	Finland	2006	MD, The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy ETIA; Finnish Business and Policy Forum
Koroma, Johannes	Finland	1993	DG, Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers
Korteweg, Pieter	Netherlands	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/1997/1998	Businessman/President and CEO, Robeco Group; Hon Treasurer of Bilderberg Mtgs
Koru, Fehmi	Turkey	2006	Senior Writer, Yeni Safek
Koss, Johann O.	Canada	2006	President & CEO, Right to Play
Kothbauer, Max	Austria	1994/1995/1996/1997	Deputy Chairman, Creditanstalt-Bankverein
Kovanda, Karel	Czechoslovakia	1998	Head of Mission to the Czech Republic to NATO and the WEU
Kovner, Bruce	US	2004/2007	Chairman, Caxton Associates; Chairman, American Enterprise Institute
Kramidiotis, Yannis	Greece	1999	Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs

Krauer, Alex	Switzerland	1991/1992/1995	Businessman/Chair, Ciba Geigy
Krauthammer, Charles	US	2002	Columnist, Washington Post
Kravis, Henry R.	US	1992/1993/1996/1998/2000/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	Founding Partner, Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co
Kravis, Marne-Josée (nee Drouin)	US	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/1996/1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	Senior Fellow, The Hudson Institute/
Kreutzer, Idar	Norway	2007	CEO, Storebrand ASA
Kristol, William	US	1995	Chair, Project for a Republican Future
Kroes, Neelke	INT	2005/2006/2007/2008	Commissioner, European Commission
Krogh, Peter F.	US	1994	Dean, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown Univ.
Kronenburg, Ed	INT	2006	Director of the Private Office, NATO
Krouchner, Bernard	France	2005	Director, "Sante et developpement", CNAM
Kudelski, Andre	Switzerland	2002/2005/2006	Chairman & CEO, Kudelski Group
Kwasniewski, Aleksander	Poland	2008	Former President
Lacharriere, de Marc Ladreit	France	1991/1992	Chair Fimalac
LaFalle, John J.	US	2002	Congressman, New York (Democrat)
Lagayette, Philippe	France	1992	First Deputy Governor, Banque de France
Lamers, Karl	Germany	1995	Foreign Affairs
Lanfalussy, Alexandre (Baron)	Belgium	1992	Bank for International Settlements
Lamont, Norman	UK	1995	Former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Director N.M. Rothschild
Lamy, Pascal	INT	2000/2001/2003/2005	Commissioner, European Commission/European Trade Commissioner/President, Notre Europe
Larsson, Stig	Sweden	1994	President & DG, Swedish Railways
Lank, Kurt	Germany	1991/1996	Auditor/Member of the Board Veba AG
Lauvergon, Anne	France	2006	Chairman, AREVA
Ledeen, Michael A.	US	2005	American Enterprise Institute
Lehtinen, Mirja	Finland	1993/1994	Local organizer Bilderbergs
Lehtomaki, Paula	Finland	2004	Minister of Foreign Trade and Development
Leitner, Wolfgang	Austria	2008	CEO, Andritz AG
Lellouche, Pierre	France	1996/2003	Foreign Affairs Spokesman, Rassemblement pour la Republique/VC, NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Leontvai, Paul	Austria	1993	Director, Austrian International Radio
Leon-Gross, Bernardino	Spain	2006/2007/2008	Sec of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Leschly, Jan	US	1998/1999/2002	CEO SmithKline Beecham/Chairman & CEO, Care Capital LLC
Levy-Lang, Andre	France	1991/1998/2000/2001/2002/2003	Chairman, Banque Paribas
Lewis, Bernard	US	2001	Emeritus Prof of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton Univ (CFR)
Lewis, William W.	US	1997	Director of McKinsey Global Institute
Likonen, Erkki	INT	1999/2005	Member of the EC/Governor and Chairman of the Board, Bank of Finland
Lindh, Anna	Sweden	2003	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Lippens, Maurice	Belgium	2000/2002/2006	Chairman, FORIIS Bank
Lipponen, Paavo	Finland	1998/2000/2001/2003/2004	Prime Minister/Speaker of the Parliament
Livanos, George P.	Greece	1993	Shipping
Lloyd, Ronald S.	Canada	2006	Chairman & CEO, Credit Suisse First Boston
Lopez, Francisco	Portugal	1995	CEO, Argentaria
Lopes, Pedro M. Santana	Portugal	2004	Mayor of Lisbon
Lord, Bernard	Canada	2001	Prime Minister of New Brunswick
Lord, Winston	US	1996	Asst Sec for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Lubbers, Rudi	Netherlands	1991/1992/1994	Prime Minister, President of the EEC
Lundestad, Geir	Norway	2005	Director, Norwegian Nobel Institute; Sec, Norwegian Nobel Committee
Luti, William J.	US	2004/2005/2006/2007	Dep Under Sec of Defense for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs/Special Asst to the President
Lykieroff, Mogens	Denmark	1998/2003/2005/2007	Minister of Finance/Chairman, SDP/MP
Lynch, Kevin G.	Canada	2004	Deputy Minister, Dept of Finance
Lyras, John C.	Greece	1993	Vice Chairman, Union of Greek Shipowners
Mabro, Robert E.	UK	1997	Director, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies
MacDonald, Donald S.	Canada	1993	Senior Partner, McCarthy, Terrault; Former Minister of Finance
MacLaren, Roy	Canada	1992/1994/1999	Minister for International Trade/High Commissioner for Canada in Britain
MacMillan, Margaret	Canada	1998/1999/2001/2003	Editor, International Journal, Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Univ of Toronto/Provost, Trinity College
Maculan, Alexander	Canada	1995	Chair, Maculan Holdings AG
Mandelson, Peter	UK	1999/2008	MP/European Trade Commissioner

Manji, Ishaad	Canada	2005	Author/Founder of "Project Ijtihad"
Manning, Preston	Canada	1998	Leader of the Reform Party
Manos, Stephanos	Greece	2001	MP, Former Minister of National Economy; President of the Liberal Party
Marante, Margarda	Portugal	1996	TV Journalist
Mardin, Serif	Russia	1995	Chair, Islamic Studies, American Univ Washington DC
Margebov, Mikhail V.	Russia	2003	Chairman, Committee for Foreign Affairs, Council of Federation
Margerie, Christophe de	France	2008	CEO, Total
Markstaller, Margrit	Switzerland	1994	
Martelli, Claudio	Italy	1992	Deputy PM and Minister of Justice
Martens, Wilfred	Belgium	1991/1993	Prime Minister/Minister of State, Former Prime Minister
Martin, Paul	Canada	1996	Minister of Finance
Martin, Philip L.	US	1992	Professor of Agricultural Economics, Univ of California at Davis
Martin, Roger	Canada	2008	Dean, Joseph L. Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto
Martins, Guilherme d'Oliviera	Portugal	2001	Minister of Presidency
Martonyi, Janos	Hungary	2008	Professor of International Trade Law; Partner, Baker & McKenzie; Former Minister of Foreign Affairs
Masera, Rainer S.	Italy	1998	DG, IMI S.p.A.
Mathias, Charles McC	US	1991/1992	Attorney, Ex-Senator (CFR)
Mathlock, Jack F.	US	1991/1993/1996	Ambassador to USSR (CFR)/Partner, Jones Day Reavis & Pogue; Former US Senator
Matthews, Jessica Tuchman	US	1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	President, The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CFR)
Mattsson, Bjorn	Finland	1995	CEO, Cullor
Mau, Bruce	Canada	2005	Bruce Mau Design
Maucher, Helmut	Switzerland	1992/1995	Chairman, Nestle
Maynes, Charles	US	1994	Editor, Foreign Policy
Mavsiadt, Philippe	Belgium	1996	Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Trade
McAuliffe, Terry	US	2002	Chairman, Democratic National Committee
McCreavy, Charlie	Ireland	2008	European Commissioner
McDonough, William J.	US	1997/1998/1999/2000/2002/20	President, Federal Reserve Bank of New York/Chairman & CEO, Public Company Accounting Oversight Board/Vice Chairman, Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc.
McDougall, Barbara	Canada	1993	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
McDowell, Michael	Ireland	1992/2007	Chair, Progressive Democrat Party/Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform
McGinn, Richard A.	US	1999	Chairman & CEO, Lucent Technologies
McHenry, Donald F.	US	1996	Research Professor of Diplomacy and International Affairs, Georgetown Univ
McKenna, Frank	Canada	1994/2004/2005/2006/2008	Premier of New Brunswick/Counsel, McInnes Cooper/Ambassador to the US/Dep Chairman, Toronto Dominion
McKillop, Tom	UK	2008	Chairman, The Royal Bank of Scotland Group
McLaughlin, David	US	1994	President, The Aspen Institute
Medish, Mark C.	US	2005/2006	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
Mehlman, Kenneth B.	US	2005	Chairman, Republican National Committee
Melbert, Ad P.W.	Netherlands	1996/2001	Minister for Social Affairs and Employment/Parliamentary Leader PvdA (Labour Party)
Melo, Vasco de	Portugal	1999	Vice Chairman & CEO, Grupo Jose de Melo
Merkel, Angela	Germany	2005	Chairman, CDU; Chairman CDU/CSU-fraction
Merlini, Cesare	Italy	2004	Exec Vice Chairman, Council for the US and Italy (CFR); former Director, Italian Institute for International Affairs
Mestrallet, Gerard	France	1999	Chairman & CEO, Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux
Michelis, Gianni De	Italy	1991	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Micklethwait, John	UK	1996/1998/1999/2000/2001/2003/2005/2007	Business Editor, The Economist/US Editor, The Economist
Miert, Karel van	INT	1993	EC Commissioner
Mignuel, Ramon de	Spain	2001/2002	Sec of State for European Affairs
Miklos, Ivan	Slovak Rpb	2005	Deputy PM and Minister of Finance
Mitchell, Andrea	US	2002	Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent, NBC News
Mitsotakis, Constantine	Greece	1993	Prime Minister
Mitterbauer, Peter	Austria	1997	Chairman, Miba AG
Mityukov, Ihor	Ukraine	1999	Minister of Finance
Moisi, Dominique	France	1999/2002	Dep Director, IFRI
Montjardin, Carlos A.P.V.	Portugal	1991	Businessman
Monks, John	UK	1996	Gen Sec, TUC
Monbrial, de Thierry	France	1991/1992/1993/1994/1995/19	French Institute of International Relations/Professor of Economics, Ecole Polytechnique
		96/1997/2000/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2008	
Prof.Monti, Mario	Italy	1991/1992/1993/1994/1996/19	Academic/Rector and Professor of Economics, Bocconi University, Milan/
		99/2001/2003/2004/2005/2006	European Commissioner for Competition/President, Universita Commerciale Luigi Bocconi

Moore, Mike	INT	/2007/2008	DG, WTO
Morali, Veronique	France	1991	Diplomatic Advisor, Presidency of the Republic
Morel, Pierre	France	1992	Sec of State for Economics and Technology
Mosdorf, Siegmur	Germany	2001	President, Federal reserve Bank of Chicago (CFR)
Moskow, Michael H.	US	2001/2002	Member, European parliament; Vice President, Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport
Moura, Vasco Graca	Portugal	1991/1993/1994	President, Morden & Co/American Friends of the Bilderbergs Inc
Muller, Charles W.	US	2003/2004/2006/2007/2008	CEO, Advanced Strategies & Policy, Microsoft/Chief Research & Strategy Officer, Microsoft Corp
Mundie, Craig J.	Canada	1997/2001/2005	VP, Research & International Relations, Univ of Toronto/Principal and Vice Chancellor, McGill
Munroe-Blum, Heather	Canada	1995	President, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research
Mustard, J. Frase	Norway	1997/2002/2003/2004/2005/20	Chief Executive, Norsk Hydro/Chairman, SAS
Myklebust, Egil	Norway	06/2007/2008	President & CEO, Portugal Telecom
Nabo, Francisco Murteira	Portugal	1999	International Sec, Socialist Party
Nallet, Henri	Finland	2001	Former roving Ambassador of the Arab League; Finance Minister for Palestine Authority
Nashashibi, Mohammed	SR?	1997/1998/1999/2000/2001/20	Deputy Editor, Die Zeit
Nass, Matthias	Germany	03/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	Chair, Parliamentary Group, Austrian Peoples Party
Neisser, Heinrich	Austria	1992	Chairman, QuinetQ, Governor of the BBC; Chairman, Information Assurance Advisory Council
Nemirovskaya, Elena	Russia	2005	ibinary Group
Neville-Jones, Pauline	UK	2004	Minister of Finance
Nickerson, Ken	Canada	2006	President & CEO, Royal Bank of Canada
Nimsto, Sauli V.	Finland	1997	Foreign Trade Minister/Mayor of Lyon
Nixon, Gordon	Canada	2006	President & CEO, PepsiCo
Noir, Michel	France	1991	Chairman & Partner, ECON Management AS
Noovi, Indra K.	US	2004	CEO, BAWAG PSK
Norvik, Harald	Norway	2006	Senator/former Senator (Georgia)
Nowotny, Ewald	Norway	2007	Chairman, National Intelligence Council
Num, Sam	US	1996/1997	Chairman, Communicorp Group
Nyc, Joseph S. Jr	US	2007/2008	Editor in Chief, France Television/CEO, French television and radio world service
O'Brien, Denis	Ireland	2006	Director of National Security Studies, The Hudson Institute; Former Director, National Security Agency
Ockrent, Christine	France	1991/1992/1994/1997/1999	Minister of Foreign Affairs/Chairman, Bank Handlowy W. Warszawa/
Oddson, David	Iceland	1991	Chairman, Central Europe Trust/former Presidential candidate; Leader, Civic Platform
Odum, William E.	US	1994/1995/1996/1997/1998/19	Minister of Trade and Tourism
Olechowski, Andrzej	Poland	99/2001/2003/2004/2005/2006	President & CEO, Nokia Corp/Board member Ford Motor Company; UPM-Kymmene
Oliviera, Francois Faria de	Portugal	1994/1997/1998/1999/2000/20	Minister of Enterprise and Energy; Deputy Prime Minister
Ollila, Jorma	Finland	01/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006	Editor, Valgars? Actuelles
Olofsson, Maud	Sweden	/2007/2008	Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer
Oort, Conrad J. (Treasurer)	France	1991	President & CEO, Union Bank of Switzerland AG
d'Orcival, Francois	UK	2006/2007/2008	Chairman, Centre for International Studies, Univ of Toronto
Osborne, George	Switzerland	2001	EC Mediator, International Conference on former Yugoslavia
Ospel, Marcel	Switzerland	1996	CEO, Koc Holding A.S.
Ostry, Sylvia	Canada	1991	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Owen, David	UK	1991	Prof International Relations and Political Science, Istanbul Bilgi Univ
Ozaydinli, Bulend	Turkey	2002	MP
Ozceri, Ugay	Turkey	1991	Chairman, CONSOB/Member of the Exec Board, European Central Bank/Director, European Central Bank
Ozel, Soli	Turkey	2006	Chief Economist, Middle East & Africa Region, The World Bank
Oztrak, Faik	Turkey	2008	Minister of Trade
Padoa-Schioppa, Tommaso	Italy	1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/20	Journalist, La Repubblica
Page, John M. Jr	US	03/2004/2005/2006/2008	Spokesman for Foreign Affairs, Socialist Party/Minister for Foreign Affairs
Padgrosky, Leif	Sweden	1997	Ambassador to Greece
Palacio, Loyola de	Spain	2000/2001	CEO, Titan Cement Co. S.A.
Panara, Marco	Italy	2005	
Pangalos, Theodoros	Greece	1991/1996	
Pantelides, Leonidas	Cyprus	2004	
Papathelas, Alexis	Greece	2002/2008	
Papalexopoulos, Dimitris	Greece	2008	

Papalexopoulos, Theodore	Greece	1991	Deputy Chairman, Titan Cement Company
Papandreou, George A.	Greece	1995/2000/2005	Minister of Education/Alemania Minister for Foreign Affairs/President, PanHellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)
Parisot, Laurence	France	2007	President MEDEF
Passera, Corrado	Italy	2003/2004	MD, Banca Intesa BCI
Pataki, George E.	US	2006	Governor of New York State
Pattison, Chris	UK	2007	Member, House of Lords
Pattison, James	Canada	1992	Chair, & CEO, Jim Pattison Group
Paulson, Jr., Henry M.	US	2008	Secretary of the Treasury
Peart, Frank H.	US	2001/2002/2005/2008	Chairman & CEO, Perseus LLP; Chairman, Rappahannock Investment Co; Counterpoint Press
Pearlstone, Norman	US	2005/2006	Editor-in-Chief, Time Inc./Senior Advisor, Time Warner
Pehe, Jiri	Czechoslovakia	2001	Director, NY Univ; former advisor to President Havel
Pei, Minxin	US	2006	Director, Carnegie Institute for International Peace
Pell, Chahorne	US	1992	US Senator, Democrat Rhode Island
Penttinen, Mikael	Finland	2005	President, Sanoma Corporation
Perzias, Arno	Finland	1995	VP Research, Bell Labs
Peraticos, Michael C.	Greece	1991	Pegasus Ocean Services
Pergler, Werner A.	Germany	1999	Political Correspondent, Die Zeit
Perkovich, George	US	2003	VP for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Perle, Richard N.	US	2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/20	Fellow, The American Enterprise, IPRP; President & CEO, Hollinger Digital;
		06/2007/2008	Director, Jerusalem Post (CFR)/Member, Defense Policy Board; member, PNAC
		2008	Deputy General Secretary in charge of Economic Affairs
Perol, Francois	France	2007	Governor of Texas
Perry, Rick	US	2007	Secretary of Defense
Perry, William J.	US	1996	Director, Stiftung, Wissenschaft und Politik
Perthes, Volker	Germany	2007/2008	Parliamentary leader of the Conservative Party
Petersen, Jan	Norway	1996	President & CEO, Skandia
Petersen, Lars Eric	Sweden	2000	High Representative for Bosnia & Herzegovina; EU Chief Negotiator at the Kosovo peace talks
Petrusch, Wolfgang	Austria	2000	MP/State Sec of Defence
Plüger, Friedbert	Germany	2005/2006	US Ambassador to Russia
Pickering, Thomas R.	US	1994	Commissioner, European Commission
Piebalgs, Andris	INT	2006	ECC
Pimenta, Carlos	Portugal	1991	President, Artemis; chairman & CEO, PPR Group
Pinaut, Francois-Henri	France	2006	Foreign Affairs
Plotz, Hans-Friedrich von	Germany	1995	Editor, Commentary
Podhoretz, Norman	US	1996	Banker
Pohl, Karl Otto	Germany	1991	Academic
Prof'Polanyi, John	Canada	1991	MP, CDU/CSU
Polenz, Ruprecht	Germany	2002	Chairman, ENI S.p.A.
Poli, Roberto	Italy	2003	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Popoacostantinou, Michalia G.	Greece	1991	Programme Director, Forum for the Future
Porri, Jonathan	UK	1999	Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Powell, Colin L.	US	1997	CEO, Syngenta AG; Director, AstraZeneca
Pragnell, Michael P.	UK	2001	Under Sec Gen for Political Affairs, UN
Prendergast, Kieran	INT	1998	Senator
Pressler, Larry	US	1991	President, Economic Strategy Institute
Prestowitz, Clyde V.	US	1998/2001/2002	Royalty
Prince Philippe	Belgium	1991/1992/2003/2004/2005/20	Royalty
		07/2008	
Prince Willem Alexander	Netherlands	2001/2008	Royalty
Pritchard, Robert	Canada	1995/2005/2006/2008	President, University of Toronto/President, Torstar Media Group and CEO, Torstar Corp
Profumo, Alessandro	Italy	1999	CEO, Credito Italiano
Puhringer, Othmar	Austria	1998	Chairman, VA-Technologie AG
Pujol, Jordi	Spain	1991	Businessman
Purves, William	UK	1998	Group Chairman, HSBC Holdings
Pury, David de	Switzerland	1991/1992/1994/1995/1996/19	Chairman, BBC Brown Boveri; Co-Chairman of ABB Asea Brown Boveri Group/ former Ambassador for Trade Agreements/Chairman, de Pury Pictet Turrettini & Co
		1991	Brookings Institute, NBC News (CFR)
Quand, William B.	US	1991/1992/1995/1996/1997/19	Royalty
Queen Beatrix	Netherlands	98/1999/2000/2001/2003/2004	Royalty
		/2005/2006/2007/2008	
Queen Sophia	Spain	1991/1992/1994/1996/2001/20	Royalty
		03/2005/2007/2008	

Quinn, Lochlann	Ireland	1997	Chairman, Allied Irish Bank Group
Rachman, Gideon	UK	2003/2004	Brussels Correspondent, The Economist (Rapporteur)
Racicot, Mark	US	2002	Chairman, Republican National Committee
Radice, Giles	Austria	1995	MP; Chairman of the Euro Movement
Raidl, Claus J.	France	2001	Ceo & Director, Bohler Uddeholm AG
Raimond, Jean-Bernard	US	1994	MP; former Minister of Foreign Affairs
Raines, Franklin D.	US	2002	Chairman & CEO FannieMae
Rainfors, Bo C.E.	Sweden	1991	Banker
Rainqvist, Lars	Sweden	2001	Chairman & CEO, Ericsson; board member of Skandia and Volvo
Randa, Gerhard	Austria	1998/1999/2002	Chairman & CEO, Bank of Austria
Ranke, Denis	France	2003	Chairman & CEO, Thales Aerospace and Defense
Rasmussen, Anders Fogh	Denmark	2000/2003	Chairman, Liberal Party/Prime Minister
Rato Figaredo, Rodrigo de	Spain	1992/1994/2005/2007	Parliamentary Leader of the Minority Group (Partido Popular)/MD, IMF
Rattner, Steven	US	1999/2001/2002/2006	Dep Exec, Lazard Freres & Co/Director, Quadrangle Group (CFR)
Rautigam, Hans-Otto	Germany	1991	Minister of Justice
Reed, John S.	US	1991	CEO Citicorp (CFR)
Reed, Ralph E.	US	2004	President, Century Strategies
Rees-Mogg, William	UK	1991	Chairman, Broadcasting Standards Council; Chairman, The American Trading Co; Former editor, the Times
Rehn, Olli	INT	2007	Commissioner, European Commission
Reinholdt, Fredrik	Sweden	2006	Chairman, Conservative Party
Reisman, Heather	Canada	2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	President & CEO, Indigo Books and Music Inc
Reitzle, Wolfgang	Germany	1991/1992	Member of the board, BMW AG
Reves, Chresten W.	Germany	1991	President & CEO, Berlingske Tidende
Rhodes, William R.	US	1998	Vice Chairman, Citibank
Riboud, Antoine	France	1992	Chair, Societe BSN, Gervais Danone
Riboud, Franck	France	2003	Chairman & CEO, Danone Foods
Rice, Condohezza	US	2008	Secretary of State
Richardson, Bill	US	1999/2000	Secretary of Energy
Ridgeway, Kozanne L.	US	1991/1992/1994	Pres. Atlantic Council (CFR, TC)/Vice Director of the Office for Management and Budget of the White House
Rifkind, Malcolm	UK	1996	Foreign Secretary
Ringer, Michael	Switzerland	1991/2003	Publisher/CEO, Ringier AG
Rio, Rui	Portugal	2008	Mayor of Porto
Riotta, Gianni	Italy	2000/2001/2004	Dep Editor, La Stampa;Editorialist, Corriere della Serra
Robertson, George	UK	1998/2001	Secretary of State for Defense
Robertson, Simon	UK	1991/1992/1994/1995/1996/19	Chairman, Kleinwort Benson Group/former Chairman
Rocketfeller, David	US	1991/1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	CEO Chase Manhattan Bank (CFR, TC)/Chairman, Chase Manhattan Bank International Advisory Committee/ Member, JP Morgan International Council/Chairman, Council of the Americas
Rocketfeller, Sharon Percy	US	1991	President & CEO, WETA, TV and FM
Rodin, Judith	US	2005	President, The Rockefeller Foundation
Rodrigues, Eduardo Ferro	Portugal	1997/1998/1999/2000/2001/20	MP; Leader of the Socialist Party
Rodriguez Inclarte, Matias	Spain	02/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	Vice Chairman, Banco de Santander
Rogers, Edward S.	Canada	1996	President & CEO, Rogers Communications Inc
Rogononi, Virginia	Italy	1991	Minister of Defense
Rojas, Mauricio	Sweden	1999	Associate Professor of Economic History, Lund Univ; Director of Timbro's Centre for Welfare Reform
Roll, Lord Eric (of Ipsden)	UK	98/1999/2000/2001/2002	Conservative MP, President SG Warburg Group
Romano, Sergio	Italy	1992	Columnist, La Stampa/fmr Italian Ambassador to USSR
Rose, Charlie	US	2002/2008	Producer, Rose Communications
Rose, Flemming	Denmark	2008	Editor, Jylland's Posten
Rossgren, Bjorn	Sweden	1999	Minister for Industry, Employment and Communication
Ross, Dennis B.	US	2004/2005/2006/2008	Director, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy
Rossella, Carlo	Italy	1997	Editor, La Stampa; University Professor and Researcher, Laboratorio Monde Iranian, CNRS
Rothschild, Emma	UK	1995	Director Centre for History and Economics, Cambridge
Rothschild, Evelyn de	UK	1998	Chairman, NIM Rothschild and Sons
Roy, Olivier	France	2002/2003/2005/2006/2007	Professor, CNRS/Senior Researcher CNRS
Roy, Stapleton J.	US	2006	Director, Kissinger Associates
Rubin, Barmett R.	US	2008	Director of Studies and Senior Fellow, Center for International Cooperation, New York University

Ruggie, John	US	2003	Director, Center for Business and Govt, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard
Ruggiero, Renato	Italy	1991/1992/1994/1995/1996/2000	Exec Vice Chairman, Fiat; Former Minister of Trade/DG, WTO Vice Chairman, Schroder Saloman Smith Barney
Ruhe, Yolker	Germany	1991/1992/1994	Minister of Defence
Ruhnau	Germany	1991	Lufthansa Airlines
Rumsfeld, Donald H.	US	2002	Sec of Defense
Ruys, Anthony	Netherlands	2003	Chairman, Heineken NV
Sabia, Maureen	Canada	1997	Corporate Director & President, Maureen Sabia International
Sahenk, Ferit	Turkey	2008	Chairman, Dou? Holding A.S.
Sahlin, Mona	Sweden	1996	MP
Salat, Carlos Ferrer	Spain	1991	Chairman UNICE (The European Employers Federation)
Salgado, Ricardo	Portugal	1997/1999	Espirito Santo President & CEO, Banco Espirito Santo
Samaras, Andonis	Greece	1992	Former Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sampaio, Jorge	Portugal	1999	President
Sampmans, Francois	France	1995	Chair, Groupe Express
Sanberk, Ozdem	Turkey	2001/2002/2003	Turkish Ambassador to the UK; DG, Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation
Sanford, Mark	US	2008	Governor of South Carolina
Sadjapour, Karim	US	2006	Analyst, International Crisis Group
Sand-schneider, Eberhard	Germany	2004	Director, Research Institute, German Society for Foreign Policy
Sant, Roger	US	2006	Co-founder and Chairman Emeritus, The AES Corporation; The Summit Foundation
Santer, Jacques	Luxembourg	1991	Prime Minister
Santos, Nicola	Portugal	1999	Ed-in-Chief, Expresso
Santos, Nuno Bredederode	Portugal	1991	Member of the Socialist Party; Columnist, Expresso
Sapin, Michael	France	1992	Minister of Economy and Finance
Saracoglu, Rusdu	Turkey	1991	Governor, Central Bank of Turkey
Sario, Ighalam, Mahmood	Iran	2006	Associate Professor of International Relations, School of Economic and Political Sciences, Nat Univ of Iran
Sarmento, Nuno Matrais	Portugal	2005	Former Minister of State and of Presidency; MP
Scaroni, Paolo	Italy	2003/2004/2005/2006/2007	MD, Enel S.p.A.
Scharping, Rudoph	Germany	1999	Minister of Defense
Schauble, Wolfgang	Germany	2003	Deputy Parliamentary Leader, CDU/CSU Group
Scheepbouwer, Ad J.	Netherlands	1999	Chairman & CEO, TNT Post Group
Schenz, Richard	Austria	2003/2004/2005/2006	CEO & Chairman, OMV AG
Schily, Otto	Germany	1994/1995	Minister of the Interior
Schmidheny, Stephan	Switzerland	2007/2008	Chairman, ANOVA Holdings; former Chairman, Business Council for Sustainable Development
Schmidt-Chari	Austria	1991	Banker
Schmidt, Eric	US	2007/2008	Chairman of the Exec Committee and CEO Google
Schnabel, Rockwell A.	US	1992/1999/2000/2001/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2008	Ambassador to the EU
Scholten, Rudolf	Austria	1994/1995/1996/1997/1998/1999/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007	Member of the board of Exec Directors, Oesterreichische Kontrollbank AG
Schrempf, Jurgen E.	Germany	1994/1995/1996/1997/1998/1999/2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007	CEO, Daimler-Benz-Luft-und-Raumfahrt Holding AG/Chairman, Daimler-Benz/Chairman, DaimlerChrysler
Schulz, Ekkehard	Germany	2002/2005/2006	Chairman, ThyssenKrupp AG
Schur, Fritz H.	Denmark	2008	Fritz Schur Gruppen
Schurer, Wolfgang	Switzerland	1994/1995	Chairman, MS Management Service AG
Schwab, Klaus	Switzerland	1995/1996/1997/2003/2007	President, World Economic Forum/Exec Chairman WEF
Schwarzenberg, Karel	Czechoslovakia	2008	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Schweitzer, Louis	France	1991/2002	Chairman and CEO, Renault
Scouthete de Tervarent, Philippe de	Belgium	1991/2000	Permanent Representative of Belgium to the European Communities
Seowcroft, Brent	US	1994	Former Asst. to the President for National Security Affairs
Scully, Robert W.	US	2007	Co-President Morgan Stanley
Sealapino, Robert A.	US	1994	Robson Research Prof. of Govt. Emeritus, Berkeley
Sebastian Gascon, Miguel	Spain	2005	Chief Economic Advisor to the PM
Sebelius, Kathleen	US	2007/2008	Governor of Kansas
Seidenfaden, Toger	Denmark	1994/1995/1996/1997/1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/2003/2006	Ed-in-Chief, Politiken
Seilliere, Ernest-Antoine	France	1992/2002	Chairman & CEO, CGIP
Serra, Narcis	Spain	1991/1992	Deputy Prime Minister
Serra Rexach, Eduardo	Spain	2004	Head, Real Institute Elcano
Shad, John S.R.	US	1991	Philanthropist
Shapiro, Robert B.	US	1999	Chairman & CEO, Monsanto Co

Sharansky, Nafan	Israel	2005	Former Minister for Jerusalem & Diaspora Affairs
Sheehy, Patrick	UK	1991	Chairman, BA T Industries
Sheeran, Josette	INT	2007	Exec Director, UN World Food Programme
Shenkman, Jack	US	1992/1994/1995/1996/1997	Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union; AFL-CIO-CLC/Chairman, Amalgamated Bank
Shelton, Sally	US	1992	Snr Fellow Georgetown Univ/Ex Ambassador to Grenada
Shevtsova, Lilia	Russia	1999/2001/2002/2003/2004	Carnegie Moscow Center
Shultz, George P	US	2008	Thomas W. and Susan B. Ford Distinguished Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University
Siedenop, Larry A.	US/UK	2001	Fellow, Keble College, Author
Steghan, Mary Ann	UK	2001	Editorial Writer, The Times
Stegman, Henry	US	2002	Council on Foreign Relations
Sigurdsson, Jon	Iceland	1991	Minister of Trade and Industry
Sikora, Slawomir	Poland	2004	President & CEO, Citibank Handlowy
Silva, Artur Santos	Portugal	1999	President & CEO, BPI Group
Silva, Augusto Santos	Portugal	2006	Minister for Parliamentary Affairs
Silverberg, Kristen	US	2007	Asst Sec of State, Bureau of International Organisation Affairs
Silvestri, Stefano	Italy	1997	VP, Istituto Affari Internazionali; former Under Sec of Defense
Simpson, Jeffrey	Canada	1992	National Affairs Columnist, the Globe & Mail
Siniscalco, Domenico	Italy	1998/2004/2005/2007	Director of Fondazione ENI Enrico Mattei/DG, Ministry of the Economy/MD & Vice Chairman, Morgan Stanley
Sions, Thomas W. Jr	US	1991	Ambassador to Poland
Skidelsky, Robert	UK	2005	Professor of Political Economy, Warwick Univ
Smith, John	UK	1991	Leader of the Opposition
Socrates, Jose	Portugal	2004	MP
Soderbergh, Nancy	US	1995	Dep Asst. to President for NSA
Solana Madariaga, Javier	INT	1998/2000	Sec General NATO/Sec Gen, Council of the European Union
Solbes Mira, Pedro	Spain	1999	MP, Socialist Party
Sommaruga, Cornelio	Switzerland	1996	President, International Committee of the Red Cross
Sommer, Theo	Germany	1991/1992	Editor-in-chief, Die Zeit
Soros, George	US	1994/1996/2000/2002	Soros Fund Management
Sousa, Marcelo Rebelo de	Portugal	1998	Leader of the PSD Party
Soysal, Ayse	Turkey	2007	Rektor, Bosphorus University
Spath, Lothar	Germany	1991	Former Prime Minister of Baden-Wuerttemberg
Spector, Norman	Canada	1992	Former Chief of Staff, Office of the PM
Spillmann, Markus	Switzerland	2008	Editor-in-Chief and Head Managing Board, Neue Zuercher Zeitung AG
Spinelli, Barbara	France	1991	European Correspondent, La Stampa
Spitaels, Guy	Austria	1991	President, or Chairman, Belgium Socialist Party
Stahl, Lesley R.	US	1997	National Affairs Correspondent, CBS News
Stegg, Helga	UN	1991/1992	UN/Executive Director, International Energy Agency
Stefanos, Manos	Greece	1991	Minister of National Economy
Steinberg, James B.	US	1994/2000/2002/2003/2006	Director for Policy Planning, State Department/Asst to the President for National Security Affairs
Stephanopoulos, George	US	1996/1997	Senior Advisor to the President/Visiting Prof/Columbia Univ; former senior advisor
Stevenson, Dennis	UK	1995	Chairman, SRU Group
Steyn, Mark	Canada	2003	Journalist
Stollenberg, Thorvald	Norway	1994/1995/2002	Co-Chairman, international Conference on the Former Yugoslavia; former Minister of Foreign Affairs/Defense
Storvik, Kjell	Norway	1998	Governor, Bank of Norway
Straberg, Hans	Sweden	2006	President & CEO, AB Electrolux
Strauss-Kahn, Dominique	France	2000	Former Minister of Finance, Professor, Univ of Paris
Strauss, Robert S.	US	1992	US Ambassador to the Russian Federation
Strzecki, Marn J.	US	2004	Smith Richardson Foundation
Strube, Jurgén	Germany	1994/1996	Chairman, BASF
Struve de Swielande, Dominique	Belgium	2004	Permanent Representative of Belgium, NATO
Summers, Lawrence H.	IS/US	1998/2002/2007/2008	Dep Sec for International Affairs, US Dept of the Treasury/President, Harvard Univ
Sundqvist, Ulf L.	Finland	1992	Chair, Social Democratic Party
Suranyi, Gyorgy	Hungary	1996/1997/1999	President, National Bank of Hungary
Suchoka, Hanna	Poland	1998	Minister of Justice
Surroi, Veton	KS?	2000	KOHA Diftore
Sutherland, Peter D.	Ireland	1991/1992/1994/1995/1996/19	Chairman, Allied Irish Banks; Former Commissioner of the European Communities/DG, GATT/
		97/1998/2000/2002/2003/2004	Former DG WTO/Chairman & MD, Goldman Sachs Int/Chairman BP
		/2005/2006/2007	
Svanberg, Carl-Henrie	Sweden	2007	President & CEO, Telefonaktiebolaget LM Ericsson
Svedberg, Björn	Sweden	1997	President & CEO, Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken
Szawajewski, Jacek	Poland	2005	CEO, Polska Grupa Farmaceutyczna

Tabakslat, Morris	Netherlands	1996	Chairman, Unilever
Taggart, Paul A.	UK	2007	Professor of Politics, Univ of Sussex
Tara, Sinan	Turkey	1997	VP, Enka Construction
Tarullo, Daniel K.	US	2000	Visiting Prof of Law, Georgetown Univ
Taurell, Sidney	US	2007	Chairman & CEO, Eli Lilly & Co
Taxell, Christopher	Finland	2002	President & CEO, Partek Oyj
Taylor, J. Martin	UK	1991/1994/1995/1996/1997/19 98/1999/2000/2001/2003/2004 /2005/2007/2008	CEO, Courtauld's Textiles/CEO, Barclays Bank/Chairman, WHSmith Group; International Advisor Goldman Sachs (Hon Sec Gen Bilderberg Group)/Chairman, Syngenta
Teufel, Erwin	Germany	1991	Chairman, The Seatrade Organisation
Themistocles, Volkos	Greece	2007/2008	President, Clarium Capital Management LLC
Thiel, Peter A.	US	1998/1999/2002	President & CEO Xerox/Senior Advisor, Evercore Partners
Thoman, Richard G.	US	1999/2000/2001/2002/2003/20 04	President and co-CEO, Goldman Sachs Group/Director, Ford Motor Co (CFR); Brookings Institute/ President & CEO, Goldman Sachs Group/Chairman, Brookings Inst; Professor, Tsinghua Univ Editor, The Globe and Mail
Thornton, John L.	US	1999/2000/2001/2002/2003/20 04	Director of Research, Centre for European Studies, Helsinki Univ/Sec of State, Ministry for Foreign Affairs Chairman, ING NV
Thorsell, William	Canada	1992	Minister of European Affairs
Figuerola, Federico	Spain	2000/2004/2006	Former Gen Sec of the RPR
Tilikkaenen, Teija H.	Finland	1999/2008	Member of the Finance Commission, Chamber of Deputies/Minister of Economy & Finance
Tilman, Michel	Netherlands	2005/2007	Deputy Director, Carnegie Moscow Center
Timmermans, Frans	Netherlands	1995/1999/2000/2001/2002/20 08	President & CEO, Eelectrolux Group/Chairman, Ericsson Governor, Banque de France/President, European Central Bank
Toubon, Jacques	France	1991/2004	Exec VP & CEO, Pirelli/Chairman & CEO, Pirelli SpA
Tremont, Giulio	Italy	1996	Chairman, Ford Motor Company
Trenin, Dmitri V.	Russia	2003	Vice Governor, Central Bank of Austria
Treschow, Michael	Sweden	1992/2003/2006	Prof, University of Athens; President of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)
Trichet, Jean Claude	France	2004	Sec Gen, Boao Forum for Asia
Tronchetti-Provera, Marco	Italy	1999	Dean, Haas School of Business, Univ of California at Berkeley
Tromp, Alexander J.	US	1998	Foreign Editor, Aftenposten
Trumpell-Gugerall, Gertrude	Austria	2005	Columnist, Hurrywet
Tsoukalis, Loukas	Greece	2007	CEO, Umoe AS
Tu, Yonglong	China	1991/1992/1995/1996/1997/19 98	Rector, Univ of Oslo Chairman and General Manager, Ibertomto/Chairman, Dresdner Kleinwort Benson S.A.
Tyson, Laura d'Andrea	US	1995	Minister of Transport & Communication
Udgaard, Nils M.	Norway	2008	Assistant Professor of Middle East Studies, The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies
Ulsever, Cumeyt	Turkey	2008	MP
Ullvert-Moe, Jens	Norway	1999	Chairman of the board, Bank of Finland
Underdal, Arild	Norway	1999	MD, Research Institute of the Finnish Economy (ETLA)
Urquijo, Jaime Carvajal	Spain	2008	Co-Founder and President, V + O Communication
Uusmann, Ines	Sweden	1998/1999/2000/2001/2002/20 03/2004/2005/2007/2008	Chairman & CEO Novartis
Vakkil, Sanam	US	2008	Director, The Finnish Institute of International Affairs
Valls, Manuel	France	1992/2008	Sec Gen, Presidency of the Republic/Hubert Vedrine Council
Vanhala, Matti	Finland	2000/2003/2005/2007	MD, Royal Dutch/Shell/President, Royal Dutch Shell/Chairman
Vartia, Pentti	Finland	1994	Lawyer
Varvisiotis, Thomas	Greece	1996	Editor, I'Lindia
Vasella, Daniel	Switzerland	1999	Professor of Political History, Univ of Athen; President of Eliamep
Vayrynen, Raimo	Finland	1999	Professor Political history, Athens University; Director, Hellenic Foundation for Defence and Foreign Policy
Vedrine, Hubert	France	2006	Parliamentary leader, Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)
Veer, Jeroen van der	Netherlands	1995	Sec Gen Social Democratic Party
Veiga, Miguel	Portugal	2004	CEO, BT; former director, Lucent Technologies
Veltromi, Valter	Italy	1991/1992/1994/1996	Rockefeller's secretary/Exec Asst to DK
Veremis, Thanos M.	Greece	1997	Exec Director, Reuters Holdings
Prof. Veronis, Thanos M.	Greece	1992/2003	VP Figaro/Vice Chairman, Lehman Brothers Europe
Verhagen, Maxime J.M.	Netherlands	1998/2000/2002	President & CEO, Warner Lambert Co/Chairman, Global Health Care Partners; Credit Suisse First
Verheugen, Gunther	Germany	2005/2006	Senior Correspondent, IHT
Vervaayen, Ben J.M.	UK		
Victor, Alice	US		
Villeave, Andre Francois H.	UK		
Villin, Philippe	France		
Vink, Lodewijk J.R. de	US		
Vincour, John	US		

Virkkunen, Janne	Finland	1998/2001	Senior Ed-in-Chief, Helsingin Sanomat
Visco, Ignazio	Italy	2004	Foreign Affairs Manager, Banca D'Italia
Vitorino, Antonio	Portugal	1996/2004	Dep Prime Minister and Minister of Defense/Justice and Home Affairs Commissioner, EU
Vits, Mia de	Belgium	1998	Gen Sec, ABVV +FGTB
Vogel, Ezra F.	US	1997	Henry Ford II Professor of Social Sciences, Harvard University
Volkert, Paul A.	US	1992/1997	Chairman, BT Woldensohn/Ex Chair Board of Federal Reserve System
Vollebaek, Knut	Norway	2008	High Commissioner on National Minorities, OSCE
Voscherau, Henning	Germany	1996	Mayor of Hamburg
Voutilainen, Pertti	Finland	1995	Primera Bank
Vranitzky, Franz	Austria	1991/1995/1996/1997/1998/19	Chancellor/former Fed Chancellor
		99/2000/2002	
Vries, Gijs M. de	INT	1997/1998/2004	Chairman, Liberal Group, European Parliament/EU Counter Terrorism Co-ordinator
Vries, Klaus de	Netherlands	2003	MP (Labour); Former Minister of the Interior
Vuursteen, Karel	Netherlands	1995/1996	Chairman, Heineken
Waal, Lodewijk J. de	Netherlands	1999	Chairman, Dutch Confederation of Trade Unions
Waldegrave, William	UK	1995	Minister of Agriculture
Wallage, Jacques	Netherlands	1995	Leader, Labour Party
Wallenberg, Marcus	Sweden	1996/1997/2001	Exec VP, Investor AB
Wallenberg, Jacob	Sweden	1998/2000/2001/2002/2003/20	Chairman, Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken/Chairman SEB Investments; Chairman, W Capital Management AB
		04/2005/2006/2007/2008	
Warner, Mark R.	US	2005	Governor of Virginia
Waugh, Richard E.	Canada	2006	President & CEO, Bank of Nova Scotia
Weber, Jurgen	Germany	2004	Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Deutsche Lufthansa
Weber, J. Vin	US	2007/2008	Partner, Clark & Weinstock
Weidenfeld, Lord	UK	1992	Publisher
Weinberg, Peter	US	2004/2005	CEO, Goldman Sachs Int
Weiss, Stanley	US	1995/1996/1997	Chairman, Business Executives for National Security
Wellink, A.H.E.M.	Netherlands	2006	President, De Nederlandsche Bank
Wendt, Gerhard M.H.	Finland	1994	President, Kone Corp
Werring, Niels	Norway	1991/1992	Banker/Director, Wilhelmsen limited AS
Wegener, Henning	UN	1991	NATO
Werner, Manfred	UN	1991	Secretary General of NATO
Westerwells, Guido	Germany	2007	Chairman, Free Democratic Party
Whaitoo, Bjorn	Finland	2003	President & CEO, Sampo plc
White, Peter	US	1994	Chairman, Unimeda; former Head of the Prime Ministers Office
Whitehead, John C.	Canada	1991/1994/1995/1996/1997	Ex-Deputy Sec of State (CFR)/Chairman AEA Investors Inc
Whitman, Christine Todd	US	1998	Governor of New Jersey
Whyte, Kenneth	Canada	2001/2002	Ed-in-Chief, The National Post
Wijers, Hans	Netherlands	2004	Chairman, AkzoNobel NV
Wilbur, Brayton Jr	US	1991	CEO Wilbur Ellis Co (CFR)
Wijffels, Herman H.F.	Netherlands	1997	Chairman, Rabobank Nederland
Wijlhelm, Nils	Denmark	1991/1992	former Industry Minister/MD, Industrial Mortgage Fund
Williams, Gareth	UK	2002/2003	Leader, House of Lords; Member of the cabinet
Williams, Lynn R.	US	1991/1992	Pres. United Steelworkers Union
Wilson, Michael	Canada	1991	Minister of Trade
Wilson, L.R.	Canada	1996	Chairman, President & CEO, BCE Inc
Wilson, Ross	US	2007	Ambassador to Turkey
Winthrop, Grant	US	1991/1992/1994	Attorney/Partner, Millbank Winthrop & Co
Wisner, Frank G.	US	1994	Under Sec for Policy, Dept of Defense
Wissman, Mathias	Germany	1998/2005	Federal Minister for Transport/MP
Wolf, Martin H.	UK	1999/2000/2001/2003/2004/20	Associate Editor and Economics Commentator, The Financial Times
		05/2006	
Wolfensohn, James D.	US	1991/1992/1994/1996/1997/19	Pres. James D. Wolfensohn Inc (CFR) President, The World Bank/
		98/1999/2000/2002/2003/2004	Special Envoy for the Gaza Disengagement
		/2005/2006/2007/2008	
Wolffowitz, Paul D.	US	1994/1995/1996/1997/1998/20	Dean, SAIS, John Hopkins Univ/Form Under Sec of Defense for Policy/Dep Sec of Defense/
Wood, Joseph R.	US	2007	President, The World Bank
Woodridge, Adrian	UK	1998/1999/2000/2001/2004/20	Deputy Advisor to the Vice President, National Security Affairs
		05/2006/2007/2008	Foreign Correspondent, The Economist
Worner, Manfred	UN	1991/1992	Sec Gen NATO

Wright, Patrick	UK	1991	Head of the Diplomatic Service
Yahuda, Michael B.	UK	1997	Professor of International Relations, LSE
Yakindag, Atzuhan Dogan	Turkey	2007	President, TUSIAD
Yanez-Barnuevo, Juan A.	Spain	1996	Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN
Yavlinsky, Grigory A.	Russia	2004	MP
Yergin, Daniel	US	2004	Chairman, Cambridge Energy Research Associates
Yost, Casimir A.	US	1991/1995/1996/1997/1998	Exec Director, The Asia Foundation's Center for Asian Pacific Affairs
Yucoglu, Erkut	Turkey	1999/2007	Chairman, Tusaid/Chairman MAP
Zakaria, Fareed	US	2003/2005	Editor, Newsweek International
Zannoni, Paolo	Italy	1991/1992	VP, Fiat
Zantovsky, Michael	Czechoslovakia	1999	Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security, Czech Senate
Zelekow, Philip D.	US	2006/2007	Counselor of the Department, US Department of State/White Burkett Miller Professor of History, Univ of Virginia
Zhang, Yi	China	2006	Dep Sec Gen, China Society for Strategy and Management Research
Zimmerman, Norbert	Austria	1999	Chairman, Berndorf AG
Zoellick, Robert B.	US	1991/2003/2006/2008	State Dept. Economic Advisor/Trade Advisor to the President/Dep Sec of State/President, World Bank Group
Zonbanakis, Mimos	Greece	1991	Editor, US News and World Report
Zuckerman, Mortimer B.	US	1994	Chairman, Deutsche Post AG/Chairman Deutsche Post Worldnet AG/Chairman, Deutsche Telekom
Zumwinkel, Klaus	Germany	2002/2003/2004/2005/2006	

Appendix D.

Coding/Thematic Categories

	Nodes	References
Interview 1	30	63
Interview 2	43	137
Interview 3	23	63
Interview 4	41	105
Interview 5	44	79
Interview 6	43	101
Interview 7	56	109
Interview 8	31	38
Interview 9	62	156
Interview 10	47	134
Interview 11	42	76
Interview 12	45	86
Interview 13	29	44
Interview 14	59	161
Interview 15	21	36
Interview 16	34	56

Type	Name	Sources	References
Free Node	Consensus	16	69
Free Node	What do people get out of it	15	42
Free Node	The Role of business in policymaking	13	41
Free Node	Other groups	13	53
Free Node	Networking	12	42
Free Node	Inter-relationship of business and politics	12	33
Free Node	A mechanism for change	12	40
Free Node	Economic motivation	11	25
Free Node	Invitation	11	20
Free Node	Collaboration legitimacy	11	19
Free Node	Globalization	11	22
Free Node	Bilderberg personalities	10	26
Free Node	Bilderberg hierarchy	10	30
Free Node	Bilderberg management	10	17
Free Node	Personal relationships	10	20
Free Node	Interconnectedness of networks	10	31

Free Node	Information interchange	10	21
Free Node	Purpose of Bilderberg	9	25
Free Node	What people talk about at Bilderberg	9	13
Free Node	Acceptable parameters	9	23
Free Node	The influence of influential people	9	16
Free Node	Bilderberg administration	9	30
Free Node	European American relations	9	17
Free Node	Learning	9	21
Free Node	Discussion helps to agenda set	9	14
Free Node	Elitism	9	21
Free Node	Conspiracies	9	17
Free Node	Composition of Bilderberg	8	15
Free Node	Seductive appeal	8	24
Free Node	Secrecy and privacy	8	13
Free Node	A new international relations paradigm	8	29
Free Node	Dissent in the international arena	8	13
Free Node	Importance of Bilderberg vs other groups	8	12
Free Node	Geriatric ramblings	8	11
Free Node	Establishing discourse parameters	8	9
Free Node	Europe	7	16
Free Node	How much diversity is there	7	15
Free Node	Open and frank	7	13
Free Node	Views of criticism of Bilderberg	7	7
Free Node	Possibility of introductions	7	9
Free Node	Social hierarchy	7	12
Free Node	Think tanks	7	15
Free Node	Communication hubs	7	12
Free Node	Power	7	17
Free Node	Changing minds	7	9
Free Node	They're always talking to each other anyway	6	8
Free Node	Not part of the network	6	15
Free Node	Media relationships	6	18
Free Node	Personal survival	6	11
Free Node	Who speaks	5	6
Free Node	How is the public good enhanced	5	7
Free Node	Fear	5	12
Free Node	Encouragement of contentiousness	5	13
Free Node	Discussion agenda	5	9
Free Node	Star spotting	5	7
Free Node	Opinion formation	5	12
Free Node	Civil society influence	5	6
Free Node	Conclusions	5	9
Free Node	Old boy network	5	15

Free Node	Atlanticist European club	5	14
Free Node	Iraq - American foreign policy	5	7
Free Node	Valuable experience	4	6
Free Node	Importance of going	4	9
Free Node	Fascination of group	4	8
Free Node	Hard soft regulation	4	15
Free Node	Structural context for policymaking	4	12
Free Node	Political settlements and middle ground	4	7
Free Node	Evasive	4	7
Free Node	Politicians and incremental change	4	6
Free Node	Democracy	4	10
Free Node	Dynamic membership	4	5
Free Node	Steering force within Bilderberg	4	6
Free Node	Independence of media	4	6
Free Node	Washington consensus	4	6
Free Node	Membership screening	4	8
Free Node	Why do people join groups	4	11
Free Node	Not interested in networking	4	6
Free Node	Intimidating	3	16
Free Node	Depth of thinking	3	4
Free Node	Subjects of debate	3	8
Free Node	Individualized zero support	3	7
Free Node	End of Cold War	3	3
Free Node	Not that interesting really	3	5
Free Node	Political agenda	3	3
Free Node	Must say something	3	5
Free Node	Paternal grandees	3	3
Free Node	Fundamentally political gatherings	3	4
Free Node	Understanding	3	4
Free Node	Norms	2	2
Free Node	Rules of the game	2	2
Free Node	Not that earth shattering really	2	5
Free Node	Social responsibility and development	2	4
Free Node	Building credibility	2	11
Free Node	The spread of ideology	2	2
Free Node	Not good at networking	2	5
Free Node	Interlockers	2	3
Free Node	Board interlocks	2	2
Free Node	Absence of cultural dimension	2	5
Free Node	Consciousness of activity	2	2
Free Node	Establishment	2	4
Free Node	NGOs	2	3
Free Node	Personal skills	2	2

Free Node	Trust	2	5
Free Node	Complexity	2	2
Free Node	Intensity of experience	1	1
Free Node	Hard work	1	4
Free Node	American vocalism and unity	1	2
Free Node	Scale of event	1	2
Free Node	Maintain contact	1	1
Free Node	In private capacity	1	1
Free Node	Group demands	1	1
Free Node	Representing your country	1	1
Free Node	Bilderberg ups and downs	1	1
Free Node	Timing	1	1
Free Node	Political class	1	1
Free Node	Acceptable language	1	1
Free Node	MDG's	1	3
Free Node	Global regulation and institutions	1	3
Free Node	Filling a vacuum	1	1
Free Node	Special skills	1	3

