

Factionalism in the Conservative Parliamentary Party: The 'Anti-Europeans'
since 1970.

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The University of Leeds

Department of Politics

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

The Conservative Parliamentary Party (CPP), traditionally regarded as a party of unity and cohesion by many leading academics, has since the early 1970's, witnessed a public display of internal controversies and disunity amongst its members. In the last twenty-eight years, successive Conservative governments have required the CPP to adopt the Treaty of Rome and two major treaty changes. It is the intention of this research to show that it is specifically the task of securing parliament's ratification of the Treaty of Rome and subsequent changes, which has fragmented the CPP and catalysed division. It is argued that since Britain's third attempt to join the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1971, a number of Conservative Members of Parliament (MP's) have persistently opposed the principle of entry and any further attempts at integration. Their behaviour, in the furtherance of this aim, is to be regarded as "factional."

In support of these two positions, this research narrates the story of Britain's integration with the evolutionary institutions of Europe, from the perspective of those Conservative Members of Parliament who, since the vote on principle of entry on 28 October 1971, have engaged in behaviour contrary to that expected by their leadership and colleagues. No academic work to date has closely examined the internal dynamics of factions within the CPP, which constitutes a crucial area of importance and academic interest as to the effective functioning of the party in office in the latter part of this century. This research goes some way towards the remedy of this omission by providing a case study of internal dissent over the span of the European debates, from the Parliamentary debates over Britain's membership of the EC 1971-2 to the European Finance debate in November 1994. The case demonstrates both the dynamics and effective roles in the CPP and the nature of party factionalism in contemporary British politics.

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CHAPTER 1

FACTIONS - STRUCTURES AND DYNAMICS AND THE CPP

Introduction

An intellectual problem exists in contemporary British politics. The Conservative Party, which until May 1997 had been in office continuously for eighteen years, found itself fraught with internal conflict, notably over the issue of Britain's relationship with Europe. Such a phenomenon has previously been associated with the internal wrangling of the British Labour Party. This represents a conceptual problem for both the party and for academics studying British Politics. The problem is that a party, whose prior existence has been marked by its ability to both portray and command party loyalty and unity amongst its ranks, appears to be fragmented, racked with internal divisions and conflicts. In addition, these internal changes potentially have rendered the party incapable of functioning as the party of government as it has previously been accustomed, and has resulted in party sub-units replacing the overall party as the foci for political analysis.

This research has two positions. The first is that the prime cause of dissension within the CPP over the last twenty-five years are the policy decisions over Europe taken by three very different Conservative Prime Ministers. In order to establish this position this research provides a comprehensive account of why the issue of Europe has induced controversy and anguish amongst some Conservative Members of the party, to the extent that they were prepared to openly defy their leadership in the voting divisions on party policy objectives. More seriously, they were prepared to publicly demonstrate discord and opposition in the press. Such behaviour is traditionally unacceptable in a party whose internal divisions usually remain behind closed doors. The second position is that this public dissension over Europe provides evidence of the existence of a faction within the CPP. This is an occurrence, which until recently was not previously associated with the Conservative Party. For, as Garner and Kelly have stated, "Conservative factions is considered a misnomer by many authors."¹ Richard Rose was the first to characterise the British Conservative Party as a "party of tendencies" not factions. This, he alleged, was due to party members forming temporary alignments on issues, which lacked any organisational structure.² Rose claimed that issues around which tendencies gravitate are quickly resolved and are replaced by new alliances over new emerging problems. He asserted that this temporary nature of concerns within the party stems from the Prime Minister's ability to cajole and manipulate his party to abide by his wishes, due to his pre-eminent position within the party.³

¹ Garner, R & Kelly, R "British Political Parties Today" p 121, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993. (Hereinafter Garner, R & Kelly, R "British Political Parties Today").

² Rose, R "Parties, Factions and Tendencies" p 40 Political Studies, 1964. (Hereinafter Rose, R "Parties, Factions and Tendencies"). Sixteen years later, Rose still claimed that 'disagreements' within the Conservative Party were not factional. Rose, R "The British Conservative Party" p 101 Morgan, R and Silvestri, S Eds "Moderates and Conservatives in Western Europe" London, Heinemann, 1982.

³ Rose, R "Parties, Factions and Tendencies in Britain" p 40.

This study refutes Rose's claim on the basis of the anti-European Members of the CPP. It will be shown that these Members constituted an organised group who actively sought to influence policy and as such, constitute a faction. A profile of the anti-European members of the Party during the period will also be established and their motivations and behaviour analysed. This may enable a fuller understanding of the internal methods by which the contemporary CPP handles, and resolves, intra-party disputes. As no satisfactory analysis of factions has been established to date, a subsidiary aim of this research is to provide a provisional theory of factionalism, in order to ensure that internal conflicts within the party over Europe are correctly interpreted. It may be that these public conflicts represent only an ephemeral change in the history of the Conservative Party, where a reversion to traditional behaviour may shortly occur once conflict over the issue of Europe has been finally resolved. If this is the case this research is still of importance for it will document and explain a unique period of behaviour within the Conservative Party's history of development. Should this change in internal party behaviour become permanent, a rethink of the way the Conservative Party is currently conceptualised by academics of British politics will be required. This research will go a small way towards establishing this point and will provide an analysis of the nature of internal conflicts within the CPP on European legislation since 1970.

The claim that the CPP may contain factions, particularly an anti-European one, has implications. The most obvious implication is that since 1970, the Conservative Party no longer represents a party whose policy is determined by its leadership to which most members are content to subscribe and adhere. Instead, members appear more willing to openly defy and challenge the official party line on some issues of principle.⁴ This constitutes a departure from McKenzie's assertion that the leadership of the party substantially controls policy within the CPP.⁵ McKenzie claimed for example, that "the Conservative leader, whether in power or opposition, has the sole ultimate responsibility for the formulation of the policy and electoral programme of his party."⁶ Alternatively, the existence of factions may need to be acknowledged and important policy issues

⁴ This implication is discussed further in Chapter eight.

⁵ McKenzie, R T "British Political Parties" London, 2nd edition, Heinemann-Mercury, 1963. Hereinafter, McKenzie, R T "British Political Parties"). See Chapter two for McKenzie's discussion of Conservative leaders and, Chapter three on the party leader's relations with the rest of the party. Whilst McKenzie claimed that "the most striking feature of the Conservative party organisation is the enormous power which appears to be concentrated in the hands of the leader", he went on to state that the "Conservative leader achieves office and retains power only with the consent of his followers; and there is ample precedent for the withdrawal of that consent" p 22. In Chapter three McKenzie qualified his claim asserting that opponents within the political party have less power to control the leader than is thought. He claimed that "there now appears to be so uncompromising a political future for the man who is expelled from or falls out of favour with his own party, that every MP must ponder very deeply before he challenges or condemns his leader" p 55, "And above all, of course, he must think very deeply indeed before he joins anything which might be classified as a rebellion against him." This he attributed to be due to the lack of "formal constraints on the authority of the leader" p 55.

⁶ McKenzie, R T "British Political Parties" p 21. For further discussion by McKenzie on the role of the party leader in party policy formulation see pp 63-65.

negotiated between them.⁷ If this became the case, the role of Conservative Party managers would become one of controlling and managing the existence of factions within the parliamentary party as opposed to being able to force the direction and shape of party policy. Rose in 1964, even argued for example that "the need to balance factions, tendencies and individuals against one another acts as a major restraint upon the power of the party leader."⁸ If this change within the Party has occurred, the change needs to be documented and analysed in order to establish a clear vision of these processes within the modern day Conservative Party.

This Chapter addresses the second position by establishing a provisional theoretical framework of factionalism in order to corroborate the existence and nature of factions within the contemporary CPP. Academic discussion of the term 'faction' to date is unsatisfactory, in that it is limited in comment to mere definitions at the expense of the analysis of the political behaviour of factions. Through a case study of the anti-Europeans of the CPP, this research offers some suggestions for methods by which the political behaviour of factions can be analysed. This chapter focuses initially on the term 'faction'. In order to conclude whether the term 'faction' is applicable in this instance to the CPP, the study provides a suitable definition and identifies factional characteristics that can be tested against the empirical findings of this study. An examination of the causes and constraints of factional activity supplements this. This section also addresses the nature of other forms of classifying political behaviour, such as 'party' and 'tendency', clarifying the differences between the terms. The chapter concludes with an appraisal of existing literature, which has postulated that the term 'faction' has little relevance to the Conservative Party, suggesting reasons for the existence of this view on which this study casts such doubt.

The methodology employed in this research is based primarily on interviews with the anti-European members of the CPP of the relevant periods.⁹ This is supplemented, firstly, by a review of existing literature and an extensive content analysis of the European debates in the House of Commons documented in Hansard and secondly, by an issue path analysis, which traces how the political behaviour of dissidents developed at different points in the evolving relationship between the European Community and the United Kingdom. The study identifies the relationships between the dissidents themselves; between the dissidents and the leadership; and between the dissidents and the pro-European members of the parliamentary party in order to clarify inner party behaviour. An aggregation analysis of the voting data and social characteristics has also been employed which tests correlations and measures of variance to identify common elements applicable to the rebels as a group, which could identify some interesting conclusions as to their motivations and behaviour.

⁷ This is a limited suggestion based on this case study of four European debates in parliament. As well as providing an illustration of this, the European issue to date, is the main cause of this phenomenon.

⁸ Rose, R "Parties, Factions and Tendencies in Britain" p 44. See also Rose's article "Complexities of Party Leadership" Parliamentary Affairs Volume XVI, 3 1963, pp257-273, for his more in-depth discussion of the restraints on party leaders.

⁹ See Appendix 1 for a list of MPs questioned by the author.

Whist Chapter one proffers a provisional theory of factionalism and discusses why such activity has not been closely associated with the Conservative Party based on a review of existing literature, Chapter two, is a short history of Conservative dissent on Europe since 1957 and provides a contextual setting on which the remaining analytical chapters of this work are based. Chapter three identifies the Euro-sceptic members of the party who have engaged in internal dissent over their party's European policy and provides a brief examination, of their social characteristics and their own perceptions of their motivation for rebellion. Chapter four identifies the issues of concern to the Euro-sceptic members of the Party in respect of these Bills, which led them to oppose in the manner that they did. Chapters five to seven examine the nature of the opposition afforded by these members of the Party, together with an assessment of their strategies and tactics employed in opposing legislation. Chapter five examines the formation of organised Euro-sceptic groupings within the CPP, which arose in response to the Party leaderships' European policy. Chapter six examines the nature of their opposition whether in a group or as independent MPs. Chapter seven discusses the various ways in which the level of their opposition was constrained and fuelled. Chapter eight, the conclusion of this work, sums up the arguments raised throughout this study. It also develops the theoretical framework for analysing the methods of the contemporary CPP in resolving internal conflicts, which is of central importance to the study of British politics today.

Faction - A problem of definition

The problem which exists with contemporary definitions of the term 'faction', is that they are too broad in scope and are often confused with other terms such as 'party,' 'tendency' or 'split' and, as such, are incapable of accurately defining the phenomenon. These problems will be highlighted later in this section. It is first necessary to establish a narrow definition of the term together with descriptive characteristics to enable clear recognition of a faction's existence. A faction is defined by this study as *'an organised, cohesive, political group, which actively seeks to organise itself within a political party to influence and/or determine the policy of its leadership'*. A 'political group' is referred to here as a group of members of parliament. The term 'leadership' refers to the leader and cabinet of a party (Shadow if in opposition). A faction can therefore be identified as a sub-group of a parliamentary party. To distinguish this from a mere collection of individuals with common aims but who take no further action, a faction must be organised and cohesive. It must actively seek to influence and/or determine the policy of a party, otherwise it constitutes nothing more than an interest group. As factional activity takes place at the heart of the British parliamentary system it possesses the ability to directly threaten the political survival of the government and/or party leadership. A party leadership, especially if in office, therefore, needs to seriously consider the activities and objectives of political factions when formulating or preparing policy legislation with which a faction is concerned.

One aim of this research is to define the behaviour of a political faction. Table 1.1 summarises the necessary and contingent characteristics (discussed on pages 12-18) that can be used to identify the

existence of a faction and other party entities.¹⁰ The necessary characteristics of a faction are discussed further below. By definition, a faction must be a sub-group of a political party. It must have a political purpose and the ability to achieve this. To achieve its purpose, a faction must be organised for political competition with the wider party. Factions are thus concerned with organised conflict, where conflict is defined as “the clashing of opposing ideas and forces”¹¹ between a sub-unit and the leadership of the wider party and/or in some instances, between two or more sub-units of a party. In order to prevent a faction becoming a party split a faction's behaviour must necessarily be constrained by the wider party unit.

¹⁰ Rose suggested the following features apply to a 'policy party' and a 'parliamentary organised faction': "an ideology, leadership, technical expertise, cadres, a communications network and rewards." Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" pp 322-323, London, Macmillan, 1974. (Hereinafter Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government"). These features are discussed further in Chapter eight.

¹¹ "Universal Dictionary" 1987, London, Reader's Digest p 334.

Summary of Necessary and Contingent Characteristics of Party Entities				
<i>Necessary Characteristics</i>	Tendency	Faction	Party	Split
Sub-group of a political party		√		
Leader			√	√
High level of political organisation to achieve aims		√	√	√
No organisation	√			
Self-conscious entity		√	√	√
Seeks to influence or replace party policy in some area		√		√
Cohesive		√		√
Political purpose		√	√	√
Multi issue			√	
Body of attitudes	√			
Mass political support required to achieve aims			√	
Pursuit of political office			√	
Incapable of sustaining united front on all policy issues			√	
Incapable of addressing all legislation in detail			√	
Ability to achieve aims		√	√	√
Acts within confines of political party	√	√		
Formal breakaway from party leadership				√
Wants to replace existing party leadership with its own due to serious disaffection with existing party leadership or conduct of its administration				√
Needs to manage competing and different interests of members			√	
Ability to threaten survival of Government		√		√

Table 1.1				
Summary of Necessary and Contingent Characteristics of Party Entities				
<i>Contingent Characteristics</i>	Tendency	Faction	Party	Split
Temporary duration	√			
Lengthy duration		√	√	
Acts within confines of political party				√
Pursuit of political office				√
Parasitic		√		√
Needs support of wider party to achieve aims				√
Can sustain a united front on policy objectives		√		
Single or multi issue		√		√

The existence and behaviour of a political faction can also be identified by a number of other characteristics. These are defined as contingent characteristics. Contingent characteristics may describe the behaviour of a faction but in themselves are not sufficient to substantiate the existence of a faction. It is argued that as any political party in office has an overloaded policy agenda, it is incapable of examining the intricacies of every policy Bill in detail.¹² An administration could even have one specific overriding policy objective to which most of its energies are devoted, so that other policy legislation is ignored. One main policy objective of the Heath Administration of 1970-74 for example, was the procurement of Britain's membership of the EEC. As a faction exists to influence policy legislation or address specific issues of concern to MPs, membership of a faction offers party members one way to influence the party leadership on such issues. One contingent characteristic of a faction, therefore, is that it can exist as a single issue or as a multi-issue faction. This is one of the main areas of dispute between the author and other academics' definitions of factions.

A second contingent characteristic is that a faction may be able to sustain a united front on policy objectives whereas the wider party can not. A party is composed of many members held together by some common ethos who at times, hold very different objectives and interests. Given the vast array of interests that a political party has to serve it would be impossible to placate all members on every issue. A faction on the other hand can enjoy the luxury of organising on one issue, which the party can not. It is easier, arguably, to organise a small group with similar interests to achieve a specific objective, than it is to harness the support of the whole party of which a substantial proportion may be unsympathetic to the view of a small group. It cannot be assumed however, that

¹² Stringer and Richardson have suggested that the policy making process can be affected by three objectives: firstly, to "solve the 'real' underlying problem"; secondly, to "reduce conflict between competing interests"; and thirdly, "policies may be formulated simply in order to remove an issue from the political agenda." Stringer, J and Richardson, J "Managing the Political Agenda: Problem Definition and Policy Making in Britain" p 23, Parliamentary Affairs Volume 33, 1980, pp 23-39.

a faction will always be united. For a faction may be composed of individuals with different interests, but whose desires may be fulfilled by the common objective of the faction.

Factions can be parasitic in nature. It is suggested that factions in an attempt to influence policy or assert political influence on the party leadership, feed off the base of the wider political party. As factions exist within the environment of a political party, they have a ready-made mass organisation from which they can draw support or sympathy for their views. The parliamentary forum also offers a ready-made supply of existing structures and procedures together with sophisticated channels of communication, which can be harnessed to aid the ends of the faction. A faction, however, may be able to fulfil its aims without resorting to the base of the wider political party. This is, therefore, a contingent but not a necessary characteristic of a faction.

It is plausible to assume that a party's main aim is electoral victory, followed by continuous political survival in office. It follows that as political support is derived from the mass public and wider party constituencies, a party in office needs to legitimise its existence and policy outcomes. A party needs to justify most of its actions for it cannot always afford to alienate large voiced demands and risk the disaffection of a large part of its mass support. A faction, however, because it exists to influence specific policy objectives, is not necessarily directly dependent on continuous political support for its survival. As a result, a faction can take a risk in disaffecting certain parts of the party or mass public. For members of a faction are necessarily disaffected with some aspect of their party's policy programme or the strategy of its leadership and/or the wider political party. This again is only a contingent characteristic, as factions may desire wider political support as a tactical manoeuvre in order to give greater weight to their argument and bring more pressure to bear on policy formulators. Associated with all of these elements is the durability of a faction. It is reasonable to assume that a faction exists for a time period, sufficient to achieve its objectives. As factions exist for a purpose, once their ends have been met the faction will disband. Factions can thus be a short-lived or lengthy occurrence.¹³

A major misconception of the term 'faction' is that a faction exists to challenge and replace the existing leadership and as such represents a 'struggle for power.' It will be argued later, that this is due to historical conceptions of the term. Factional activity within a parliamentary system is not concerned with over-throwing the political leadership of the day and replacing it with their own. A group that seeks to overthrow the political leadership actually constitutes a party split. For this

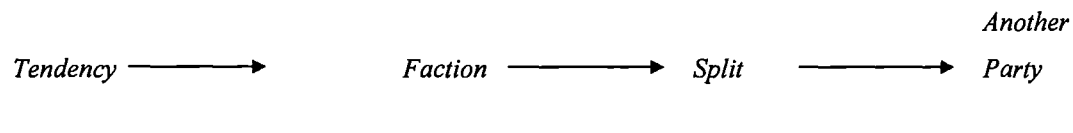
¹³ In contrast, Rose has argued that one identifiable characteristic of a faction is that they 'must persist through time.' Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 20. Although the author disagrees with Rose's requirement of this time scale to identify a faction, it will be shown by this study that a group of Conservative MPs can be identified, who have persistently opposed European policy for a period, in some cases in excess of twenty years. These members, therefore, satisfy Rose's criteria of a faction on this point as well as his organisational criteria. Baker, D, Gamble, A, Ludlam, S and Seawright, D were also of this opinion when they claimed that the 'Fresh Start' rebels satisfied Rose's criteria of 'time.' "Backbenchers with Attitude: A Seismic Study of the Conservative Party and Dissent on Europe." Paper presented to the ECPR Conference - Bordeaux, 1995 p 7.

represents a group, which is disaffected with the whole leadership and its policies, not just a particular aspect of it.¹⁴ A faction is concerned with securing influence on a particular policy Bill or some Bills and its members are content to stage their activities within the party framework. Because they are happy to remain under the banner of the parent party, they do not wish to split away as on most or all other issues they are satisfied with party policy.

Rose claimed that to enable a faction to be so classified it must have a clearly identifiable leader.¹⁵ In contrast, I claim that this is neither a necessary nor contingent requirement of a faction. Firstly, as suggested above, historical perceptions of the word 'faction' have prevented parties and inner party groups from wanting to be associated with this term. If a faction's aim is to overthrow the political leadership of the party, or replace a substantial section of the party's policy programme with its own, then any factional leader will be seen as a potential challenger to the party leadership. In order to avoid any such perception, factions may, therefore, avoid having a leader for this very reason and instead will operate a system of collective leadership. This leadership structure prevents a faction from being labelled as a maverick group whose objection is to replace the political leadership of the party, or who wish to break away. Secondly, if the faction can demonstrate that its objectives are restricted to limited policy areas and in all other areas its members are loyal to the party programme, then its members' views are more likely to be given serious attention by the rest of the party. In some circumstances however, the members of a faction may be so opposed to the party leader's stance on an issue that they see the only possible redress is to oppose the continuance of the Party leader. In this event a faction would need to put forward their own candidate. It is at this point, however, that a faction starts to transcend the boundaries between a faction and a split. It may, therefore, be possible for a section of the party to split from the rest of the party on just one issue.

Faction versus Tendency, Party and Splits.

The common mistake many authors have made when talking about factions is that they have confused them with other forms of political groups and activity. A faction can be identified on a linear diagram between a tendency and a split.



A faction may well start off as a tendency and could develop into a split within a party and eventually establish itself as a new party in its own right. It is important to place boundaries between these concepts to enable discussion of each stage in its own right and to ensure the correct

¹⁴ Whilst a necessary characteristic of split is that it represents a direct challenge to the existing party leadership, other political groups within a party or even individuals may plot to try to overthrow the existing leadership and replace it with their own. It also cannot be ruled out that a split could occur over just one issue.

¹⁵ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 323.

application of terms to political activity. Accordingly a brief discussion of the various concepts follows.

1. Tendency

Richard Rose, a prolific scholar of British Politics, defined a 'tendency' as "a body of attitudes expressed in Parliament about a broad range of problems held together by a more or less coherent political ideology."¹⁶ As an example, Rose pointed to the general "right-wing and left-wing tendencies" in both the British Conservative and Labour parties.¹⁷ A necessary characteristic of a tendency requires, therefore, that a number of individuals, who exist within a particular party due to some belief in an ideological view of society, hold and/or express similar views over various policy objectives. A second necessary characteristic of a tendency as Rose stated is that a tendency does not constitute a "self-consciously organised"¹⁸ group. Rose correctly asserted that a tendency refers to an ad-hoc grouping of individuals who may have common interests, but specifically do not constitute a recognised collection identifiable as a group with a specific aim. These individuals may be aware that others within the party hold similar views. However, whilst these individuals may either inadvertently appear as a group, or influence the policy outcomes of the leadership, they do not knowingly do so. A tendency, therefore, does not describe formal co-ordinated political behaviour within a party.

Rose suggested that a third necessary characteristic of a tendency is its temporary nature.¹⁹ This he believed was due to members switching between various tendencies within a party according to their prevailing interests. It is not clear however from Rose's argument that a tendency by definition must constitute a temporary state of affairs. For like a faction, a particular tendency may either be a short or long-term occurrence, dependent on the continuance of particular views and their practical relevance being held by members. Rose's belief that members switch between tendencies according to their particular policy interests represents a contingent, not a necessary characteristic of a tendency.

2. Party Split

A party split occurs when a faction seeks more than influence over certain policy outcomes. That is, when as a group, it becomes seriously disaffected with the whole policy spectrum offered by its leadership, or perhaps with the actual conduct of the administration. Baker, Gamble and Ludlam have defined a split as "a formal breakaway by a substantial group, followed by the establishment of a new party or alliance with an existing one."²⁰ A faction will progress to a split when the faction no longer feels comfortable under the identification of a sub-unit of the wider political party. It

¹⁶ Rose, R "Parties, Factions and Tendencies" p 37.

¹⁷ Rose, R "Parties, Factions and Tendencies" p 38.

¹⁸ Rose, R "Parties, Factions and Tendencies" p 38.

¹⁹ Rose, R "Parties, Factions and Tendencies" p 38.

²⁰ Baker, D, Gamble, A, & Ludlam, S "1846...1906...1996? Conservative Splits and European Integration" p 421. *Political Quarterly*, 1993, Volume 64(4) pp 420-434. (Hereinafter, Baker, D, Gamble, A & Ludlam, S "Conservative Splits and European Integration").

desires a new identity, as its principles become incompatible with those of the leadership. A faction's aims and behavioural patterns are distinct from those of a split, where the former can be identified by various strategies and manoeuvres to influence policy. This is in direct contrast to the aims and behaviour of a party split. A necessary characteristic of a split must be that it seeks either to directly challenge and overthrow the existing leadership and/or policy programme, or it breaks away to form a new party.

For a faction, obtaining the support of the wider political party to achieve its aims is a contingent characteristic. For a split, this is a necessary characteristic, since if a split seeks to overthrow the existing party leadership and replace it with itself, it needs to mobilise as much support and acceptance from the wider political party as it can. If a split fails in this objective, the group breaks away from the existing party and forms either a new party or joins with another existing party that is sympathetic to its views. Like a faction, a split must necessarily represent an organised cohesive group in order to pursue its aims. A split's behavioural characteristics are similar in behavioural style to a faction except that they often occur on a much larger scale.

3. A Party

Many authors have attempted to determine both the definition and purpose of a party. There exists an in-exhaustive supply of literature on this subject,²¹ however, a few key points can be drawn. A party as discussed before, is a political organisation, which is differentiated from a faction on the basis of a mass organisation and the pursuit of electoral victory. Madgwick succinctly clarified a definition of a party as an "organised group seeking political power....and aiming to form, or form part of, a government"²². Though there are many points of difference between a party and a faction, it is not the intention of this study to list them. It is sufficient here to state that a faction is distinguishable from a party in that a party seeks power whereas a faction seeks to influence the policy of its party when either in power or in opposition.

The above discussions have clarified points of distinctions between factions and other political entities. The confusion over such distinctions, which exists among many scholars, owes much to historical derivations and connotations of these concepts.

Historical Development

The term 'faction' is a derivation of the Latin verb 'facere - to do'²³ and came into political usage in the eighteenth century to describe a collection of individuals whose activities were characterised by their degree of self-interest.²⁴ Factions were historically seen as a political group within a

²¹ See Duverger, M "Political Parties: their organisation and activity in the modern state" London, Methuen, 1964, for the classic text on party behaviour, organisation and purpose.

²² Madgwick, P "Introduction to British Politics" p 254, quoted in Garner, R & Kelly R "British Political Parties Today" p1.

²³ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Edition, Volume 10, p 121.

²⁴ Sartori, G "Parties and Party Systems: A framework for analysis" Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p 3. (Hereinafter Sartori, G, Parties and Party Systems").

political party who “put their party aims and interests above those of the state or public and employ unscrupulous or questionable means.”²⁵ As a result, derogatory perceptions of factions arose. This alarmed political philosophers of the time, such as Bolingbroke and Burke, who were anxious during the growth of “small parties” in the House of Commons in Britain during the eighteenth century, to assert that parties were useful and harmless entities in society. Philosophers were quick to point out that factions, unlike parties, were harmful to society. “The term party is not in itself loathsome, the term faction always is.”²⁶ As a result factions were seen as evil entities within parties, a connotation which has transcended centuries to modern day society. This helps to explain the reluctance of British political parties (mainly the Conservative Party) today, to accept or recognise the existence of factions within their own party. Dissident behaviour instead is determined as internal disagreements that are of little concern and easily resolved. Such a belief has heralded the abundance of confusion in adequately describing internal disputes within parties today, which really should be described as factions.

Sartori accurately contended that factions are in fact a prelude to parties. This is a valid proposition as before the existence of parties, different groups of politically organised people struggled for political power.²⁷ Struggles for political power rarely display pleasant characteristics for the political observer and from this view it is easy to see why factions were often regarded with distaste. Once parties are in existence however, factions take the form of internal organised political activity. There is no reason however, to still equate the evil conceptions of factions prior to a party’s existence, to those within a party. A faction is capable of performing legitimate functions, such as scrutinising policy when the party leadership is overloaded. Connotations of an internal faction being evil in its endeavours to overthrow the political leadership is really a reference today, to either political competition between parties or a party split as previously discussed. Thus when Burke defined a party as distinct from a faction on the premise that a party “as a body of men, united for promoting their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed.....will easily be distinguishable from the mean and interested struggle for place and emolument”²⁸ he was actually describing a faction as perceived today.

Contemporary definitions of factions whilst concluding that factions are necessarily sub-units of a party, do not provide any further clarification. This has aided and perpetuated both confusion over and mistrust of factions. For example, Huntington, when referring to the forty-two parties of Korea, described factions as of “little durability and no structure...they are typically the projections

²⁵ “Faction” Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th Edition, Volume 10 p 121.

²⁶ Voltaire, “Faction” (1778 Geneva Ed. of the Encyclopedie, Volume XIII, p 765) quoted in Sartori, G “Parties and Party Systems” p3.

²⁷ See Sartori, G “Parties and Party Systems” especially Chapter one.

²⁸ Burke, E. (“The works of Edmund Burke, Boston, Little Brown, 1839, pp 425-6) quoted in Sartori, G, “Parties and Party Systems” p 9.

of individual ambitions.”²⁹ It has already been contended that factions are structured entities, which exist until their aims are achieved. Whilst factions undoubtedly are composed of individuals and their collective aspirations, Huntington’s reference equally depicts the scenario of a chair-less board meeting. Ranney and Kendall correctly depict that a faction is an “element inside a party.” They are perhaps over-zealous in their suggestion that factions seek to “control the personnel and policies of the party.”³⁰ For factions can only ever seek to influence a certain element of party policy else they progress, if they attempt more, to a party split. It is equally dubious whether factions can control all elements of the personnel of the party, as government whips for example, appear at times to have difficulty in exacting compliance from dissidents over policy.

This study distinguishes itself from other conceptions of factions over the political purpose of a faction. As is shown in Table 1.1, it is claimed that the purpose of a political faction within a parliamentary party is to influence the party leadership on one or more policy issues. A faction does not attempt to replace the whole of the policy platform of the party, which it has been suggested was the purpose of a political split. The author's definition of a faction is distinct from Seyd, for example, who characterised a faction as “a group of party members operating within the framework of a political party which is consciously organised for replacing the policies and/or leadership of the parent party.”³¹ Richard Rose comes closest amongst contemporary definitions in adequately defining a faction as “a group of individuals based on representatives in Parliament who seek to further a broad range of policies through consciously organised political activity” which “persist through time.”³² However, whilst Rose suggests that factions exist only over a variety of issues, else the organisation becomes a pressure group, he overlooks the essence of a faction, that is, by actively seeking to determine or influence the policy of its leadership over one specific issue, a faction is acting as an internal pressure group within the party. David Hine in his discussion of factionalism in West European Parties identified a fourth unit, 'issue groups', within parties, which he identified as Rose's "ad-hoc combination of politicians in agreement upon one particular issue at any one moment in time.”³³ Hine distinguished between an issue group and a faction or a tendency on the basis of "scope and duration” and made a further distinction between an issue group and a faction, on the basis that a faction tries to "exercise, or share in the exercise of, overall power within the party," whilst an issue group "tries to influence the way in which power is exercised by others on given questions.”³⁴ Barnes, in contrast made the distinction between an issue group and a

²⁹ Huntington, S (“Political Order in Changing Societies” pp 412-413 Volume 1) quoted in Sartori, G “Parties and Party Systems” p 72.

³⁰ Ranney, A & Kendall, W “Democracy and the American Party System” New York, Harcourt Brace, 1956, p 126, quoted in Rose, R “The Problem of Party Government” p 320.

³¹ Seyd, P “Factionalism in the Conservative Party. The Monday Club” p 465. Government and Opposition, Autumn 1972, pp 464-487. (Hereinafter, Seyd, P “Factionalism in the Conservative Party”).

³² Rose, R “The Problem of Party Government” p 320.

³³ Hine, D “Factionalism in West European Parties: A framework for analysis” p 39 West European Politics, Volume 15, January 1982, pp 36-53. (Hereinafter, Hine, D “Factionalism in West European Parties”).

³⁴ Hine, D “Factionalism in West European Parties” p 39.

faction on the basis that the former operates exclusively in the parliamentary arena and is not concerned "with the ambitions of its members" and the latter, by seeking to control the "party, necessarily aspire to a coherent platform which extends across a range of policy areas."³⁵ Both these authors identified members of issue groups as either composing 'politicians' or parliamentary membership.³⁶ Generally, issue groups have been identified by academics as forming around single issues and some suggest the level of organised activity within these groups on occasions can reach intense levels.³⁷ Seyd referred to an 'alliance', which he defined as "an organised group of persons within the parent political party, which is concerned to replace the policy of the party on a single issue and the existence of these issues, unites persons who on other issues would differ."³⁸ Once the issue is resolved he claimed the alliance would disband. In general to date, internal opposition to European legislation by the Conservative Euro-sceptics, (notably the 1970 Group of conservative anti-marketters) has been placed in this category of issue groups by academics.³⁹ It would be quite feasible to suggest that on the basis of some of these definitions, the Conservative Euro-sceptics represent issue groups. To do so, however, would be misleading.⁴⁰ It will be shown through this study that the behaviour of the Euro-sceptic members of the CPP represents a clear example of factional activity within the party.

It is clear that contemporary as well as historical definitions of factions are caught up in a web of confusion, and do not clearly distinguish between the different forms of political entities that exist within parties today. Whilst it is hoped that these errors have been clarified,⁴¹ this study seeks to go one step further. As well as clarifying a definition, it intends to depict and characterise modes of factional behaviour. In order to do this a review of the causes and limitations of factions is discussed together with an exploration of the different modes of tactics and manoeuvres available to them in order to procure their ends.

³⁵ Barnes, J "Ideology and Faction" p 346 Seldon, A and Ball, S Eds "Conservative Century The Conservative Party since 1900" Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994. (Hereinafter, Barnes, J "Ideology and Faction").

³⁶ Barnes for example, claimed that the activity of such groups, such as the 'Tory Reform Group', the 'One Nation Group' and the 'Monday Club', play an important part in the development of Conservative Party policy and their activities usually attract "public attention when they fail to 'achieve the degree of influence which they feel they merit on the issue in question." Barnes, J "Ideology and Faction" p 346.

³⁷ For example, see Hine, D "Factionalism in West European Parties" p 39.

³⁸ Seyd, P "Factionalism in the Conservative Party" p 465.

³⁹ For example, Seyd placed 'The Suez Group' and 'The Tariff Reform League' in this category. See also Hine, D "Factionalism in West European Parties" p 39.

⁴⁰ It was suggested earlier that there is no reason to suggest that factions cannot be single issue. It should be noted here and, as will be demonstrated in later Chapters, the European issue is not synonymous to all rebels there were a number of different issue-related reasons for rebellion to European legislation in all periods under study by this work.

⁴¹ Graham has also recently provided a brief review of the development of factional terminology and usage in academic discussion. See Graham, B D "Representation and Party Politics. A Comparative Perspective" Oxford, Blackwell, 1993.

Factions - Origins, Dynamics and Processes

A faction may come into existence for a variety of reasons. It has been suggested that a faction often starts on an evolutionary path originating as a tendency where a collection of individuals identify a common interest or belief between them. Once the level of concern intensifies, these individuals may decide to act to influence or alter the party line. It is at the point where the group becomes organised to act for the furtherance of their aims that a tendency passes through a transitional phase to become a faction. Various typologies have been documented to date which help explain why factions come into being. Janda, in his comprehensive study of parties world-wide identified the following types of factions: ideological, issue, leadership, strategic and tactical.⁴² He suggested that the latter two are more likely to be a by-product of one of the former types of factions. For he believed that factions are unlikely to emerge merely out of dissatisfaction with the party's strategy or tactics, but rather that the initial cause is probably due to concern over a policy issue of which the particular strategy is a by-product. I cannot be ruled out completely however, that a faction may exist in order to influence the mechanisms through which the party leadership evolves and implements policy.

Janda plausibly depicted that a faction can arise over a policy issue when there exists "disagreement over one or more substantive issues in politics."⁴³ An ideological faction may emerge when a group disagrees with an ideological principle held by the rest of the party. Janda suggested that a leadership faction would occur when a group of individuals unite "behind a person due to their personal attributes."⁴⁴ He did not identify, however, that a faction could arise out of opposition to a particular leader. This does not mean that a leadership faction would necessarily become a split, for it is merely unhappy with the particular style of the leader. As Janda pointed out however, a leadership faction is also likely to be supported by issue or ideological considerations. The removal of a party leader may be the only way a faction can effect its aims. This consideration was certainly viable, given the debate over John Major's survival as Prime Minister following the internal conflicts within the CPP over Europe. Meny similarly suggested that, "parties which are endowed with strong ideologies but still accept debate are likely to contain factions which clash over the more or less dogmatic interpretation of the party creed."⁴⁵ On the other hand he suggested that party leaders are an essential pre-requisite for factionalism to occur within parties. He claimed for

⁴²Janda, K "Political Parties - A Cross national survey" pp 119-123 London, Free Press, 1980. (Hereinafter Janda, K "Political Parties"). Hine also suggested more recently that distinctions could be made between factional conflicts which arise out of genuine disagreements over strategy, policies or ideology, and which, while possibly couched in these terms, really represents a personal struggle for power between different leaders and their respective followers." Hine, D "Factionalism in West European Politics" p 42.

⁴³ Janda, K "Political Parties" pp 119-124.

⁴⁴ Janda, K "Political Parties" p 120.

⁴⁵ Meny, Y "Government and Politics in Western Europe, Britain, France, Italy and Germany" 2nd Edition revised by Andrew Knapp, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, p104. See pp103-108 for Meny's account of Factionalism in West European Parties. (Hereinafter, Meny, Y "Government and Politics in Western Europe").

example that, "there are no factions without leaders, whatever the party, and that even with the most ideological factions, leadership is always an essential cause of internal divisions."⁴⁶

Whilst such typologies are useful they are not conclusive. For a number of different factions may run concurrently in any party, or different sub-factions of a faction may exist, where the common tie is stronger than that of the party banner in ensuring cohesion and unity between different individual interests. As factions centre on individuals, they represent the internal micro-processes of political activity in parties. Accordingly, any analysis of behaviour and motivations must take account of personal characteristics and attitudes as well as those expressed collectively as a group. Further analysis of group behaviour is considered in Chapter six.

As the aim of a faction is to influence or determine the policy decisions of the party leadership, membership of a faction must imply that members are dissidents in that they are not prepared to act in line with the wishes of the leadership. Dissidents have an array of existing structures and channels of communication both within the party and in parliament, which they can harness to achieve their aims. Whilst these structures are advantageous, they are also restrictive in that the same channels and structures are available to the party leadership to constrain dissident activity and attempts at influence.

Intra-party dissent is generally recognised by the public through either press reports or when a member votes against the government line in a division lobby. Whilst this represents visible dissidence to onlookers, this only represents an extreme form of behaviour as a final threat to the government to take their views seriously. Much factional activity is conducted behind the curtains and often may be resolved before it ever reaches the public platform and more factional activity, therefore, may be present in the CPP than is initially thought. A government may for instance, acquiesce at the first sign of internal opposition within its ranks by making concessions or dropping the motion from its agenda altogether.⁴⁷ Alternatively, the leadership may tackle the opposition full on, refusing to surrender to internal pressures. If both sides refuse to acquiesce, conflicts are more likely to become highly explosive and publicly visible. At such a stage, both sides may try to elicit the support of fellow MPs and public opinion to help their case.

The most plausible reason for a faction's existence is that it comes into being to satisfy more fully the needs of some party members than the wider party is able to do. It has already been stated that parties are composed of many individuals with different interests and needs. Associated to this is the fact that members come from a variety of constituencies, which impose different demands on their representatives. Of vital consideration also are a member's own interests and ambitions which

⁴⁶ Meny, Y "Government and Politics in Western Europe" p 105.

⁴⁷ The above points are discussed further in Chapter six.

may affect his behaviour in the Commons. As Angus Maude has pointed out, it is no wonder that “the juxtaposition of seeming incompatibles generates tensions within the party.”⁴⁸

If factions do have a legitimate role to play in seeking to satisfy more fully the needs of party members and their constituencies, it is important to understand why dissent within a party is often regarded by the party leadership with such disdain. With the expansion of the franchise in the late nineteenth century, the public switched their support from their individual MP to the party organisation in parliament. This occurred as Norton succinctly pointed out, because “to attract the support of new electors, measures had to be promised to meet their needs, and promised measures could only be carried through parliament if MPs displayed sufficient unity in their voting behaviour” and as a result “electors no longer identified with individual MPs but increasingly with the party.”⁴⁹ Ensuring party cohesion in order to achieve the demands of the public thus became an intrinsically necessary goal for the party leadership. As parties today are unable practically to meet all their electors' needs, voters are forced to opt for the best package offered by each competitive party. Party cohesion remains vital to the success of a contemporary party in office, for as Ozbundun argued, “the parliamentary system creates a strong incentive for maintaining party cohesion by making almost every vote in the legislative assembly a vote of confidence in the Government.”⁵⁰

Party cohesion is thus regarded as of the utmost importance by the party leadership. This is an important factor in subduing the incidence of factions within a party. Barnes has recently argued for instance, that the electorate has shown that it is willing to punish a divided party, which can contribute to electoral defeat. As a result, he argued that “since they value being in Government, Conservatives preach the virtues of loyalty and are openly resistant to the development of factions.”⁵¹ As the party's survival in office is determined by ensuring support for Government policy, the party leadership can apply a lot of pressure to an individual or groups of MPs to exact their support if they threaten to oppose the Government on policy issues. It is this sort of pressure that has led to accusations of MPs constituting mere ‘lobby fodder’ in the Commons.

There is increasing evidence today, however, which suggests that MPs are more willing to rebel and/or defy the wishes of their leadership, despite pressures from the party leadership to act as a unified party. Burch and Moran have attributed this to a changing social profile in the Commons.⁵²

⁴⁸ Maude, A “The Conservative Crisis - 1” *The Spectator*, 15 March 1963, p 319, quoted in Norton, P “Conservative Dissidents – Dissent within the Conservative Party 1970-74” London, Temple-Morris, 1978, p 29.

⁴⁹ Norton, P, “Conservative Dissidents - Dissent within the Conservative Party 1970-74” London, Temple-Morris, 1978, p 25. (Hereinafter Norton, P “Conservative Dissidents”).

⁵⁰ Ozbundun, E “Party Cohesion in Western Democracies: A Causal Analysis” 1970, Sage p 380, quoted in Norton, P “Conservative Dissidents” p 26. Rose, in contrast, argued that this idea is a “constitutional myth”. Rose, R “Still the Era of Party Government” *Parliamentary Affairs* p 296.

⁵¹ Barnes, J “Ideology and Factions” p 345.

⁵² See Burch, M & Moran, M “The Changing Political Elite” pp 131-143, Burch, M & Moran, M Eds “British Politics: A Reader” Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1987).

Until the late 1960's the Conservative Party was largely composed of an older generation of members of public school origin. Kelly & Garner established that in "1945, 83 per cent of Tory MPs were public school educated" compared to 1983, where "a majority of the 'new boys' had been educated at state secondary schools."⁵³ They have identified that representatives are entering the Commons today often at a much lower age with a state secondary education. These new representatives, they claim, appear to be more willing to actively participate in politics and to criticise where necessary, than was previously the case. Norton however, in his study of Conservative dissenters within the party between 1970-74, was unable to find a correlation between prior socialisation and a member's voting behaviour.⁵⁴ He concluded that whilst such a factor may or may not encourage a member to dissent, "it does not motivate it."⁵⁵ A profile of the Conservative rebels will be established in this study to explore whether conclusions can be drawn between their social make-up and acts of dissidence. That is, can the anti-European members of the CPP be distinguished as a group as a result of their social origins?

The incidence of factions

The importance of party cohesion as a restraining factor to internal party dissidence has been briefly summarised and this factor cannot be underestimated. Members are subjected to pressure to toe the party line through the Government's machinery, the Whips, their Constituency Associations and from their peers in Parliament. It may be that a rebellious MP is acting on behalf of his constituency interests, in which case he may seek support for his opposition to a Bill from his local party organisation. An MP, however, may feel he needs to take a stand due to personal conviction over an issue. In any such circumstance, an MP is under fire from two quarters, pressure to conform and pressure to rebel. Norton in his study "Conservative Dissidents", provided some useful conclusions about dissident behaviour. He sought to explore why Members in the 1970-74 Parliament, dissented to the extent they did and to identify any pressures to which they were subjected. This study focuses entirely on the anti-European rebels of the CPP between 1970 and 1994. It will examine the nature of their dissent and ultimately address the rationale behind their rebellions. This research is also concerned with the pressures that these members faced and how they were handled.

There are various tactics that can be employed by a party leadership to ensure unity within the parliamentary party. It is often assumed that a Constituency Association can bring much pressure to bear on the individual MP. How true this is, is questionable. Traditionally the main threat a constituency can bring to bear on an MP is the threat of de-selection. It is rare however, in the history of British politics for this tactic to be employed.⁵⁶ A further force associated in exacting party unity, is the Prime Minister's use of private discussions, patronage and parliamentary

⁵³ Garner, R & Kelly, R "British Political Parties Today" p 110.

⁵⁴ See Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 217-221, for a fuller discussion of his argument and methodology.

⁵⁵ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 220.

⁵⁶ This is discussed further in Chapter seven.

privilege. Evidence as to the effectiveness of these tools is again conflicting. A Prime Minister also has the power to withdraw the whip from a Member and the ability to invoke a vote of confidence if internal dissent in the party is carried too far. There also exists within a party an all pervading ideology, which conditions members to act in a certain way. Layton-Henry argued for example that a consensus had arisen over time over prescribed methods for expressing dissent within the CPP.⁵⁷ All of these forces bring pressure to bear on an MP to prevent him opposing the party leadership in an adverse manner.

Should an MP decide to dissent, despite the above pressures to conform, there are a number of fora which he can utilise. Usually, he will find some sympathetic supporters amongst his parliamentary colleagues. He can also utilise the parliamentary structures of committees or employ delaying techniques on the floor to delay a Bill to guarantee more time. Information bulletins can be circulated within the Commons to increase awareness and elicit support of the issue. Appeals can also be made for support, to his local party and the general public via the media.

The Nature of Dissent.

Dissidence can take a number of different forms. If Members desire to influence policy they have ample opportunities to express their concerns during the legislative process. Norton in his book "Conservative Dissidents" identified seven formal stages during the legislative process where members have the opportunity to present their views. These he identified as before, during or after; the pre-introduction stage, the First reading, the Second reading, the committee stage, the report stage, the Third reading, and finally after the Bill has received Royal Assent.⁵⁸ Norton's classification is useful in that it provides a chronology of when dissent may take place within the legislative process. It does not, however, afford analysis of informal procedures that may be utilised to influence policy in advance of the legislative process, for example, private appeals by a member to fellow colleagues for support, or to the Whips to encourage the party leadership to reconsider their stance. This study will harness both informal and formal mechanisms in tracing the development of the activities of the rebels over Europe and to assess how they tried to influence Conservative Government policy during the course of the debates. Rebels have a variety of tactics and strategies, which they can employ collectively, or as individuals to affect their aims. Dissent may be expressed in parliament in committees or on the floor, privately to the Cabinet, to the Prime Minister or to the Whips and publicly to the press. Norton again has provided a useful table that depicts the different forms of dissent available to an MP.⁵⁹ Whilst this table is invaluable as a guide and will be utilised by this study, it does not make reference to the personal relations between colleagues of similar sympathy, which will also be explored.

⁵⁷ Layton-Henry, Z "Constituency Autonomy in the Conservative Party" p 400, Parliamentary Affairs, 29, 1976, pp 396-403. (Hereinafter, Layton-Henry, Z "Constituency Autonomy in the Conservative Party").

⁵⁸ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 30.

⁵⁹ See Chapter six, Table 6.1.

Once these various stages have been analysed, it is necessary to consider what form dissent takes and in particular whether any correlation between a particular stage and, the form of dissent can be determined. Since different tactics may be employed to achieve different ends, there is no reason to assume, that an extreme form of dissent may not be undertaken immediately. Having briefly summarised the nature and forms of dissent, a fuller discussion will take place with reference to the Conservative Party and, in particular a consideration of why the phenomenon of factions has not been closely associated with this party to date.

Factions and the CPP

Traditionally, the CPP has been seen as the party of unity within British Politics. Any disagreements that have taken place have been kept firmly behind closed doors, save for the historic splits in 1846 and 1903 over the repeal of the Corn Laws and Tariff Reforms respectively.⁶⁰ This claim is valid up to the late 1960's. In the early 1970's, Norton found evidence of an unprecedented level of public dissidence within the Conservative Party.⁶¹ This he attributed to be primarily the result of backbench dissatisfaction with the Prime Minister, Edward Heath. It can be argued that this party unity has been preserved by an effective propagandising of political ideology, which stresses party unity. Riddell identified this as a sense of "Tory tribalism" amongst party members, which he believes promotes a sense of "loyalty - not necessarily to the leader...but to its own survival."⁶² Survival is an essential undercurrent, which runs close to the heart of many Conservative MPs. It can be argued that Mrs Thatcher's departure from leadership of the party in 1990 was the result of the Party's actions to preserve unity and their electoral chances.⁶³ The Conservatives represent a Party that has been in office for much of the post war period. They have come to both know and enjoy the trappings of political office. This has had a two-fold effect: firstly they see themselves as the Party of Government, in that they regard as natural, the right to govern and secondly, they regard themselves as the only Party capable of governing. In the party's view, therefore, any attempt to threaten this status quo such as dissidence must quickly be marginalised. Divisions within the CPP remain severely disfavoured and an MP is regarded with contempt if he fails to support the superior ethos. To appear as a party, publicly dominated by rifts and factional activity, in the eyes of many Conservative Members, equates to political suicide.

Many academics have argued that the Conservative Party is a party of "dispositions"⁶⁴ which lacks

⁶⁰ Baker, D, Gamble, A and Ludlam, S "Conservative Splits and European Integration" p 421.

⁶¹ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 61. See also pp 206-215 for detailed analysis of his conclusions.

⁶² Riddell, P "The Conservatives after 1992" p 423, *Political Quarterly*, 63, 1992, pp 422-431.

⁶³ Layton-Henry, Z also has argued that "the overwhelming priority given to electoral success is a major force to unity in the Conservative Party." *Constituency Autonomy in the Conservative Party* p 401.

⁶⁴ See Oakeshott, M "Rationalism in Politics and other essays" p 168, London, Methuen, 1962.

an all-pervading ideology.⁶⁵ This, they believe, has minimised divisions within a party, which evolves policy in a pragmatic manner in response to emerging problems. The party is not without its own breed of ideology, as different strands of ideology can be found within the party,⁶⁶ for instance, the defence of tradition; conservation of what is known; a belief in the free market and liberal economic thinking as espoused by Mrs Thatcher. These different strands, to varying degrees, have the capacity to diminish or fuel conflicts within the party. Although this study postulates that conflicts over the issue of Europe are a prime cause of factionalism within the CPP, it may be that the issue is related to others. Accordingly, a weaker alternative position of this study, which supports the former, claims that since 1975, a polarisation of ideological beliefs occurred. This ideological diversity which allegedly emerged between the two wings over domestic policy, may have some claim to being a causal factor in the incidence of an anti-European faction within the party. One line of inquiry which will be explored by this study, is to assess to what extent Mrs Thatcher's ideological legacy has contributed to the high level of dissident behaviour within the parliamentary party over the issue of Europe. What can be said conclusively, however, is that a political practice of maintaining unity and cohesion exists. For this is believed by many members of the party to be the reason for their success in political survival this century.

A more plausible reason for the low incidence of intra-party disputes within the CPP has much more to do with the internal make-up and organisation of the party. Unlike the Labour Party that is seen as a grass roots organisation, the Conservative Party historically is regarded as a top-down model of activity and influence. It is this, which has led to the concealment and low incidence of divisions. Seyd has argued for example, that the "organisation of the Conservative Party affords little opportunity for factional activity."⁶⁷ Garner and Kelly make an important observation that in contrast to the British Labour Party, the CPP predates the wider party organisation, which exists today.⁶⁸ They identify that the wider Constituency Parties were designed for the interests of the Members to elicit support from the wider community. This may explain why Members who have dissented, have often commented that they received little pressure from their local party to conform, and why the threat of de-selection may not be seen as significant. Seyd also suggested that conflict within the party has been minimised by the lack of "social and educational diversity" amongst Conservative MPs, in contrast to members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, which he suggested may make appeals to party loyalty amongst Conservative members more effective.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ According to Baker, D, Gamble A and Ludlam, S "this is a party which officially denies that it poses an ideology." They argued, however, that recent 'internal debate' within the CPP suggests the opposite, that is in their words, "a surfeit of ideology" p 279. "Mapping Conservative Faultlines: Problems of Typology" Contemporary Political Studies 1994, Volume 1, Dunleavy, P and Stanyer, J, Eds "Political Studies Association of the UK and Belfast" 1994.

⁶⁶ See Norton, P & Aughey, A "Conservatives and Conservatism" London, Temple Smith, 1981, especially Chapters one & two, for their analysis of varieties of Conservatism and Conservative principles.

⁶⁷ Seyd, P "Factionalism in the Conservative Party" p 466. Seyd also argued that factional conflict within the CPP has been constrained by a lack of ideological content to the party's programmes, p 465.

⁶⁸ See Garner, R & Kelly, R "British Political Parties" p 99 for a fuller account of this analysis.

⁶⁹ Seyd, P "Factionalism in the Conservative Party" pp 465-466.

Garner and Kelly point out that much of the autonomy vested in the parliamentary party is invested in the Conservative leader.⁷⁰ This has given rise to many claims that the Conservative Party is 'leader-centric'. Conservative leaders do appear to have the ability to demonstrate a certain amount of influence and freedom in deciding policy. Evidence of this can be found in personalised policy objectives announced by respective leaders. Unlike the Labour Party, policy in the Conservative Party is not decided at annual party conferences, and lacks any formal, codified mechanisms through which policy is evolved. CPP policy usually is announced through the party leader's statement in Parliament. This lack of formal mechanisms for evolving policy and as Ramsden argued, the lack of "binding rules on the central question of the leader's authority and the making of policy", has conveyed the picture that "all policy decisions are made by the leader."⁷¹ I suggest that this leader-centric view is now out-dated, for the leader of the party remains accountable to his colleagues and does not have such a free rein as is at first assumed. Ramsden said for example, that the Party leader often will have discussed policy with colleagues and his Cabinet and would have given consideration to external party parliamentary opinion.⁷² It is also suggested in the conclusion of this work that the party leader must closely consider intra-parliamentary party opinions especially where cleavages on policy issues lie when formulating party policy.

It should be noted that the formal authority of the party leader of the CPP in determining official party policy has remained unchanged over the period under review of this thesis. What has changed is that since 1970, Conservative MPs have shown an increasing willingness to rebel against their party leader on important policy Bills, significantly on occasions through organised collective activity. As a result of these rebellions, this thesis suggests that Conservative party leaders since 1970, have had to try to manage these rebellions within the CPP to ensure that party policy is enacted. In this thesis, it is suggested that intra-party rebellions occur when MPs consider a policy bill of fundamental importance to themselves or the nation is debated in Parliament, to which they are opposed or which in their view is given insufficient attention by the party leadership. Such rebellions are more likely to occur, when intra-party opponents believe they have a realistic opportunity of influencing legislation.⁷³

⁷⁰ See Garner, R & Kelly, R "British Political Parties Today" pp 100-107 for their account of this occurrence.

⁷¹ Ramsden, J "The Making of Conservative Party Policy", New York, Longman, 1980, p 2.

⁷² Ramsden, J "The Making of Conservative Party Policy" 1980, New York, Longman, pp 2-3.

⁷³ In Chapter 5, I discuss how collective rebellion arose in opposition to the Maastricht treaty on pp 141-2. Here I discuss how three events resulted in organised rebellion. These were firstly the sacking of Mrs Thatcher and her replacement by John Major, whose Euro-scepticism over EC legislation was doubted by many of the party's Euro-sceptics. Secondly, the Government's small majority led many Euro-sceptics to believe that rebellion could result in their bringing influence to bear on the outcome of the Maastricht treaty. Finally, a Conservative rebellion occurred because many Conservative MPs believed that the Maastricht Treaty would be disastrous if implemented for the UK. See also, p 261 for a model of how party dissent arises and its consequences.

The Prime Minister, however, undeniably has at his disposal many devices to exact loyalty from Party Members. These include the use of patronage,⁷⁴ parliamentary privilege (often on recommendations of the Party Whips), threats to withdraw the Whip and the ability to threaten to dissolve parliament.⁷⁵ The threat of a short-term political career or removal from office can act as a crucial constraint in any career politician's eyes. A dissenting politician must prepare a cost-benefit analysis to assess the benefits of pursuing his current course of action or the potential costs to his political career. For those with no such aspirations for high office, this may not serve as an effective constraint. Conversely, as well as denying political appointments to rebels, a Prime Minister may offer an appointment as a bribe to quell threats of dissidence: whether this is an effective weapon in the leader's armoury depends greatly on the individual's own aspirations. Threats to withdraw the whip can also play an important part in a dissenter's decision to continue his actions. As will be discussed in Chapter seven, it is dubious whether this was seen as an effective tool by the Conservative Euro-rebels. Prior to the Maastricht debates, the last time Conservative Party managers withdrew the Conservative Whip from an MP was in 1942.⁷⁶

The threat to dissolve parliament or invoke a vote of confidence over a policy issue can be deemed to have much more impact, for this threatens the security of an MP in parliament and for the Conservative Party, proffers the unthinkable, that the opposition may attain power. The latter device was employed by both Edward Heath and John Major when faced with internal divisions over their respective European policies. Although John Major was successful in exacting support for his Maastricht Bill in 1993 after using the vote of confidence ploy, it is arguable whether this constrained future rebellion or whether more ominously, it has served as a basis for future rebellion. As Baker, Gamble and Ludlam pointed out "the boil of ratification may have been finally lanced, but the poison is still in the party's blood."⁷⁷ The Prime Minister's power to dissolve Parliament is seen by Alderman and Cross to be "a formidable factor in preventing dissidence within the parliamentary party."⁷⁸ However, a Prime Minister cannot continually threaten votes of confidence within his party without loss of credibility. As Jones has claimed "a Prime Minister who can carry

⁷⁴ See Alderman, K "The Prime Minister and the Appointment of Ministers: An exercise in Political Bargaining" *Parliamentary Affairs* Volume 29, 1976, for a useful discussion on the relationship and power of the Prime Minister in Ministerial Appointments. He suggested that the Prime Minister's ability to choose, rather than his right to choose Ministers is not as clear cut as may at first be assumed. Rather that political appointment may be the result of complex bargaining procedures between the Prime Minister and individuals concerned.

⁷⁵ Alderman and Cross, suggested that this power is "deployable in at least three target areas: it is a potential sanction against dissidents within his parliamentary party; it enhances his prestige vis-à-vis his Cabinet colleagues; and it secures for him and his party an electoral advantage over opposition parties." Alderman, R K & Cross, J A "The Prime Minister and the Decision to Dissolve" *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 1974-5, (pp 386-404) p 387. (Hereinafter, Alderman, R K and Cross, J A "The Prime Minister and the Decision to Dissolve."

⁷⁶ The Whip was withdrawn from Captain Cunningham-Reid. See Cross, J A "Withdrawal of the Conservative Whip" *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol. 21, 1967-8 pp 166-175. Cross also discussed three other occasions this century when the Conservative Whip was withdrawn.

⁷⁷ Baker, D, Gamble, A, and Ludlam, S "Conservative Splits and European Integration" p 434.

⁷⁸ See Alderman, R K and Cross, J A "The Prime Minister and the Decision to Dissolve" p 387.

his colleagues with him can be in a very powerful position, but he is only as strong as they let him be.”⁷⁹

A Prime Minister may thus resort to more psychological tactics, such as the maligning of the identity of the rebels as mavericks. John Major for instance, referred to three alleged Euro-sceptic members of his Cabinet as "Bastards". Self-perception forms a crucial part in ensuring group cohesion and so, attempts to undermine the significance of a rebel group can go a long way in jeopardising dissident behaviour. Associated with this is the deployment of Government Whips who are responsible for providing support for Government policy. Whips will often meet in person those who are deemed to be dissenters and those who inform the Whips that they intend to oppose a motion. Many Whips like to be forewarned of any planned opposition: non-compliance risks incurring the wrath of the Whips. This is important because the Whips exist within the corridors of power in parliament, and are often responsible for recommendations for posts in office. Sometimes Whips are happy to accept a Member's wishes, however, when dissent is expressed over policy, which is deemed to be of importance to the Government, the whips may often try to persuade members of the error of their ways, especially if a three-line whip is involved. In summary, the Whips have an important role to play in the prevention of factional incidence. As Baker, Gamble and Ludlam have commented, "the whips are highly skilled at turning the appropriate screws" using "threats and sanctions to pull wavering MPs in line."⁸⁰

Parliamentary committees, as well as offering a forum in which factional activity can take place also serve as a constraint. For the party leadership, these committees offer an opportunity for Whips and Ministers to gauge the opinion of their backbenchers. Parliamentary committees act as important areas for the dissemination of opinion between the top and the lower echelons of the parliamentary party. As such, the leadership can address its stance on a policy issue on the basis of these opinions, if it feels so desired, in order to prevent a public display of hostility from emerging towards government policy. Committees also offer a forum where emerging conflicts of opinion can be resolved or negotiated, by preventing any need for rebels to organise themselves to challenge government policy at a later date. The 1922 Committee, which is unique to the Conservative Party in its composition, offers one such mechanism where the tide of opinion of Conservative backbenchers can be quickly conveyed via the Whips to the leadership. McKenzie claimed for example that the 1922 Committee "is the most important forum for the expression of Conservative opinion within the House of Commons."⁸¹

⁷⁹ Jones, G W "The Prime Minister's Power" p 185, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 18, 1964-65.

⁸⁰ Baker, D, Gamble, A. & Ludlam, S, "Whips or Scorpions? The Maastricht Vote and the Conservative Party" p 152 *Parliamentary Affairs* 46(2), 1993, pp 151-166. (Hereinafter Baker, D, Gamble, A. & Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions?").

⁸¹ McKenzie, R "British Political Parties" p 61. For further information see pp 57-61 where McKenzie discussed the role of the 1922 committee in conveying backbench opinion to the leadership of the CPP, as well as a useful account of the formation and purpose of the committee and its relationship with the party leadership.

It has been suggested that Conservative Members are concerned with political survival. Thus an important consideration in their calculations of dissidence may be the size of the Government majority. Members may feel relatively safe in opposing Government policy when the party has a large majority in the House of Commons. In such instances a member may feel he can safely make his objections without affecting the party in office. Norton found evidence in his study of dissent in the House of Commons between 1945-79, that dissent usually takes place when there is a substantial Government majority. "Dissenting in large numbers usually occurs...when the Government's overall majority was such that it could sustain a sizeable dissenting vote."⁸² As will be shown in Chapter seven, this does not hold in light of the statistics of the rebels' activity over John Major's Maastricht policy during his fragile majority in the Commons

This study will investigate whether the social make-up of the parliamentary party has had a profound effect on the behavioural patterns of the party membership in parliament. Traditionally, members formed part of the 'old boy network' who were content to defer decisions of policy making to the party leadership. This network has now become fragmented, with new entrants more willing to criticise their leadership and its policies. It is fair to comment that the Conservative Party, until the early 1970's, was seen as the party of unity with little conflict in its ranks. On review, the Conservative Party is not as unified as it first appears. It is possible that the Conservative Party management has merely succeeded in maintaining a facade of cohesion within the party, for since the Second World War, a number of internal concern policy groups have formed within the parliamentary party framework. These include the 'No Turning Back Group,' the 'Tory Reform Group,' the 'Suez Group' and the 'Conservative Way Forward' which have all actively sought to influence the leadership of the day.⁸³ The 'Monday Club,' which formed in 1961, and concentrated its activity in the constituency forum, provides more convincing evidence of divisions within the party, although this appears more reminiscent of a party split, in that it represented the views of a substantial group within the party on a variety of issues.⁸⁴

It has been argued by many academics, that factionalism is not to be associated with the CPP, as conflicts within the party are in fact Rose's 'tendencies'. Whilst this may have been the case up until the early 1970's, when Norton documented an upsurge in intra-party disputes,⁸⁵ it is no longer valid today. The Conservative Party has become fraught with divisions of which the most conspicuous is concerned with the issue of European policy. This is a party, however, which

⁸² Norton, P "Dissension in the House of Commons 1974-79" Oxford, Clarendon, 1980, pp xvii-xviii.

⁸³ Barnes has suggested that these groups and a number of earlier ones provide evidence of factional activity. Barnes, J "Ideology and Faction" p 345.

⁸⁴ Seyd claimed the activities of the 'Monday Club' should be regarded as factional. See Seyd, P "Factionalism in the Conservative Party." Rose disagreed with his analysis on the basis of a lack of organisation and a 'leader of front-bench stature.' Rose also rejected the 'Bow Group' and what he described as 'ideas groups' as constituting factions within the CPP. See Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" pp 325-326.

⁸⁵ See Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" especially Chapters nine & ten, for his account of the rise in dissidence during the 1970-1974 Parliament.

traditionally has prided itself on its ability to change with the times. Recent disunity within the CPP over European integration, therefore, perhaps represent nothing more than a hiccup in the status quo, where divisions once accepted, will represent the typical state of affairs within the party.

Conclusion

This chapter has challenged the view held by many academics that the Conservative Party remains a party of unity, whose internal conflicts constitute nothing more than temporary disagreements. It has been suggested that divisions within the party over European policy Bills since 1970, have developed into organised groups, which have actively sought to influence Government policy. They are thus, by some preliminary discussion of definition “factional.” It has been argued that this is the consequence of the party leaderships’ policy objectives regarding Britain’s integration with the European Communities, an issue which will be examined more closely in Chapter four.

CHAPTER 2

A SHORT HISTORY

OF CONSERVATIVE DISSENT ON EUROPE

SINCE 1957

Introduction

Attempts to integrate Britain with the European Communities have been a source of internal controversy for the CPP. This Chapter briefly outlines the European story so far in respect of the CPP and includes a chronology of events. It does not intend to duplicate the ample studies in existence on this area but provides a contextual setting on which the subsequent chapters of this work are based. It is assumed that when reading the remaining chapters, the reader is aware of the information contained within this Chapter.

1957-70

Various accounts have been proposed as to why Britain made the decision in 1961 to apply for membership of the European Economic Communities (EEC) after refusing to be a member from the outset.¹ Some of the reasons include the political crisis of Suez in 1956,² declining international

¹ The decision to apply for Britain's membership of the EEC in 1961 arose out of domestic considerations and a desire to maintain international influence. Britain's economic fortunes had suffered in recent years relative to some of its European neighbours. By 1957 Britain's balance of payments was no longer healthy and the British economy was growing at a slower rate than its European counterparts. Britain was increasingly reliant on international trading but its share of world trade had fallen between 1950-55. Young, J "Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992" Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993, p 58. (Hereinafter Young, J "Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992"). See pp 58-59 for Young's assessment of Britain's economic position at the time. Despite Britain's poor economic performance in the post war period the British Government decided to stay out of the EEC when it was formed on 1 January 1958. At this stage, the British Government was keen to establish a free trade area between European states but not to further establish any political relations, apart from deepening the relationship with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and enhancing communications with the US. Young also discussed how the six initial members of the EEC suspiciously viewed Britain's pursuit of the Free Trade Association (FTA), which they saw as an effort to frustrate this newly created European organisation.

In summary, the position of the British Government in the late 1950's and early 1960's was a preference for preserving links with Commonwealth partners, developing relations with the US and procuring a position of influence in the development of the EEC but not to be an integral part of it. Lord has recently suggested that the decision of the British Government not to be part of the EC from the start was due to a perception of fundamental differences of 'character' between the UK state and those of the six founding members. Lord, C "Absent at the Creation: Britain and the Formation of the European Community, 1950-2" Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1996, p 1. See also George and Sowemimo's brief explanation, in George, S and Sowemimo, M "Conservative Foreign Policy towards the European Union" Ludlam, S and Smith, M Eds "Contemporary British Conservatism", Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996, pp 245-246. (Hereinafter, George, S & Sowemimo, M, Eds "Conservative Foreign Policy"). See also George's account in George, S "Britain and European Integration since 1945", Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1991, p 44. (Hereinafter George, S "Britain and European Integration") pp 43-46.

² See George, S "Britain and European Integration" p 44 for his assessment of the implications of the Suez crisis in the decision to apply for membership of the EEC.

influence, concerns that membership of the EEC would endanger the balance of UK/US and UK/Commonwealth relations, as well as the poor economic performance of the UK compared to the six founding members of the EEC. What is significant, in terms of this study, is that whilst concern was voiced at the time of Britain's first application from members of the CPP,³ intra-party opposition to British membership was nothing like that which was witnessed in subsequent European debates in Parliament in the 1970's and 1990's. In 1961, only one Conservative MP opposed Macmillan's entry motion in support of the EEC and twenty-four abstained.⁴ Macmillan's cautious handling of the issue has been the most frequently cited cause for the low level of Conservative opposition to entry. George, for example, argued that Conservative intra-party opposition to the EEC was contained by Macmillan's success in presenting the EEC debates in pragmatic terms to parliament.⁵ This, he claimed, eased intra-party concerns over the potential loss of national sovereignty within the Party at that time. He also argued that if any Prime Minister at the time had adopted a more pro-European stance, they would not have been taken seriously, as both main political parties in the 1960's were nationalistic.⁶ Ludlam also argued that, the first application for British membership could have resulted in substantial opposition by Conservative MPs had it not been for the successful management of the issue by Macmillan.⁷

1970-74

Edward Heath led the Conservative Party to victory in the British General election of June 1970. From the start, the question of Britain's entry into the EEC quickly emerged as the main policy of the Heath administration.⁸ The Prime Minister's determination and emphatic enthusiasm for securing Parliament's approval of this legislation was the cause of substantial Conservative intra-party opposition in the 1971-2 Parliamentary session. Heath's enthusiasm for this legislation could not, in any way, be seen as surprising, for following his election to the leadership of the Party in 1965, his

³ George has argued that most EEC opposition came from what he termed the "Traditional Tories" of the Party and that the "prosperity of the country" by British standards in the 1950's together with the principle of Party loyalty helped diminish potential opposition from this section of the Party. S "Britain and European integration since 1945" p 67-9. Young argued that generally, questions related to the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) gave rise to concerns in the Conservative Party, as well as fears that membership would diminish UK parliamentary sovereignty. Young, J "Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992" p 75.

⁴ Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism: Europe and Backbench Rebellion" Ludlam, S & Smith, M, Eds "Contemporary British Conservatism" Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996, p 103. (Hereinafter, Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism").

⁵ See also Young, who argued that Macmillan proceeded with caution in his negotiations to join the EEC, which arose partly due to an apprehension over possible division within his Party on the issue. Young, J "Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992" p 76.

⁶ George, S "Britain and European integration" pp 68-69.

⁷ Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 103.

⁸ Kitzinger claimed for instance that just twelve days after the General election, the Conservative Government began to negotiate Britain's entry to the EEC. Kitzinger U, "Diplomacy and Persuasion. How Britain joined the Common Market." London, Thames and Hudson, 1973, p 153. (Hereinafter, Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion.")

intentions in this regard were clear.⁹ His keenness for British entry can possibly be traced further back to the first attempt to negotiate Britain's entry to the EEC, under Macmillan, where Heath acted as Britain's chief negotiator at the time. Lord has pointed out that so committed was Heath to British entry of the EEC, that in 1967, during the debate in parliament on Britain's second application for membership, he imposed a three line whip on his Party in support of Labour's proposal to bid for Britain's entry. This was significant because as Lord stated, it was the first time since 1945, that a Conservative leader had whipped his Party in support of the opposition Party's policy.¹⁰ Despite the imposition of the party whip, twenty-six Conservative MPs opposed the Bill.¹¹

Conservative opposition to Government European policy in the first parliamentary session of the 1970 administration was remarkable because it recorded the highest level of dissidence amongst Conservative MPs in the post-war period up to that date.¹² According to Norton, Conservative opposition to Government policy was manifest over a number of other policy Bills during the 1970-74 parliamentary sessions. It was over the Government's European policy however, which Norton claimed provoked the most ardent dissent ever expressed by Conservative MPs to Government policy in the post-war period.¹³ This can be explained simplistically by the fact that procurement of Britain's entry into the EEC was the prime policy objective of the Prime Minister and therefore, dominated much of the 1971-2 Parliament's time. Secondly, Conservative Parliamentary opposition was mounted against this Bill because the issue of joining the EEC was seen to be beyond Party considerations by a number of the Party's antis on the grounds that it was an issue of national importance and principle.

The Conservative Government embarked on their quest to secure Britain's entry to the EEC for the third time on 30 June 1970. Thereafter, through to spring 1971, Geoffrey Rippon, who later replaced Anthony Barber as Britain's chief negotiator,¹⁴ engaged in discussions with Britain's European counterparts to procure, in principle, Britain's accepted entry and terms of accession. Throughout this period a number of both Conservative pro and anti entry campaigns were fought nationally and locally in constituencies across the country to engage and persuade public opinion as to the merits of both camps. By the spring of 1971, Kitzinger claimed that the anti-market campaigns of all parties were the most successful throughout the country and public opinion in the main was against entry.¹⁵ Kitzinger

⁹ Lord for example argued that upon assuming leadership of the Party in 1965, Heath maintained the Party's policy commitment to enter the EEC. Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government of 1970-74" Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1993, p 99. (Hereinafter, Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community"). See also Kitzinger's assessment of Heath's ambitions towards the EEC, in Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" pp 147-151.

¹⁰ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 100.

¹¹ Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 103.

¹² Only twenty-eight Conservatives opposed the Government decision in agreement with the Egyptian Government to close the British Canal Base, in the Division lobbies of the House of Commons on 29 July 1954. See. Norton, P "Dissension in the House of Commons. Intra-Party Dissent in the House of Commons' Division Lobbies 1945-74," London, Macmillan, 1975, pp 107-8. (Hereinafter, Norton, P "Dissension in the House of Commons.")

¹³ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 82.

¹⁴ See Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 86. For his analysis of the negotiations see pp 77-104.

¹⁵ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 159.

argued that in response the “central leadership of the Party again went out of its way to take opportunities (and create opportunities) to test the temperature in the Party, get the issue debated and mobilise opinion behind the Government.”¹⁶

Following Heath's white paper and speech on EEC entry to Parliament on 7 July 1971, public opinion in the country and in Parliament thereafter gradually became more pro-entry. In fact so successful were the efforts of the pro-market MPs that by July 1971, it was according to Kitzinger, the anti-marketisers who were seen as the villains “rocking the boat.”¹⁷ A large part of this change in public opinion must be attributed to the successful party management and persuasiveness of the pro-entry arguments advanced by the Conservative Government and pro-entry supporters of both the Labour and Conservative parties. Ludlam noted for example, that Heath “forced a card vote that produced an eight to one majority for entry” at the 1971 Party conference.¹⁸ The Conservative Euro-sceptics did not give up their fight however, and throughout the summer of 1971, debacles over the entry issue ensued between the Conservative Euro-sceptics and the Government.

The Government's White Paper, which announced Heath's intention to seek parliamentary approval for entry into the EEC subject to negotiations being satisfactory, fuelled hostility amongst Conservative MPs over this proposal.¹⁹ Prior to July 1971, Kitzinger reported that, both the Labour and Conservative parties were prepared to accept Britain's entry subject to the terms negotiated and, after parliament's approval for entry. According to Kitzinger, the only problem for the Government at this time was that Heath had pledged to join the EEC before he had secured agreement from Parliament.²⁰ As a result, the domestic battle which ensued in Parliament became more than a national debate for the Conservative Party. The debates over Britain's entry to the EEC came perilously close to splitting the Party. For not only was an issue of national importance at stake, but the whole issue of Parliamentary procedure was involved. The conduct of Conservative Party politics began to be questioned as the result of Heath's steam-rolling the Bill through Parliament and the subsequent upsurge in Conservative opposition to this Bill. It was these facts which led to the highest level of Conservative dissidence witnessed in British politics in the post war period up to that date.²¹

During the summer months of 1971, the Prime Minister further ignited internal controversies over Britain's proposed entry to the European Communities within the Party by repeatedly refusing to allow his Party a free vote on this issue, maintaining that a three line whip would be in place on the October vote. This backfired on the Government: Heath's insistence that a three-line whip would be imposed

¹⁶ Kitzinger, U “Diplomacy and Persuasion” p 158.

¹⁷ Kitzinger, U “Diplomacy and Persuasion” p 159.

¹⁸ Ashford, N (“The European Economic Community” pp 104-6, Eds Layton-Henry, Z “Conservative Party Politics” 1980, London, Macmillan) cited by Ludlam, S “The Spectre Haunting Conservatism” p 106. Lord also has said that this was the first time a card vote had been used at Conference in the Party's history. Lord, C “British Entry to the European Community” p 101.

¹⁹ See Hansard 7 July 1971 Columns 1338-1339, for Heath's White Paper address to Parliament.

²⁰ Kitzinger, U “Diplomacy and Persuasion” pp 154-155.

²¹ It should be remembered that intra-party dissent to this Bill occurred across all parties.

encouraged some Conservative Euro-sceptics to form an informal group and engage in collective activity to oppose the Bill. It also became the intention of all the rebels at that time to ignore a three-line whip.²² Heath's declarations over a three-line whip throughout the summer, strengthened Conservative opposition on the October vote on the principle of entry. In anticipation of this eventuality, the rebels had had all summer to prepare themselves psychologically to defy their Government in the division lobbies. The extent of potential Conservative rebellion on this vote was clarified in advance of the vote by the figures supplied to the Conservative whips by anti-market MP, Neil Marten, which indicated the rebel numbers were about thirty-two.²³

Parliament's debate on the principle of EEC entry was delayed until the autumn of 1971, when the Government was more sure of Conservative support in the lobbies. Kitzinger argued, for instance, that the pro-market MPs at this time believed they needed longer to win over their constituencies on the issue.²⁴ The belief that a three-line whip would be imposed right up until the last minute did, therefore, help the Government, for it meant that Constituency Associations applied pressure on their candidates to support the Government right up to the debate itself. One anti-market MP, for example, commented that his Constituency President rang him up before the vote to try to persuade him from voting against the Government."²⁵

Heath's eventual decision to allow a free vote for Conservative MPs was not taken to appease Conservative anti-market MPs, but was a calculated decision under the advice of the party whips so as to secure maximum support from Conservative MPs. It also split the Labour vote as, by allowing the Conservatives a free vote, it kept the Labour pro-supporters to a maximum, as they were then not voting on a Government motion. Kitzinger also argued that it was necessary for Heath to secure the support of as many Conservative MPs as possible in order to demonstrate the strength of pro-British opinion for entry to his European partners.²⁶ For Conservative parliamentary opponents to the Bill, the pressure to some extent was relieved by the announcement of a free vote, as they could now more easily defend their voting behaviour to their constituents.²⁷

It is doubtful if the results would have been different had a three-line whip been imposed on Conservative MPs. The only effect it may have had would have been to reduce the numbers of

²² Former MP Carol Mather to author - September 1994. In the summer of 1971, Heath was still determined to impose a three-line whip. See Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" pp 165-166. Both Norton and Kitzinger have claimed however, that the aim of the Conservatives Euro-sceptics during the summer months was to ensure a free vote would be held. Norton claimed they hoped this would lessen Constituency pressure to support the Government. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p69. See also Kitzinger's account of the reasons for their campaign for a free vote in, Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 165.

²³ Kitzinger "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 172. This figure excluded any Ulster Unionists who were likely to oppose.

²⁴ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" pp 163-164.

²⁵ Lord William Clarke of Kempston to author - September 1994.

²⁶ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 159.

²⁷ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 387.

opposing Conservative MPs by a few, given that Labour MPs were whipped,²⁸ and all but one of the Conservative MPs interviewed by the author, stated that they would still have voted against the Government on this debate had a three-line whip been in place. Party loyalty is a strong factor in persuading would-be rebels to support Government policy on vital points in the lobbies. One Conservative rebel stated that any opposition in the lobbies against the Government on a three-line whip would depend on the issue involved, as the imposition of a three-line whip underlines the importance of that policy to the Government.²⁹ In this context, the issue of whether Britain should join the EEC must be seen as an issue beyond Party considerations. Another former Conservative anti-market MP stated that, had a vote of confidence occurred on this vote, as it did on the Second reading of the Bill, his voting behaviour would not have altered, because he believed Government defeat on that vote would not lead to an election. He believed it was necessary for an MP to exercise his own judgement and vote accordingly.³⁰

The debate on the principle of British entry to the EEC commenced in Parliament on 21 October 1971. After six days of debate, the vote took place on 28 October. The Government secured parliament's approval of the principle of Britain's entry into the EEC by a clear majority of one hundred and twelve votes. Thirty-nine Conservatives had opposed this Bill and a further two, abstained.³¹ Despite defeat for the Conservative anti-marketeters, the battle between them and the Conservative Government was far from over. The Bill had still to pass through Second and Third readings as well as Committee stages and, as Kitzinger argued "with an opposition that would substantially close ranks, attention would focus on the 41 Conservatives who had voted against entry on principle or abstained: the Government's fate would be in their hands."³² Kitzinger, in fact, argued that Conservative anti-marketeters refused to back down after the October vote and accept defeat in the belief that "if they stood firm, the Government could be forced to go to the country; and the electorate would most likely...put back into power a Prime Minister pledged to 're-negotiate' and if necessary drop the whole idea."³³

Despite victory for the Government, the potential influence of an intra-party group of MPs who were prepared to vote against their Government in order to defeat legislation was now clearly visible. As well as establishing the benefits to be brought from cross-party interdependence where Kitzinger claimed that during the summer of 1971, "rebels in opposite parties on opposite sides discovered their tactical interdependence",³⁴ the Conservative anti-market MPs also realised the benefits which could be reaped from inner-party collective action. Throughout the remainder of the EEC entry debates a number of both internal and cross-party groups emerged in both parties in opposition and support of

²⁸ As already mentioned for example, estimates of likely Conservative opposition were around thirty-two MPs when it was thought that a three-line whip would be in place.

²⁹ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - September 1994.

³⁰ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - September 1994.

³¹ This figure includes six Ulster-Unionists who are identified in the next chapter.

³² Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 373.

³³ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 374. See also p 373.

³⁴ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" pp 166-67.

the EEC Bill.³⁵ Levels of organisation and membership of the 'Conservative 1970 Group' (the Conservative anti-European parliamentary group) and the subsequent intra-party groups, which developed over the course of the next twenty years in opposition to successive Conservative Governments' policies on Europe are discussed in the following chapters. What the development of such groups in the 1970's reflected, was that some Conservative MPs were prepared to align with others against the official party line over issues of concern to them, in order to try and defeat European Communities (EC) treaty legislation, which would have brought closer integration with Europe.

The nature of Conservative opposition was more striking on the Second reading of the Bill in February 1972, for although only fifteen Conservatives opposed this stage of the Bill by voting against or abstaining, they arguably did the unthinkable and opposed their Government on a vote of confidence. The vote on the Second reading of the EEC Bill, followed the signature of the Treaty of accession on 22 January 1972 accession was signed. The small debate, which took place in Parliament on the treaty of accession, was not significant in terms of a Government defeat to its Bill: but it did demonstrate two things. Firstly, that the Heath Government was determined to ensure that the Bill would be passed without amendment.³⁶ This led to the opinion of some Conservative MPs that the Government was not prepared to allow any concessions or listen to the opinions or concerns of some members of its Party, which further upset a number of Conservative MPs.³⁷ It should be remembered, that although existing academic accounts of Heath's leadership style suggest this manner was indicative of Heath, the Conservative Government was not in a position to allow amendments to this Bill as it was an external treaty. To have secured any amendment would have required the terms of entry with the other EEC Member States to be renegotiated.³⁸ Secondly, the fifteen Conservative MPs who opposed Second reading in the division lobbies demonstrated that they were likely to continue opposition to this Bill throughout its remaining stages in Parliament. This would not have been a problem for the Conservative Government given its parliamentary majority of thirty at the time, had it not been for the fact that the Labour Party was likely to oppose the remaining stages of the Bill. This was because they were opposed not to Britain's entry itself, but to the basis of the terms negotiated by the Heath administration.³⁹

The use of votes of confidence is clearly an effective strategy that can be deployed by a Government to induce potential internal rebels to fall in line and support party policy. Heath, whom it is assumed was

³⁵ See Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" pp 232-251 for a detailed account of the anti-market groups in existence and their campaigns against entry. See also pp 160-161 for details of the Conservative pro-entry group - 'The Conservative Group for Europe' and p 162, for brief details on the Conservative anti-market group, 'The 1970 Group'. The latter group is discussed further in Chapters five and six of this work.

³⁶ See Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 384.

³⁷ The manner of Heath's leadership style is discussed in more detail in Chapters four and seven.

³⁸ See Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 383.

³⁹ The Government's majority is taken as at the General Election of June 18th 1970. For the Opposition's comments – see the speech of Harold Wilson – Leader of the Opposition, Hansard 28 October 1971 Column 2110. He also reminded the House during the debate on Second reading that the Labour Party as in the October Vote on the principle of entry could not vote in favour of British entry on the terms negotiated by the current Government. Hansard 17 February 1972, Column 631.

not confident of victory at this stage, imposed such a deterrent on Second reading of the Bill to ensure the support of his backbenchers, when he announced to the House that if the Government failed to receive Parliament's approval for the Bill at this stage, then "this Parliament cannot sensibly continue."⁴⁰ Kitzinger argued that Heath had allowed his Party a free vote on the October vote, but "no such life line could be thrown to them in the vote on the Second reading of the Bill on 17 February, when the Government was fighting for its survival with its back to the wall."⁴¹ John Major may have drawn conclusions from Heath's tactics in this debate and deduced that the only way to defeat the Euro-sceptics of his Party during the Maastricht debates, was similarly, to invoke a vote of confidence at crisis points. It is in such circumstances that the Conservative Party leadership, is still able to dominate the development of party policy, even against substantial inner party opposition.

Kitzinger claimed that, the majority of eight, secured by the Government on Second reading, must be regarded as an accomplishment for the Government, given that the number of rebels who had opposed was substantially less than occurred on the October vote.⁴² Yet the Government came perilously close to defeat on this Bill and had it not been for the last minute collective decision of a few Conservative MPs who opposed the October vote, to decide to support the Government, then the Bill could have been defeated.⁴³ This would suggest that a number of the Conservative antis were not prepared to risk the possibility of a Labour government at this time, despite their opposition to this Bill.

The behaviour of the Conservative antis in the 1970's demonstrated that some Conservative MPs were prepared to challenge their Government in order to influence or prevent ratification of a Bill. This was notable since whilst it may have been usual for internal opposition to occur over a particular aspect of a Bill, it was unusual within the history of the CPP, for such opposition to occur on an entire Bill. Whether the Conservative anti-market MPs would have been prepared to jeopardise the survival of a Conservative Government on this Bill is less clear, for, as will be seen in Chapter seven, a number of the Conservative antis supported the Government on the Second reading, because they feared if the Government lost the Bill, Parliament would be dissolved and this risked the possibility of a Labour Government.⁴⁴ A few of the Conservative antis who opposed the Second reading of the Bill, did so on the basis that they believed Heath's threat to dissolve Parliament was bogus. It was their belief that Heath would resign as Prime Minister if defeated on this Bill, and would simply be replaced by a new Conservative leader, without a general election being called. These rebels considered such an outcome satisfactory.

During the next few months, the Bill passed through its committee stages on the floor of the House.

⁴⁰ Hansard 17 February 1972 Column 752.

⁴¹ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 387.

⁴² Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 387.

⁴³ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - November 1994.

⁴⁴ Wilson's iron law of backbench rebellions claimed that "the maximum number of rebels in any Commons vote of confidence is one less than the number needed to wipe out the Government's majority." Baker, D, Gamble, A & Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions" p 153.

The results of these debates can be found in Norton.⁴⁵ Despite sustaining opposition during this stage, the Conservative anti-market MPs were unsuccessful in securing any amendments to the Bill. Opposition was mounted by twelve Conservatives who opposed the Bill in the Division lobbies and five, who abstained from voting on Third reading of the Bill.

Opposition to party policy by MPs has of course occurred previously in the history of the Conservative Party and it would be misleading to assert otherwise.⁴⁶ The Suez crisis of 1956, for example, reflects such an event.⁴⁷ Two aspects of the Conservative opposition in the 1971-2 Parliament were, however, unusual: firstly, the scale on which it occurred and secondly, the way in which some Conservative MPs engaged collectively to plan and discuss their opposition to the first vote on October 28, and thereafter, on subsequent stages of the Bill's passage through Parliament.

The Conservative Party was shocked by Conservative opposition over the EEC Bill and found it difficult to accept the rebellions. Whilst the concerns of Conservative MPs over the Bill were sufficient on their own to propagate a Conservative rebellion in the 1970's, this debate clearly demonstrated that opposition could become manifest when dissatisfaction with the Party leadership had occurred. Both Kitzinger and Norton have argued, for example, that Heath's management of the EEC Bill incited the Party's anti-marketeters.⁴⁸ Kitzinger contended that the rebellion was fuelled by the fact that Heath did not, in the rebels' view, stick to the promises he made. He argued that Heath's 1970 election address on Europe, was to negotiate on entry "no more, no less,"⁴⁹ that consultations would take place and that MPs would not be asked to do anything that was "unequal or unfair."⁵⁰ As will be seen in Chapters three and four, a number of the Conservative anti-marketeters believed they were being asked to do just that, as they had pledged to oppose membership in their election manifestos.

1974-79

The next main European debate to occur in Parliament was Labour's referendum in 1975 over whether

⁴⁵ Committee proceedings commenced on 1 March 1972 ending on 5 July after 32 days of debate. For details of all the committee debates and results see Norton, P "Dissension in the House of Commons" pp 412-22, 434-448, 449-453, 456-460, 462-488 and 489-494. For the allocation of time motion on the Bill on 2 May, see pp 449-450.

⁴⁶ Ludlam has provided a brief but useful account of Conservative rebellions to other areas of Party policy between 1945-1970. Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" pp 101-102.

⁴⁷ Opposition was mounted by a Group of Conservatives MPs over the proposed closure of the British Canal Base in Suez. For further discussion on the events over Suez, see Kyle, K "Suez" London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1991. The Commonwealth Immigration Bill of 1962 is another example of Conservative parliamentary opposition in the division lobbies.

⁴⁸ Norton's views are discussed elsewhere in this work.

⁴⁹ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 152.

⁵⁰ "A Better Tomorrow: The Conservative Programme for the next five years," quoted in Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 151. As will be seen in Chapters three and four, a number of the Conservative anti-marketeters believed they were being asked to do just that, as they had pledged to oppose membership in their election manifestos.

Britain should remain a member of the EEC or leave.⁵¹ Britain's continued membership of the EEC was officially advocated by the CPP during the February 1974 election campaign⁵² and was later endorsed by the new leader of the CPP, Margaret Thatcher, in a three day debate in the Commons in April 1975.⁵³ The main anti-market campaign was co-ordinated through a cross-party alliance "The National Referendum Campaign" (NRC) under the Chairmanship of Conservative anti-market rebel Neil Marten.⁵⁴ The activities of the anti-marketeters of the period proved unsuccessful when, on 5 June 1975 the British public delivered their verdict in favour of continued membership of the EEC. Eight Conservative MPs opposed Britain's continued membership of the EEC in the division lobbies and eighteen abstained.⁵⁵ Despite a small rebellion from within the Conservative ranks, Kitzinger claimed that little damage had been made to the CPP over this issue.⁵⁶ Ludlam has argued, however, that Conservative opposition to European integration in 1975 was contained by the visible benefits to be reaped by Party unity and Thatcher's replacement of Heath as Party leader.⁵⁷ This view is confirmed by an account of a Conservative MP at the time, who claimed that the battle over the EEC referendum became a battle between the ideological visions of the Labour and Conservative Parties. It was the Party's opportunity to discredit Labour, which according to this source "solidified the Conservative vote and increasingly negated the efforts of anti-EEC Conservatives."⁵⁸ By 1979, the Party was dominated largely by a 'confederalist' vision of Europe based on "inter-governmental co-operation on economic, foreign and defence policies."⁵⁹ It suited the Party to portray itself as the Party of Europe until well into the 1980's. This was a vote winner at the time given what was regarded by some, as the Labour Party's irresponsible attitude to external relations.⁶⁰ According to Ashford, "outright anti-marketeters were virtually irrelevant" at this time.⁶¹

⁵¹ As discussed earlier, during the 1971 debates, the Labour Party leadership pledged to renegotiate Britain's entry but on their terms. Labour in fact committed itself to this in their 1974 election pledge. Young, J "Britain and European Unity, 1945-92" p 119. See also pp 119-129 for his historical account of "Wilson's re-negotiation and the Referendum, 1974-5" See also Kitzinger and Butler for their account of Labour's rationale behind the renegotiations. Butler, D and Kitzinger, U "The 1975 Referendum" London & Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1976, Chapter 2, pp 21-53. (Hereinafter, Butler, D and Kitzinger, U "The 1975 Referendum").

⁵² Butler, D and Kitzinger, U "The 1975 Referendum" p 24.

⁵³ Butler, D and Kitzinger, U "The 1975 Referendum" p 53. For further details of the pro Conservative market campaign see pp 75-78.

⁵⁴ For details of the NRC's activities, formation and aims during the Referendum campaign see Butler, D and Kitzinger, U "The 1975 Referendum" Chapter 5 pp 97-115.

⁵⁵ On Second Reading of the debate on European Community (Membership) on 9 April 1975. Butler, D and Kitzinger, U "The 1975 Referendum" p 52.

⁵⁶ Butler, D and Kitzinger, U "The 1975 Referendum" p 281.

⁵⁷ Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 108.

⁵⁸ Unattributed source as reported in Butler, D and Kitzinger, U "The 1975 Referendum" p 287.

⁵⁹ Attributed by Ashford, N ("The European Economic Community" in Layton-Henry, Z, "Conservative Party Politics" London, Macmillan, 1980) in Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 109.

⁶⁰ David Watt, for instance, was reported to have commented that divisions within the Labour Party on three key foreign policy issues, the EEC, the Falklands and nuclear armament culminated in their neglect by the party leadership. As reported in Butler, D & Kavanagh, D "The British General Election of 1983", London & Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1984, p 270.

⁶¹ Ashford, N ("The European Economic Community" in Layton-Henry, Z, "Conservative Party Politics" London, Macmillan, 1980) quoted by Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 109.

1979-87

The Single European Act represented the first major overhaul of the existing treaties of the European Communities as laid out in the original Treaty of Rome 1957. It entailed two main revisions and was due by the end of 1992. The first of these was the creation of a deadline for the completion of the Single Market within Europe by 1992. In order to do this an extension of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) was required, into policy areas where unanimity of voting between members had previously prevailed. Prior to the Luxembourg meeting, the British Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, had been engaged in adversarial politics with her partners in the European Community in an attempt to secure a better deal for Britain. During the preceding years, in the run up to the SEA, she secured a budget rebate for Britain at the Fontainebleau European Council in June 1984;⁶² obtained restraints on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and regional aid and proclaimed her concerns in general about the state of European monetary control and spending. During this time she made few British concessions, the most notable being an increase in VAT payments, which was the alleged cost of procuring the agreement between member states for a single market.⁶³

Young suggested that “Mrs Thatcher adopted a nationalist approach to EEC issues...and wanted to be seen 'winning' arguments rather than seeking compromises.”⁶⁴ The result of this was that those MPs within the party who were most likely to be Euro-sceptical viewed Mrs Thatcher's approach to European policy to be firmly handled, displaying a strong tendency to protect British sovereignty. In so doing, she provided little opportunity at home for domestic internal squabbles over Europe from the Euro-sceptics within the parliamentary party. Through this stance, there was, however, some danger that the Party would begin to split from the left, by those who were in favour of extending European integration.⁶⁵ The SEA in one way represented a dilemma for the Prime Minister, for whilst she was an advocate of free trade and co-operation within the Community, Young argued that Mrs Thatcher saw no need for “institutional reforms” which were becoming apparent in the new Treaty.⁶⁶ Mrs Thatcher has described how she herself realised that her counterparts in Europe held increasingly divergent views from her own, as to the future role of the EC at the Luxembourg summit.⁶⁷ Whilst Mrs Thatcher perhaps was not overly enthusiastic over the SEA in this regard, she thought the federalist ambitions, together with calls for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and political union by other Community members, would never materialise. In her biography, the “Downing Street Years,” she recalled how at the time “we in the British delegation were inclined to dismiss such rhetoric as cloudy

⁶² For details of meeting: see Thatcher, M “The Downing Street Years” London, Harper Collins, 1993, pp 541-545 and for more information on the budgetary issue, see pp 537-541. (Hereinafter, Thatcher, M “The Downing Street Years.”) For a more detailed discussion of the budgetary question see Young, J “European Unity, 1945-1992” pp 140-149.

⁶³ For further details: see Thatcher, M “The Downing Street Years” pp 544-545.

⁶⁴ Young, J “European Unity, 1945-1992” pp 136-137.

⁶⁵ George and Sowemimo have also argued recently that “in terms of the internal party struggle, Thatcher discovered that to be a sceptic about the benefits of belonging to the EC put her in a stronger position than her opponents.” George, S and Sowemimo, M “Conservative Foreign Policy” p 248. Ludlam also argued that in the early years of Mrs Thatcher's term as Prime Minister, Europe did not appear to be a “divisive issue.” Ludlam, S “The Spectre Haunting Conservatism” p 109.

⁶⁶ Young, J “European Unity, 1945-1992” p 152.

⁶⁷ For further details see Thatcher, M “The Downing Street Years” pp 551-2.

and unrealistic aspirations which had no prospect of being implemented.”⁶⁸

The SEA passed through the House of Commons during the latter half of the 1985/6 session with relative ease. Little Conservative dissension in the division lobbies was evident. Whilst approximately ten Conservative MPs expressed their opposition to the Bill in this manner, the Act was noted more for the considerable amount of apathy displayed on both sides of the House. The Act was also conspicuous for the relatively high level of abstentions by MPs of all parties: on Third reading of the Bill, only one hundred and ninety-two MPs out of a possible six hundred and fifty voted. Many MPs, on both sides of the House, whether consciously or not, refrained from voting.

Parliament's apathy towards the Bill was apparent during the debate on its Second reading. Conservative MP, Bill Cash, for example, pointed out how poorly considered this Bill was by referring to the lack of members present in the House from the opposition parties during the debate.⁶⁹ The Bill's debate in Parliament on 1 July was short, lasting only a day on Second reading and less than an hour following a standing order on the allocation of time motion, on Third reading.⁷⁰ In total only eleven different Conservative MPs actually voted against the SEA. Ten Conservative MPs opposed the SEA on Second reading on 23 April 1986 (Division 154).⁷¹ One hundred and six Conservative MPs did not vote on this part of the Bill.⁷² On Third reading on 10 July 1986, seven Conservative MPs voted against the Bill.⁷³

Sir Geoffrey Howe, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs introduced the Bill to the House for Second reading on 23 April 1986. He announced that the House was merely discussing the Treaty already agreed at Luxembourg, December 1985.⁷⁴ It may have been that as a result of this declaration, many MPs on both sides of the House did not regard the SEA to be an issue of great significance. Indeed this was the suggestion of the Foreign Secretary to the House when he claimed that the SEA was not an issue of 'controversy' for the UK, as both sides of the House supported this Bill. Despite this statement, the Foreign Secretary was careful during the debate to try and allay the fears and worries of any Conservatives who were perturbed with this Bill, especially over references to 'European Union' in the preamble on the treaty.⁷⁵

⁶⁸ Thatcher, M "The Downing Street Years" p 552.

⁶⁹ Bill Cash MP Hansard 23 April 1986 Column 325.

⁷⁰ For the debate on the allocation of time motion on the European Communities (Amendment) Bill see Hansard 1 July 1986 Columns 931-982.

⁷¹ 288 Conservative MPs voted for the Bill. Second reading was approved by 319-160 votes. Hansard 23 April 1986 Column 393.

⁷² This figure is based on the general election result of 1983 which records 397 Conservative MPs elected on June 9. This figure is reduced to 395 when the by elections of Portsmouth (14 June 1984) and Brecon and Border (4 July 1985) are taken into account which resulted in lost seats for the Conservatives.

⁷³ Hansard 10 July 1986 Column 571. Conservative MPs made all the Aye votes. Two hundred and thirty-nine Conservative MPs did not vote.

⁷⁴ Sir Geoffrey Howe Hansard 23 April 1986 Column 316.

⁷⁵ Sir Geoffrey Howe Hansard 23 April 1986 Column 325. He declared this reference related specifically to the "Stuttgart declaration agreed in June 1983." For further information on the Stuttgart Summit see Thatcher, M "The Downing Street Years" pp 312-314.

Third Reading of the SEA was approved by one hundred and forty-nine to forty-three votes on 10 July 1986. The fact that only one hundred and ninety-two MPs out of a potential six hundred and fifty actually voted in the lobbies gives some indication of the relative unimportance attached to the Bill by a substantial number of MPs on both sides of the House. What is apparent, however, on closer examination is that a considerable number of Conservative MPs who had either voted against Britain's accession to the EEC in 1972, or later voted against the Maastricht treaty in the early 1990's, supported the SEA, on either Second or Third reading or both.⁷⁶ Indeed, despite the limited amount of Conservative opposition to this Bill, the reasons for which are set out in later chapters, the SEA was still a matter of concern to a number of Conservative MPs, as was evidenced during the debates themselves, if not in the division lobbies. During the opening speech of the Foreign Secretary, five Conservative MPs made seven interruptions⁷⁷ and in total on Second reading, Conservative Euro-sceptic made thirty-two speeches to explain their concerns.⁷⁸ In contrast, during the brief debate on Third reading, only two Conservative backbench MPs who had previously expressed concern on this Bill, Bill Cash and Tony Marlow spoke.

Mrs Lynda Chalker, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who had been responsible for steering the Bill through the House summed up the debate on the SEA. She criticised in her speech some members of the House for the way in which the Bill had been debated, claiming that many speakers had merely lamented back to the debates of 1972 and 1975, rather than concentrating on the SEA itself. Mrs Chalker also attempted to allay the fears of the Conservative Party's sceptics, over the extension of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV).⁷⁹ The Bill was presented to the House on the basis that proposed changes would bring forth benefits to the UK in terms of its continued membership of the EC. The fact that the Bill had not created a national debate was, according to Mrs Chalker, "because the great debate is over."⁸⁰

Conservative opposition that occurred over this Bill was not characteristic of either earlier or later rebellions on European policy. The SEA did not result in open divisions within the CPP over Europe, and there was no formal organised collective activity in terms of planned opposition to the Bill. Neither

⁷⁶ See p 81.

⁷⁷ These were made by Sir Teddy Taylor, Tony Marlow, Nicholas Budgen and Bill Cash.

⁷⁸ Content analysis of these speeches is included in Chapter four. Ludlam summarised the main concerns of the rebels as relating to concerns in the preamble of the Treaty, to the aim of achieving Economic and Monetary Union (attributed to Ridley, N "My Style of Government: The Thatcher Years" London, Fontana, 1992) and, the introduction of QMV, Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 109.

⁷⁹ Mrs Lynda Chalker Hansard 10 July 1986 Column 570.

⁸⁰ Mrs Lynda Chalker Hansard 10 July 1986 Column 572.

was there in evidence, the multitude of intra-party and cross-party dissent groups that had existed in the 1970's debates over the entry issue. Although there were no formal tactical groups, collective activity was evident in the form of the Conservative European Reform Group (CERG), which, to all intents and purposes, acted as a 'watch-dog' over European affairs during the 1980's under Mrs Thatcher's leadership. The CERG is discussed in greater detail in Chapters five and six.

1988 – 1990

Shortly after the SEA, divisions within the Conservative Party over Britain's relations with the EC began to re-emerge. The first indication of this came after Mrs Thatcher's Bruges Speech to her European counterparts in September 1988, which publicly declared her concerns over European integration.⁸¹ Her public condemnation of the vision held for the future course of European integration opened up avenues for Conservative dissatisfaction slowly to become manifest amongst backbenchers. As their Euro-sceptic champion had now squarely placed the issue of Britain's relationship with Europe back in the public debate. According to Lawson however, it was Thatcher's subsequent "crude populist anti-Europeanism" in the disastrous 1989 European election campaign that lit a fuse under a "hitherto largely quiescent Party."⁸² The re-opening of the party's historical divisions over Europe partially led to the internal moves to sack Mrs Thatcher as party leader of the CPP in 1990.⁸³

From 1989, divisions over European integration resulted in a polarisation of political views within the Party.⁸⁴ Mrs Thatcher's increasingly confrontational style in meetings with her European counterparts and growing sceptical assessment of the development of European Integration led to confrontation with members of her own cabinet and party who began to see her as a liability. Confrontations from members of her Cabinet emerged during the Madrid EC Council meeting in June 1989, where Mrs Thatcher was allegedly pressed against her wishes, to agree to take Sterling into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) under the threat of the resignations of her Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson and Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary. Mrs Thatcher eventually agreed to take Britain into the ERM in October 1990, under pressure from her Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Major and Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd.⁸⁵ A few weeks after the Madrid EC Council meeting, she sacked Geoffrey Howe from the Foreign Office and accepted his appointment as Deputy

⁸¹ See also Ludlam who claimed that divisions within the Party over Europe re-merged after Mrs Thatcher's Bruges speech. Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 110.

⁸² Lawson, N "The View from No.11: Memoirs of a Tory Radical" London, Bantam, 1992, p 922 quoted by Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 110.

⁸³ Alderman (RK) and Carter (N) have suggested reasons for Mrs Thatcher's resignation in their article, "A Very Tory Coup: The Ousting of Mrs Thatcher" Parliamentary Affairs, Volume 44, pp 125-140. Whilst they claim the 'poll tax' issue was the principal factor which created hostility over her leadership of the CPP, they suggest the resignation of Geoffrey Howe in response to his differing views with Mrs Thatcher over Europe, was the trigger, p 128.

⁸⁴ The prospect of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) reaffirmed under the German Presidency of the Council of Ministers in 1988, was one area, along with British membership of the ERM. For a concise account of the main facts surrounding these events see George, S and Sowemimo, M "Conservative Foreign Policy" pp 251-256.

⁸⁵ See George, S and Sowemimo, M "Conservative Foreign Policy" pp 255.

Prime Minister. Later, both Nigel Lawson and Geoffrey Howe resigned their positions in 1989 and 1990 over disagreements with their Prime Minister on Europe.⁸⁶ Along with these challenges came increasingly vocal disquiet from the left and pro-Europeans of the CPP who were unhappy with Mrs Thatcher's handling of European affairs which they regarded as "increasingly strident and confrontational."⁸⁷

Following Mrs Thatcher's departure from office, John Major inherited the job of uniting an unsettled and divided Party, in particular on Europe. His task was to pacify both the right wing of his Party on European issues after their champion had been ousted, and the left wing of the Party who expected 'more' in European terms from their new leader. John Major's leadership style on European issues contrasted starkly with that displayed by his predecessor. The approach of the new Prime Minister appeared 'conciliatory' in contrast to Mrs Thatcher's "doctrinal opposition to further integration".⁸⁸ Riddell argued for example that Mr Major adopted a consensual style, intended to embrace all factions in the Party.⁸⁹ If Mrs Thatcher's dismissal was a reaction by the left wing and pro-Europeans of the CPP against her, then later opposition to John Major's European policy by a number of party members on the right may be seen as a reaction of the political right. There were many in the party who were angered by Mrs Thatcher's dismissal and some of these members were opposed in general to the new incumbent, John Major, as leader of the party. Others were not opposed to John Major but the Maastricht treaty and its implications for the UK.⁹⁰ Whilst some Euro-sceptics believed John Major would not represent their interests on EC policy negotiations by protecting British sovereignty others believed he would protect their concerns, as he had received Mrs Thatcher's endorsement for the Party leadership.

1991-97

The British Press has made much of the Conservative intra-party rebellions over the Maastricht treaty as constituting the development and activities of a party faction. Whether this is an accurate label for the Maastricht rebels is discussed in the final chapter of this work. What it is important to stress here, is that the Maastricht treaty, for various reasons, invoked enormous concern amongst a substantial section of the Conservative Party. So great were these concerns that a number of Conservatives met shortly after their electoral victory in 1992, to discuss their concerns over European integration and later, their opposition to the Maastricht Bill. The events that subsequently followed are remarkable in terms of Conservative Party post-war history, for this initially small group of concerned Euro-sceptics within the CPP, quickly grew into a larger collective identity who were prepared to challenge their party's

⁸⁶ Geoffrey Howe had been "sacked as Foreign Secretary in 1989." Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 101. George, S and Sowemimo, M "Conservative Foreign Policy" have also given an account of their resignations: see pp 252-253 on Lawson's resignation and pp 255-256 for Howe's resignation.

⁸⁷ Junor, P "The Major Enigma" London, Penguin, 1993, p 161.

⁸⁸ George, S and Sowemimo, M "Conservative Foreign Policy" p 256.

⁸⁹ Riddell, P "The Conservatives After 1992" p 427, Political Quarterly, 1992, Volume 63, pp 422-431.

⁹⁰ It is discussed later that Prime Minister equivocated on European Policy where the result was to antagonise divisions within the CPP on European issues.

policy actively. Various reasons are suggested in this study and elsewhere why the Treaty of Maastricht gave rise to such growth in intra-party opposition to a party leader's policy. The essential point that this study attempts to demonstrate and characterise, is that this group of MPs, who became known as the Fresh Start Group (FSG), engaged in collective activity in order to influence the party leadership on this Bill. What is politically significant, is the manner of their opposition as an internal organised political fighting force within the CPP to this Bill, and the consequences of such activity for the future behaviour of Conservative opposition.

Proposals for the draft treaty of Maastricht were first signed between EC Member Heads of State at Maastricht on 9-10 December 1991. Parliament accepted the basis of the Treaty negotiated by John Major in a debate on 19 December by 339-253 votes. Five Conservative MPs opposed the terms negotiated and a further eleven abstained.⁹¹ The Bill itself was first introduced to Parliament on 7 May 1992. Second Reading of the Maastricht Bill came before the House of Commons on 20/21 May 1992. In comparison to later debates on the Bill, the number of Conservative MPs opposing this stage of the Bill was relatively low. Twenty-two Conservative MPs voted against the Government and a further four MPs abstained.⁹² What was significant about the size of the Conservative opposition at this stage, was that it indicated the potential size of internal rebellion that the Government was liable to face on the remaining stages of the Bill. It also acted as a method of self-identification for the Conservative rebels from whom support could be drawn in order to challenge the Bill. Not all Conservative MPs who opposed the Maastricht treaty had the same aim, some wanted to defeat the whole Treaty, others parts of it. What is noteworthy, is that a number of them, after Second reading decided to organise themselves to fulfil their aims collectively rather than individually. There was an awareness prevalent in the 1990's amongst the CPP Euro-sceptics, that there was a greater likelihood that real influence could be brought to bear if collective opposition was pursued. Similar to the 1971-2 debate, events that followed cemented the battle lines between the Conservative Euro sceptics, the Conservative leadership and the pro-Europeans of the party.

Throughout the next year, bluffing games were continuously waged between the Euro-sceptics and the Party leadership, each threatening to hold the other side to ransom. John Major's pursuit of ratification of the Maastricht treaty, in its own way, was similar to the determination of Heath in 1971-2, to secure Britain's entry into the EEC. Following Second reading of the Bill, its natural course was unusually disrupted following the rejection of the Maastricht treaty by Denmark in their first referendum on 2 June 1992.

Denmark's objection to the Maastricht treaty gave new impetus to the domestic debate in Britain, renewing the vigour of the opposition of the Conservative anti-Maastricht Euro-sceptics, who now believed they had greater vindication of their objections. A number of the key leaders of the Conservative Euro-sceptic domestic campaigns had in fact travelled to Denmark to assist in the Danish

⁹¹ Hansard 19 December 1991 Columns 553-554.

⁹² Gorman, T "The Bastards" London, Pan, 1993, p 49.

anti-Maastricht campaigns in the run up to the second Danish referendum on 18 May 1993.⁹³ What was significant about the Danes' rejection was that more Conservatives, who had not opposed Second reading of the Bill, thereafter felt easier about opposing their Government on the remaining stages of the Bill. Following Denmark's rejection of the Maastricht treaty, John Major decided to allow a discussion debate on the treaty (Paving debate) to take place before the remaining enactment stages of the Bill.⁹⁴ This was surprising and to many it seemed unnecessary: as it transpired, it was also costly. John Major was under no formal obligation to delay the debate and this decision could, therefore, have been undertaken to appease the party's internal opponents to the Bill and to demonstrate that he was prepared to listen to their concerns and to gain time to rejuvenate Conservative approval of the Maastricht treaty, which suddenly appeared to be in ruins. An article in the Press claimed for instance that following Denmark's rejection of the treaty, "Privately, the Tory party's backroom number-crunchers know that, in its present mood, there is no chance of getting the Maastricht Bill through the House of Commons."⁹⁵ John Major's decision may have also been influenced by the fact that Britain was due to take over the Presidency of the EC in July and hence he would want to minimise division at home on Europe as far as was possible to save embarrassment. This decision was also taken as the result of his other surprising move, to delay ratification of the Bill until after all other countries had ratified it. This latter decision was a policy reversal, which was considered by many observers to have been a fatal mistake, as it gave the Euro-sceptics of the Party time to mobilise. To some, this was also seen as a sign of weak leadership. On 3 June, Michael Spicer tabled an EDM, which called for the Government to take a 'fresh start' on the Maastricht treaty, which was signed by 91 Conservative MPs.⁹⁶

During the summer months of 1992, the anti-Maastricht Conservatives began to campaign in their constituencies as did the anti-marketisers during the summer of 1971, to demonstrate their concerns over the Maastricht treaty to their constituents and to raise the general public awareness of the Bill and its implications across the country. The Euro-sceptics were afforded an opportunity during late summer 1992 to demonstrate what they considered to be the disadvantages of Britain's relationship with Europe, when on 16 September, sterling fell out of the exchange rate mechanism.⁹⁷ A financial crisis subsequently emerged for the government. Parliament was recalled from the summer recess to hold an emergency debate on the matter on September 24. Although this debate was not specifically related to

⁹³ Bill Cash was one Conservative Euro-sceptic who travelled to Denmark. A number of Labour anti-Maastricht MPs also travelled to Denmark to help the rebel cause in Denmark. The Danes voted in favour of the Maastricht treaty in this referendum. See Gorman, T "The Bastards" pp 164-165.

⁹⁴ The Labour Party had in fact tabled an amendment to review the treaty and its implications for Britain, once the Danes had rejected it.

⁹⁵ The Financial Times "While the Cat's away..." 13 June 1992.

⁹⁶ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 53. According to Baker, Gamble and Ludlam however, 84 Conservatives signed this EDM. For the text of the EDM and list of Conservative signatories see their article "Whips or Scorpions?" p 166. According to other sources, the latter figure appears to be correct.

⁹⁷ On 2 June 1992, Denmark had voted in a referendum to reject the Maastricht treaty. This was significant for the Conservative Euro-sceptics battle, and indeed for the British Government, because "without the agreement of all twelve partners in the EC the Treaty could not be implemented" Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 50.

the forthcoming Maastricht Bill debates it afforded the Euro-sceptics of the CPP an opportunity to demonstrate to their Government their growing strength in numbers who were likely to oppose the forthcoming Paving debate in the division lobbies. The Government won the vote to express support for the Government's Economic policy by 322–296 votes.⁹⁸ Nine Conservative Maastricht rebels abstained however on this vote.⁹⁹ Indeed, the determination with which a number of Conservative MPs had returned to Parliament in the autumn to challenge the Maastricht treaty was evident at an informal meeting of Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs convened on the evening prior to the debate. As a result of this meeting a further EDM signed by seventy-one Conservative MPs calling for a Fresh Start on the Government's economic policy, was tabled by the chairman of the Fresh Start Group, Michael Spicer. This was significant, as it demonstrated to both the pro-Europeans of the CPP and the Government, according to Mrs Gorman, that "real opposition to Maastricht, whether tacit or overt, was still strong."¹⁰⁰ Battles were also waged within the Party during the Conservative Party Conference. Norman Tebbit and Mrs Thatcher between them criticised the course of European Development, Maastricht and the ERM, which further embarrassed the Government on its European policy.

The Paving debate was held in the Commons on 4 November 1992. From the start of the debate, there was anticipation within the House that the Government could be defeated on the paving motion. For as Mrs Gorman claimed, "the rebels, the whips and the opposition had done their sums and, if people were to be relied upon, the Government could lose the vote."¹⁰¹ Speculation had also arisen that the Prime Minister would resign if he lost this debate which resulted in anxieties amongst the Conservative benches. Officially a vote of confidence in Her Majesty's Government was not in place. The supposition of many Conservatives however that the Prime Minister would resign if he lost the vote arose out of a meeting of the Prime Minister and five senior members of the '92 Group'.¹⁰² At this meeting the Prime Minister allegedly informed them that his position as Prime Minister would be unsustainable if the Government lost the vote.¹⁰³

The threat of this deterrent was important because these five MPs who had been expected to abstain then supported the government on this vote:¹⁰⁴ had these MPs withheld their support, the government could have been defeated. As it was, the government secured victory by just three votes in a 316-313 split.¹⁰⁵ Twenty-six Conservatives voted against the Bill. The Prime Minister's threat, which was

⁹⁸ Hansard 24 September 1992 Division 73, Column 112.

⁹⁹ These nine Members were: John Carlisle, Bill Cash, Teresa Gorman, Richard Shepherd, Nicholas and Ann Winterton, Sir Teddy Taylor, Nicholas Budgen and John Butcher.

¹⁰⁰ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 70.

¹⁰¹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 122.

¹⁰² As confirmed to the author by a member of the '92 Group. This is also confirmed by Baker, D, Gamble, A & Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions?" pp 155-156.

¹⁰³ Baker, D, Gamble, A & Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions?" pp 155-156.

¹⁰⁴ Baker, D, Gamble, A & Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions?" pp 156.

¹⁰⁵ Defeating the Paving debate was crucially important to the Conservative Maastricht rebels. If the FSG had been successful then the Government "would have had to go back to the drawing board." Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 125. Sir Peter Fry argued to the author - October 1995, that the success of the rebels was impeded by the fact that "it was made a vote of confidence and that altered the goal posts."

reinforced by the Conservative whips, was also important because it constrained the voting behaviour of a number of Euro-sceptics who were under the impression that unofficially, this was seen as a vote of confidence in the Government.¹⁰⁶

Whilst it was the Maastricht Bill itself which parliament was about to debate, the Prime Minister informed the House that in reality, the Paving debate was about whether parliament wished Britain to be at the heart of Europe and its negotiations, or on the perimeter of the debate.¹⁰⁷ He warned the House that should the Government's Bill not be supported then the Government's negotiating position at the Edinburgh Summit in the following month would be severely hampered to the detriment of the UK.¹⁰⁸

The narrowness of the Government's victory was significant for the future rebellions of the Party's Euro-sceptics. The Euro-sceptics had only marginally lost their fight to defeat the Maastricht Bill, albeit with the help of the opposition parties. The vigour of the FSG was renewed after the debate because they could see that their collective efforts had resulted in near victory. If they could continue their efforts and increase their numbers there was a possibility that they could defeat the Bill on Third Reading or at least, force an amendment to the Bill that would place the government in an awkward position. The Euro-sceptics could be fairly confident at this stage as a number of Conservative MPs had shown their willingness to oppose their Party leadership on the Paving vote, when an unofficial vote of confidence had been attached.

The confidence of the Fresh Start Group (FSG) was also boosted during the Committee stages of the Bill, which commenced on 1 December 1992. The FSG had planned their activities for every committee debate, ensuring opposition to the Bill in both speeches on the floor of the House and in the division lobbies. Additional support was attracted from a number of Conservative MPs who were specifically concerned with particular aspects of the Treaty, but not the whole of it. The FSG was able to rely on extra support at times during the committee stages of the Bill from these members. On one occasion, on 8 March 1993, the Conservative anti-Maastricht rebels were victorious. They defeated the Government on a vote on the composition of the EC Committee of the Regions by twenty-two votes.¹⁰⁹ This small victory for the Conservative rebels was crucial for confidence building as was mentioned above. Their victory in effect was incidental to their aim of defeating the Maastricht Bill. For this vote did not affect the outcome of the passage of the Bill, it only dealt with the question of how Britain

¹⁰⁶ The tactics employed by the Party leadership to constrain the revolt among their backbenchers to this Bill are discussed further in chapter seven and an account specific to the events surrounding the Paving Bill can be found in Baker, D, Gamble, A & Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions?"

¹⁰⁷ John Major Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 284.

¹⁰⁸ John Major Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 296.

¹⁰⁹ 26 Conservatives voted against the Government and 18 abstained. A vote on whether a referendum should be held before the Bill was ratified, which resulted in victory for the Government by 363-124 votes, took place on 21 April 1993. 38 Conservatives opposed the Government and 13 abstained. The Report stage of the Bill was made on 4-5 May 1993. The debate lasted approximately six hours. A 10-minute rule Bill was introduced between 6 and 8 p.m., which was later reduced to 5 minutes. Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 381.

would carry out its obligations under the Treaty when ratified.¹¹⁰ Because this vote did not affect the outcome of the Bill, the Euro-sceptics were able to increase their numbers on this vote from their fellow Euro-sceptics who had been constrained, previously from voting against the Government, especially the Paving Bill, because of the vote of confidence that was attached.¹¹¹

After almost six months of internal battles, Third reading of the Maastricht Bill came before the House for debate on 20 May 1993 after 204 hours of debates. This in the normal course of parliamentary Bills represented the last chance for the Party's Euro-sceptics to defeat the Maastricht Bill. Formally, after Third reading with a Commons majority in favour of a Bill, a Bill would then proceed to the Upper House for debate and then, if approved, receive Royal Assent. This was not entirely the case for the Maastricht treaty, for although this procedure in fact occurred, a final hurdle for the Bill had yet to be crossed before it became effective as UK law: this hurdle was the debate over the Social Chapter clause. In December 1991, in negotiating the Maastricht treaty, John Major obtained an opt-out on the inclusion of the Social Chapter within the Treaty for Britain, as well as an opt-out on stage three of monetary union.¹¹² The Labour Party, who wanted the inclusion of the Social Chapter, had previously tabled an amendment during the Maastricht debates for its inclusion as part of the treaty. On 4 May, the Labour Party won the right to hold a debate on the Social Chapter after the passage of the Maastricht Bill itself had taken place.

During the debate on Third reading, the Government portrayed the arguments of the Conservative Euro-sceptics of "a lurch into a super state" as misguided, and argued that ratification of the Maastricht treaty would not lead to diminished parliamentary democracy which many of them feared.¹¹³ Although the Government was subsequently victorious, the Bill being approved by 232-112, (a majority of one hundred and eighty), forty-one Conservative MPs had rebelled. No vote of confidence or threat of senior Cabinet resignations was attached to this vote, which allowed more Conservative MPs the freedom to oppose. The Government knew that it could rely on the support of many Labour and Liberal MPs who wanted to see the Maastricht treaty come into effect. Despite their defeat, the Euro-sceptics of the CPP had mounted their biggest opposition at this stage of the Bill against their Government.

The debate on the Social Chapter was held in the House of Commons on 22 July 1993. During the preceding months' various debates in the Commons on Amendment 27 (later 2) and New Clause 75 of the Maastricht Bill, many Members of the Opposition and some Conservative rebels tried to establish the fact that if the Social Chapter clause was approved by Parliament then the Maastricht Bill would be

¹¹⁰ For further details see Hansard 8 March 1993 Columns 665-762

¹¹¹ For two MPs George Walden and Michael Grylls this was the only occasion when they failed to support the Government during the Maastricht debates, covered by Table 3.5. They both registered an abstention.

¹¹² For John Major's speech to the House why he was not prepared to accept the Social Chapter within the treaty see Hansard 18 December 1991 Columns 279-281. On the single currency see Columns 283-284.

¹¹³ Sir Douglas Hurd Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 389-90.

come null and void in UK law. The Foreign Secretary however made it clear to the House that this was not the case as the amendment on the Social chapter did not affect the status of the opt-out on the treaty only whether it should be incorporated into domestic law.¹¹⁴ Many of the Euro-sceptics continued to believe that the question of parliament being able to ratify the treaty if the Social Chapter was included was inconclusive.¹¹⁵ Some of them believed this delayed debate offered one further opportunity for the Conservative Euro-sceptics to defeat the Maastricht Bill. The previous internal battles for the CPP over Maastricht, therefore, resumed. This debate was not so cut and dried for the Euro-sceptics causing controversy amongst them and essentially it split them. A number of rebels were in essence opposed to the Social Chapter, a fact which was used by the Conservative Government during the debate to persuade some Conservative Euro-sceptics to support them. The Government argued that normally Conservative MPs would oppose the inclusion of such a clause and that it was only because the Social Chapter was linked to the outcome of the Maastricht treaty that a number of Conservative MPs had decided to vote for its inclusion within the Bill. During the debate the Conservative Government tried to portray this Bill as an issue entirely separate from the Maastricht treaty (which had already received Royal Assent).¹¹⁶ The Prime Minister warned the Euro-sceptics of his Party that voting for Labour's motion in order to defeat the Maastricht treaty was "a cynical and unscrupulous vote" which was unrepresentative given the wishes of the House previously to approve the treaty.¹¹⁷

The decision of some Euro-sceptics to support the Social Chapter was a calculated gamble based on the theory that if they were victorious in the division lobbies, they could in effect, defeat the Maastricht Bill. Although the Labour Party wanted the Social Chapter included within the Maastricht treaty, they also saw it as a chance to defeat the Conservative Government. This latter fact acted both as a constraint and impetus to opposition for the Conservative Euro-sceptics. The Labour Party's proposed opposition to the exclusion of the Social Chapter persuaded a number of the Conservative Fresh Start rebels to support its inclusion, because they could rely on the opposition in the division lobbies to try and defeat the Bill. The Government, therefore, was correct in its claim that the intentions of some of its party members combined with the opposition parties as an "alliance of different parties with different interests, voting for the same amendment for different purposes."¹¹⁸ Many Conservative MPs, however, felt they could not support the inclusion of the Social Chapter Clause because they abhorred its provisions. Others were unable to persuade their Constituency Association that joining the Labour Party in the division lobbies on this vote was acceptable in order to defeat the Bill.

The Government lost the vote on the Social Chapter. This according to one MP was "the most dramatic Parliamentary event since the fall of the Callaghan Government in 1979."¹¹⁹ The first vote of the debate on Labour's motion, which opposed the Government's intention to exclude the Social

¹¹⁴ Sir Douglas Hurd, Hansard 5 May 1993 Column 203-204.

¹¹⁵ See for example the speech of Tony Marlow to the House during the debate on Amendment 2 (previously 27), Hansard 5 May 1993 Column 226.

¹¹⁶ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 524.

¹¹⁷ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 524.

¹¹⁸ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 524.

¹¹⁹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 205.

Chapter from the Maastricht treaty, was tied. By precedent, the speaker of the House cast her deciding vote with the noes. The Government then lost the crucial main motion, division 359, that the Government should accept the Treaty of Maastricht with the exception of the Social Chapter, through the combined efforts of the Conservative Euro-sceptics and the Labour Party. The Conservatives Euro-sceptics victory was short lived. Immediately after the vote took place, the Government following an emergency Cabinet meeting, announced its intention to hold a vote of confidence in Her Majesty's Government the next day given that its European policy, for which it had received a majority of the House, was now in tatters.¹²⁰ The Government clearly frustrated by this turn of events, given the earlier approval of the House for the Maastricht Bill, declared that this situation was no longer acceptable and that the issue must be resolved once and for all.¹²¹ In contrast to the 1972 debate on Second reading of the EEC Bill, there could be no misunderstanding among Conservative MPs that the Government's intention was to dissolve Parliament if defeated as the Prime Minister clearly stated to the House that "if we lose the Division today I will seek a dissolution of Parliament."¹²² Effectively, this meant that the battles between the Government and the Euro-sceptics in Parliament over the Maastricht treaty were to recommence.

Despite a number of meetings the next day to plan their opposition, the Conservative rebels soon realised that they could not win: the battle was lost. This position was clearly evident during the debate itself, where unlike the preceding debates of the last year, only a few of the hard core Fresh Start members made speeches. In the knowledge that defeat was upon them, some of the Euro-sceptics tried to clarify their position and remind the House of the arguments in which they still believed. Richard Shepherd for instance, pointed out to the House that he was only supporting the Government on this Bill because its survival was at stake.¹²³ The Government won their vote of confidence: on the first vote on the Labour amendment by a majority of 38 (301-339) on the second vote on the main question the Government won with a majority of 40 (399-299). All but one Conservative MP supported the Government on the vote.

Whilst the battles within the Conservative Party over Europe seemed to be finally over, this was far from the truth. Rupert Allason, the one Conservative MP who had abstained on the vote of confidence on 23 July, was removed from receipt of the Conservative Whip as punishment for his action. As was mentioned in the preceding chapter, this was an uncharacteristic move by the Conservative Government, having last been used in 1942. It reflected the seriousness with which the Conservative Government viewed the internal battles within its Party over the last year. Despite the Prime Minister's intention that the issue should not be allowed to "fester"¹²⁴ this was never going to be the case. John Major's leadership style over the past year had angered and further frustrated a number of Conservative

¹²⁰ The Prime Minister made a short speech after the end of voting declaring that since the House had not reached a resolution "as required by section 7 of the European Communities (Amendment) Act" the Bill could not be enforced. Hansard 23 July 1993 Column 610.

¹²¹ Hansard 23 July 1993 Column 612.

¹²² Hansard 23 July 1993 Column 627.

¹²³ Hansard 23 July 1993 Column 665.

¹²⁴ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 611.

MPs who were already deeply concerned about the pace and development of European legislation and upset that they had effectively been held to ransom over a policy Bill, about which they held deep reservations. The Government's handling of the Maastricht debates created disruption within the CPP, after which the concerns and anxieties over Britain's relations with Europe, which remained amongst a number of Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs, bubbled and erupted over the European Finance Bill (EFB) in November 1994.

The Conservative Party leadership's difficulties did not abate during the following year. The Conservative Government was generally beleaguered by a series of sleaze scandals which were a setback to John Major's 'back to basics campaign.' The Government was also seen as electorally unpopular: an ICM poll of the voting intentions of the public if a general election were held in January 1994, placed the Conservatives at 26% compared to 20% Liberal and 50% Labour.¹²⁵ By January 1994, the press were reporting that John Major's Government was slowly disintegrating amidst crisis after crisis and unpopularity.¹²⁶ By March 1994, John Major was reported as saying that he would remain as leader of the Conservative Party even if the Conservatives did badly in the following elections.¹²⁷ Opinion polls further suggested that the Conservative Party was likely to suffer heavily both in the Euro elections in June and in the Council elections in May of that year.¹²⁸

One of the main problems that affected the fortunes of the Party leadership during 1994 was that by trying to placate the two inextricably opposed pro and anti European wings of the Party, it had failed to take any firm position to the Party, on Europe. One article in the press for instance, commented that in John Major's handling of recent European affairs, "the problem has not been his objective of seeking a more decentralised European union...but the inconsistencies of his rhetoric and tactics...He annoyed pro-Europeans whilst failing to win their respect, or support, of Euro-sceptics."¹²⁹ Sowemimo supported this argument when he claimed that John Major's attempt to maintain unity in Europe had in fact paradoxically succeeded in intensifying his party's divisions on the issue.¹³⁰ One MP, Tony Marlow, regarded the Prime Minister's management of recent European affairs, specifically John Major's acceptance of a reduced blocking vote from 27 to 23 in EU government voting decisions, to be so bad, that he called for his resignation in the Commons.¹³¹ To some observers, it appeared that John Major was wooing the Party's sceptics by taking a firm stance on Europe, which upset the Pro-Europeans. One article in the press claimed for instance that John Major was attempting to "defend British interests against the centralising ambitions of Labour and the Liberal Democrats."¹³² John Major's rejection of Jean-Luc Dehaene for the position of Commission President at the EU Council

¹²⁵ The Guardian "Major denies any crisis over back to basics drive" 12 January 1994.

¹²⁶ The Guardian "A Government falling apart like no other in history" 20 January 1994.

¹²⁷ The Times "I shall fight on as leader, says Major" 8 March 1994.

¹²⁸ The Times "Tories face Euro-poll trouncing" 6 January 1994.

¹²⁹ The Times "Faltering leader gives ammunition to his enemies" 30 March 1994.

¹³⁰ Sowemimo, M "The Conservative Party and European Integration 1988-95," p 93, Party Politics, Volume 2, No. 1 pp 77-97.

¹³¹ See the Times "Major faces new struggle for survival" 30 March 1994 and The Times "Major accused of a climb-down over blocking vote deal" 30 March 1994.

¹³² The Times "Major plans new Europe onslaught" 24 March 1994.

meeting in Corfu, for instance, (June 23-4) was also widely regarded in domestic party politics as an effort to placate the Euro-rebels of his party.

John Major's attempt to unite his Party on the European issue failed: it was in fact an impossible task.¹³³ In the European elections of June 1994, the Conservative Party received their lowest share of the vote in a national election since 1832.¹³⁴ At the October Party Conference divisions within the Party over Europe once again emerged as a result of the Government's plan for a 'multi-speed' Europe.¹³⁵ A number of fringe meetings were held at the Conference by the Party's Euro-sceptics to reassert their concerns over European integration. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Government faced challenges to the EFB on 28 November 1994. What was surprising, was the course of the events that followed, the outcome of which was a minority Conservative Government and the expulsion of eight Conservative members as a group from receipt of the Conservative Party whip.

On 28 November 1994, the Government survived an attempt by the Labour Party and eight Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs, to defeat its European Finance legislation, by twenty-seven votes. The subject matter of this Bill, which laid out the cost of Britain's increased contribution to the European Union over the next few years, was sensitive for many Conservative Euro-sceptics. Plans for this Bill had been set out at the Edinburgh Summit of the European Union in December 1992, during the British Presidency. When this Bill was brought before the Commons in November 1994, once again, the passage of a European Policy Bill through Parliament re-opened divisions within the CPP on Europe.

What was extraordinary about this debate, and perhaps not foreseen by the Government, the Euro-sceptics and the Conservative Party in Parliament and in the country, was the escalation of events that occurred during the next two weeks and which resulted in the Conservative Government imposing a third vote of confidence (officially second) during its reign and nine Conservative MPs, losing the whip.¹³⁶ These outcomes were partially the result of the unfortunate timing of the Bill's passage in the Commons. On 15 November 1994, the day preceding the Queen's address at the opening of Parliament,¹³⁷ the Court of Auditors delivered their annual report on the financial state of the European Union.¹³⁸ This report stated that wastage in the European Union budget, allegedly due to fraud and waste, amounted to between five and six million pounds a year, approximately 10% of its budget. The timing of this report, a little under two weeks prior to the Bill's ratification in the Commons, was

¹³³ The Times "Pro Europeans help to arm the sceptics" 22 March 1994.

¹³⁴ The Guardian "Major Promises Big Reshuffle" 14 June 1994.

¹³⁵ Ludlam also claimed that there was clear evidence of division between the Party's pro and Euro-sceptics at the Party Conference. Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 115.

¹³⁶ The figure of nine includes Sir Richard Body who resigned the whip in protest of the government's tactics on this debate. This is discussed in more detail in later chapters.

¹³⁷ The Queen's speech outlined plans for Britain's increased contribution to the EU. For further details of the alleged waste and fraud, see article in The Daily Telegraph "Play the EU game: you can waste millions" 16 November 1994.

¹³⁸ For further details of the alleged waste and fraud, see article in The Daily Telegraph "Play the EU game: you can waste millions" 16 November 1994.

crucial to the events that followed. The report's implication of massive fraud re-awoke deep resentment and outrage among many of the Party's Euro-sceptics.¹³⁹ The anger felt by the rebels in light of this, was fed further by the fact that this Bill was asking them to agree to more money being sent to the European Union (EU). This outrage was fuelled further by a new Treasury report, that showed the Chancellor's figures which had already been presented to the House were incorrect.¹⁴⁰ In addition, the sensitivities of a number of the CPP's Euro-sceptics were incited still further by the Government's decision to attach a vote of confidence to this Bill. Eight Conservative MPs were so angered by both the actions of their Government during the debate and the legislation itself, that they deliberately withheld their support. As forewarned by the Government, the Conservative whip was immediately withdrawn from those eight. One further MP, Sir Richard Body, supported the Government in the division lobbies, but resigned the Conservative whip in protest.

The decision of the Government, to make the vote on the Bill a vote of confidence in Her Majesty's Government, left many Conservative MPs bewildered. Many of them could not understand why a vote of confidence was in fact necessary, as they believed the Government would have got its legislation through regardless. One Maastricht Conservative rebel stated for instance, that "I'm still a little mystified about why an issue that commands a majority in the Commons...can be turned into a political crisis. It takes extraordinary skill to do that."¹⁴¹ The Prime Minister's decision to attach a vote of confidence to the Bill was deemed by many of the Euro-sceptics to be "absolute madness."¹⁴² It was this decision which fuelled the rebellion into yet another European 'political crisis' for the Conservative Government¹⁴³ and for Conservatives all over the country, who were fearful of a Labour Government seizing power. This revolt could have been contained to the extent that it need not have resulted in the Government's survival hanging in the wind.

The Prime Minister's decision was announced in the address of Sir Marcus Fox, Chairman, of the 1922 Committee, to all Conservatives MPs, that rebellion over this Bill would precipitate a general election. "I am asking all my colleagues to appreciate the seriousness of the situation. If there is any amendment or defeat, the consequences to the Government are quite obvious. We shall end up with a general election."¹⁴⁴ Sir Marcus Fox justified this move on the gravity of the situation. "It is the most serious issue that has faced us since the last general election. There is no hidden agenda. All we are being asked to do is to honour an agreement made during our presidency of the EC in 1992."¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ According to one article in the Press, the Euro-sceptics used this to justify their intended opposition to the EFB in the division lobbies. The Financial Times "Cabinet to quit if crucial EU budget Bill is defeated" 24 November 1994.

¹⁴⁰ The Financial Times "Cabinet to quit if crucial EU budget Bill is defeated" 24 November 1994.

¹⁴¹ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁴² For instance as stated by Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁴³ It could be argued that John Major maybe knew what he was doing and it was a tactical move on his part, to defeat the rebels and assert his authority. Alternatively, it may be that he was involved in a wider conspiracy. One confidential Conservative MP claimed for instance that "I am now quite clear in my own mind that the Prime Minister is at best confused if he thinks he can stop this. Or at worst he knows what's going on and he's part of the conspiracy to get in."

¹⁴⁴ The Times "Euro revolt could cause an election" 16 November 1994.

¹⁴⁵ The Times "Euro revolt could cause an election" 16 November 1994.

It seems odd, in view of this statement that the Government went to the lengths it did to induce such a crisis. What was Mr Major's intention by risking all in the threat of a general election? It may have been a bluff tactic to frighten the rebels off and to exert his authority. The Party machinery may also have over-estimated the number of potential rebels.¹⁴⁶ Whatever the reason or multitude of reasons, only those privy to the Cabinet meeting and the Government's most inner thoughts will have the answer. This peculiar situation, once again, was escalated further with the announcement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kenneth Clarke, a week prior to the Bill that the Prime Minister's approach had the support of the whole Cabinet, who would resign en masse if the Bill were defeated. According to an article in *The Times*, the suicide pact of the Prime Minister and Cabinet "merely inflame the rebels and weakens his authority in the eyes of his Party and the voters."¹⁴⁷

The 'suicide pact' of the Cabinet as it became known, arose in an attempt to quash the growing claims of the Party's Euro-sceptics that the vote of confidence was bogus. Intra-party tensions were heightened still further during the run up to the Bill because, by coincidence, the Bill coincided with the deadline for any challengers for the Party leadership to be received. One report in the press indicated that up to "twenty-four Conservative MPs would be likely to oppose John Major in a leadership contest with the aim of bringing forth a 'serious challenger'."¹⁴⁸ Thirty-four names were needed to be able to secure a leadership challenge to the Prime Minister. Two problems arose out of this: firstly, it brought back memories of Mrs Thatcher's ousting almost four years earlier from the Party leadership; secondly, the possible leadership challenge altered the voting intentions of a number of Euro-sceptics on this Bill. As if they opposed and lost the Conservative whip they would be unable to sign their names to a leadership candidate.¹⁴⁹

The Government was successful in securing the passage of the EFB. The situation was remarkable, however, in that a group of Conservative MPs was ejected from the CPP. During the next year, the rebel group of nine whip-less MPs held together as a cohesive group and applied pressure on the Government. As Party outcasts and given the Party's tiny parliamentary majority, this group, thereafter, could threaten the defeat of any Government legislation with the combined strength of the opposition parties. As a result, this nameless group of nine MPs perhaps represented the most successful Conservative group, through their potential ability to influence the Government, in the post-war history of the Conservative Party.¹⁵⁰ Their influence, for example, was quickly demonstrated a week later on 6 December when three of them voted against and five abstained on the Government's Bill to increase

¹⁴⁶ This was allegedly the case over Second reading of the EEC Bill of February 1972, under Edward Heath. (As one Conservative anti-market MP said to the author).

¹⁴⁷ *The Times* "Drum Major" 24 November 1994.

¹⁴⁸ *The Financial Times* "Cabinet to quit if crucial EU budget Bill is defeated" 24 November 1994.

¹⁴⁹ The problem was that the EFB vote coincided simultaneously with a potential leadership contest. According to a press article, thirty-four signatures would be needed to stage a leadership contest. *The Daily Telegraph* "Referendum hint too woo Tory rebels" 26 November 1994.

¹⁵⁰ 25 MPs in total had the whip withdrawn from them this century. "The most famous occasion was when nine MPs opposed the Government's withdrawal from Suez in May 1957." *The Times* "Quiet life without the crack of the whips" 30 November 1994.

VAT on fuel.¹⁵¹ Further pressure was demonstrated by the some of the Maastricht rebels, who produced a manifesto under the label of 'The No Turning Back Group,' which outlined their proposals for the forthcoming IGC of 1996.¹⁵² During 1995, the influence of the Euro-sceptics was mostly firmly demonstrated by the support of most Maastricht rebels for John Redwood in the Conservative leadership election in June.¹⁵³

Conclusion

The European issue for the last twenty-eight years, has been a divisive issue for the CPP. What is particularly significant about these internal divisions, has been the manner of their expression as discontents. This is important for three reasons. Firstly, the events themselves tell an extraordinary tale: the Euro-sceptics' parliamentary revolts were unprecedented in post-war history. Secondly, these rebellions were largely conducted through formalised collective activity in groups rather than individual opposition. Thirdly, in contrast with past serious intra-party rebellions these groups did not culminate in a party split as occurred in 1846 and 1903 over the Corn Laws and Tariff Reform. Why, therefore, if the Party's Euro-rebels were so upset about these various European policy Bills, did they succumb to Government tactics? Why also did they not continue their opposition and oppose the Government in the last stage and, why indeed did they not split away from the party? These are the interesting questions which will be answered by this study and which characterise the special nature of Conservative opposition behaviour. Another issue of discussion will be the party management's response in order to exact the support of their members on these European policy Bills.

¹⁵¹ See also The Daily Telegraph Article "Government suffers whiplash effect" December 1994.

¹⁵² Sowemimo, M "Conservative Party and European Integration" pp 79-80.

¹⁵³ A number of the Maastricht rebels privately indicated to the author whether they had supported John Major or John Redwood in the leadership election. Sowemimo also commented that John Redwood was publicly endorsed by some Euro-rebels of the CPP. Sowemimo, M "Conservative Party and European Integration" p 80.

Chronology of events¹⁵⁴**1970**

- 18 June General election - Conservative Government elected with a majority of 30. Issue of negotiation to join to EEC – policy platform of all three parties - but minor theme in election manifestos.
- 30 June Negotiations commence for Britain to join EEC.
- 27 October Conclusion of initial negotiations for UK membership.

1971

- Spring Anti-market campaigns across country
- 16 June Cabinet decision to delay vote on principle of entry to October to maximise support for the Bill.
- 7 July Edward Heath presents White Paper on proposals to take Britain into the EEC
- 21 Oct. Debate commences in House of Commons on the principle of Britain's entry to the EEC for six days.
- 28 Oct. Vote in the House of Commons on the principle of entry.
House approves entry by 352 - 244 votes.
39 Conservatives (including 6 Ulster Unionists) voted against and 2 abstained.

1972

- 22 Jan. Vote on Treaty of Accession. Four Conservative MPs oppose the motion and between 15 – 20 Conservatives oppose.¹⁵⁵
- 15-17 Feb. Debate on the Second Reading of European Communities Bill.
- 17 Feb. Vote on Second Reading. Government wins with a majority of eight votes in 309-301 split. Thirteen Conservative MPs and two Ulster Unionist MPs oppose. Six Conservative and Ulster Unionist MPs abstain.
- 1 March Committee proceedings commenced on European Communities Bill.
(Dates in debate 1 - 8 March, 14-15th March, 18-19 and 25-26 April, 3 and 24 May, 8 June, 13 - 28 June and 4-5 July.)
- 2 May Allocation of time motion on European Communities Bill. Government obtains a majority of eleven to restrict remaining Committee debate to 10 more days.
13 July Third Reading of European Communities Bill. Government secures victory by 17 votes.

1973 – 1985

- 11 Feb. 1975 Mrs Thatcher elected as leader of the CPP.
- 11 March 1975 House of Commons approve principle of referendum on continued EEC Membership by 312-262 votes.

¹⁵⁴ Sources: The events are compiled from events in Hansard and the Press and the following publications: Thatcher, T "The Downing Street Years," Gorman, T "The Bastards," "Guardian Political Almanac 1993/4," Baker, D, Gamble, A and Ludlam, S "The Parliamentary Siege of Maastricht 1993: Conservative Divisions and British Ratification" Parliamentary Affairs Volume 47 pp 37-60.

¹⁵⁵ See Norton, P "Dissension in the House of Commons" pp402-403 for further details and names of rebels. All of these rebels had previously rebelled on the October vote on the principle of entry to the EEC.

- 10 April 1975 Second reading of the Referendum Bill approved by 312-248 votes. (4 Conservatives cross vote, two officially abstain).¹⁵⁶
- 22-23 April Committee stages of Referendum Bill.
- 3 May 1979 General election - Conservative Government elected with a majority of 43
- 7 June 1979 1st European elections to the European Parliament.
- 9 June 1983 General election - Conservatives re-elected with majority of 144.
- 25 June 1984 Margaret Thatcher obtains UK budget settlement at Fontainebleau European Council
- 3 Dec. 1985 Luxembourg European Council - Negotiations for Draft Treaty of SEA
- 1986-1990**
- 23 April 1986 Second Reading of the European Communities Bill for the SEA. Ten Conservative MPs oppose.
- 10 July 1986 Third Reading of the European Communities Bill for the SEA. Seven Conservative MPs oppose.
- 11 June 1987 General election - Conservatives re-elected with majority of 102 seats.
- 20 Sept. 1988 Margaret Thatcher's Bruges speech
- 26 Oct. 1989 John Major replaces Nigel Lawson as Chancellor of the Exchequer following his resignation.
- 5 Dec. 1989 Mrs Thatcher survives challenge for the party leadership from Sir Anthony Meyer. (314-24)
- 1 Nov. 1990 Geoffrey Howe resigns from the Conservative Government.
- 22 Nov. 1990 Mrs Thatcher resigns as Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party.
- 28 Nov. 1990 John Major elected as the new Party Leader and becomes Prime Minister.
- 1991**
- 13 November Bill Cash ousted as Chairman of backbench committee on European Affairs.
- 20-21 November Government wins support of House for its negotiating stance on Maastricht treaty by 351-250. Six Conservatives oppose. Margaret Thatcher calls for a referendum on monetary union.
- 9-11 December EC Member states sign Draft Maastricht treaty. John Major negotiates British opt-outs from the Social Chapter, and third stage of Monetary Union
- 18-19 December House of Commons approves Prime Ministers negotiation of terms of Maastricht treaty by 339-253.
5 Conservatives oppose approval of the terms negotiated and 11 abstain.
- 1992**
- 9 April General Election – Conservatives re-elected with a majority of 21.
- 7 May First reading of Maastricht Bill.
- 20-21 May Second reading of the Maastricht Bill. Government wins main motion by 336-92. 22 Conservatives oppose.
- 2 June Denmark narrowly rejects Maastricht treaty in a referendum.

¹⁵⁶ For further details See Norton, P "Dissension in the House of Commons 1974-1979" Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980, pp 62-3.

- 3 June Conservative rebel Michael Spicer tables 'Fresh Start' EDM on Government's Maastricht policy.
Major declares that further debate on Maastricht treaty is delayed until outcome of Danish referendum is clarified.
- 29 June Mrs Thatcher criticises Maastricht treaty in her maiden speech in House of Lords
- 1 July Britain takes over presidency of EC
- 16 September Sterling falls out of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism.
- 24 September Emergency Parliamentary debate on Government's economic policy and handling of the E.R.M. Government wins the support of the House in handling of the economy by 322-296.
- 24 September Fresh Start rebel Michael Spicer tables EDM (549) calling for a fresh start on the Government's economic policy.
- 6-9 October Conservative Party Conference
- 4 November Paving Debate. Government wins by a majority of three votes (316-313). 23 Conservatives oppose.
- 5 November John Major announces that Third reading of Maastricht Bill is to be delayed until conclusion of second Danish referendum.
- 1 December Commencement of Committee stages of the Maastricht Bill.
- 11-12 December EC Edinburgh Summit
- 1993**
- 1 January Single European market formally established.
- 22 February Foreign Secretary announced that Maastricht treaty will be ratified without Commons support for the Social Chapter.
- 8 March Government is defeated on EC Council of regions vote by 22 votes.
- 30 March New clause on Social Chapter is accepted for debate.
- 21 April House rejects referendum on Maastricht treaty 363-124.
Opposition Motion that the ruling regarding the timing of the debate on the Social Chapter should be reconsidered and incorporated into Committee stages of Maastricht Bill is defeated by 450-81 votes.
- 22 April Completion of Committee stage of Maastricht Bill.
- 4 May Debate on the Social Chapter is permitted only after the Maastricht Bill has received Royal Assent.
- 6 May Conservative Party lose by-election at Newbury.
- 18 May Second Danish Referendum gives approval for Maastricht treaty by 57%-43%.
- 20 May Government wins Third reading of Maastricht Bill by 292 to 112.
41 Conservative Euro-sceptics opposed the Bill, five abstained.
- 27 May Kenneth Clarke replaces Norman Lamont as Chancellor of the Exchequer following Mr Lamont's resignation..
- 20 July House of Lords approved Maastricht treaty by 141 to 29 votes. Maastricht treaty received Royal Assent.

- 22 July Debate on the Social Chapter. Government loses first vote on Labour's amendment to include the Social chapter within the Maastricht treaty by one vote, (318 to 317) after Speaker casts deciding vote. 15 Conservatives oppose and 8 abstain
Government loses the second vote on the main motion vote by eight votes in a 324 to 316 split. 23 Conservatives oppose and 1 abstains.
Government announced vote of confidence in its social Chapter policy to be held the next day.
- 23 July Government wins confidence vote on its management of the Maastricht treaty by 40 votes (339-299).
One Conservative MP abstained and subsequently had Conservative whip withdrawn.
- 29 July Conservatives lose Christchurch by-election.
- 2 August Maastricht treaty formally ratified by EC Member States.
- 1994**
- 15 November Court of Auditor's report on financial state of the European Union alleged 10% of budget wasted due to fraud and waste.
- 15 November Sir Marcus Fox warns Conservative Euro-rebels that Government defeat on EFB could precipitate a general election.
- 22 November Sir Nicholas Bonsor announces his decision to challenge Sir Marcus Fox as Chairman of the 1922 Committee.
- 22 November Euro-sceptics meet to discuss opposition to the EFB.
- 22 November Employment Secretary, Michael Portillo criticises European economic performance at Institute of Directors in London.
- 23 November Kenneth Clarke reveals Cabinet 'suicide Pact'.
- 23 November Euro-rebels claim they are willing to back a leadership challenger to John Major.
- 24 November Sir Marcus Fox survives challenge for Chairman of the 1922 Committee.
- 24 November Conservative Party ratings fall to 24% according to latest MORI Poll.
- 28 November EFB debate. Government wins vote by 27 Votes.
Eight Conservatives abstain. One Conservative MP resigns the Whip.
- 6 December Three of the nine Conservatives without the Whip oppose Government Bill to increase VAT on fuel. Five of them abstain.
- 11 December Campaign for reinstatement of Tory rebels launched by MPs of the Conservative Right.
- 15 December Conservatives lose Dudley West by-election. (Government majority reduced to 4).

CHAPTER 3
THE EURO-SCEPTIC MEMBERS OF THE CPP

Introduction

A problem of disunity clearly exists for the contemporary CPP, in that a number of its parliamentary members have consistently rebelled over European legislation since the October vote on principle of entry to the EEC in 1971. An article in the Press for example, claimed that Europe has long been a "malicious bogey man for the British, and it will leap right out at them again, not in some distant future, but immediately and repeatedly; and it will continue haunting until the day (if it ever does) when the British political establishment finally resolves its ambivalent feelings about the European community, one way or another."¹ Both the incidence and continuance of Conservative intra-party rebellion on European issues has led to many claims by the Press, Opposition Parties, some members of the Conservative Party and the British public, that disunity over European policy rendered the CPP incapable of government. The CPP, under the leadership of John Major, was charged with this claim due to its failure to maintain unity, within its ranks, on European policy legislation. The consequence of such a charge was that the Conservative Euro-sceptics were grouped together, labelled as mavericks and marginalised to the edge of party politics not to be taken seriously and only seen as nuisances who, on occasions, jeopardised ratification of Government European policy.

There are two immediate problems with such labelling of the Euro-sceptics. Firstly, conceptualisation of the rebels in this manner is too simplistic. Mere denigration of the rebels does not provide satisfactory answers as to why the rebels opposed Government legislation by the manner in which they did and, how they reached the point of rebellion. Any real appreciation of the processes at work within the CPP, therefore, cannot be understood solely by such accounts, as this ignores the question of what the rebels themselves thought they were doing. On closer examination, the labels the CPP and Press apply to the Euro-sceptics do not fit when the motivations and views of the rebels concerned are considered. The second problem is that this typecasting does not assist the CPP in solving the problem of disunity, as it does not enable them to understand what is going on within the parliamentary party. This is a problem because the CPP historically has prided itself on its ability to command internal unity on fundamental policy legislation. So, if the CPP cannot get close to finding the truth behind the rebellions on European policy, especially when history suggests that such trends may continue in the foreseeable future, it faces loss of credibility as a potential party of governance. This Chapter seeks to find out what really motivated the rebels during various periods of Conservative Government for opposing their party leadership on European policy, in the way that they did. It will also be suggested in the concluding chapter, that their behaviour could be explained if factional analysis were applied.² In order to do this, we must

¹ The Financial Times "The bogey man will be back" 8 March 1993.

² The rebels themselves may not like this description but this is really how they should be described.

strip away all characteristics and labels that have been applied to the rebels, to enable a clearer picture of them to be rebuilt.

This Chapter, therefore, has three aims. The first is to identify the Euro-sceptic members of the CPP throughout the four case studies. A second aim is to establish whether they had any identifying and common characteristics that distinguished them as rebels. A third is to compare and contrast the way, in which they have been categorised by others, with the accounts of the Euro-sceptics themselves. As previously suggested, the main problem with labelling the Euro-sceptics as mavericks, is that it does not assist understanding of a definitive change in the internal dynamics of Conservative Party politics. It only provides temporary comfort for those party members who are disturbed by the activities of their rebellious Euro-sceptic colleagues. Any contrast between the official account and that of their own might get closer to the truth of what was actually happening in the CPP in the respective periods of Conservative opposition to European policy.

It will be shown that through a methodological layering of the above three aims and their respective methods of analysis, the rebels do not neatly fit into a comfortable party politics model or for that matter, any typological boxes. The Euro-sceptic Members of the CPP possess a traditional view of the way things should be done both by the Party and the Government, for the country. In other words, these Party members are fundamentalist individuals. Each has their own peculiar view of the way the party should be led, the way the country should be run, their views on policy especially on European issues, and what it is to be a Conservative. These views sometimes, but not always overlap.

In terms of labels, I use the term 'Euro-sceptic' to describe members of the CPP who were opposed to the various pieces of European legislation covered by this study. It should be noted that some of the Euro-sceptics do not like labels such as 'Euro-sceptic,' 'Euro-rebel' or 'anti-European' to describe them. They regard such characterisations as too broad in scope and which, imply more hostility on their part to the concept of Europe than was actually the case. Their criticism of such titles lie in the fact that whilst many of the MPs were opposed to the political development of the European Union (EU), they were not opposed to its economic or cultural aspects. Tony Marlow claimed for example, that he was pro-Europe, but just didn't want to be governed by Europe.³ Sir George Gardner announced to the House that he was happy to accept the label "Euro-pragmatist."⁴ Iain Duncan Smith claimed that he did not regard himself as "anti-European." He claimed that "Europe is a geographical expression. Therefore, being in the centre of Europe, or supporting Europe is neither here nor there. The key is a European community of nations trading and co-operating through sovereign parliaments."⁵ Similarly, James Cran stated that, "I do not regard myself as a Euro-sceptic. I am very much in favour of Europe. I do not say that we should pull up the anchor and take the UK somewhere else. We are part of Europe and we must stay part of Europe. I am

³ Interview with author - October 1995.

⁴ Hansard 20 May 1992 Column 367.

⁵ Hansard 20 May 1992 Column 356.

concerned only about the kind of Europe we will have.”⁶ The preferred method of self-identification of many of these European policy opponents within the party was 'Euro-realist'. One Conservative rebel MP in explanation of this label claimed, for example, that the internal party divisions during the Maastricht debates were a consequence of his belief that the “problem with the Government’s position at the moment is they’re not realistic about Europe.”⁷

The Identities of the CPP Euro-sceptics

Policy issues in parties are determined by what MPs do as well as what they think. The first method of identifying the Euro-rebels of the CPP was conducted through analysis of the voting behaviour of Conservative MPs during the four European Bills covered by this study. Such analysis clearly identified the main rebels of the party and as will be seen in Chapter five, voting behaviour was regarded as a key method of self-identification for the Euro-sceptics. Further identification of the rebels within each period is more difficult and this study relies on accounts of members of the party, existing literature and press reports to indicate wider levels of Euro-scepticism. That is, members, who may have been concerned with the direction of party policy on European issues, but were not prepared to vote against their Government in the division lobbies.

Entry to the European Communities 1971-2

On October 28 1971, thirty-three Conservative MPs voted against the Government Bill on whether Britain should apply for EEC membership on the terms negotiated by the British Government.⁸ A further two Conservative MPs abstained. These thirty-five members form the basis of the 1970's case study (See Column B Table 3.1). It should be noted, however, that this figure is smaller than the number of known or actual Euro-sceptics within the CPP at the time, as in the spring of 1971, sixty Conservative MPs were deemed to be Euro-sceptical in some way or another.⁹

⁶ Hansard 20 May 1992 Column 442.

⁷ Bernard Jenkin MP to author - November 1994.

⁸ This figure excludes six members of the Ulster Unionist Party: James Molyneux, James Kilfedder, Stanley McMaster, John E Maginis, Capt. LPS Orr and Rafton Pounder. These members are not included in Table 3.1 as this study will identify Conservative rebels across the span of the four case studies. In the three later case studies, Ulster Unionist MP's did not receive the Conservative Whip. For the purposes of this study it is merely necessary to state that their links to the Conservative Euro-sceptics were without doubt important to the Conservative battles in terms of calculations of voting success and ability to try to defeat Government policy in the division lobbies. Note: Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" and Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" include these six within their calculations of Conservative rebels for the period.

⁹ Norton claimed that approximately thirty Conservative incumbents were returned who were known to be opposed to British entry and another "twenty new members were returned, who it was to transpire, held similar views" at the 1970 General Election. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 65-66.

Various different estimates of the level of Conservative potential rebels were compiled at the start of 1971. See Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 67.

Table 3.1			
Summary of Conservative anti-market MP's voting on the European Communities Act 1971-2			
A	B	C	D
Name	Vote on Principle of entry	Second Reading	Third Reading
Key X = Vote against Government, A = Vote with Government, AB = Abstained			
Ronald Bell	X	X	AB
John Biffen	X	X	X
Richard Body	X	X	X
Eric Bullus	X	A	A
William Clarke	X	A	X
John Farr	X	A	A
Anthony Fell	X	X	X
Hugh Fraser	X	AB	X
Peter Fry	X	A	A
Michael Hutchinson	X	X	X
John Jennings	X	X	X
Toby Jessel	X	A	A
Sir Donald Kaberry	X	A	A
Sir Stephen McAdden	X	A	A
Neil Marten	X	X	X
Carol Mather	X	A	A
Angus Maude	X	AB	A
Lt. Col. C Mitchell	X	A	A
Roger Moate	X	X	X
Geraint Morgan	X	A	A
David Mudd	X	X	A
Sir Gerald Nabarro	X	X	AB
Sir Harmar Nicholls	X	AB	A
Sally Oppenheim	X	A	A
Enoch Powell	X	X	X
Sir R Russel	X	AB	AB
Harold Soref	X	A	A
John Sutcliffe	X	A	AB
Edward Taylor	X	A	AB
Robert Taylor	X	A	A
Robin Turton	X	X	X
Jasper More	X	A	A
Sir Derek Walker-Smith	X	X	X
Edward du Cann	AB	A	A
Patrick Wolrige-Gordon	AB	A	A

On Second reading of the EEC Bill, 17 February 1972, thirteen of the thirty-three Conservatives who voted against the October vote of principle, again voted against their Government and a further four abstained (Column C Table 3.1).¹⁰ On Third reading of the Bill on 13 July 1972, twelve Conservative MPs voted against their Government. Another five members abstained (Column D Table 3.1).¹¹ In total, ten Conservative MPs voted against the Conservative Government on all three

¹⁰ Source: Hansard 17 February 1972 Division 59. Note: 3 of the six Ulster Unionist MPs supported the Government (Stanley McMaster, Capt. LPS Orr and Rafton Pounder), 1 abstained (James Kilfedder) and two opposed (James Molyneaux and John Maginis).

¹¹ Source: Hansard 13 July 1972 Division 292. Note: 5 of the six Ulster Unionist MPs opposed Third reading (Stanley McMaster, Capt. LPS Orr, James Kilfedder, James Molyneaux and John Maginis and), 1 abstained (Rafton Pounder).

of these votes in the division lobbies. As can be seen from Table 3.1, these are: John Biffen, Richard Body, Michael Hutchinson, John Jennings, Neil Marten, Roger Moate, Enoch Powell, Robin Turton, Sir Derek Walker-Smith and Anthony Fell. Three of these ten individuals, Roger Moate, John Biffen, and Richard Body were still elected members of parliament in 1992 and voted against the Maastricht Bill.

The SEA 1986

In total eleven Conservative MPs voted against the SEA. Second reading of the SEA on 23 April 1986, (Division 154) was opposed by ten Conservative MPs (Column B Table 3.2). Two hundred and eighty-eight Conservative MPs voted for the Bill, whilst one hundred and six Conservative MPs did not vote.¹²

Table 3.2		
Summary of Conservative anti-market MP's voting on the European Communities Act 1971-2		
A	B	C
Name	Second Reading	Third Reading
Key X = Vote against Government, A = Vote with Government, AB = Abstained		
Jonathan Aitken	X	AB
Michael Brown	X	AB
Nicholas Budgen	X	X
Derek Conway	X	AB
Edward du Cann	X	X
Neil Hamilton	X	AB
Roger Moate	X	AB
Sir Teddy Taylor	X	X
Bill Walker	X	X
Harvey Proctor	X	X
Gerald Howarth	AB	X
Tony Marlow	AB	X

On the Third reading of the Bill, 10 July 1986, seven Conservative MPs voted against the Bill (Column C Table 3.2). All one hundred and forty nine votes cast in favour of the Bill were comprised exclusively of Conservative MPs. Two hundred and thirty-nine Conservative MPs did not vote. Ludlam recorded nil abstentions for this vote.¹³ I am able to state that Ludlam's claim is incorrect as a number of the rebels that I interviewed of earlier and later rebellions stated that they consciously abstained from voting on Second and Third reading of the SEA. This was also confirmed during the speeches of a number of the rebels to the House during the Maastricht

¹² This figure is based on the general election result of 1983 which records 397 Conservative MPs elected on June 9. This figure is reduced to 395 when the by elections of Portsmouth (14 June 1984) and Brecon and Border (4 July 1985) are taken into account which resulted in lost seats for the Conservatives. See Butler, D & Kavanagh, D "The British General Election of 1983" London & Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1984.

¹³ Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 104.

debates. Toby Jessel, for example, reminded the House during the early Maastricht debates that he had abstained on the SEA.¹⁴

The Maastricht Treaty 1992-3

In total eighty-three Conservative MPs¹⁵ registered either a protest vote, consciously abstained, or did not vote throughout the seven main debates on the Maastricht Bill.¹⁶ The seven major debates covered are Second and Third reading, the Paving Motion, the Committee of the Regions vote and the Referendum votes taken in Committee of the House, and the Social Chapter and Vote of Confidence votes. Of these eighty-three MPs, twenty-six are eliminated from further analysis. Of these twenty-six, the following MPs were eliminated after claims by the respective MP to myself that they were away on parliamentary business and/or were paired: note these MPs registered only one abstention across these seven debates, Dame J Knight, Sir Michael Marshall, Marion Roe, John Greenway, Sir G Johnson-Smith, David Mellor (Former National Heritage Secretary until 24.09.92). I have excluded Members of the House who were a Member of the Government at the time, who made an abstention, as in normal circumstances, they would vote with the Government. Any abstention made by them during the Maastricht debates is assumed to be unconscious. These Members are Michael Mates, Malcolm Rifkind, Stephen Norris, Jeremy Hanley, David Lightbown (Whip), Sir Patrick Mayhew (Secretary of State for Northern Ireland), Norman Lamont, Michael Heseltine, Nicholas Scott. The former Prime Minister, Edward Heath, did not vote on the Referendum debate. He has been ruled out given his publicised views on European issues in the Commons. The following MPs did not reply to my questionnaires and I have treated any one-off abstention as an unconscious one: David Howell, Graham Bright, P Viggers and Terry Dicks. Eric Forth was ill at the time and since the Whips did not insist on the vote he abstained on Third reading of the Bill.¹⁷ The following MPs could not remember (in reply to my questionnaires) why they abstained, so I have assumed that they are not Euro-sceptical given their lack of recall: Michael Jopling (also voted for British EEC entry in 1971-2), and Winston Churchill. A further two MPs, Nicholas Fairbairn and Robert Atkins (Minister of State for Northern Ireland at the time) are since deceased and their decision, therefore, could not be sought. Anthony Coombs has also been ruled out, as he believed he did not make an abstention on Third Reading and I have assumed, therefore, that he is pro-Maastricht.

Of the remaining fifty-seven MPs, forty-seven of them comprise Mrs Gorman's rebel list (Table 3.4). From the difference of ten potential rebels, I have classified the following four as Euro-sceptics: Edward Leigh, Nirj Deva, Peter Griffiths and Andrew Robathan. Edward Leigh MP, did not vote against the Maastricht Bill, but later opposed the Social Chapter. During the Maastricht debates Mr Leigh was Under Secretary to Ministry of Trade and Industry and was restrained from

¹⁴ See Hansard 18 December 1991 Column 382.

¹⁵ All of them were contacted but not all replied.

¹⁶ Source: "The Guardian Political Almanac 1993/4" London, Fourth Estate, 1993, pp 207-215 & p 224.

¹⁷ Eric Forth to author – July 1995.

opposing this Bill until his departure from office on 27 May 1993. Nirj Deva MP, a member of the 1992 intake of MPs at the last general election intake made only one vote against the Bill on the Referendum clause. He stated that this was a conscious decision which may indicate that he is Euro-sceptical to a degree and/or believes that the opinion of the British public should be consulted before any decision was taken in Parliament on the Maastricht treaty.¹⁸ Peter Griffiths MP, similarly indicated that his abstention on the Referendum clause was a conscious one.¹⁹ I have assumed that Andrew Robathan, another new intake a member at the 1992 general election, was Euro-sceptical, as he opposed Third reading of the Maastricht Bill in the division lobbies. Of the remaining six MPs who made up to three abstentions on the Maastricht Bill, it was not possible to determine whether their abstentions were made consciously. Julian Critchley, who made two abstentions on the Referendum vote and on Third reading, stated that he was ill at the time and was, therefore, unable to vote. Whilst he did not indicate what his position would have been had he voted, I assumed that he is not a Euro-sceptic of the party given that he has been a Member of the House since 1959 and had supported the Government on the EC debates in 1971-2.²⁰ Robert Jones and Richard Needham made two abstentions during the debates. As neither of them are included on Mrs Gorman's list (See Table 3.4) they are not assumed to be Euro-sceptical. It is assumed that the one abstention made by Robert Dunn on the Referendum clause was a conscious decision to allow British people a choice, but ultimately he supported the Government's position. Sir Ralph Howell made two abstentions, but did not reply to my questionnaire. Neither did Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, who made three abstentions two on the substantive motions (Committee of Regions and the Referendum Votes) and on Third reading. I have assumed that these last two Members are not Euro-sceptical.

Fifty-one MPs, therefore, are claimed by this study as known Euro-sceptics of the CPP over Maastricht (Table 3.3). The forty-seven on Mrs Gorman's list (Table 3.4) plus the four aforementioned rebels form the basis of further analysis of this study. Table 3.5 places these fifty-one rebels in order of their rebellion in terms of voting behaviour in the lobbies across the seven selected debates related to the Maastricht Bill.

¹⁸ Nirj Deva to author – August 1995.

¹⁹ Peter Griffiths to author – July 1995.

²⁰ He abstained on the SEA. It is not known whether this was a conscious decision or not.

Name	Rebel Score	X	Abs	For	FSG
William Cash	16	8	0	3	*
Teresa Gorman	16	8	0	3	*
Toby Jessel	16	8	0	3	*
Tony Marlow	16	8	0	3	*
Richard Shepherd	16	8	0	3	*
Sir Trevor Skeet	16	8	0	3	*
Sir Teddy Taylor	16	8	0	3	*
Ann Winterton	16	8	0	3	*
Sir Richard Body	15	7	1	3	*
Nicholas Budgen	15	7	1	3	*
Christopher Gill	15	7	1	3	*
Michael Spicer	15	7	1	3	*
Bill Walker	15	7	1	3	*
John Butcher	14	6	2	3	*
James Cran	14	7	0	4	*
John Wilkinson	14	7	0	4	*
Iain Duncan-Smith	12	5	2	4	*
Barry Legg	12	5	2	4	*
Walter Sweeney	12	5	2	4	*
Nicholas Winterton	12	6	0	5	*
Rupert Allason	11	3	5	3	*
John Biffen	11	5	1	5	*
John Carlisle	11	5	1	5	*
Roger Knapman	11	5	1	5	*
Sir Ivan Lawrence	11	3	4	4	*
Sir Peter Tapsell	11	6	0	5	*
W. Hawksley	10	2	6	3	
Sir G. Gardiner	9	4	1	6	▽
Michael Lord	9	4	1	6	
David Porter	8	3	2	6	
Bernard Jenkin	7	2	3	6	*
Michael Cartiss	7	3	1	7	
John Whittingdale	7	2	3	6	
Vivian Bendall	6	2	2	7	
Michael Clark	6	2	2	7	
Harry Greenway	6	3	0	8	
Andrew Hunter	6	2	2	7	▽
Roger Moate	6	2	2	7	
Sir Nicholas Bonsor	5	2	1	8	
Sir Peter Fry	5	2	1	8	
John Townend	5	2	1	8	
Sir Rhodes Boyson	4	2	0	9	
Edward Leigh	4	2	0	9	
James Pawsey	4	2	0	9	
Sir Gerald Vaughan	4	0	4	7	
Sir Kenneth Baker	3	0	3	8	
Nirj Deva	2	1	0	10	
Andrew Robathan	2	1	0	10	
Peter Griffiths	1	0	1	10	
Michael Grylls	1	0	1	10	
George Walden	1	0	1	10	

Source: Adapted from Guardian Political Almanac 1993-4

Key: *X = Vote against Government - 2 points*
 ABS = Abstention - 1 point
 FOR = Vote with Government - 0 points
 ** = Member of FSG according to Mrs Gorman list*
 ∇ = Stated to author that they were a member of the FSG.

Table 3.4: The Conservative Maastricht rebel league table according to Teresa Gorman MP.²¹

NAME	R	A	G	PTS
W. Cash	47	13	2	107
N. Winterton	46	15	1	107
Sir T Taylor	18	10	4	106
Mrs A Winterton	44	17	1	105
R Knapman	44	16	2	104
C Gill	43	17	2	103
Sir T Skeet	41	19	2	101
T Jessel	42	16	4	100
Mrs T Gorman	40	19	3	99
B Walker	39	19	4	97
Sir I Lawrence	38	21	3	97
M Spicer	37	23	2	97
T Marlow	36	25	1	97
N Budgen	36	24	2	96
R Shepherd	34	26	2	94
M Lord	35	23	4	93
J Cran	30	31	1	91
J Wilkinson	31	28	3	90
Sir R Body	30	28	4	88
J Biffen	26	35	1	87
Sir P Tapsell	24	34	4	82
J Carlisle	21	40	1	82
J Butcher	19	43	0	81
Sir G Gardiner	23	34	5	80
W Hawksley	18	44	0	80
W Sweeney	21	36	5	78
B Legg	18	41	3	77
M Cartiss	17	41	4	75
D Porter	15	44	3	74
R Allason	12	46	4	70
I Duncan-Smith	11	47	4	69
V Bendall	4	56	2	64
Sir R Boyson	12	39	11	63
J Pawsey	14	34	14	62
J Townend	6	50	6	62
Sir R Moate	4	53	5	61
Sir N Bonsor	3	55	4	61
B Jenkin	1	58	3	60
K Baker	1	56	5	58
P Fry	5	47	10	57
Dr M Clark	2	51	9	55
J Whittingdale	1	41	20	43
A Hunter	5	24	33	34
Sir G Vaughan	1	27	34	29
G Walden	0	24	38	24
Sir M Gylls	0	17	45	17
H Greenway	4	8	50	16

Key: R=Rebellion: a vote against the Government. A=No Vote. G= Vote with Government.

²¹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 236.

Table 3.4 is useful in that it provides clarification to the degree in which individual MPs in the division lobbies expressed dissent. The table shows that in total, thirty Conservative MPs admitted that they were active members of the Fresh Start Group.²² The voting behaviour indicates that of these 30 members 26 had a rebel score of 10 or higher. Only four who were deemed to be regular Fresh Start members had a lower score. Table 3.5 is a record of the voting behaviour of the Conservative rebels across the Maastricht debates 1991-3.

²² Of these, Teresa Gorman identified 28 in her book 'The Bastards'. See Key Table 3.3

Key Table 3.5

– Not a Member of House of Commons

- 1 HC Debate on Maastricht Negotiations – 19 December 1991*
- 2. Labour Amendment on Second Reading – 21 May 1992*
- 3. Second reading – 21 May 1992*
- 4. Emergency Economic Debate – 24 September 1992*
- 5. Labour amendment on Paving motion – 4 November 1992*
- 6. Government motion – Paving debate – 4 November 1992*
- 7. Vote on composition of EC Committee of regions – 8 March 1993*
- 8. Referendum debate – 21 April 1993*
- 9. Third reading – 20 May 1993*
- 10. Labour amendment on Social Chapter – 22 July 1993*
- 11. Government Motion on Social Chapter – 22 July 1993*
- 12. Vote of confidence in H.M. Government related to Social Chapter – 23 July 1993*

The fifty-one Members of this case study are not the only the Euro-sceptics within the CPP, for at different times Press reports indicated different levels of Euro-scepticism within the CPP. Indeed, if the signatories to the two Fresh Start EDM's are examined, then this would reveal a level of ninety-one Euro-sceptics within the CPP at the start of the Maastricht debates.²³ One Maastricht rebel even suggested that approximately two hundred members of the CPP were Euro-sceptical in some way.²⁴ Much depends, therefore, on how the term Euro-sceptic is defined. However, as this study is primarily concerned with why and how Euro-sceptic opposition to European Bills of legislation occurred, limited discussion is given to general levels of Euro-scepticism within the CPP.

European Finance Bill debate, 28th November 1994

Eight Conservative MPs withheld their support by abstaining over the Government's European finance legalisation (Table 3.6).

²³ Fresh Start EDM 174, 03.06.92, records 91 signatories. Information supplied by the House of Commons Information Office.

²⁴ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

Table 3.6 Conservative rebels of the EFB debate.

A	B	C
Name	Division (5) Labour Amendment	Division (6) Second Reading
Sir Teddy Taylor	AB	AB
Teresa Gorman	AB	AB
Tony Marlow	AB	AB
John Wilkinson	AB	AB
Nicholas Budgen	AB	AB
Christopher Gill	AB	AB
Richard Shepherd	AB	AB
Michael Cartiss	A	AB

The first seven Conservative MPs abstained on the first vote, on the Labour amendment to the Bill, and were joined by an eighth MP, Michael Cartiss, on Second reading of the Bill.²⁵ Sir Richard Body MP later joined these eight rebels in opposing the Bill through different means. Whilst he voted with the Government in the division lobbies, he resigned the Conservative whip immediately prior to the vote taking place.²⁶ A number of other Euro-sceptics of the CPP wanted to oppose the Government on this Bill but did not for various reasons.²⁷ One Maastricht Conservative rebel claimed, for instance, that he deliberately did not oppose this Bill despite his desire to do so, because of the threat of withdrawal of the party whip. He felt that he would be better able to serve his Constituents on European issues if he avoided being expunged by the party, as a result of any opposition in the division lobbies, and was able to continue his fight on the issue from within the party.²⁸ Sir George Gardiner, was also reported as saying that whilst he would support the Government on this vote, he had “no pride in my Government or myself for so doing.”²⁹

Rebel Profiles

Given the charge laid at the door of the Euro-sceptics, that they constituted a bunch of maverick MPs determined to wreck the political fortunes of the CPP, most notably during the Maastricht and EFB debates, the next section examines whether the rebels had any common characteristics which distinguished them as a group. I assumed at the start of this study, that the Euro-sceptics would not be distinguishable as a group by virtue of their sociological profiles and, that almost certainly, any such results would not explain the motivations of these rebels for opposing legislation so fervently, which at times threatened the continuance of their party leadership and brought disrepute to the

²⁵ The Daily Telegraph “Major pays high price for victory” 29 November 1994.

²⁶ As stated to author – 30 October 1995.

²⁷ As stated to author by Conservative MP’s and, as reported in the Daily Press. This is discussed further in Chapter seven.

²⁸ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

²⁹ The Daily Telegraph “Major pays high price for victory” 29 November 1994.

CPP. I supposed that their actions were a consequence of other factors, which are discussed in the following chapters.

If attempts are to be made to pigeonhole Conservative Euro-sceptics, it is necessary to examine the social profile and characteristics of the Euro-sceptics to conclude if there are any distinguishing features, which befit them as a group. This study uses traditional methodologies to test for correlative associations between the Euro-sceptics social profile and their propensity to oppose legislation and, whether they can simply be grouped together as malcontents within the CPP.³⁰ Crewe, however, has debated the criticisms of such study techniques.³¹ The variables considered include the size of an MP's majority, previous record of dissension on European issues, education, age, date first elected to Parliament and ideological perspectives. These variables were chosen in order for the author to remain consistent with past academic analyses of Conservative dissension over European policy.³²

Variable 1: Prior record of Dissension on European Issues

In respect of the 1971-2 EC debates, Norton found that a number of the party's Euro-sceptics, who opposed UK entry, had opposed earlier attempts for British membership in 1961 and 1967. Some of these rebels were returned in the 1970 parliament and whom could be expected to vote against this Bill.³³ Not all of the rebels of earlier periods, however, remained rebels. Two previous rebels, Peter Walker and John Biggs-Davison supported entry in the 1971-2 debates.³⁴ Norton also identified a number of previous pro-European supporters in the 1970's debates, who subsequently converted to the anti-side during the 1970's debate.³⁵

On the SEA, of the 11 MPs who rebelled, 5 of them supported the Government on both the Maastricht and EFB debates and were not MPs during the 1971-2 debates. Two MPs, Nicholas

³⁰ Before this point is considered it should be noted that a number of the rebels engaged on collective action to pursue their opposition to the respective European legislative Bills. The reasons for which are considered in the next chapter. It should be noted that information contained within the next two chapters is interrelated and it is difficult to separate. For clarity, it is at this point that the identities of those rebels who engaged in collective activity in the form of groups are considered.

³¹ Baker, D and Fountain, I, draw attention to "Crewe's critique of the unproven assumption of a direct link between an elite's social origin and political attitudes and behaviour." in their article "Eton Gent or Essex Man? The Conservative Parliamentary Elite" p 89, (Ludlam, S & Smith, M Eds "Contemporary British Conservatism" Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996. Hereinafter, Baker, D and Fountain, I "Eton Gent or Essex Man?"). For their discussion of methodological problems on study of social backgrounds of elite's see pp 88-89.

³² Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" used the variables of age, university education, size of an MP's majority. See pp 400-405 for his results.

³³ These include Robin Turton, Derek Walker – Smith, Anthony Fell and John Jennings. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 65.

³⁴ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 65.

³⁵ According to Norton, included here are Enoch Powell, John Biffen and Richard Body. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 65. He also claimed that these three formed the core of the neo-liberal wing of the parliamentary party. See also Uwe Kitzinger's record of the number of likely dissenters and their previous and current attitudes on Europe in "Diplomacy and Persuasion" pp 169-170.

Budgen and Tony Marlow opposed the government on both these last two Bills, but were not an MP during the 1971-2 debates. Edward du Cann rebelled during the 1971-2 debates but was not an MP during the European debates in the 1990's. Sir Roger Moate rebelled both during the 1971-2 debates and over the Maastricht treaty, but not on the EFB debate. Only one rebel, Sir Teddy Taylor rebelled across all four of the European debates of this study. In total twenty-three Conservatives who voted against the Maastricht treaty, supported the government on the SEA. Of these, however, eleven abstained on either second or Third reading of the SEA.

Over Maastricht, of the fifty-one rebels, twenty MPs who had been a Member of Parliament during the SEA, or even earlier, voted against the Maastricht Bill only. Nine Maastricht rebels who were not MPs during the two earlier pieces of European legislation all supported the government on the EFB. Two MPs voted against the Maastricht Bill and EFB Bill only whilst having being a Member of Parliament during the SEA. Two Maastricht rebels voted against all the European Bills of this study except the EFB and a further two, Sir Richard Body and the Rt. Hon John Biffen voted against EEC entry in 1971-2 and the Maastricht Bill. Only five MPs voted against all the European legislation of this study, whilst they were a Member of Parliament.

What is clear from the above is that of the members who have been in parliament across all the debates, not all have rebelled on every occasion that a European Bill was debated in the House of Commons. Typecasting in this manner, therefore, does not explain why Euro-sceptic MPs did or did not oppose the various European policy Bills. As will be seen in the next section, the reasons of Euro-sceptic MP's for not rebelling over the different debates were not uniform. Correlative analysis can, therefore, only indicate party members who are likely to rebel over European policy Bills. It cannot be entirely predictive.

Variable 2: Social Profile of the Euro-rebels - Age

In terms of social profile Kitzinger found no dissimilarity between the 1971-2 pro-marketers and Euro-sceptics in terms of age, and university education. Norton's study of the 1970-74 period agreed with these findings.³⁶ In respect of the Maastricht rebels, Baker, Gamble and Ludlum stated that press reports identified two characteristics, which befit the Maastricht rebels, "their lack of standing in the party and their tendency to be older MPs."³⁷ In contrast, Baker and Fountain said that "the divisions in the Conservative Party over European integration could be related to the socio-economic composition of the party's younger cohorts, with the elder cohorts fearing the

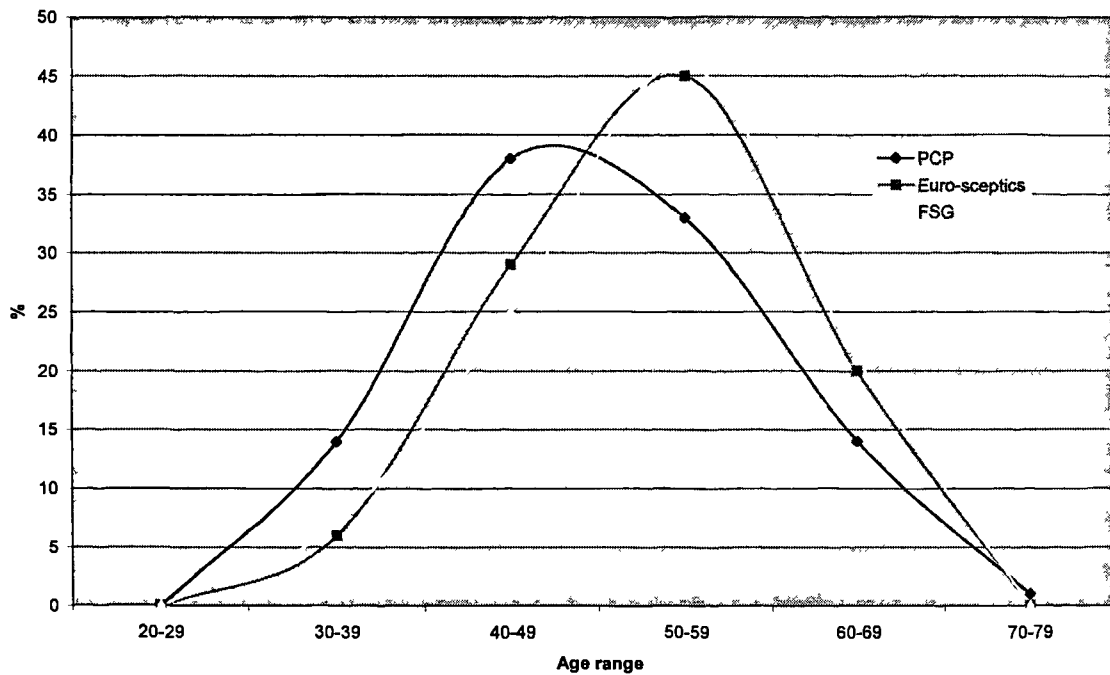
³⁶ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 80-81. He also found positive correlation's using Yule's rule between dissent on entry into EEC and other issues in parliament, which led him to suggest that one of the causal factors in intra-party dissent in the CPP during the 1970-74 parliament was the development of alternate party view advanced by Enoch Powell.

³⁷ Baker, D, Gamble, A and Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions?" p 160. They found that "of the 32 who rebelled on the Paving Motion (including abstainers), one was 74, six were over 60, eleven were in their fifties, eleven were in their forties, and three in their thirties."

rekindling of conflict in a disunited Europe, and many of 'Thatcherite children were concerned with federalist European encroachment upon British sovereignty.'³⁸

When the age range of the fifty-one Maastricht Euro-sceptics and the Fresh Start Group are compared to the rest of the CPP the graphs (Chart 3.1) of the respective groups are similar. The Chart does indicate, however, that most of the Euro-sceptics and in particular the FSG members were older than their CPP colleagues. The majority of the Maastricht Euro-sceptics were in the fifty to fifty-nine age range.

Chart 3.1
Comparison Age range of Maastricht Euro-sceptics, FSG and PCP



It could be argued that dissent is something, which an MP develops as a habit: that is it grows with practice. MPs who believe they are past an age for promotion or hold some grudge against the Government are less constrained. Alternatively, political openness about their concerns in the House may be linked to generation cohorts and formative experiences during their political socialisation as an MP. Whilst any of the above factors may have played some part in the decision of these rebels to oppose European legislation, it is suggested that the real motive behind the rebels opposition is demonstrated by their previous propensity to dissent over European legislation. It also may be characteristic of a younger MP not to dissent. The ability of the new 1992 intake members to oppose the Maastricht Bill is discussed in Chapter five.³⁹ It should be noted at this point however, that for a new MP there is a protocol which many new members adhere to. That is, new

³⁸ Baker, D and Fountain, I "Eton Gent or Essex Man?" p 89.

³⁹ The five youngest members of the FSG were also amongst the new intake at the 1992 general election.

MPs have a parliamentary apprenticeship to serve before establishing themselves as an MP worthy of expressing dissent without incurring the wrath of the party whips or party machinery and doing untold damage to their future careers in parliament.

The new intake of Conservative members of parliament in 1970, who did oppose the EEC entry Bill in 1971-2, entered parliament in a period where dissent had emerged within the CPP on a scale not previously encountered in the post war period. The accepted norms of parliamentary behaviour were in a state of flux within the CPP. These new MPs almost immediately on entering parliament, therefore, had to decide how they would behave during the course of the EEC entry debates. Their choice was made harder on the Second and Third readings by two facts. Firstly, they had to sustain their opposition against their own Government over almost two years. Secondly, unlike the October vote on 28 October 1971, the Second reading of the Bill was made a vote of confidence. For the new members of the CPP such a factor probably was overwhelming. Since not only were they displaying their dissatisfaction over an area of Government policy, but if they continued their opposition, they threatened the survival of that very Government. The dilemmas faced by these new intake members are comparable to those of the 1992 intake who faced similar pressures over the Maastricht Bill. Kitzinger found that the number of Euro-rebels of the new intake was comparable to a representative sample of the party, but on Second reading only three "new members were still found voting against the Government."⁴⁰ He argued that "young men...cannot have found it altogether easy to stand out against the party line."⁴¹

Of the EFB rebels none of the new intake members from the 1992 general election opposed this Bill which may support the above argument. Of the EFB rebels only one MP was below the age of fifty at the 1992 general election, six were in the fifty to fifty-nine age range and two in the sixty-sixty-nine age range. Few conclusions are to be drawn, however, over the age of an MP and his propensity for rebellion over European policy, other than that older MPs may be less concerned with career promotion and therefore, may be less constrained when opposing policy.

Variable 3: Social Profile of the Euro-sceptics - Education

In terms of education both Kitzinger and Norton found little correlation between the education of a rebel MP on the EC entry debate in 1971-2 when compared to the rest of the CPP.⁴² During the next two decades the education profile of Conservative MPs changed little. Table 3.7 shows that in 1970 and 1992, 43% of the party received an Oxbridge education.⁴³

⁴⁰ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 404.

⁴¹ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 404.

⁴² Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 402.

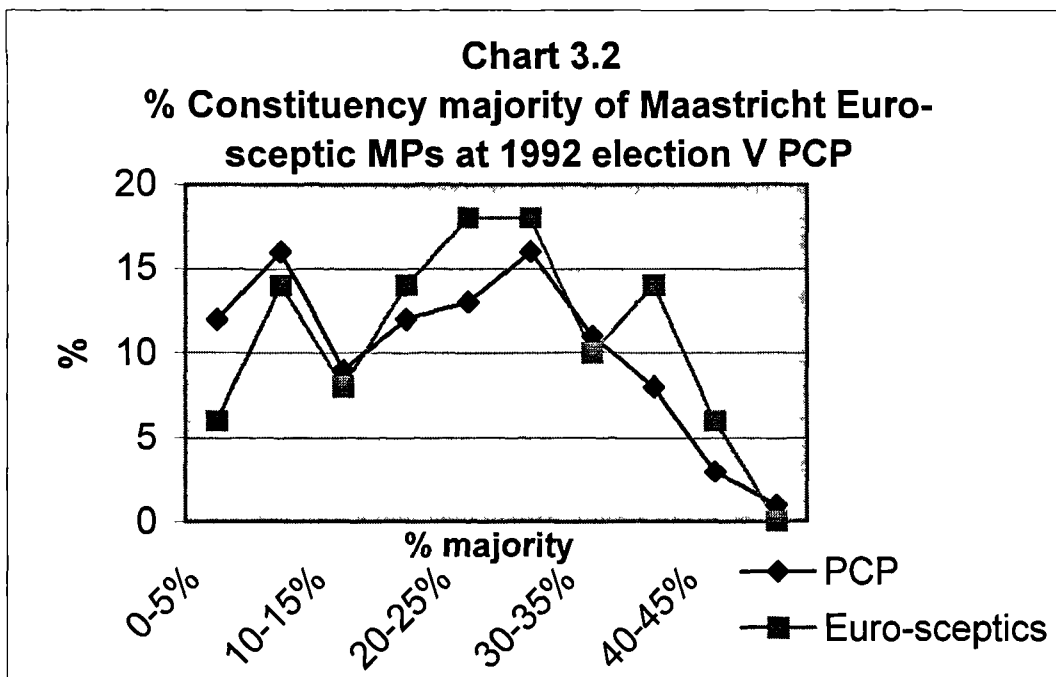
⁴³ Education may have been used as an important variable in the 1970's where historic differences between the Marxist class and developing finance classes may have led to differences in the actions and belief systems of MPs. It is less easy to see that this variable is so applicable today.

1970	1979	1983	1987	1992
43%	37%	39%	42%	43%

Fisher recorded a slight decrease in the number of MPs receiving a public school education over last years from 70% in 1983 to 62% at 1992 election and found an increase in the number of University educated Conservative MPs from 76% in 1983 to 86% in 1992.⁴⁵ As little change has occurred in this variable of the party, little benefit would be derived from further analysis given Norton's and Kitzinger's findings on this variable in respect of the 1971-2 European rebellions.

Variable 4: The size of an MP's Majority

The size of a MPs parliamentary majority appears to have had no impact as a constraint to an MP's opposition to any of the four European debates. Kitzinger concluded that many of the 1970's Conservative rebels were not deterred by the size of their own respective parliamentary majority from opposing Government policy. He found that a more important consideration as a "deterrent to rebellion was the inherent redistribution of seats."⁴⁶ In respect of the Maastricht rebels, Chart 3.2 indicates that in general, the Maastricht Euro-sceptics had larger parliamentary majorities than the rest of the PCP. However, some Maastricht rebels still opposed the Maastricht Bill despite having a parliamentary majority of less than 5%.



⁴⁴ Baker, D & Fountain, I "Eton Gent or Essex Man?" p 91.

⁴⁵ Fisher, J "British Political Parties" Hemel Hempstead, Prentice Hall, 1996, pp 46-47. Fisher explained the increase as mostly from non-Oxbridge - but still almost half of party are Oxbridge.

⁴⁶ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 404.

Variable 5: Ideological preferences of the Euro-sceptics

So far, it can be seen that it is difficult to find common characteristics that specifically apply to all of the Euro-sceptics of the CPP, which distinguish them from the rest of their party colleagues. The next layer of analysis that is applied to try to distinguish the rebels is an examination of their ideological preferences. Both the press and other members of parliament have tried to conceptualise the rebels as a group of 'right-wing reactionaries' within the CPP. To date, academic comment has also tried to conceptualise the behaviour of Conservative Euro-sceptic rebels within the party under general ideological perspectives such as 'left-right' or 'wet-dry'. Norton for instance in his study of Conservative Dissidents 1970-74 identified seven types of ideological categories.⁴⁷ As will be seen such analyses fail to work in the case of the Conservative Euro-sceptics. For as Ludlum recently claimed, "it is one of the most explosive features of the European issue that it combines such ingredients in ways that cut across the familiar left-right, 'wet/dry', ideological wings of the party."⁴⁸ Also as Ludlum correctly asserted, the Conservative Maastricht rebels were not ideologically coherent as a group.⁴⁹

The language of 'left-right' terminology is useful to the extent that it pinpoints the possible philosophical perspectives of a rebel MP. 'Left-right' typologies, however, are more generally conceptualised firstly, as a basis for assessing the general balance of ideological preferences within the party. Secondly, they can be used as a method for determining how far Conservative MPs are prepared to distinguish themselves from their main opposition counterparts, the Labour party. Such generalisations bear little fruit when they are applied to the party's Euro-sceptics. For as the Euro-sceptics themselves argued, their ideological stand on European issues should not be attributed to their political inclinations towards other areas of party policy. Typecasting Conservative rebels according to their political perspective is not to be totally disregarded as a method, for whilst it does not explain their opposition in each case it may help suggest the formation of their own political philosophical perspectives on policy, which may unwittingly subsequently affect the way an MP voted.

Academic analysis has generally agreed that the 1970's saw a general shift in the political spectrum of Conservative Party politics to the right. Of the 1970's rebels, Norton identified three Euro-sceptics as forming a "core of the neo-liberal wing of the party."⁵⁰ Interview data of this study predominately revealed that most of the 1970's Euro-sceptics regarded themselves as being centre-

⁴⁷ See Norton, P "This Lady's not for turning' But what about the rest? Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party 1979-88" pp 49-50, Parliamentary Affairs Volume 43, 1990, pp 41-58. He identified the seven typologies as follows: The Thatcherites: 'he Neo-Liberals' and the 'Tory-Right', The Party Faithful: as 'Thatcher Loyalists' or the 'Party Loyalists' the Populists and the Critics as the 'Wets' or 'Damps'.

⁴⁸ Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 100.

⁴⁹ Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 111. He is referring to Michael Spicer's discussion of the subject in his book "Spicer, M "A Treaty Too Far - A New Policy For Europe" London, Fourth Estate, 1992, pp167-185.

⁵⁰ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 65. Norton identified here Enoch Powell, John Biffen, and Richard Body.

right of the CPP.⁵¹ Given the more recent attributions to the Euro-sceptics as composing the political right wing of the party, it would be easy to assume that the Euro-sceptics of the 1970's precipitated a right wing/neo-liberal change of political direction in the party during the next decade. During the 1980's the CPP under went a shift in political direction towards the right under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, who advanced her own policy platform under a 'new right' 'economic-liberal' banner.

In the 1990's on first appearance it transpired that the majority of Maastricht Euro-sceptics were right wing, as were the alleged four Euro-sceptic Cabinet Ministers, John Redwood, Michael Portillo, Peter Lilley and Michael Howard. Baker, Gamble and Ludlum found that when using Norton's index of political preferences,⁵² the Maastricht "rebels are overwhelmingly characterised by their right wing tendencies, and to a lesser extent their Thatcherite loyalties. Their right-of-centre attitudes are also revealed in the various groups they belong to, these include the Bruges group, the No Turning back group, the 92 group, the Fresh Start Group, and the European Reform Group."⁵³ The findings of this study agree with their analysis. Of the Maastricht MPs who agreed to comment 33% stated they were right wing and 67% considered themselves to be centre-right of the party.⁵⁴ One Maastricht Euro-sceptic even suggested that heightened tensions arguably ensued over Maastricht because the Fresh Start Group reflected the right of the party whereas the party leadership arguably, had moved to the left.⁵⁵

In terms of typecasting the Euro-sceptics into ideological groupings, FSG chairman, Michael Spicer, identified four political groupings of the Maastricht sceptics according to various philosophical beliefs on Europe. He identified the first group as those MPs traditionally opposed to the idea of Britain's integration with the EU. Within this category he identified Roger Moate, John Biffen, Sir Richard Body, Toby Jessel and Sir Teddy Taylor. He referred to his second group of MPs as the 'Constitutionalists' which he defined as those members who were concerned with "the pace and the direction of the legal and institutional changes which are taking place"⁵⁶ as a result of EC membership. He included within this group, Bill Cash, Richard Shepherd, Christopher Gill, James Cran and Iain-Duncan Smith. His third group, the 'Patriots' he described as those MPs who love the UK and who uphold the virtue of the UK 's democratic institutions.⁵⁷ He placed in this category, Tony Marlow, John Carlisle, Nicholas and Ann Winterton, Harry Greenway, Bill Walker, Sir Trevor Skeet, David Porter and Andrew Hunter. His final group, the 'Marketeers' were concerned with the economic arguments of Britain's integration with the EU. He included himself

⁵¹ Some of the anti-market Conservative MPs here are John Farr, John Sutcliffe, Carol Mather, Harmar-Nicholls, and Eric Bullus. Note: A number of the Anti-marketers of this period were deceased at time of interview. The findings of this study, therefore, cannot be conclusive.

⁵² Baker, D, Gamble, A & Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions?" See p 160.

⁵³ Baker, D, Gamble, A & Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions?" p 160.

⁵⁴ Thirteen MPs commented.

⁵⁵ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

⁵⁶ Spicer, M "A Treaty Too Far - A New Policy For Europe" London, Fourth Estate, 1992, p 168.

⁵⁷ Spicer, M "A Treaty Too Far - A New Policy For Europe" London, Fourth Estate, 1992, p 171.

in this category along with John Biffen, Nicholas Budgen, Roger Knapman and John Butcher. He also identified a number of other Euro-sceptics who all had their own perspectives of Britain's relations with its European partners.⁵⁸ The next section adds a further layer of identification by offering a comparison of accounts between the participants and onlookers of the European debates, as to the style, purpose and intent of the rebels' behaviour during these debates.

Whilst it would appear that the Fresh Start Group is predominantly right-wing, it is an oversimplification to claim that Conservative European rebellions can be epitomised as a reaction of right wing politicians. For in every case study there were exceptions to this. Of the Maastricht sceptics for instance, Sir Peter Tapsell is generally regarded as being on the left of the CPP. The Fresh Start rebels are preponderantly of the right of the CPP, but not exclusively so. Many MPs also suggested to the author that although they may be on the right on European policy issues, they are both conscious of other opinions within the CPP and may cross sides of the political spectrum depending on the issue in question. Typologising the rebels as a right-wing cohort, therefore, does not also explain why rebellions did not occur over other policy areas that were sensitive to the interests of the political right of the CPP. Finally using 'left-right wing' analysis does not clearly distinguish the Euro-sceptics as individuals. It merely suggests that they are more right-wing than the average of the party. The most damning evidence against this analysis of typecasting the rebels is clear when the requirements of FSG membership are examined. As will be seen in Chapter five, individuals' voting behaviour in the lobbies in opposition to the Maastricht Bill determined membership of this group. The ideological preferences of an individual were not necessary or sufficient criteria for membership. In other words, it did not matter whether an MP was ideologically on the left or right of the party political spectrum for membership of the FSG to be secured.

In their recent work, Ludlum, Baker and Gamble postulated that it might be preferable to typologise current disunity within the CPP over Europe on the basis of a 'sovereignty/interdependence dimension,' which Ludlum argued both bisects and supersedes "the party's traditional and ideological fault line over how interventionist the state should be."⁵⁹ This would appear to be a much more satisfactory method of analysing profiles of Conservative rebellions, especially over the issue of European policy, which appears to be a unique issue in terms of conceptualising Conservative Party rebel behaviour.

The academic view of the CPP Euro-sceptics

As discussed in Chapter one, academic treatment of Conservative intra party groups has traditionally classified them as political tendencies, which disappear quickly once an issue is

⁵⁸ Spicer, M "A Treaty Too Far - A New Policy For Europe" London, Fourth Estate, 1992, pp 167-85. He described Peter Tapsell as an independent for example and Rupert Allason and Teresa Gorman had their own views on Europe.

⁵⁹ Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 112. He is referring to observations made in a joint authored article, with Baker, D & Gamble, A "Conservative Splits and European Integration."

resolved, forming new alliances over new issues, or as rebels who have alternate motives to replace the policy platform of their party leadership. The Euro-sceptics of the CPP do not fit the broad category of a political tendency, first and foremost, because the European issue has not gone away for the party. It has persisted for twenty-eight years at least and will most probably continue to do so, especially if the party leadership continues to insist that unity is an essential requirement of Conservative MPs behaviour on European issues, which transcend usual party allegiances. The continuance of the 'European problem' for the CPP has also been matched by the increasing development of organised collective opposition by some of the party's Euro-sceptics to European legislation. Academics have still been reluctant however to describe such developments as factional. Ludlam recently queried whether the Euro-rebellions in the CPP form part of a broader factional phenomenon, but concluded there was little evidence to support this.⁶⁰ His main objection was that following the culmination of each particular European debate, the Euro-rebels did not cohere over other areas of party policy.

It is suggested that the reasons why academics have been reticent in describing the Euro-rebellions as evidence of factional activity is because they are blinkered by traditional characterisations of factions, which in their view must occur over a number of policy areas. It will be argued in Chapter eight that the Euro-rebellions do constitute the activities and formation of a political faction within the CPP, not over a broad range of issues, but as a single-issue faction. Secondly, the whole notion of multi-issue factions may even be misguided. For a faction then assumes some of the characteristics of a party in its own right, and may, accordingly, herald the beginnings of a split.⁶¹ As discussed in Chapter one, it is this confusion over terminology that to a large extent has prevented any close examination by academics down this behavioural avenue.⁶²

Treatment of the CPP Euro-sceptics by the Press

In the debates over British entry to the EEC in 1971-2, Kitzinger claimed the Press was predominantly pro-entry in their coverage of the Bill's passage through Parliament.⁶³ He observed that during the 1970's European debate, the Press, which proved advantageous to the CPP, operated a parity system where the Labour Party was portrayed as more disunited on the issue than the CPP.⁶⁴ This was in contrast to Press coverage of the Maastricht debates, whose attention

⁶⁰ See Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 117.

⁶¹ The distinction between a faction and a party split was discussed in Chapter one.

⁶² Clarification of such terms is debated in the final chapter. It is inferred by this study that the Euro-sceptics of the CPP constitute a political faction within the party. This label has been applied by other sources such as the press. Whilst the term faction has been applied by both the author and other sources essential points of difference exist behind these characterisations. Other sources talk of factions as though they represent a party split, the author suggests that this is not the case and that factions are entities in their own right within political parties.

⁶³ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 334. Kitzinger provided details of press coverage during these debates - which includes coverage of the Labour Party in Chapter 11. He also claimed the Daily Telegraph, in the main was "loyal to the Party leadership" on the issue, but did on occasion, give "space to the odd anti-marketer for a sustained argument." Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 339.

⁶⁴ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 334.

highlighted differences of opinion over Europe between Conservative MP's, making life more difficult for the Government.

The Euro-sceptics of the CPP were often, but not always, vilified by the Press during the course of the Maastricht debates and over the EFB. One article in the Sunday Telegraph suggested for example that the Maastricht sceptics were "not really serious about politics."⁶⁵ Another article in the Financial Times claimed that "Conservative MPs divide into three broad camps; the die-hard Euro-rebels to whom defeating Maastricht is top priority and who want to exploit every chance to de-rail the Bill; the Government loyalists who want Maastricht approved and are prepared to fight for it and the frustrated MPs in the middle - who want most to turn parliament's attention to other business."⁶⁶ Whilst this is quite a simplistic analysis of the rebels, the article draws attention to a significant section of the party during the debates, the 'middlemen' who were often obscured due to headlines over feuding pro and anti Europeans within the CPP. These 'middlemen,' some of whom were opposed to Maastricht, wanted essentially to move the government's business away from the Maastricht treaty and onto other policy areas. Michael Clark was reported to have claimed that despite his opposition to the Bill, his decision to vote with the Government on 8 March 1993 was because he was frustrated at the extent of parliamentary time given to the process of ratifying the treaty.⁶⁷ Also, a number of border line Euro-sceptics chose only to vote against the Government on Maastricht on substantive motions, supporting the Government on procedural motions to prevent other Government legislative business from being frustrated.⁶⁸

The ability of the Euro-sceptics to dominate Press headlines for much of the Maastricht debates was enhanced through the formation and collective activity of a number of Conservative MPs through a group which became known as the Fresh Start Group (FSG).⁶⁹ A Financial Times article described these rebels as having established "a party-within-a party." The article further claimed, that the group's internal organisation and passionate fervour of its members to oppose the Bill, was far more problematic for the Conservative Government than ever were the left-wing extremists of the Labour Party, Militant' during the 1980's.⁷⁰ As the Maastricht debates developed it became common for Press headlines to refer to CPP as being composed of rival factions and 'factional strife over Europe.'⁷¹ Despite such criticisms, the Conservative Press was generally supportive of the Euro-

⁶⁵ Sunday Telegraph "The Euro-sceptics are getting the same treatment as the anti-appeasers." 27 November 1994.

⁶⁶ The Financial Times "The story of three men in a vote" 9 March 1993.

⁶⁷ Michael Clark as reported by The Financial Times "The story of three men in a vote" 9 March 1993.

⁶⁸ John Whittingdale MP and Andrew Hunter MP to author - November 1994 & December 1994 respectively.

⁶⁹ See Chapters five and six.

⁷⁰ The Financial Times "Major engulfed by recriminations: the fallout from last week's election" 10 May 1993.

⁷¹ The Financial Times "Mr Major's next steps." 1 June 1993.

sceptics during the Maastricht debates.⁷² It should be noted however, that the Press itself was both a political actor during the Maastricht debates as well as influencer of public opinion on the issue.

The Euro-sceptics of the CPP received disparaging comment from the Press over the EFB, where they were described as 'mavericks',⁷³ "the awkward squad,"⁷⁴ "mutineers,"⁷⁵ "the 'crazies,' "the loonies," and "the bastards."⁷⁶ One article in the Financial Times stated that in many instances, the Euro-sceptics of the party were misrepresented, not by just the Press, but also their own party. Emma Nicholson MP was reported to have said on a Radio Four programme for instance, that "Bill Cash wants Britain to turn into Albania surrounded by water."⁷⁷ Some statements in the press implied that the Euro-sceptics were to blame for the CPP's current disunity and, poor performance in opinion polls. One article claimed for instance that after the CPP lost the Dudley by-election,⁷⁸ that "it is profoundly depressing for most Tories that a handful of dissident MPs, together with chronically clumsy political management, have been able to reduce their party to its present pass."⁷⁹ Criticism of the Euro-sceptics by other Conservative MPs and the willingness of the Press to highlight divisions during the Maastricht debates, may have been more intense than occurred over previous European debates within the CPP, precisely because the Government had a small majority in this period.⁸⁰ For as one Euro-sceptic member of the party claimed, "when a Government majority is small you are not just risking your own seat by rebelling and threatening the Government, you're threatening your colleagues' seats."⁸¹

The Conservative Party View of their Euro-sceptic MPs

The credibility of the Conservative Euro-sceptics in opposing the Maastricht Bill was damaged still further by their denigration at the hands of some of their own party members. These members claimed that the rebels were damaging the political fortunes of the Conservative Party. David Mellor MP, for example, epitomised the views of some pro-Europeans in the party of the EFB Euro-sceptics when he said, "there is a real sense of anger now. Some of these people have pressed the self-destruct button."⁸² The former Prime Minister, Sir Edward Heath, made clear his own

⁷² See Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 111.

⁷³ The Times "Mavericks await association verdicts" 30 November 1994.

⁷⁴ The Times "Awkward squad is hell-bent on upsetting EU role" 24 November 1994.

⁷⁵ The Times "Awkward squad is hell-bent on upsetting EU role" 24 November 1994.

⁷⁶ The Sunday Telegraph "The Euro-sceptics are getting same treatment as the anti-appeasers" 27 November 1994.

⁷⁷ The Sunday Telegraph "The Euro-sceptics are getting same treatment as the anti-appeasers" 27 November 1994.

⁷⁸ Dudley by-election was held on 16 December 1994.

⁷⁹ The Daily Telegraph "Failure of Government" 17 December 1994.

⁸⁰ According to one Euro-sceptic such comments actually made Conservative internal divisions worse over Europe, Michael Spicer (1992) following weekend of ministers calling for unity and loyalty over Maastricht claimed that "some of the speeches have actually execrated matters" "The attempt to denigrate, to belittle - and in some cases to even misinterpret what is a very sincerely held belief - and also highly representative of public opinion - is in itself damaging to party unity." The Financial Times "The story of three men in a vote" 9 March 1993.

⁸¹ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

⁸² The Sunday Telegraph "The Euro-sceptics are getting the same treatment as the anti-appeasers" 27 November 1994.

perception of the Conservative Maastricht rebels when he was reported to have claimed, that “these people are going to be hated for all time.”⁸³ He also accused Baroness Thatcher and Lord Tebbit of “inciting the Tory rebels,” in their opposition to the Bill.⁸⁴ It would appear that he classed the rebels as on the political right-wing of the party, as he stated that “there is one thing that one always has to remember in my party, which is, you can never appease the right-wing. Never. You can live happily with them but you can recognise they will not accept your general policies and they will whenever possible, protest.”⁸⁵

The Party leadership also castigated the motives and activities of its rebel members during the run up to the EFB. Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, was reported to have claimed that one rebel Bill Cash “looked upon it as a way to political advancement, which could be used or spurned as circumstances dictate.”⁸⁶ Despite such criticisms it is interesting to note that not one of the Maastricht or EFB rebels interviewed stated that career advancement was a motive in their decision to rebel.⁸⁷ It was not even a consideration in their contemplation not to do so.⁸⁸ The Prime Minister allegedly accused the rebels of “self-indulgence” which he claimed was “neither understood nor accepted by the majority of their colleagues in parliament.”⁸⁹ Another Conservative MP, Ray Whitney, denounced the Conservative Euro-sceptics during the EFB debate for damaging the country's interests. He argued that “seven words in the English language are damaging at the moment to the Conservative Party, to the Government and to British special interests. They are “I am in favour of Europe, but.” That attitude is sapping and damaging Britain's position in developing a Europe with which we can live and in which we can prosper.”⁹⁰ Such opinions however belie the key to the Party's problem over Europe. As mentioned earlier, the CPP has prided itself historically on party unity. Rebellion on the part of some of its members left many Members bewildered by such activity, which naturally would lead to their defamation of the rebel individuals concerned.

Not all Party members were critical of the Euro-sceptics, however. Some frustrated Euro-sceptics had some sympathy for the active Euro-sceptic opponents.⁹¹ Michael Clark, for instance, said “they have been consistent and they have been honourable and they believe strongly in what they are

⁸³ The Sunday Telegraph “The Euro-sceptics are getting the same treatment as the anti-appeasers” 27 November 1994.

⁸⁴ The Financial Times “Heath accuses Thatcher of inciting rebels” 27 March 1993.

⁸⁵ The Financial Times “Heath accuses Thatcher of inciting rebels” 27 March 1993.

⁸⁶ The Sunday Telegraph “The Euro-sceptics are getting the same treatment as the anti-appeasers” 27 November 1994.

⁸⁷ It is also interesting to note, that in spite of any reticence, it is surprising that not one of the rebels owned up to having career ambitions.

⁸⁸ See Chapter seven for further details.

⁸⁹ The Times “Right appeals for rebels return as Major stands firm” 12 December 1994.

⁹⁰ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 994.

⁹¹ ‘Frustrated’ is defined as those who were concerned with the Maastricht treaty's implications but who were annoyed over the monopolisation of parliamentary time.

doing.”⁹² Baroness Thatcher even supported the Euro-sceptics cause by claiming that the Prime Minister was deluding himself over the Maastricht Treaty and living in “cloud cuckoo land.”⁹³ Another Conservative MP laid some of the blame for the current state of party disunity on Europe at the door of the Party leadership. He asserted for instance that “there is no leadership...what we get now and again is a petulant lashing out - headlines saying 'Major to crack down on Euro-sceptics' - and then nothing happens. It is like a turn-of-the-century plane, lots of flapping of wings and noise and the thing nosedives.”⁹⁴

The Opposition Parties highlighted the overall disunity within the CPP, which they claimed severely affected the ability of the CPP to govern the country. Tony Blair, Leader of the Opposition, described the Tories as “an ill-disciplined rabble, incapable of governing this country.”⁹⁵ Similarly, George Robertson, Labour's European affairs spokesman said there was a “Tory chasm over Maastricht: the Conservative Party is a shambles, a rabble out of control, without the slightest atom of knowledge of where they are going to go on Europe, or indeed, anywhere else.”⁹⁶ What was consistent among reports in the Press and some statements from members of the House of Commons was the terminology of 'factions' used to describe the Conservative Party's disunity over Europe. Over the EFB, for instance, Gordon Brown, the Labour Party's Shadow Chancellor stated that “such is the tyranny of factions in the Conservative Party and the impotence of the leadership that the only European policy they can agree on is to stand apart from Europe.”⁹⁷

Self-perceptions of the CPP Euro-sceptics

This study tried to establish during interviews with Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs how they conceptualised their rebellion to the respective European Bills especially where group activity was involved. One Euro-sceptic of the party and a peripheral FSG member described the group as “a highly organised party within a party.”⁹⁸ In contrast, a member of the FSG claimed that “this is not a party within a party. It is a group about one issue - that's all.”⁹⁹ Another MP claimed that Kenneth Clarke's referral to them, as an 'extreme right wing faction' was incorrect. He claimed that the Fresh Start Group was “an eclectic group of people who dislike Maastricht for the noblest of reasons.”¹⁰⁰

Some of the Maastricht Euro-sceptics who did not oppose the EFB of November 1994, described

⁹² Michael Clark as reported by The Financial Times "The story of three men in a vote" 9 March 1993.

⁹³ The Financial Times "Thatcher raps government over Maastricht" 7 May 1993.

⁹⁴ The Financial Times "Back benches strain for leadership amid gloom" 2 March 1993.

⁹⁵ The Guardian "Major may face fight for job" 25 November 1994.

⁹⁶ The Financial Times "Maastricht amendment rejected. Government relief as move to wreck ratification is thrown out." 5 March 1993.

⁹⁷ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 958. See also an article in The Times "Brown condemns Major's absurd test of strength" 29 November 1994.

⁹⁸ Andrew Hunter MP to author - December 1994.

⁹⁹ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁰⁰ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

the nine who lost the whip in this period as constituting a faction within the CPP, and others, described their activity as acting as a “party within a party.”¹⁰¹ Christopher Gill one of the EFB rebels was reported to have claimed that, “I am not in the business of setting up a new party or engineering a leadership contest. I am trying to get the Conservative Party to adopt policies to appeal to Conservative voters.”¹⁰² He further added that his pamphlet 'Not a Penny More' co-written with colleague Teresa Gorman, did not amount to “a manifesto for an alternative European party.”¹⁰³ After the EFB received the assent of the House of Commons one MP claimed, that the group of nine whip-less rebels did not constitute a faction, but were more like “chums. It’s a bit like joining the golf club, you meet all the old regiments. We have a metaphorical regimental tie. We have a certain sentiment and warmth towards each other because we went through the battle together. It’s like the 'old contemptible' after the 1st World War.”¹⁰⁴

Another rebel over the EFB stated that the rebels should not be described as a party within a party or a faction as he claimed he was a true Conservative in philosophical and party terms.¹⁰⁵ This MP suggested that within the CPP there were both ideological positions and pragmatic positions on Europe. He explained that “pragmatic positions on Europe are to maintain party unity and to get the party through a political situation and, are also to do with our relationship with other European countries and what you can get away with and what you can’t. The ideological ones are whether it’s a good thing or a bad thing, what we should agree to and what we shouldn’t agree to and using your will power like Margaret Thatcher to get our money back. The Government thus far has been more pragmatic than idealistic about it. But with the debate that’s taken place over the last year or so, within the political party in the country and in parliament and changes in public opinion there is the possibility that if this Conservative Government continues it will become more idealistic in its approach and less pragmatic.”¹⁰⁶ Such views suggest that differences in political perspective over Europe within the CPP were not the result of a left-right-wing ideological split but the result of a new cleavage, which is concerned with the distribution of governance between the House of Commons and the European Parliament in Brussels.¹⁰⁷ Another Euro-sceptic argued that “the most extraordinary thing about the UK is that traditionally, expenditure and taxation were decided by the House of Commons. This has always been the people's parliament. In future, these matters will not be decided here because responsibilities for many of them may have been transferred to Europe.”¹⁰⁸

The Euro-sceptics believed that if they were regarded as 'true Conservatives' of the Party, then their motivation for opposing Government European legislation could be explained. One member, for instance, believed that by being true Conservatives during the Maastricht debates the Euro-sceptics

¹⁰¹ Whip-less nine includes Sir Richard Body.

¹⁰² The Daily Telegraph "Not a penny more plea over EU cost" 29 November 1994.

¹⁰³ The Daily Telegraph "Not a penny more plea over EU cost" 29 November 1994.

¹⁰⁴ Teresa Gorman MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁰⁵ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁰⁶ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁰⁷ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁰⁸ Sir Trevor Skeet Hansard 20 May 1992 Column 422.

were in fact operating as a party within a party. "It's the party that can win for the party."¹⁰⁹ In this respect many of the Euro-sceptics believed they represented the heart and soul of the Conservative Party and, indeed the country.¹¹⁰ One MP even clarified his opposition to the Maastricht treaty as being "ultra loyal to what I regard are the true principles of the Conservative Party, and the true interests of this country."¹¹¹ During the EFB debate, John Wilkinson queried, if the EFB was approved by the Conservative Party, how it was possible to say "that we are acting as loyal Conservatives and responsible members of parliament if we renege on our traditional duties to our constituents and allow ourselves - as this Bill proposes, to bind future Parliaments which will succeed us."¹¹²

If the rebels believed that they were defending the true principles of conservatism then this view was reinforced by their belief that they represented the majority view on European policy within the party and the country. One rebel MP for instance claimed this was evident from consultations with his constituency association and the public.¹¹³ Another Euro-sceptic MP believed that most of the CPP was opposed to the idea of a federal Europe and many of the party's Euro-sceptics were just orchestrating the majority view held by the CPP.¹¹⁴ Many of the Euro-sceptic MPs believed that their views on Maastricht were representative of the majority view of Conservative supporters outside Parliament, which was confirmed at recent Party Conferences, in Constituency Associations and by letters from the public.¹¹⁵

This view was further reflected by the view of a Euro-sceptic MP's reflections on the October 1994 Conservative Party Conference, where he believed that it was clear the issue of Europe was an important consideration given the various fringe meetings held by the Euro-sceptics and one which was staged by the former Chancellor, Norman Lamont.¹¹⁶ In doing this, this MP believed the Euro-sceptics were defending their concerns over the direction of the party's European policy, which was not being given serious consideration by the party leadership, as only eight lines in John Major's speech was given to the European issue. This MP argued that this speech subsequently "upset people because it showed how far apart the Government has got from the people and that's a very dangerous situation to get in. Very very dangerous."¹¹⁷ Also, during the EFB debate, Teresa

¹⁰⁹ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

¹¹⁰ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

¹¹¹ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

¹¹² Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 998.

¹¹³ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995.

¹¹⁴ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

¹¹⁵ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹¹⁶ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994. Sir Teddy Taylor MP also claimed during the EFB debate that the Government should be aware of the changing views of the British public against further European integration, which he believed was evident at the Bournemouth Conservative Party Conference of 1994, where he claimed that "it was tragic that no one wanted to talk about the European Community at the Conference, but every meeting organised by the Euro-sceptics or the anti-market groups was packed out. We had to turn people away, and it was not because speakers like me were brilliant but because the average Conservative knew that something was going very wrong." Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 983.

¹¹⁷ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

Gorman argued that her opposition to more money being given to Brussels was supported by the general reaction of her constituents. She stated for example that “when I walk the streets of Billericay or other parts of my constituency.... Why do people not boo at me for resisting the idea of this European organisation? Why do complete strangers compliment me on my resistance to giving any money to it... Why do the British people ...think that there is something wrong with our giving more money to this Institution?”¹¹⁸

Another MP, as a result of his belief that the Euro-sceptics represented the majority view in the country on Europe, was of the view that many of the Euro-rebels saw their opposition as fulfilling a 'reminding role' to the Government on policy matters. He claimed for instance that although the Government “may continue to get parliamentary majorities every time, they're not actually winning the hearts and minds of people outside who we feel are on our side.”¹¹⁹ In this capacity and contrary to reported opinion the rebels did not believe they were undermining the Government. What they believed they were doing through their opposition to the Maastricht Treaty, according to one of the Euro-sceptics, was to show firstly, that the Government was out of tune with the majority of the party on the issue. Secondly, to act as a reminding group to the government of their responsibilities to preserve the sovereignty and democratic life of Westminster.¹²⁰ Another MP similarly commented that “we're returned by our constituents to enhance the UK, certainly not to destroy it and, we have to observe very very closely the operations of the Government, to see that they do conform to higher standards.”¹²¹

The theme of the Government being divorced from political reality and from the views of the people and party was common among the motives of the Maastricht Euro-sceptics. One MP for instance, claimed that “there was a feeling that the party had lost its way somewhat and that the Government was not reflecting the views of the parliamentary party. And I think that we were just simply expressing a view and also creating a group who could manifest this disquiet.”¹²² In this respect, a number of Euro-sceptics believed they were rebelling in order to make the Government take a firmer or clearer stance over European legislation that they wished to debate and, implications for the UK. During the 1970's debates over EC entry, one rebel claimed for instance that by opposing the legislation it was his “rather forlorn hope that changes and a greater understanding from British people and Britain's press might have some effect.”¹²³ Similarly during the EFB debates, one Euro-sceptic MP claimed there was a “conspiracy of silence.” It was his role, therefore as an MP, to educate the people and enable them to gain an understanding of what was happening.¹²⁴ Some of the rebels considered the internal rebellions during Maastricht to be the

¹¹⁸ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 1010.

¹¹⁹ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹²⁰ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹²¹ Sir Trevor Skeet MP to author - November 1994.

¹²² Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

¹²³ Former MP Eric Bullus to author - September 1994.

¹²⁴ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995.

result of politicians leading the people too far too fast in a federalist direction.¹²⁵ One MP believed this to be a consequence of Euro-sceptic MPs having to fight the party's machinery, which ever since the 1970's, had been federalist. The real problem according to this MP was that the party machine dictates party policy.¹²⁶

Some of the CPP Euro-sceptic MPs believed that in opposing European legislation they were merely fulfilling their duties as an MP. One MP stated for instance that his constituents "didn't send a delegate - they sent a representative. And the representative was there to use his brains and read."¹²⁷ Another MP believed the role of an MP as a representative is to make decisions on behalf of the constituencies who elected the MP. He suggested to the author that "if you take, Maastricht for one moment, it's too complex for the constituency to pursue all these objectives because they've got to condone them in their own mind and, many people really are not interested in politics, they leave it to us to determine ourselves what is the good for the greater number."¹²⁸ He went on to proclaim his belief that parliament is about the freedom of expression of opinion on policies and should an MP flounder in this regard then he would be failing his constituents. "If they want a bunch of parrots then, well fine, there's a lot of parrots out there. And that's all you need to do, put a line of parrots in parliament and they'll vote for everything you tell them to. But parliament shouldn't be like that. It should be a place where individuals can express their opinions and if they have strong feelings about something, which in the majority of cases are constituency based, I'm not talking about moral issues, I'm talking about policies of the day. I would be failing my constituents if I didn't express their opinion."¹²⁹ Similar sentiments were echoed by Christopher Gill when he asked the Commons, during the Maastricht debates, whether they were "prepared to put our signature to a treaty which will erode the power and influence of Members of this House to such an extent that they are incapable of delivering the natural and legitimate aspirations of their constituents? Our constituents look to us to obtain redress; if the only satisfaction that we can give them is to say that the matter is out of our hands, it will not be long before they begin to wonder why they had voted for us at all."¹³⁰

During the EFB debate, Euro-sceptic MP Richard Shepherd proclaimed his intended rebellion that evening on the basis of upholding his duties as an elected representative. He argued that "I was elected by an electorate whom I hold to be good and honourable. Like every other Honourable Member, I have tried to honour those relations. If the Government thinks that by stuffing my mouth with gold or offers of reward, or by withdrawing the Whip, they can alter the first trust in a democracy - that of a Member and his constituency - they misjudge their party and the Members of this House. We must be true to ourselves, or the electorate will have no confidence in the most

¹²⁵ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

¹²⁶ Sir John Farr to author - September 1994

¹²⁷ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹²⁸ Sir Trevor Skeet MP to author - November 1994.

¹²⁹ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹³⁰ Hansard 20 May 1992 Column 415.

important institution in our democracy - a free Parliament."¹³¹ Sir Teddy Taylor MP also saw his role as guardian to the interests of the British people, when he argued in respect of the EFB debate, that the Government should "tell the truth and that "we simply have to tell the people the facts and, once we have done so, we must ask about the options."¹³²

One MP even went so far as describe the Euro-sceptics as 'gad-flies.' He claimed that "we are uncomfortable gad-flies and they brush us off and we're back again. And you know, gad flies can cause a whole herd to stampede and that's exactly what's happened."¹³³ He suggested the opposition of the Conservative Euro-sceptics during the Maastricht debates caused a problem for the CPP because their actions challenged the status quo, which was antagonised further by their refusal to go quietly away.¹³⁴ Another Euro-sceptic MP claimed that in parliament there is a "yeoman-stock feeling and I think it's that, which to me, keeps coming through in this debate all of the time, and so you've got the sort of contrast between views. There's some that like it cosy, 'you know', let the Government do everything for them and hardly complain. And that tiny element of bolshy people ...who make the changes, who bring in the new ideas, who force issues and they care for politics."¹³⁵

Some MPs simply stated that their opposition to European legislation was simply a matter of conscience. One MP claimed that it was the only issue that kept him awake at night.¹³⁶ Another MP stated "I had to be true to myself and what I thought was best for the country and the people I represented."¹³⁷ Another MP believed that the British people had been conditioned as an 'island people and it would be therefore unnatural to expect people to suddenly be able to agree to a new way of thinking of being governed by the European Union (EU). This MP claimed that "people think that by passing laws you can change human nature. It is the grand delusion of all politicians."¹³⁸

Others conceptualised their opposition to the Maastricht Bill as a battle of ideas. One Euro-sceptic MP claimed that "that unless we stand and fight we're going to be part of a federal united states of Europe, with a single social policy, a single currency, a single foreign policy, a single defence policy and eventually a single army, run from Brussels and this place will be cancelled."¹³⁹ In this respect a number of the Euro-sceptics felt that their duty as an MP lay firstly with the nation, before

¹³¹ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 1006. He further added "the government have misjudged the temper of their own nation and they have misjudged the truthful intent of their own party. They will see people go through the lobby, but in their hearts they are damned."

¹³² Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 982.

¹³³ Jain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹³⁴ Jain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹³⁵ Teresa Gorman MP to author November 1994.

¹³⁶ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

¹³⁷ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - November 1994.

¹³⁸ Teresa Gorman MP to author - November 1994.

¹³⁹ John Townend MP to author - October 1995.

their party on issues of national principle or on issues of passionate concern to themselves.¹⁴⁰ Another Maastricht rebel MP similarly commented that he believed that in voting on policy, the interests of the country comes first.¹⁴¹ Bill Cash MP echoed these sentiments when he reminded the House during the EFB debate, of the words of Winston Churchill and, which were given to him during a constituency association meeting. "Your first duty is to your country; your second duty is to your constituency; only in the third instance is your duty to your party's policy programme."¹⁴²

In terms of charges that the Euro-sceptics were responsible for splitting the party and rendering it a party incapable of governing, notably during the Maastricht debates, one MP claimed, that this was not the case, that the European issue had always been an issue for the party and parallels could be drawn with the party's internal divisions in 1846 over the issue of Corn Law reform. He claimed that "it's the same issue, it's just reappeared again. Its free trade, it's managing trade and ... Europe. It's the same argument and it's in the same party and that's the key."¹⁴³ He went on to argue that divisions within the party arose not because a group of MPs wished to cause trouble for party, but because the Conservative Party was actually the only party who would tackle the European issue and not run away from it.¹⁴⁴ He believed, therefore, that internal divisions over Europe were merely the manifestation of the Conservative Party resolving an issue of great political significance. He claimed that resolving the issue may involve some discomfort for the party, as "getting them there is a very nasty business which is of course why people feel very uncomfortable, they don't like being challenged by ideals so they're fighting instinctively, because they're scared. This issue has within it the seeds of salvation of the party and future power, then it also has the seeds of destruction for us."¹⁴⁵

Contrary to opinion expressed in the Press and by many Party Members, it was not the aim or the intention of the rebels to split or bring the Government down. One Maastricht Euro-sceptic MP claimed for instance that they were "reluctant rebels" who "want to work together with the Party."¹⁴⁶ This was precisely because they regarded the Labour Party as even more pro-European than their own party. One MP claimed that had the Labour Party been anti-European then this could

¹⁴⁰ John Townend MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁴¹ Sir Peter Fry MP To author - October 1995.

¹⁴² Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 990 and as stated to author in interview - November 1994.

¹⁴³ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994

¹⁴⁴ In contrast to this view however, John Biffen MP, argued during the EFB debate that the problem for the Conservative Party over Europe was precisely because there was an "ambivalence in Conservative Party Policy." He argued therefore in contrast to Mr Duncan-Smith's conceptualisation of the problem that this "has very little by way of quality leadership about it." Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 974.

¹⁴⁵ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994

¹⁴⁶ Sir Teddy Taylor as reported in The Financial Times "Maastricht amendment rejected. Government relief as move to wreck ratification is thrown out" 5 March 1993. During the EFB debate Sir Teddy Taylor also argued that "I am very distressed because I am in no sense a Conspirator against the Prime- -Minister." He continued "I am not trying to rock the Government in any way, but I hope that they will accept that some Hon. Members think it outrageous, impossible and wrong to vote for extra cash for the EC when it wastes so much money." Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 983.

have led to a different outcome. However, the problem for the Euro-sceptics in this scenario would have been that the Labour Party would probably have both signed and implemented the Social Chapter to which most of them were opposed. For many of the Conservative Euro-sceptics, therefore, it was a case of 'better the devil you know'.¹⁴⁷ Bill Cash MP reiterated this dilemma for Conservative MPs, when he asked during the EFB debate "what is to be done? I will not support the Labour Party, which would simply enact the Bill.... It would be worse than a pyretic victory to defeat the government tonight. In 'Murder in the Cathedral' we are told: 'it is the greatest treason to do the right thing for the wrong reason.' Tonight, I'll do the wrong thing for the right reason."¹⁴⁸

Another MP argued that, it was unnecessary for the Euro-sceptics to *split from the CPP even if they wanted to* because they believed the majority of the party supported their views on Europe.¹⁴⁹ One MP claimed, however, that the CPP was split at a more profound level between the front and backbenchers that were clearly divided from each other. He saw the European issue as a method for reuniting the party.¹⁵⁰ Another Conservative MP believed, that an MP fighting on a Euro-sceptic platform was a mechanism for restoring the public's confidence after the collapse of the ERM and Sterling in September 1992. This MP believed the Opposition Parties were unable to offer such support and, therefore, it was up to the Euro-sceptics of the CPP to fight for the future of the country. "We are in a battle and in a way it's a historic fight and in a way it's a fight for the future really of this country without any blood being spilt, except metaphorically."¹⁵¹

Conclusion

The Euro-sceptics of the CPP who voted against the European Bills have been identified and, their treatment by the Press and Party colleagues, discussed. Few identifying social characteristics fit them as a collective group of individuals. Kitzinger concluded of his 1970's study that "actuarial tables or political science correlations are useful in their way: but only documents and interviews can give us the feel for events, and of just what compound of heroism and villainy individual human beings are made."¹⁵² An examination of the Euro-sceptics' account and perspective of their actions during the various debates of the four case studies contrasts starkly with reported accounts of their activities and motives. What perhaps is the most revealing piece of information derived from this Chapter, is that the rebels' own conceptions of their rebellion in many cases, are divergent from their colleagues. If there is no common attribute for the rebels' rationale for rebellion, then their opposition activity must be the result of some wider phenomenon. As will be seen in the next

¹⁴⁷ John Townend MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁴⁸ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 990. A little late in his speech Bill Cash claimed that "we are being whipped to do the wrong thing for the wrong reason. That is a disgrace to our parliamentary democracy" and asked the Government to withdraw the Bill. Hansard 28 November 1994 Columns 990-991.

¹⁴⁹ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁵⁰ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994. It was his belief that the party is divided because it "does not believe in itself."

¹⁵¹ Teresa Gorman MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁵² Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 405.

Chapter, this is the sole phenomenon of similar and different held views in opposition to British integration with the European Communities.

It is clear that the Euro-sceptics cannot be pigeon-holed into a single group, for there are a number of small groups of MPs who may be typologised according to one social characteristic or belief of what they were doing. In fact it seems pointless to try and categorise them for clearly there are many differences between them. The focus of academic attention instead, should concentrate on discussing how the rebels behaved and what the processes were which brought them together in collective action. Indeed Kitzinger claimed, that "statistical tabulators are no substitute for old-fashioned piecemeal history, treating each MP as an individual with his own fairly unique conjunction of problems: for in the last resort, the rebels were these men and women who wanted to rebel or not."¹⁵³ Nor, he argued should the observer forget "in judging an MP's stomach for a fight with his own party underestimate even more private factors."¹⁵⁴ The next Chapter seeks to address the issues of concern that led a number of MPs to oppose Government European policy in the division lobbies, that is, the motivations of the CPP's Euro-sceptics.

¹⁵³ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 405.

¹⁵⁴ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 183.

CHAPTER 4

ISSUES AND MOTIVATIONS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the identities of the Euro-sceptics of the CPP since 1970 were established. It was plain that the European policy of the various Conservative Governments was clearly an issue of rebellion for these MPs. What is less clear, is that, whilst the European issue may have formed the visible eruption of their rebellion, there were a myriad reasons why these MPs rebelled over the four European Case studies of this work. For the rebels, there was not one single factor or exclusive concern over European policy, which led to their rebellion over the respective European legislative Bills. As will become clear, the Euro-sceptics of the CPP, to a degree, held divergent views or concerns regarding each piece of European legislation, brought before the House of Commons for ratification. This was most evident during the Maastricht debates, where the Euro-sceptics rebelled collectively in a more vehement manner than has previously occurred in the course of Conservative Party post-war history, precisely because the treaty evoked so many different reasons for concern, and a greater number of MPs were, therefore, discontented with some aspect of this piece of legalisation. If this had been the case, to European policy during the early 1970's and mid 1980's, the rebellions then may have been conducted on a similar scale and manner. The reasons for the formation of a formal organised rebellion under the label of the Fresh Start Group during the Maastricht debates is discussed in the next chapter.

This Chapter examines the interesting question of the nature of the rebels' motivations in opposing the various pieces of European legislation covered by this study. It asks why it was that the European issue mattered so much and assesses whether such analysis provides a greater insight in to what was occurring within the internal processes of the CPP during the last twenty eight years over this issue. The role played by the Party leadership¹ and the timing of each respective European Bill in its passage through Parliament, are also considered. It is suggested that that the role of the Party leadership had a considerable impact on the expression of the respective Conservative European policy rebellions, although it should be made clear that this factor is regarded as a contributory, and not a sufficient, cause for many of the MPs' opposition.

In order to answer such questions, a methodological content analysis of Hansard of the respective European debates was pursued, in order to identify the issues of concern and to assess whether there was group coherence on an intellectual level over the issues involved. This information was compared to the results obtained from interview data, in order to establish a broader picture and deduce why it was, that the rebels opposed European legislation, in periods when the CPP was in office.

¹ In Chapter seven, the question of the party leadership acting as a constraint to intra-party opposition is discussed.

Issue analysis of the various debates documented in Hansard together with interview data, revealed that a number of Members of the CPP, held various doubts on the European Bills brought before Parliament, and that a number of them were prepared to vote in the same way in the division lobbies, sometimes for the same reasons. Issue analysis, however, can never be entirely conclusive, as ultimately, this type of analysis does not explain the motives for rebellion in the form that it took. In other words, why did some of these MPs choose to engage in collective behaviour and/or formalised rebellion, when traditionally, such behaviour was not considered to be acceptable for a Conservative MP? The latter part of this chapter, therefore, explores the rebels' motivations for the manner in which they opposed European legislation.²

In advance of a discussion of the European issues of concern to Conservative MPs, it should be pointed out that the question of 'Europe' essentially means different things to different people. It is, therefore, difficult, and perhaps pointless, to attempt to pigeonhole these rebels into boxes as discussed in the previous chapter. That being said, typologising these rebels according to their beliefs, in an issue-related manner, is useful since it helps to advance discussion of their behaviour and further our understanding of why the European issue was so important to the Party's Euro-sceptics. This of course still does not explain why they rebelled in an organised fashion over the Maastricht treaty and the EFB. Had the manner of the Euro-sceptics' rebellious behaviour during the four case studies been the same, it would be easier to explain their opposition as a simple reaction by some Conservative MPs to a particular policy. It is precisely the fact that the style of rebellion was so different in each of the debates, which makes a study of the European debates within the CPP so interesting and enriches academic discussion of the issue in terms of the motives of the individuals concerned.³

The debates over Britain's application for entry to the EEC 1971-2

Many of the arguments voiced by Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs during the 1971-2 debates over Britain's third application for EEC membership echoed many concerns expressed previously in the early 1960's during Macmillan's first application for membership and later, under Harold Wilson in 1967.⁴ In his study on the debates of the principle of entry in June and October 1971, Lord identified the following issues of concern amongst Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs (Table 4.1).

² It is easy to forget that the European issue has also been the cause of considerable controversy for the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). In 1981, for instance, pro-Europeans of the PLP formally broke-away, to "form the core of the.... Social Democratic Party." Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 117.

³ This is discussed in the next three chapters.

⁴ There are a number of studies already in existence on these debates and discussion here, therefore, is limited. Of these existing studies, on the 1971-2 debates formal academic content analysis is limited up to the October vote of principle of entry. No content analysis has been performed on Second and Third reading of the Bill. This has been completed by this study. See Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

Themes in House of Commons Debate on EC Entry, July and October 1971: The Conservative Euro-sceptics	%
Loss of sovereignty	65.8
Food Prices/CAP	34.2
Global free trade	23.7
Commonwealth	21.0
New Zealand	13.1
Sugar Producers	13.1

It is clear from Table 4.1, that the predominant area of concern for the Conservative Euro-sceptics at the time, as represented during the debates themselves, was a diminution of UK Parliamentary sovereignty as a result of joining the EEC.⁶ The next main issue of concern for the UK joining the EEC, was an expected increase in food prices for UK citizens in association with CAP issues. Also of concern to the Euro-sceptics, was a fear that, in developing relations with the EEC, traditional trading relations with the rest of the world would be neglected. Another pronounced concern was that traditionally established political and economic links with the rest of Britain's Commonwealth partners, notably New Zealand, would be damaged as a consequence of joining the EEC. This concern stemmed from a belief held by some Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs that Britain should not jeopardise these relations by fostering new ones with countries within the EEC. These concerns were indicative of a much deeper concern amongst the Euro-sceptics of the CPP, that their own view of how Britain should be governed, and its particular location as an actor on the world political stage, was under threat. On closer examination of their concerns, a more profound rationale can be found behind each of the main general concerns outlined. These issues, which will be discussed later, reflect a more fundamental point of view, from which each MP considered the European question.

When the results of Lord's content analysis is compared to interview data compiled by this study (Table 4.2), the results are similar in that the main issue of concern was over a relinquishment of some aspect of parliamentary sovereignty. This concern was also intrinsically related to another fear for some MPs, that the long-term aim of some of the existing Members of the European Communities was to develop the Institutions into some form of political union. One former Conservative anti-market MP said for instance, that he had a "deep suspicion that the Common Market we were being asked to join was not really so much economic as political in intent and was

⁵ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 102.

⁶ This study does not engage in detailed discussion of the various academic definitions and concepts such as sovereignty, which are wide ranging, and discussion of different definitions is covered by other academic literature. For examples see the following articles. Howe, G "Sovereignty and interdependence: Britain's place in the World", *International Affairs*, October 1990, pp 675-696, Judge, D "Incomplete Sovereignty: The British House of Commons and the Completion of the Internal Market in the European Communities" *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 41 (4), pp 441- 455. Lord, C. "Sovereign or confused? The 'Great Debate' about British entry to the European Community, 20 years on" *Journal of Common Market Studies*, XXX(4), 1992, pp 419-436, Wallace, W "What price independence? Sovereignty and interdependence in British Politics" *International Affairs*, Vol. 62 (3), pp367-389.

going to lead to some form of political union, thereby diminishing our historically and totally unique parliamentary democracy and substituting a more distant bureaucratic government.”⁷

TABLE 4.2	
Content analysis of interview data. Issues raised by Conservative MPs who opposed EEC entry during 1971-2.⁸	%
Loss of UK parliamentary sovereignty	31
Preserve and promote Commonwealth obligations & relations	23
CAP	12
Global free trade	12
Wrong time economically for UK	12
UK would be on fringe of EEC - no affinity between countries	7
Unsatisfactory negotiations	3

The second highest issue of concern, according to interview data, was the maintaining of links with Commonwealth partners, which rated fourth on Lord's compilation of results. The small discrepancies can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, they can be accounted for by memory lapse, timing and hindsight of MPs given that the interview data from this case study was obtained over twenty years after events took place.⁹ As well as practical considerations, another explanation is that discrepancies in results may simply be due to differences between what an MP privately thinks and believes and, the extent to which he is prepared to publicly declare those beliefs. In the House of Commons debate on the vote on the principle of entry, nineteen of the thirty-three Conservative rebels spoke.

The decision of an MP to declare his concerns publicly may be hindered for a number of reasons. An MP may lack confidence in public speaking or may have concerns relating to a policy issue, but has insufficient knowledge on the issue to capably project his views to a wider audience such as the House of Commons.¹⁰ For some MPs, the European issue may not have been a matter of significant concern. These individuals, therefore, may not have been prepared to declare their objections to the House and/or vote against the Bill in the division lobby, neither were they motivated to join concern groups to defeat legislation. This may explain the fact that, in all the European debates of this study, there were a substantial number of probable Euro-doubters within the Party at any one time, who chose not to rebel, for a number of unknown personal considerations. It may well also be the case that, if an MP knows he is likely to oppose his Party leadership on another policy issue in the

⁷ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - September 1994.

⁸ This table summarises answers received from 11 Conservative anti-market MPs.

⁹ A full survey of the 1971-2 rebels was not possible given that a number of them were deceased at time of interview.

¹⁰ An MP cannot know the intricacies of every policy Bill that comes before the House. An MP often relies, therefore, on the speeches of other colleagues in the House or information bulletins for information. It may even, not be uncommon for an MP to vote on an issue according to the advice given by a friend, or so as to secure some return of favour from a friend later, on an issue of importance to himself.

future, he may not want to rebel on an issue which is not of passionate concern to himself, in order to avoid being earmarked by the Party leadership as a troublemaker.

There are, of course, other reasons why an MP may express differing sentiments privately and publicly. It can be to an MP's disadvantage to express his concerns publicly. Some MPs for example, genuinely fear reprisals, for any publicly declared opposition with the Party leadership on policy, both from their Party leadership, especially when in office, and from their Constituency Association. One Conservative MP claimed that, Heath was known to be unforgiving to anyone who ventured an alternate vision of Europe to that of his own.¹¹ Any MP, to whom career progression was important may, therefore, have chosen to remain silent on the issue of Britain's entry to the EEC, despite any concerns held on the issue. This may well be the case even though not one Euro-sceptic MP of the period who rebelled in the division lobbies and was interviewed for this study, stated that the allure of career advancement checked their dissent. It is assumed, therefore, since this was the case across all case studies, that these Euro-rebels either were not concerned with career advancement or that their career aspirations were overridden by more passionately felt concerns over the progression of European legislation.

More interesting perhaps, is the fact that on examination of Lord's content analysis of the debates, none of the rebels commented publicly on their beliefs expressed at interview that, the negotiations for entry were unsatisfactory, or that there was a lack of natural affinity between EEC countries. William Clarke for instance, suggested to me that, in respect of the former point, Heath's decision to apply for Membership was flawed on the basis that Britain's negotiating position was severely handicapped by not joining the European Communities at an earlier stage. He argued for example that, "if we'd gone in, then we would have been instrumental in formulating the Common Agricultural Policy." He further suggested that Britain had started the current round of negotiations for entry from a poor position to procure a satisfactory arrangement when he added that, "I think the French are on record as saying, if you join this club, we're not going to change the rules for you."¹² Another Conservative anti-market MP of the period was unhappy about the terms negotiated, believing Britain's net contribution to be greater than that of existing Members.¹³

Some Conservative anti-market MPs found simply that, as they became more informed on the matter, their dislike for the Bill grew. Sir Richard Body for instance, who, prior to 1967, was an advocate for Britain's entry in to the EEC, stated that the more he delved into the matter the more he

¹¹ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author.

¹² Interview with author September 1994. William Clarke is now a Member of the House of Lords and bears the title Lord William Clarke of Kempston.

¹³ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author.

found he disliked it.¹⁴ Of the MPs who disliked the implications for Britain of EEC Membership, a number felt that the opinion of the British public in a referendum should first be consulted before the Bill received the assent of parliament. Allied to this, was a concern that the full implications of the Membership should be disclosed to the British public, based on a premise held by some of the anti-market MPs that the British people were unaware of the true implications of the Treaty of Rome if fully implemented.¹⁵ This view was not shared by all the Conservative anti-market MPs of the period, as some Members, perhaps more so in the 1970's than in the 1990's, felt that they were elected to Parliament to make decisions on behalf of their Constituency rather than being unduly influenced by them.¹⁶

As can be seen from Tables 4.3 - 4.5, fear of an expected loss of parliamentary sovereignty continued to be the dominant themes raised by the Conservative rebels across Second and Third reading of the parliamentary debates on British entry to the EEC. Commonwealth issues were rarely mentioned during these two debates and concerns over the terms of entry negotiated, a lack of democratic procedures in the EEC and the lack of public approval for entry became the next most important issues for the Conservative rebels.

Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during Second reading of EC Bill, 1972.¹⁷	%
Loss of UK parliamentary sovereignty	32
Terms of Entry – unsatisfactory	16
Lack of democratic procedures and accountability	16
Lack of UK public approval for entry	12
No Natural affinity between EEC Member States and/or Increasing conflict between them	8
CAP	8
Other	8

¹⁴ Sir Richard Body to author - October 1995. In 1955, Sir Richard Body signed the first EDM in the House urging the country to take part in the negotiations for joining Europe. At the 1966 general election, he advocated Membership of the EEC. In 1967, he voted for negotiations to take place to join Europe. It was only in 1967 when he embarked on a detailed study of joining the EEC, that he found he disliked it.

¹⁵ Despite the national campaigns which had been fought by advocates on both sides of the entry issue and by both main political parties, it was only because rebellions over the issue threatened the survival of the Conservative Government on Second reading that Constituency Associations took more than a particular interest in the issue and the actions of their MP. This is discussed further in Chapter seven.

¹⁶ A number of the Conservative anti-market MPs who opposed Membership of the EEC stated that they believed it was their right as an elected representative, to make judgements on behalf of their constituencies. Some of these beliefs were based on a view that few of their Constituency Members had any inclination or knowledge of the political issues at stake.

¹⁷ This table summarises content analysis of issues raised during 21 Conservative rebel speeches (12 were short speeches) and 5 interruptions. Issues related to issues of parliamentary procedure, behaviour of the Opposition Parties or their intentions, are excluded.

TABLE 4.4	
Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during Third Reading of EC Bill, 13 July 1972¹⁸	%
Loss of UK parliamentary sovereignty	28
Economic costs of joining for the UK	18
Lack of democratic procedures and accountability	18
Terms of entry – unsatisfactory	18
No Natural affinity between EEC Member States and/or Increasing conflict between them	9
Lack of UK public approval for entry	9

TABLE 4.5	
Compilation of Content analysis of issues raised by Conservative Antis during EC Debates 1971-2¹⁹	%
Loss of UK parliamentary sovereignty	30
Lack of democratic procedures and accountability	17
Terms of entry – unsatisfactory	17
Lack of UK public approval for entry	10
Economic costs of joining for the UK	9
No Natural affinity between EEC Member States and/or increasing conflict between them	9
Food Prices/CAP	4
Other	4

Heath's management of the issue

McKenzie argued that the "the most striking feature of the Conservative Party is the enormous power which is concentrated in the hands of the leader. He has the sole responsibility for policy."²⁰ Undoubtedly in the 1970's, the direction of the Party leadership over European policy was of enormous influence in ensuring its ratification through parliament. In Chapter seven, the extent to which the Party leadership acted as a constraint to Conservative opposition to European Bills is discussed. Of consideration in this Chapter is the extent to which the Party leadership may have incited opposition by a number of MPs to oppose the EEC Bill.

Norton claimed that the leadership style of Edward Heath was a prime cause of Conservative opposition to the Government's European policy Bill to secure Britain's entry to the EEC.²¹ This claim does not stand up in view of the testimonials of a number of Conservative MPs of the period who claimed to myself, that whilst some of them may have disliked Heath and his particular style

¹⁸ Note: only four Conservative anti-market MPs defended their concerns to the Commons during this debate. These were Sir Robin Turton, Enoch Powell and Hugh Fraser, together with Neil Marten, who made one short speech.

¹⁹ This table is a compilation of the results from Tables 4.3 and 4.4

²⁰ McKenzie, R "British Political Parties" p 21.

²¹ Norton claimed that the leadership of Edward Heath was the 'dependent variable', which led to the high level of intra-party dissent in the 1970 Parliament. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 243 & p 254. He also cited the development of an alternate party view led by Enoch Powell, p 249. Lord in keeping with Norton, argued that this core was "largely an irreducible core who were opposed either bitterly oppose to Heath's leadership or so publicly committed to resist entry has to make any change in position embarrassing." Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 101. Indeed a number of MPs cited that they could not change position because this was their electoral address.

of leadership, not one of them claimed that this motivated them to oppose the EEC Bill, in the first instance.²² Instead, Heath's personal ambition to ensure Britain became a Member of the EEC aggravated the situation because he "presided over a Party that was deeply ambivalent about the EC."²³

Heath's management of the Party on this issue, therefore, exacerbated tensions within the CPP but it was not the cause of what was quickly becoming a controversial issue for the Party.²⁴ The part played by the Party leadership during the debates represented little change to the behaviour displayed by previous Conservative Party leaderships who were campaigning on the merits of their policy. Kitzinger, who has documented how the Party leadership acted as persuaders in converting the Party to the merits of entry,²⁵ claimed that by July 1971, the Party leadership had successfully managed to create the perception that the anti-marketisers were the "villain 'rocking the boat," which he argued, was "precisely the effect for which the Party leadership was working."²⁶ Lord observed that the outcome of Heath's management of the Party on the issue, only resulted in the "creation of a stand-off" between the two sides, claiming that Heath used traditional "disciplined patterns of internal management as a substitute for a bi-partisan approach to EC entry, but he had not yet forged the Conservative Party in to a firm political base for his own preferences for an ambitious Europe."²⁷ In this light the battles fought internally within the CPP over EEC entry must be construed as a fight to project the opinions and desires of some Party members to the Party leadership. As will be seen in the next section, this situation arose because there was a miss-match between fundamental visions of the way the Party should be handled. In fact, it is on such occasions where tensions or views become so divergent between the front and backbenches of a party that intra-party opposition to party policy erupts.²⁸

²² That being their principled objection to the EEC Bill itself. It should be noted that this claim is reliant on interview data. Whilst I concur with the information derived from this source and I have no reason to believe that this information is misleading, (having tried to triangulate information gathered from this source with press reports and MPs comments recorded in Hansard) there are well known defects and limitations with relying on interview data. See Robson, C "Real World Research" Oxford, Blackwell, 1993, pp 229-230 for a discussion of the disadvantages of interviews. Such limitations should also be observed on the following pages where I have also relied on interview data: p 105, pp 211-212, p 217, and p 264.

²³ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 100. See also pp 99-101 for Lord's account of why Heath took over the issue of Europe and how he was solely responsible for guiding the CPP in a new direction on this policy issue.

²⁴ Of course, Europe had previously been an issue of controversy since the question of Britain's Membership was first discussed, but had since become more pronounced when there was a Conservative Government in power and where, there was a greater likelihood that Britain's Membership would materialise following the death of Charles de Gaulle.

²⁵ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" see pp 154-159 for further discussion.

²⁶ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 159. Kitzinger has documented the parliamentary battles and campaigns fought by both sides in great detail and are not been duplicated here. See Chapters 6, 8 and 13.

²⁷ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 105.

²⁸ Another explanation may be that one side has decided on a new era of policy or change within a Party and the other side has not yet caught up with, or resists such change.

Ultimately, the opposition of a number of the Conservative anti-market MPs to the EEC Bill must be seen as their determination to change the handling of the course of events. In other words, they wanted to influence and shape the policy direction of their Government on the European Communities Bill and in some cases, prevent Britain's membership of the EEC. This latter aim was clearest amongst those MPs who continued their opposition on Second and Third reading of the Bill.²⁹ The high rise in dissension in the CPP in the 1970's of a number of Conservative MPs not just to European policy, was partly a reaction to the Party leadership's policy. Especially, as Norton claimed, when it was not apparent that the Party leader was in tune with the range of emotions within his party on the issue.³⁰ Whilst a party leadership has the ability to generate or subdue concerns amongst MPs over a policy Bill, in the case of the EEC Bill, it was clear that the leadership of Edward Heath was a contributory factor in the motivations of a number of Conservative MPs to rebel, but it was not a self-sufficient cause. The principal motivator for a number of the Party's Members for opposing the EEC Bill was what they thought was at stake for the UK, if the Bill was ratified.³¹ As Lord argued in respect of this Bill, therefore, as "occasionally happens in UK politics, a foreign policy issue had produced a lively group politics."³²

Domestic Considerations

The domestic situation surrounding events of the period should also be considered as a factor that fuelled, but did not give rise to the concerns of the Conservative anti-market MPs over the EEC Bill. The concerns of the Conservative anti-market MPs over the EEC Entry Bill were aggravated by domestic considerations for as Lord argued, "Heath was able to use the domestic political situation to his advantage."³³ Heath's adept managing of the situation arose partly because the Conservatives had only recently retained office in 1970. Lord argued that it was a belief in the 1970's that a party would suffer at the hands of the public in a general election as a result of any disunity.³⁴ This premise still holds today. A recent survey of Conservative MPs undertaken by the author after the general election of 1997 revealed that many of them believed that the Party's recent disunity on the issue of Europe was a prime, if not sole cause, of the Party's misfortunes at the general election.³⁵

²⁹ This intention was even more visible during the Maastricht debates where dissatisfaction over the Bill partly arose because the Conservatives had been in power for the longest period in post-war history. A number of MPs felt that as a result, the Conservative Government to some extent had become complacent about being the natural party of government and equally, was less disposed to listen the concerns of its backbenchers. The reasons why a number of the Conservative MPs who opposed their Government on the October vote of principle in 1971 but who did not oppose the Bill any further in the division lobbies is discussed in the penultimate chapter.

³⁰ Kavanagh has also described Heath as being "not at ease with the Party's grass roots or with many of the backbenchers and dispensed with very few political honours to Party activists." Kavanagh, D "The Heath Government 1970-74" p 217 Hennissey, P and Sheldon, A Eds "Ruling Performance" Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987.

³¹ This is discussed later in this chapter.

³² Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 123.

³³ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 104.

³⁴ See Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 99.

³⁵ This is based on the responses of fifty-one MPs. I sent all Conservative MPs a brief questionnaire immediately after the general election. See chapter eight of this thesis for a brief discussion of the implications of factions for the future management of the CPP.

Lord has argued that when considering the formulation of policy, Conservatives should consider the impact on the fortunes of the party if they opposed the Bill and the position of the Labour Party on the policy.³⁶ Lord claimed that Heath was able to "raise the stakes and highlight the risks of opposition to Europe policy in terms of exaggerating what the implications for the Party as a whole would be if he failed in terms of lack of credibility."³⁷ Indeed Lord claimed that Heath was particularly able to use the 'electoral fortunes belief' as a negotiating tool with many of his party's Euro-sceptics given that "a failed EC negotiation had preceded the last Conservative fall from power; in party lore, this was a parallel to be avoided, as it had contributed to a crisis of confidence in Conservative handling of national affairs."³⁸ There was general fear of losing power during the 1971-2 debates as well as a perceived need to demonstrate that the CPP could succeed in a policy area where the Labour Party had only recently failed, thus promoting an air of governing capability.³⁹

Lord has suggested, therefore, that in the 1970's, for those that did not have strong beliefs over the merits of entry, a number of them "were simply caught up in a triangle of interacting influences that involved little reflection on the nature of EC Membership."⁴⁰ As a result, a substantive debate on the issue of entry was replaced by an inter-party debate.⁴¹ If this was the case, then the reservations of Conservative backbench MPs on this Bill may have been further obscured in the Party's quest to establish themselves as the better Party in the domestic political game, which may help to explain the rise in dissension in the period. This is a point of distinction between the intra-party debates of the CPP on Europe in the 1970's and 1990's, for at the start of the Maastricht debates, the Conservative Party had been in office for thirteen years.

Also in contrast to the 1971-2 debates, there was no recent evidence of a failed European policy, which immediately preceded the Maastricht Bill, save for the notorious resignations of senior Cabinet Ministers of Nigel Lawson and Geoffrey Howe from Government.⁴² As interview data revealed, in all of the debates, such arguments did not wash for many of the Euro-sceptics precisely because a number of them regarded the Government's policy on Europe to be a main, if not sole in some instances, factor which would lead to the party's downfall at the next general election. Internal debates within the CPP on policy were much more likely to be influenced by how the party managed policy issues. Whilst this may be the case, such accounts are not entirely accurate as John Major's leadership over the Maastricht and EFB debates hardened the resolve of some Conservative Euro-sceptics (for whom the European issue was the sole cause of their rebellion) to oppose these

³⁶ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 103.

³⁷ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 102.

³⁸ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 103. For further discussion see pp 102-103.

³⁹ See Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" pp 103-4

⁴⁰ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 102.

⁴¹ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 104.

⁴² These allegedly occurred over Mrs Thatcher's handling of European policy and relations.

Bills. The fundamental worries of the Euro-sceptics about the way the CPP was being run were of great concern, therefore, and were not easily dismissed.

A fundamentalist view?

It was precisely because of what the issue of entry symbolised in terms of domestic considerations for the UK, which gave rise to the concerns of a number of Conservative MPs and which in turn motivated them to oppose their Party leader's most cherished policy. In light of the sovereignty issue, the fundamentalist vision of a number of the Euro-sceptics is more easily understood in terms of what they had been asked to sacrifice. It should be noted here that the sovereignty issue is not all encapsulating, where all Conservative MPs had the same vision of sovereignty. Each had their own interpretation of sovereignty that sometimes overlapped with the concerns of others. Lord has succinctly captured the fundamental concerns of the Euro-sceptics during 1971-2 as arising from the fact that "many Conservatives now found it hard to deal with a change that would at the least make national identity more ambiguous: would Britain now become a provisional entity, pending European integration? Could national pride and ambition be meaningfully attached to such an entity? Would integrated markets and European policies substitute soul-less harmonisation for 'national character'? How could a Party that identified so closely with the 'nation' - or at least their concept of it - cope with membership of an International Community with a potential for the sublimation of the nation?"⁴³

The debates of the SEA

Table 4.6	
Content analysis of issues raised by Conservative Antis during Second & Third reading of the SEA	%
Loss of Parliamentary sovereignty and increased power of Community	30
Existing problems (CAP, trade, abuse of existing laws, spending and employment)	18
QMV and changing to the voting structure	18
No further increase of powers should be given.	13
Wrong emphasis by focusing on constitutional Change – should look to improve effectiveness instead	7
Different definitions of political institutions	7
Increased British scrutiny arrangements needed	7

The main themes evident in the speeches of the Conservative Euro-sceptics during the Second and Third readings of the SEA (Table 4.6) were: a loss of parliamentary sovereignty and increased powers of the Community Institutions, a concern over changes in the voting procedures on policy areas, existing problems and a concern over what many Euro-sceptics regarded as an apparent lack of concern in the House over the constitutional implications of the Bill. Edward du Cann, for instance, attempted to show that despite the brevity of the Bill, its importance and implications for the UK should not be understated when he argued that "it is probably, in terms of Britain's

⁴³ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community" p 101.

Membership of the European Community, the largest constitutional measure that the House has had to discuss since our discussions on the European Communities Act 1972."⁴⁴ Du Cann further questioned the pace of the changes to be made and in fact their necessity, belying his belief that the aim of the House should instead be to make the Community, as it currently stood, more effective. "I believe that our priorities are now entirely wrong. We should not be wasting our time on constitutional matters when there is so much to do practically."⁴⁵ This concern was echoed by many of the Euro-sceptics of the CPP at the time, whose arguments demonstrated their resistance to further change to the existing status quo of the European Communities. Sir Teddy Taylor, an erstwhile Euro-sceptic of the Party, argued many of the same sentiments on the sovereignty theme, which he had previously expressed during the 1971-2 debates, when he argued that no further powers should be given to the European Community until it could demonstrate its ability to resolve existing problems. Rather than debating the merits of changes to the Common Market, he felt the House would be better served if the focus of the debate concentrated on dealing with this problem. In illustration of his claim, he stated that since joining the EEC "trade has been disastrous... Common Market spending has got out of control,"⁴⁶ whereupon, ratification of the SEA would "simply divert Europe from tackling its problems."⁴⁷

Some Conservative MPs to the SEA also made objections to the proposed extension of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV). This represented a continuation of a theme evident from the 1970's debates that the UK would suffer from a further loss of sovereignty as a result of any further integration of the UK with the EC. Some of the Euro-sceptics believed for instance, that the existence of QMV would mean that the sovereign powers of Westminster would be surrendered to unaccountable officials in Brussels. Bill Walker, was one MP who opposed the Bill for this reason, believing the resultant changes to the EC treaties would require Great Britain to accept decisions by a majority of EC Member States. Peter Fry MP, who abstained, was similarly concerned, and claimed that it was his belief that most UK sovereignty was lost over the SEA precisely because the voting structure of the Communities decision-making process was altered.⁴⁸

Another of the main concerns amongst the Conservative backbench Euro-sceptics over the SEA was a fear that the Act would lead to the creation of more than a single market, that it engendered further the idea of political integration between the EC partners. One Conservative MP for instance claimed, that "I had anxieties that some of its clauses might go far beyond what was necessary to create a Single Market and be used as a mechanism for speeding up the pace of social and political integration within the EU with a detrimental effect on the sovereignty of the British Parliament."⁴⁹ John Carlisle MP, similarly abstained on this Bill because he felt that it was "the first major move

⁴⁴ Edward du Cann Hansard 23 April 1986 Column 332.

⁴⁵ Edward du Cann Hansard 23 April 1986 Column 333.

⁴⁶ Sir Teddy Taylor Hansard 23 April 1986 Column 366.

⁴⁷ Sir Teddy Taylor Hansard 23 April 1986 Column 366.

⁴⁸ Interview with author - October 1995. In fact he argued that "many people weren't anti-European until the Single European Act came along precisely for this reason."

⁴⁹ Jonathan Aitken MP to author - August 1995.

after the Treaty of Rome towards further integration, and towards I think federalism, particularly on currency and particularly of course the Single European Act began to cover subjects that were outside the old economic responsibilities that countries had within the Communities."⁵⁰

A further issue of disquiet was voiced by one Conservative MP, Bill Cash, who throughout the debates questioned whether the scrutiny arrangements of the House of Commons were sufficient to monitor the incoming European legislation, that would subsequently arise out of a change in the voting procedures.⁵¹ Although Mr Cash voted for the Bill, his concerns represent the development of a further typology of Conservative Euro-sceptics that became more predominant during the Maastricht debates, the 'Constitutionalists'. Within the Euro-sceptics of the CPP, there were a number of Members who were particularly concerned with the implications for the constitutional position of the British Parliament as a result of increasing changes to the EC treaties and, an increase in the amount of European legislation which affected UK policy making.

The Party leadership:

The question of the position of, and loyalty to the Party leadership during the SEA was a vital consideration in the motivations of a number of potential rebels in the question of whether to oppose this Bill. In terms of both speeches and voting behaviour, Conservative opposition to the SEA was minimal by comparison to the other main European debates of this study. As will be discussed in Chapter seven, much of this can be attributed to the fact that many of the Euro-sceptics were content to follow the direction and assurances of their Prime Minister over the SEA, as they believed her to be Euro-sceptical and in some cases, a believer in and a defender of, British national interests. During her service as Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher had had suitable opportunity to demonstrate her credentials in these areas in her dealings with other foreign external relations. She had for instance cultivated the 'special Anglo-American relationship' and had only recently secured victory for Britain in the Falklands War. At a European level, she had secured budget rebates for Britain and had to some extent resolved the controversial CAP issue. For many potential Euro-opponents to the SEA at the time within the CPP who still believed in the doctrine of Britain's splendid isolation, Mrs Thatcher's leadership helped contain possible internal opposition to party policy on Europe. Perhaps more importantly, Mrs Thatcher particularly during the early stages of her leadership was seen to listen to the concerns of her backbenchers of her Party on European issues.⁵² One example of this was displayed in her meetings with a concern group of backbenchers, the Conservative European Reform Group (CERG).⁵³ Through these meetings and her public activities in the sphere of foreign policy matters, many MPs who were concerned over the development of Britain's relations with the EC, believed that Mrs Thatcher was actually doing her best for British interests and, therefore, supported her on this Bill.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Interview with author – November 1994.

⁵¹ For Mr Cash's comments see Hansard 23 April 1986 Column 334.

⁵² This is discussed in more detail in Chapter seven.

⁵³ The CERG is discussed in more detail in the next two chapters.

⁵⁴ This is discussed further in Chapter seven.

The Maastricht debates

Content analysis of Hansard's record of the Maastricht debates clearly revealed a more diverse range of concerns amongst Conservative MPs. By now the traditional arguments of an expected resultant loss of British parliamentary sovereignty as a result of changes to the EC treaties, continued to be well versed during the debates and were to a large extent, voiced by the same Members who had declared such concerns in previous European debates. These concerns were also evident amongst some of the new intake Members at the 1992 General Election. John Whittingdale MP for instance, commented that "for a variety of reasons we regarded the Maastricht treaty as handing over a further sort of transfer of power to the European Community and away from Westminster." As an example, he argued that "we were extremely fearful that attempts would be made to impose Social legislation on the United Kingdom via the back door and that the Social Chapter opt-out would actually prove ineffective."⁵⁵ Associated to this concern were fears that the Bill would lead ultimately to the creation of a union of federal states. John Carlisle was one such MP who believed that the "Maastricht treaty was basically a further road towards federalism" which was eroding the "sovereignty of our country."⁵⁶ He expressed concern that he was elected to represent his constituency of Luton in Parliament - not in Brussels.

Sovereignty concerns, continued to be a predominant issue of disquiet amongst Conservative MPs, expressed during the Maastricht debates. The main concern to Conservative MPs was an anxiety over the intention expressed by some of Britain's European partners to move the European Communities towards a more political rather than an economic European Community.⁵⁷ Some of the Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs who were concerned that the European Communities would expand its economic parameters and move into political and social policy areas, stated that they would have been content for the EC to continue as an economic arrangement only.⁵⁸ It was their belief that the Maastricht treaty would lead to an extension of EC responsibilities outside the economic framework, which gave rise to concern and their opposition to the Bill in the division lobbies. There was a further apprehension amongst a number of Conservative Euro-sceptics who believed the treaty's proposals were undemocratic, in that there were insufficient safeguards surrounding the accountability of non-elected officials in Brussels. Sir Peter Fry for instance said, "I object violently to so much power being given to non-elected officials in Brussels. And I'm afraid I haven't got a lot of time for the European Parliament. I think it's just a talking shop and I can't see in any case that there could be any effective control of what the Commission does."⁵⁹ Of concern also to the Maastricht Euro-sceptics was the way in which the treaty had been presented to the House and the country as a safe policy, over which Members of the Party should not be concerned.

⁵⁵ Interview with author - November 1994.

⁵⁶ Interview with author - November 1994.

⁵⁷ Sir Trevor Skeet was one such MP who believed that the Maastricht Treaty represented an intention to extend the parameters of the UK's relations with the EC, from a relationship based on economic links, which he endorsed, to political links. Interview with author - November 1994.

⁵⁸ This refers to comments made to the author by a number of Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs.

⁵⁹ Interview with author - October 1995. Rupert Allason MP expressed a similar concern to the author when he said that he was "worried that we won't be able to sack them" - November 1994.

Bernard Jenkin MP suggested to the author for instance, that the Government presented the Maastricht treaty to the Commons on the basis that "it was a set back for those who wanted to create a federal Europe."⁶⁰

A number of the Party's Euro-sceptics believed that the Maastricht treaty could never work on the grounds of historical examples of relations between European countries. One Conservative MP for instance believed that the exercise of expanding the parameters of the EC, would be its downfall.⁶¹ Harry Greenway MP also envisaged dangers, if attempts were made to bring the countries of Eastern Europe within the Community, believing that it is "historically mistaken to seek to integrate Europe."⁶² As well as the belief that the concept of a European Community was flawed, a number of Conservative MPs were concerned because they considered the Maastricht treaty to be outdated with no place in the current world. Iain Duncan-Smith MP for instance commented to the author, that "what you have now is a treaty set and designed before the end of the cold war...we've got here in Maastricht a set of conditions and rules, which are essentially about a world that has gone and changed...It's an unconstitutional, undemocratic, bureaucratic treaty, which is bound to fail. And within that failure, there will be disaster for everybody."⁶³ It was as a result of these misgivings that many Conservative MPs believed that a referendum of the British people should be held over whether Britain should in fact participate in these political developments.

The following Tables (Tables 4.7 - 4.14) reflect the issues raised by the Conservative Euro-sceptics during the actual course of each of the Maastricht debates in the House of Commons covered by this study. Table 4.15 is a summary of the issues of concern over the Maastricht treaty collated from interview data.

⁶⁰ Interview with author - November 1994.

⁶¹ Sir Trevor Skeet stated to the author - November 1994, that, what "you have to remember is that Europe has never been homogeneous as heterogeneous. In fact there's been a number of warring States. The idea to try and get them all together and work together is an excellent idea. But that's not the way to do it. The more States you bring in, the more you're going to ensure its own termination."

⁶² Interview with author - November 1994. He cited the recent events in Yugoslavia as an example. "In Yugoslavia before our very eyes is a massive war of disintegration. The same has almost happened in Russia. The changes are against integration rather than the reverse."

⁶³ Interview with author - November 1994. A consequence of transferring more powers to the Commission in Brussels, according to Mr Duncan-Smith, was that it has "actually changed the nature of the relationship between the Member of Parliament and the constituents." More specifically, he expressed concern over the legal implications of transferring powers to the European Court which he believed would result in the "European Court of Justice finding ways of ruling across all those areas and thereby creating a schism between us and our own constituents." Similarly Bill Cash was reported as stating that "we want to see Europe work. What we don't want is a Community torn by internal dissension, jealousy, the exclusion of Eastern Europe, and as a result of trying to create a Europe based on the ideas of the 1950's when we want the Europe of the 1990's." The Financial Times "Threat of Rift between Cabinet and backbenches after resignation of Nicholas Ridley" 16 July 1990.

TABLE 4.7	
Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during the debate on the Treaty of Maastricht negotiated by John Major 18 - 19 December 1991.⁶⁴	%
EMU & Single Currency & Economic costs of integration	27
Loss of UK sovereignty & centralised EC	20
Social Policy issues	17
Skilful Negotiations	10
Opt-outs ineffective	10
Decrease democratic values	7
Defence & CFSP	7
Damage US/UK relations	2

TABLE 4.8	
Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during Second Reading of the Maastricht Bill 20 - 21 May 1992.⁶⁵	%
Loss of UK Sovereignty & Centralising EC	29
Lack of democratic discussion in UK	11
Social Chapter / Negotiation of UK opt-outs	10
Border controls / Immigration	10
Single Currency	9
Increased powers of Community Institutions & lack of democratic accountability	9
Subsidiarity	9
Economic costs of EC	5
Voting arrangements	4
Defence and Foreign Policy	2
ERM / CAP / Education	2

TABLE 4.9	
Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during the ERM debate - 24 September 1992⁶⁶	%
Opposed to ERM / EMU	48
Maastricht Treaty will be a failure	20
Lack of Democracy in legislating for the Maastricht treaty	15
Centralised Europe	7
Public Humiliation	5
Subsidiarity	5

⁶⁴ Eighteen speeches by the Conservative Euro-Sceptics surveyed.

⁶⁵ Thirty speeches by the Conservative Euro-Sceptics surveyed.

⁶⁶ Thirteen Conservative Euro-sceptic speeches surveyed.

TABLE 4.10	
Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during The Paving Debate in the House of Commons - 4 November 1992⁶⁷	%
Referendum required & implications for British Democracy	29
Distrust of European Institutions and powers and other Member states vision of EU	29
Defence issues	14
Projectionist Europe and implications for British job creations	14
Concerns over Citizenship	7
Subsidiarity concerns	7

TABLE 4.11	
Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during the Third Reading of the Maastricht Treaty in the House of Commons 20 May 1993.⁶⁸	%
Loss of Sovereignty & Centralising EC	25
Referendum on Maastricht and Europe Union	15
Loss of Democratic accountability	12
Loss of Economic control - single currency and Monetary Union	12
Subsidiarity and areas of competence	9
Defence and Foreign Policy	6
Not damage Trade and investment if not Ratify	6
Concerns over other Countries perceptions of EU	6
Rights of Citizenship	3
Social Protocol	3
Government minority position in the country	3

Table 4.12	
Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during the Social Chapter debate in the House of Commons - 22 July 1993.⁶⁹	%
Protectionist Europe - disadvantageous for British job market & British trade	38
Social Chapter unnecessary - ability to act is already defined under existing European treaties	13
Loss of sovereignty in economic and foreign policy decisions	13
Adversely affect UK/Us relations	6
Monetary union and single currency	6
Referendum required	6
CAP policy - disastrous	6
Accountability of EU institutions	6
Majority voting destroys UK Parliamentary democracy	6

⁶⁷ Eleven Conservative Euro-sceptic speeches surveyed.

⁶⁸ Sixteen speeches by the Conservative Euro-Sceptics surveyed.

⁶⁹ Twelve speeches by the Conservative Euro-Sceptics surveyed.

Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during the Vote of Confidence in Her Majesty's Government debate in the House of Commons - 23 July 1993.⁷⁰	%
Excessive power of EU institutions & resultant lack of ability by UK to influence	33.2
Monetary Union	16.7
Federalist EU	16.7
Maastricht adversely affect UK	16.7
Reform SEA instead	16.7

Compilation of issues raised by Conservative Euro-sceptics during HC debates 1991-1993 on Maastricht Bill⁷¹	%
Loss of Sovereignty & Centralising EC	20.30
EMU & Single Currency & Economic costs of integration	17.71
Protectionist Europe – damage UK trade	8.27
Referendum on Maastricht and European Union	7.15
Maastricht treaty will fail / adversely affect the UK	5.24
Social Protocol and opt-outs ineffective	5.04
Concerns and distrust over other Countries perceptions of EU	4.94
Loss of Democratic accountability	4.88
Defence & Foreign Policy	4.28
Subsidiarity and areas of competence	4.25
Lack of democratic discussion of Maastricht treaty in UK	3.79
Social Policy issues	2.44
Reform SEA instead	2.39
Other	2.36
Citizenship Rights	1.45
Voting arrangements	1.44
Skilful Negotiations	1.40
Border Controls	1.43
Damage US/UK relations	1.24

⁷⁰ Four speeches by the Conservative Euro-Sceptics surveyed.

⁷¹ This Compilation excludes the debate on the Government's Economic Policy in September 1992 (Table 4.9) as this was not directly related to the Maastricht Bill.

Content Analysis of Interview data of the concerns raised by the Maastricht rebels⁷²	%
Transfer of Sovereignty & Political Implications of centralised federal EC	44
Single currency and Monetary Union	15
Costs of EU expansion & development of EU	6
Lack of Accountability - non-elected EU Officials	6
British People not consulted	5
Subsidiarity	5
Common Foreign and Defence Policy	5
Social Chapter	3
Other Issues -Frontiers/Immigration/ Citizenship/ Transport	11

What is particularly significant about the Maastricht debates is that many more issues of concern were voiced during the debates⁷³ and importantly by a greater number of Conservative MPs than in the preceding European debates of this study. This situation arose because the Maastricht Bill touched upon a whole host of issues other than just economic and sovereignty considerations.⁷⁴ Essentially, the Maastricht treaty represented the materialisation of many concerns and fears previously felt by many Conservative MPs during previous European debates within the Party and, a whole host of new ones, such as subsidiarity issues, citizenship rights and a single currency. Bernard Jenkin for example believed, that Subsidiarity was "an indication that the Community is becoming a State, because there are Subsidiarity clauses or their equivalents in the constitutions of States like the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany."⁷⁵ Rupert Allason similarly claimed that he was not attracted to the idea of a European Union, when he claimed to the author that he did not want to see a United States of Europe. He explained that "I just don't think that it would work and I think that it would end up with fragmentation. I think in historical terms there's a

⁷² Richard Matthews (University of Essex) also identified the following list of concerns identified by the Maastricht rebels in an undergraduate dissertation, "The Anatomy of a Rebellion. The Conservative Backbench MPs and the Maastricht Treaty (1991-93).

1. Mistrust of Government - belief that Government had not told truth to the rebels
2. Lost sovereignty
3. Irrevocable Treaty - impossible to sign
4. European states are different
5. Evidence of other countries experiences - Denmark etc economic damage

⁷³ As well as helping to understand why it was that the issue of Europe upset so many Conservative MPs, one reason why there was such diffuse coverage of a wide range of issues during the debates, was in part due to the fact that this was one tactic employed by members of the FSG to try to defeat the Bill. It was one strategy of the rebels to defeat the Bill orally, if they could not defeat the Bill in the division lobbies. It was, therefore, a tactical manoeuvre that between them, members of the FSG would cover every aspect of the debate in Parliament by being both informed and able to argue their opposition to every pro-argument made, and specifically, those made by the Party leadership. This is discussed further in Chapter six.

⁷⁴ The previous European Communities Bills had also touched on the extension of political powers and proposed future vision of a political integrated Europe in the earlier treaties, but these were not so widely appreciated either through successful Party management and/or abidance to their Prime Minister's assurances that, such a scenario would never in fact materialise in the future, and a belief on the part of many Euro-sceptics especially in the 1970's, that the issue of political integration was a concept along way off in the future, which would probably never materialise.

⁷⁵ Interview with author - November 1994.

very curious proposition that at a time when the central planning structures of Eastern Europe are all fragmented, that we should be building the same kind of central planning structure."⁷⁶

The outlined progression of Member States towards monetary union was a main concern amongst many of the Conservative MPs and in fact was an issue which drew wider support to the Euro-sceptics' cause than perhaps would have been the case if this concept had not been included within the Treaty. In fact had John Major not secured an opt-out on monetary union for Britain, it is probable that opposition to the Maastricht treaty by Conservative MPs would have greatly increased and they could have defeated the treaty in parliament. Despite this opt-out for Britain, the issue of monetary union still remained a matter of concern for a number of Conservative MPs. John Whittingdale for instance stated that the treaty "quite clearly spelt out that the eventual goal was political union and indeed monetary union."⁷⁷ A number of different economic concerns were also prevalent amongst Conservative MPs arising out of the treaty. One such area of concern was a belief that the Maastricht treaty would damage British interests and economic links with the rest of the world. Sir Peter Fry for instance, reiterated old concerns prevalent in the 1970's, that Britain could lose out on future trade with other areas of the world if Britain's trade focused on Europe. This, he envisaged as a problem given his belief that the fastest developing countries are in the Pacific Rim and his belief that Japan, is probably now the strongest economy in the world.⁷⁸ Allied to these concerns, were the protests of a number of MPs at what they believed would be Britain being forced to harbour the economic and social development costs of other countries in Europe. Mrs Gorman, a staunch vocalist on this area said "we don't owe the Spanish, the Portuguese the Greeks, Italians or any one else a living. No Government has a mandate to tax its people to pay for people in other countries. We only have a mandate to do what we think best for the people in this country, who after all, are footing the Bill for it."⁷⁹

Other general issues of concern were expressed to the author by Conservative Euro-sceptics. Some Euro-sceptics believed that frontier problems between countries would be inevitable. Others expressed their concerns over the history of the ERM. One MP even claimed that the EC was a "rich man's club" and the treaty itself, was a "dog's dinner of legislation." A xenophobic fear was evident with some Euro-sceptics, notably among older Members who still remember and indeed may have fought in the two previous world wars: that is a fear of German domination. Sir Trevor Skeet stated for example, that the Maastricht Treaty "won't prevent Germany from doing anything. Germany is going to do what it wants to do. It wants to dominate Europe, its got the ability to and I suppose we have had a tradition of... that when nations start to gang up on one another, we oppose them until we restore the equilibrium."⁸⁰ Another MP stated that he was opposed to the Maastricht Treaty because he couldn't actually understand it. "I don't understand it. I understand the European

⁷⁶ Interview with author - November 1994.

⁷⁷ Interview with author - November 1994.

⁷⁸ Interview with author - November 1994.

⁷⁹ Interview with author - November 1994.

⁸⁰ Interview with author - November 1994.

Community and I understand the principles of a free trade club. My understanding of Maastricht is that it is a political dimension and I don't understand it."⁸¹

The Institutions of the EC had further established themselves as a political autonomous entity and achieved a much higher profile than previously was the case in recent years.⁸² The four main Institutions (Commission, Council, European Parliament and European Court of Justice) with the passing years had sought to increase their powers in order to justify their own presence within the Communities. Thus what was traditionally a debate over Britain's role within the world, developing economic interests and defending the old established networks of political allies and trading networks of the Commonwealth, gradually over the next two decades, had become a more focused debate on the Communities Institutions. Similarly, for the CPP, what was once a debate solely about Britain's role in the world, had expanded into new areas as a result of increasing EC legislation seeping into domestic British policy issues, such as VAT, defence and fisheries. As a consequence, many more Conservatives MPs were drawn into the Euro-sceptic web of concern regarding the nature of Britain's relations within the EC. The Social Chapter debates also raised speculation and concern amongst Conservative MPs over the implications of this part of the treaty for British Industry.⁸³ Significantly, Constituency Associations also started to become more vocal regarding their concerns.⁸⁴ Perhaps more so than any other European legislative debate in Parliament, the Maastricht treaty brought into the discussion the concerns of many Constituency Associations, for as well as being a debate about Britain's foreign and external policies, it also became a vital domestic debate.⁸⁵ In this respect the Maastricht debates gave rise to a greater number of concerns than was previously the case. It was no longer merely an external policy, the European issue had become a domestic debate, and significantly at a local level as well as a national one.⁸⁶ As a result, there were far more discontented individuals within the CPP over a greater number of issues, all of which related to the Treaty of Maastricht, than had occurred over the previous debates.

Given that there were more discontented individuals within the Party, there was a greater opportunity for rebellion following the increase in number of MPs who were concerned with the Maastricht Bill. If these MPs could find some way to unite all their divergent concerns, there was a chance that their concerns would be heard, which might lead to them being more effective in either

⁸¹ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

⁸² For example, direct elections since 1979 to the European Parliament.

⁸³ Despite John Major having secured an opt-out, the British Labour Party won the right to have a debate on the inclusion of the Social Chapter within the treaty, although the debate took place after the debate on the treaty itself.

⁸⁴ As will be discussed in Chapter 7, this issue proved to be a contentious issue for the Conservative-sceptics as usually many of them would be opposed to such legislation representing their agreement with the Government's opposition, but simultaneously it represented an opportunity to defeat the Maastricht treaty, if they voted against their Government.

⁸⁵ This is speculation by the author who acknowledges that the EEC entry debates were also of national concern.

⁸⁶ Note – The European issue has always been a domestic issue, but was less easy to disguise as such now.

defeating the Bill or securing amendments to it. There was, therefore, a greater opportunity afforded to the Conservative Euro-sceptics during the Maastricht debates, to do something about it than had perhaps occurred before. The fact that the Government itself had a small majority was also a vital consideration and a catalyst for rebellion.⁸⁷ Of course these factors on their own may have been sufficient to precipitate a rebellion by Conservative MPs against their Government policy. What transformed what would otherwise have been a vocal rebellion in the debates and in the division lobbies by MPs acting as individuals, into a collective organised fighting force of formalised rebellion, was the direction and style of the Party leadership on this policy. It is suggested that the Party leadership did not listen to and/or was not prepared to seriously consider the concerns of their own backbenchers on the issue of Europe. John Major's inheritance of an alleged disunited Party in 1990 resulted in a conciliatory approach by the Prime Minister in his management of the Party,⁸⁸ especially on the European issue, which was seen by many to be an issue of controversy even as early as 1990, as a result of Mrs Thatcher's removal from office - and perhaps even earlier.⁸⁹ Major's perceived failure by both pro-Europeans and Euro-sceptics of the CPP to offer any clear direction on European issues, combined with attempts to appease simultaneously both political wings of his Party on the European issue in order to pacify them, served only to increase the political tensions within the Party over the issue of Europe.⁹⁰

Upon his inheritance of the Party leadership in 1990, John Major had been portrayed as the natural successor, especially on the European issue, to Mrs Thatcher. In the run up to the Maastricht treaty debates, it was the belief of many Euro-sceptics that their Prime Minister had not lived up to this task and to a large extent was not listening to the concerns of his backbenchers.⁹¹ This study cannot vouch for the intentions of the Conservative Party leadership on European policy at this time but it can be argued that on the European issue, more so than on any other policy issue, the Party leadership did not live up to the expectations of a substantial section of the Parliamentary Party.⁹² This factor was one of the catalysts of one of the most serious manifestations of intra-Party rebellions that has taken place in the post-war history of the CPP.⁹³ It was the combined factors of John Major's style of leadership, alongside the fact that the Maastricht treaty clearly impacted much more on the domestic political scene as well as on foreign policy considerations, which motivated many of the Euro-sceptics to participate in a formal organised rebellion.

⁸⁷ This is discussed further in the next two Chapters.

⁸⁸ See Riddell, P "The Conservatives after 1992" p 427, *Political Quarterly*, Vol.63, 1992, pp 422-431.

⁸⁹ See Alderman, R K & Carter, N "A Very Tory Coup: The Ousting of Mrs Thatcher" *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol.44, 1991, pp 125-139, and Alderman, R K & Smith, M J "Can Prime Ministers be Given the Push by their Parties?" p 273, *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol.43, 1990, pp260-276, and Kavanagh, D "British Party Conferences and the Political Rhetoric of the 1990s" *Government & Opposition*, p39, Vol.31, 1996, pp 27-44.

⁹⁰ This is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

⁹¹ This was exacerbated by the fact that a number of the Euro-sceptics believed that the ERM fiasco had been poorly handled and in some cases, caused by the Conservative Government.

⁹² A number of Euro-sceptics clearly stated to the author that they supported John Major on all other issues except Europe.

⁹³ This is discussed further in later Chapters.

It should be remembered however, that of equal importance was the fact that there were many different points and issues of concern expressed. The Maastricht treaty itself, therefore, was the reason for the rebellion, being an umbrella policy, which gave rise to concerns over wide-ranging areas of concern. As well as encompassing a myriad of concerns, the Maastricht rebellions erupted because these concerns happened to be much more than simple policy concerns, touching more deeply held sentiments and fundamental concerns, such as the belief of an MP over the way Britain should be governed, defence of British interests and what it means to be a true Conservative. For example, one Conservative MP expressed such a view when he said in respect of the Maastricht treaty "we are not talking about the vicarage tea party after all, but the way this country is governed."⁹⁴ The Maastricht treaty was a common focus, which enabled people, perhaps in some cases, of different political persuasions on other issues to come together and unite, to effect actions, which would benefit them equally and satisfy individual particular concerns.

There was a degree of ideological coherence between the Euro-sceptics over the Maastricht treaty. Some of the Euro-sceptic MPs for instance, were unilaterally opposed to the whole of the Maastricht treaty and wanting to rid the country from its auspices all together. As will be seen in the next Chapter these Members formed the nucleus of the hard core membership of the FSG. A number of other Members and Euro-sceptics, were not so universally opposed to the whole of the Treaty in its entirety, and were happy to campaign for amendments to the Bill. These were important Party members who could be drawn upon to join with the hard core members of the FSG at various points during the debates, when their own concerns were a matter of discussion.

The European Finance Bill

Given the large Conservative rebellion over Maastricht, the fact that only eight Euro-sceptics rebelled on this Bill by way of abstaining from voting, may at first sight be construed as a victory for the Government, albeit that these MPs did abstain on a vote of confidence in the Government. To interpret these events in such a light is to misunderstand the nature of Conservative MPs' motivations for rebellion on European issues. First and foremost, rebellion to this Bill was less than that which occurred over the Maastricht Bill, precisely because this Bill referred to a particular aspect of European policy, that of financial arrangements for the EC. Rebellion against this Bill by Conservative MPs could, therefore, only ever be expected to materialise from those MPs who were concerned over this area of policy in the first place. A number of the Maastricht sceptics for instance, were unhappy with the amount of expenditure entailed upon the UK to be given to the EC budget, but who in the main had no principled objections to the Bill. Michael Spicer MP, for instance, advised me that he regarded the then forthcoming IGC of 1996 as the issue on which he held graver concerns and he was more likely to oppose it.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ The Financial Times "Tory Euro-sceptics plan tactics after Danish referendum" 18 May 1993.

⁹⁵ A number of the Maastricht rebels who did not oppose this Bill made similar observations to the author.

As will be discussed in Chapter seven, the motives for a number of the Maastricht rebels not opposing this Bill were based on the fact that many believed this Bill was merely a debate on a position already agreed to by the British Government at the Edinburgh Summit and, therefore, the UK Government should be seen to honour its commitments.⁹⁶ Bill Cash MP tried to clarify during the debate, however, that this was not in fact the case and that legally the Government had only become bound by the Own Resources Bill a month before on October 31, and that this position was dependent on the assent of Members of Parliament.⁹⁷

Secondly, a number of potential rebels did not oppose this Bill because there was a vote of confidence in the Government. For some MPs, this was a substantial constraint, as a number of the Euro-sceptics believed that it was important if they were to be influential in effecting changes to the content of the UK's European policy, that a Conservative Government remained in power and, that they themselves remain as Conservative MPs in order to fight what they regarded as more important issues on Europe. For some Conservative Euro-sceptics such as Richard Shepherd however, the Government's decision to make the vote on the Bill a simultaneous vote of confidence in the Government frustrated and annoyed the rebels.⁹⁸

The Government's handling of the situation was in fact another cause for disquiet and anguish amongst a number of Conservative MPs. A number of them simply could not comprehend why it was necessary for the Government to escalate the issue into a crisis situation for the CPP. Richard Shepherd for instance, declared his confusion to the House over the Government's intentions, when he announced that "the country is confused. Two weeks ago the Government began with a punitive majority of 500 more than 500 - on this issue. By the end of the last week, we were into a suicide pact. Yet the atmosphere in the House is hardly the thought that the Government will - remotely lose tonight. There is no sense of urgency about it."⁹⁹ As a result of this management of affairs, John Wilkinson also declared that "the extraordinary consequence over events over the past weeks and days had compelled me even more urgently and insistently to obey my conscience."¹⁰⁰ He further argued that despite this, the Government had chosen to "press ahead with this legislation which in my judgement is not recognisably Conservative."¹⁰¹ Such views were also voiced to the author by a number of Euro-sceptics who did not oppose the Bill and who also expressed their concerns during

⁹⁶ Again this view relates to a fundamental perception of how Britain should be seen externally in the world, that it keeps its promises.

⁹⁷ In clarification, he argued that the Bill was "dependent on it being enacted in the House according to our constitutional requirements. That includes the rights of Members of Parliament." Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 989.

⁹⁸ During the debates Mr Shepherd asked the Government why it was not abiding by traditional methods of the use of votes of confidence, which allow a vote of confidence to take place after the debate on the issue has taken place. Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 1004.

⁹⁹ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 1003.

¹⁰⁰ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 997.

¹⁰¹ John Wilkinson, Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 997.

the debate on the Bill.¹⁰² Of the EFB rebels all but two, Sir Richard Body¹⁰³ and Michael Cartiss, pronounced their concerns during the debate. Table 4.16 records the main issues of concern identified from content analysis of the EFB debate.

Content analysis of the issues raised by Conservative Antis during the debate on the European Finance Bill – 28 November 1994.¹⁰⁴	%
Fraud and irrefutable behaviour of other European Member states	14.71
Poor value for money to UK and increased contributions	13.24
Lack of control over EU expenditure	11.77
Doubts of validity of figures presented both by EU and UK Parliament	8.80
Poor record of EU public expenditure and waste	8.80
Referendum required	8.80
Damaging to Tory Party and Vote of confidence	7.35
Further loss of UK sovereignty and democracy	5.88
References to other tax increases - VAT on fuel	5.88
Single currency	4.41
Fears of the formation of a federal United States of Europe	2.94
Enhanced powers sought for national Parliaments in EU	2.94
Government out of touch with public concern	0.16
Withdraw EU altogether	0.16
Insufficient scrutiny arrangements for EU legislation in UK Parliament	0.16

By far the most important concern voiced by the Conservative Euro-sceptics on this Bill was what a number of them saw as a pervasion of fraud within the EC. John Wilkinson for instance was reported as stating that this Bill "represents institutionalised fraud."¹⁰⁵ A second concern was evident over the prospect of Britain's increased contributions to the EC, especially when the rebels perceived that this represented poor value for money for Britain. A number of the rebels were quick to point out the difficulty of being able to justify this position to their constituents if they supported the Government. Michael Cartiss for instance, was reported to have claimed after the debate, that "I have stood on the slogan 'value for money' - a great thing which the Conservative Party has held before the electorate of this country. Therefore, it was impossible for me to agree to spend more money in Europe to help tobacco growers in Greece or Mafioso in Italy when money is needed in my own constituency."¹⁰⁶ A number of the EFB rebels also queried how they could suitably justify their support of the Bill when their own constituents suffered from financial difficulties. Teresa

¹⁰² For example - Rupert Allason to author – November 1994, For discussion of the reasons why a number of MPs stated their concerns but did not oppose the Bill in the lobbies – see Chapter seven.

¹⁰³ As I mentioned in Chapter 3, Sir Richard Body is classified as an EFB rebel because he resigned the Whip in protest of the Government's imposition of a vote of confidence.

¹⁰⁴ Twenty speeches by the Conservative Euro-Sceptics surveyed.

¹⁰⁵ The Financial Times "Rebel Rouser Lamont" 29 November 1994. In the same article Bill Cash was reported to have argued similarly that, the Bill "is tainted with fraud."

¹⁰⁶ The Daily Telegraph "Major pays high price for victory" 29 November 1994.

Gorman claimed for example, that she could not justify any increase in funds being given to Europe when extra money would make a significant difference to members of her Constituency.¹⁰⁷

A number of Euro-sceptics also argued that if anyone had claimed to be in any doubt about the implications for the UK of the Maastricht Treaty, they could not do so about this issue. Mrs Gorman expressed this position when she argued that, "the people of Britain did not fully understand the deep and profound issues of Maastricht, but they understand this issue. They understand that that their hard-earned money is being taken away from them and given to an institution, which we are told is riddled with fraud."¹⁰⁸ This position was supported by the former Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont, who argued that "value for money will always be difficult to achieve in Europe because... our money will be used to bribe the Greeks, Spaniards, Portuguese and Irish to believe in ever closer European union."¹⁰⁹

One other area of disquiet amongst Conservative MPs in relation to this Bill was their concern over Community spending. In other words, how the money was spent once it had been handed over. The Rt. Hon. Member John Biffen declared to the House that, "European spending is flawed in its conception and execution."¹¹⁰ What worried Conservative MPs was that in addition, there was a perceived lack of accountability over how the money was managed. John Biffen also argued for instance that "the most unnerving point of all," was that within the EC "there is an erosion of standards of fiscal responsibility which seems to be pervasive."¹¹¹

Traditional Conservative concerns over loss of sovereignty as a result of Britain's relationship with the EC re-emerged during this debate. Norman Lamont stated that "Europe is an issue that risks splitting the Conservative Party, because the Party as a whole has not yet accepted that our partners' ambitions are not compatible with Britain's continued ability to govern ourselves as an independent sovereign state."¹¹² John Wilkinson also used the debate on the Bill as an opportunity to reiterate his concerns over the overall aim of Britain's partners to create a United States of Europe. He argued that giving the EU more money would only accelerate this development. "It is plain to see... that it is a blue print for a United States of Europe. The more money we give - the Bill is an example - the nearer the day will come when we are part of a super-state without our fellow countrymen ever having had a chance to express their opinion."¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 1009. Similarly, Sir Teddy Taylor was reported to have asked how it was possible "to support extra funding for the EC when spending is so tight at home." *The Times* "Rebel Rouser Lamont" 29 November 1994.

¹⁰⁸ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 1011.

¹⁰⁹ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 962.

¹¹⁰ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 972.

¹¹¹ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 927.

¹¹² Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 962.

¹¹³ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 998.

Conclusion

The issue of Europe is not just about one issue. The European concept has meant different things to different people and at different times during the last three decades. During the 1971-2 European debates the issues of concern to Conservative MPs were clearly about the loss of sovereignty, preserving established links with the Commonwealth and increased food prices associated to the economic costs of joining the EEC. The SEA raised further issues of concern over the extension of trading arrangements, but more essentially, gave rise to concerns about the extension of QMV, which renewed old concerns surrounding the question of British sovereignty in the realm of domestic legislative affairs. The Maastricht treaty debates gave rise to the same concerns and new ones, which centred on conjecture of the impact of further moves towards political integration by other EC Member States in a number of domestic political arenas. The EFB represented a debate about the way in which the newly named European Union (EU) was financed and the way it was currently managed, which for some MPs constituted an amalgamation of concerns inherent in the Maastricht treaty. For others, it constituted a concern at a more localised level for their constituents. As can be seen from content analysis of Hansard of the European debates and interview data, Conservative Euro-sceptics did not possess universal concerns over Europe. The concerns of the Euro-sceptics were undoubtedly similar in many instances and yet simultaneously different. This divergence of views stemmed not from the particular view of certain sections of the Party, such as the right wing, but from a deeper foundation, that being an MP's own particular fundamental view of the way the country and the CPP should be both managed and portrayed. As was discussed in the previous chapter, such views arise from the basis of the fundamental ideological position of the individual MP.

On this basis it is clear that the European issue is a shallow one in that it represents the manifestation of a deeper symbolic adherence to other concerns about which Conservative MPs fundamentally care. It is in this respect that the European issue is divisive. As an issue in terms of rebellion however, it is a mechanism for uniting and harnessing the wider discontents of some of the Party's members on policy issues. For in the case of the Maastricht treaty, it touched on the sensitivities of a wider range of deeper issues of fundamental concern for the Euro-sceptics of the Party, whereby the European issue became a mechanism through which the more deeply held concerns of some Conservative MPs could be expressed. It could be argued in this light that the European issue itself is not that important, it is what it symbolises to Conservative MPs which is important. Fellow Party colleagues and Press headlines, which label the Party's Euro-sceptics as mavericks and troublemakers often, obscure conceptualisation of the European problem in this way. If Euro-scepticism within the Party is seen as the manifestations of more deeply felt fundamental objections to the way the Party is being managed, it may make it easier to understand what was occurring within the CPP over the European issue. In this respect the Party is not falling apart as has been observed by political observers, but is seeing the expression of a number of Members who are unhappy with the direction of the Party leadership and its management and, who by way of collective rebellion, demonstrated their concerns to their Party leadership along with a desire to

effect some change in order to press for their own vision of the way the Conservative Party and the country should be run. The impression of disunity this gives to the electorate cannot be underestimated however, since it was seen by Conservative MPs as the main, if not sole, cause of the Party's failure at the polls in the 1997 General Election. The effective management of intra-party factions, therefore, represents a significant challenge which future leaders of the CPP need to master in order to satisfy the electorate on the issue of unity.

The formal rebellions which subsequently occurred within the CPP over European policy, and specifically the rebellions of the 1990's, occurred on the issue of European legislation and not to the same extent on any other policy area during the 1990's firstly, because the Euro-sceptics had a greater opportunity to effect their aims thorough collective action.¹¹⁴ Secondly, the European issue was in effect a convenient banner to house the various concerns and ill feelings expressed by discontented members of the Party. It could in fact be argued that the European issue in the Conservative Party has always been a debate about this. One Conservative MP suggested to the author that the "battle in the Party is always a battle between the Small Tories and the Big Whigs."¹¹⁵ Under the leadership of Edward Heath in 1970-74, Norton also identified a number of policy areas where he observed an increase in intra-party dissension, which he described as the development of an alternate policy party view. Unlike Norton's conceptualisation, the emergence of an alternate party view on a range of issues did not manifest itself during the two European debates of the 1990's debates covered by this study, since it was essential for the Maastricht and EFB rebels, not to split away and form a new Party, because of their fundamental vision that they cherish of the way they believe the CPP should be run and govern the country, which ensured that their fight must take place within the party.

It is in this respect that the rebellions of the Party's Euro-sceptics must be seen as factional as is debated in the conclusion of this study. For it is as a result of being constrained and forced to stage their battles with the boundaries of the Party, that factional organised intra-party rebellions developed on a scale never previously witnessed in the CPP in the post-war period. It is to this development of intra-party groupings, which this study now turns.

¹¹⁴ This is discussed in the next chapter.

¹¹⁵ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994. He defined "Small Tories" as those concerned with free trade, minimal integration, and distrust of government. The "Big Whigs" he defined as people who are concerned with "grand schemes," "big apparatus and government."

CHAPTER 5

THE STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF CONSERVATIVE EURO-SCEPTIC PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION: INTRA-PARTY GROUPS AND INDEPENDENTS.

Introduction

The existence of Independents and group entities within the CPP is an anathema to the principles of Conservative Party politics and to many Conservative MPs. Their existence challenges the view that the CPP represents, or should represent, a unified body in agreement on Party policy and/or mode of political behaviour. What became clear after the debates over Britain's third application for membership of the EC was that the issue of 'Europe' would continue to plague the party leadership of the CPP in the form of intra-party opposition. During this period, the idea was fostered, that membership of, or attachment to, rebel party groups as a feasible method for Conservative MPs to oppose government policy. What is particularly interesting is the motivation of Conservative MPs to engage in collective activity in order to attempt defeat of proposed government legislation, especially when traditionally the occurrence of intra-party opposition to policy had previously been conducted on an individual level.¹ The decision of some of the party's Euro-rebels to oppose policy from within groups, highlighted the potential influence and pressure that could be brought to bear on government Bills, through group membership.

In order to fully appreciate and comprehend the nature and style of Conservative parliamentary opposition to the four case studies of this work it is necessary, therefore, for the reader to understand the structure and organisation of opposition undertaken by the Euro-sceptics. This chapter examines the structure and organisation of Conservative opposition, which it will be claimed, differentiates the Euro-sceptics' behaviour within the party from previously defined political tendencies, and makes it factional behaviour. An examination is conducted at three levels: firstly, at what level was opposition taken, that is, was an MP's opposition to the European debates conducted individually, through membership of a group, or, both? The second level of analysis identifies the structure and organisation of Euro-sceptic groups within the party in each of the case studies, and explains their emergence and development. Thirdly, the groups identified are examined as possible as factions within the CPP. Such analysis raises two further areas of discussion, which will be discussed in the final chapter. Firstly what need is there for organised opposition within the CPP towards policy, and what purposes do the various structural dynamics of groups serve? Secondly, would opposition to policy Bills be less effective if one or more of these factors were less prevalent?

¹ Norton identified a change in the conduct of intra-party dissent between the previous period of Conservative Government 1951-64 and the 1970 Parliament. He claimed Conservative opposition previously was limited to "verbal criticism and/or abstention from voting in the division." This is in contrast to the results he identified in the 1970-74 Parliament, where Conservative Members were prepared to oppose legislation in the division lobbies and their Government on the EC Bill on a vote of confidence. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 215.

Conservative opposition to the European Communities Bill 1971-2.

At the start of the 1970 Parliament, the existence of and participation in rebel group activity towards government policy was unfamiliar to many Conservative MPs, as arguably, was the notion of rebellion itself.² The emergence and development of rebel groups in the period 1971-2, over the issue of Britain's entry into the EC, was therefore, hindered by this lack of familiarity, especially when opposition to government policy was undertaken by a substantial section of the party's membership.³ Norton has also claimed that the 1970-74 Parliament was unique in the post-war period in terms of the scale of eruption of intra-party dissent.⁴ The Conservative MPs, who opposed government policy in this period, needed to familiarise themselves with the concept of rebellion against the official party line. In addition, if, as Norton suggested, Conservative dissidence on the scale that occurred in the 1970-74 parliament was an unprecedented occurrence within the CPP, then Conservative rebel MPs arguably had to find means for expressing their opposition, as no clear procedure for rebellion by a large part of the party existed in the post-war period.⁵ A second and perhaps more important consideration, was that, when opposition occurred, it was often sustained across a substantial part of a Bill which, according to Norton, continued for much of the Conservative period of government 1970-74.

This study, however, is concerned with Conservative intra-party rebellion over Britain's third application for membership of the EC. Previously, when Conservative opposition had taken place over government policy, it was undertaken individually. On the subject of EEC entry, Conservative opposition continued this pattern, but the period also witnessed the development of Conservative intra-party opposition groups in response to the government's EC Bill during the debates of 1971-2.

The 1970 group

A number of pro and anti European Conservative, Labour and cross party have been identified in this period on both sides of the issue of Britain's entry to the EEC.⁶ The Euro-sceptic groups of the

² Although Conservative rebellions had occurred previously, they had not occurred on such a scale.

³ Substantial is defined by reference to previous periods of dissent. See Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 212, for his analysis of the number of dissenting votes cast by Conservative MPs during 1945-70. See also Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" pp 104-5 for a Table of Conservative Parliamentary rebellions against European legislation between 1961-1995.

⁴ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 61, argued that "the incidence of dissent was without post-war precedent." He also stated that the EEC Bill "was not only opposed by a number of Conservative anti-marketters, but was persistently opposed by them, with one or more of them voting against it or its provisions in over eighty divisions" p 228.

⁵ It should be noted that this study is not suggesting that rebellion by backbench Conservative MPs, has never occurred within the party in the post-war period, as there are many examples, which show this is the case, the most notable being that of the Suez Group during 1956. Rather, this study contends, and is in agreement with Norton, that more Conservative MPs were prepared to rebel against Government policy, during the 1970-74 Parliament, which on many occasions threatened to defeat Government legislation

⁶ Kitzinger claimed that these three groups "were highly specific cause groups concentrating entirely on this one issue of EEC entry." Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 250. See also pp 232-234 for details on the ACML see (Note the ACML was set up in 1961 to oppose Macmillan's bid for entry) and for details on the 'Safeguards Campaign' pp 234-242 and the 'Keep Britain Out' (KBO) pp 245-251.

period included The Anti Common Market League (ACML), The Safeguards Campaign, The Conservative 1970 Group and The Keep Britain Out Organisation (KBO). The formal structures and activities of these groups are extensively documented by Kitzinger and are not duplicated by this study. This study is exclusively concerned with the Conservative Anti-Market 1970 group. It is suggested that this Group constituted the emergence of a Euro-sceptic faction within the CPP which, by virtue of its internal structure and the political activity of its members, cannot be classified as a political tendency. It should be noted, that as well as the emergence of a Conservative opposition group, a pro-European group "The Conservative group for Europe" also emerged within the party, which on the basis of existing literature appears to have been more organised in its activities than was its counterpart.⁷ This pro-group became an arm of the government in deploying tactics to influence Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs to support the government on the EC Bill.

The Conservative '1970 group,' formed in 1970, consisted exclusively of Conservative MPs who declared they were opposed over the government's intention to secure Britain's place within the European Communities.⁸ The group has been most commonly documented as an informal 'dining' group of Euro-rebels, often dubbed 'Derek's diner.' Such contentions are fair given that the most obvious feature of the group's activities was the informal meeting of members over dinner. It is worth noting at this point that the 1970 group did not affect organised activity and structured opposition to the EC Bill on the same scale that was carried out by members of the FSG during the Maastricht debates. This can be partly explained by the previous suggestion that Conservatives were accustomed to operating as individuals when opposing government policy. It is even easier to understand such reasoning with hindsight, given the later more organised committee style meetings of the FSG during the Maastricht debates. Many of the 1970 Group's members also perpetuated such perceptions. William Clarke, for instance, argued that the Euro-rebels of the period acted as independent individuals and suggested that the nature of some Conservative MPs was to be 'club-minded', displaying a willingness to engage in chats to discuss issues.⁹

This group, however, fulfilled a prominent role in influencing the way in which Conservative MPs opposed party policy and to simply analyse this group as a dining group of colleagues ignores the subtleties of the group's activities. Meetings of the 1970 group provided a forum, from which, more formalised Conservative rebel group procedures were formulated and nurtured. Neither of these analyses provides a satisfactory appreciation of what the rebels were trying to achieve by engaging

⁷ See Norton "Conservative Dissidents" p 66. He claimed the activities of this pro-European group included organised meetings, distributing literature and influencing Tory MP's to vote for entry, in which he argued, they were highly successful so that "by the 1971-72 session, the bulk of the parliamentary party had joined the group." See also Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" pp 160-163 for further details. This group was initially called the 'European Forum', which changed its name after the 1970 General Election.

⁸ According to Norton, membership of the group was open to anyone who had said they were opposed to entry. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 66.

⁹ Lord William Clarke of Kempston to author - September 1994.

in group activity. The meeting of like-minded Conservatives of the 1970 Group signalled to the rest of the party and themselves, that they constituted a rebel group on the issue and the fact that they were prepared as a collection of individuals to vote together in the division lobbies, demonstrated their potential threat to defeat government policy.

The public's perceptions, of the Euro-sceptics' motivations for rebellion, which was not necessarily accurate, may have subsequently affected the development, nature and structure of the group and its activities in the party.¹⁰ The fact that the group was regarded by observers of the period to constitute an informal body, may have actually suited the Euro-rebels and arguably, this may have been their intention, for at the time many potential rebels felt their participation in group meetings such as these, would engender the illusion that they were participating in covert meetings which could harm the party in some way. One MP of the period claimed that the party's whips were invited to meetings, "so it was not a conspiracy."¹¹ The 'informality' of their meetings, therefore, may have been strategic for, by meeting in such a manner, the rebels could easily dismiss claims that they represented an internal party faction. Kitzienger claimed that it was important for the Euro-rebels to "keep everything above board and escape charges of conspiracy against the leadership."¹² This would suggest that intra-party groupings at this time were regarded as heinous entities within the party.

The relaxed atmosphere of the 1970 group's meetings would have helped to generate the impression that they were a collection of individuals who, over dinner, engaged in discussion over their concerns. This is very different to the public perception that would materialise from a group of people huddled together in a committee room to discuss detailed plans to opposition, as occurred with the FSG over Maastricht. In the latter case, even the location of meetings would encourage the notion that members were part of a rebel group whose intention was to oppose the government and defeat its European policy. In the 1970's it would be far easier for an MP to disassociate themselves from claims of being part of a rebel group, as they could easily claim that they were having dinner with friends where discussion would naturally gravitate toward issues of common concern, such as Europe. A further advantage for the Conservative Euro-rebels of the period, was that it would have been easier for more timid Euro-sceptics to become associated with the group in that way. It was also easier for the group to expand their ranks, if they were seen as an informal group of Conservatives and not an organised faction.

Membership of this group is difficult to assess accurately, as various sources indicate different levels. One difficulty arises out of the informal nature of the group, as a number of rebels did not associate themselves as being a member even though they had attended a few meetings. Indeed a

¹⁰ The group's activities are discussed in the next chapter. Chapter 3 discussed various characterisations made about the CPP's Euro-sceptics.

¹¹ Sir Roger Moate MP to author - December 1994.

¹² Kitzienger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 162.

number of individuals who were interviewed, were reluctant to state that they were part of this group, whilst others were more comfortable and in some cases proud of their association. One source placed membership of the group as being between fifty and sixty Conservative members.¹³ This would appear plausible given the estimates of Euro-rebels in the party at the time identified by both Norton and Kitzinger.¹⁴ Derek Walker Smith has been most frequently cited as the group's leader and chairman of the group's meetings.¹⁵ A number of the group's more active members, defined in terms of their rebellion in the division lobbies, have been ascertained as leading individuals.¹⁶ These have been identified as Robin Turton, Enoch Powell, Neil Marten and John Biffen, three of whom had previously held Ministerial positions.¹⁷

Discrepancies of account exist as to the frequency of the group's meetings. Norton, for instance, claimed that the group met infrequently "approximately three times a year."¹⁸ This is in contrast to the information obtained by this study which suggests that meetings occurred on a more frequent basis. John Farr, for example, stated that the group "had a tremendous number of meetings: going back to the seventies, we would have meetings, possibly late at nights, to define our line on one particular subject or another."¹⁹ Differences in these accounts may lie in identification of the group's membership, as Norton claimed that more frequent meetings were convened between the group's more active membership during 1971-2.²⁰

What is clear is that a group of Conservative Euro-sceptics, who can be identified as an inner group of the wider 1970 group existed, and organised informally as a group to effect opposition to the EC Bill during its debates of 1971-2. Whether there was a coherent aim between the Conservative rebels of the group is less clear. Some of the rebels wanted to defeat the Bill, others were happy to merely make their opposition known to the House in the October vote of principle, and thereafter, to abide by the decision of the House that had approved entry. Norton claimed that the main purpose of the 1970 Group was "to demonstrate to the party how many Members were antagonistic to British entry into the EEC."²¹ Norton also suggested that during the enabling legislation of the Bill in 1972, it was only probably the aim of one Conservative rebel, (Enoch Powell) to defeat the

¹³ Lord Clarke of Kempston to author - September 1994.

¹⁴ Norton claimed a maximum membership at one time of approximately 56 Members. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 67.

¹⁵ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 66 and as advised by a number of MPs in interview.

¹⁶ Norton claimed that the most persistent anti-marketers in the division lobbies was Enoch Powell who, in the 1971-72 session, voted against the EEC Bill and related motions in a total of 89 divisions. He was closely followed by John Biffen (78 divisions), Neil Marten (69 divisions). He identified thirteen other Conservative MPs (nine if exclude Ulster Unionist MPs) voted against in ten or more divisions of the Bill. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 80.

¹⁷ In an interview with the author – September 1994, John Farr identified Enoch Powell, Robin Turton (also identified to the author by Lord William Clarke of Kempston) Neil Marten & Derek Walker-Smith. See also Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 67.

¹⁸ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 66.

¹⁹ Interview with author - September 1994.

²⁰ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 67.

²¹ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 66.

Government on this Bill, where others would have been satisfied with securing amendments to the Bill. Alternatively, some of them may have been content to be able to constrain the development of future Conservative Governments' European policy. If this is the case, it may offer another explanation as to why intra-party opposition was not as organised in the 1970's as the FSG was over Maastricht. It would also appear to verify the claim of chapter three, that Conservative MPs of the period possessed divergent aims and concerns in respect of this Bill.²²

It is clear however, that some Conservative MPs who wished to defeat the Bill were prepared to engage in collective action with other Euro-sceptic colleagues to try to defeat it, whilst others, were content in making their objections publicly known, and did not continue their opposition into the division lobbies. To suggest therefore that the Euro-sceptic opposition had collapsed by January 1972 is incorrect.²³ It had not collapsed, it was merely that some individuals had fulfilled their own aims in respect of this Bill after the October 1971 vote. To have continued engaging in collective action against the Bill just because their colleagues were doing so, would have been pointless, because their own aims had been fulfilled. There were, therefore, a number of Conservative anti-marketeers who were happy to make a statement of opposition in principle. As will be seen in Chapter seven, it was not just the motives of the Euro-sceptics that in some cases changed in respect of this Bill affecting the different levels of opposition throughout all stages of the debate, for the level of constraints imposed by the party machinery also changed. On Second reading for example, the prospect of defeating the government was very real. The labour pro-marketers had started taking their Party whip, and many Conservative anti-marketers, therefore, felt they had to do the same. This effectively diminished the size of the Conservative rebellion on this vote.²⁴

Level of organisation

It is possible to pinpoint some areas of group organisation. In the first instance the 1970 group existed as a formal entity in that it was registered with the whips.²⁵ As already indicated the group had a number of leading individuals who undertook different roles within the group in order to mount an effective Conservative Euro-sceptic opposition to the EC Bill. One rebel MP even suggested that these leaders represented an 'anti-market faction' within the party.²⁶ Leadership of the group here was defined by one of the rebel MPs as "by way of oral argument and ability to present the arguments clearly to the House."²⁷ The task of co-ordinating the rebels was undertaken by Neil Marten and John Biffen, who operated an informal whipping system for the group during

²² Norton "Conservative Dissidents" p 66.

²³ Opinion of Political Editor of The Times, in The Times 21 January 1971, quoted in Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 72.

²⁴ Kitzinger suggested that the Labour Party considered the unpopularity of the Government at the time was discrediting the Common Market. He stated that, Labour's Chief Whip was reported to have claimed that "I would do anything short of anarchy to bring this government down."

Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 386.

²⁵ Norton P "Conservative Dissidents" p 66.

²⁶ Confidential Conservative anti-marketeer to author - November 1994.

²⁷ Confidential Conservative anti-marketeer to author - November 1994.

the debates.²⁸ These activities were useful for both the rebels, who were able to assess their own numbers at each stage of the debate, and for the government, as figures of likely rebels were duly supplied by the group's whips to the government whips.

At the meetings between the more active members of the 1970 Group, strategies and tactics were discussed to defeat the Bill. One MP claimed that meetings were held on the evenings prior to a main debate on the EC Bill, where the rebels discussed 'answers and information' for the next day's debate. According to one rebel these were then circulated amongst rebel members so that "those of us who were speaking could get the benefit of that ammunition."²⁹ Meetings such as these often continued late into the night to enable the rebels to prepare their arguments on a particular aspect of the Bill for the debate.³⁰ Kitzinger claimed that Neil Marten and Derek Walker-Smith also "shared the assignments of covering between them all the party committees, putting down hostile questions to Ministers, using question time as a platform for arguments conducted in the form of supplementaries, and keeping in touch with the anti-market groups outside the House."³¹ This all suggests that a reasonable level of organisation was prevalent between the more active members of the group.³² The recollections of one rebel MP do not support this view, however, for he does not recall tactics being discussed so much as who might be susceptible to persuasion to vote against. He stated that "looking back - he was surprised at how "uncoordinated" they were, and he claimed that he "was left very much alone by fellow opponents of entry."³³

A telling factor in determining the level of group organisation is found through an examination of the existence of a moral support network, as this suggests that communication and bonding may have occurred between MPs, coupled with a degree of inter-reliance. This factor was largely absent among group members during these debates, and may be due to the fact that the notion of collective activity was new and in some cases an 'uncomfortable' concept for many of the Conservative rebels of the period. The low level of formal collective activity is important as this may help explain why the Euro-sceptic rebels of 1971-2 failed to influence any aspect of the Bill and why their opposition never reached the level of organisation achieved by the FSG during the Maastricht debates.³⁴ One rebel MP in fact suggested that it was a major disadvantage at the time that the rebels were not part of an organised group as "it added to the stress of it all, not being made to feel part of a group."³⁵

²⁸ As advised by a number of MPs of the period in interview. See also Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 79.

²⁹ Sir John Farr to author - September 1994.

³⁰ Sir John Farr to author - September 1994.

³¹ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 162.

³² Sir Richard Body MP (October 1995) and Sir John Farr (September 1994) both stated to the author that the activities of the Conservative rebels were organised in this period in planning opposition to the Bill.

³³ Confidential Conservative anti-marketeer to author - November 1994.

³⁴ Norton's claim that Heath was determined to get the Bill passed, may also have contributed to the rebel's failure. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 226-227.

³⁵ Confidential Conservative anti-marketeer to author - November 1994.

For the less active 'dining club' members³⁶ of the group, the dinner meetings as well as brief discussions over coffee, served as a forum for sharing of opinions on the entry issue. These meetings were useful to the extent that they facilitated the development of opinion and/or crystallisation of an MP's possible stance on the Bill in the division lobby. The 1970 Group of Conservative Euro-sceptics, however, still acted as a potential and realistic check to the government's ratification of the EC Bill. Kitzinger claimed that, "the party organisation had to think beyond any particular issue, however important, and beyond any one party leader, however successful. It had to steer a path between strong action against the anti-market Conservatives MPs and tolerance of the anti-market arguments being propagated at the expense of party funds; between bringing pressure to bear on MPs through their local associations and not damaging relations between Conservatives at the constituency level."³⁷

If this is the case, I suggest that one role of contemporary party leaderships is the management of opposing factions within their party in order to pass their policy agenda through the House. Party leaderships have a tremendous task to balance all their activities, especially when in government, and in view of this, the 1970 group should not be maligned merely as an intra-party opposition group that sought to harm the government. In any party it is unusual to expect total agreement between members over policy, however, the historical attitude of the press, the CPP and the country has condemned the development of opposing views of policy within the CPP. To obtain such a level of unity is an impossible task since, as suggested in Chapter three, a Conservative MP will have a number of competing interests which affect his own decision making process and which may or may not be similar to colleagues' interests on issues. To deny, therefore, that group opposition should be allowed to exist is unnatural. The existence of such views should exist for democratic arguments if nothing else. Indeed Kitzinger claimed that in respect of the 1970 period and debate over re-entry that if the "anti-market campaign had not existed, the government and European movement ought to have invented them."³⁸ He went on to state that, as it was, "the balance of campaign was unequal, and to have had the balance more equal would have thrown grave doubt on the vitality of British democracy."³⁹

The SEA and the Conservative European Reform Group (CERG).

Group activity amongst Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs in the 1980's emerged in the form of a Conservative backbench group on Europe. This group, called the CERG, was established in 1979 shortly after the general election and was an informal group, formed out of the general concerns of some Conservative MPs over Britain's developing relations with the EC. At its creation, the group had no specific aim in terms of preventing ratification of any particular piece of European

³⁶ Defined as those who either voted against only on the vote of principle October 1971, or did not vote at all against the Bill throughout the debates, but contemplated doing so.

³⁷ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 164.

³⁸ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 250.

³⁹ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 250.

legislation. The general aim of the group according to one member was to check the acceleration of the “move towards Brussels going too far, too fast,” and to ensure that “essential British interests” were protected.⁴⁰ The issue of the Common Agricultural Policy was another area of concern to the group. One Conservative MP for instance stated that the group's agenda was that they “had decided that they were staying in the Common Market and therefore the issues were to get rid of CAP.” In this respect the main purpose of the group became the supply of information on European issues to Conservative MPs.

Concern groups have always existed within the CPP. The formation of a Conservative concern group over European policy during the 1980's may have been less easy for the party leadership to dismiss given the party's historical and controversial record of intra-party dissension over Tariff Reform, the Corn Laws, and the debates in the 1960's and 1970's over Britain's entry into the EEC. The significance of the formation of this group is more marked if the previous decade of an increase in Conservative parliamentary dissidence is considered. The formation of the CERG must have been significant to the party since the group was summoned to see the Prime Minister within two days of its formation, where according to one member, the Prime Minister sought to assure members of this group that she was as Euro-sceptical as they were, claiming that they were all working together and asked if, as a group, they would not cause any trouble.⁴¹ By doing this, the Prime Minister in effect signalled the importance and potential influence of such a group to the rest of the CPP.

The prime function of the CERG was to advise Conservative MPs on European issues. In this manner, one MP claimed that the group behaved as a watchdog over the government's European policy decisions.⁴² In this respect the group may have been acting, therefore, as a check or constraint on government policy making on Europe. The group also played a useful role in assisting the Prime Minister in her negotiations with other European Heads of State. One MP suggested for instance that, Mrs Thatcher was able to demonstrate the depth of Britain's seriousness regarding relations with their EC partners, to her counterparts, by the very virtue of the group's existence.⁴³ This same MP believes the Prime Minister may even have encouraged the group's existence for this very reason.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

⁴¹ Warren Hawksley MP to author - September 1995.

⁴² Confidential Conservative MP to author.

⁴³ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

⁴⁴ One argument exists that the CPP ousted Mrs Thatcher because of her views and policies on Europe. Others argue, in addition, that it was because of her general unpopularity in the country, the poll tax and the views of many Conservative MPs that she would be unable to secure another Conservative victory at a General election. If the former argument was the case, this may indicate that the tide of pro-Europeanism was on the increase in the CPP in the early 1990's. If this is true, then the Euro-Sceptics of the party may have become isolated and faced a tougher environment in which to wage their battles.

Arguably, Mrs Thatcher may have needed to demonstrate to the Group and her counterparts in the EC, her European credentials as she had only recently become Prime Minister in 1979 and had had little time to prove her position.

Annual meetings were held between the CERG and the Prime Minister to discuss European issues and more frequent meetings were occasionally convened. Such incidents may have subdued the level of dissent within the party, for these meetings demonstrated to the CPP that the Prime Minister was prepared to listen to backbench concerns within her parliamentary party. Norton suggested that one reason for the incidence of dissent in the CPP during the early 1970's was the leadership style of Edward Heath, who failed to engage in such activities and dismissed the concerns of Conservative backbenchers.⁴⁵ As the term of her leadership increased, Mrs Thatcher's style of leadership arguably altered to a more authoritarian one.⁴⁶ One example of this change occurred in her dealings with the CERG. One member of the group, for instance, commented that "the meetings used to last about an hour but that Mrs Thatcher never listened to what they said anyway, as she did all of the talking."⁴⁷ Another MP stated that "as with so many things I noticed over the years, that the amount of talking we did and the amount of talk she did started to alter. Until the last one we had...she just told us what it was, which rather defeated the object of such a meeting."⁴⁸ If, as Norton claimed, the leadership style of Edward Heath was the prime cause of dissension in the rise of Conservative intra-party dissidence in the 1970's, which ultimately led to his displacement as leader of the Party,⁴⁹ then, arguably, a similar incident occurred with Mrs Thatcher's displacement from the party leadership on 28 November 1990.

Structure & Organisation

The CERG was established under the appointed chairmanship of Jonathan Aitken, and the joint leaderships of Mr Aitken and Sir Teddy Taylor.⁵⁰ The group was managed and organised by Sir Teddy Taylor who acted as Secretary to the group. Membership of the group is difficult to determine as recollections of many MPs had faded by the time of interview. One member of the group claimed that within a week of its inception, the group initially numbered around 70 Conservative MPs.⁵¹

In terms of organised activity the group did not plan strategies to defeat the SEA, as did the FSG during the 1990's over the Maastricht Bill. The group did, however, co-ordinate activity between those Conservative MPs who were concerned about European legislation.⁵² The group held ad-hoc

⁴⁵ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes. Backbench Independence in the 1980's" p 37, Ed Norton, P "Parliament in the 1980's" Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1985. (Hereinafter, Norton, P "Behavioural Changes. Backbench Independence in the 1980's").

⁴⁶ This is discussed later in this Chapter.

⁴⁷ Sir Roger Moate MP to author - December 1994.

⁴⁸ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

⁴⁹ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes Backbench Independence in the 1980's" p 38.

⁵⁰ Both Nicholas Bonsor and Hugh Fraser were also cited by MPs of the period to the author as leaders of this group

⁵¹ Known members of the CERG identified by MPs of the period include: Jonathan Aitken, Sir Teddy Taylor, Sir Richard Body, Sir John Farr, Sir Nicholas Bonsor, Sir Peter Fry, John Townend, Hugh Fraser, Sir George Gardiner, Tony Marlow, Sir Roger Moate and Neil Hamilton.

⁵² Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995. Discussion over the tabling of amendments to the Bill was carried out. Sir Richard Body MP to author - October 1995.

meetings to discuss European issues of concern as they arose in the House, and the numbers of Conservative MPs who attended these meetings was higher than at those, which occurred during the Fresh Start meetings during the Maastricht debates. Interestingly however, the numbers of Conservative MPs who subsequently voted against the government during the SEA debates was substantially lower than the number of Conservative MPs from the FSG, who voted against the Maastricht Bill.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy may have been the fact that the group did not specifically organise to challenge any particular piece of legislation and was merely regarded as an advisory organisation. On this basis, more Conservative MPs may have been prepared to attend meetings, as a source of information on issues. MPs might also have been more prepared to attend meetings, which were not regarded by observers as meetings of 'maverick' MPs whose aim was to bring down the policy platform of the party leadership. As an informal concern group, the CERG was also not considered a serious threat to Mrs Thatcher's leadership of the party and her policy agenda, in particular because many Conservative MPs of the period were in favour of the creation of a single market.⁵³ Each MP decided independently how to vote against the Bill and the group was not as well organised in effecting group opposition as were the anti-Maastricht campaigns.⁵⁴ What concerned some MPs and affected the way they voted, for instance, was the proposed changes to the voting structure in the EC. Neil Hamilton for instance feared that "changing the voting system would lead to a greater momentum for centralisation." Also, as one later Maastricht rebel MP claimed, "people who supported the SEA could have had no idea that its provisions would be twisted and altered in so blatant a way by the Commission and the Court."⁵⁵

During the passage of the Single European Act through parliament, meetings of the CERG were helpful to the more ardent Euro-sceptics of the period as they served as a forum for the discussion of those MPs' concerns and opinions.⁵⁶ One member commented that the group would meet in this capacity late in the evening after the 10pm close in the House of Commons, to discuss and debate European issues of concern, such as EC directives, as they arose during the debates.⁵⁷ Throughout the passage of the SEA through the Commons, the group met regularly and, on occasions, these meetings were attended by Euro-sceptics from the opposition parties.⁵⁸ John Farr, an 'anti-marketeer' of the 1970's did not attend the meetings but said the group always had an 'agenda', which was always circulated to Conservative members. The group existed until the late 1980's as an information unit.

⁵³ Neil Hamilton MP to author – June 1996.

⁵⁴ Neil Hamilton MP to author – June 1996.

⁵⁵ Michael Spicer MP to author - January 1995.

⁵⁶ Defined as those who voted against the SEA.

⁵⁷ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995.

⁵⁸ Notable attendees included Peter Jessel (Liberal) Ron Leighton, Douglas Jay and Peter Shore (Labour).

The formation of a Conservative Euro-sceptic group in opposition to the Maastricht Treaty

The passage of the Maastricht treaty through the House of Commons in 1992-93 resulted in a change in the nature, style and conduct of Conservative Parliamentary Party politics. This change was largely effected through the formation and activities of an organised intra-party Group within the party, whose aim was to prevent ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. More so than with EC entry or the SEA, the emergence of this Group, 'The Fresh Start Group' marks a distinct move away from the previous behavioural type 'tendencies' within the Parliamentary Party, to the development of an organised faction. This section examines the evolution, structural dynamics and aims of the FSG, which it will later be claimed delineates the emergence of an issue faction within the CPP. The motivations of Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs who chose to act as a group in their opposition to the Maastricht Treaty are also examined.

The evolution of the FSG within the CPP is most commonly believed by observers to have occurred following an Early Day Motion (EDM), from which the group took its name, and which called for a 'Fresh Start' on Europe in June 1992. The purpose of this EDM, tabled and developed by Euro-sceptic MP, Michael Spicer, was to persuade the leadership of the CPP to call for a 'Fresh Start' on Europe.⁵⁹ Of the eighty-four Conservative MPs who signed this EDM, approximately fifty either did not become members of the FSG, or expressed no further opposition to the Maastricht Treaty in the division lobbies.⁶⁰ This decrease from those who initially signed the EDM but did not express any further dissent, can be explained by three factors. Firstly, the timing of the EDM was tabled in Parliament immediately after the Danish people, had rejected the Maastricht treaty in a referendum on 2 June 1992, which had the effect of securing the highest possible number of sympathetic Conservative signatures to the EDM.⁶¹ In addition, many people may have signed this EDM shortly after the Danish referendum under the mistaken impression that the Maastricht Treaty was dead.

Secondly, the nature of the EDM process in Parliament lends itself to attracting more support amongst Conservative MPs than would occur if a vote were held on the issue. This, as Mrs Gorman stated, is because "there is a kind of routine on these EDM's: you tend to sign those of people you like and trust even if you don't always entirely agree with them. It's a form of camaraderie in the House which binds people to you so that when you want some support they feel they owe you one back."⁶² Mistakes of course can be made as was evidenced by the signature of James Hill who was reported to have signed the EDM by mistake.⁶³ A third explanation is that the pressure from the whips to conform could have been too much for some MPs to withstand when the issue became a

⁵⁹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 53.

⁶⁰ For a list of signatories see Baker, D, Gamble, A and Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions?" p 166.

⁶¹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" See p 52.

⁶² Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 53. She claimed a number of 'Fresh Start' MPs had helped support their fight at home by assisting the anti-Maastricht campaigns in Denmark.

⁶³ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 54. She stated that James Hill MP is a pro-European of the CPP and signed the EDM in error.

Bill to be debated and voted on in the House. Baker, Gamble and Ludlum for instance claimed that “most of the back-bench signatories of the Fresh Start manifesto appear to have melted away once the whips got cracking.”⁶⁴

If the FSG was formally created after this EDM, its true origins can be traced back further. Prior to the formation of the Group, three informal alliances of Conservative MPs existed who held similar political persuasions on European policy. These alliances operated loose and informal structures, although each alliance contained a leader. Informal alliances such as these most frequently materialise in party politics as a result of chance chats and conversations between MPs. “It is mostly over food, and occasionally a drink, that you gauge the spectrum of feelings about an issue and find out who are your likely allies. From such chats, alliances can often occur between MPs of similar political persuasions on one or more issues.”⁶⁵ Such alliances, arguably, typify the behavioural characteristics of political tendencies within the Parliamentary Party as identified in Chapter one.

The first identifiable alliance was the Bruges Group, founded in 1989 by Bill Cash, MP. The Bruges Group was known to be sympathetic to the Thatcherite view following Mrs Thatcher's Bruges Speech in 1988.⁶⁶ This informal Group of Thatcherites continued what they believed to be her cause within the arena of the backbench committee on European affairs. By the early 1990's, the Bruges Group had arguably become out-dated with no clearly defined role. Bill Cash claimed that after Mrs Thatcher had been removed from office, he believed his role had become one of acting as a 'safeguard' on Europe for the CPP.⁶⁷ By acting in this role Bill Cash had staked his credentials as a Euro-sceptic within the CPP. With the approach of the Maastricht debates Bill Cash claimed that the Bruges Group “decided to re-group” to form the FSG.”⁶⁸ A second loose network of Euro-sceptics emerged from the CERG of the 1980's, which centred on Sir Teddy Taylor MP. By the early 1990's this Group had also lost much of its political significance. The third alliance in existence prior to the Maastricht Bill was Michael Spicer's so-called 'dining club' of Euro-Sceptics. Prominent figures within this Group included James Cran and Christopher Gill, both previous members of the backbench committee on European affairs.

With the impending passage of the Maastricht treaty through the Commons, these three alliances merged to form the FSG. The merger of informal intra-party alliances is one manner in which organised groupings can emerge within a party. Chats between MPs, aligned to informal alliances, can sow the seeds of dissent in any party. Mrs Gorman claimed that “most movements... occur

⁶⁴ Baker, D, Gamble, A and Ludlam, S “Whips or Scorpions?” p 155.

⁶⁵ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 42.

⁶⁶ Margaret Thatcher laid out her vision of the further development of the EU at The College of Europe in Bruges 1988. See “The Downing Street Years” pp 742-746, for details of this speech.

⁶⁷ Out of this alliance Bill Cash allegedly “organised a coup” to replace the then chairman of the Conservative European Committee of backbench affairs, Sir Anthony Meyer. Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

⁶⁸ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

spontaneously in different groups of people getting together to express similar concerns... from those various groups they extend feelers into other colleagues...then the thing coalesced into one group.”⁶⁹ In order for collective action between MPs of a party to develop however, a catalyst is needed as an impetus for the mobilisation of like-minded individuals into a cohesive grouping. In this instance three inter-related catalysts occurred which led to the formation of the FSG.

In November 1990, Mrs Thatcher was sacked as leader of the Conservative Party. At that time, Mrs Thatcher was regarded by many of the Euro-Sceptics of the CPP as the best possible leader to manage European policy and safeguard British interests. This is illustrated by the fact that while she was Prime Minister, opposition by Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs to European policy was relatively muted, although, no European debate, including the SEA had arguably, been deemed to be of such constitutional significance as the Maastricht Treaty. With Mrs Thatcher's departure, a number of the Euro-Sceptics in the party regarded John Major as their best candidate on Europe.⁷⁰ Their choice may also have been influenced by Mrs Thatcher's endorsement of John Major as her replacement. In an attempt to unite the party, John Major was portrayed as a 'Euro-sceptic' right from the start of his electoral campaigns for the party leadership. Baker, Gamble and Ludlum argued that “the Prime Minister was launched as the Cabinet's 'greatest Euro-sceptic' on 29th October 1990 when over 200 backbenchers flooded into Committee Room 14 to hear him give the speech of his life.”⁷¹ As time passed the Euro-Sceptics of the CPP gradually began to doubt their Prime Minister both in respect of his European policy and his European credentials. As a consequence of this, Conservative MPs of a Euro-sceptic persuasion “began sounding each other out.”⁷²

The second catalyst to occur was the general election of 1992, which resulted in a Conservative Government majority of 21. The Group formed precisely because the newly elected Government had a small majority.⁷³ The Euro-Sceptics in the CPP knew that they had potentially sufficient numbers, to challenge and alter the policy platform of their Government on Europe. High Government majorities arguably act as defusers of intra-party opposition since protests by rebellious MPs over Government policy are unlikely to have any real effect on the ratification of government policy. When parliamentary majorities are small, dissent by a relatively small number

⁶⁹ Teresa Gorman MP to author - November 1994. She also explained in her book precisely how such a chance meeting could work when she described her encounter with Christopher Gill and Michael Spicer outside the “Whips inner sanctum” in May 1992. She made “a chance pro-remark to get their opinions on the treaty,” and discovered that they were in fact sceptical about quite a lot of the treaty's implications. Subsequently, she was invited to a meeting at the Carlton Club organised by Mr Gill, to find out the extent of opposition among Conservative MPs over Maastricht. Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 44.

⁷⁰ Rupert Allason supported this view - Interview with author - November 1994.

⁷¹ Baker, D, Gamble, A and Ludlam, S “Whips or Scorpions?” p 157.

⁷² Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 52.

⁷³ On the first Sunday afternoon following the general election, four MPs (Bill Cash, Michael Spicer, Christopher Gill, and Nicholas Budgen) who formed the nucleus of the FSG met to discuss the prospect of organising opposition to the Maastricht Treaty. Nicholas Budgen MP to author - September 1994.

of MPs can have a noticeable affect. Previously, substantial Conservative majorities during the 1980's had meant that the number of MPs prepared to rebel over European legislation was not great enough to cause a problem for the Government.⁷⁴ In Chapter seven, it is argued that Mrs Thatcher's ability to command high parliamentary majorities, may have checked substantial Conservative opposition on the SEA, which was passed without amendment.

The final catalyst was the imminent passage of the Maastricht Treaty through Parliament. It was precisely because the Euro-sceptics believed that the Maastricht treaty if implemented, would be detrimental to the British constitution and British society, that so many Conservative MPs decided either to oppose the Bill, or declare their concerns in order to procure assurance from their Government that the Treaty would not adversely affect the UK. Norton has also argued that “for intra-party dissent to occur there usually has to be some legislation or issue to precipitate it.”⁷⁵ Arguably, this debate represented the most important 'constitutional' debate in the history of Parliament on Europe, since the debates in Parliament over British entry in 1972.⁷⁶ One rebel claimed that “if it hadn't been for Maastricht the Group would not have existed.”⁷⁷ The Euro-Sceptics of the CPP were extremely concerned about the implications of the Maastricht Treaty. It was their belief that they had support within the CPP, the party in the country and ultimately the British public, that motivated some of them to join together as a Group to prevent the ratification of the Maastricht Bill. Another rebel MP argued that organised opposition arose amongst the Euro-sceptics of the party because the political temperature within the party over European policy had changed. According to one rebel, “the change was because there was a change in public concern over Europe and the Government was in the position of a small majority.”⁷⁸ These three catalysts lit the fuse for the three pre-Maastricht informal alliances to join forces and coalesce into one single group. Although the three alliances remained visible within the group after their union, they came together because it was expedient for them to do so, in order to effect their aim of defeating the Maastricht Bill.

Membership of the Fresh Start Group:

Membership of the group consisted exclusively of a number of Conservative MPs, who persistently opposed the Maastricht Treaty in the division lobbies. It is difficult to determine accurately the size of the FSG as its membership fluctuated throughout the Maastricht debates, both in terms of identities and numbers. One rebel member claimed that “throughout the eighteen months of our

⁷⁴ In contrast to this view, Norton argued that dissent is “assumed” minimal within parties when majorities are high, so those dissenters can make a stand without jeopardising their Governments authority to pass legislation. Norton, P “Behavioural Changes Backbench Independence in the 1980's” p 32. As will be shown by the Conservative Euro-sceptics during the Maastricht debates, these rebels wished to deny their Government a majority on this Bill.

⁷⁵ Norton, P “Conservative Dissidents” p 222.

⁷⁶ Although some MPs would now claim that the SEA had immense constitutional implications, if not more.

⁷⁷ Sir Trevor Skeet MP to author - November 1994.

⁷⁸ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995.

campaign the magic number of twenty six cropped up time and again but membership was fluid.”⁷⁹ John Whittingdale is one MP who was initially regarded as a member of the FSG but who left shortly afterwards. Another Conservative MP stated that a number of members “effectively dropped out at the crucial vote on Maastricht.”⁸⁰ Rupert Allason MP was a late convert to the group. This fluidity of membership can be partly explained by Mrs Gorman's account that membership of the group “varied as some lost their nerve about opposing the Government, while others found their resolve strengthened.”⁸¹ Another explanation for fluctuating levels of membership may be the fact that a number of Conservative MPs, who ultimately voted with the Government over Maastricht, attended Fresh Start meetings solely to obtain information.

A further difficulty in accurately determining the membership of the group was the reticence of some of the Maastricht Euro-sceptic MPs in commenting on the Group.⁸² During the Maastricht debates, the need for secrecy surrounding the group's activities was paramount to ensure that their tactical plans would not be scuppered. Even at the time of the interviews, referred to in this study, after the Maastricht debates were concluded 'secrecy' regarding the activities and identities of the Group remained in some cases closely guarded.⁸³ The decision of many members of the FSG to keep their activities secret must be viewed as a tactical manoeuvre at the time, in order to keep the Government guessing as to what they would do next, as well as avoiding subsequent reprisals from the government for their rebellion.

A final hindrance in determining the size of the Group is the reluctance of some MPs to state that the FSG was a group. For some Euro-sceptics, the idea of being part of a rebel Group, that existed specifically to challenge the Government, was too difficult to reconcile with their own notions of party loyalty. Such perceptions were based on the premise that, although some MPs engaged in collective activity, they saw themselves as independents.⁸⁴ This was particularly relevant for some of the newer members of Parliament, although Walter Sweeney was a hard core member. Their beliefs were based on the fact that no formal membership existed, and compulsory membership was

⁷⁹ Gorman, T “The Bastards” pp 62-3.

⁸⁰ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

⁸¹ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 63.

⁸² Although Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs were generally more willing to freely comment on their activities after the EFB debate, there was not an increase in the numbers who were prepared to comment on the activities of the FSG. Whether or not an MP commented on these activities was based on his/her own stand as to whether the activities of the group should remain secret.

⁸³ The time scale when interviews were conducted may have influenced the willingness of some MPs to talk about the group. Of those interviewed, the MPs who lost the Conservative whip over the EFB in November 1994, were more openly prepared to comment on the FSG. These MPs may have been more willing to talk because their subsequent need for 'positive respectability' as a group of eight increased when they lost the Conservative whip. It could be argued, however, that, given the amount of bad press received by the FSG during the Maastricht days, the need for positive publicity for the Conservative Euro-sceptics may have been equally important for them.

⁸⁴ Iain Duncan-Smith claimed that members of the FSG were a “very strange group in the sense that they are all individuals and different people...who are all intelligent and determined people. You can not tell them what to do. They will actually approach it in their own way.” Interview with author - November 1994.

not a requirement for meetings. Such comments, however, do not refute the claim of this thesis, that the FSG constitutes an organised group. As can be seen with a number of groups today, formal and compulsory membership is not a necessary factor in determining whether the entity in question is a group, nor is it even a contingent factor. What can be said is that as a group's level of organisation rises, the importance of formal membership may increase. The FSG's fluid membership is still compatible with the existence of a group entity, however, as there was some continuation of beliefs, objectives and methodology for opposition.

Many of the members who stated that no formal membership existed, were inconsistent in their voting trends during the debates, supporting both the FSG and the Government. Some of these MPs were of the 1992 intake who may have been unsure of their own ability to sustain opposition to the Bill in the division lobbies, whilst others were generally sceptical about their own abilities to oppose the Bill consistently. Finally, some MPs had something to gain or lose personally by not opposing. These MPs also preferred to be labelled 'Euro-sceptic' or 'Euro-realist' as opposed to 'Euro-rebel'. This may indicate that these members were less committed in their opposition to the Maastricht Bill than were some of their colleagues.

The FSG's lack of formal admission criteria was also cited as evidence by some Euro-sceptics that it was not a group. The holding of Euro-sceptic concerns over the Maastricht Bill was, however, a contingent admission criterion. Membership of the FSG was ultimately defined by an MP's voting behaviour in the division lobbies on the Bill. One member of the group claimed that "the only thing that matters in Parliament is whether you're prepared to vote."⁸⁵ Mrs Gorman has identified twenty-eight members of the CPP as members of the FSG. A further two Conservative MPs stated that they were members of Fresh Start (See Table 3.1 Chapter three). If voting is taken as the determinant of membership then on third reading of the Bill on 20 May 1993, forty Conservative MPs voted against the Bill, a further six abstained. The maximum membership of the FSG can therefore be deemed to be forty, although four of these MPs indicated to the author that they regarded themselves as Independent members of the party as well as members of the FSG.

Norton in 'Conservative Dissidents' correctly asserted that a lot of intra-party dissent is carried out behind the scenes, where an MP's voting behaviour in the division lobbies, represents an extreme visible form of dissidence.⁸⁶ Norton suggested that a scale of dissent can be identified with opposition in the lobbies appearing as the extreme. In the case of the FSG rebels, a lot of organised dissent in terms of planning strategies and tactics was conducted behind closed doors. The FSG however employed all levels of dissent, both visible and invisible, in opposing the Maastricht Bill. They also employed the extreme measure of opposing the Government in the division lobbies. This action was regarded as vital. If Norton is followed, it could be argued that because the FSG immediately opposed the Government in the lobbies over Maastricht, all other stages of dissent had

⁸⁵ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

⁸⁶ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 27-28.

previously been engaged, and the Group formed and organised in this way only because all other stages of dissent had failed. In the case of the FSG, opposition to the Maastricht Bill in the lobbies was not a final stage in the rebellion of the Euro-sceptics to the Bill. Because it was deemed to be the determinant of group membership, the way an MP voted in the division lobbies was of paramount importance to the group. As one member claimed, “the current battle on Europe is not what you think or indeed what you would like to say. It’s a question of what you do.”⁸⁷

Group Organisation and Structure

Leader

The FSG had a chairman and a number of leading individuals. Some MPs believed there was a specific leader of the Group, whilst others stated that a system of collective leadership was in operation. Most of the Euro-sceptic MPs who were interviewed agreed that the FSG operated a system of collective leadership with no one specific leader. A plausible explanation for these differences in recollection may be because the group contained a number of leading individuals and each member pursued avenues that were natural to their own abilities or their personal interests.⁸⁸ Doubts as to the existence of a particular leader may also derive from the lack of a formal leadership election. Arguably, any one leader of the FSG would have been viewed as a potential challenger to John Major for the leadership of the party, especially given the perceptions held by the press and the rest of the CPP at the time, which considered the FSG to be a right wing group within the party, whose real aim was to overthrow the Government.⁸⁹ An intention of the group to allay any such claims, therefore, may have been not to have had one leader.

One indicator for determining the level of a Group's organisation is arguably whether a common leader can be agreed by all to exist. However if a Group does not have a specific leader, it does not necessarily mean that a group is not organised, as groups vary in size, structure and purpose. The FSG was organised in that it had a number of leading individuals, a collective leadership and a chairman. Examination of interview data clearly reveals that there were 3-4 leading figures of the Group, three of whom were heads of the three alliances that existed prior to the convergence of the FSG. This is a natural progression given that these three alliances continued to exist to some extent as sub-Groups within the FSG.⁹⁰ These leading figures were Bill Cash, Michael Spicer, Sir Teddy Taylor and Christopher Gill. The duties and actions that they performed in Fresh Start define their leadership qualities. These four people “all played and fulfilled a prominent role within the FSG. They did a lot of the organisational work and gave the Group its organisational and intellectual direction.”⁹¹

⁸⁷ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

⁸⁸ Andrew Hunter MP to author - December 1994.

⁸⁹ Rose, for instance, has argued that leaders of factions exist as challengers to the party leadership. See Rose, R “The Problem of Party Government” p 326. Such perceptions would contend therefore that the FSG represents a party split. This was not the case, for the group and its leadership sought only to challenge the Government on the basis of the Maastricht treaty.

⁹⁰ These are discussed later in the Chapter.

⁹¹ Andrew Hunter MP to author - December 1994.

Michael Spicer was regarded as a leader of the group because of his previous experience as a Minister, his chairmanship of FSG meetings and his EDM, which led to the naming of the Group. "Michael Spicer, his inside knowledge of Government, and his pleasant nature, marked him out as an acceptable leader of our dissident Group, which took its name from the Fresh Start mentioned in his EDM."⁹² Christopher Gill was identified as a leader by virtue of his organisational activities as the Group's informal whip. "He really was one of the leading organisers of Fresh Start and of the rebellions of Maastricht."⁹³ Bill Cash was cited as a leader of the group on the basis of his voting record, which gave direction for other Conservative Euro-Sceptics to follow. Mr Cash himself stated that he believed that most people considered him to have been the most active in his opposition.⁹⁴ Sir Teddy Taylor was cited as another leader by some Maastricht rebels, based on his knowledge of European issues and his seniority within the party, as well as his provision of a lot of the group's briefing papers.

The majority of those interviewed were in agreement that there was one chairman of the Group, identified as Michael Spicer. One member claimed that he "was a good Chairman, neither charismatic nor dominating, his natural good humour had kept us all tougher."⁹⁵ The role of Mr Spicer was limited to chairing the meetings of the FSG. Unlike the leader of a party however, the chairman of the FSG did not have the vested authority of FSG Members to speak on their behalf.⁹⁶

Whips

The FSG operated an informal whipping system where roles were undertaken voluntarily.⁹⁷ The group's whips performed a number of functions, which enabled the Euro-sceptics to engage successfully in collective action. Their main role, according to one Group Member, was to keep "people in touch with each other, taking a view of who was going to vote."⁹⁸ Another MP commented that "we had a whip in the sense that we had one person who scurried around arranging the meetings and keeping a tally of who was intending to do what, and who had a grip on the arithmetic. That was quite well organised and well disciplined."⁹⁹ Another purpose of the whips was to ensure the "discipline of the Group itself, to make sure that our people were there. To make sure that when there was a vote, we gave a respectable vote and again, to make sure that there were enough speakers to keep going at a particular time."¹⁰⁰ The majority of members identified between two to three MPs, James Cran, Christopher Gill and Roger Knapman, who they believed acted as

⁹² Gorman, T "The Bastards" pp 54-5.

⁹³ Warren Hawksley to author - September 1995.

⁹⁴ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

⁹⁵ Gorman, T "The Bastards" pp 114-115.

⁹⁶ Iain Duncan Smith MP to author - November 1994.

⁹⁷ Voluntary roles indicates the reason for informal - it does not mean that the Group is not a faction.

⁹⁸ Confidential Conservative MP to author.

⁹⁹ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁰⁰ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

whips of the FSG.¹⁰¹ Some members however denied the existence of such a system. One member claimed for instance that “no one was required to do anything in particular, we just made each other aware of what our views were and what we intended to do.”¹⁰² Another member described the role of the whips as one of guidance. “Guidance was given but there was never any obligation as everyone was always allowed to vote however they wanted, in terms of people who attended the meetings, but guidance was given as to what the consensus of the Group was going to do.”¹⁰³

The operation of an informal whipping system within the FSG was important for a number of reasons. Firstly the presence and activities of these individuals demonstrated that this group of Conservative MPs could operate as an organised group to effect opposition to government policy. Secondly, these whips ensured as far as possible, that the group's presence as a collective entity was always felt by the government on the floor of the House during the debates and ultimately in securing opposition votes or abstentions in the division lobbies. “People used to be whipped to attend meetings. There were 20-25 who met every Tuesday with the three whips of the Fresh Start. They used to let them know when the vote was going to be. They would get them ready to speak....and they used to liaise with the official Government whips.”¹⁰⁴ The nature of the group's whipping activities is comparable to the activities of the party whips, according to one MP, in so far as there “was as much a three line whip as you can do on your own colleagues, because obviously we are all individuals and it is very difficult in a Group like that.”¹⁰⁵ Some wavering Euro-sceptic MPs found themselves squeezed between pressures from Government whips to support, and the Fresh Start whips to oppose the Maastricht Bill, although a number of the FSG members stated that little overt pressure was ever directed against Fresh Start members by their own whips. Some social pressure to support the group and each other in the lobbies however would have been evident amongst the group. As Rose argued, “to abandon a faction is to risk appearing as a renegade, and can cause tensions in personal relations between the defector and his political associates.”¹⁰⁶

Other Roles within Fresh Start

A number of prominent Conservative Euro-Sceptics MPs fulfilled other important roles within the FSG. Mrs Gorman claimed she acted as an extra whip and was responsible for circulation lists between the more frequent members of Fresh Start. Another important role was liaison with other Euro-sceptics in other parties in order to gauge their potential support in the division lobbies. Mrs Gorman claimed that “to be effective in the chamber we needed to set up contacts with key people in other parties to find out what they were up to. Roger Knapman was roped in to set up lines of communication with the Ulster unionists and other fringe Groups....to see if they would vote with

¹⁰¹ Some of those interviewed declined to name the whips due to secrecy of ‘Fresh Start’ operations. Of those who agreed to comment 89% of respondents stated that James Cran and Christopher Gill were the Fresh Start Whips.

¹⁰² Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁰³ Bernard Jenkin MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁰⁴ Sir Richard Body MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁰⁵ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁰⁶ Rose, R “The Problem of Party Government” p 321

us...Christopher Gill and James Cran covered the *Liberal Democrat* and the *Labour Parties*”¹⁰⁷ Assessment of the numbers of likely pro-voters in each party was also calculated to assess the group's chances of victory at each stage of the debate.

The wife of one Euro-sceptic MP, Biddy Cash, played a social and informal role. She arranged a number of social evenings for the Euro-sceptic members of the FSG. As well as providing some light relief for the group, these occasions served two important purposes. Firstly they allowed people to see that members of the FSG “were not the wreckers” of the CPP as some people claimed. Secondly, these occasions according to one MP “helped cement us into one of the most effective fighting forces anyone could ever remember in the history of Parliament.”¹⁰⁸

The credibility of the FSG as a serious organisation was enhanced by the membership of a few senior figures of the CPP and was reinforced by their voting behaviour in the Commons against the Government line. As mentioned in Chapter one, such credibility is important for a group since it serves to dispel perceptions that this group merely represents a bunch of maverick MPs. The association of such members also helped raise public awareness of the FSG. As well as the aforementioned leaders of the group, who themselves had ministerial experience and/or membership of the back-bench committee on European affairs, senior figures within the group included Peter Tapsell, “a giant of a man in every way...the speeches he made were the best I have ever heard and will strike a chord with ordinary people in Britain”¹⁰⁹; Ivan Lawrence, “he was one of the most powerful debaters in the House”¹¹⁰ and John Biffen “a heavy weight... ex-cabinet Minister and former leader of the House...when he spoke, the House listened. His balanced views and his long experience in politics were invaluable to us.”¹¹¹ The membership of these senior figures also helped to engage support from those MPs who were under pressure from their Constituency Associations to toe the party line. A potential rebel MP's Association could see that senior and respected members of the parliamentary party were supporting their own MP's opposition. The consequence of all this was that the Government was forced to regard the FSG as a credible group that could not readily be dismissed

The FSG - Meetings

The first official meeting of the FSG was held at the Carlton Club on 12 May 1992 and was attended by twenty Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs.¹¹² Although some of these twenty MPs never attended again, the FSG grew in size thereafter. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss views over possible opposition to the Second reading of the Maastricht Bill and to assess chances of defeating the Bill. The meeting had a profound effect on the rest of the CPP, as this meeting

¹⁰⁷ Mrs Gorman “The Bastards” p 57.

¹⁰⁸ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 88.

¹⁰⁹ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 110.

¹¹⁰ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 109.

¹¹¹ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 11.

¹¹² Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 46.

signalled to the Government the first signs of potential intra-party rebellion to the Maastricht Bill. However, as only twenty-seven MPs (including five abstentions) had opposed the Bill, the Government at this stage was probably not unduly concerned.¹¹³

Throughout the Maastricht debates, the Fresh Start Group held weekly meetings at the House of Commons on Tuesdays at 5pm. The Group met initially in a small committee room off Westminster Hall. As the membership of Fresh Start grew, this room soon became too small for its numbers and the venue was moved to "Room J on the lower ministerial corridor inside the House of Commons, known as the "bunker."¹¹⁴ The frequency of these meetings was determined by events surrounding the progression of the Bill in the Commons.¹¹⁵ During the height of the Maastricht debates for instance, meetings were held up to three times a week. One year after the Maastricht Bill had been ratified, the Group continued to meet approximately fortnightly.¹¹⁶

Fresh Start meetings served a number of basic purposes and their examination helps to explain the motivation of some MPs for membership and collective activity. The first purpose of the meetings was to provide a forum for debate on issues of concern. Each MP had a researcher and they were all supported by the briefings provided by Bill Cash's Great College Street operation and Sir Teddy Taylor's office.¹¹⁷ The building used to house Bill Cash's research operation bears witness to the scale of the organisation of the Fresh Start Euro-Sceptics at the time. One commentator for instance stated that "within this elegant House resides what must surely be the most audacious, elaborate and best financed parliamentary campaign ever mounted by dissident Tory MPs still in receipt of their party's whip."¹¹⁸ The FSG therefore had substantial research resources at its disposal with which to challenge the Government. In contrast to previous European debates in the House, the existence of such research resources on this scale for the rebels, highlights a change in the nature of intra-party organisation in the CPP. Sir Richard Body claimed that in the 1970 Parliament for instance MPs used to have £600 a year from which they had to cover secretarial and other expenses, compared to the 1990's where every MP had a researcher as well as support from Bill Cash's research operation.¹¹⁹

Many MPs, including both the pros and antis, on both sides of the House, were ignorant to the intricacies of the Maastricht Treaty. As an MP's life is very full and active, MPs do not have the

¹¹³ Mrs Gorman claimed that the Government knew they could rely on votes from the Liberal and Labour parties to carry them through in the division lobbies. She claimed that "the majority was more than enough to give John Major a peaceful night's sleep." Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 49.

¹¹⁴ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 57. Another regular meeting place was Rodins restaurant on Great Peter Street near the House of Commons.

¹¹⁵ As advised by Tony Marlow MP - October 1995.

¹¹⁶ As advised by John Carlisle MP - November 1994.

¹¹⁷ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 80. She stated that "the briefings covered both the policy implications of clauses in the Maastricht Bill and discussed the tactical implications of defying the Government whips on particular votes." P 87.

¹¹⁸ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 87.

¹¹⁹ Sir Richard Body MP to author - October 1995.

time to know the intricacies of every piece of legislation brought before the House. They often rely therefore on the advice of others on issues that are of little concern to them personally. The Group's briefings, supported by the Fresh Start researchers played, therefore, an ever-increasing role as the debates developed. Mrs Gorman claimed that such meetings were also "paramount in providing knowledge of the issues in order that MPs could clearly make up their minds about issues."¹²⁰ The briefings provided ammunition for the FSG members during the debates. One of the reasons why the Group was so successful, arguably, was because they were so well briefed. One MP believed that it was not surprising that the Government never answered any questions posed by this group during the debates.¹²¹ Mrs Gorman argued that "to be effective on these occasions you must know your facts or have them supplied to you in briefing notes, unless you are Bill Cash or Richard Shepherd, a natural orator with an inborn hatred for, and an encyclopaedic knowledge of, European legislation all the way back to 1972. On the other hand it is equally effective to be like Teddy Taylor, an aggressive street fighter with an innate feeling for the meaning of nation-hood, who can speak passionately off the top of his head. Then there was Tony Marlow; a kamikaze pilot given to interrupting everyone else's speeches if he hears something he can tear to shreds. Or else you are like me and need regular briefing notes on each stage of the debate in order to follow it."¹²² Knowledge that the group was well briefed also helped to give its members confidence to continue their actions. "We always knew there would be enough to make a respectable showing in the chamber so to speak."¹²³

A second purpose of the meetings was to gauge the level of likely dissent in the lobbies by Conservative MPs at each stage and subsequently to consider where the rebels were most likely to be victorious.¹²⁴ The group's assessment of its chances of victory was aided by its intelligence source provided by the unofficial whips, who calculated which MPs would be likely to oppose the Bill from the other parties.¹²⁵ This function helped to give moral support to those members who were unsure whether they were confident enough to oppose in the lobbies. If an MP did decide that they could not offer their support to the group in the division lobbies, no pressure was ever applied by other members of the group, to convince them to change their minds. This may have offered some relief to the wavering MP that they were not under pressure from both camps, although this in itself may have been detrimental to the group's ultimate aim of defeating the Treaty.¹²⁶ The FSG

¹²⁰ Mrs Gorman "The Bastards" p 55. She also claimed that not every MP is naturally suited to examining the implications of legal documents. "The paving debate called for an orator. The committee stage required a lawyer's mind. There are several lawyers in our Group but no one knew the intricacies of the Treaty as imminently as Bill Cash."

¹²¹ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

¹²² Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 80.

¹²³ John Carlisle to author - November 1994.

¹²⁴ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 57.

¹²⁵ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 57.

¹²⁶ See Mrs Gorman "The Bastards" who claimed in contrast, that, prior to the Paving Motion, Mrs Thatcher talked to those members of the FSG who were thinking of abstaining (p 112) and Norman Tebbit, "sat like a cross between a vulture and an evangelist... from time to time wavering rebels were taken by our unofficial whips to meet him, so that he could have an arm-twisting chat" p 120.

ensured that a member's opposition was solely based on his or her own conscience. For Rupert Allason this point was important, because on the Social Chapter vote, he told the group "I certainly wouldn't support the Government, but I would find it very difficult to vote in favour of the Social Chapter, having actually had meetings with all my residential home owners... I'm very sorry, my heart is with you and I would very much like to vote against this...but I must abstain."¹²⁷

The main function of the group was to provide moral support, as pressures mounted on individual Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs to discontinue their opposition. In her book, Mrs Gorman reflected that, at the start of the Maastricht debates "I don't think any of us anticipated the bitterness and bullying we would encounter. Nor did we realise how much we needed to stick together, physically for our own protection and mentally to support each other in the face of unparalleled pressure."¹²⁸ Another MP commented that "it was nice to have fellow kindred spirits during the long and dark days of Maastricht."¹²⁹ For some MPs this role became the most vital purpose of the Group. Self-perceptions of being part of a Group were an essential factor for some MPs to carry on their opposition in the face of the imposed constraints. Some members in fact felt that this was the only purpose of the Group.¹³⁰

The function of moral support between members of the group was further furnished through the exchange of confidences in their experiences. As one MP claimed for instance, the "exchange of information relating to our experiences was very helpful indeed."¹³¹ On one occasion Ann Winterton and Teresa Gorman mentally and physically supported each other by going into the lobbies together to register their dissenting vote.¹³² Association to the group, however, was not without its own adverse implications. For some members of the FSG, self-identification with such an organised political grouping and the notoriety and fame it gave them, was unfamiliar and uncomfortable. Mrs Gorman claimed that "if anyone thinks you enjoy being a rebel they can never have experienced it. You go reluctantly, conscious that you are living in an alien environment."¹³³

Given the pressure the Conservative Euro-sceptics were under during the course of the debates, opposing the Government in the lobbies also served another function, in that it gave them mutual recognition and confidence and motivation to sustain opposition as a group: it was also the key to their success. Finally, as the debates on the Maastricht Bill advanced, the advantages of collective action in the division lobbies were highlighted in order to increase their chances of defeating the Bill. Voting against the Bill in the lobbies was also seen as the only method through which the

¹²⁷ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994. As it transpired he was the only MP to rebel on this vote via an abstention.

¹²⁸ Gorman, T "The Bastards" pp 60-61.

¹²⁹ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹³⁰ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994

¹³¹ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

¹³² Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 136.

¹³³ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 137.

rebels could defeat the Bill. As one rebel commented “you don’t win in this place by talking, but by voting.”¹³⁴

Essentially, expediency was the reason that motivated some of these rebels to oppose the Maastricht Treaty as a group.¹³⁵ By joining together as a group, they believed they had their best chance of defeating the Bill. As one rebel claimed “there is only one thing that any government understands and that is the arithmetic...if you can hold out as a fairly solid group, and it has got to be convincing and people have got to hold together... you hold enormous influence.”¹³⁶

Though the Group was bound and arguably formed because of shared concerns over the Maastricht Bill, the manner in which members within the Group sought to effect their aims was not unilateral. In opposing the Maastricht Treaty, many of them pursued activities individually or acted within sub-groups of the larger FSG. It is important to note, however, that by acting in this manner their ability to act as a cohesive unit was not affected. One explanation for this is that because the Group itself was a new entity in terms of its existence and operating methods within the CPP, members of the Group did not know how they should act or behave and to an extent they were forced to rely on each other's experiences during the debates.

A hard core of Euro-sceptic rebels existed within the FSG and are identified by their rebel scores of 14 or more.¹³⁷ Mrs Gorman claimed that “the Club, for such it seemed to us regulars, consisted of a hard core of about 15.”¹³⁸ One member of this hard-core group also believed the real hard core of sceptics within the group was to be found amongst those who voted against the government on the Social Chapter Vote.¹³⁹ This inner group, who were the most consistent in their opposition to the Bill in the division lobbies, were also identifiable by their specific aim which, according to one representative, was to prevent the Maastricht treaty from being ratified.¹⁴⁰ This aim is in contrast to those of many of the remaining members, both of the FSG and other Euro-sceptics of the CPP, who sought to achieve amendments to the Treaty, as opposed to its defeat.

In addition to this hardcore of Fresh Starters, four sub-groups can be identified. The members of the hard core of the group were drawn from each of these four sub-groups. Three of these sub-groups are identified as the three previously identified alliances that predate the wider group.¹⁴¹ Firstly, the ‘Traditionalists’ were those Conservative Euro-sceptics who had a parliamentary record of consistently opposing European issues. Within this grouping were Sir Teddy Taylor, Richard

¹³⁴ Bill Cash to author - November 1994.

¹³⁵ Mrs Gorman claimed that “we banded together to save our democracy from being submerged in Brussels.” Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 57.

¹³⁶ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

¹³⁷ See Chapter 3 - Table 1

¹³⁸ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 63.

¹³⁹ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁴⁰ Bill Cash MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁴¹ John Carlisle MP identified the first three categorisations to author - November 1994.

Shepherd and Tony Marlow. Secondly, the 'Intellectuals,' were those who were opposed to Maastricht on a technical and factual basis. One member of the group categorised this sub-group as containing the most intellectually informed members of the group on the Maastricht Treaty. Such members included Bill Cash and Nicholas Budgen. Finally, the 'Troopers' were those who were primarily concerned over sovereignty arguments and those who wanted to check the advance of federalism within the EC and its effect on UK policy development. Despite the fact that the Group was obviously split in these three ways, reflecting the organisation of the Euro-sceptics into sub-groups according to their concerns over Europe, the ability of the Group to act cohesively and effectively was unaffected in the division lobbies. As one rebel commented "we came together when it mattered."¹⁴²

One further sub-group of the FSG can be identified. This sub-group consisted of four MPs who were elected to Parliament at the 1992 general election: Walter Sweeney, Bernard Jenkin, Barry Legg and Iain Duncan-Smith. They are identifiable as a sub group by a number of characteristics, the first being their own assessment of the FSG. Neither Iain Duncan-Smith nor Bernard Jenkin classified Fresh Start as a Group. Mr Jenkin described the FSG as a "an ad-hoc group of people who share a wide range of opinions but come together for one purpose, which is to try and advance the argument on the European issue."¹⁴³ Iain Duncan-Smith did not regard Fresh Start as a group in organisational terms as he claimed members acted as individuals. "Everyone in Fresh Start just went about it in their own way... they are a very strange group in the sense that they are all individuals and different people."¹⁴⁴ It is clear from this and from others' perceptions, that some members of the group, whilst uniting under the Fresh Start umbrella and being in agreement with the overall objectives, had their own political agenda, which may have been a stronger/weaker version of those held by the rest of the group. This further supports the claim of Chapter three that the Euro-sceptics can neither be dismissed as malcontents nor as having identifying characteristics applicable to them all.

These new intake members had different perceptions of the role to be performed by the wider group than other group members. Iain Duncan-Smith thought that Fresh Start existed as a support Group. He claimed that "Fresh Start is a collection of people who mutually supported each other through Maastricht. The pressures brought to bear on people are pretty immense, so it was really a support Group more than any thing else." Such comments further reflect the differences in perceptions between the press's commentary of them and what the rebels themselves believed they were doing, as is shown in Chapter four. Bernard Jenkin characterised his own involvement with the Group as limited, where he would "just ring up someone... and say what do you think about this?"¹⁴⁵ He claimed his own hesitant involvement with the FSG was because it was seen as controversial, in

¹⁴² John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁴³ Bernard Jenkin MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁴⁴ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁴⁵ Bernard Jenkin MP to author - November 1994.

comparison to 'The No Turning Back Group', of which he was a member, as he believed the latter group "tended to avoid controversial issues so as not to create tensions within it."¹⁴⁶ One identifying factor of these four MPs as a sub-group, which may also be an explanation for their limited involvement, was the immense pressures they came under from both the party machinery and their relative inexperience as MPs in conducting parliamentary business. This limited degree of involvement was shown by other new intake members, except Walter Sweeney, who stated that he was a hard core member of the FSG. At Fresh Start meetings, this sub-group also sat apart from the rest of the group, which suggests that they were not prepared to be as strident in their opposition as were some of their colleagues, or as, Mrs Gorman claimed, it was if they were "deferring to the older hands."¹⁴⁷

John Whittingdale was the fifth member of the 1992 intake who expressed opposition to parts of the Maastricht Treaty, and who Mrs Gorman initially claimed as a member of the FSG. Mr Whittingdale claimed to the author, however, that he was not a member because he believed the FSG was an organised grouping, which was why he did not join them, for, whilst he was opposed to the Maastricht Treaty, he did not agree with the organised activities of the FSG. He stated that he "didn't want to be seen to be part of what was regarded by the Government as a sort of group to plot against them. I'd always said that I wasn't going to deliberately set out to make life difficult for the Government."¹⁴⁸ Mr Whittingdale did, however, maintain close contact with the other new intake members. He believed the essential distinction between himself and the other new intake members was that the others supported the Government on procedural motions, which he did not. He believed that "that was seen as being a much more organised move to sort of try and frustrate the Government at every turn."¹⁴⁹

The distinction between these new intake members and the rest of the FSG lies in the fact that they did not feel they were as hard core as some of their fellow colleagues in the CPP, who were prepared to ardently and consistently defy their Government in the lobbies. These four MPs found

¹⁴⁶ Bernard Jenkin MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁴⁷ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 113.

¹⁴⁸ John Whittingdale MP to author - November 1994. Another consideration in his decision not to join the Group was that he did not want to disrupt the Government's remaining business. It was as a result of this that Mr Whittingdale deliberately didn't speak during the course of the debates, explaining his position on Maastricht instead to his constituents and the Government.

¹⁴⁹ John Whittingdale MP to author - November 1994. His decision to abstain during much of the debates on the Treaty was also influenced by the successful persuasion of the Government whips. He argued that he "accepted the arguments, which the whips put, that by stringing out Maastricht through procedural manoeuvring it was actually causing them difficulty on other parts of the programme, which I fully supported. I had no wish to obstruct other parts of the programme. And the whips also argued to me very forcibly that in terms of their attitude, they recognised that MPs might in principle oppose specific major policy issues. But that to oppose procedural motions was not an issue of principle. It was an issue of bloody mindedness basically." He further stated that he was prevented from opposing the Government outright because he was a Parliamentary Private Secretary at the time. He also said, "one of the reasons why I slightly fell out with Fresh Start was procedure, because the FSG always felt that they stood a better chance of winning votes on procedural motions than on the main substance."

themselves in a difficult situation: they were newly elected to parliament and were at the start of their parliamentary careers. They did not want, therefore, to be immediately labelled as rebels and, unlike the older and more senior members of the FSG, these members did not have the years of parliamentary experience to cultivate relationships within their constituency associations, and build a position of authority on contentious issues. Usually, new MPs, on entering Parliament, do not wish to be seen to be challenging the status quo. They join backbench committees on which they have interests. This sub-group, however, on entering Parliament, found themselves in an unusual situation of being faced with an issue of extreme importance and of concern to themselves. Almost immediately on starting their Parliamentary careers, they found themselves in the position of having to choose between the Government and their rebel Group.¹⁵⁰ It was precisely the fact they were new MPs at the last general election, which kept and forged them together as a sub-group. They remained members of Fresh Start because they were new and needed the support of more experienced and senior politicians within the group. In Chapter six it is revealed that this sub-group was subjected to the most pressure that was applied by the Government whips during the Maastricht debates.

This sub-group acted uniformly to some extent as a small policy sub-unit within Fresh Start. Although they did not vote uniformly as a Group throughout the debates, they met frequently, talked and decided how to act. Each of the four MP's examined a different aspect of the Treaty from which they could attack the basis of the Government's position wherever possible. Whilst this sub-group expressly stated that they acted as Independents, making individual contributions and speeches and undertaking individual research, their goals were pursued collectively as a group. "We just thought we'd not go for the big things - we'd go for the small things."¹⁵¹ In this way the new intake formed their own "sort of policy group" within the overall framework of Fresh Start.

Iain Duncan-Smith spoke out about the European Court of Justice. His aim was to clarify points of distinction between the British High Courts and the European Court. "I think what we demonstrated in Maastricht was that people who thought that the European Court of Justice was like our High Court never understood the way that it worked, and if we've done anything at all we've certainly opened their eyes as to problems with the European Courts, such that now the Government is talking about some way of reforming it."¹⁵² Barry Legg MP examined the opt outs of the Maastricht treaty and EMU associations.¹⁵³ Walter Sweeney examined in detail the implications of the Treaty

¹⁵⁰ Despite having the potential of future successful Parliamentary careers ahead of them, none of these MPs stated that career aspirations affected their eventual voting. These MPs were also among the youngest members of Fresh Start. Iain Duncan-Smith and Bernard Jenkin were both below the age of 39. Walter Sweeney and Barry Legg, closely followed in the next age banding 40-45. None of the new intake was over 45 at the start of the Maastricht debates.

¹⁵¹ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁵² Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁵³ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

on foreign policy issues and Bernard Jenkin examined the issues of the Social Chapter and a single currency and especially the issue of Subsidiarity.¹⁵⁴

The role of these four was important for the overall functioning of the FSG. By examining the minute aspects of the Treaty they brought to light a lot of what they thought were the flaws in the Treaty, which they used in their speeches during the debates. Mrs Gorman described them as the “four who remained a little sub-group of their own, working through the material of the treaty to bring out points of particular interest to them.”¹⁵⁵ She also claimed that Mr Iain Duncan-Smith's inclusion within the group was particularly useful to the wider group as a “lawyer, his grasp of the minutiae of the Treaty helped to guide this younger Group through the complex committee stage.”¹⁵⁶

The division of the FSG into these sub-groups suggests that members associated themselves with others who shared similar concerns over the Maastricht Bill. Within these sub-groups, the Conservative MPs all had their own aims and/or political agenda. They united as individuals with divergent aims as well as general common aims, because it was expedient to do so. It was, however, the passion felt between members that enabled the group to endure as a collective entity during the progress of the debates. As one MP claimed, “it was because the strength of feeling was so strong that it stayed together.”¹⁵⁷ The group, therefore, was composed of individuals and a number of strong identities who effected their opposition in different ways. “You can't tell them what to do. They will actually approach it in their own way, which is what they did.”¹⁵⁸

Other Euro-sceptics of the CPP

A periphery to the FSG, approaching thirty further Conservative MPs who sometimes voted against their government or abstained over the Maastricht Bill, with scores of 2-9 has been identified.¹⁵⁹ These MPs were not part of the FSG, although some of them attended meetings held by the Group or were loosely connected with the Group.¹⁶⁰ Within this broader periphery of Conservative Euro-Sceptics, a small sub-Group existed which consisted of the Euro-Sceptics of the '1922 Executive'. They were not an organised sub-group and can only be classified as an informal group to the extent that they consulted each other as to their voting behaviour in the lobbies over Maastricht. John Townend stated that he was a member of Fresh Start but was not actively involved in the activities of the group as his full membership of the Group was impeded by his being on the 1922 Executive.

¹⁵⁴ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 105.

¹⁵⁵ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 60.

¹⁵⁶ Gorman, T “The Bastards” p 112.

¹⁵⁷ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁵⁸ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁵⁹ See Table 3.3, Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁰ These peripheral MPs are classified either as independents or just MPs who have expressed concerns over European policy. These members could be said to represent a 'tendency'. They held common concerns over Conservative European policy, but they did not act in an organised fashion in concert with others to effect their aims. However they were more than just a collection of ad-hoc individuals with common attitudes as evidenced by their voting behaviour. Both the Government and the FSG tried to increase their support over the Maastricht Bill by harnessing this periphery.

He claimed that a further four Euro-sceptics who were members of the 1922 Executive consulted each other as to their intended opposition over Maastricht. He claimed that “we tended to do the same thing. We voted against the issues of importance, but we abstained on procedural motions.”¹⁶¹ The other Euro-sceptic members of the 1922 Executive were Sir George Gardiner, James Pawsey, Robert Dunn and Sir Rhodes Boyson, Ivan Lawrence and John Townend.¹⁶²

The Independents

Contained within the periphery of these thirty or so Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs, were a number of independent dissenters. Independent MPs choose to express their opposition to policy Bills regardless of the views of other members of the parliamentary party, and they do not usually form associations with groups. Opposition is solely based on their own moral principles or objections to a particular Bill. In respect of the Maastricht Treaty these Independents regarded themselves as responsible members of the parliamentary party. Known Independent Euro-sceptic members of the CPP during the Maastricht debates were Sir Roger Moate, Sir Trevor Skeet, Warren Hawksley and Sir Rhodes Boyson. One anomaly was Sir Trevor Skeet, who regarded himself as both an Independent and a ‘stalwart’ member of Fresh Start. He became a member of the group in order to obtain information regarding the Maastricht Bill. “I’m interested in ideas. If they can provide me with information which is useful and which I can consider, I would consent with them. I acted completely independently.”¹⁶³ Sir Roger Moate and Sir Rhodes Boyson were two further MPs who regarded themselves as Independents in terms of their Maastricht rebellions. Sir Roger Moate claimed that no one had ever asked him to join the group, although he had once attended a Fresh Start meeting prior to the Maastricht debates. Sir Rhodes Boyson did not join the FSG on the basis that he does not “join groups on political issues,” apart from ‘the 1922’, because he adopts an independent stance on policy issues.¹⁶⁴ Mr Hawksley classified himself as an Independent, labelling himself as a natural rebel. He is an Independent by virtue of his own actions on many issues in the lobbies, not just on Europe. Mr Hawksley used the resources of the Group to obtain information. “I never went to it, purely and simply because I didn’t think it was necessary. I thought we’d got plenty of people fighting and doing the work. I supported them on most occasions. I had a relationship with them to the extent that I would discuss what I was going to do.”¹⁶⁵ Mr Hawksley, however, was not a rebel to the extent that he did not oppose the whole policy platform of his Government, as he supported the party “fairly strongly on economic policy, education and social security.” He was motivated to oppose the Government on Maastricht and other areas, based on his

¹⁶¹ John Townend MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁶² Baker, D, Gamble, A and Ludlam, S “Whips or Scorpions?” p 156. Sir Ivan Lawrence and John Townend were also executive members as at 30 July 1993. See “The Guardian Political Almanac 1993/4” p 338.

¹⁶³ Sir Trevor Skeet to author - November 1994. One aim of Fresh Start was to advance the European argument. A direct method of doing this was to provide information to try to persuade others to vote with them. If they could get other Conservative MPs to their meetings this furthered this aim.

¹⁶⁴ Sir Trevor Skeet MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁶⁵ Warren Hawksley MP to author - September 1995.

desire to procure further action from the Government. "I only opposed them to the extent that I wanted them to toughen it up. I wanted to make them take stronger action on Europe."¹⁶⁶

The existence of Conservative Independents who announced their intention to oppose the treaty represented a problem for the Government if they were to ratify the Maastricht Bill. In comparison to those MPs who aligned themselves with the FSG, the actions of these Independents may have been more acceptable to the Conservative Government, as it could be argued that opposition to party policy by intra-party Independents represented a lesser threat to Government policy. This view is supported by the fact that the Government's attempts to persuade the Independents against their opposition over Maastricht Bill were limited. This may be for three reasons: firstly, whilst the formation and mobilisation of an organised Group such as Fresh Start is unique to the contemporary CPP, the existence and activity of Conservative MP's as Independents is not. Independent MPs, throughout Conservative post-war history have challenged or expressed opposition to their Government or party leadership's policy. These MPs usually oppose one particular Bill or aspect of party policy and only on occasions, have they opposed a wider policy platform. Rose in his study of rebellions, found that "few Conservative MPs are persistently out of sorts with party policy."¹⁶⁷ According to Rose, "only five percent showed dissident views more than five times in the life of the Parliament."¹⁶⁸

Secondly, these Independents were not viewed as extreme troublemakers in the way the members of the FSG were. This is because past experience has shown that Independents are usually senior Members of Parliament, both in terms of age and parliamentary experience.¹⁶⁹ With the exception of Warren Hawksley, all of these MPs were elected to the House prior to 1975. Some of the Conservative MPs, who opposed British entry into the EEC in the early 1970's for instance, remained as Independent opponents to the Maastricht Treaty for example. The decision of these MPs to remain and act as Independents, is founded on their belief that their own stance is more dignified than what some of them regard as the over ambitious zealots of the newer intake and in some cases, a new breed of MPs. Their parliamentary record indicates that their opposition is more likely to be based on a principled objection. Once the issue is resolved, the support of this member is usually given to the party on most policy issues.

Thirdly, their seniority within the CPP makes them less vulnerable to threats and pressure. Any attempt to publicly belittle them would have had dire consequences for the Government. In contrast to the intra-party Conservative rebellion to the EC Bill in the 1970's, fewer MPs pursued their

¹⁶⁶ Warren Hawksley MP to author - September 1995.

¹⁶⁷ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" pp 324-5.

¹⁶⁸ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" pp 324/5.

¹⁶⁹ One notable case of a Conservative Independent is Enoch Powell who registered dissent against his Government on various occasions during his parliamentary career. One characteristic of an independent MP may be that they are more likely to break away from their party, than are intra-party groups, because they have no restricting ties of allegiances to their party and parliamentary colleagues.

opposition independently in the 1990's over the Maastricht Bill. This is partly because a number of 1970's Independents such as Sir Teddy Taylor and Tony Marlow were prepared to join and participate in the activities of the FSG. The fact that more senior members were prepared to participate in the activities of the FSG may be an indicator that the nature and the accepted way of opposing party policy has changed within the CPP.

The Rebel Group of nine whip-less Conservative Euro-sceptics

The nine Conservative Euro-rebels who, by one way or another, lost the whip following the vote on the European Finance Bill on 28 November 1994, formed a cohesive group during the course of the following year. This group became a bane for the Conservative administration, by acting as a unified group, which consistently badgered the Government over its European policy. Sir Richard Body claimed that as a group they were very “unnerving for the Government as they were constantly having a go at the Government and they were seen as a loose cannon.”¹⁷⁰

This group, already part of the larger FSG, formed a close tight knit sub-group of their own. Groups form and endure for a number of reasons. For a group to form it needs certain characteristics such as a purpose, identity and self-awareness. This group of MPs was thrown together following their loss of the Conservative whip. In contrast to the FSG, group membership was only cemented after the debate when it was made clear who had lost the Conservative whip. Tony Marlow, for instance, commented that, upon losing the whip, they became “inter-reliant to a certain extent.”¹⁷¹ To survive as a group, other factors such as participation, norms and mores, cohesiveness and loyalty are required. Etzioni stated that in measuring the effectiveness of an organisation the “central question in the study of effectiveness is not, “how devoted is the organisation to its goal?” But rather, “under the given conditions, how close does the organisational allocation of resources approach an optimum distribution?”¹⁷² The effectiveness of this small group of rebels lay in their ability to stick together and act as a unit. Sir Teddy Taylor claimed that if they had not stuck together the group would not have been as effective.¹⁷³ A strong feeling existed amongst these rebels that by acting uniformly as a group, it gave them power to influence government policy. One way in which the group demonstrated their ability to influence the government was through their cohesive and collective decision not to accept the Conservative whip unless it was offered unilaterally to all of them. Tony Marlow commented that, because “we were vulnerable to the party machine, one of the things we decided was that if they wanted to give us the whip back, they would have to give it back to all of us, not just pick people off.”¹⁷⁴ Abiding by this decision helped bind them together as a group where camaraderie between them subsequently flourished. Sir Richard

¹⁷⁰ Sir Richard Body MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁷¹ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁷² Etzioni, A. “Two approaches to Organisation analysis: A critique and a suggestion. “Administrative Science Quarterly No. 5, 1960-61 p 262.

¹⁷³ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995.

¹⁷⁴ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

Body said that they were a “very happy, very united group” who had great respect for each other. He likened the situation “to the War when you’re fighting against the odds.”¹⁷⁵

Due to their ability to survive as a group, these nine MPs were successful in fulfilling most of their aims identified in Chapter four. The group's ability to endure was facilitated by their organisation where all decisions were taken collectively. Whilst the group did not have a leader, it had a rotating chairman at their weekly meetings. The group's activities were also conducted collectively and included embarking on a series of meetings, which they undertook around the country stating their position.¹⁷⁶ After the whip had been restored to them as a group, the nine MPs continued to meet once a week on Tuesdays at 5pm to discuss strategies and tactics over European issues of concern.¹⁷⁷ The Group pursued an “Anti - Directives” crusade and Fisheries policy,¹⁷⁸ and all of them remained opposed to a single currency and were committed to retaining British sovereignty in parliament.¹⁷⁹

At the Conservative Party conference in October 1995, the group was active and had planned their approach to the conference in advance.¹⁸⁰ As a group they held various fringe meetings. At one official meeting, the “second biggest” at the conference, around four hundred Conservative MPs attended.¹⁸¹ One member believed the group was in a very powerful position, especially as the Government had a small majority at the time.¹⁸² The group believed that by acting as a small group they were successful in a number of areas. Firstly they were successful in surviving as a group without the whip, despite attempts by the government to “discredit them.”¹⁸³ One MP claimed that Constituency Agents attacked these individuals in their constituencies through “calculated campaigns.”¹⁸⁴ This had the effect, however, of uniting them as a group. Sir Richard Body also claimed that they were assisted in their survival by the attention they generated in the media, which motivated them to keep going despite the tenseness of the situation. Secondly, Sir Richard Body believed that his unanimous re-adoption as the Conservative candidate for Boston and Skegness in

¹⁷⁵ Sir Richard Body MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁷⁶ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995 and Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995.

¹⁷⁷ When? Unsuccessful attempts were made by the Government machinery to invite them back individually in an attempt to split the group. Their decision to re-enter the party when they had the whip restored was accepted because as Tony Marlow stated “it was difficult to say no when there were no conditions attached to it.” Interview with author - October 1995. Sir Richard Body finally accepted the whip back in December 1995. His own personal decision to remain outside of the party after the Lowestoft meeting was due to his desire not to return until the Fisheries policy had been resolved to his satisfaction.

¹⁷⁸ In January 1996, the group of eight published a pamphlet “Dire Directives.”

¹⁷⁹ Teresa Gorman to author – January 1996. She also stated that both Sir Teddy Taylor and herself were in favour of Britain leaving the European Union.

¹⁸⁰ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995.

¹⁸¹ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁸² Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995. Sir Teddy Taylor claimed the group-derived security from this position.

¹⁸³ Sir Richard Body MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁸⁴ Sir Richard Body to author - October 1995.

December, demonstrated to the party that Conservative Constituencies were prepared to support a rebel MP. Finally, as a group they believed they were successful in effecting a change in the Government's position on Europe and having a major effect on public opinion.

Conclusion

This Chapter has outlined the development since 1971, of Conservative intra-party opposition to European legislation through the formation and operation of group activity. Group organisation amongst the Conservative Euro-sceptics of the party was most advanced during the Maastricht debates, precisely because the group's members believed that through collective action they had a realistic opportunity for defeating the Maastricht Bill. The formation of this Group marks an historical step in the annals of the CPP's history, as it represents the emergence of an organised intra-party group of Conservative MPs on one issue. "Fresh start is only about one issue. This is not a party within a party, it is a group about one issue...once you start to talk about all the other things they all break up."¹⁸⁵ By meeting as a single group of fellow Conservative Euro-Sceptics, whose express aim was to develop and instigate organised opposition to defeat the Maastricht Treaty, these informal alliances transcended the boundaries between a 'tendency' of like-minded individuals to a 'faction' as an organised grouping. If the FSG had merely met to discuss their concerns and possible opposition to the Bill, they could not be classified as a faction, for meetings of like-minded individuals frequently occur in the course of parliamentary business. It was the deliberate collective level of organised activity, which subsequently arose out of their meetings, which delineated them as a faction.

It is important to remember, however, that the Euro-sceptics of the party essentially regarded themselves as individuals who shared common concerns over the development of European legislation.¹⁸⁶ It is claimed that those rebels, who chose to pursue their opposition to European legislation through collective action, did so, because they believed they were more likely to bring effect to their aims in respect of the various pieces of legislation as a group. In order for collective activity to be successful, it became necessary for the participants of the group to organise both themselves and their activities. As a result of this, the group generated some structural elements and a division of labour. It is suggested that the co-ordination of activities and a semblance of group structure was necessary because collective activity in itself is difficult to achieve. It is argued that political parties themselves find it very difficult to achieve unity within their ranks on all areas of policy. In order for parties to perform their functions, it is necessary for them to have some semblance of structure; they themselves need structured organisations and institutions.¹⁸⁷ Arguably, therefore, for collective activity amongst a number of MPs to occur and be successful, it is necessary for the collection of individuals to reproduce some of the party's structural elements.

¹⁸⁵ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁸⁶ Former MP Carol Mather claimed that parliament itself represents a "collection of voices expressed independently." As stated to the author - September 1994.

¹⁸⁷ The CPP for instance has research institutions, an election unit, Central Office and the Whips.

CHAPTER 6
AN ANALYSIS OF CONSERVATIVE EURO-SCEPTIC OPPOSITION

Introduction

This Chapter analyses the behaviour of the Conservative Parliamentary Euro-sceptics in opposing the four European policy Bills within this study.¹ Initial consideration is given to the various stages during the legislative process where intra-party dissent can occur, and the different ways in which it manifests itself in the intra-party arena. As will be seen in this and the next chapter, Conservative intra-party opposition to the four EC Bills was neither constant nor always expressed in the same way, during their passage through Parliament. The nature of this opposition will be examined through an analysis of independent dissent and collective action. This Chapter focuses largely on the Maastricht and European Finance Bill debates. Brief discussion only is given to the 1970-2 debates, since Norton (1978) and Kitzinger (1973) have documented comprehensively, the activity and strategies pursued by the Conservative Euro-sceptics and the Conservative Government during the Parliamentary debates over whether Britain should become a member of the EEC.²

Intra-party Dissent

In Chapter one, reference was made to Norton's classification of seven stages during the legislative process where intra-party opposition to a Bill can occur.³ In his study of 'Conservative Dissidents in the 1970-4 Parliament', Norton observed, correctly, that intra-party dissent on a Bill may vary from case to case in its timing and strength.⁴ He claimed, for example, that the incidence of intra-party dissent over a legislative Bill, can be affected by when an MP first becomes aware of the issue or when "representations" are first made to him by 'interested parties' and/or constituencies.⁵ When an MP opposes legislation, his capacity to do so is affected by his assessment of a number of factors: the levels of constraint imposed by the Party leadership and/or colleagues, which can decrease or increase dissent during the passage of the Bill; whether or not acceptable concessions to the dissident can be obtained from the government; the persuasions of the party Whips and/or Ministers that his concerns are "misplaced", as well as party pleas for loyalty.⁶

Whilst it will become clear during this chapter, that the intensity of Euro-sceptic dissent varied during the passage of the four Bills through Parliament, one particular factor affected all four policy

¹ Note: in places, this Chapter pulls together various themes, which have been discussed in earlier chapters, but sets them in a different context.

² It is not the intention of this study to duplicate the studies of Norton and Kitzinger, but to take account of them where they exemplify the strategies employed by the Conservative Euro-sceptics during the period. Interview data compiled by this study almost twenty years after the event, has revealed slight discrepancies to these existing accounts, although allowances must be made, for differences in recollection by MPs interviewed almost twenty years later.

³ As I discussed in Chapter 1, Norton discussed how intra-party dissent may arise on non-legislative Bills. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 30-31

⁴ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 31.

⁵ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 31.

⁶ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 31.

Bills. The fact that these Bills were all external treaty agreements, which, once negotiated, had to be adopted in their entirety by Parliament in order to be ratified, affected both the nature and timing of the Euro-sceptics' opposition. As has been mentioned previously, the only opportunity for internal party opponents to exert influence on external treaty Bills, or to prevent their introduction to the Commons for debate and ratification, is to influence the negotiation of the relevant Treaty. If opponents to a policy Bill are successful in securing influence at this stage there may be little need for opposition in the division lobbies. Where it has not been possible to secure influence at the Treaty stage, the mere threat of intra-party dissent on a policy Bill in some instances may still be sufficient to secure influence on that Bill and/or secure concessions from the Government.⁷ If at this stage opponents fail, their only remaining option is to try to defeat the Treaty in its entirety in the division lobbies, by voting against the Bill. Backbench attempts to secure influence on policy Bills is only one of a number of different sources of influence that can be brought to bear. Attempts to influence the shape and outcome of policy Bills can also derive from lobbyists, business interests, public opinion, other governments, external institutions and the House of Lords.⁸ Dissent by members of Parliament in the division lobbies against a Bill however, remains the ultimate power to defeat Government legislation.

Norton argued that, "voting against one's own side in the division lobbies.....constitutes essentially an admission of failure, failure at an earlier stage to persuade one's own leaders not to persist with the measure or motion under debate."⁹ This argument is useful, as it illustrates how organised opposition might occur when all attempts at negotiation and persuasion have failed. This type of analysis, however, cannot explain the sudden eruption of organised intra-party opposition against the Maastricht treaty. As I suggested in the previous chapter, formal, collective and organised intra-party activity is most likely to emerge as a result of some event or impetus, rather than through Norton's scenario of failed negotiations between the Party leadership and internal Party opponents to the Bill. It may well be the case, however, that, even where there is a history of failed negotiations between two sides, differences of opinion on the issue are so opposing that even the most skilled of Party Managers is unable to bridge the divide.

Just as the incidence of intra-party dissent during the legislative process is likely to vary between different situations, it also does not conform to one format or method every time. If an MP chooses to oppose a Bill, there are a number of for a, which can be used to pursue opposition, and which the Party leadership can expect a dissenting Party member to adopt. The particular display of intra-

⁷ Norton found that in the 1979 Parliament, Backbenchers had secured some influence on policy Bills before the Bills were debated in the Commons. He also claimed that dissent in the division lobbies was rare because the Government was prepared to concede to the dissenters on various issues, when its governing majority was threatened. Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 29. See also pp 29-31 for further examples.

⁸ Young has suggested for example that, the Foreign Office were instrumental in getting Mrs Thatcher to agree to an IGC to prepare draft documentation for the SEA. Young JW "Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992" p 152. 1993, Basingstoke, Macmillan.

⁹ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 29.

party dissent witnessed on any Bill will depend on both the issue or policy Bill and the personalities involved, as well as a number of external and/or domestic considerations, all of which can affect the level and expression of intra-party dissent. It is this unpredictability, which Norton observed lends intra-party dissent its "interactive and dynamic character."¹⁰ A Party leadership when faced with internal dissenters to a Bill can never be certain which method of dissent or combination of methods will be employed by these members, nor can they assess accurately the level of intensity that internal opposition to a Bill will reach. The Party managers do have an array of mechanisms available to try to limit or prevent the occurrence of intra-party dissent in the first instance,¹¹ however, since the form and intensity of dissent varies, any response by the Party management is likely to be different in every case.

Norton has provided a useful summary of the various forms of dissent (Table 6.1). This summary will be used to identify the methods of opposition adopted by the Conservative Euro-sceptics in each of the four case studies. It should be noted that, whilst Norton's summary depicts recognised modes of dissent, it neither indicates the level of dissent in each form, nor shows whether a particular form of dissent diminished or increased over the span of each debate. The summary also does not reveal whether a number of methods of dissent were employed simultaneously, which would reflect the complexity of the dissent process, and does not show the levels of collective intra-party action that were employed by Party members in each of the EC Bills, or the degree of formal organisation. This chapter, therefore, also investigates the extent to which opposition was carried out through collective action.

¹⁰ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 35.

¹¹ These mechanisms were discussed briefly in chapter one and are considered further in chapter seven.

<i>Table 6.1: Norton's summary of forms of intra-party dissent</i> ¹²	
PARLIAMENTARY	NON-PARLIAMENTARY
Private dissent	Public/private dissent
1. Verbal dissent expressed at a meeting of the Parliamentary Party (1922 Committee or PLP as appropriate); ⁴¹	1. Verbal or written dissent expressed to constituency associations or individual constituents
2. Verbal dissent expressed at a meeting of the appropriate back-bench Party committee;	2. Verbal opposition expressed at a public meeting (or on television);
3. Verbal or written dissent expressed to the Minister(s) in charge of the measure (and possibly to the Prime Minister);	3. Verbal dissent expressed to representatives of the news media;
4. Verbal or written dissent expressed to the whip(s);	4. Written dissent expressed in letters to the press or press releases.
Public dissent	
5. Verbal dissent expressed on the floor of the House (via debates, adjournment debates or question time);	
6. Signing of a critical Early Day Motion (EDM);	
7. Verbal dissent expressed in committee;	
8. Tabling of critical amendment(s) to the measure;	
9. Abstention from voting for the measure (Second or Third Reading/Motion) or elements of it (committee, report);	
10. Voting against the measures (Second or Third Reading Motion) or elements of it (committee, report);	
11. Resigning the Party whip;	

*1971-2 European Communities Bill*¹³

Conservative opposition to the EC Bill during 1971-2 manifested itself in a number of fora, through both individual opposition and through inner Party collective action in the form of the Conservative Parliamentary anti group, the '1970 Group'.¹⁴ Norton's study of the period identified the following methods of dissent, employed by the Euro-sceptics during the October vote on the principle of entry in 1971:¹⁵ private communications with Ministers; EDMs; use of the floor of the House and division lobbies on second and third reading and finally, both committee and report stages. All of these methods of dissent were employed by individual opponents to the EC Bill and the 1970 Group. In contrast to existing studies of the period, the research data of this study found that organised group activity was more prevalent than has previously been attributed.

¹² Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 32.

¹³ The various abbreviations EEC, EC and EU are hereafter referred to as EC for continuity throughout the case studies.

¹⁴ It is difficult to assess accurately the extent of the group's organisation and how well strategies and tactics were planned at the time, as many of the rebels were deceased at the time of this study. It is necessary, therefore, to rely to some extent on accounts of the period already in existence.

¹⁵ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 202-203 and Table p 204. The research conclusions of this study of the period agree with Norton's findings. In chapter nine Norton discussed the effectiveness of these forums.

The '1970 Group'.

The formation of an inner Party group to oppose the EC Bill is significant in this period of history. Firstly, it represented a change to previous forms of dissident opposition to Party policy employed by Conservative MPs. Norton has argued that, in the 1970-74 Parliament it was only on this particular Bill that it was possible to identify a group of Conservative rebels.¹⁶ Lord has also claimed that, the "forty-one members who rebelled in October 1971 and some of the identifiably reluctant converts to entry, formed the clearest nucleus of a group opposed to the leadership and philosophy of a sitting Conservative Government since the 1902-5 split over imperial preferences."¹⁷ Although many Conservative antis of the period pursued their opposition to the EC Bill on an individual basis, a small group of Conservative MPs engaged in collective action to oppose this Bill. As was discussed in the previous chapter, part of their behaviour as a group consisted of dinner meetings, where discussions took place to plan general strategies in opposition to the Bill.

As has been discussed in previous chapters, inner Party concern groups have existed previously within the CPP and have arisen out of concern towards policy Bills. Such groups however, have almost exclusively represented general issue groups, which are concerned with the general direction of Party policy in a particular area and not with specific Bills, which are considered at the same time by the Party leadership to be major pieces of legislation. Both informal and formal co-ordination of opposition activities amongst the Conservative antis to this Bill was significant for a second reason. The very engagement of Conservative MPs in collective opposition to this Bill challenged perceptions within the Party over other possible means of dissent available. The possibility for the recurrence of such activity in opposition to future Bills could not now be ruled out. Opposition to Party policy by an intra-party group, however, was not seen as acceptable then (nor is it now), to Party members and on-lookers.

The aim of the Conservative antis of the 1970 Group, and most of the individual Conservative antis who acted independently, was to defeat the EC Bill. As this Bill was an external Treaty, if the rebels were to be successful in their aim, they needed to exert influence prior to the Bill's debate in Parliament to enlist as much public, Party and cross-Party support as possible with the hope of getting the Government to drop the Treaty. The Conservative antis were very active in pursuing this aim. Once the Government announced its intention to seek Britain's entry into the EC, right up to the vote on the principle of entry in October 1971 and beyond, the Conservative antis fought many national campaigns to increase public awareness of the issue, in order to demonstrate to the Government that the majority of public opinion was against entry.¹⁸ Where possible, use of the

¹⁶ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 246, claimed that Conservative dissent on other policy issues during this Parliament lacked the "organised interaction between them."

¹⁷ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government of 1970-74" p 117.

¹⁸ This was discussed in Chapter 2. See also Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" Chapter 8, for a general account of the anti-market campaigns of all parties.

Press was secured to put forward their arguments,¹⁹ and many of them staged debates on the issue of entry in their respective constituency associations.

One strategy used by the rebels in this period, to try to exercise influence during the negotiating stages of the Bill as well as during the debates on the Bill in Parliament, was to table EDMs in opposition to the proposed Treaty and subsequent Bill. One EDM as early as June 1970 for example, urged the Government, "not to seek or accept any terms which do not safeguard British sovereignty and our ability to decide our own economic and social policies and protect the interests of our commonwealth and European free trade association partners, or which impose financial burdens involving substantial and inflationary increases in food prices and the cost of living."²⁰ The Conservative antis continued to table EDM's during the run-up to the October debate on the vote of principle of entry, to try and increase the number of MPs prepared to oppose the Bill.²¹ With the same aim, the Conservative anti group employed another strategy of inviting guest speakers to attend and/or address their meetings. These speakers were not exclusively of an anti-European persuasion. A number of speakers favoured Britain's membership of the EC. On some occasions the Prime Minister Edward Heath and Reginald Maudling, the Home Secretary, were invited to address the group.²²

Despite efforts in campaigns to influence the Government during the negotiation stages and co-ordination of their efforts with cross-Party opposition support groups, the Conservative antis failed to influence the terms negotiated for British entry to the EC. The focus of the rebels' activity thus moved onto the forthcoming debate on the vote of principle in the Commons.²³ As was discussed in Chapter two, throughout the summer of 1971, the Conservative antis stepped up campaigns in their respective constituency associations to try to increase support against entry. The credibility of their campaign was enhanced by the resignation from the Scottish office of Sir Teddy Taylor, a senior anti-market MP of the Party, over his disagreement with the Government's position on this Bill.²⁴

In the run up to this debate, one of the main strategies employed by the Conservative antis was to ensure that a free vote would be held on the Bill.²⁵ By securing a free vote they hoped to maximise

¹⁹ See Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" Chapter 11 for a detailed account of the role of the Press and Television during the debates on the issue.

²⁰ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 66. This EDM was tabled by six of the Conservative Euro-sceptics within one month of the 1970 Parliament on 23 July. 44 Conservatives signed it.

²¹ These are documented in Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p69.

²² Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 67. Note: the FSG also employed this activity during the Maastricht debates.

²³ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" Chapter Thirteen provides a detailed account of the "Battle in Parliament" on this Bill.

²⁴ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 69, claimed that "the same evening 15 Conservative anti-marketers put their signatures to an EDM congratulating him on his decision.

support from within their own Party, especially amongst members who wanted to oppose the Bill, but for various reasons felt they could not. In addition, they hoped to convert many potential abstentions into votes against the Bill. They also believed that allowing a free vote for Conservative MPs would help to maximise cross-Party support in opposition to the Bill. The Prime Minister, however, held out until the last minute in allowing a free vote on the Bill. The Conservative antis believed that they had been successful in securing a free vote on this debate, but this was not entirely the case. The Government realised little could be done to persuade the thirty or so members of their own Party to change their minds on this vote, whether it was whipped or not.²⁶ Their attention, therefore, had to be focused elsewhere. During the months before October vote, it was clear to the Party managers and whips that by allowing a free vote for the Conservatives, they would maximise support not just from within their own Party, but crucially from the opposition parties, which would counteract the Conservative anti vote. The calculations of Party whips as to the likely number of opponents to the Bill indicated that the Government was more likely to be victorious if a free vote was allowed. A free vote would result in a projected increase of ten Conservative rebels, to be outweighed however by an increase of thirty Labour supporters.²⁷ According to Norton, regardless of this information, the Prime Minister still held out on allowing a free vote until almost the last minute on 18th October, before relenting.²⁸ This late decision may have been because Heath wished to have a majority within his Party for the Bill.²⁹ In contrast, Lord suggested that in some circumstances it may be expedient for a Party to secure cross-party votes to please external parties. He argued that Heath needed to justify British commitment and demonstrate a majority at home for his policy, to his potential partners in the EC.³⁰

Once the Bill had been scheduled for debate, the main strategy of the 1970 group of Conservative MPs was to ensure the maximum number of Conservative opponents to the Bill voted against it in the division lobbies. To be sure of defeating the Bill they needed to attract cross-party support in the lobbies. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the group operated an informal whipping system to ascertain how the anti-marketeters of all parties would vote.³¹

²⁵ Twenty-six Conservative MPs signed an EDM to this effect. Norton "Conservative Dissidents" p 69. The Conservative antis also campaigned for a free vote in the forum of the 1922 Committee. See Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 69-70. Lord also claimed that the rebels' campaign against British entry to the EC in May 1971 used this forum. Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government 1970-74" p 103.

²⁶ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 69-70 argued that the prospect of a free vote gradually appealed to the Tory Party managers. They believed that they would maximise Labour support if the vote was not whipped.

²⁷ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 70.

²⁸ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 70.

²⁹ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 70.

³⁰ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government of 1970-74" p 116.

³¹ According to Norton, "Conservative Dissidents" p 79, John Biffen acted as the group's unofficial whip. Sir John Farr (former Conservative MP and Euro-rebel) identified Neil Marten as holding this position to the author - September 1994.

During the debate itself, the strategies of the Conservative antis were two-fold and were largely carried out by the group's hard core members.³² Firstly, they tried to challenge the Treaty during the debates, highlighting the disadvantages for Britain if she became a member. Their aim in making these speeches was again, to try to maximise support in the division lobbies against entry. Secondly, they rallied round to ensure that any remaining doubters on the issue voted against the Bill in the division lobbies. It was particularly important for the Conservative antis to defeat the Bill at this stage, for, once the Bill had received Parliament's approval for entry, it would be harder to sustain internal opposition to the Bill during the enabling legislation. As it turned out, it became more difficult for some Conservative antis to persuade constituency associations of their continued opposition when Parliament had voted for the principle of entry (the October 1971 vote).

During the debate, the most available method for the Euro-sceptics to oppose this Bill was to make clear their concerns and/or intended opposition to the Bill on the floor of the House.³³ They hoped that, through their speeches, they would attract sympathetic support for and, hopefully, convertees to their position, and persuade more MPs to vote against the Bill. Two Conservative MPs, William Clarke and Peter Fry, whom the Whips expected to support the Bill, announced their intention in the Commons to vote against.³⁴ This method proved advantageous to the rebels as the Government was forced to go on the defensive in support of their policy. Norton also found that the effectiveness of the Conservative Euro-sceptics arguments was enhanced by the fact that no Labour pro-marketeters rose to contest their arguments.³⁵

As noted in Chapter two, Conservative opposition to the Bill peaked in terms of numbers voting against the Bill on this vote. Despite the attempts of some of the Conservative antis to co-ordinate their activity in opposition to the Bill and liaise with cross-party opponents, they failed to defeat the Treaty at this stage. Thereafter, the Conservative antis' battle to defeat the Bill became more difficult. As will be seen in the next chapter, Conservative opposition diminished after the October vote. On this vote, a number of MPs had been prepared to vote against their Government, because it was a vote on whether the UK should join the EC and had been made a free vote. Thereafter, a number of Conservative opponents chose to support the Government's policy for one of two reasons. Firstly, a number of them felt they should accept Parliament's decision to approve the principle of entry. Secondly, the pressures that were subsequently imposed by the Party leadership checked any further opposition in the division lobbies.³⁶ The Government, although only narrowly victorious on second reading of the Bill, was in fact, in a much stronger position to demand the support of its Party on this Bill and to dictate its passage through Parliament. To many observers, it

³² On the basis of voting behaviour, I classify the ten Conservative die-hard Euro-sceptics who voted across all three of the main debates: The vote on principle of entry and Second and Third reading as the hard-core. Note it is not known whether these were all members of the 1970 group.

³³ See Chapter Three for Content analysis of the rebels' speeches.

³⁴ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 70. Patrick Wolrige-Gordon and Edward du Cann, who subsequently abstained also, expressed concerns during the debate.

³⁵ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 74.

³⁶ See also Norton's account in "Conservative Dissidents" pp 71-73.

seemed that Conservative opposition had collapsed after the October vote. On the vote on the Treaty of Accession in January 1972, only four Conservatives voted against the Government, whilst 17 abstained against the Government's comfortable majority of twenty.³⁷ Norton claimed that the comparatively low level of opposition by the Conservative Euro-sceptics on this debate, following that of the October vote, arose because this later vote was not directly related to the issue of EC entry.³⁸

Various claims have been made as to the aims of the Euro-sceptics after the October 1971 vote.³⁹ It is possible to identify three groups of Conservative anti MPs at this point in time. The first group has already been mentioned. This group consisted of those MPs who may have been concerned that Britain was to become a member of the EC, but gave the Government their full support because of Parliament's approval of this legislation. Secondly, there was a small number of Conservative antis, who believed ratification of the Bill was now inevitable, and thus there was little to be gained from continuing their opposition in the division lobbies. According to Lord, some Conservative MPs were prepared, despite this, to deny Heath a comfortable parliamentary majority for his European policy, without defeating the Bill.⁴⁰ Finally, a third group of Conservative antis remained committed to the defeat of the Bill in its entirety and continued to oppose the Bill at all remaining stages of its passage through Parliament. It is amongst the latter two groups of Conservative antis that opposition, mounted against the Bill, intensified. To have any chance of defeating the Bill, the rebels had to do all they could to sustain their opposition in the division lobbies. Their task was made harder by appeals from the Party leadership for Party loyalty and for constituency associations to bring the Euro-sceptic rebels to heel and, during the progress towards second reading, pressures mounted on the ardent Euro-sceptics who still refused to support the Government. The Party whips believed that support for the bill from Labour supporters would diminish, and so Conservative Euro-sceptic opposition provided a realistic threat of defeating the Bill on second reading. This, according to Norton, led the Prime Minister to call a vote of confidence.⁴¹ Though the rebels lost their battle, their opposition in this period is highly significant in terms of post-war CPP history, for this was the first time that fifteen Conservatives had dared to oppose the Government in the division lobby on a vote of confidence.⁴²

During the months up to the third reading of the Bill, the more earnest Conservative Euro-sceptics continued their battles in the forum of the committee debates.⁴³ According to Norton, the Chief

³⁷ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 72.

³⁸ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 72.

³⁹ These were discussed in Chapter four.

⁴⁰ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government 1970-74" p 117.

⁴¹ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 73

⁴² Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 74. A further five had abstained.

⁴³ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 75-79 provides a comprehensive account of their activities and includes analysis on cross voting on amendments and during the Committee stages.

Whip claimed this period "was the most prolonged struggle of its kind."⁴⁴ The Euro-sceptics used the floor of the House to argue their case, especially during the Committee stages. This strategy diminished progressively, however, during the 1971-2 debates. On the October 1971 debate for instance twenty-one Conservative Euro-sceptics challenged the Bill in the Commons thirty-one times. On Second reading only seven of the Conservative rebels continued to defend their objections on the floor of the Commons. This decreased still further on third reading of the Bill where only three of the original thirty-nine Conservative Euro-sceptics opposed the Bill during the debate.⁴⁵ Despite this activity the rebels failed to attract any new converts in the division lobbies.

The rebels never secured any amendment to the Bill, although they did succeed in sustaining pressure on the Government throughout the duration of the debates on the Bill.⁴⁶ It should be noted here, that the rebels' attempts to defeat the Government on amendments were part of their wider battle to defeat the EC Bill itself. If the rebels could defeat the Government on an amendment to this, external Treaty, it would lead to the rejection of the whole Treaty. In circumstances such as these, it is easy to see how the development of intra-party organised opposition to a Bill is a logical method of dissent, for the Government lacks the normal resources to accommodate discontented opponents, as its hand is forced by having to ratify the Treaty in its entirety. This fact may partially explain the zealous nature in which Heath tried to push the EC Bill through the House. On the other hand, as was attempted during the Second reading of the Bill, internal Party opponents, if they are to be successful, are forced to play a game of brinkmanship, pushing the Government to the limits in order to make it climb down and accept defeat of the Treaty. Despite the continued opposition of sixteen Conservative MPs in the division lobby and the abstention of four MPs, the Conservative rebels were yet again defeated on the final debate on the Third reading.⁴⁷ Lord suggested that, although the rebels failed to defeat the EC Bill, the Conservative Government could not themselves claim victory, as "Heath had only managed to create a stand-off in the Conservative Party: he had used its disciplined patterns of internal management as a substitute for bipartisan approval to EC entry."⁴⁸ Indeed, Norton claimed that Heath's management of the issue led to the manipulation of the emotions of a latent right-wing within his Party,⁴⁹ which I contend cemented the development of a Euro-sceptic faction within the CPP.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 75. Lord "British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government 1970-74" p 117, also claimed during the committee stages that the Government's majority in a "gruelling three months... fell as low as four and rarely exceeded twenty."

⁴⁵ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 79.

⁴⁶ Lord suggested that the Government's position on this Bill was assisted by "the fact that a failed EC negotiation had preceded the last Conservatives fall from power; in party lore, this was a parallel to be avoided, as it had contributed to a crisis of confidence in Conservative handling of national affairs." Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government 1970-74" p 103.

⁴⁷ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 79.

⁴⁸ Lord, C "British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government 1970-74" p 105.

⁴⁹ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 248.

⁵⁰ This claim is discussed in Chapter eight.

The Conservative antis' opposition to the EC Bill was the most dramatic display of intra-party dissent against Party policy in office in the post-war period. As Norton found, to try to defeat the Bill, the rebels used all available methods to express their dissent, except for resigning the Party whip. Whilst some rebels undertook their opposition individually, with no involvement or minimum contact with other groups in general, others engaged in informal organisation by collective planning through informal whipping activities and strategies to defeat the Bill. This latter development was important, as it paved the way for future inner Party opposition to Party policy Bills, by adopting collective action techniques. The activities of the 1970 group, although unsuccessful in defeating the Bill, demonstrated that, through co-ordinated collective activity, it was possible to bring the Government to the brink of defeat.⁵¹

Clearly, a general consequence of dissidence by Conservative MPs since 1970, has been its significant effect on the shaping of Party policy. Norton argued that defeat in the lobbies or the anticipated threat of defeat itself was sufficient to make the Government modify its policy on a number of past occasions.⁵² Although intra-party opposition to a policy Bill hinders the ability of a Government to push that legislation quickly through the House, such activity has a positive role to play in enhancing democratic procedures in Parliament. The collective opposition to this bill by some of these members demonstrated that, as a group of individuals, they were capable of sustaining a tremendous fight against the muscle of the Party machinery in order to defend their views and principles and to attempt defeat of the Bill.

The SEA - Euro-sceptic opposition 1986

Intra-party dissent within the CPP did not reach the same level of intensity over the SEA as it did during the 1970 Parliament on the debate over Britain's entry into the EC. It nevertheless existed. As in the 1970 Parliament, a small group of Conservative MPs demonstrated that they were prepared to rebel against their Party leadership in visible terms by voting against the SEA. Their opposition continued to have a marked effect on the nature, style and conduct of Conservative Parliamentary Party politics. These members continued the trend established during the 1970's, of the willingness of some Conservative MPs to vote against their Party leadership on European legislation. Norton, for example, has argued that the continuation of MPs between 1970-1983 to oppose Party policy has meant that the Party leadership of the CPP in the future cannot always expect the support of its backbenchers in the division lobbies. He also argued that, whilst in general the Party was cohesive in its voting in Parliament during the early 1980's "it is not the cohesion of

⁵¹ If the aim of the 1970 group was to defeat the EC Bill then clearly the group was unsuccessful. Their only legislative success lay in delaying the debate on the principle of entry until October after the introduction of the White Paper. According to Norton, the Government delayed the vote under threat of dissent until it could be sure of a majority for the legislation. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 259 & p 265.

⁵² Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 41.

the pre-1970 era."⁵³ The Conservative rebels continued also to voice well established themes of concern over Britain's developing relations with the EC.⁵⁴ Conservative opposition to the SEA was significant, therefore, in that it precipitated the development of intra-party organised opposition to the Maastricht Bill.

The incidence of intra-party dissent over Government European legislation during these debates set a precedent within the Party, whereby Conservative leaders could expect in the future some degree of internal opposition to European legislation. As the rebels had achieved little success in terms of influencing the development of the 1971-2 European Communities Bill or the SEA, when the next major European piece of legislation - the Maastricht Treaty - came before the House of Commons, Conservative Euro-sceptics realised that, if they were to wield any substantial influence on that Bill, an organised collective approach would be required.

There are two interesting observations about the nature of Conservative opposition to the SEA. The first is that the number of Conservative MPs opposing this Bill in the division lobbies was lower than the number who opposed Britain's accession in 1971-2 and the Maastricht Treaty in 1992-3.⁵⁵ Secondly, the ability of the Euro-sceptics within the CPP to significantly influence Party policy over the SEA during the 1980's, was limited.⁵⁶

The main reason for the low level of opposition within the Party to this Bill was that the majority of Conservative MPs of the period did not regard the SEA as a significant piece of legislation in constitutional terms. This was a view held across all parties in Parliament at the time and is reflected in the high level of abstentions in the Parliamentary debates during its progress.⁵⁷ Former MP Sir John Farr, for example, felt that the SEA was not a "cliff hanger in parliamentary terms."⁵⁸ A number of Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs who had opposed the 1971-2 Bill and/or later opposed the Maastricht Treaty, were not unduly concerned about this Bill. They believed the SEA was concerned with both enhancing and establishing trading agreements between European states, and

⁵³ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 43.

⁵⁴ As discussed in Chapter four.

⁵⁵ As was seen in Chapter three, only eleven Conservative MPs in total opposed the SEA in the division lobbies on Second and Third reading.

⁵⁶ As is discussed in more depth in the next chapter.

⁵⁷ Norton has argued that dissidents may limit their opposition to an abstention rather than a vote against a Bill, if a Government is prepared to make concessions. Norton, P "Behavioural Changes. Backbench Independence in the 1980's" p 33.

This was not the case on the SEA. It was not the Government's readiness to make concessions, which gave rise to the high level of abstentions but the fact that the SEA was not viewed as a Bill of any significant constitutional importance. This was underlined by the fact that the Prime Minister did not at any time address the house on the Bill during second or third reading. This would have indicated to Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs that either she accepted the Bill as it stood, or that she herself was apathetic about the Bill. The insignificance of the Bill at the time was further belied by the fact that all divisions on the Bill were free votes. This is dissimilar to both the previous and following European debates in the 1970's and 1990's, where on more than one occasion, either a three-line whip or a vote of confidence was invoked.

⁵⁸ Interview with author - September 1994.

would not lead to a constitutional metamorphosis of the Westminster Parliamentary system, which had been a pronounced fear during the other two debates. These beliefs were perpetuated by Prime-ministerial representations to this effect. One Conservative MP commented for instance, that the Prime Minister had tried to assure him at the time that the Bill was only about trade.⁵⁹ As will be seen in the next chapter, many potential Conservative opponents to the Bill, in contrast to the European debates of the 1970's and 1990's, were prepared to accept their Prime Minister's assurances on this Bill. Many Conservative MPs believed that Margaret Thatcher had secured a 'great triumph' in both the initiation and negotiation of this Bill. The Prime Minister's ability to procure consent within her Party over the issue, whether deliberately or not, therefore limited the extent of Conservative opposition. In contrast to the leadership style of Edward Heath, which Norton claimed was a cause for dissent, Mrs Thatcher's leadership style encouraged support for her European policy Bill in Parliament.

The Government had a substantial majority in Parliament of 144 at the time. Many potential Euro-sceptics to this Bill were of the opinion that, although they might not like the Bill, rebellion would be of little consequence because the Government's majority was so overwhelming. The view of many would-be Euro-rebels at the time therefore was, as one of these MP's commented, "you might just as well ignore it - you weren't going to defeat it."⁶⁰ The Euro-sceptics were hindered further in their ability to exert any real influence on this Bill because of a credibility problem. Interview sources revealed that the Euro-sceptics in the Party were not regarded as a serious threat to this Bill, nor were they taken seriously by either the Party leadership or the press. What the above limitations meant was firstly that, the level of potential rebellion was diminished. Secondly, it prevented many newcomers joining the Euro-sceptics cause, leaving only those who were committed to resisting alterations to the status quo.

Voting against a Bill in the division lobbies represents the most visible form of an MP's opposition. Once an external Treaty Bill reaches the floor for debate, it really is the only option available in order to defeat a Bill. It could have been the case over the SEA that more intra-party dissent may have privately occurred in opposition to the SEA than was publicly evident. In the previous Chapter, the formation of the CERG was discussed as playing a watchdog role on the development of Government European policy. During the 1980's, prior to the SEA, the group met frequently with their Party leader to discuss the development of such issues. Conservative opponents to the SEA could have used this forum, therefore, to try to influence the development of the SEA before inter-governmental agreements were concluded at Luxembourg. As has been mentioned earlier, little influence was brought in this forum because many potential Euro-sceptics were satisfied with Mrs Thatcher's handling of European affairs at the time.

Conservative organised parliamentary opposition to the Maastricht Treaty

⁵⁹ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - October 1995.

⁶⁰ Warren Hawksley MP to author - September 1995.

Activities employed by the Conservative Fresh Start Group in their opposition to the Maastricht Treaty and the rest of the CPP's reaction to them, represented an unprecedented change in the orchestration of Conservative intra-party opposition since 1945.⁶¹ What was unusual about the intra-party opposition to the Maastricht Treaty during 1992-3 was both the level and organisation of collective opposition to the Bill by a number of the Party's Euro-sceptics. This section seeks to analyse the activities of the Fresh Start Group by examining the strategies and tactics they employed during the Maastricht debates of 1992-93. It will be argued in Chapter eight that their behaviour is factional.

The activities and motivations of the Euro-sceptic Conservative MP's during the Maastricht Treaty have been examined on Second Reading, the Paving Motion, Third Reading of the Bill and the debate on the Social Chapter. These represent the four main debates of the period.⁶² The voting records during these debates have been analysed in order to determine the range and extent of Euro-sceptic opposition within the Conservative Parliamentary Party. Conservative intra-party opposition to the Maastricht Bill was conducted at two levels during the debates: on an individual basis and by collective action through the FSG. In the previous Chapter, 28 MPs were deemed to be Fresh Start members. Analysis of the group's cohesion has been performed on each of the debates under study, to determine the ability of the group to act as an organised collective intra-party group, in their attempt to both influence and defeat the Bill. Interview data and other primary sources provide further information as to the nature of opposition expressed by the Euro-sceptics. It should be noted that it is not possible to claim that the full range of activities pursued by the group have been fully documented given the secrecy that surrounded the group's activities, which operated in both the public and private domain. One member of the group stated, for example, that the group's activities were only ever revealed when it would benefit the group to do so.⁶³

The Independent Conservative anti-Maastricht MPs

A number of Conservative MPs, who opposed the Maastricht Treaty, did so outside the framework of the FSG. The level of opposition to the Bill varied between these members. Some voted against the Bill in its entirety, whilst others voted periodically against the Bill, but gave their support to the Government on the remaining votes. As was the case for members of the FSG, the decision of these MPs whether to vote against the Bill or not at different stages was determined by a number of internal and external factors, which are discussed in the next chapter. Both the existence and intention of many of these independent MPs to vote against the Maastricht Treaty proved to be crucial to the FSG's strategy of trying to defeat the Maastricht Treaty. For, whilst these members did not participate in the formal planning of strategies and tactics employed by the FSG to defeat

⁶¹ This claim is limited to interview responses and existing documentation.

⁶² The four main debates have been considered, as these are comparable to the main debates covered by this study in the 1970's and 1980's. The other minor debates on a referendum clause, the committee votes on regions and the general committee debates have not been covered in depth by this study, but also offer useful insights into this period.

⁶³ John Carlisle to author - November 1994.

the Treaty, on many occasions they were relied upon to vote against the Bill. Collectively, these members employed all of Norton's modes of dissent (Table 6.1) in their opposition to the Maastricht Treaty with one exception, the resignation of the Party whip.⁶⁴

Activities of the Fresh Start Group: Organisation, Strategies and Tactics

The level of organised activity employed by the Fresh Start Group in opposition to the Maastricht Treaty Bill was not constant throughout the debates, but intensified as the Bill progressed through the House of Commons, for two reasons. Firstly, as opposition to Maastricht continued, the imposition of constraints imposed by the Government intensified. The group was forced to campaign harder, to prevent members or allies falling back to supporting the Government line. Secondly, some members decided that, whilst they continued to hold reservations over the Bill, they no longer wished to express their opposition to the Treaty by voting against the Bill in the division lobbies. In order for the group to ensure that they had consistent strength to carry through their opposition, a number of tactical plans and strategies were consistently employed throughout the debates and are discussed below. It was the continued pressure of these activities that defined the extent of the group's organisation and enabled them to sustain pressure on the Government throughout the debates.

The group organised opposition to the Maastricht Treaty at two levels. On one level, the group employed a number of general strategies, which were constant throughout the progression of the debates. At a second level, the group planned their opposition to each specific stage of the debates on the Bill. The tactics employed by the group at each stage were influenced by their assessment of the strategies employed by the Government and the group's own assessment of winning. The specific strategies employed with regard to each debate are discussed in more detail in the next section. The more general strategies pursued by the group throughout the debates are considered first.

1. Tabling amendments: Throughout the Maastricht debates over 600 amendments were tabled, of which at least 400 were tabled by members of the Fresh Start Group.⁶⁵ As a result of this, one Euro-sceptic Conservative MP, who was not a member of the FSG, claimed that the group became adept both in the "mechanics of putting down amendments and making sure that there were enough speakers for the amendments."⁶⁶ Tabling amendments to the Bill served two basic purposes for the FSG. The group hoped to delay progression of the Bill through the House. This also afforded the Euro-sceptics more time to persuade and inform others of the Party and the House of their beliefs.

⁶⁴ This claim reflects the range of modes of dissent used by the MPs. Note - not all MPs employed all modes of dissent.

⁶⁵ Confidential Conservative MP to author.

⁶⁶ Andrew Hunter MP to author - December 1994. He claimed that Bill Cash, Michael Spicer and the Fresh Start whips divided these amendments on the Bill into 29-30 groupings, and organised speakers and briefings for each amendment.

Mrs Gorman claimed for example that "the more it was exposed to public view, the more its shortcomings would be recognised."⁶⁷

2. Speakers in the Commons: As well as ensuring members were present to defend amendments in the House, the group tried to ensure there was always a well versed and informed member to argue against the Government's position on every issue it raised on the Bill. The group regularly held meetings to decide who would be the best person to address the House on each aspect of the debates.⁶⁸ The aim of the group here was to defeat the Maastricht Treaty by oral argument in the House. One member of the group also commented that the group's aim in arranging sufficient speakers for the Maastricht debates was "psychological warfare."⁶⁹ More generally, members of the group would speak during the debates on issues on which they were informed.⁷⁰ The plan of the Fresh Start rebels was twofold. The first tactic was to try to limit the extent of pro-European speeches during debates, thus limiting the exposure of the House to pro-Maastricht arguments. This was achieved both by the FSG dominating the debates with their own speeches, and by maintaining the debate on the Bill, often into the early hours of the morning.⁷¹ One MP commented that the group was successful because the Government "never answered an argument. We won all the arguments, certainly as far as I was concerned, over the opt-outs. We just destroyed their argument. They never came back - they couldn't!"⁷² A second tactic employed by the Fresh Start Group was to continually interrupt the pro-European speeches made by both members of their own Party and opposition parties.⁷³ Their strategy was to defeat and challenge the assertions made by the pro-Europeans in Parliament, in order to reveal what they perceived were the inadequacies of the pro-European arguments. This strategy also demonstrated the concerns of the Conservative Euro-sceptics to Parliament, which they hoped would bring forth further support and sympathy from other Conservative backbenchers, as they became more informed on the issues involved.

The FSG believed that, as well as having a strong commitment to defeat the Treaty, they were able to challenge successfully the pro-Maastricht speeches made in the House, because their speakers were well briefed.⁷⁴ It should be mentioned here that the group, in pursuing their opposition and planning their strategies, only ever acted in opposition to the Maastricht Bill; no other Government policy was discussed at their meetings. This was crucial to the ability of the group to sustain itself as an organised group, for a number of the group's members were subject to pressures and name-calling for being part of a rebel entity. Some of the Conservative Euro-sceptics were nervous about

⁶⁷ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 147.

⁶⁸ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

⁶⁹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 152.

⁷⁰ Roger Knapman MP to author - November 1994. Sir Peter Tapsell for instance, spoke on financial issues, an area in which he was knowledgeable.

⁷¹ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

⁷² Iain Duncan-Smith to author - November 1994.

⁷³ See Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 151.

⁷⁴ As mentioned in the previous Chapter, Bill Cash MP and Sir Teddy Taylor MP provided the Group's technical briefings.

their association with a Government opposition group. By being able to claim that they were part of an organised group on one issue, it was easier for some MPs to be involved in collective opposition. In addition, the group's ability to demonstrate to the rest of the Party that they were only opposing Government policy exclusively on European policy limited the opportunity for the pro-Europeans of the Party to denigrate the group as a 'maverick' group, whose ultimate aim was to replace the policy platform of the Party leadership with their own.

3. *Speeches outside the House:* Group Members also tried to win the support of the House and to make a coherent attempt to influence public opinion on the issue, by making a number of individual speeches to both the press and to their constituency associations. It is unclear whether, in fact, the Group had a co-ordinated policy on public speaking. One member of the group believed, for instance, that it "just happened.... there are some that quite enjoy and are quite good in front of television cameras and others who are not. We didn't actually put anyone up or train them specially."⁷⁵ In contrast, another member of the group claimed that the group operated a strict code of conduct about members of the group appearing in public and also what they would say.⁷⁶ This approach was intended to ensure that the group was not publicly seen to be deliberately trying to fragment the Party. Generally, it was important for the Group to present themselves publicly as being both cohesive and unified. Because this group represented a new entity in Conservative Party politics, unity was paramount in order to survive, to exert influence and to ensure that their opposition was given serious consideration by the Party leadership.

4. *Pamphlets and literature:* A number of the Euro-sceptics and Fresh Start members produced pamphlets, which listed their concerns and objections to the Maastricht Treaty. This literature helped disseminate their arguments to the rest of the CPP and to the public, as well as providing a source of factual information for the uninformed members of the House.⁷⁷ A number of Euro-sceptic MPs also published books on the subject of Europe.⁷⁸

5. *Use of meetings:* Outside speakers (both supporters and opponents of the Treaty) were occasionally invited to address the FSG meetings. One tactic employed by the group was to expand the numbers present at their meetings when a prominent external pro-Maastricht speaker was invited to address the group, in order to convey the depth and strength of Euro-scepticism within the CPP. This tactic was successfully used on one occasion, when the Prime Minister was to address the group. Usually Fresh Start meetings were attended by 20-30 people on a regular basis. One member stated that, when John Major was invited to one of the Group's meetings, the Group

⁷⁵ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

⁷⁶ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

⁷⁷ Five Fresh Start members within the 1992 intake of MPs produced a booklet called "Game Set and Match."

⁷⁸ These include Bill Cash "Against a Federal Europe - the Battle for Britain" London, Duckworth, October 1991 and "Europe - the Crunch" London, Duckworth, August 1992, Michael Spicer "A Treaty Too Far" London, Fourth Estate Ltd, 1992.

expanded to include non-FSG Euro-sceptic members of the Party.⁷⁹ According to this MP, the Prime Minister had been expecting only a small number of Euro-sceptics to be present. As a result, this MP alleged the Prime Minister was sent into a panic, to the extent that it was a contributory factor in Major's decision to call a Party leadership contest in July 1995.⁸⁰ The next section examines the strategies and tactics employed by the FSG in the context of each of the debates.

The Debates of the Maastricht Treaty - Second Reading

As was seen in Chapter two, Conservative opposition to the Maastricht Treaty at this stage was relatively low. Most of those who voted against the Bill were known senior Euro-sceptics of the Party. Most of the members of the 1992 intake or of the 1992 executive either voted for or abstained on Second reading. The comparatively low number of Conservative dissenters at this stage is explained by one factor. At the time of second reading the outcome of the second Danish Referendum on the Maastricht treaty was unknown. This was important because until the Danes rejected the Maastricht treaty, a number of Conservative MPs felt duty bound, as Conservative MPs, to support the Maastricht treaty.

Second reading of the Bill was essentially the first real debate in the Commons on the Maastricht Treaty. It is not surprising, therefore, that Conservative Euro-sceptic opposition was less intense at this stage.⁸¹ The battle lines had yet to be drawn. Both Conservative supporters and opponents of the Treaty were preparing for the debates ahead by testing the barometer of the opposition. Voting cohesion of the Fresh Start Group members on second reading was 100% in respect of the Labour amendment, which supported the Government line, but only 37.5% when voting against the Government. It would not have mattered if the rebels had been more cohesive at this stage, because the Government could rely on sufficient support in the division lobbies from the opposition parties to counteract the projected size of the Conservative rebellion. Although the Conservative rebellion at this stage was small compared to later debates, the rebellion itself was significant, for as Teresa Gorman argued, it gave the Government a first glimpse of the potential depth of internal Party opposition to this Bill.⁸²

On 2 June 1992, the people of Denmark voted in a second referendum to reject the Maastricht Treaty. This was significant for the British Conservative Euro-sceptics, and indeed for the British Government because, without the assent of all EC member states, the Maastricht Treaty could not come into force.⁸³ Significantly, this checked the advance of the Bill, as the Government itself then needed time to procure further support from the British Parliament and time for negotiations with

⁷⁹ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

⁸⁰ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

⁸¹ Various reasons for this are given in the next and previous chapters.

⁸² Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 49.

⁸³ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 50.

the other heads of EC states.⁸⁴ This culminated in the decision of the Prime Minister to delay the committee stage of the Bill to allow a paving debate on the Treaty.⁸⁵ According to Mrs Gorman, the prospect of this debate excited the ardent Euro-sceptics of the Party.⁸⁶ It gave them more time to elicit support, both internal and external, against the Treaty and to increase their own ranks. Mrs Gorman claimed in fact that the Prime Minister's decision to allow the Paving debate was unnecessary and posed considerable risk to the Government's ability to get the Bill through Parliament.⁸⁷ The risk was that, if the Government were defeated in the lobbies on the Bill, they would be forced to drop the Maastricht Treaty. The possibility of this situation occurring was realistic, for whilst the Government may have thought they would have sufficient support from the Liberal Democrats, the risk was that the Labour Party would vote against the Bill in order to embarrass the Government.⁸⁸ For the Euro-sceptics of the CPP, whatever the reason for John Major's decision, it gave them, according to Mrs Gorman, a "heaven sent opportunity... to ditch the Bill once and for all."⁸⁹

The Paving Motion

Prior to the Paving debate, the FSG had an opportunity to demonstrate their strength and numbers during the emergency Commons debate held on 24 September over sterling's departure from the ERM. On the evening before the Commons debate, the chairman of the FSG tabled an EDM, which called for a 'fresh start' on the Government's economic policy. This EDM attracted seventy-one Conservative signatures.⁹⁰ The tabling of this EDM was significant because it demonstrated to both the Pro-Europeans of the CPP and its leadership that "real opposition to Maastricht, whether tacit or overt was still strong."⁹¹ During the debate over the Government's handling of the E.R.M crisis, the FSG were active. Four members of the group (Nicholas Budgen, Sir Teddy Taylor, John Wilkinson and Michael Spicer) challenged the Prime Minister during his speech through a number of interventions querying the Government's handling of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) crisis in September.⁹² Michael Spicer had also tabled a second EDM which more specifically "urged the Government to drop economic Union within Europe."⁹³

It was during the Paving motion that the activities of the Fresh Start Group crystallised. Throughout this debate, the group conclusively demonstrated to the CPP that they were an effective fighting force on European policy issues, and more importantly, had a realistic chance of defeating the Maastricht Bill. Although the rebels were unsuccessful in defeating the Bill at this stage, the

⁸⁴ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 51.

⁸⁵ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 51.

⁸⁶ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 50.

⁸⁷ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 102.

⁸⁸ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 102.

⁸⁹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 102.

⁹⁰ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 70.

⁹¹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 70.

⁹² Gorman, T "The Bastards" pp 79-81

⁹³ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 81.

narrowness of the Government's victory forced the Party leadership to doubt its ability to carry the Bill at every remaining stage of its debate.

On the eve of the Paving debate, the Fresh Start Group held a meeting to discuss their tactics, in order to try to defeat the Treaty the next day. The group was determined to keep secret its activities over strategies and planned tactics to be implemented the next day. They did this to try to increase their advantage over the Government by removing the element of uncertainty in the division lobbies. As a result, Michael Spicer requested that anyone present, who did not intend to oppose the Bill the next day, should leave the meeting before the proceedings commenced.⁹⁴ By the end of the meeting, thirty-two Conservative MPs had confirmed that they would oppose the Bill in the division lobbies the next day. Mrs Gorman has claimed that the group calculated that only twenty-six Conservative MPs needed to vote against the Bill to be sure of victory.⁹⁵ As it transpired, the group could not be confident of these numbers, as several of these MPs changed their minds during the course of the debates.⁹⁶

During the debate itself, the FSG members challenged the pro-Maastricht arguments made by both political parties. Only two members of the group, Tony Marlow and John Wilkinson made interruptions during the Prime Minister's speech.⁹⁷ During later debates, interruptions made by senior Party members during key speeches in defence of the Maastricht Bill became more frequent. The speech of the former Prime Minister, Sir Edward Heath, in support of the Maastricht Bill⁹⁸ also suffered from Conservative Euro-sceptic interruption,⁹⁹ as was the speech of the leader of the Liberal Party, Paddy Ashdown. As well as challenging the arguments made in support of the Bill, members of the FSG presented their own arguments in opposition to the Treaty, raising a number of general concerns and objections held within the Party.¹⁰⁰ Conservative Euro-sceptic, Sir Teddy Taylor for example claimed that the Maastricht Treaty should not be ratified without the consent of

⁹⁴ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 109. She believed a Government spy (unidentified at that stage) was present at the meeting.

⁹⁵ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 118.

⁹⁶ One such MP was Vivian Bendall, who Teresa Gorman claimed appeared at the meeting declaring that he would not vote for the Treaty, but in the end he "swooned like a love sick maiden when the time came in." Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 113.

⁹⁷ John Wilkinson corrected the Prime Minister on the issue of West European Union and Britain's defence interests Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 293, and Mr Marlow questioned the role of the Commission's powers Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 289. Bill Cash also attempted to make an interruption, Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 292.

⁹⁸ See Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 309-314.

⁹⁹ John Wilkinson, Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 311, and Tony Marlow, Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 311.

¹⁰⁰ The issues are covered in Chapter 3 in the content analysis of the debates. John Wilkinson claimed for example that "we cannot vote in this matter without the assent of the British people." He argued that "so many people allege that there is a democratic deficit in Europe. The democratic deficit is here in Westminster, and if we tonight, on behalf of the British people, allow this proposed Treaty on European Union to proceed, we will betray the trust which is ours." Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 355-6.

the British people.¹⁰¹ The tactic of calling for a referendum, during the debates had two aims. Firstly, by calling for a referendum on the Treaty, the Euro-sceptics directly brought into question the legitimacy and sufficiency of the Parliamentary vote on the Maastricht Bill, in which the House of Commons was engaged. Secondly, if they were successful in securing a referendum on the Treaty, it would force the decision into an arena in which the Euro-sceptics felt they had a better chance of winning.¹⁰²

Another tactic of the Euro-sceptics was to declare their voting intentions during the debate itself to demonstrate the commitment of their opposition to the Bill. Michael Cartiss, for instance, declared he would vote against the Labour Party amendment and the Government, and for a referendum.¹⁰³ When some peripheral Euro-sceptics announced that they would support the Government on this Bill,¹⁰⁴ the FSG sought to refute their arguments in defence of their own intentions. John Wilkinson for instance, implied that it was not possible to support the motion just because the Government was seeking to enhance their credibility at the Edinburgh Summit. He argued that the majority of twenty-one at second reading hardly equated to a support in the House for the Treaty and therefore found it unacceptable "for the Conservative Party to be made fools of," which he suggested would be the case if the motion were passed.¹⁰⁵

The verbal battles between the Government and the Conservative Euro-sceptics provided for a tense debate and the stakes for both sides were raised by rumours that the Prime Minister would call an election if the Government lost the vote.¹⁰⁶ Defeating the Paving debate was of great importance to the Conservative Maastricht rebels. The group believed that, if they had they been successful, the Government "would have had to go back to the drawing board."¹⁰⁷ Defeat for the rebels essentially came at the hands of the alleged vote of confidence,¹⁰⁸ which, according to one Conservative Euro-sceptic, meant that the 'goal posts' had been moved.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰¹ Sir Teddy Taylor Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 317. A number of the Conservative Euro-sceptics and members of the FSG also pressed for a referendum to be held on the Maastricht Treaty throughout all of the debates.

¹⁰² As was discussed in chapter three, many of the Euro-sceptics believed that the majority of the British public was opposed to the Maastricht Treaty. Bill Cash, a member of the FSG, made use of public opinion surveys during the debate to support the rebels' cause. He quoted a report in "Management Today", where 69% of its readership claimed that they wanted a referendum and 68% were opposed to the Treaty itself, Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 375. In the event that a referendum had taken place, which resulted in the public's support for the Treaty, many of the Euro-sceptics of the Party stated to the author that they would have accepted this decision and supported the Bill, as in their view, a true exercise of democratic principles would have taken place.

¹⁰³ Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 339.

¹⁰⁴ Rupert Allason, a Conservative Euro-sceptic stated that although he was opposed to the Maastricht Treaty he found it perfectly possible to support the Government on this motion. Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 357.

¹⁰⁵ Hansard 4 November 1992 Column 358.

¹⁰⁶ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 125, and as the author was advised by a number of Euro-sceptics.

¹⁰⁷ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁰⁸ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁹ Confidential Conservative MP to author.

Following their defeat on the Paving Bill, mixed feelings were evident amongst the Fresh Start Group.¹¹⁰ Generally, the group did not believe they were beaten at this stage.¹¹¹ The Fresh Start rebels learned a great deal from their strategies and tactics employed in this debate, to help them in future ones. Firstly, the narrowness of their victory reinforced the benefits to be brought from their collective opposition.¹¹² Their cohesion score in voting had more than doubled on this vote. The group achieved a high cohesion score of 83.9% on the Labour amendment and 87.5% on the main motion. Secondly, the group realised they could not rely on the votes of all those who stated that they would support the rebel line, whether at Fresh Start meetings or in the debate itself.¹¹³ Another lesson learned was that the physical proximity of Group Members in the House was paramount. During this debate the group had not sat together as a block, which allowed some of the Euro-sceptics to be persuaded against opposition by other members of the Party.¹¹⁴ Moreover, despite defeat, the threat of the FSG was abundantly clear to the Government by virtue of the narrowness of their victory.

Third reading

During the next few months, the FSG continued to oppose the Treaty during twenty-three days of committee proceedings, through oral argument on the floor of the House and by voting against the Government line in the division lobbies. After 204 hours of debate and 163 hours of committee debate,¹¹⁵ the final battle for the Euro-sceptics to defeat the Maastricht Treaty on Third reading had arrived. The Foreign Secretary defended the Government's position in the opening debate. He presented the concerns and fears of his Euro-sceptic fellow Party members as misguided¹¹⁶ and stated that the Bill would not lead to diminished Parliamentary democracy, which many of them feared.¹¹⁷ The Foreign Secretary, was forced during his speech, to listen to objections to his arguments by six leading Euro-rebels.¹¹⁸ In total, twelve members of the Fresh Start Group gave speeches during this debate in defence of their concerns. In addition, six Euro-sceptics made over thirteen interruptions to arguments to speeches in favour of ratifying the Bill made by members of their own Party and the opposition Parties. Fresh Start member Bill Cash even called on the former Prime Minister, Edward Heath, to repudiate part of the 1971 White paper on accession.¹¹⁹

Some of the rebels criticised the way they had been treated by their fellow members during the debates. Conservative MP Michael Cartiss, for example, referred to Sir Edward Heath's

¹¹⁰ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 139.

¹¹¹ See Gorman, T "The Bastards" pp 139-140.

¹¹² The Government secured victory by only 3 votes.

¹¹³ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 139. Michael Cartiss, Robert Jones and Vivian Bendall all supported the Government after declarations to the contrary to the House.

¹¹⁴ Teresa Gorman "The Bastards" p 139.

¹¹⁵ Douglas Hurd Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 381.

¹¹⁶ Douglas Hurd Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 389.

¹¹⁷ Douglas Hurd Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 389-90.

¹¹⁸ These were Sir Teddy Taylor, Nicholas Budgen, John Wilkinson, Tony Marlow, Richard Shepherd and Roger Knapman.

¹¹⁹ Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 406.

condemnation of them on the radio, and was reported as saying that "these people - meaning those of us opposed to Maastricht- are going to be hated for all time. Think what they have done to our Party."¹²⁰ The rebels also criticised the Labour Party for being, in their opinion, lapse in their job in providing opposition to the Bill. Nicholas Budgen MP claimed, for example, that "it is obvious that, throughout the proceedings, opposition Front-bench members have given the most full hearted support to the Government. All who support the Maastricht Treaty should understand that they have, in a most courageous way, abandoned the traditional role of opposition and have given the Government the most slavish support that has ever been seen."¹²¹

Throughout the debates, the Euro-sceptics of the CPP continued to justify their opposition, on the basis that they represented the majority view in the country on this Bill. Mr Cartiss stated for example, that as a Euro-sceptic, he was in the minority in the House, whilst the Prime Minister was in the minority in the country.¹²² As had occurred in the previous debates, some Fresh Start rebels announced publicly in the chamber that they would be opposing the Government in the 'no' lobbies.¹²³ This reassured fellow Fresh Start members of their continued support and encouraged fellow members on the bench, who were concerned about their respective abilities to oppose their Government in the lobbies. Euro-sceptic, Sir George Gardiner, stated that he could not support the Maastricht Treaty, although he had given his support both to Britain's accession and to the SEA, because of democratic and sovereignty arguments.¹²⁴ His speech summarised the objections of many of the Euro-sceptics, who felt that they could not support ratification of this Bill. Such speeches served as a reminder to those Euro-sceptics who remained seated and or undecided on the backbenches. Michael Spicer led another Euro-sceptic attack by seeking to refute the arguments of the Government that sought to commend the Maastricht Treaty to the House. He claimed for example, that, "subsidiarity seems to me to be the opposite of decentralisation...a single currency means a single country. The European Parliament is clear that, once Maastricht is passed, we shall move towards codification into a Union of Europe."¹²⁵

Concerns over possible recriminations against the Conservative Euro-sceptics, after the Bill had reached its conclusion, were openly evident in both speeches of 'pro' and 'anti' Europeans of the Party during the debate. The pro-Europeans were eager to put this spell of disunity hastily behind them. David Howell the Conservative MP for Guildford, argued that "I also dare to hope that ratification will provide us with an opportunity to unite the Conservative Party. I do not believe that the Euro-rebels should be hated for ever."¹²⁶ Sir George Gardiner, a senior member of the

¹²⁰ Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 436.

¹²¹ Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 398.

¹²² Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 435.

¹²³ These were Michael Cartiss, Sir George Gardiner and Michael Spicer.

¹²⁴ See Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 440-441 for summary of his arguments.

¹²⁵ Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 450-451.

¹²⁶ Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 426.

Conservative Party and a member of Fresh Start, also requested that, once the issue of Maastricht was resolved, the Euro-sceptics should not be hated and Party unity should be restored.¹²⁷

Third reading was the last opportunity for the Euro-sceptics to try to defeat the Bill. In numerical terms the Euro-sceptics had mounted their biggest opposition at this stage. The FSG also achieved their highest voting cohesion score in the whole of the Maastricht debates, obtaining a score of 98.2%.¹²⁸ Although the rebels were defeated, the Government's Bill was effectively saved by the support of the opposition parties. This substantial level of internal opposition to an external Treaty was politically significant, for, as Mrs Gorman claimed, "most Bills go through on the nod once they reach the third reading stage."¹²⁹

The Social Chapter

A complex twist of events gave the Euro-sceptics of the CPP one further opportunity to defeat the Maastricht Treaty. This came through the delayed vote on the Social Chapter clause. As was mentioned in Chapter two, the debate on the Social Chapter essentially split the Conservative Euro-sceptic rebels due to a tactical dilemma. This was reflected in their voting cohesion scores on this debate of 32.1% on the Labour amendment and 57.1% on the main motion. Their dilemma was that they could only really be sure of defeating the Government by voting for amendments that were even more pro-European and intergrationalist than the Maastricht Treaty and, in order to do so, they would have to align with the Liberal and Labour parties in the division lobbies. The Government, which was opposed to the inclusion of the Social Chapter within the Treaty, realised the predicament of the Euro-sceptics. Throughout the debate, they tried to persuade the Euro-sceptics of the incredibility of their position in aligning with the opposition parties on a motion, to which, in essence, they were totally opposed.

During his speech, the Prime Minister reminded the House that the Treaty of Maastricht had already received Royal assent and Parliament was no longer debating this Bill.¹³⁰ By reminding them that this Bill was on a separate issue, it is assumed that John Major hoped to split the rebels further and thus ensure support for the Government. The Prime Minister also stated that this Bill should not be "frustrated by one parliamentary motion expressing an opinion to the contrary."¹³¹ He claimed that, if the House were to vote for the Labour motion, then this would represent a "cynical and unscrupulous vote which does not represent the true will of the House. It is an alliance of different parties with different interests, voting for the same amendment for different purposes."¹³²

¹²⁷ Hansard 20 May 1993 Column 441.

¹²⁸ Except on the vote of confidence on the Social Chapter, where all of the 28 Fresh Start members supported the Government.

¹²⁹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 155.

¹³⁰ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 524.

¹³¹ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 524.

¹³² Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 524.

A number of the Conservative rebels could not, in their own conscience, vote in favour of the inclusion of this opt-out within the Treaty. Others saw that voting in favour of the Social Chapter represented one further opportunity to defeat the Maastricht Bill. This situation emerged because the Prime Minister had previously declared that he would not accept the Maastricht Treaty if the Social Chapter were included. By voting for the Social Chapter's inclusion a number of Euro-sceptics believed that, if victorious, they could force the Government to drop the Treaty. The Labour Party's proposed opposition to the exclusion of the Social Chapter induced rebellion among some of the Fresh Start rebels because they could rely on the opposition for numbers to defeat the Bill. Conversely, it served as a constraint for those Conservative MPs who felt they could no longer support the Fresh Start line, because they would be regarded by their constituencies and other colleagues within the CPP as deliberately siding with the opposition; a stance which could jeopardise the continuance of a Conservative Government. The decision to support the Social Chapter was therefore a calculated gamble by some of the Fresh Start members in the hope that, if victorious in the division lobbies, they could defeat the Maastricht treaty.

Party loyalty reached its peak during these debates. Peer pressure to support the Government was openly evident amongst the non-Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs during the debate. Conservative MP, Sir Cranley Onslow, for example, claimed the only reason the debate continued was because "an unholy alliance, on the part of some of my Honourable Friends, is seeking to wreck the Maastricht Treaty and prevent its ratification."¹³³ He declared the Labour amendment to be a "wrecking one" as was the objective of some Conservative members, to "leave the House without a resolution" so that the Government would be unable to ratify the Treaty.¹³⁴ Sir Cranley Onslow declared that the House should not be abused in this manner, given that there was a majority in the House for the Maastricht Bill. The FSG's response to this was through an interruption made by Sir Teddy Taylor, who retorted that there was not a majority "in the country."¹³⁵ According to Mrs Gorman, the Government acted out the debate on the Social Chapter as a series of "well rehearsed sub-plots."¹³⁶

¹³³ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 549.

¹³⁴ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 550.

¹³⁵ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 550.

¹³⁶ Teresa Gorman "The Bastards" p82.

The FSG were quickly faced with a serious situation. A number of their members deserted and publicly announced in the Commons their support for the Government.¹³⁷ Other Fresh Start members defended their position to vote against the Government. Nicholas Winterton, another hard core Fresh Start member, said that he had been reassured by the Prime Minister's statement of his vision on Europe during the debate, but still sought assurance that the Party leadership would not make any moves towards a single currency and there would be no possibility of Britain rejoining the ERM.¹³⁸ John Butcher MP explained his decision to the House to vote in favour of the first vote but against the main motion. He announced that his second vote was in fact a vote against the Social Chapter "I believe that in recording a vote against the Social Chapter I may do a little bit to delay the implementation of the Treaty. If we do not want the Social Chapter, let us wipe the protocol out by wiping out the Treaty."¹³⁹ He declared to the House his justification for his intended rebellion that evening, announcing that, when he joined the Labour Members, he would be joined by two ghosts 'Adam Smith' and 'Edmund Burke.' In respect of the latter he stated "as I put my head on my pillow tonight, I will say to him, "I did my little bit when they tried to put the lights out," and I shall sleep well."¹⁴⁰

Sir Teddy Taylor, a senior Euro-sceptic of the Party by virtue of his continued opposition to European policy Bills during the last two decades, reminded the House that, "it is 22 years ago this week that I have had the pleasure of resigning from a Conservative Government to oppose this country joining the EC." To assist some of his Euro-sceptic colleagues in their opposition, he claimed that his arguments in opposition to Britain's entry to the EC in the early 1970's were only now being borne out. He mentioned the adverse affects on trade and the undermining of the Anglo-American alliance and claimed that, democracy would be further undermined.¹⁴¹ He declared he was in favour of the Social Chapter, stating that "it will not be possible to ratify the Treaty until the Government say they want to sign the Social Chapter."¹⁴² In an attempt to increase the support of the remaining Euro-sceptics in the Party who were concerned about voting for the Social Chapter, he argued that there was little need for concern because the Chancellor had already declared the

¹³⁷ Michael Lord was one such member. Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 185. See also Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 523 & 582 for his reasons for doing so. John Carlisle, another Euro-sceptic, followed suit and announced that he would support the Government. Mr Carlisle did allow his colleagues in the FSG an explanation for his decision to join the Government, which was based on constituency interests, despite the fact that he remained opposed to the Maastricht treaty. He even declared to the House that he had been asked by a 'wag' whether he felt like 'Judas Iscariot'. He went on to state that "I have received no pieces of silver, but if my body is found floating down the Thames at 10.15, so be it - although the whips were anxious to make sure it was 10.15 and not 9.15, so that I could be here to vote for the Government." Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 563-564. Whilst maybe in jest, this speech belied the enormous pressure the Conservative Euro-sceptics were under from both the Conservative Government and the Fresh Start Group to support each side.

¹³⁸ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 528. The Prime Minister responded to this stating that he did "not envisage that we shall be able to move towards a single currency in anything like the time scale previously set out."

¹³⁹ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 577.

¹⁴⁰ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 579.

¹⁴¹ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 558 for details of speech.

¹⁴² Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 558.

Government's intention never to "sign" it.¹⁴³ He pointed out that "is it not the ideal thing for someone to vote for who does not like the Maastricht Treaty?"¹⁴⁴ He further questioned the right of the House to agree to such a Treaty, which "surrenders vast powers of our democracy, without consultation of the British people" - a theme which was very dear to the heart of many Euro-sceptics.¹⁴⁵

Alongside the verbal battles during the debate itself, the battles between the Government and the FSG continued off the floor of the House. Pressures to support each side continued to be mounted on 'wobbly' Euro-sceptics by both the Government and Fresh Start hard core members.¹⁴⁶ Both sides knew that the outcome would be a close call. The FSG believed, however, that they had a 'secret weapon', in Bill Walker MP, who had been ill during the end of the Maastricht Treaty debates and therefore absent from the Commons.¹⁴⁷ Although Bill Walker came under pressure from the Government whips to return to the chamber to support the Government, the whips did not expect his attendance and had paired him. It was the plan of the FSG to bring Bill Walker to vote against the Bill in the lobbies at the last minute to increase their numbers.¹⁴⁸

The first vote of the evening, on the Labour amendment to reject the Government's decision to exclude the Social Chapter from the Maastricht Treaty, was tied. Parliamentary precedent in the event of a tie subsequently defeated the Government, since the speaker of the House cast her deciding vote with the noes. The Government then lost the crucial vote, division 359, that the Government should accept the Treaty of Maastricht with the exception of the Social Chapter, by eight votes. The Euro-sceptics of the CPP were over-joyed, for they believed that they had managed to defeat the Maastricht Treaty by securing victory on this vote.

Immediately after the vote, the Government held an emergency Cabinet meeting. The decision was made to table an immediate vote of confidence in the Government. The Prime Minister stated that, whilst there was not a majority in the House to join the Social Chapter, there was one for the Maastricht Treaty and appealed to those members of the House, notably the members of the opposition, to rethink their stance. He then declared a vote of confidence in the Conservative Government would be held the next day.¹⁴⁹ This decision of the Party leadership was a dramatic turn of events for the Euro-sceptics. The view of the Euro-sceptics at this outcome was one of

¹⁴³ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 558.

¹⁴⁴ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 558.

¹⁴⁵ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 558.

¹⁴⁶ These pressures are discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁷ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 197 claimed Bill Walker was angry at the "plots his fellow Conservatives had been hatching against him" and had lost his place on the Scottish backbench committee, as well as being pressurised by the chairman of the Scottish Conservatives to vote for the Government on the Paving Bill.

¹⁴⁸ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 199.

¹⁴⁹ Hansard 22 July 1993 Column 610-11.

incredulity. They felt that, yet again, the Government had moved the goal posts.¹⁵⁰ The stakes to be played for remained the same, but the risks to the Euro-sceptics had changed dramatically, for the vote the next day was no longer just about ratification of the Social Chapter, but also the very survival of the Conservative Party in power. For many Euro-sceptics within the CPP, this was a risk they were not prepared to take.¹⁵¹

The vote of confidence: - 23 July 1993

In the run up to the debate, the members of the FSG, who had voted against the Government the day before, met frequently to discuss their options during the next day. During the morning of the debate the Fresh Start Group called a meeting to discuss their voting intentions and opinions, now that a vote of confidence in the Government was in place. Some attendees at this meeting had voted with the Government the day before and they were asked to leave.¹⁵² Once these converts had left the meeting, the Group assessed their options. The Fresh Start rebels considered they had been defeated, not by virtue of the Government's arguments during the debates in persuading members of the House, but by the threat of a Labour Government following a general election.¹⁵³ Sir Richard Body investigated whether the Government's action was illegal, as it was trying to overturn a decision made by the House.¹⁵⁴ The group investigated the possibility of pursuing this strategy of going to the Courts to delay and/or obtain a writ, but failed due to lack of support within the group.¹⁵⁵ The group decided the Government might still be worried about the uncertainty of the rebel decision and may, as a result, be prepared to offer concessions to the group in the face of this threat.¹⁵⁶

At this point in the proceedings the rebels believed that they still held the upper hand. Mrs Gorman claimed, for example, that "we had them over a barrel and their jobs were on the line, there'd hardly be any of them left if we had a general election."¹⁵⁷ The rebels eventually acquiesced in the light of constituency pressure during the morning and because they did not want to risk the possibility of a Labour Government. The group had to satisfy themselves with what they believed was a moral victory, won the day before. Mrs Gorman claimed, for example, that "we won the victory the day before. The Government then, out of their pique and petulance, made it a vote of confidence. Now at that stage, we simply were not able to organise our colleagues into a fighting force. There was no

¹⁵⁰ Teresa Gorman claimed, for example, that she could not believe this outcome, for "ten minutes ago we had won the battle for Maastricht. Now the Prime Minister was moving the goal posts... we were back to square one." Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 207.

¹⁵¹ This is discussed further in the next chapter.

¹⁵² See Gorman, T "The Bastards" pp 215-217 for further details.

¹⁵³ As advised by a number of Conservative rebels to the author. See also Mrs Gorman's account "The Bastards" pp 216-217.

¹⁵⁴ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 217.

¹⁵⁵ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 218.

¹⁵⁶ Teresa Gorman claimed that Michael Spicer met with both Richard Ryder and the Foreign Secretary during the day to try to procure a concession of no recriminations for the Fresh Start Group Members. Gorman, T "The Bastards" pp 226-228.

¹⁵⁷ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 227.

point in not voting on the confidence motion unless we could pull it off."¹⁵⁸ Indeed, she argued that to continue their rebellion would have rendered them outcasts. She argued, sometimes "it's important not to be expunged, because when you're on the inside you can keep up the battle. Once they've thrown you out, that is it. None of us wanted to cause an election of course."¹⁵⁹

The threat of a Labour Government would usually be sufficient to prevent many Conservatives from rebelling on policy. For the Euro-sceptics however, the threat of a Labour Government represented much more than losing power,¹⁶⁰ for the overriding objection to a Labour Government was their belief that a Labour Government would be more pro-European and intergrationist than their own Government. The threat of a pro-Europe Labour Government conversely acted as a focus for rebellion until the last vote on the Social Chapter, where the Euro-sceptics could not be sure they could win in the division, given that a vote of confidence was attached to this debate. The Euro-sceptics were left, therefore, with little choice but to attempt to check their own Government's policy on Europe and conduct their battle within the confines of their own Parliamentary Party. The Conservative Government was also relatively safe in the knowledge that ultimately, the Euro-sceptics would not risk the prospect of a Labour Government on a vote of confidence on this debate.

It was almost immediately apparent in the Commons that, the Government would secure the support of its Euro-sceptic members. As unlike the preceding debates on the Treaty during the last few years, only a few of the hard core Fresh Start members made speeches. Of the Euro-sceptics that did speak during the debates, many tried to clarify their position and remind the House of their arguments and principles, for which they had fought over the last two years.¹⁶¹ Bill Cash was one MP who declared his support for the Government during the debate, despite his abhorrence of the Treaty. He claimed that he was not prepared to let the opposition or a coalition of the opposition parties, manage the country on European affairs, which he believed would be "ten times worse."¹⁶²

The Government won their vote of confidence, on the first vote on the labour amendment with a majority of 38 (Ayes 301 Noes 339) and on the second vote on the main question by a majority of 40 (Ayes 339 Noes 299). At the meeting before the Fresh Start members returned to the Chamber for the vote, their Chairman, Michael Spicer, declared "the Government has overplayed its hand on the vote of confidence card. This is the second time he has done it. How many times can a Prime Minister threaten to resign and still be elected?"¹⁶³ He went on to state that "he can't pull this one again for a long time...in 1996 at the next European conference we can fight again...the tide is with

¹⁵⁸ Teresa Gorman to author – November 1994.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with author - November 1994.

¹⁶⁰ As will be argued in the next chapter, it was the fear of a Labour Government that conclusively prevented the rebellion of Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs on this vote.

¹⁶¹ Hansard 23 July 1993 Column 680.

¹⁶² Hansard 23 July 1993 Column 682.

¹⁶³ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 230.

us. We have only to come together again to generate fear in the Cabinet."¹⁶⁴ However, as was seen only 16 months later, the Government was prepared to use a vote of confidence again to defeat the Euro-sceptics over the European Finance Bill of November 1994.

Conclusion: The Success of the Fresh Start Group

In terms of defeating the Treaty the Fresh Start Group failed. The group however regarded themselves as successful, in that they altered the way Conservative Party politics is usually conducted. This group conclusively showed that an organised group of backbenchers could realistically challenge the Government on policy and in this instance, its European policy. In fact the activities of the Fresh Start Group showed how such a group could pose a real obstacle to the Government in achieving its policy objectives. The hard core of the Fresh Start Group were persistent in their attempts to prevent ratification of the Maastricht Treaty at almost all costs. Other Euro-sceptics in the Party were not prepared to go to such lengths, because they did not want to stop the Government from pursuing its other business. Their decision, in some instances, was also influenced by the fact that some MPs wanted to remain as Conservative MPs and, essentially, in power. The formation and activity of the Fresh Start Group as a faction within the CPP over the Maastricht debates demonstrates that Conservative Party policy on Europe is not conclusively determined by its leader.¹⁶⁵ A change has occurred within the Party, whereby MPs, now and in the future, may demonstrate their readiness to openly challenge Government policy and express their dissent, to such an extent that the respective policy is threatened.

As will be seen in the next chapter, many of the constraints imposed by the Government actually helped the group to remain cohesive during the debates. In many instances, these constraints failed to work because the group forum offered refuge and mutual support for the dissenting Conservative MPs.¹⁶⁶ The group's ability to sustain itself was helped by the fact that the group's membership was larger than previous gatherings in the Party. Although there was a cohesive hard core, more MPs were freely able to join the group and maintain loose membership. The group was also assisted by money and other resources at its disposal.¹⁶⁷

Another feature, which added to the success of the group, was that they set out to oppose the whole Treaty not just parts of it. The ability of the group to challenge the Government at every single debate on the Bill kept the Government on the defence throughout the duration of the Bill. Mr

¹⁶⁴ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 230.

¹⁶⁵ As is often still perceived. As was discussed on p 30, it is not the formal authority of the party leadership for determining party policy which has changed, but the increasing willingness of Conservative MPs to oppose party policy.

¹⁶⁶ Sir Richard Body suggested that constituency pressures were not as great as they had been in the 1970's, nor did they have Conservative agents working against them in their constituencies as occurred in the 1970's. He believed this made it easier to keep the group together.

¹⁶⁷ Again this was a different situation to the 1970's. Sir Richard Body claimed that in the 1970's, MPs used to have £600 a year, from which they had to pay out secretarial expenses and postage expenses. In the 1990's they had much more backing in terms of research. The rebel MPs in the 1970's also did not have the individual research assistants, which they had in the 1990's.

Hawksley suggested that usually "MPs seek to oppose only a part of the Bill, not the whole of it," and that the norm for an individual who is thinking of opposing, is to consult a Minister. He argued however that, usually if they do decide to rebel, they "do it on one issue and one issue only."¹⁶⁸

The success of the Fresh Start Group ultimately lay in its organisation. It was more organised than any other dissident grouping, in the Conservative Parliamentary Party, during the post war period, in that it had a clear division of labour and a whipping system. One MP commented that previously there had been a "whole lot of interests groups, but there's never been before, that I can remember, a system where they've done really a whipping system."¹⁶⁹ The group believed their success was enhanced by their ability to keep their activities secret during the debates, especially from the press. One MP claimed that "more important than worrying about the whips was keeping our group's deliberations from lobby correspondents and in this, I think we were successful."¹⁷⁰ The group was aware, however, that on occasions Government "spies" infiltrated their meetings. These persons, who in the mean time would have revealed the activities and plans of the group, were eventually identified.¹⁷¹

Many Conservative MPs, and especially the Government, hoped however that this display of organised opposition to the Maastricht Treaty by an intra-party grouping would be an ephemeral occurrence in the annals of Conservative Party history. This was not the case as the activities of the Fresh Start Group have ensured that a new path has been forged for organised opposition within the Conservative Parliamentary Party. This had immediate consequences for the debate on the European Communities Finance Bill in November 1994.

Opposition to the European Communities Finance Bill November 1994: Strategies and Tactics.

On the Tuesday evening prior to the debate, a meeting was held by twenty-five Conservative Euro-sceptics (many of whom were Fresh Start members) to discuss the forthcoming Bill. Fifteen of the Conservative MPs who attended this Fresh Start meeting signed a 'rebel' amendment to the Bill.¹⁷² This amendment served a number of purposes. The first aim was to establish a list of those who would be prepared to defy the Government. This was particularly important, since it enabled potential rebels to identify themselves by initially making a small public stand. It was additionally significant given the mounting pressures to which they were subjected. A second objective was to "express confidence in the Government."¹⁷³ This was an important self-sustaining move, since a

¹⁶⁸ Warren Hawksley to author - September 1995.

¹⁶⁹ Warren Hawksley to author - September 1995.

¹⁷⁰ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 59.

¹⁷¹ Sir Teddy Taylor to author – September 1995 and see also Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 109.

¹⁷² The Financial Times "Finance Bill set to test Euro-sceptics resolve" 25 November 1994. This article suggested the following Members were likely to sign this amendment drafted by Bill Cash: Sir Teddy Taylor, Tony Marlow, Christopher Gill, Sir Richard Body, Bill Walker, John Wilkinson, John Carlisle, Edward Leigh, Teresa Gorman, Richard Shepherd, Sir Trevor Skeet and Nicholas and Ann Winterton.

¹⁷³ The Guardian "Killer amendment" 25 November 1994.

number of the Euro-sceptics wished to clarify to the public and, indeed their colleagues, that except on this particular issue, they supported the Government. Again, this was essential for their credibility amidst the ferocious cries of many Conservatives that they were trying to wreck the Conservative Party. Finally, they wished to prevent further funds flowing to Europe before the Court of Auditors and the Public Accounts Committees had assessed the level of Britain's contributions.¹⁷⁴

The amendment was not selected for debate.¹⁷⁵ This was not, however, the aim of the Euro-sceptics, whose intentions were firstly to publicise the reasons for their opposition and secondly, according to the press, "to provide an opportunity for Labour... to maximise the potential vote against the Government by adapting the rebels' tone and language."¹⁷⁶ If this was their aim, they were successful as Tony Blair, leader of the opposition, tabled an opposition amendment.¹⁷⁷ The sceptics' reliance on the Labour Party to table the amendment may not have acted in their favour however, as the content of the amendment dissuaded some sceptics from signing it.¹⁷⁸

Equally, the wording of Bill Cash's amendment dissuaded some potential signatures from his Euro-sceptic camp. Michael Cartiss was one such MP who did not sign the amendment "because it began by declaring a vote of confidence in the Government. I don't feel any such confidence."¹⁷⁹ Another MP tactically refused to sign this amendment since he thought, "the more the whips are kept uncertain, the better."¹⁸⁰

If the rebels were to succeed in defeating the Bill, they needed to defeat the Government in the first vote, on the Labour amendment, for two reasons. Firstly, Parliament does not allow the same Bill to be re-tabled in the same year. If the rebels could defeat the Bill at this stage they would in effect delay the "implementation of the increased contributions until 1996."¹⁸¹ More importantly however, as was discussed in Chapter two, the Government made the decision to make the vote on this bill a vote of confidence in the Government.

¹⁷⁴ The Guardian "Killer amendment" 25 November 1994.

¹⁷⁵ According to an article in the Financial Times "The Euro-sceptics know that the amendment is unacceptable to the Government because it would set up a mechanism making it impossible for the Government to give the EU guarantees that payments would be made when they became due. "Battle of the amendments will stretch Commons nerves." 25 November 1994.

¹⁷⁶ The Financial Times "Battle of the amendments will stretch Commons nerves" 25 November 1994.

¹⁷⁷ The amendment was tabled on 24 November 1994 and sought to refute the Bill on the premise that the Government was trying to increase Britain's contributions without first rectifying the perceived issue of fraud within the EC. For further details see, The Guardian "Killer amendment" 25 November 1994.

¹⁷⁸ As advised by a confidential Conservative MP.

¹⁷⁹ The Sunday Telegraph "Suicide Pact...and" 27 November 1994.

¹⁸⁰ The Financial Times "Finance Bill set to test Euro-sceptic resolve" 25 November 1994.

¹⁸¹ The Financial Times "Battle of the amendments will stretch Commons nerves" 25 November 1994.

In the sixteen months following the conclusion of the Maastricht Treaty, a number of the Party's Euro-sceptics continued to try to influence the development of the Government's European policy. A Euro-sceptic organisation, The European Foundation was formed. The aim of this organisation is "to mount a vigorous and constructive campaign in the United Kingdom and throughout Europe for the reform of the EC as a community of independent sovereign states."¹⁸² Under the banner of this organisation, a number of the Maastricht Euro-sceptics published a number of pamphlets on the development of European policy. In the run up to the European finance debate, two former members of the FSG, Christopher Gill and Teresa Gorman, published a pamphlet "Not a penny more", which delineated the Conservative Euro-sceptic position on the European Communities Finance Bill. The aims of this pamphlet, were twofold. The first aim was to 'educate' the British people as to how much the UK's contribution to the EU was already costing.¹⁸³ The second objective was to "explain what would happen to the extra money that they were being asked to put forward." To achieve this, they dispatched the pamphlet to every Conservative association in the country. The fact that these two MPs personally financed the production of this pamphlet revealed their determination to get their views on the European Finance Bill across to the Conservative public. The pamphlet, once again, created tension amongst Pro-Europeans of the Conservative Parliamentary Party. Voices were heard from amongst their ranks that this pamphlet represented little more than a "a manifesto for an alternative European Party." Mr Gill flatly denied this allegation. "I am not in the business of setting up a new Party or engineering a leadership contest... I am trying to get the Conservative Party to adopt Conservative policies to appeal to Conservative voters."¹⁸⁴

The rebels made much use of the media to make public statements and appearances during the run up to the debate. The group of nine rebels who later lost the Conservative whip, particularly used this forum by appearing regularly on the BBC's "News-night", local chat shows and radio broadcasts, and continued to do so after the debate. For the rebels, this had the wider impact of directly delivering to Conservatives in the country, a justification for their intended opposition during the course of the Bill. This served also to give them tremendous support and courage in their conviction to actually oppose the Government amidst all the fervour at Westminster. Publicity was thus regarded as vital for the success of the rebels, in opposing more money being sent to Brussels.

One strategy of the rebels was to denounce the vote of confidence itself. The rebels knew that, if they defied the Government in the lobbies, they risked losing the whip. Despite this, they were still prepared to defy the Government. By publicly demonstrating to the Government that they were prepared to lose the Party whip, the rebel Euro-sceptics therefore changed the dimensions of intra-

¹⁸² Extract from the "European Journal" published by the European Foundation, London.

¹⁸³ Teresa Gorman to author - November 1994. She suggested the cost was in the region of seven million pounds.

¹⁸⁴ Christopher Gill as reported in The Daily Telegraph "Not a penny more plea over EU cost" 29 November 1994.

party dissent. Whether or not the rebels would lose the whip if they did rebel, was of course in the hands of the Party leadership. The decision was solely theirs whether to make this threat effective. There was, in fact, some speculation by some rebels and other Party members, whether the Party leadership would actually carry out its threat to a group of rebels as opposed to an individual MP, particularly in view of the Government's already slim Parliamentary majority. One MP did not believe, for example, that they would do so. Both sides pushed each other to the brink in their battle to secure victory on this Bill. In contrast to all the other European debates however, Sir Richard Body MP, whilst supporting the Government in the lobbies, resigned the Party whip, in opposition to the Bill and in protest at what he regarded as the Government's strong arm tactics to induce Party consent on this Bill.¹⁸⁵ The repercussions of the Government's decision to withdraw the Party whip left many Euro-sceptics bewildered and angered, a factor which the rebels were able to use to their advantage in their negotiations with the Government in their period in the wilderness.

The eight rebels who opposed the Bill made particular use of the Commons floor during the debate to re-emphasise their opposition. Nicholas Budgen claimed the Government was trying to "bash the Bill through."¹⁸⁶ Sir Teddy Taylor issued a warning to his colleagues that if they supported the Government they would be in danger of losing every battle against the European Communities.¹⁸⁷ The speeches of these MPs may have played a vital part in helping to persuade other potential Conservative rebel opponents to side with them during the Bill, since many of the rebels did not make their decision until the debate itself. John Carlisle was one such MP, who said, "I didn't actually make up my mind until literally the vote itself took place."¹⁸⁸

The fact that the rebels abstained instead of voting against the Bill was a tactical decision. In order to defeat the Government on the Bill, together with the opposition parties, the rebels needed either eighteen Conservative MPs to oppose or 36 to abstain. The rebels believed that abstaining on the vote was their best chance of enlisting as many MPs as possible to support them.¹⁸⁹ There were two sideline factors, which assisted the rebels and further embarrassed the Government. Firstly, Mrs Gorman won the opportunity on 24 November 1994 to table legislation. Subsequently she introduced a Private Member's Bill to call for a referendum on Europe, which she claimed, was supported by all the rebels.¹⁹⁰ The second bonus for the rebels was the leaking of the Central Office report, the "Maple Memorandum", which revealed that Central Office sources found that former Conservative voters regarded the Government as "ineffectual and unable to deliver promises."¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ During the Suez debates, eleven conservative MPs resigned the Conservative Whip. According to Jackson, sixteen Conservatives resigned the Whip between 1945-1964. Jackson, R "Rebels and Whips" 1968, London, Macmillan pp 229-10.

¹⁸⁶ The Daily Telegraph "Clarke appeals to 'duty and loyalty' of Euro-rebels" 29 November 1994.

¹⁸⁷ The Times "Rebel Rouser Lamont seizes torch of Euro-scepticism" 29 November 1994.

¹⁸⁸ John Carlisle to author - November 1994.

¹⁸⁹ The Sunday Telegraph "Lamont set to challenge Major" 27 November 1994.

¹⁹⁰ Teresa Gorman to author - January 1996.

¹⁹¹ The Sunday Telegraph. "Suicide Pact ...and" 27 November 1994.

The rebels' opposition to this Bill received the support of a wider group of Euro-sceptics, who did not intend to oppose the Government in the lobbies. During the debate itself, for example, a number of Maastricht rebels continually denounced the Bill. Peter Riddell has compared the manner of their actions as being similar to that which they displayed during the Maastricht debates. "It was preceded by lots of noise, from ministers warning of the importance of the vote and from rebels parading their consciences and protesting about strong arm tactics by the whips and Central Office."¹⁹² For some of these members, this avenue allowed them to voice their concerns, and alleviated the uneasiness felt by those who subsequently voted with the Government. As will be seen in the next chapter, the ability of an MP to oppose a Government Bill was limited by a variety of institutional and non-institutional considerations.

The rebels' battle was assisted by the public condemnation of John Major's strong-arm tactics in the run up to the debate, by the former chancellor, Mr Norman Lamont. Mr Lamont did not join the abstaining Euro-rebels, allegedly because he did not want to disrupt a key piece of Government legislation, which he himself had agreed to at the Edinburgh Summit.¹⁹³ The seniority of Mr Lamont, lent great weight to the credibility of the rebels' stance and opposition. Mr Lamont argued, for example, that "a conscripted army never fights as well as an army of volunteers, and the Conservative Party is an army of volunteers. We should have the confidence to set out the issues and debate them before our future is thrown into the melting pot in 1996."¹⁹⁴ The impact of his speech for the rebels' position cannot be understated. The next day, the press reported that so powerful was his speech, that Mr Lamont had personally launched himself as a potential leader of the rebels.¹⁹⁵

Whatever the reasons which finally made up the minds of the Euro-sceptics of the Conservative Party as to which way they would vote, the immediate result was to re-open deep wounds in the Party on the issue of Europe. As Riddell has stated, "the crisis in the Tory Party is real. Anyone listening to and watching, yesterday's debate can have been left in no doubt about the Party's deep fissures."¹⁹⁶ The outcome of this debate was dramatic in terms of Conservative Party history. The cleavages within the Party that had been forged during the last few years left a permanent scar on the nature and conduct of Conservative Party politics for the rest of the year. During the course of the next year, the group of nine rebels applied continuous pressure on their Party leadership to adopt a more Euro-sceptic stance. In this area, the rebels believed they achieved some success. Through their sustained opposition to European legislation, they believed they raised the level of Euro-scepticism within the Party. One article in the press claimed, for instance, that "what makes

¹⁹² The Times "A leader bruised and bloodied but still not beaten" 29 November 1994.

¹⁹³ The Times "Rebel Rouser Lamont seizes torch of Euro-scepticism." 29 November 1994.

¹⁹⁴ Hansard 28 November 1994 Column 962.

¹⁹⁵ The Times "Rebel Rouser Lamont seizes torch of Euro-scepticism" 29 November 1994.

¹⁹⁶ Times "A leader bruised and bloodied but still not beaten" 29 November 1994.

the events of last week even more bizarre is that the orthodoxy of the Conservative Party has moved to being Euro-sceptic."¹⁹⁷

Conclusion

Across the span of the four case studies, all modes of dissent identified by Norton (Table 6.1) were used at some point by the Conservative Euro-sceptics in opposition to the Bills. It is not possible to say that one mode of dissent was more effective than any other. In every case study, the rebels failed to defeat the respective European Bill. In addition, defeating the bill was not the aim of all rebels. The cumulative effect of all these methods enabled the rebels to be successful in demonstrating opposition. Voting against the Bill, was potentially the tactic most likely to be successful in trying to defeat the Bill and/or influence the content or progression of the Bill through Parliament. All other methods of dissent were used by the Euro-rebels' to try to influence public opinion on the issues and establish support for their rebellion. Pursuing opposition collectively greatly enhanced the ability of the rebels to sustain their opposition throughout the Bills duration and to continually threaten ratification at almost every stage (except for the SEA). Collective opposition of the 1971-2 Conservative Euro-sceptics was minimal. Nonetheless, the opposition of these rebels formed the seeds for future Euro-sceptic collective opposition to European policy Bills. Opposition to the EC Bill during the 1971-2 EC debates demonstrated the various mechanisms through which future rebellion over Government European policy could be orchestrated, whether to exert influence over policy or attempt its defeat. The Maastricht rebels subsequently utilised these mechanisms in their attempt to defeat the Maastricht Treaty. Although the FSG failed to prevent ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, their organised opposition conclusively demonstrated to the rest of the CPP, their considerable strength and ability to threaten the defeat of future European Bills or influence issues such as the Inter-Governmental Conference of 1996.¹⁹⁸ The Group, as one FSG rebel claimed, "made enough progress and ... enough noise to influence others" so that "when the real big fish comes up in 1996, the Government will find it extremely difficult to go ahead without some form of opinion from the British people."¹⁹⁹ Not every rebel MP opposed the Bills to the same degree or even in the same way. The decision of every MP on how to conduct opposition was influenced by a number of institutional and non-institutional factors and this forms the focus of the next chapter.

¹⁹⁷ The Sunday Telegraph "This is no way to run a Government" 4 December 1994. In the same article, it was reported that another MP suggested that recent Conservative administrations are composed of able men, who do not have the independence of their own financial backing. As a consequence, he argued that, "they've got no money and are therefore not independent. They've always had to look over their shoulder and ponder the consequences of their own actions. They could be slung out of the House if the machine moved against them." This suggests that the Party machinery may have had to change the way it operates in controlling the incidence of internal dissidence and a change in the style of Party politics. As a consequence, this may also constrain the ability of the Party leadership to push its policies through, as they may be susceptible to pressure from differing interest groups.

¹⁹⁸The Fresh Start Group's ability to influence others at the IGC had intensified by May 1996, when the Conservative majority stood at 1.

¹⁹⁹ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994. Big Fish refers to the Inter-Governmental Conference of 1996.

CHAPTER 7
CONSTRAINTS TO AND IMPETUS FOR
CONSERVATIVE EURO-SCEPTIC OPPOSITION

Introduction

In Chapter one, I suggested that intra-party opposition to a policy Bill will always be constrained by a number of internal and external factors. Internal Parliamentary pressures include the Party machinery, Party leadership, Party loyalty, Party colleagues and the size of the Government's parliamentary majority in the House of Commons. External Parliamentary pressures emanate from Constituency Associations, public opinion, a Party's need to project an image of unity to win elections and personal considerations of an MP such as career aspirations.¹ This chapter analyses the constraints involved in determining both the ability of Conservative Euro-sceptic MP's to oppose the four policy Bills of this study, and the way their opposition was expressed. Since opposition was not constantly expressed by all the Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs to the same degree throughout the debates, this Chapter seeks to examine whether the various factors resulted in a diminution of intra-party opposition and whether any of the variables were more effective than any other.² The ability of these factors to constrain the opposition of an MP is determined also, by external circumstances and events at any one time. These variables can act separately or cumulatively in determining whether an MP is willing, in principle, to oppose legislation, whether through individual or collective activity. These various constraints also affect the intensity of opposition expressed. The above areas of discussion are conducted on both an individual and group level and the various constraints are discussed as separate variables. It should be remembered that an interplay of these factors occurs in practice.

This Chapter will also consider how factors, which are regarded as constraints, can fuel opposition. I will also claim that the operation of the above constraints helps to characterise factional activity. As I will demonstrate in the discussion on votes of confidence, the Euro-sceptic rebel groups of the CPP are a faction as opposed to a split, because, to date, they have succumbed and have not allowed a Conservative Government to be defeated on votes of confidence related to its European policy. As intra-party independent and organised collective opposition occurred within the CPP over the four case studies, it would appear that the above constraints were limited in restricting the rebellious Conservative MP. These constraints failed to work effectively in most instances, because there is something peculiar about the European issue. That is, most of the hard core rebels believed that when voting on this issue, the national interest came before that of their party.

¹ This study only considers constraints when the CPP is in office. It is not assumed that constraints will necessarily be the same or yield the same influence when a Party is in opposition.

² Within this Chapter, some constraints are introduced by a general introduction, which is followed by an examination of the constraint in each case study. For some constraints, the factor is discussed generally throughout the four case studies, without specific case study headings.

1. The Conservative Party Whips

The role of Parliamentary Party Whips in any governing party is to ensure support for Government policy, to enable both ratification and enactment of its legislation. In this role, Whips act as disciplinarians of the Party; as a mechanism for maintaining some semblance of order in an MP's busy parliamentary life, and as chains of communication between the front and back benches of a parliamentary party.³ As a result, discourse between Whips and their Party Members is an established practice in party political life. Precedent exists within this relationship, where it is usual for an MP to inform their Whip of any intended opposition to a particular piece of legislation. Such communication is both natural and expected, in order that Whips can successfully manage the Government's policy agenda and communicate with the other Parliamentary parties in activities such as pairing. These activities occur over the passage of every Bill through the Commons and become more prominent when a key piece of legislation for the Government is debated.

If an MP has an objection to Government policy, the respective MP traditionally informs the Party Whips of their concerns and intended stance. An MP may express his opposition in the lobbies against the Government by abstaining or voting against the Bill, or by making his dissatisfaction known by speaking to the Whips privately or commenting in the debate itself. The Whips may simply accept this, try to alter the MP's decision, or try to limit the extent of their opposition by requesting an abstention as opposed to a vote against. Attempts to influence potential rebel MPs by the Whips usually becomes more intense when the Party leadership imposes a three line Whip, or when it is thought that the Government may encounter difficulties in securing the approval of the Commons for its legislation. As I will argue later, Whips also apply more pressure when the Government's majority is small. In such circumstances, the Whips perform an important task by identifying where Government policy could be defeated in the division lobbies. As intra-party opposition intensifies over a Bill, so too does the coercion of the Whips. When this occurs, the above channels of communication over intended voting behaviour or opposition often collapse.

Parliamentary Party Whips have a number of strategies at their disposal in their attempts to secure Party support for policy. The first of these is moral pressure, whereby the Whips claim that the Government needs the support of an MP in the division lobbies on a particular Bill. As I have suggested previously, on European Treaty Bills, the Government was committed by international agreement to ratify them in their entirety. It is imperative in such circumstances, that when such Bills pass through the Commons, Party Whips try to prevent defeat on amendments or attempts to adjust the overall policy. On occasions, a deal may be struck, where in return for support on one

³ For example, Whips ensure that MPs are informed when they should vote, what votes are coming up and when an MP's support is needed in the lobbies. Norton has claimed that the disciplinarian role of the Whips in the 1970 parliament in general was marginal. He identified three main roles of the Whips to achieve Party cohesion: Communicators, Managers and Persuaders. See Norton. P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 163-168 for detailed discussion. The latter of these three roles, he described as "primarily concerned with intra-party dissent," p 165. As Norton also observed however, in ensuring party cohesion, the Whips can only ensure "the cohesion of those who wish to be cohesive" p 173.

Bill, an MP may negotiate some return, which for instance, may be of importance to his constituency. Such deals may be imperative in the calculation of an MP whether to oppose a Bill. An MP may even be calculating enough to threaten to oppose a Bill without actually ever intending to do so, in order to elicit some return.⁴

Whips also try to contain internal opposition through their ability to recommend career appointments. Where internal opposition to a Bill is threatened, the Whips, therefore, may offer prospects for career advancement. For the ambitious backbencher, keen for parliamentary promotion, such inducements may prove crucial in limiting potential rebellion. In making any such recommendation, the Whips will consider an MP's record of parliamentary service. That is, does the potential rebel have a good track record in showing consistent support for Government policy? It is widely believed in the CPP, that a one-off rebellion may not ultimately jeopardise a future career in Parliament, but persistent opposition will, whether it is on a range of issues or just one. One Conservative MP believed, "the real power House is number 12 where the Chief Whip....lives," and where the "exclusively male coterie meets to make or break careers."⁵ Meetings of Party Whips occur weekly in the usual business of Parliamentary life. During the Maastricht debates, however, Euro-sceptic MP, Mrs Gorman, suspected that the frequency of these meetings increased to enable tactical discussions on how to defeat the Conservative Euro-sceptics.⁶ The ability of offers of career appointment to constrain the political behaviour of an MP ultimately depends on the individual's yearning for such advancement. As will be seen later, many of the Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs were content to remain as backbenchers.

Other strategies available to the Whips include recommendations for parliamentary privilege such as foreign trips or allocations to parliamentary committees of interest to MP and patronage recommendations. For such inducements to be effective, they must be seen to work in practice. Norton commented that the perceived influence of the Whips had declined in recent years.⁷ Conservative MPs today, however, have little doubt as to the readiness of the Whips to carry out their threats. One senior Euro-sceptic of the Party claimed, for example, that in the 31 years that he had been in Parliament, only one foreign trip, to Cardiff, had ever been offered to him. He believed this was a direct consequence of his rebellious behaviour in Parliament to European legislation.⁸ Another Euro-sceptic MP claimed that, as a result of previous opposition to Government policy, he "didn't get any trips at all...they refused to put me on the select committee I wanted to get on. It was not until last year that I came back on the list."⁹ If the inducements of the Whips fail to work, they have little power to constrain internal opposition to a Bill. The continued withdrawal of such favours, however, may fuel rebellious behaviour by MPs, for, if no rewards are offered, an MP has

⁴ This is not suggested on this issue and is highly speculative.

⁵ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 103.

⁶ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 103.

⁷ See Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" pp 40-41.

⁸ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995.

⁹ Warren Hawksley MP to author - September 1995.

little incentive, from the whips, to behave, and may more freely oppose Government policy in the lobbies. Norton, for example, found that the lack of rewards offered in the 1970 Parliament was one cause of the rise in Conservative Party dissent in the early 1970's.¹⁰

Whips can also try to persuade an MP to limit the extent of his dissenting political behaviour through their Constituency Association. Constituency Presidents may be persuaded by the Whips that their MP's support is needed in the Government lobbies to sustain the Government's credibility and at times, its very survival, on a crucial piece of legislation. As a result, they may persuade Constituency Associations to bring pressure to bear on the dissenting MP. It will be seen later, that the Whips' ability to influence Constituency Associations depends ultimately on the willingness of the respective association to be persuaded.

The ultimate sanction of the Whips to constrain an MP or group of MPs, who continue to rebel over a policy Bill, is to threaten to withdraw the Conservative Party Whip. This can be a very powerful constraint, as without the Party Whip, an MP will be limited in his ability to perform the job for which he was elected and also may not be re-adopted as a Conservative candidate.¹¹ Prior to the Maastricht debates, this sanction was last utilised in 1942. As I have suggested, Whips' threats need to be credible in order to be effective. Many MPs consequently believed that the withdrawal of the party whip was now only a myth. During the 1970's, the 1980's and the 1990's debates on European legalisation, this threat failed to fully constrain intra-party opposition. It is doubtful, therefore, whether the Conservative Euro-sceptics regarded this power as a credible threat until the final debate on the Social Chapter, where a vote of confidence in the Government was attached. This threat was realised when Rupert Allason, the only Conservative MP to abstain on this Bill, subsequently lost the Conservative Whip. This demonstrated that the Conservative Party Whips were prepared to use tactics, which, up to this point, were no longer deemed necessary for ensuring effective management of the Conservative Parliamentary Party. The use of this tactic also revealed the determination of the Conservative Parliamentary Party machinery to demand unity within the Party.

Once this threat was realised, in the case of Rupert Allason, it was immediately obvious to the Conservative Euro-sceptics that such a tool could not be discounted in future European debates where they might seek to oppose the Bill. The tactic was quickly re-used by the Government on the European Finance Bill of November 1994, in an attempt to eliminate both intra-party dissent in the lobbies, and to prevent the Bill from being defeated, which would have caused grave embarrassment for the Government with its European counterparts. The threat to re-deploy this tactic was a consideration in the Euro-sceptics' decision on whether to oppose the Government in the lobbies on this Bill and, in fact constrained the voting behaviour of a number of MPs. As will

¹⁰ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" pp 37-38.

¹¹ References are given in a later footnote, which comment on the consequences of withdrawal of the Party Whip.

be seen later, although some MPs chose to support the Government because of this threat, it did not represent obedience to the Whips' demands. Some MPs chose to support the Government because they thought they would be better able to continue their opposition to future European legislation, if they remained a member of the CPP. The threat of withdrawing the whip from MPs who opposed the Bill also fuelled rebellion. Some Euro-sceptic MPs were angered by this threat and it strengthened their determination to oppose the Bill. Even on the EFB, the Whips still had a problem of credibility. Many Conservative MP's doubted whether the Government would carry out this threat if a group of MPs opposed the Bill.¹² The group of eight rebels who abstained on this Bill did so in the belief that, if they acted cohesively they might prevent this tactic from being applied.

The powers available to the Conservative Party Whips to constrain intra-party opposition have been briefly outlined. Such powers represent the visible pressures available to the Conservative Party Whips to constrain the political behaviour of their Party members who seek to challenge Government policy. It should be remembered that the full extent of the Whips' activities remains a closely guarded secret.¹³ For as Teresa Gorman claimed, "the Whips are as secretive as the Masons. What goes on behind that oak door is never revealed, unless they want it to be."¹⁴ The next section discusses how the Whips in each of the case studies tried to limit intra-party opposition to Government European policy.

The European Communities Bill 1971-2

The ability of the Whips to persuade a potential rebel MP to give support to the Government was not as effective in the 1971-2 EC debate as it was in the 1990s. The majority of the 1970 Euro-rebels interviewed stated that pressures applied by the Whips were not that great and consisted mainly of gentle talks with both Ministers and Whips.¹⁵ New Members of Parliament are, however, more likely to be pressured by the Whips, than those whom the Whips have learnt from past experience, are unlikely to be persuaded by their efforts. Throughout the Maastricht debates, the Whips' influence, which was brought to bear on newer members of the House, was intense. This was not the case during the 1970 Parliament. One Conservative anti-market MP of the 1970 intake claimed that no undue pressure to conform was brought to bear upon him by the Party Whips on the EC Bill.¹⁶ Norton, in his study of the period, similarly found that the Whips did little to try to influence the Conservative anti-market MPs of the period.¹⁷ He argued that Whips have "few

¹² As advised by a number of Conservative Euro-sceptics to the author.

¹³ The role played by Conservative Party Whips is scope for further academic research

¹⁴ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 106.

¹⁵ This confirms Norton's findings of the period. Norton claimed that the Whips made little attempt to persuade committed anti-market MPs against their opposition. This, he argued, was to the "advantage of both Whips and dissenters" (p 171). He argued that to have persuaded these committed members, could have antagonised them further, especially as many of them suffered from constituency pressure. It essentially allowed the Whips to concentrate their efforts on those they thought were persuadable and the rebels kept them informed of their numbers. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 171.

¹⁶ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁷ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 68. See also his comments and analysis on pp 170-171.

'sticks' with which to beat recalcitrant members."¹⁸ In the 1970's, he found that the Whips, in their attempt to constrain the Euro-sceptics of the period, relied more upon the "three C's", colleagues, constituencies and consciences. (Anti-Marketeers would probably add a fourth "C": Central Office)."¹⁹ During the 1971-2 debates, pressure from the Whips was applied behind the scenes to make life uncomfortable for the Euro-sceptic MP, rather than to act as an effective constraint in controlling intra-party opposition to the Bill.

If Whips brought little pressure to bear, why was this the case?. One explanation is that the Conservative Euro-sceptics informed the Whips of their intended opposition prior to the vote. As was discussed in Chapters five and six, Neil Marten, one of the Conservative Euro-sceptics, made periodic reports on the strength of Conservative opposition to the Assistant Chief Whip. These declarations enabled the Whips to calculate the likely numbers of internal opponents to the Bill and to react accordingly. Kitzinger claimed that the Whips accepted these figures as an accurate estimate of likely Conservative anti-market rebellion on the October Vote.²⁰ The Whips' estimates that the Government could be defeated on the Second reading was instrumental in the Prime Minister's decision to make the vote one of confidence.²¹

Intra-party opposition to the EEC entry Bill in 1971-2 was not the secret occurrence that it necessarily became in the 1990s. The Maastricht rebels learnt that secrecy in respect of their planned political behaviour was vital for victory. This suggests that the usual norms of inner party communication with the Whips had been eroded. This lesson was not learnt in the 1970's, for the simple reason that formal collective organised opposition to European legislation was embryonic and the rebels were trying to shock the Conservative Government and, by rebellion on this Bill, constrain the future development of Conservative European policy. Also, if as Norton suggested, a number of MPs were antagonised by the leadership style of Edward Heath, the higher level of Conservative opposition to the EC Bill on the vote of principle could have occurred in retaliation to his leadership style.

During the EEC entry debates, if the Whips, following discussions could see little scope to change an MP's mind to support the Bill, it was left at that. This gave rise to Norton's claim that perceptions of the Whips' powers had become diminished in the eyes of Conservative MPs.²² If Whips' influences were limited in this period this may have been because the Whips knew that they had no direct influence over their Euro-sceptics and attempted, therefore, to influence these MPs

¹⁸ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 68. Jackson also found that in the period 1945-64, rebellions by backbenchers "were almost never punished." This would also suggest that the creditability of the Whips in being able to use their powers to any effect to control dissent had been lost. Jackson, R "Rebels and Whips" p292.

¹⁹ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 68.

²⁰ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 172. In August 1971, Kitzinger stated that the figures supplied to the Whips by Neil Marten anticipated the rebellion of thirty-two Conservative MPs (excluding Ulster Unionists), p 172.

²¹ See Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 73.

²² See Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" pp 40-41 for his account in this period.

indirectly through their Constituency Associations. The Whips knew that they were unlikely to influence Euro-sceptics who were opposed to the Bill in principle and, who saw the issue as outside the jurisdiction of party loyalty. There was similarly little likelihood of persuading die-hard anti-market MPs, such as Enoch Powell, to change their minds because of their previously stated attitudes on European issues. The Whips may also have decided not to apply undue pressure for fear of creating bad feeling, which might have run over into other areas of Government policy. Pressures applied by the Whips during the Maastricht debates were, however, unprecedented: those applied in the 1970's were representative of the norm. The Whips may not have regarded even those anti-market MPs who were part of the 1970 Group as posing a realistic threat to this Bill. They certainly did not consider this group to be an organised faction, but an informal dining group.²³ This was based on their perceptions of the group and those portrayed by members of the group themselves. The Whips may have believed, therefore, that on subsequent readings of the Bill during the 1971-2 debates, the Conservative rebel MPs could be open to persuasion. Although the Whips were unable to significantly alter the voting behaviour of the hard-core Conservative anti-market MPs, they continued, through to the conclusion of the debates, to try to change the minds of the rebel MPs. As Norton, observed for example, following Second reading, "for five months the whips had to maintain a parliamentary majority despite anticipated continuing dissent of between five and twenty of their own backbenchers."²⁴

I have argued that the Whips' ability to constrain the political behaviour of the 1970s Euro-sceptics was minimal. Moreover, even if the Whips had applied substantial pressure, it is doubtful that this would have limited further, intra-party opposition. The reason for this is that the majority of the Conservative Euro-sceptics in the 1970's believed the issue of Britain's entry into the EEC was of national importance and beyond Party considerations.²⁵ This explains why, on the October 1971 vote, the Government was unable to prevent a large number of Conservative Euro-sceptics from opposing. On Second reading, the number of Conservative MP's opposing this Bill fell. This was due to two combined factors: firstly, the Prime Minister implied that he would resign if the Bill was defeated, and secondly, a number of rebels felt their objections to the Treaty had been made on the October vote. They would, therefore, give their support to the Government on subsequent readings of this Bill as the House had approved the principle of British entry.

The Single European Act (SEA)

Attempts by the Whips to influence the Euro-sceptic MPs over the SEA were minimal. Due to the substantial Government majority in Parliament at the time and the lack of expected opposition to

²³ They were not regarded as a close knit group as were the Fresh Start Group during the Maastricht treaty debates.

²⁴ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 75.

²⁵ As was stated for example by former MP, Carol Mather to author - September 1994. As we have already seen, Norton found that the Whips saw little advantage was to be gained from trying to persuade committed Conservative anti-market MPs against their opposition and that by "adopting a "tolerant and persuasive approach the whips helped contain the level of dissent." Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 174-5.

the Bill, by the Labour Party and from Conservative backbenchers, there was little need to pressure Conservative rebels. Interview data revealed a distinct lack of comment on the Whips' activities during this period. Only one rebel of the period stated that the Whips had tried to influence his intended opposition on this Bill.²⁶ This lack of comment would suggest that the nature of the Whips' influence on this Bill, was no more than that which occurs over any other policy debate, where the Whips are trying to ensure support for Government policy. Many Conservatives did not regard the SEA as a crucial policy Bill at the time. This, together with the Government's substantial parliamentary majority, meant there was little risk to the Bill's safe passage from any potential Conservative rebels. In view of this, the Whips may not have wished to risk upsetting the few Conservative members who intended to oppose this Bill, as their support may have been needed in the future, when a Government bill could be in jeopardy of being ratified. The number of actual Conservative Euro-sceptics willing to oppose the Bill was minimal compared to the debate over EEC entry in 1971-2 and the next major European debate in the Commons, over the Maastricht Treaty in 1991-3. This, however, had less to do with the operation of party management constraints, than it had to do with the personal reassurance of Margaret Thatcher to her backbenchers on the issue. A number of Conservative Euro-sceptics were also of the belief that they had won the argument on the issue of European integration. They believed that the EC was being 'safely diverted' into a project of market liberalisation, of which, many of them were in favour. If they opposed the SEA, therefore, they risked the possibility of torpedoing an approach that was close to their own preferences for Britain's relationships with the EC. In addition, whilst a number of Euro-sceptics may not have liked all that was entailed in the provisions of the SEA, this situation may have been better than other possible alternatives which could have evolved.

The Maastricht Treaty

The efforts of the Conservative Whips were more successful in ensuring Euro-sceptic waverers returned to the fold to support the Government on the Maastricht treaty. They may also have successfully warded off some potential Euro-sceptics within the Party from rebelling. In addition, the Whips were successful in raising the credibility of their powers to influence potential dissenters by sustaining the intensity of their efforts during this period. The influence of the Whips varied according to the person against whom it was implemented.²⁷ At various points during the debates, the Whips targeted most of the Maastricht rebels to persuade them against their intended rebellion. Only eight of the MPs interviewed, said the Whips made no attempt to influence them. These eight, moreover, stated that attempts at persuasion would have been futile as they were senior members of the Party and/or possessed ardent political views on Europe. One of these eight MPs, for instance, said the Whips wouldn't dare attempt to influence him because of his standing within the CPP.²⁸ The same sentiments were expressed by another Conservative Euro-sceptic member, who stated that "Whips are there to press gang one into Government policies, which they can, but for senior

²⁶ Bill Walker MP to author - November 1994.

²⁷ It is not known how many this applied to.

²⁸ Sir Rhodes Boyson MP to author - November 1994.

members it's rather difficult for them to operate."²⁹ Another senior Conservative Euro-sceptic member stated that he was not pressurised by the Whips at all but if he had "ever been bullied at any point, he would have voted against the measure."³⁰

The deployment of the Whips was the first strategy used by the Government to procure support for the Maastricht Bill. Failing this, the Whips tried to influence the MP through their Constituency Associations. One Euro-sceptic MP claimed, for example, that because he was now of an age, at which he had no great ambitions to become Prime Minister, the various methods of persuasion used against him, failed to check his opposition. As a result, he claimed that Central Office had tried to interfere with his Constituency Party to persuade him to support this Bill.³¹ Interference from Central Office in local Constituency Associations, in many cases, was counterproductive, as a number of the Euro-sceptic MPs were incensed by this activity of the Whips, which hardened the resolve of a number of them to oppose the Maastricht Bill.

The Whips' ability to influence Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs over Maastricht was hindered by the fact that many of the rebels felt so passionately about their cause, and were unconcerned as to the consequences of their actions, especially as many of them had no future desires for political office. Some Euro-sceptic MPs, however, still felt that the Whips should be regarded with some reverence. This may underlie their belief either that the Whips do hold some power, or that a precedence of procedure still exists within the Party, as to the manner in which opposition to legislation should be conducted. For instance, one Euro-sceptic MP commented that, "what you must do with the Whips, is make perfectly clear what the situation is beforehand. You mustn't actually do it by accident in the middle of the night."³² A number of the Euro-sceptics, who kept the Whips informed of their intentions, suffered relatively little pressure. Many of these MPs, however, were not FSG members. These MPs believed that, by keeping the Whips informed of their intended voting on the Bill, they reduced the amount of pressure applied by the Whips. This was also the case for the Euro-sceptics who declared they would support the Government on procedural votes.³³ Some of the Maastricht Euro-sceptics were amenable to compromise with the Whips in return for limiting their opposition to the Bill. One Euro-sceptic MP declared to the Whips, for instance, that he would not vote for the Government on substantive motions. The Whips accepted this, but asked if he would vote to end the debate. This MP decided that the Government was going to get this Bill through anyway, and therefore saw little point in "dragging this through the House into the early hours day after day after day, which was exhausting everybody and stopping the Government doing anything."³⁴ Another of the Euro-sceptics did not oppose the Paving Motion because he believed this was a neutral Bill that merely invited the Government to bring the Maastricht Bill forward for

²⁹ Confidential Conservative MP to author.

³⁰ Sir Roger Moate MP to author - December 1994.

³¹ Bill Walker MP to author - November 1994.

³² Sir Rhodes Boyson MP to author - November 1994.

³³ Andrew Hunter MP to author - December 1994.

³⁴ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

discussion. His opposition was constrained also by his belief that the Government had been accommodating towards the Euro-sceptics and that the attitude of the Fresh Start Group was to "savage" the Bill.³⁵ This MP, having also informed his Constituency of his intended support for the Government on this stage of the Bill, felt unable to alter his decision.³⁶

Despite some successes, the Conservative Whips failed to stop the majority of the hard core rebels opposing the Bill in the lobbies. Though the rebels did not prevent ratification of the Maastricht Bill, they embarrassed the Government throughout the period by refusing to succumb to Whips' pressures, or stern warnings, that they were damaging the electoral chances of the Party by rebelling. As the Whips were unsuccessful in persuading hard line Conservative Euro-sceptics, many of whom were senior and ardent opponents of European legislation, they concentrated their efforts of persuasion on the newer members of the House, and those who they knew or thought could be persuaded. As one of the youngest members of the House and a new MP with a slim constituency majority of nineteen, Walter Sweeney became a main target of the Whips. On one occasion, Mr Sweeney was reported to have been "bawled out by the heavyweight Tory Whip in the middle of the member's tea room"³⁷, and Bernard Jenkin was "frog-marched on to the terrace for a bit of last minute persuasion."³⁸ The newer Conservative members of Parliament became the battleground of the Maastricht dispute, as their support potentially meant victory for either side. On the Paving debate, Teresa Gorman claimed, for example, that the Whips needed "to switch two of our members to be sure of winning."³⁹ She argued consequently that, "every step that Bernard, Walter, Barry or Iain took around the building they were stopped by a member from one side or other, pressing them to vote with the Government or telling them to stick to their principles."⁴⁰ Rupert Allason MP, a relatively young member of the House, also suffered from pressure from the Whips, although he was never called in to see the Chief Whip at any time during the entire Maastricht episode. He stated, however, that he decided to remain at home during the Social Chapter debate for fear of being bullied into voting with the Government if he attended the House.⁴¹

The majority of the Maastricht rebels interviewed, agreed that most of the Whips pressure was applied over the Paving Motion, during the Maastricht debates. This, they claimed, was because the Party Whips did not know whether they would win the vote. Mrs Gorman inferred that on the Paving Motion the "dirty tricks" campaign was in full swing, as the Whips employed a "nice-nasty

³⁵ Confidential Conservative Euro-sceptic MP to author - November 1994.

³⁶ Confidential Conservative Euro-sceptic MP to author - November 1994.

³⁷ Teresa Gorman "The Bastards" p 109.

³⁸ As reported by Teresa Gorman "The Bastards" p 112. Bernard Jenkin, however, stated to the author - November 1994, that he had a good relationship with both his Whip and the senior Party Whips and did not regard any activity of the Whips over the Maastricht Bill "as beyond legitimate pressure."

³⁹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 123.

⁴⁰ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 123.

⁴¹ Interview with author - November 1994.

technique" in order to secure support.⁴² Some Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs regarded the role played by the Whips during the Maastricht debates as the most tyrannical display of their activities ever employed. The alleged "dirty tricks" campaign, which ensued, may have occurred because the Whips' usual attempts to secure support for Government policy were seen to have little effect on the hard line members of the Fresh Start Group as the Maastricht debates progressed. As a result, some Whips engaged in tactics which one MP described as, "going for the jugular whenever they felt the need arise. Like Rottweilers, they looked for the most vulnerable area of the anatomy and sank their teeth in."⁴³ The increased intensity of the Whips' efforts to constrain rebellious Conservative MPs over Maastricht is partially explained by the need of the Whips to reassert their authority as Party disciplinarians. In recent years, the perceived influence of the Whips by Conservative MPs had declined. During the last two decades, Norton claimed that, "Members began to realise that the Whips had little effective power other than that of persuasion."⁴⁴ He continued to argue that once "such assumptions – about the powers of the Whips, government reaction to defeat and so on have been dispelled, it is difficult to resuscitate them."⁴⁵ As a consequence, the Maastricht debates gave rise to the most intense display of Party whipping on Conservative members to have occurred during any preceding European debate in Parliament.

The European Finance Bill - November 1994

Little successful pressure appears to have been brought by the Whips on the European Finance Bill of November 1994, in so far as no MP stated that this was a factor that convinced them to vote with the Government.⁴⁶ One of the EFB rebels commented, however, that it was their belief that a number of former rebels on Maastricht succumbed to the allures of the Whips on this debate.⁴⁷ Given the actions of the Whips during Maastricht, it is most unlikely that they were inactive over the EFB, since a vote of confidence was attached. For the eight rebels who were determined to oppose this Bill, the "carrots and sticks" at the Whips' disposal appeared to have little or no effect. One article in the press claimed, for example, that "for once, senior Tory tacticians, expert in psychological warfare, are at a loss over how to persuade the handful of dissenters to retreat from the ultimate rebellion that could conceivably force the Government's collapse, or John Major's downfall...The rebels for once hold the Whipped hand."⁴⁸ By acting collectively in their opposition, the eight Conservative MPs who opposed the Bill demonstrated their potential power in two areas. Firstly, by opposing the Bill by abstention, they challenged the Party leadership to withdraw the Party Whip from all of them, at a time when removal of the Party Whip from eight MPs would damage the Government's ability to secure a Parliamentary majority on any future debate in the

⁴² Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 108.

⁴³ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 107.

⁴⁴ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 40.

⁴⁵ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 41.

⁴⁶ This relates to the Maastricht rebels that I questioned who supported the Government on the EFB.

⁴⁷ Teresa Gorman to author - November 1994.

⁴⁸ The Times "Awkward Squad is hell bent on upsetting EU vote" 24 November 1994.

Commons.⁴⁹ The Conservative Government made real its threat, however, and withdrew the Party Whip from the eight Conservative rebels who failed to support the Government on this vote;⁵⁰ no Conservative Government has ever made such a dramatic step before. An article in *The Times* claimed, for example, that "it was the first time this century that so many Conservatives had together received the most severe punishment available to the Party's disciplinary machine."⁵¹ This move illustrates the determination of the Government at this time not to be held to ransom by an intra-party group and to demonstrate that it would be prepared to fight such a group on future European debates. Secondly, because the Group of eight refused to bow down to such pressures and remained as a cohesive organised group after the debate, they strengthened their bargaining position with the Government. As a cohesive group, which had received the ultimate punishment for opposing the Government, they no longer had to worry about the consequences of their actions, save perhaps from their constituencies. As a group of party out-casts they were subsequently able to threaten to decrease the Government's majority and thus endanger the safe passage of other legislation. This power was strengthened by the fact that they refused to accept the whip back unless it was reinstated to all of them simultaneously.

2. Career Aspirations

As mentioned previously, the Party Whips have considerable power to recommend career appointments. They play, therefore, an important role in determining the career progression of an individual MP. According to one MP, "the way to get on, if you don't happen to come from the right school or the right family, is to be a bit of a toady and never step out of line."⁵² Both individual opposition to party policy Bills and/or membership of an intra-party opposition group is a threat to career advancement of an MP and as such, this may act as a constraint to rebel behaviour. Conservative MPs who oppose a Conservative Government on policy Bills must be prepared to accept the consequences for their careers. Teresa Gorman, for instance, claimed that, over Maastricht, "we had everything to lose. By resisting the Government on a policy so close to the Prime Minister's heart, we were sacrificing all chances of promotion under the present regime."⁵³ To ensure support for the European Finance Bill, the Cabinet and the Party machinery also made threats to both the Euro-sceptic MPs and their Constituency Associations, that as well as losing the Whip, the rebellious MP jeopardised prospects for a long term career in Parliament. An

⁴⁹ Removal of this Whip had far reaching consequences for the individuals concerned. For further information on the consequences of losing the Whip, see the following articles: *The Daily Telegraph*, "Eight rebels who are now out in the cold," 29 November 1994, *The Daily Telegraph* "Major pays high price for victory" 29 November 1994, and *The Times* "Quiet life without the crack of the Whip" 30 November 1994.

⁵⁰ The eight were informed that they had lost the Whip by a letter from Richard Ryder, the Chief Whip. *The Daily Telegraph* "Major pays high price for victory" 29 November 1994.

⁵¹ *The Times* "Eight rebels out in the cold" 29 November 1994. Another article in *The Daily Telegraph*, "Major pays high price for victory" 29 November 1994, suggested that "the Cabinet should realise that removing the Whip is not the Tory way of doing things. The Whip was not taken away from Churchill in the 1930's, the Suez rebels in the 1950's or from Enoch Powell when he voted more than 100 times against the Treaty of Rome."

⁵² Gorman, T *The Bastards* p 56.

⁵³ Gorman, T *The Bastards* p 56.

article in the press claimed that, "MPs would have little chance of returning to Parliament after the next election. Their Constituency Associations would not readopt them...and it was even said that if constituencies decide to stick by "renegade" MPs they would be wound up and new ones formed."⁵⁴ In some cases, this pressure proved counter-productive. Tony Marlow's constituency, for instance, was allegedly furious at this interference by Central Office and declared their support for their MP.⁵⁵

The threat of limited career prospects for the Euro-sceptics did not appear to be a main or even a minor consideration in any of the rebel MPs' decisions to oppose the various pieces of European legislation.⁵⁶ As an inducement to support the Government on the Social Chapter vote, one Conservative rebel was offered a pair after serving ten years in Parliament, which was refused.⁵⁷ In 1991, Bill Cash, a leading Euro-sceptic of the Party at this time, was also offered an appointment to the Foreign Office, which he refused.⁵⁸

If career prospects are severely limited following rebel behaviour, why was it that this was not a more significant constraint in curtailing opposition to European legislation? A number of explanations follow. Firstly, career threats did not work because some Euro-sceptic MPs, who already held career positions, were prepared to resign them over European matters. Sir Teddy Taylor, for example, resigned his position as Under-Secretary of the Scottish Office over his disagreement with the Government on European policy. His resignation was followed subsequently by the Conservative Assistant Whip, Jasper More.⁵⁹ During the 1980's, there was no notable resignation over the Single European Act. As will be discussed later, this had much to do with the fact that Mrs Thatcher was deemed to be Euro-sceptical in her approach to European affairs. Her Euro-sceptic stance, however, later led to the resignation of two senior members of her cabinet, Nigel Lawson and Sir Geoffrey Howe and was also the principle reason why she was sacked as Party leader in 1990. John Redwood resigned his position as Welsh Secretary in 1995, due to his disagreement with the Government's European policy. Such a resignation almost immediately allows that figure automatic entry to the faction group. John Redwood, for example, quickly became a prominent leader of the broader Euro-sceptic faction within the CPP after his

⁵⁴ The Times "Cabinet pact to resign if rebels win" 24 November 1994.

⁵⁵ According to an article in The Sunday Telegraph "Euro-rebel finds support for his cause" 27 November 1994.

⁵⁶ This claim is limited to responses from hard core Euro-sceptics of the Party. It is not known how many of the 200 or so Euro-sceptics within the Party (not interviewed) did not oppose because of career prospect considerations. A number of MPs were constrained in opposing the Bill because they held positions of office. One MP said to the author that because, he was a PPS, he would have to support the Government. It is also unknown how many of the Euro-sceptics Cabinet members would have opposed this Bill, had they not held office at this time.

⁵⁷ Confidential Conservative Maastricht rebel MP to author - September 1995.

⁵⁸ Interview with author – November 1994. Mr Cash's reasons for not accepting this offer have not been disclosed.

⁵⁹ Sir Harmar Nicholls also resigned from the Macmillan Government over Europe. As advised in interview – October 1994.

resignation, and later, challenged John Major for the Party leadership in June 1995.⁶⁰ The rallying round and almost full hearted support given to him by the Conservative Euro-sceptics suggests that the association of a senior figure from within the Party, now with the group, could bring credibility to their cause and consequently, more power to influence the direction of European policy. The voting behaviour of a member of the Government is, however, more constrained than it would be if that member were a backbencher. One MP, who later became a Maastricht rebel, stated for instance, that he was unable to vote against the Bill initially because he was a Minister at the time and, therefore, abstained.⁶¹

A second reason why threats to career advancement failed to work over Maastricht, was that a large number of Euro-sceptic MPs felt they were of an age where they were past career appointment and/or were unconcerned about their future careers.⁶² One Maastricht rebel for instance, had already served a term as a Minister and was not troubled about future career progression.⁶³ Thirdly, four MPs believed that their opposition had already affected their potential careers. Teresa Gorman claimed, that James Cran was removed from the Trade and Industry Select Committee due to his vocal opposition of the Maastricht treaty.⁶⁴ Another Maastricht rebel believed that as a consequence of his opposition to Maastricht, he was on a 'blacklist' for promotion.⁶⁵ Only one rebel MP, John Whittingdale, believed that his career had not been affected in any way at all as a consequence of his rebellion. This was evidenced by his appointment as a Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS).⁶⁶ One Conservative MP even stated that his decision to vote against the October vote in 1971, diminished any future chance of career advancement, regardless of whether he supported the Government on Second and Third reading.⁶⁷ Another rebel MP of this Bill, simply believed that any career ambition he ever had was destroyed in 1970 under Edward Heath.⁶⁸

Fourthly, a number of MPs felt that the issue of Maastricht and the interests of their country were more important than their potential career in Parliament. One rebel MP commented that, he had taken the view that, "if I never go anywhere again, I'd rather not go anywhere again knowing I did the right thing on this, than to plunge myself into a slough of despond for years to come."⁶⁹ Finally, 21.4% of those interviewed simply had no desire for a ministerial career in Parliament. One MP

⁶⁰ It should be noted that this leadership contest was not sought solely on the basis of the European issue, although it was a substantial part of it. Sowemimo, however, has also recently claimed that "the leadership contest was a further stage in the development of factionalism within the Conservative Party centred on the European Issue." "The Conservative Party and European Integration" p 77.

⁶¹ Sir Rhodes Boyson MP to author November 1994.

⁶² Five MPs stated this to the author.

⁶³ Sir Rhodes Boyson MP to author - November 1994.

⁶⁴ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 48.

⁶⁵ Bernard Jenkin MP to author - November 1994.

⁶⁶ Interview with author November 1994.

⁶⁷ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - November 1994.

⁶⁸ Roger Moate MP to author - December 1994.

⁶⁹ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994.

commented that "I've never wanted office and my sole ambition was to be a backbencher."⁷⁰ Similarly, another MP commented that "I haven't got a parliamentary career. I've always been rebellious. I'm happy to be a backbencher. I've always been rebellious and it's not just on Europe."⁷¹ Another MP stated that he had no particular ambition for a ministerial career, as he thoroughly enjoyed his life as a backbencher and procured job satisfaction from constituency work.⁷² Although it is not possible to be conclusive, it may be characteristic of a dissenting MP, that he is content to spend his parliamentary life as a backbencher.⁷³

3. Constituency Associations

An important consideration in an MP's decision to oppose their Party's policy is the position of their Constituency Association on the Bill. MPs are selected as a party candidate by their constituency party and this, may give MPs a sense of loyalty to the wishes of their association. Just as Constituency Associations can select an individual as a candidate, they can also threaten to reverse that decision, either by passing a resolution of no confidence or by not re-selecting their MP for election. This, as Norton observed, may 'deter' an MP "from carrying through his threatened dissent."⁷⁴ The constraint of Constituency Associations during the course of the European debates of this study was more effective than those of limited career threats or Whip's pressures. This was because some of the Conservative Euro-sceptics felt their duty to their Constituency came before any such duty to the Party. The ability of Constituency Associations to threaten not to re-adopt their MP if opposition against their wishes continued, was a considerable factor in an MP's decision whether to rebel.

The European Communities Bill 1971-2

The ability of Constituency Associations to constrain their MP from voting against the Government on its European policy during the 1970's debates varied, and in some cases altered in line with swings in public opinion. In the October vote, constituency pressure was not an overt factor in the calculations of an MP whether to oppose the Government in the division lobbies mainly because this was made a free vote. The Conservative rebels also had considerable opportunity to court the sympathies of their respective associations for both their view point and intended course of action during the summer and autumn months of 1971. Norton also observed that, a number of the rebels had made up their minds to oppose the Bill in the October, before "their Constituency Associations had an opportunity to influence them."⁷⁵ Many of the Conservative Euro-sceptics undertook votes of confidence and/or held debates in their constituencies on the issue.⁷⁶ One MP who held a

⁷⁰ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994.

⁷¹ Roger Moate MP to author - December 1994.

⁷² Former MP Sir John Farr to author - September 1994.

⁷³ Some MPs may say this in public, but they have their own agenda, which they keep private.

⁷⁴ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 176.

⁷⁵ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 179. See also pp 177-179 for Norton's account of constituency pressures in the period during the summer and run up to the October debate.

⁷⁶ Norton also found that a number of Euro-sceptics were asked to explain their "position to their Constituency Association." Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 71.

referendum in his Constituency, consequently voted against the Bill on the October vote on the basis that he received the support of 60% of his constituency for his intended action.⁷⁷ Eric Bullus also participated in a constituency debate on the issue, which he subsequently lost.⁷⁸ The rebels' ability to oppose the Government in the lobbies was also assisted by the fact that public opinion during the summer of 1971 was still undecided as to the merits of entry. Norton claimed in fact that, in the summer of 1971, it was the pro-Europeans of the Party who needed more time to persuade their constituencies of the case for entry.⁷⁹

The ability of Constituency Associations to bring substantial pressure to bear on their candidate was impeded also by the fact that at the 1970 general election, EEC entry was not portrayed as an important issue, constituting only 3% of Heath's campaign speeches⁸⁰ and only became so at the start of the Heath administration. Constituency Associations were, therefore, less able to apply pressures on their MP on the October vote, especially when a free vote was in place at the end. In addition, Constituency Associations had little power to pressurise a number of MPs to support the Government on this vote, where they had pledged in their 1970 election address, to oppose Britain's membership of the EEC.⁸¹

Some Conservative Constituency Associations were, however, able to bring some pressure to bear on their anti-market MP who intended to rebel. This, according to Kitzinger, had a more pronounced effect on the younger members of the House. He claimed that, as a result, "it became one of the functions of the more seasoned leading Euro-sceptics to advise them on their constituency tactics and try and stiffen their morale."⁸² This is one of the benefits of collective activity, where in the 1970 Parliament, more experienced anti-market Conservative MPs, assisted their inexperienced colleagues to oppose the EEC Bill. A more effective method of constraining the political behaviour of an MP over this Bill was the appointment by Central Office of Constituency Agents, who influenced local public opinion.⁸³ One Conservative MP claimed that, as a result of the agents' activities, the whole situation became very tense and unpleasant.⁸⁴ Kitzinger also found that, by early 1971, not many associations were pro-entry but, by late summer, only a few remained opposed to the Government policy.⁸⁵

⁷⁷ Confidential Conservative MP to author - November 1994.

⁷⁸ Former MP Eric Bullus to author - September 1994. Eric Bullus opposed the October vote 1971, but supported, thereafter, the Government in the division lobbies on Second and Third reading.

⁷⁹ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 68.

⁸⁰ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 151.

⁸¹ Lord Harmor Nicholls to author - September 1994. According to Norton, despite the fact that Neil Marten had been opposed to EEC entry in 1970, he still suffered from constituency pressure to support the Government on this Bill. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 186.

⁸² Kitzinger U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p180.

⁸³ Kitzinger claimed for example that here, "crucial to the whole operation were the Conservative Party agents in the constituencies themselves." "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 177.

⁸⁴ Sir Richard Body MP to author - October 1995.

⁸⁵ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" pp 177-8.

Constituency pressures were stepped up between the October vote and Second reading and were most intense during Second reading of the Bill, when the Party machinery persuaded many Constituency Associations that the survival of the Government was at stake. Norton found that, of the thirty-three Conservatives, who opposed in the October, "twenty-one are known to have encountered some constituency problems and only two, Edward Taylor and Robert Taylor had no problems."⁸⁶ Roger Moate, for instance, said his Constituency was generally supportive of his position, and only got upset when his vote in Parliament threatened to bring down their own Government, as on Second reading for example.⁸⁷ The Constituency Association of John Farr was also predominantly pro-entry, being largely composed of Members with farming interests. As a result, John Farr suffered from a resolution passed by his Constituency to support the Party on this Bill. He claimed that his Vice Chairman, although opposed to his position, believed it was up to him as an MP, to decide how to vote.⁸⁸ William Clarke's Constituency Chairman was pro-European and, despite pressures from Central Office, the Chairman allowed Mr Clarke to make his own decision on the issue.⁸⁹ Another Euro-sceptic MP was of the view that as long as an MP is consistent in his stand then constituencies would not be threatening. He suggested that constituency pressures are only aroused when an MP displays an inconsistency in his voting behaviour.⁹⁰

Some constituency concerns over rebel opposition to the EEC Bill in the 1970 Parliament may have been exaggerated, as the Conservative Government had only been in office since June 1970 and was not performing well, according to opinion polls. Norton found some association between the marginality of a member's seat and his Constituency Association, where members with marginal seats suffered "less pressure than members with safe seats."⁹¹ Although four new rebel members of the House subsequently voted for the Bill after the October vote, this was not connected with constituency pressure.⁹²

The Single European Act

In contrast to the preceding debate over Britain's entry to the European Community, the level of constraints imposed by Constituency Associations was remarkably low on those Conservative

⁸⁶ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 179. See also Table 1.7 p 180, for his analysis of the relationship between Conservative rebels and their Constituency Association during the EEC Bill 1971-2. For detailed discussion of the individual rebel MPs' relationship with their constituency see pp 181-187.

⁸⁷ Interview with author - December 1994. It should be noted that he still opposed the Government on Second reading of the EC Bill in February 1972.

Norton also found that pressures from Constituency Associations were more marked on Second reading than on the October vote of principle. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 69

⁸⁸ John Farr to author - September 1994. Norton found that although John Farr gave an undertaking to his constituency not to vote against the Government if it could be brought down, he voted against the EEC bill on fifteen subsequent occasions, "Conservative Dissidents" p 183.

⁸⁹ Interview with author - October 1994. Norton claimed, however, that conflict was prevented in Mr Clarke's constituency as Mr Clarke said he would be prepared to accept the division of the House after the October verdict. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 181.

⁹⁰ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - November 1994.

⁹¹ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 188.

⁹² Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 190.

Euro-sceptics who intended to vote against the SEA. To a large extent, this was due to the size of the Government's majority, which made the risk of defeat to the Bill minimal. None of the rebel MP's interviewed stated that they had experienced any difficulties with their Constituency Association over the SEA.⁹³ Both Jonathan Aitken and Michael Brown received the full support of their Associations. I also suggest three more reasons why Constituency Associations may generally have found it difficult to persuade their MP to support the Government. The first is that members of a Constituency Association will often hold divergent views on a policy. It is difficult, therefore, for some Constituency Associations to adopt a clear line against their MP. Secondly, if an MP declares his intention to oppose Government policy, and if the Chairman of the Constituency disagrees with this, a vote may be held in the Constituency to gauge the level of concern within the Association. In such a case, the Chairman of a Constituency Association cannot expect the deferential support of all its members. A third explanation is that the media, is often as quick to highlight evidence of divisions within a constituency association, as it is to highlight those within the parliamentary party. A Constituency Party may not wish to be seen as divided and hence, limited debate may take place within the Constituency. Any pressure brought to bear on an MP by their Constituency Association may also be organised as covertly as possible.

The Maastricht Treaty debates

The role played by Conservative Constituency Associations in influencing an MP's dissident behaviour came under scrutiny more times during the duration of the Maastricht debates, than had probably occurred in Conservative post-war history. During the passage of the Maastricht Bill, Constituency Associations were brought to the fore of Conservative Party politics, when they came under substantial pressure publicly, not to support their rebel candidate. The Government's strategy was to remind the Associations of traditional Conservative principles, of party deference and uniformity on party policy. I have classified Constituency Associations during the Maastricht debates into four sections.

1. Those who supported their candidates unanimously.
2. Those who wished their representative to support the Government at all costs.
3. Those who were prepared to support their candidates except on votes of confidence.
4. Those who were split equally between supporting the Government and their candidate.

The Constituency Associations who wished their MP to support Government at all costs, were the biggest constraint to the intended opposition of the Conservative Maastricht rebel MP, as in some instances, the MP was threatened with de-selection if opposition continued on this Bill. One of the MPs of the 1992 intake suffered immense pressure as a result of Central Office interference in his Constituency. During the Paving Motion debate, this MP was ordered to support the Government

⁹³ This assertion is limited to interview responses.

and he indicated that hints of his de-selection were organised by Central Office.⁹⁴ Another Euro-sceptic MP, supported the Government on the Social Chapter vote, for, as the Maastricht debates progressed, he found that he was experiencing enormous problems with his pro-Europe Constituency Association and felt that he had stretched their loyalty as far as he could.⁹⁵

Some Euro-sceptic MPs received the total support of their Constituency Associations, which aided their ability to oppose the Bill. Included here are Roger Knapman, Harry Greenway and Rupert Allason. Rupert Allason believed, in fact, that it is extremely difficult for an MP to oppose the Government without their Constituency Association's support, unless as he claimed, "you are suicidal."⁹⁶ Bill Cash was informed by his Constituency Chairman that his first duty was to his country, his second duty to his constituents and his third duty to his Party's policy programmes.⁹⁷ A number of the Euro-sceptic Conservatives received the support of their Constituencies, in cases where the Association believed that it was up to the individual MP to decide how to vote. A number of MPs commented that their Constituency Associations found it difficult to understand the intricacies of the Maastricht treaty, and left their MP to decide how to vote. One of the Euro-sceptics, for instance, claimed that, in respect of the Maastricht treaty, "it's too complex for the Constituency to pursue all these objectives because they've got to condone them in their own mind, and many people really, are not interested in politics. They leave it to us to determine ourselves what is the good for the greater number."⁹⁸ Another Conservative Euro-sceptic believed he received the majority of his Constituency's support, because he kept his officers informed of his voting intentions during the Maastricht debates. Support for this MP was enhanced by the reported annoyance of his Constituency at Central Office interference to try to get him deselected.⁹⁹

The majority of the Maastricht rebels interviewed said their Constituents were split over the issue of Maastricht. Some MPs tried to induce support in their Associations by proposing motions of confidence and votes on resolutions as to whether they should oppose the Bill. John Townend, for example, held a 'resolution' in his Constituency, in order to elicit support for his intended opposition to the Maastricht Bill. In some Constituency Associations, confidence motions in the MP were held. Iain Duncan-Smith, for instance, was given the support of his Constituency following a vote of confidence in him. He believed this aided his ability to oppose the Bill, especially as he was a new Member of Parliament, who was likely to be pressurised in other ways.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ See Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 126. Walter Sweeney confirmed to the author – August 1995, that Conservative Central Office had contacted the Executive Committee of his Constituency Association.

⁹⁵ Andrew Hunter MP to author - December 1994.

⁹⁶ Interview with author - November 1994.

⁹⁷ As the Maastricht wrangles ensued he did suffer some constituency pressure, especially over the Social Chapter vote to support the Government.

⁹⁸ Sir Trevor Skeet MP to author - November 1994.

⁹⁹ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with author – November 1994.

Naturally, some of the Euro-sceptic MPs had some disagreements with their Constituencies during the passage of the Bill. A number of the Euro-sceptics received the general support of their Constituency Associations, but faced problems when the Government invoked votes of confidence.¹⁰¹ One Maastricht rebel MP stated that although his Constituency was very tolerant of his opposition, he was aware that his continued opposition was creating tensions, which thwarted his subsequent rebellions.¹⁰² He also suffered from media pressure, which aggravated these tensions. Another of the Euro-sceptics received a mixed reaction from his Constituency over his opposition to the Maastricht Bill, and suffered also from media attention. He believed he was able to continue his opposition due to the full support of his Constituency President, who defended his opposition to the press.¹⁰³ Another MP commented that, as a result of differences of opinion in his Constituency, he was still undecided as to which way he would vote on the Paving Bill even two hours before the debate. His final decision was influenced by the fact that he thought that there was a vote of confidence in the Government. "I had to change my mind because I didn't really want to get the Prime Minister to resign."¹⁰⁴

The role played by Constituency Associations was particularly prominent during the Social Chapter debate. One Maastricht rebel for example, stated that, the main threat to the Euro-sceptics during this debate was their Constituency Associations. The Euro-sceptics needed to convince their Constituencies that by voting for the Social Chapter, they had the best chance of getting rid of the Maastricht treaty. This was difficult, because some members of the FSG felt that the Social Chapter would be disadvantageous for their Constituencies and did not, therefore, oppose this Bill.¹⁰⁵ An associated difficulty facing these rebels in respect of their Constituencies, was that they would be seen to be voting in line with the opposition. A number of MPs were unsure whether their Constituency Associations would understand their reasons for doing this. Michael Lord, MP, for instance, was reported as saying that the "media will try to misrepresent our actions. The Constituency Associations may not understand."¹⁰⁶ Another MP gave his support to the Government on this vote, because he believed the inclusion of the Social Chapter within the Maastricht treaty would have adverse effects on his Constituency's business interests. In addition, he, like a number of other Maastricht Euro-sceptics, believed that the Social Chapter debate was completely separate to the Maastricht treaty.¹⁰⁷ He also believed that he could not oppose at this stage, because he regarded the actions of the Opposition and some of his Euro-sceptic colleagues, as being "purely a manipulative move...to try and embarrass the Government."¹⁰⁸ Similarly, another member of the FSG did not continue his opposition on this debate as he believed the

¹⁰¹ Roger Moate MP to author for example - December 1994

¹⁰² Andrew Hunter MP to author - December 1994.

¹⁰³ Warren Hawksley MP to author - September 1995.

¹⁰⁴ Sir Peter Fry to author - October 1995.

¹⁰⁵ Rupert Allason supported the Government for this reason. Interview with author - November 1994.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Lord as reported by Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 174.

¹⁰⁷ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁰⁸ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

"whole Social Chapter issue was an artificial spat between the parties, which had nothing really to do with the ratification of Maastricht."¹⁰⁹

The European Finance Bill - November 1994

Sir Teddy Taylor and Tony Marlow received the unanimous support of their associations to oppose this Bill and one Press report claimed that these two MPs and Richard Shepherd "would have been in even more trouble if they had supported the Government."¹¹⁰ John Carlisle MP, despite having the support of his Constituency Association to oppose the Bill, voted with the Government. He believed that, as the punishment for opposition on this Bill would be loss of the Party Whip, he would be in a better position to serve his Constituency if he did not lose it.¹¹¹ Two of the eight Conservative MPs who abstained on this Bill, John Wilkinson and Nicholas Budgen, experienced severe Constituency pressure to vote in line with the Government, as well as interference from Central Office in their Constituency Associations. John Wilkinson was reported as saying that he would rather face de-selection, than vote for the Government.¹¹² The rest of the EFB rebels opposed the Bill in the face of Constituency pressure to support the Government. Mrs Gorman had the backing of the majority of her Constituents, but came under pressure from some Senior Tory colleagues within her Association. One senior Conservative from Billericay for instance, was reported as saying, "Teresa Gorman is trouble. She is always on television attacking the Prime Minister and the Government. We may not like Europe...but we would like a Labour Government even less. If an election is brought about, Teresa Gorman will pay the price."¹¹³ Christopher Gill experienced some pressure, but was supported in his opposition by his Constituency Chairman. He was reported to have claimed that the "attitude of my Chairman is that if the Constituency wants to be represented by a sheep then they can go down to Ludlow live stock market and buy one."¹¹⁴ Sir Richard Body held meetings with the officers of his Association and with the Finance and General Purposes Committee, to discuss his proposed opposition and before, he decided to resign the Whip. He said his Constituency was in a "bit of a stew" because they thought that if a general election was forced as a result of the vote, then the Government would lose. He tried to persuade them that this would not be the case as they were being misinformed: it was only John Major who would resign as leader, not the Conservative Party. He eventually agreed with his Constituency Association that he would vote with the Government on the evening but that he would have to resign the Whip.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Bernard Jenkin MP to author - November 1994.

¹¹⁰ The Times "Maverick Tories await association verdicts" 30 November 1994.

¹¹¹ John Carlisle MP to author - November 1994.

¹¹² John Wilkinson MP to author - November 1994 and as reported in The Times "Defiant rebels unbowed by ultimate sanction" 29 November 1994.

¹¹³ A senior Tory in Billericay as reported in The Times "Angry constituencies tell Tory rebels to back Major or else" 25 November 1994.

¹¹⁴ Christopher Gill as reported by The Times "Defiant rebels unbowed by ultimate sanction" 29 November 1994.

¹¹⁵ He sent a letter to the Chief Whip and a copy to the Prime Minister in which he explained his decision to resign the party whip.

Significantly, however, a number of the former Maastricht rebels did not oppose this Bill because of Constituency pressures to support the Government.¹¹⁶

4. Party loyalty and Peer Pressure

The pull of party loyalty is one of the main constraints in the decision making process for a Conservative MP who is thinking of rebelling. This has been an operative constraint to opposition during the debates on European legislation in the last twenty years. Party loyalty, however, failed to stop Conservatives opposing the October 1971 vote on principle of EEC entry, because many of these Conservative MP's regarded the issue of Britain's entry into the EEC as a national issue, beyond Party considerations. Eric Bullus for instance, spoke out against the party line because of his "agonising conscience."¹¹⁷ Another anti-market MP, was of the opinion that the lures of party loyalty could never be effective in this Parliament because the CPP was split on the entry issue.¹¹⁸ When an issue of national importance is thought to be at stake on a policy Bill, intra-party rebellions will display their most ardent opposition in the face of party loyalty pressures to support the party leadership. As will be discussed later in more detail, on Second reading of the EEC Bill, the vote of confidence in Edward Heath ensured that party loyalty was more effective as a constraint. A number of Conservative MPs, who had opposed on the October vote, acquiesced and supported the Government as a result. As I have suggested earlier, however, for some of these rebels, this had more to do with the proclaimed aims of the Labour Party, that if elected they would still approve entry but would re-negotiate the terms agreed, than the pull of party loyalty. The constraint of party loyalty on opposition behaviour in some respects is bogus. Only when the opposition party more fervently supports the Bill than their own Party, will party loyalty ultimately constrain the opposition of some MPs on a vote of confidence. As will be seen, this theory was certainly borne out during the Maastricht debates.

Although party loyalty failed to prevent Conservatives voting against the October vote of principle, pressures to conform, were considerable. One anti-market MP recalled that "it wasn't anything like as common nor as easy to be dissident in the 1970's as it has since become. I remember it as a miserable period."¹¹⁹ This would suggest that one of the difficulties facing the anti-market MPs at the time, was that it was difficult to separate two, conflicting but interacting factors. The first of these was that a number of Conservatives were deeply concerned about the impact of the EEC Bill for the UK and opposed it for this reason. The second factor was that, at the time, even some of the rebels in the CPP, found difficulty in coming to terms with the concept of their opposition, especially when taken collectively. Collective activity in the 1970 Parliament was still in its early stages of development. In those days, it should be remembered, collective opposition to a Bill was a relatively new occurrence, which was neither a perceived nor acceptable method of political

¹¹⁶Bill Cash MP for instance was one MP who was confronted with extreme constituency pressure to support the Government on this Bill. See The Times "Angry constituencies tell Tory rebels to back Major or else." 25 November 1994.

¹¹⁷ Comment to author – September 1994.

¹¹⁸ Former MP Carol Mather to author - September 1994.

opposition behaviour in the CPP. This remained the case during the Maastricht debates, although the rebels adopted a more organised and intense opposition.¹²⁰

Conservative anti-market MPs also suffered from pressure exerted from Conservative Party colleagues to change their mind, either directly or indirectly, to support the Government on this European debate. Kitzinger has claimed that, most peer influence was exerted through the 'Conservative Group for Europe'.¹²¹ The aims of the group were to convert more Conservatives to support the Government's position than Labour MPs, because the 'prestige of the Government was at stake'.¹²² It was also important for the Government's credibility abroad to be able to show a majority at home for Britain's third application for EEC membership, especially from within its own Party. Any Government would be weakened by the perception that it could not rely on a majority within its Party, to pass key aspects of its programme. As was seen later, during the Maastricht debates, the ability of John Major's Government to convey the impression that it was competent in office, was severely weakened, when a group of backbenchers continually threatened to deny their leader a comfortable majority at any stage of the debates progression.

Pulls for party loyalty during the debates on the SEA were much more effective as a constraint on potential rebel MPs to support Government policy. A number of would-be rebels on this Bill voted with the Government on the basis of party loyalty. One Conservative MP claimed, for example, that despite having "misgivings" at the time, his decision to vote in favour with the Government was exclusively for party loyalty reasons.¹²³ As will be discussed, a lot of MPs, who may otherwise have opposed the SEA, did not do so because of the perceived hard-line stance on European issues adopted by their Prime Minister. Andrew Hunter MP claimed, for example, that Mrs Thatcher was renowned for her strident attitude on Europe, and that he was therefore able to give her his support on this Bill.¹²⁴

If a Government has a particularly large parliamentary majority it might be assumed that the party's demands for the loyalty of its MPs in the lobbies would not be particularly strong. At the time of the SEA, however, calls for Party loyalty were strong despite the Government being in possession of a comfortable parliamentary majority. One Conservative rebel, however, believed that a lot of Conservative MPs supported the Government on the SEA because they misunderstood what the

¹¹⁹ Confidential Conservative MP to author – November 1994.

¹²⁰ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - November 1994.

¹²¹ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" pp 160-161, argued this group aided the Government. For further details of the group see also pp 162-3.

¹²² Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 162. Norton claimed that the Government would be "embarrassed" if it failed to win over the majority of its party for entry. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 67. Norton also stated that the Conservative Pro-Group took a group of "twenty doubters to Paris" to try to convince them to support the Government on this Bill. Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" pp 67-68 referring to Kitzinger's findings in "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 170.

¹²³ Andrew Hunter MP to author – December 1994.

¹²⁴ Andrew Hunter MP to author- December 1994.

treaty was actually about.¹²⁵ The debates on the SEA occurred approximately one year before the next general election of 1987. The pull of party loyalty for unity is usually stronger prior to an election than afterwards. One Euro-sceptic MP suggested that, "if it's in the year after an election, if you've won I think you're more likely to get rebellious trouble."¹²⁶ With the approach of an election, MPs' minds arguably become more focused towards winning. Given the belief that Conservatives hold, as to the effect parliamentary unity has on their electoral success, it is not surprising that one MP commented that, "I think that with an election approaching, it's surprising how minds are pushed almost towards unity rather than to anything else."¹²⁷

Calls for party unity and party loyalty during the Maastricht debates were particularly strong. Those MPs who had been in Parliament throughout all the major debates on Europe, covered in this study, believed that calls and pressures for unity and loyalty were at their highest during the early 1990's. This, one MP suggested, was because the Prime Minister's leadership strategy was to "unite the Conservative Party."¹²⁸ Indeed the Government was as determined not to be seen as dis-unified on the issue of Europe, as it was on any other key area of legislation. The Chancellor, Kenneth Clark, illustrated this when he stated that, "you can't have twenty, thirty or forty Euro-rebels determining the Government of this country. They cannot be the tail that wags the dog."¹²⁹ In response to this, Teresa Gorman claimed that, in fact, she believed the Maastricht Euro-sceptics of the Party represented "a better pedigree, of the good old British bull dog sort, that they regard it as their duty to defend the country from government poodles."¹³⁰

A large proportion of the Conservative Euro-sceptics were not prepared to follow the party line and defer to their leadership over the Maastricht Bill. As was seen in Chapter three, one explanation for this, is that the Euro-sceptics believed they had a prominent and positive role to play in safeguarding the interests of the nation.¹³¹ The inability of this constraint to have any significant effect on limiting the opposition of the hard-line Conservative Euro-sceptics over Maastricht, except over the Social Chapter vote, strongly suggests that Conservative MPs are not always content to follow the policy set out by their party leadership, particularly when they believe that its enactment would be against the national interests. If anything, intra-party opposition became stronger in the 1990's, as more MPs were willing to be associated with an organised political grouping opposed to party policy on a Bill, that was regarded by the rest of the party, as a faction. It should be noted, however, that MPs' opposition to legislation had not become easier or more acceptable since the EEC debates in the 1970's. For, as Mrs Gorman has stated, "the Captain's word is law unless you disagree so fundamentally that you can summon up the courage from somewhere

¹²⁵ Bill Walker MP to author November 1994.

¹²⁶ Warren Hawksley MP to author - September 1995.

¹²⁷ Warren Hawksley MP to author - September 1995.

¹²⁸ John Townend MP to author October 1995

¹²⁹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 150.

¹³⁰ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 150.

¹³¹ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 124.

to flout his commands."¹³² Collective opposition within the CPP, as demonstrated by the FSG, is still relatively new to the party and as yet, it would not appear to be the accepted way of Conservative Parliamentary behaviour, even if it might be occurring in practice.

Conservative Euro-sceptics also came under fire from their parliamentary party colleagues to support the Maastricht Bill.¹³³ On the Paving motion debate, Teresa Gorman claimed, that a deliberate attempt was made by some of her colleagues to upset her.¹³⁴ In one instance, senior members of the Government allegedly resorted to physical persuasion in an attempt to procure the support of one Euro-sceptic. According to one Euro-sceptic, he saw senior Cabinet members take one arm each of this member in an attempt to pull him into the Government lobby.¹³⁵ The efforts of the Conservative pro-Europeans to persuade wavering Euro-sceptics to support the Government were also matched by the conspicuous efforts of senior Conservative Euro-sceptics to persuade those MPs of the value of their opposition. According to Mrs Gorman, for instance, the former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, offered her support to talk to "anyone whose back bone need stiffening,"¹³⁶ She claimed similarly, that Norman Tebbit played an influential role throughout the debates by "encouraging our weaker brethren to stick with their principles and take the opportunity provided by the Paving debate to kill off the Treaty."¹³⁷ The association of such party political heavyweights with the Fresh Start Group lent credibility to the group, which made it more acceptable for some hesitant Euro-sceptics to ally themselves with the group and oppose the Bill in the lobbies.¹³⁸

5. The Party Leader

When faced with the threat of internal dissent over Party policy, the Party leader has an array of devices which can be deployed, in order to constrain opposition from his own backbenches. (Table 7.1)

¹³² Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 152.

¹³³ It is difficult to determine exactly how effective peer pressure was in constraining the political behaviour of rebellious MPs since many of the MPs interviewed refused to comment.

¹³⁴ See Gorman, T "The Bastards" pp 131-134 for details.

¹³⁵ Warren Hawksley in interview to author - September 1995. On the same occasion the MP commented that he "walked out of the chamber so as to be seen not to be voting" and was chased out by his Whip who subsequently "forgot to vote."

¹³⁶ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 119.

¹³⁷ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 120 for further comment on his role.

¹³⁸ Developments on the continent may also have made it easier for these rebels to oppose. For, after the Danish referendum, more Euro-sceptics felt less constrained to oppose the Bill. Certainly, this would not have affected the voting of the hard core rebels as they were totally opposed to the Maastricht Bill, however, it may have affected the voting decision of borderline Euro-sceptics and certainly would have increased pressures from their hard-core rebel colleagues for their support in the lobbies.

<i>Table 7.1</i>
<i>Measures which a Party Leader can deploy to try to constrain intra-party opposition to a Bill</i>
1. Personal statements to Parliament and/or private discussions with members of his party to persuade them of the merits of the policy
2. Conceding points of contention, agreeing to amendments, or offering concessions to dissenters.
3. Appeals for party loyalty
4. Holding a referendum on the issue
5. Secure Cabinet Unity and support of Constituency Associations
6. Threaten to resign personally, or dissolve parliament if defeated on key legislation or attach a vote of confidence in the government to a vote.

Sir Edward Heath

Edward Heath's determination to secure Britain's entry to the EEC cannot be underestimated as a constraint to Conservative opposition to the EEC Bill during 1971-2. It should be remembered here, that Norton attributed the leadership style of Edward Heath as the most important cause of Conservative dissidence within the Party during the 1970 Parliament.¹³⁹ Whilst the leadership style of Edward Heath undoubtedly contributed to the level of dissent within the CPP, this study claims that, on the EEC issue alone, the issue was the cause of dissidence, not the leadership style of the Prime Minister. Heath's tactics were strategically conducted to ensure support for this policy. Kitzinger, for instance, argued that the Prime Minister took much care over career appointments, to ensure that Conservative Euro-sceptics were not placed in "positions that would prove difficult to hold later and cause embarrassment to the Government if they resigned."¹⁴⁰ Such a manoeuvre was later to prove instrumental, as "getting cabinet approval for the terms that came out of Brussels proved to be no problem at all."¹⁴¹

The Prime Minister's personal determination to secure ratification of this Bill was immense. Kitzinger claimed, that the entry campaign was "probably one of the most massive and most expensive domestic Government campaigns since the war."¹⁴² Heath's determination here, created an uneasy environment in the House, however. One anti-market MP commented that the atmosphere within the Party in this Parliament was unpleasant, as Heath never forgave anybody over their opposing views on Europe.¹⁴³ Kitzinger also argued, that some people believed that Heath's ambition to secure ratification of this Bill nearly split the CPP in the 1970's.¹⁴⁴ Norton claimed, that Heath's ability to ensure sufficient support for this Bill, was constrained and stated

¹³⁹ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p37.

¹⁴⁰ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 154.

¹⁴¹ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 154.

¹⁴² Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 157. See also pp 157-9 for his comments on the efforts of the party organisation from the start of the campaign for entry in 1970.

¹⁴³ Roger Moate MP to author - December 1994.

¹⁴⁴ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p150.

that one observer commented that, "the failure of the leader of the opposition to try to commit his Party either way on the issue, helped, as one observer noted, to keep the number of Conservative dissenters at a maximum."¹⁴⁵ During the debates, however, Harold Wilson's statement that, if in office he would seek to re-negotiate the terms of British entry, constrained a number of MPs from voting against. A number of Conservative antis believed that opposing the Government in the lobbies would secure no obvious purpose given the opposition's official position on the issue. One anti-market MP had the view that, there was little point with his continuing to oppose the Bill, as he believed he was not going to be able to change the outcome.¹⁴⁶ This suggests that a number of the anti-market MPs felt powerless to do anything that would significantly alter the policy of the Government by voting against Second reading.

The height of the Conservative rebellion to the EEC Bill occurred over the vote of principle in October 1971. Prior to the debate on Second reading in the Commons, nearly all of the October Conservative rebels were interviewed by the Prime Minister, to persuade them of his sincerity in calling a vote of confidence and to advise them of their duties in terms of Party loyalty. This according to Norton, proved to be an effective constraint to opposition. He found that "of nine Euro-sceptics seen by Mr Heath (a further two refused to see him) four were apparently responsive to his appeal.... a fifth member, although reserving his position after seeing Mr Heath, was also subsequently to vote with the Government."¹⁴⁷ If this tactic was an effective method of constraining rebel opposition to the Bill, it is surprising that this method was not universally applied. Peter Fry, for example, claimed that the Prime Minister never spoke to him during the whole of these debates.¹⁴⁸

Whilst private consultations between a Prime Minister and his backbench Euro-sceptic opponents may be effective in constraining intended opposition to a Bill, it can also fuel it. One rebel Conservative MP stated for instance, that Mr Heath's "lecture did not influence me to support the Government, if anything it was counter-productive."¹⁴⁹ The effect of such talks, in curtailing an MP's opposition, as with every constraint, therefore, varied from one individual to another. These talks failed to eliminate intra-party opposition because a number of the anti-market MPs believed the Prime Minister's arguments to be defective. One anti-market MP commented, that "I personally thought he was entirely wrong. He thought that this was a panacea for all our ills."¹⁵⁰ Another MP was not constrained by Prime Ministerial persuasions, as he believed the Prime Minister was "deceiving the country" in respect of this Bill.¹⁵¹ He believed that Edward Heath was implying that it was only the common market they were joining, whereas he believed the ultimate goal was a

¹⁴⁵ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 67.

¹⁴⁶ Lord Clark of Kempston to author - September 1994.

¹⁴⁷ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 73.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with author - October 1995.

¹⁴⁹ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁵⁰ Lord Clark of Kempston to author - September 1994.

¹⁵¹ Sir Richard Body MP to author- October 1995.

United States of Europe.¹⁵² What the view of these anti-market Conservative MPs suggest is that it is principled objections to a policy Bill, rather than personalities, which ultimately dominate the development of party politics and sustain intra-party opposition to policy Bills. An interplay of both factors is at work, to some degree.

Margaret Thatcher

By far the most effective constraint on Conservative opposition to the SEA was the policy declarations of the Prime Minister herself. Mrs Thatcher claimed to have "one overriding goal" in respect of the Bill, which was the creation of a single common market.¹⁵³ Concerns remained however, amongst a number of the Conservative Euro-sceptics over the proposed extension of qualified majority voting (QMV). The Prime Minister was able to persuade a number of potential Euro-sceptics against opposing the Bill by justifying the extension to QMV as the cost of securing the Single Market.¹⁵⁴ A number of Conservative Euro-sceptics were also reassured by the fact that Mrs Thatcher saw she would need "to fight a strong rear-guard action against attempts to weaken Britain's control over areas of vital national interest."¹⁵⁵

A number of Conservative MPs, who held concerns over the SEA, were, therefore, prepared to accept the reassurances of the Prime Minister over European policy Bills. This contrasts with the European debates of the 1970's and 1990's. One MP, for instance, still accepted Mrs Thatcher's reassurances, despite his belief that she was deceived over the real implications of the SEA.¹⁵⁶ An anti-market MP of the 1971-2 rebellion was not so ready to accept the assurances of the Prime Minister on the SEA, but understood why a number of his colleagues within the CPP did. He believed that Mrs Thatcher thought the SEA was all about trade, which was why a number of 'known' Euro-sceptics within the Party voted for it.¹⁵⁷ What this demonstrates is that a Prime Minister's interpretation of issues can subsequently alter the voting behaviour of an MP on a Bill, even if some MPs think it to be wrong. In respect of European legislation, this argument is peculiar to the Prime Ministerial leadership of Mrs Thatcher. For a substantial number of Euro-sceptics were not reassured by either Edward Heath or John Major's interpretation of European Bills.

The style of Prime Ministerial leadership can be an important factor in controlling the political behaviour of its Party members over Bills. The manner in which the Party leader steers a Bill through the House can affect the level and nature of intra-party opposition to a Bill. Norton, for

¹⁵² Sir Richard Body MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁵³ See Margaret Thatcher "The Downing Street Years" pp 552-553 for further details.

¹⁵⁴ Margaret Thatcher "The Downing Street Years" p 553.

¹⁵⁵ Margaret Thatcher "The Downing Street Years" p 553. The fact that Mrs Thatcher had procured some substantial deals for Britain in the recent years, together with her acceptance of the Single European Act as being inevitable for trade in order for completion of the single market to some extent, helps to explain the minimal Conservative dissension that occurred.

¹⁵⁶ Sir Trevor Skeet MP to author - November 1994. John Townend, was another MP who voted for the SEA because of the Prime Minister's position on the Bill. (Although, he claimed that he now wished he had voted against it.)

¹⁵⁷ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author - September 1995.

instance, argued that the manner in which Heath introduced legislation in general in the 1970-74 Parliament and his insistence on passing Bills without amendment, contributed to dissatisfaction amongst Conservative backbenchers.¹⁵⁸ In contrast, Norton claimed, that Mrs Thatcher's style at least in the early stages, was different to that of her predecessor Sir Edward Heath, in that she regularly engaged in communication with her backbenchers as well as being willing to make concessions.¹⁵⁹ Even if Members knew they would be unable to defeat a Bill in the lobbies. Norton claimed, that intra-party dissent would be limited because rebel MPs knew they could air their grievances to Senior Party Members.¹⁶⁰ If this is true, then it explains why a large number of Conservative MPs were prepared to offer support to their leader on the SEA and accept her assurances, that the Bill was concerned with enhancing trading agreements between EC States and would not adversely affect the UK. Norton, continued to argue, however, that as Mrs Thatcher's leadership progressed, her leadership style might change as a result of her large Parliamentary majorities.¹⁶¹ This certainly became evident towards the end of her leadership in the late 1980's, where, arguably, she became less disposed to listen to the concerns emanating from her backbenches. Her leaderships became noted subsequently, for regular cabinet reshuffles and the removal from office of earlier senior Cabinet members of the 1975 Shadow Cabinets, as the so called 'wets' were purged from the political leadership of the CPP.¹⁶² Norton suggested, that if Mrs Thatcher's leadership changed, then this might lead to an increase in Conservative back bench dissent.¹⁶³ His assumption has been borne out to some extent as in the later part of the 1980's, there was a growth of discord amongst Conservative MPs in a number of policy areas.¹⁶⁴ Dissent over the style of Mrs Thatcher's leadership manifested itself, not only in her being sacked as leader of the Party, by a substantial back-bench rebellion, but also by a front-bench rebellion expressed through two prominent Cabinet resignations, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson and the Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe. These resignations were significantly, related to European issues.¹⁶⁵

Not all Conservative Euro-sceptics were reassured by Mrs Thatcher's arguments, as in total, eleven MPs still voted against the Bill on Second and Third reading. Mrs Thatcher's inability to influence these members, stemmed directly from the belief of these MPs, that this European policy issue was a matter of principle and of national importance which overrode any Party loyalty considerations.

¹⁵⁸ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" pp 37-8.

¹⁵⁹ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 39.

¹⁶⁰ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 39

¹⁶¹ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 39.

¹⁶² See Burch, M "Mrs Thatcher's Approach to leadership" for his assessment of her style of Party management, policy management and controlling back bench opposition within the Party." See p 412 for comments on cabinet reshuffles.

¹⁶³ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 39.

¹⁶⁴ For example, the Poll tax issues

¹⁶⁵ Nigel Lawson resigned on 26 October 1989, over the ERM and Mrs Thatcher's continuance of independent economic advice from Alan Walters. See Margaret Thatcher's account of his resignation in "The Downing Street Years" pp 713-718, and for her account of Sir Geoffrey Howe's resignation on 1 November 1990, see pp 832-8.

One Conservative rebel on this Bill, claimed, for instance, that it has "always been the issue, not the personality that counts."¹⁶⁶

John Major

John Major inherited the leadership of a fragmented CPP in December 1990. As mentioned in Chapter one, Conservatives, believe that they are the natural Party of Government and that their electoral success during the last century lies in their ability to portray themselves as a unified Party.¹⁶⁷ With the onset of the Maastricht debates, the threat of internal squabbling over Europe was set to resume. The Fresh Start EDM, of June 1992, gave the Government an early indication of the potential level of dissent that could occur within the Party over Maastricht. For electoral considerations, therefore, John Major needed to assert strong leadership, by attempting to squash the rebellion over Maastricht before it got started in order to prove to the country, and indeed his own Party, that the Conservatives were the Party to continue leading this country.¹⁶⁸ The Government, therefore, visibly undertook a head on battle with the Conservative Euro-Sceptics, whilst making a small number of concessions to them and employing delaying tactics in an attempt to prevent intra-party dissension boiling over into visible internal conflict. What the Government could not have foreseen at this point, was the subsequent emergence of an organised grouping out of the Fresh Start signatories. Previously, only loose informal groupings of individuals had occurred within the CPP in opposition to European policy. It was precisely this fact, which led Rose to argue that "because intra-party disagreements are not organised it is more difficult for Party leaders to anticipate how much disagreement will occur when an issue arises with contrasting tendencies supporting conflicting policies."¹⁶⁹

It was important for John Major to try to unite the Party, in particular because European issues were an area where the Party was seen as divided and because it was widely believed in the Conservative Party, that the Party could not tolerate the threat of internal disunity for electoral reasons. Indeed recent disunity within the Party over European issues had already had a telling effect, as the 1992 election produced a small Conservative majority, compared to the general election results of the last two decades. The ultimate aim of John Major's administration during the earlier stages of his leadership must have been the prevention of Conservative opposition to the Maastricht treaty in the division lobbies. As was seen in the last Chapter, the ultimate test of whether a Government can control its party, is arguably, its ability to exact support from its party on policy issues in the division lobbies. To a certain extent, the Government curtailed the level of potential intra-party

¹⁶⁶ Sir George Gardiner to author – November 1994. It was the opinion of one Maastricht rebel however that he would have voted against the Maastricht Bill in its entirety had it been negotiated under Edward Heath. (Confidential Conservative MP to author).

¹⁶⁷ According to a Gallop Poll, by June 1993, John Major was seen as the most unpopular Prime Minister since polls first started. "The Guardian Political Almanac 1993/4" London, Fourth Estate, 1993, p 370.

¹⁶⁸ One MP commented that following Maastricht, a period in opposition would be required in order to return to this state of affairs.

¹⁶⁹ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 325.

opposition to the Maastricht Bill, as at each stage during the debates, it persuaded some of the Euro-sceptics to return to support the Bill.

The Prime Minister's decision to quash any intra-party rebellion to the Maastricht treaty was in some ways foolhardy. Given the Party's historical record of intra-party dissension to European policy Bills, the Party leadership could have expected confrontation from the Euro-Sceptics of the CPP on the Maastricht Bill. Rose argued, for example, that "if the leadership adopts a policy that ignores established and well publicised views within the Party, it is likely to face a running battle over the wisdom of the resulting commitment."¹⁷⁰ The Government's anticipation of an intra-party battle over its Maastricht policy explains, to some extent, the motivation for the subsequent unparalleled force with which it tried to quash the rebellion in its Party.¹⁷¹ John Major, however, had little room for manoeuvre on this Bill. If he was to ratify the Bill, it had to be passed without amendment. The Government's task was made more difficult by the fact that it only had a small majority in Parliament following the 1992 general election. John Major was almost immediately hindered by the possibility of a sizeable, internal threat of disunity in his Party over the Maastricht Bill. The Government, therefore, wished to minimise dissent in whatever shape or form it materialised, in order to quell derisory comments from the press and the opposition parties concerning internal disunity within the Party. Given these factors, the Government was aware of the ability of existing Euro-sceptics within the Party, to check the passage of the Maastricht Treaty through the Commons. As Rose has argued, "the existence of recognisable tendencies and factions within the parties is a restraining force upon the front-bench leadership."¹⁷²

During the passage of the Maastricht Bill, the Conservative Government and Party machinery imposed a high level of constraints on known and potential Euro-sceptics, to ensure passage of the Maastricht Treaty through Parliament. To some extent the Government's tactics were successful. Like his predecessors, John Major called in known Euro-sceptics for a private talk, in an attempt to constrain intra-party opposition to the Maastricht Bill. This strategy was continued by other Senior Party members such as Douglas Hurd and Michael Heseltine, who consulted individual Euro-sceptic MPs over the Maastricht Bill.¹⁷³ During the debates on the Social Chapter, such meetings were especially prevalent.¹⁷⁴ Naturally, a number of Euro-sceptics declined to comment on the content of these meetings, deeming them to be private. It is, therefore, difficult to comment on the influence of these meetings, on an MP's subsequent voting behaviour. Of those who did comment, it would appear that these meetings allowed both sides to present their arguments to each other. Some MPs stated that, during these meetings, attempts were made to convince them of the folly of

¹⁷⁰ Rose, R. "The Problem of Party Government" p 331.

¹⁷¹ The force of the Government's action throughout the debates must be considered in the context of the surrounding circumstances and events, which had taken place.

¹⁷² Rose, R. "The Problem of Party Government" p 331.

¹⁷³ Peter Tapsell, John Wilkinson, Nicholas Winterton and Iain Duncan Smith were all invited to see either the Prime Minister or senior Ministers of the cabinet, at some point during the Maastricht debates.

¹⁷⁴ See Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 177.

their ways and to toe the Party line.¹⁷⁵ It is arguably easier to persuade an MP individually to change his/her mind on a Bill, than it is to persuade a group. Meeting the Euro-sceptics individually, therefore, afforded the Government the opportunity to try to persuade these members to support the Bill, in the absence of the backing and support of their Fresh Start colleagues.

Despite there being a number of MPs who felt that they had been let down to a certain extent on European issues by their current Prime Minister, a number of Euro-sceptics still regarded John Major as their best option on European issues, as opposed to any other likely successor such as Douglas Hurd, Kenneth Clarke or Michael Heseltine, who, at the time, were seen as more pro-European. This acted as a substantial constraint to opposition for some of the Euro-sceptics, since they had no obvious successor for the Party leadership from within their own ranks during the Maastricht debates. One MP declared that on the Social Chapter vote, he gave his support to the Government because he generally supported the Prime Minister. He added, however, that had Edward Heath negotiated the Maastricht treaty, then he would have voted against it in its entirety.¹⁷⁶ As was discussed earlier, a number of rebels supported the Government on the Social Chapter vote, only because they were opposed to the provisions of the Social Chapter in the UK. Some other Euro-sceptics did not oppose the Bill as they were pleased with the opt-outs from the treaty, which had been negotiated by the Prime Minister.¹⁷⁷

Whilst the FSG employed a number of tactics in their attempt to defeat the Bill, they were ultimately constrained by one factor. This was the fact that the opposition Party was more pro-European than their own Party leadership. The Conservative Euro-sceptics had thus to stage their battle over Maastricht within the confines of their own Parliamentary Party. This factor became the Government's greatest trump card, for Conservative Euro-sceptics were unlikely to cross sides of the House and join the opposition parties on critical votes of confidence, because the leadership of the opposition parties were even more pro-European than were their own. It was this fact, rather than specifically, the vote of confidence, which constrained the rebels of the CPP. The only real concern for the Government, which at times appeared plausible, was that the Euro-sceptics of the Party would split away from the CPP and form their own Party. What can be said is that whilst the FSG organised to resist these pressures, in order to limit internal factional activity on this Bill, the Conservative Party machinery became more organised than it has had occasion to be for many years.

¹⁷⁵ Walter Sweeney MP to author - August 1995.

¹⁷⁶ Roger Moate MP to author - December 1994.

¹⁷⁷ Iain Duncan-Smith MP to author - November 1994. One member of the Fresh Start Group voted with the Government on the first vote (Labour amendment) on the Social Chapter and against the Government on the second vote. He voted in this manner because he believed the opt-out was irrelevant. He argued that he was "not likely to vote for the imposition of the Social chapter because it would just make matters worse. But what I was demonstrating was, you'd get it anyway without the Social chapter. So I voted against the Labour Party amendment." He believed that the second vote however was in fact about the Maastricht Treaty, which was why he voted against.

John Major's ability to command support for this Bill was limited by the fact that he himself had a difficult path to tread. In negotiating Maastricht, he had to pacify both wings of his parliamentary party, the 'pro-Europeans' and the 'anti-Europeans,' who were fighting for his support on the issue. In fact, throughout his leadership, John Major's authority on European policy Bills was weakened by the fact that he failed to take a decisive position on Europe. One Conservative Euro-sceptic claimed, for example, that "it's never been entirely clear where the Prime Minister stands on Europe."¹⁷⁸ John Major's ability to influence the CPP on European issues was constrained also by the fact that, in negotiating Maastricht, Britain simultaneously held the presidency of the EC. It was important, therefore, for Mr Major to demonstrate to the other European Heads of State, that Britain was a credible European partner. Since Britain held the EC presidency at the time of the Maastricht negotiations in 1991, the Prime Minister had the opportunity to assert any anti-European concerns he may have held to Britain's partners in the EC. Had he done so, this would have resulted in a considerable reaction at home from the pro-Europeans of his Party and the opposition parties. John Major's management of the Party over the Maastricht issue was effective, in that it prevented a formal Party split. One Conservative Euro-sceptic stated, for instance, that he thought the Prime Minister had "been quite skilful in getting us into a situation where most of the Party, particularly the majority that's sceptical...can go along with it."¹⁷⁹ Riddell has also argued, that the Prime Minister had "achieved a lot to keep the Tory Party more or less together - with no cabinet resignations - for as long as he has."¹⁸⁰ Whilst this may be the case, Major's failure to give clear leadership to his party on European issues, aggravated divisions within the party. Through his failure to give clear direction to his party and his equivocation on European issues, he helped to sustain internal dissent throughout his leadership. This view has been confirmed elsewhere. Penny Junor, for example, claimed that John Major, "by not nailing his colours to the pro-European mast in advance of the Maastricht negotiations, he lost the advantage."¹⁸¹ Sowemimo, recently supported this view when he claimed that, "in the absence of a clear lead from Major, the anti-federalists have seized the initiative and have constrained the Prime Minister's room for manoeuvre at the 1996 IGC."¹⁸² He further claimed that "John Major's attempts to maintain unity on Europe has in fact paradoxically succeeded in intensifying his party's divisions on Europe."¹⁸³

One strategy that John Major could have employed to constrain further intra-party opposition was to have agreed to a referendum on the Maastricht Bill. Had John Major been prepared to agree to this for example and, in particular, to a referendum on EMU, then much of the sizeable opposition to the Bill would have disintegrated. A number of the Maastricht Euro-sceptic MPs stated that, they

¹⁷⁸ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁷⁹ Sir Peter Fry MP to author - October 1995.

¹⁸⁰ The Times "A leader bruised and bloodied but still not beaten" 29 November 1994.

¹⁸¹ Junor, P "The Major Enigma" London, Michael Joseph, 1993, p 28. (Hereinafter, Junor, P "The Major Enigma").

¹⁸² Sowemimo, M "The Conservative Party and European Integration" p 94, Party Politics Volume 2 No. 1 pp 77-97. (Hereinafter, Sowemimo, M "The Conservative Party and European Integration"). IGC refers to Intergovernmental Conference.

¹⁸³ Sowemimo, M "The Conservative Party and European Integration" p 93

would have been available for a deal with John Major, if he had been prepared to give his agreement for a referendum.¹⁸⁴ Sir Teddy Taylor, for instance, is reported to have claimed that, the pressures employed by the whips, “would not have been necessary” over the Maastricht Bill, “if only the government had agreed to a referendum.”¹⁸⁵ Paradoxically, however, on the EFB, John Major’s refusal to rule out the possibility of a referendum, increased the level of support from the Euro-sceptics within the CPP.¹⁸⁶ This was only a temporary appeasement for those Euro-sceptics whose broader objective was to procure a Prime Ministerial statement that Britain would not join a single currency. Some of the Euro-sceptics, in realisation that the Government wanted their support on the EFB, tactically tried to secure some influence on the Government in another area, which would be of benefit to their constituents, in return for support on the Bill. One MP for instance, claimed that, rather than merely supporting the Government, he “made himself available for a deal,” because he didn’t think this issue was in the same constitutional league as the Maastricht debates.¹⁸⁷

European Finance Bill

The main constraint brought to bear on Conservative Euro-sceptics opposition to the EFB, stemmed directly from the Prime Minister’s decision to make this Bill a vote of confidence, and the Cabinet’s subsequent decision to resign en masse, if the Government lost the vote. One response of the Conservative Euro-sceptics was to persuade their constituencies that, technically, if the Government lost its vote of confidence, it did not mean that a general election would follow, only that Mr Major would resign. Sir Richard Body employed this tactic with his constituency, but failed to convince them, which was why he subsequently supported the Government in the division.¹⁸⁸

The Cabinet’s ‘suicide pact’ played a decisive role in quelling the number of potential Conservative rebels.¹⁸⁹ The inclusion of the ‘Cabinet right’ within the ‘suicide pact’ thwarted the rebels’ ability to defend their opposition to their Constituency Associations.¹⁹⁰ The rebels’ chances of defeating the Government would clearly have improved had a senior Minister refused to abide by the suicide

¹⁸⁴ Rupert Allason MP to author – November 1994.

¹⁸⁵ As reported by Junor, P “The Major Enigma” p 282.

¹⁸⁶ The Daily Telegraph “Referendum hint to woo Tory rebels” 26 November 1994.

¹⁸⁷ Rupert Allason MP to author - November 1994. “The first issue was to stop “the Spanish fishermen...in the western approaches in the channel....The second thing was a package of compensation for pensioners on second contribution VAT. That was quite important for my pensioners because I have more people over the age of 70 in my constituency than any other MP And the third thing then really, which I thought was very important and useful was the question of a referendum. That after 1996... after the IGC there should be a referendum on a single currency

¹⁸⁸ Sir Richard Body to author – October 1995.

¹⁸⁹ The Times “Cabinet pact to resign if rebels win” 24 November 1994. “Kenneth Clarke dramatically stepped up the war on the Conservative Euro-rebels last night by vowing that all members of the cabinet would go down with John Major if he loses..... The Chancellor of the Exchequer was acting to quash the growing claims of Euro-sceptics that the debate on the European Finance Bill is not an issue of confidence and that Mr Major would be prevented by his cabinet colleagues from seeking a dissolution of Parliament if he was defeated, with one of them taking his place.

¹⁹⁰ This also includes Peter Lilley and John Redwood.

pact. If a Cabinet Minister had dared to defy the Government, it would have made it easier for a backbencher to rebel. A number of would-be rebels saw the increase in Britain's contributions as something, which, although unwelcome, was inevitable, as the principle of the Bill had already been agreed at the Edinburgh Summit. The Cabinet Euro-sceptics had a detrimental effect on the activities of backbench Conservative Euro-sceptics through their differences in both publicly stated opinions and language. An article in the press, for instance, identified "a big gulf between the Cabinet right and their backbench allies." The article claimed that "the Cabinet Euro-sceptics.....will keep their dissent within limits. They will not capsize the ship...They believe the main focus should be on the Inter-Governmental Conference in 1996. In contrast the hard core of Euro-sceptics want an immediate unequivocal rejection by Mr Major of British participation in a single currency."¹⁹¹

The Euro-sceptic Cabinet Ministers played a dual role in relation to the Conservative backbench Euro-sceptics, acting both as a constraint and, as an impetus for rebellion. They acted as an impetus by way of the speeches of Michael Portillo and Jonathan Aitken which made different attacks on Europe."¹⁹² Their speeches lent support to the Euro-sceptic position of the Conservative Party, by reflecting "positively on the aims of the rebel group of backbenchers." An article in the Times summarised the view that factional attempts to influence Government policy can be a positive force. "The Conservative Euro-sceptic right is often characterised as a negative force. But the vision offered by Mr Portillo and Mr Aitken could scarcely be more positive: that of a highly skilled, confident de-regulated Britain leading the way in Europe. It should command respect at home and abroad."¹⁹³ Another article claimed, that "the Prime Minister's escalation merely inflames the rebels and weakens his authority in the eyes of his Party and the voters...These are dictatorial threats that do not do credit to a Democratic Party. Far from strengthening the Prime Minister's position, this week has made him look more desperate than ever."¹⁹⁴

6. *Votes of confidence*

To try to force the support of internal party dissenters to a bill, a party leader, can as a last resort, threaten, to resign or dissolve parliament and/or make the vote on a Bill a vote of confidence in the government. On three of the four case studies of this work, the party leadership made real such threats. Heath's decision to make Second reading of the 1971-2 EEC Bill a vote of confidence, for

¹⁹¹ The Times "Mutineers seem happy to go down with the ship" 24 November 1994.

¹⁹² The Times "Aitken's attack on EU complacency" 23 November 1994. At the Nicholas Ridley memorial lecture (22 November, 1994), Jonathan Aitken described as "one of the cabinet's leading right winger's" launched his attack on how he referred to a "two speed world with "Europe trailing badly in the slow lane." See also, The Times "Portillo warns of new conflict" 23 November 1994. Michael Portillo, the Employment Secretary, also issued warnings on the same day at a meeting of the Institute of Directors in London. Mr Portillo, made a heavy attack on European policies. "Europe is under-performing. It's not because we are lazy or un-inventive, it's because we are still pursuing policies which are interventionist and centralising."

¹⁹³ For further details of their speeches and arguments see The Times "Singular opinions" 24 November 1994.

¹⁹⁴ The Times "Drum Major" 24 November 1994.

Conservative MPs, and implied threat of dissolution of the Heath administration if the Government lost the vote, without doubt, stopped a number of the October Euro-sceptics continuing their opposition. The Prime Minister's strategy proved effective as the number of Conservatives, who opposed on the October vote, fell on Second reading. For as Kitzinger argued "more than half of the rebels had come to heel at the first acid test."¹⁹⁵ One Conservative anti-market MP commented that prior to the vote, a number of his Euro-sceptic colleagues met to discuss voting tactics on this Bill.¹⁹⁶ They made the decision to support the Government in order to avoid in their opinion, "all likelihood of bringing down our own Government."¹⁹⁷ Had there been a larger Conservative Parliamentary majority at this time and no risk of the dissolution of a Conservative Government and a Labour Government replacing them, this MP claimed, that he probably would have continued to vote against the Bill or abstained.¹⁹⁸ This view confirms Norton's assumption that large parliamentary majorities assist intra-party dissent.¹⁹⁹

A number of these MPs, who continued to oppose the Second reading of the Bill, did so on the basis of their principled objections to the Bill. Some of them also perceived the Prime Minister's threat to mean that only he would resign as Prime Minister, not that he would seek a dissolution of parliament.²⁰⁰ This view demonstrates the need for a party leader's threats to be credible if they are to be effective in constraining intra-party opposition. One Conservative MP, in his discussion with Edward Heath, even suggested a possible replacement to the Prime Minister if "he didn't feel able to continue to lead us under the circumstances."²⁰¹

Maastricht – Votes of Confidence

Rumours indicated that the Government might have been intending to invoke a vote of confidence on the Paving Bill. Although this action never materialised, the rumours were sufficient to prevent a number of potential rebels from opposing the Government on this motion.²⁰² Teresa Gorman claimed, for instance, that the Paving debate was regarded by Conservatives as a vote of confidence.²⁰³ Many of the Euro-sceptics supported this view. One of them that, "we came to the decision that, rightly or wrongly, if the Government had lost the Paving resolution, the Prime Minister would probably resign and, at that stage, the alternatives were worse."²⁰⁴ A small sub-

¹⁹⁵ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 387.

¹⁹⁶ John Sutcliffe, Edward du Cann and Teddy Taylor.

¹⁹⁷ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - November 1994. The decisions of these three may have been vital for the Government for as he claimed "as it turned out, the vote was close had the three of us decided to vote against the motion, we would have brought about defeat of the EC Bill on second reading." ¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁸ Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - November 1994.

¹⁹⁹ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p32.

²⁰⁰ As informed by Sir Roger Moate - December 1994 and Sir Richard Body to author - October 1995.

²⁰¹ Sir John Farr to author - September 1994. This MP supported the Government on second and third reading of the Bill as a result of constituency pressure, not the implied vote of confidence.

²⁰² The Executive Members of the 1922 Committee were Sir Ivan Lawrence, Sir Rhodes Boyson, Sir George Gardiner, James Pawsey, John Townend.

²⁰³ Gorman, T "The Bastards" p 108.

²⁰⁴ John Townend MP to author - October 1995.

group of the Euro-sceptics decided to vote for the Paving Bill because they regarded it as a procedural resolution and not a Bill of principle.²⁰⁵

John Major's decision to call for a vote of confidence on the Social Chapter vote effectively constrained the opposition of the FSG. It could be assumed, therefore, that the Prime Minister had found the key with which to defeat the Euro-sceptic group of his Party on future European policy issues. An article in the press, sixteen months later claimed that, "the Maastricht precedent suggests that few if any Euro-sceptics are likely to oppose the government on a vote of confidence."²⁰⁶ When it came to the vote on the European Finance Bill in November 1994, where internal Euro-sceptic opposition was expected, the Prime Minister decided to re-use this tactic, in order to make sure he secured Parliament's approval for the Bill.

During the Maastricht debates, the FSG were hindered in their opposition by the fact that they were in unfamiliar territory. They were neither used to acting as a close-knit unit, nor in so organised a manner. Whilst the Group started with tactical plans to oppose the Maastricht treaty, they became more cohesive as a reaction to Government pressures. The passage of the Bill through Parliament was a period of sustained bluff, counter bluff and reaction to each other's tactics. Ironically, the effect of the Government's reaction was the opposite of its intention. For, as was seen in the previous Chapter, the FSG became more determined to oppose the Bill in the face of this pressure to conform from their Party leadership, until the Government was prepared to push the issue to a vote of confidence.²⁰⁷

John Major's decision to reuse the tactic of attaching a vote of confidence with Cabinet endorsement in the EFB debate, ultimately constrained a number of Maastricht rebels, who otherwise might have opposed this Bill.²⁰⁸ One Conservative MP was of the opinion that, the Bill in effect, was already agreed and therefore, the issue at stake was the question of the Government's survival.²⁰⁹ John Major's decision to use the vote of confidence trick during the Social Chapter debate had shocked many Conservative MPs. His decision to do so again on the EFB debate, fuelled resentment and hostility within the party. In particular, this action angered a group of the former FSG who having been defeated on the Maastricht Treaty, were determined not to be defeated by such a tactic a second time.²¹⁰ Another Maastricht rebel, who supported the Government on this Bill, nearly did not because he was so angered by the Government's strong arm tactics. He claimed that, "I strongly disapproved of the Government's strong arm tactics in pushing

²⁰⁵ John Townend MP to author- October 1995.

²⁰⁶ The Financial Times "Finance Bill set to test Euro-sceptic resolve" 25 November 1994.

²⁰⁷ See also Huber J D, "The Vote of confidence in Parliamentary Democracies" American Political Science Review Vol. 90, No.2 June 1996 p 272. (Hereinafter, Huber J D, "The Vote of confidence in Parliamentary Democracies").

²⁰⁸ There were a number of other factors that dissuaded some Conservative MPs from opposing the Bill - which are discussed in this chapter. It was the vote of confidence, which in the final outcome constrained rebellion.

²⁰⁹ Sir Trevor Skeet MP to author - November 1994.

²¹⁰ Sir Richard Body for example, resigned the whip in protest at the Government's action.

it through and was tempted to rebel on that ground alone."²¹¹ Many Conservatives throughout the country, not just in parliament, were astounded by the Prime Minister's intention to test his own survival when he only had a majority of fourteen. According to a Press article, one MP commented that, "it is a game of poker isn't it."²¹² His decision was considered to be even more extraordinary, given that opinion polls at the time regarded John Major as the most unpopular Prime Minister this century, and the Conservative Party was only slightly above its all time low in the opinion polls.²¹³ Many of the Conservative backbenchers also doubted his ability to win a future general election.

John Major's use of the "Confidence Vote Procedure"²¹⁴ on the EFB debate damaged his credibility among many Conservative Associations. As one Constituency Association Chairman was reported to have said, "how many times is he going to cry wolf."²¹⁵ There may be a limit to the number of times that a Prime Minister can use a vote of confidence without losing the respect of his Party at Westminster and in the country. Already during the course of his leadership, John Major had implemented this tactic twice before, in November 1992, and July 1993. It is doubtful, therefore, whether John Major (or any other Conservative leader in the near future), could use this tactic again after the EFB vote, to secure party support, without fatally undermining the credibility of a Conservative Government.

Although the Government would have suffered grave embarrassment had it failed to ratify the EFB, after already having agreed the basis of Britain's contributions to the EU budget at Edinburgh in 1992, it is doubtful that the Government would have faced opposition to the Bill from the opposition parties had it not been for its decision to use a vote of confidence. Without the instigation of a vote of confidence, the Bill, in all probability, would have been ratified anyway. Why then, did the Government decide to aggravate hostilities within its own party? The first explanation is that the Government must have anticipated substantial opposition to this Bill and believed that there was a risk that the Bill could be defeated, especially with the Government's small parliamentary majority at the time. The Government's concerns had also been heightened by the recent challenge of Sir Nicholas Bonsor, a Euro-sceptic, for the Chairmanship of the 1922

²¹¹ Confidential Conservative MP to author – August 1995.

²¹² The Financial Times "Finance Bill set to test Euro-sceptic resolve" 25 November 1994.

²¹³ The Times "Major's ratings fall again" 24 November 1994.

²¹⁴ As labelled by John D Huber "The Vote of confidence in Parliamentary Democracies" p269. Huber argued that anticipation of the Prime Minister's use of this procedure could affect the legislative bargaining process. If the party leadership does not use such mechanisms for long periods of time, it is probable that, just as Norton argued that dissenters become irreverent of whips' powers if this procedure is not used. There is a fine balance, however, as I discuss later, since Prime Ministers cannot keep invoking votes of confidence merely to legislate, whilst retaining credibility.

²¹⁵ As reported by one constituency Chairman in the Times "Angry constituencies tell Tory rebels to back Major or else" 25 November 1994.

Committee.²¹⁶ According to an article in the Press, this sent signals to the Government of the growing unrest in the Party, especially from the Euro-sceptics.²¹⁷ If the Government believed it could be defeated on this Bill then as, Riddell has argued, a Government "must call for a vote of confidence when it faces possible defeat on a substantial issue, it needs to know whether it still has a Parliamentary majority or not...A Government that cannot rely on a parliamentary majority to implement such a commitment is not an effective Government. The issue is indeed one of confidence, and can only be treated as such."²¹⁸

Whether or not the Conservative Government believed there was a real risk that the Bill could be defeated, it is probable that the Party leadership was determined to demonstrate that they were not prepared to be held to ransom again by the efforts of the Party's Euro-sceptics. The Party leadership was determined not to take any risks in ratifying this bill and, despite the fact that many potential rebels acquiesced in the light of the vote of confidence, four sick MP's were transported to the Commons to register their vote.²¹⁹ The use of the vote of confidence trick was generally effective, as the voting behaviour of the eight rebels who opposed the Bill was limited to an abstention rather than a vote against the Government. Prime Ministerial use of votes of confidence is clearly an effective strategy that can be deployed by a government to induce potential rebels to fall in line and support party policy and when effective, it is clear that leaders of the Conservative Party are able to dominate the passage and content of legislation. Huber, for instance, claimed that, "the attempt to torpedo Maastricht...ended with a whimper rather than a bang, and Britain ratified the Treaty in precisely the form desired by its Prime Minister."²²⁰

7. Other Constraints to opposition.

One major reason why a number of the October 1971 Conservative anti-market MPs supported the Government on Second reading, was because they felt that the House had approved the principle of entry to the EEC. These MPs believed that to have continued their opposition on Second and Third

²¹⁶ The decision of Sir Nicholas Bonsor, a Euro-rebel during the Maastricht debates, to challenge the Chairman of the 1922 Committee, Sir Marcus Fox, for the leadership, must have acted as a simmering pot for restlessness amongst the rank and file of the Conservative back-benches. Indeed, it was reported that this challenge may well be seen as "a cabal of mavericks ... trying to engineer a direct challenger to Mr Major's leadership, some MP's were inclined to see Sir Nicholas's move as part of a wider campaign to unsettle the leadership." The Times "Someone had to do it 1922 challenger" 23 November 1994. This view is also supported by Shrinkey, R, who viewed the challenge as "indicative of the mood for a possible leadership challenge" in The Daily Telegraph "Referendum hint to woo Tory rebels" 26 November 1994.

²¹⁷ The Times "Battle begins for place in the celebrity spotlight" 23 November 1994. Peter Riddell also claimed that the 1922 Committee serves an important role in Conservative Party politics since it acts "in times of crisis as a barometer of the mood of MPs." The Times "Battle begins for place in the celebrity spotlight" 23 November 1994.

²¹⁸ The Financial Times "Question of Confidence" 25 November 1994.

²¹⁹ See The Daily Telegraph "Clarke appeals to loyalty" 29 November 1994, for further details.

²²⁰ Huber J D, "The Vote of Confidence in Parliamentary Democracies" American Political Science Review Vol. 90, No.2 June 1996 p 269.

reading of the Bill would be subverting the decision of the House.²²¹ Other considerations, which constrained some of the Euro-sceptics, include the pairing of one Conservative Euro-sceptic, who secured the agreement of his Labour pair (pro-entry) to vote against his party if, in return, he voted for his. This, in effect, therefore negated his pro-vote.²²²

The issue of parliamentary procedure constrained a number of peripheral Euro-sceptics from opposing all stages of the Maastricht Bill. A number of Euro-sceptics had a general rule that they would vote with the Government on all procedural matters, as the Government had other business that they supported.²²³ For example, a number of peripheral Conservative Euro-sceptics made the decision to support the Government on procedural matters in respect of the Maastricht treaty. One MP explained for example, that "the procedure things are just trying to bugger up the House. And I think that actually, you've got to beat it or not beat it."²²⁴ Another peripheral Euro-sceptic stated that, "the Government, had a procedural right to get its legislation once the House had given its consent in principle."²²⁵

8. The Size of the Government's majority

The size of the Government's majority was a considerable factor in quelling the number of Euro-sceptics in the CPP who opposed the Single European Act. When Parliamentary majorities are large, rebellious MPs have little to fear in opposing, because their actions are unlikely to jeopardise the Government's ability to pass legislation. It would be naturally assumed that, in such instances, MPs would be more likely to rebel. One MP for instance, believed that an MP has more freedom to "do what one wants to with that sort of majority without the threat of bringing the Party and the Government down."²²⁶ If this is the case, it is surprising that more Conservative MPs did not oppose this Bill. In view of the large parliamentary majority of the Conservative Government in 1983, Norton was surprised not to have found a higher level of Conservative opposition to Party Bills in general. He found that on a number of Policy Bills, although opposed to some Bills, Conservatives were not prepared to dissent in the lobbies, which he attributed to the fact that the Government was prepared to make concessions.²²⁷ As has already been discussed, Conservative intra-party opposition was minimal over the SEA because firstly, the Bill was not regarded as constitutionally significant and secondly, a greater number of concerned Conservatives were prepared to accept the reassurances of their leader on the Bill. A third factor which curtailed the level of Conservative dissidence to the SEA, was that a number of MPs believed their opposition in the lobbies would not have been effective, given the large Parliamentary majority of their Party. In this instance, large parliamentary majorities actually constrain intra-party opposition. One MP claimed that, "the Government really couldn't care less. It always knew it was going to have

²²¹ William Clark, Carol Mather and Eric Bullus were of this view.

²²² Confidential Conservative anti-market MP to author - November 1994.

²²³ Andrew Hunter MP to author - December 1994.

²²⁴ John Townend MP to author - October 1995.

²²⁵ Harry Greenway MP to author - November 1994.

²²⁶ Sir John Farr to author - September 1994.

²²⁷ Norton, P "Behavioural Changes" p 33.

enough people to get its business through...there's an awful inevitability."²²⁸ A number of the Euro-sceptic MPs were of the opinion that the Bill would be passed anyway and therefore questioned why they should be seen to rebel, when any rebellion would be futile. One Conservative MP echoed these sentiments and said "why vote against the Government if it's only going to cause trouble for you".²²⁹

In view of this, I suggest that small parliamentary majorities fuel intra-party opposition. For why would MPs want to go to the extent of making trouble, if the Government's majority was so large that their opposition would have no effect? When a Government's majority is small, therefore, intra-party opponents have a greater chance of organising effective opposition to a Bill. This may actually help sustain the opposition over the duration of the Bill, especially when earlier efforts are seen to be successful or nearly successful. On the Paving vote during the Maastricht debates for instance, the Government only secured victory by three votes.

During the Maastricht debates, the size of the Government's parliamentary majority acted both as a constraint and as an impetus for intra-party opposition. In previous European debates, the Conservative Government had a considerable or sufficient parliamentary majority, together with enough support from the opposition parties, to ensure the safe passage of their Bill; this was not the case over Maastricht. As a result of a small majority, therefore, a Government, when faced with the threat of internal rebellion to a key policy Bill, will itself step up the level of pressures on these MPs to try and exact their support. Despite there being a greater opportunity for the rebels to be victorious, given the Government's small majority, other constraints (as already discussed) may prove more effective in whittling away peripheral or wavering rebels to ensure passage of the Bill. One Conservative MP alleged, for example, that the Government's small majority precipitated "a political change in the nature of the Party," and that, "once Maastricht, got under way it became nasty."²³⁰

In summary, when a government holds a large majority in Parliament, the impetus for a faction to rebel and the party leadership's power to constrain such a rebellion are low. Whereas, when a government holds a small majority, the impetus for a faction to rebel is high, and the party leadership's power to constrain such a rebellion is high. As a result it may appear that the government's majority in Parliament has no effect on the extent to which a faction will rebel. The varying level of differential between constraint and impetus at differing levels of government majority does however, have a significant effect on the internal activity of a faction, as greater constraints and impetus place greater demands on the faction's ability to remain cohesive. This also increases the tension between a party leadership and the faction.

²²⁸ Sir Peter Fry to author – October 1995. Note he is referring to the Maastricht Bill.

²²⁹ Tony Marlow MP to author - October 1995.

²³⁰ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author- September 1995.

The size of an MP's constituency majority can also restrain an MP's political behaviour. For some Euro-sceptics, the pressures of party loyalty were too much to withstand during the various European debates. Unless these MPs had the support of their constituencies, they risked losing their seat at the next general election. One MP commented that, for "those who had marginal seats, the size of the majority was important and the pull of party loyalty was strong. ... I think there is a very strong will, particularly in marginal seat people."²³¹ Walter Sweeney, who had a majority of only 19, stated that the size of the Government's majority affected his voting over Maastricht "in different ways at different times." He stated that "before I became battle hardened, the smallness of the Conservative majority persuaded me to support or abstain rather than vote against the Government. As the war of attrition dragged on, I became more inclined to vote against."²³² What this demonstrates is that intra-party opposition in the CPP can endure for longer and organise much more ferociously, specifically to protect and fight against the level of constraints imposed upon them.

Conclusion

It is clear that a number of constraints and pressures existed to make the 1970 Conservative Euro-sceptic MP fall in line. Kitzinger found that Euro-sceptics "were not sparing of allegations that people had been leant on to fall in line - indeed they saw it as the culmination of a process that had been deliberately begun in 1964."²³³ He found that there were no real conclusions to be drawn from statistical analysis of the various constraints, because ultimately "politics and the human soul have their own dynamics, and people who started out all set to act on one principle found themselves, ...not always able to stick to their initial resolve."²³⁴ No codified manner of behaviour of factionalism existed within the CPP in 1971-2 EC debates, as it had never before been expressed on such a scale in the post-war period. The Conservative anti-market MPs, therefore, did not know how to behave in a dissident form, as no protocol had been established. To a large extent, they were forced to make it up as they went along. They had no measure with which to gauge Constituency, Party and onlookers' reactions to them in terms of their expressed opposition, let alone themselves.

On the SEA, the main constraint to opposition was Margaret Thatcher's clear and 'perceived' strident approach to European affairs, combined with the large parliamentary majority held by the CPP. This latter point led many would-be opponents of the Bill, to believe that rebellion was futile.

Over Maastricht, it is difficult to say that one factor or constraint was more effective than any other in limiting the voting behaviour of border-line/peripheral fresh start rebels. Each MP made his own choice after an assessment of the relevant constraints imposed. As Kitzinger argued, it is "all too

²³¹ Warren Hawksley MP to author- September 1995.

²³² Walter Sweeney MP to author - August 1995.

²³³ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 181.

²³⁴ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 389.

easy in any study of an isolated issue to lose sight of the total context in which a man or woman has to take his or her stand."²³⁵

The most effective constraint to opposition for the hard-core opponents in the 1970's and 1990's European debates, was the Prime Ministerial imposition of a vote of confidence. Despite this, in the 1970's some rebels continued to vote against the EEC Bill. Many of these Members, however, were of the belief that the Prime Minister's threat was bogus. They did not believe that Edward Heath would dissolve parliament, rather, he would personally resign as leader of the CPP and a leadership contest for his replacement would follow. In the 1990's however, no Conservative Euro-sceptic voted against the Government on a vote of confidence. Only abstentions were registered.

In the case of the EFB, a high proportion of Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs supported the vote because it was consequent upon Maastricht. Eight recalcitrants opposed the Bill, despite a high level of pressure to support the government. A number of other Conservative Euro-sceptics publicly stated that they would have wished to oppose this piece of legislation. They did not do so for various reasons. The main constraint to opposition was the fact that the Government made the vote in the lobbies a vote of confidence in itself.

In some cases, the vote of confidence was sufficient to check the rebellion of a number of Euro-sceptics, especially where constituency pressures were applied. For the few hard-core rebels, who continued to oppose by abstention, it was not the vote of confidence itself, which reduced their voting, rather, it was the implication that would follow on from this, which was the possibility of the Labour Party seizing power in a general election, which in all-likelihood would take Britain further into a federalised and more fully integrated Europe. Overall, what can be claimed is that, when members of a party believe that an issue of national importance is at stake, a party leadership will find it difficult to constrain intra-party dissent in the CPP.

²³⁵ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 182.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION: AN 'ANTI-EUROPEAN' FACTION WITHIN THE CPP?

Introduction

This research has two positions and one subsidiary aim. The first position is that the European policy legislation of three Conservative Prime Ministers: Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher and John Major, has been the major cause of intra-party dissent within the CPP. The second position of this study is that behaviour displayed by some of the party's parliamentary members in opposition to these European policy Bills should be construed as factional. As was seen in Chapter one, this view contrasts to previous academic analysis, which regards intra-party opposition within the CPP as the behaviour of a political tendency. A subsidiary aim of this study is to establish a provisional framework of factional activity that could be used to test for the occurrence of such activity within the CPP in future research. The research also implicitly challenges the view that the CPP is leader-centric, at least, on the issue of Europe. Instead, the role of Conservative Party managers is to control and manage the existence of factions within the parliamentary party.

Britain's integration with the EU - An issue for Conservative intra-parliamentary party dissent.

It is clear that for a number of different reasons the issue of Britain's integration with the European Communities has been the most conspicuous cause of substantial intra-party dissent within the CPP since 1970. The European problem continued to remain an issue of internal controversy for the CPP right up to the general election in May 1997, after which Party Members on both sides of the European issue blamed the stance and/or behaviour of the other for the loss of political office.¹ As has usually occurred during election campaigns in the post-war period, the CPP was unable to pull together and reconcile their differences on Europe, whilst additionally fighting for political survival. This was because this issue raised divisions over the fundamental beliefs of members of the CPP over their vision of the way the party and the country should be run in terms of national identity and nationhood.

It was suggested in Chapter one that being the party of Government was of the utmost importance to the CPP, as it could be argued, it is for all political parties given the main aim of a major national political party, is the pursuit of political office. It was extraordinary, therefore, that a number of members of the CPP were prepared, by opposing their party's European policy Bills, to risk damage to the party's record of unity and on occasions the continuance of their party in office. This

¹ In fact so tumultuous an issue has the European debate become for the party that the question has to be asked whether the CPP lost this general election because of their inability to reconcile their divisions on Europe in recent years and, even more significantly during the election campaign itself; for internal disunity within the party over Europe fostered the public impression that they were incapable of governing. This question will be addressed by myself in a future article for which I have already collated research of the opinions of the Conservative MPs on this issue. What was significant about the Conservatives' defeat at the general election is that a number of MPs on both sides of the party believed that their recent disunity on European issues was the principal reason for their electoral defeat.

behaviour is even more extraordinary given the historical lessons of the 1846 and 1903 splits within the party and subsequent losses of office, which occurred over similar issues of nationhood and international markets. What was it, therefore, about the issue of Europe, which caused so much anguish amongst some Conservative MPs?

In an attempt to explain this, Chapter two provided a narrative of the events to date whilst Chapters three and four tried to establish and understand the issues of concern to Conservative MPs since 1970 over the four European policy Bills brought before the British parliament for ratification: Britain's third application for membership 1971-2; the SEA 1986; the Maastricht treaty 1992-3 and the EFB 1994. As was demonstrated in Chapter four, there were many different reasons why some Conservative MPs found the prospect of ratification of these Bills to be abhorrent. There were, however, a number of broad themes, which gave rise to the concerns of a number of those Conservative MPs, which spanned all four European Bills. The rebels, for example, were broadly in agreement on the exact meaning and significance of these Bills in terms of their implications for British domestic policy and the control mechanisms through which British politics is steered. It was clear that for various reasons a number of Conservative MPs regarded the issue of European integration across all four case studies to be an issue of national importance, which was outside the parameters of party jurisdiction in terms of their required support of party policy. In the eyes of some of the Euro-sceptics, this view was legitimised by cross-party campaigns in the 1975 referendum and Government and party leadership decisions to allow, for instance, free votes on the October 1971 vote, the SEA in 1986 and Second Reading of the Maastricht debates. During the 1971-2 debate it was shown from content analysis of the debates in Hansard and reflections from MPs interviewed of this period, that the main concern of the Conservative MPs who rebelled in the division lobbies, was an expectation of loss of UK parliamentary sovereignty to Brussels, in a key number of policy areas, should Britain become a member of the EEC. Sovereignty concerns had also been voiced during the 1961 and 1967 debates during the earlier attempts of the Macmillan and Wilson Governments to secure British entry to the EEC. These concerns became more pronounced when it was evident during 1970 that Britain's entry into the EEC was more likely.

Sovereignty concerns continued to be strongly voiced during the three successive European policy debates in the parliamentary era of this study. Even on the EFB debate, disquiet was manifest over the ability of European institutions to influence, and in some cases control, domestic policy and most recently it arose in the debate over whether Britain should join a single European currency. During the SEA debates and following Mrs Thatcher's Bruges speech in 1988, the predominant concerns of the Euro-sceptics of the CPP were over the increasing powers of the institutions in various domestic policy areas; insufficient safeguards over the accountability of the institutions and the potential for a federalised United States of Europe. These concerns became more pronounced during the Maastricht and EFB debates.

There were a number of issues of concern, which were not evident across the span of these four debates. For instance, the 1971-2 debates dealt with specific issues such as the effect British membership of the EEC would have on existing Commonwealth relationships, and potential food prices increases in the UK. Similarly, the SEA gave rise to specific concerns over the extension of QMV. The Maastricht Bill engendered specific concerns over a single currency, the Social Chapter and the Principle of Subsidiarity, whilst the European Finance debate dealt with concerns over the mechanisms through which the European Institutions were financed.

What is important in terms of this study and for the CPP in general, is that the continuation of some themes across all the debates interacted with the deeper dissatisfaction felt by some Conservative MPs with the way their party was run. A number of the same individuals expressed some of these concerns during each of the debates. Sir Teddy Taylor MP, for instance, expressed the same issues of disquiet over the loss of British sovereignty across all four European debates. There was also a collection of Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs who had remained in the House during at least two of the four EC debates,² who could be expected to oppose European community legislation as the debates arose. In each of the debates, these MPs were joined in their concerns by newer Conservative members of parliament and in some cases, converts from previous pro-European Party Members. Some broader concerns, for example, over the implications of further integration, which had been advocated by the senior Euro-sceptics³ were shared by newer Euro-sceptic Members of the CPP. Some Members, however, were concerned only with the specific aspects of the respective European Bills.

This study has established that the European issue has generated substantial concern for a number of Conservative MPs. What distinguishes the European question from other policy Bills, over which Conservative MPs may have had concerns over long periods of time, is the manner in which these concerns were orchestrated within the CPP and Parliament. For example, the occurrence of a collective formalised rebellion against the official party line by some, not all, of the party's Euro sceptics, in order to get their views on European policy heard and adhered to, has not been demonstrated to the same extent across any other policy issue in the last twenty years. As outlined in chapter two and further demonstrated in chapters five and six, a number of the party's Euro-sceptics were prepared to defy their Government over its European policy in the division lobbies which, with time, became initially, a source of deep embarrassment for the Government and also gave rise to recriminations from Party members on both sides of the issue as to the others side's behaviour. An additional outcome of formalised intra-party rebellion was that such activity became expected, as each successive European debate came before the House.

² This refers to the four case studies of this work.

³ Senior Euro-sceptics are defined as those individuals who had experience and a history of opposing European legislation.

Are the Conservative Euro-sceptics an intra-party faction?

It is the collective, formalised rebellion of a number of the CPP's Euro-sceptic members that I claim should be described as factional. In so doing, I suggest that this may help to explain the bewilderment felt by both onlookers and participators during the last twenty years over the turmoil within the CPP on European issues. This activity has led to claims that the CPP has fallen apart with a party leadership bereft of control and held to ransom by the warring pro and anti-European factions of its party.

If the claim that the activities of some of the Euro-sceptic members of the party constitute the activities of a political faction holds true, then the criteria of a faction, a political tendency and a party split as laid out in chapter one, need to be re-examined in light of the case studies of the four European debates. In the Chapter one it was pointed out that the term 'political tendency' has been used by academics as the term most befitting internal dissension within the CPP. As noted in Chapter one, Rose defined a tendency as "a body of attitudes expressed in parliament about a broad range of problems held together by a more or less coherent political ideology."⁴ In contrast, I defined a faction as an 'organised cohesive political group, which actively seeks to organise itself within a political party to influence and/or determine the policy of its leadership.' One further political entity discussed in chapter one was that of a political split, which was defined by the intentions of an intra-party group to replace the whole policy platform of its current leadership or to leave that party to form a new party or, join an existing one more conducive to its ideals. The central question of this work is to which political category do the Euro-sceptics members of the party best fit? A secondary question, is whether the behaviour of the Euro-sceptics was continuous or different throughout each of the four case studies. What follows is a discussion as to the behavioural characteristics and structural dynamics of each political entity identified in Chapter one which is tested against the empirical evidence collated in this study in chapters three to seven.

The 1971-2 Conservative anti-market MPs – an intra-party tendency?

Clearly, the Conservative MPs who were opposed to Britain's entry into the EC during 1971-2 and who converted their concerns into votes against the policy of their party leadership in the debates on the Bill in Parliament, at the very least constitute a political tendency. According to Rose's definition, a necessary characteristic of a tendency is that beliefs held by individuals are manifest of some wider view or beliefs of an ideological society. In this respect it is clear from Chapters two and four that some of the beliefs held by these anti-market MPs stemmed from more deeply held fundamental concerns about Britain's place in the world, British democracy and the way the country should be governed. It should be remembered here, that not all of their objections to Britain's membership of the EU arose from the same philosophy of the way Britain should be run and, in some cases, contrary views of the concept of British national identity were held. This was visibly

⁴ Rose, R "Parties, Factions and Tendencies p 37.

seen, for example, in the divergent views of the Imperialists and the little Englander's.⁵ It is possible to assume, given the collection of different philosophical rationales of the 'Euro-sceptics' for opposition to the European Bills, that the anti-European faction of the party is made up of lots of different political tendencies. This view is supported further by the behaviour of the Maastricht rebels who pursued their opposition to this Bill in various sub-groups. The second necessary characteristic of a political tendency, as noted by Rose and one which is the most telling method of identification is that the individuals are "not self- consciously organised" as a group of MPs.

It is when this criterion is applied that the labelling of the Euro-sceptic members of the party as a political tendency is most problematic. In the 1971-2 EEC debates it was clear from accounts of the anti-market MPs to myself and, as documented to a degree in other sources, that some of these MPs were to an extent, self-consciously organised in their opposition to the EEC Bill. Closer examination of the behaviour of these rebels revealed an identifiable level of self-conscious collective activity. This was shown through membership of the various anti-market groups, and through an awareness of the activities of other Conservative anti-market MPs and their voting behaviour during the debates. In addition, throughout the period of Britain's negotiations with the EEC for British membership, Conservatives on both sides of the entry issue staged campaigns across the country. Some Conservative anti-market MPs fought their battles on an individual basis, whilst others fought through the arena of a number of intra-party and cross party groups.

It has proved difficult to determine the level of self-conscious organisation of a collective group of Conservative anti-market MPs in influencing the development of the Bill in this Parliament. There was a self-conscious awareness of a number of colleagues' intention to oppose on the vote on principle of entry in October 1971. This was demonstrated by the list of Conservative Euro-sceptics likely to oppose the Government on this vote, which was supplied to the party whips and compiled by Neil Marten. At the very least, there was self-awareness of others who were likely to oppose the Government on this Bill. This self-awareness was strengthened by public attention, which was drawn to the rebels by the Conservative leadership who brought pressure to bear on them, from the Party Whips and Constituency Associations, to toe the party line. This self-awareness was also accentuated by the fact that as opponents to government policy they stood out as party rebels, especially as opposition to Party policy was not considered by the CPP to be generally a normal or accepted mode of behaviour for a Conservative MP. These MPs, therefore, had some awareness of themselves, as a collective in that they had precisely calculated estimates of how many others would join them in any one rebellion.

In this respect, some of the thirty-five individuals, who opposed the Government in the division lobbies by abstaining or voting against the Bill on 28th October 1971, clearly do not fit the

⁵ I define 'Imperialists' in the traditional sense, that is they sought to export their grand illusion of British values globally and 'little Englanders' as those who saw 'English' nationhood as perfect and saw no need for foreign interference.

characterisation of a political tendency. Many of them engaged in collective activity, if only at the very minimum, by discussing amongst themselves the Bill and their concerns. It is more difficult to assess accurately whether these individuals or those that continued their opposition across the remaining stage of the EEC Bill constitute a political faction, as documentation in existence for the period is limited and I, was unable to interview all of the anti-market Conservative rebels from this period⁶.

The truth may well be that those individuals, who continued to oppose the Bill on second and third reading, fit somewhere in between the category of a political tendency and a political faction. Evidence gathered from interview data to supports this view: a number of MPs talked of meetings held by Conservative anti-market MPs in order to discuss their opposition and in some cases, to try to plan and co-ordinate their opposition to the Bill in the division lobbies. In terms of definition, these members fulfil the definition of a political faction in that they actively sought to influence and determine the outcome of particular policy Bill, the Government's EEC Bill. Whether they constitute an organised cohesive political group is less clear, however, these rebels were prepared against all odds, to try to influence their party leadership to reject or amend the European Communities Bill. In terms of the factional characteristics identified in chapter one these MPs displayed some evidence of factional behaviour. In numerical terms, the thirty-five MPs represent an intra-party sub group on the October 1971 vote, although not all of these MPs continued their opposition across the remaining stages of the Bill. As will be discussed later, this decline is partially attributed to the attempts of the party managers to limit the extent of intra-party opposition during the latter stages of the Bill's progression through the Commons debates.

In comparison to the Maastricht debates, a greater number of MPs in the EEC entry debates of 1971-2, expressed their opposition to the Bill independently, without recourse to the opinions or actions of others. On the basis of the evidence compiled however, there was informal organisation between some of the anti-market MPs over this Bill, which was apparent from dinner meetings held to discuss the Bill. There were, therefore, rudiments of organisation. This level of organisation though, was nothing like that which occurred over the Maastricht Bill. Neither was the organisation of the anti-market MPs cohesive as some of these MPs tended to drift in and out of group activities to a greater extent than in the 1990's. The answer, therefore, which was exemplified during the Maastricht debates, is that different groups of Conservative rebels showed different degrees of organisation. I have classified three types of anti-market opponent. The first of these were the 'hardcore' members who were prepared to engage in group activity to oppose the Bill and voted against the Bill at all stages. Secondly, there were those who engaged in one or more levels of peripheral group activity, and thirdly, there were the staunch independent opponents.

⁶ As was mentioned earlier in this study, a number of the anti-market rebels of this period were deceased at the time of my research.

The 1971-2 Anti-Market Conservative MPs – An intra-party faction?

The contingent criteria of a faction identified in Chapter one more readily fit the behaviour of some of the Conservative anti-market MPs of this period. These are that faction exists to address specific issues of principle, portray unity, and are parasitic. As I suggested in Chapter one, a contingent characteristic is one, which in practice, is often associated with a faction's activity, but which is not a necessary part of its existence. For instance one contingent factor was that factions exist to address specific issues of principle. Earlier it was suggested, that a political party when in office, will often give insufficient attention to the policy detail of any particular policy Bill during its debate in Parliament due to an overloaded political agenda. In view of this, I suggest that one aim of a political faction is to ensure that all aspects of a Bill are debated and scrutinised in much more detail than would normally occur if the party leadership were solely able to steer a Bill through the House of Commons. In the case of the 1971-2 debate on EEC entry, the Prime Minister Edward Heath had insisted that the Bill should be ratified in its entirety without alteration. For some Conservative anti-market MPs, one matter of concern and for action, was to try and get particular aspects of the Bill debated which were of particular concern to them. For others, the wider agenda of ensuring that Britain did not become a member of the EEC was the prime motivator for their opposition. Although some MPs had slightly different aims, a number of them came together to try to influence parts of, or the whole of the Bill through collective action.

In terms of representing a united front on the issue, the Conservative anti-market MPs were united in their opposition to the whole or parts of the EEC treaty Bill. This was reflected during the debates in parliament as well as through the national campaigns they fought across the country during the spring and summer of 1971. On second reading of the Bill in February 1972, there was less evidence of cohesion and unity amongst these MPs as less than half of the October opponents continued their opposition. Unity amongst those MPs who continued their opposition, however, was strengthened. As I mentioned before, the fall in the numbers opposing the Bill on Second reading from the October vote is partially attributable to the effective party management of the Conservative leadership at the time in constraining opposition. For some anti-market MPs, it was never their intention to vote any further against this Bill once the principle of EEC entry had received Parliament's approval in October 1971.

In Chapter one, it was suggested that factions could be parasitic in feeding off both the parliamentary party and the party in the country for political support for their actions. This third contingent criteria was clearly employed by some of the anti-market MPs during the run up to each debate, when attempts were made to enlist support for their anti-market views and intended opposition in the division lobbies. Some Conservative anti-market MPs also made use of the mechanisms and structures present within the party, for instance the ready-made channels of communications from the backbenches to the party leadership through the parliamentary whips, to convey their views.

In conclusion, it is my claim that the Conservative anti-market MPs of this period represent an embryonic single-issue, intra-party faction. For whilst it is clear that some of their activity extended further than that associated with a political tendency, the level of their collective activity and organisation to influence this Bill is best described as informal.

Conservative parliamentary opponents of the SEA – A latent Euro-sceptic faction.

The activities of the party's Euro-sceptics during the debates on the SEA were not those of an active intra-party faction. The embryonic anti-market faction, which emerged during 1971-2, continued in existence, however, in the form of the CERG, when the Conservative Party returned to power in 1979. This group, through its meetings to discuss the development of European legislation, existed as a latent intra-party faction. Under its mission to act as a watchdog over European affairs, the group employed collective activity behind the scenes to influence the direction of the European policy legislation of the party leadership. Their activity in this area illustrates how it would be possible for a group of party members to bring influence to bear in the formulation of party policy before any subsequent Bill ever reached the Commons for debate. The CERG did not develop into an active intra-party faction in terms of mobilising and co-ordinating opposition to the SEA in the division lobbies, because many potential opponents saw little reason to oppose the principle of the Bill. The main reason for this was that many of the Euro-sceptics of the CPP felt they could trust their leader on European issues. In the eyes of many Euro-sceptics, Mrs Thatcher had adopted a Euro-sceptic attitude and had displayed evidence in the early years of leadership during negotiations with other EC Heads of States, that she could deal with policy issues in a manner satisfactory to them. The Euro-sceptics of the party who remained opposed to the Bill were unable to organise any sizeable opposition from within the party for three reasons. Firstly as mentioned above, Mrs Thatcher's attitude towards European legislation successfully constrained opposition to the Bill. Secondly, the SEA in contrast to the Maastricht Bill and the debate on Britain's entry in 1971-2, was only a very short Bill. This meant there was no opportunity for the Bill to become politicised for long enough to enable the Conservative rebels to mobilise and organise into a faction. Finally, because the Bill was of such short duration in the Commons, there was little scope for intra-party opponents to fight the Bill clause by clause, with each battle consolidating the ranks and organisation of the rebels.

The Fresh Start Group – A Conservative Euro-sceptic faction

The existence of a Euro-sceptic faction within the CPP is most evident within the Maastricht treaty and the EFB debates in parliament. The existence and the activities of the FSG as shown in chapters five and six, provide the most conclusive evidence in recent years of a Conservative single-issue intra-party faction. The members of the FSG identified themselves as a group and were self-consciously organised with a regular membership and frequent meetings throughout the duration of the debates on the Maastricht Bill to plan their collective opposition to it. This group of Conservative MPs fulfils my definition of a faction.⁷ They were a sub-political group of the wider

⁷ My definition was given on p 244 of this Chapter.

CPP and came into existence as a political group in order to influence the outcome of the Maastricht treaty in Parliament. This analysis can also be taken a step further by comparing the behavioural characteristics of the FSG, in their opposition of the Bill, against the necessary criteria of a faction. In Chapter one I identified these as a political purpose and an ability to achieve it; organisation for competition and activities constrained by the wider parliamentary party.

The political purpose of the hard core of the FSG was to prevent ratification of the whole of the Maastricht Bill; for others, it was to secure amendments to it. As a group, by virtue of their numbers in relation to the size of their party's remaining parliamentary majority (if their numbers were combined in totality with the opposition party) the FSG had the ability to affect the political outcome of the treaty.⁸ As was seen in Chapters five and six, the vast resources at their disposal in contrast to those available to the Conservative Euro-rebels in previous European debates, supported this. The FSG were politically organised to effect their goals as was shown in Chapters five and six and, as was shown in Chapter seven, to resist pressures to conform to the party line. Their activities clearly exemplify organised conflict over allegedly opposed principles between the Euro-sceptics of the FSG and the political leadership of the CPP who likewise, became more intensely organised in party management terms in order to defend their European Bill in the Commons. The internal opposition of the FSG to the Maastricht Bill, sustained throughout the debates, therefore, satisfy the necessary criteria for a faction.

The activities of the Fresh Start Group and contingent factional criteria

The FSG also satisfied many of the contingent criteria for a political faction. This group existed solely to address specific issues of principled concern, these being the beliefs of the Conservative Euro-sceptics that the implications for Britain, if the Maastricht treaty were ratified, would be disastrous. As already discussed in Chapter three and four, these members genuinely believed that the defence of their concept of national identity and other concerns, were of national importance, and should come before their consideration of party loyalty when voting on this Bill. Some of the Maastricht Euro-sceptics were even prepared to risk their party's position in Government in this dispute by voting against the Government on a vote of confidence on which the Party leader had staked his reputation.

To a large extent, the FSG were able to maintain a united front on the Maastricht Bill, a second contingent characteristic of a faction. Their ability to do so stemmed from regular meetings, to discuss their concerns and plan strategies and to maintain cohesion, as far as was possible, during the debates in the voting lobbies. Their own internal organisation of collective leadership, division

⁸ Although the official policy of the Labour Party was to support the Maastricht treaty, the Labour Party tried to embarrass the Government on the issue and on many occasions during the debates, Labour MPs were whipped to abstain from voting (Second Reading & Third reading). The Labour Party, however, was not without its own controversies on the Bill and a number of Labour Members also failed to support the preferences of the Labour party leadership. On the Paving vote, the Conservative Government had been saved from defeat by the support in the division lobbies of the Liberal Party.

of labour and informal whipping system enabled them to remain internally unified and present to the public an impression of unity. The ability to present a united front over the Maastricht Bill was essential for the Fresh Start Group members. They believed that, the more united they appeared publicly, the more likely it was that they could attract support to their cause and justify their actions in response to the concerns of some of their constituencies and the wider party over their opposition to the Bill. It demonstrated also to the Government that as a Group, they posed a convincing threat to ratification of the Bill and whose views, therefore, must receive the serious consideration of the party leadership. The voting cohesion of the group was not totally cohesive throughout the debates, since not all of the FSG members wanted to a defeat of the Maastricht Bill, which was the aim of the hard core members of the group. Some Conservative Euro-sceptics, for instance, were specifically concerned with the issues of monetary union, as opposed to the whole content of the Bill. These Members hoped, through their opposition, to constrain the Government's ability to exercise the option to go into monetary union at a later date. The voting cohesion of the group was, however, directly affected by the Government's success at each stage of the debate in converting some Euro-sceptics into Government supporters, especially at critical moments during the Bill's passage in Parliament. It was amidst the pressures to conform that the internal moral support networks of the FSG were of great assistance to its members. The provision of a moral support network is one of the most essential features that can be derived from collective action. It provides, firstly, an arena to share problems, preventing an MP from becoming isolated in his/her opposition and hence more vulnerable to the persuasions of the party managers to conform on the issue, for, as was mentioned in Chapter three, Conservative Euro-sceptic MPs found it neither easy, natural or pleasant to oppose their Government, but regarded it as something which had to be done in the national interest. Secondly, by being able to share opinions and experiences, the rebels found it easier for collective opposition to be sustained, and to remain cohesive as a group in their battles against the party leadership on this Bill.

The Conservative Maastricht sceptics came together for collective action because, by doing so, they believed they had a better chance of effecting their own aims, as well as the overall aims of the group, in respect of the Treaty. Defeat of the Maastricht treaty was not the intention of many other Conservative Euro-sceptics who opposed the Maastricht treaty from outside the parameters of this group network, many of whom voted inconsistently against the Maastricht Bill during the course of the debates. This again, was because some were particularly concerned with specific aspects of the treaty and voted accordingly, when these provisions were debated in parliament. A number of these Euro-sceptics also made the decision to support the Government on procedural motions during the Bill's passage through Parliament.

It should not be forgotten that there were also a number of individuals who opposed the Maastricht treaty independently of group opposition. These individuals did not want to attach themselves to, or to be associated with a political group such as the FSG, despite their political objectives being the same in respect of the Bill. These individuals along with a number of peripheral members of the

FSG who were concerned with aspects of the Maastricht treaty could be drawn upon by the FSG to increase their showing in the division lobbies in order to try and defeat the Bill. In this respect the FSG fulfils the criteria of being parasitic in trying to harness the support of other Euro-sceptic independents and latent Euro-sceptics within their party. The Government, however, could also harness these Party Members in order to prevent the number of internal opponents being sufficient to defeat the Bill in the lobbies. In order to run a successful public campaign against Maastricht, the FSG also needed a position of influence and publicity, which the Government's then small governing majority in Parliament gave them. The FSG also needed to keep their parent party in power in order to prevent the Labour Party, which they thought, was even more pro-European, obtaining power.

The members of the FSG faction of the CPP believed they were able to risk disaffecting part of the party in Parliament and in the country because they believed their opposition to the Maastricht Bill was in the national interest and also in the immediate and future interests of the Conservative Party. They also felt able to risk disaffecting their constituents and the pro-Europeans of the party, because they knew that the Maastricht Bill would be short lived and therefore, once it was over, they could return to behaving as party supporters on a range of other issues.⁹ It was easier for them to risk such disapproval, because they could demonstrate that it was only over one issue that their behaviour was, according to the party leaders, prejudicial to the interests of their party, even if in their view this was not the case. The FSG faction also saw that they could risk disaffecting members of the wider party because they were not effectively dependent on mass public support for their continual political survival. The Maastricht Euro-sceptics also believed, however, that their views on the Maastricht treaty were both representative of, and received the mass support of, the British public. In some cases, the continued career of an MP was directly questioned by constituency threats of de-selection if the MP continued his actions in defying the party leadership on this Bill. However, the only really effective constraint on the group's opposition to the Bill, occurred when their opposition risked the political survival of the whole party. As will be discussed shortly, constraints are an example of measures that can be employed by the party managers to control the activities of a political faction.

One further point needs to be reiterated here. A faction, in pursuing its goals is constrained by the wider party. It is this important point which marks one essential boundary between a political faction and a political split. The FSG were ultimately constrained in their opposition by the Government's tactics of deploying votes of confidence, precisely because the opposition party was more pro-European than was their own party. The FSG were clearly not representative of a party split, as they were not prepared to form a new party of their own, although this did become a brief consideration for the 'EFB Group of nine'. The FSG did not split from the CPP because ultimately they deeply believed that they were the true defenders of Conservative principles and that it was up

⁹ A number of the Maastricht rebels stated to me that on all other policy issues at the time of the Maastricht debates, they supported John Major.

to them in this role to show the rest of the party and the country the way forward on this issue. In addition, the FSG did not collectively oppose any other policy Bill and never considered counter plotting to replace the Government, or to form a new party. Many of them, in fact, actively supported the Government's policy in most if not all other areas of policy. This group of MPs, therefore, existed as a single issue faction, self-evident from the fact that they ensured at their meetings that no other policy Bill was ever discussed other than the European legislation before them.¹⁰ One further distinction between a faction and a party split is that factions are essentially concerned with private politicking within parties. In these terms, factions may seek to justify their actions and opinions to a public audience, but unlike a party split, they do not attempt the public mobilisation of voter views with the aim of seeking office with an alternate party platform, or a separate party. It is when a faction seeks to mobilise voter opinions in this way that a party split could be said to have emerged from within a party.

At this point we should also re-address the question of a political faction's durability. The validity of other academic claims that factions need to be in existence for a year, was questioned in the first chapter. In the case of the FSG the nucleus of the group formed shortly after Second reading of the Bill in May 1992 and, for over a year the group existed as an organised collective entity up to the Social Chapter debates in July 1993. The FSG continued to meet after the Maastricht Bill had been resolved in Parliament, meeting fortnightly to discuss and share concerns on other European issues (although no formal organised activity occurred in respect of any opposition in Parliament). However, there was no logical time limit for the activities of the FSG here as there were a great deal to be implemented under the Maastricht treaty. The issue of the monetary union opt-out, for instance, had still to be resolved and the Maastricht treaty itself had to be implemented. Thereafter, this group remained as a latent faction within the CPP during 1993 and 1994, which the party leadership was careful not to upset during course of the next year.

This situation gave rise to many claims and growing concerns from the growing number of pro-Europeans within the party, that the Prime Minister had become hostage to the demands of the party's Euro-sceptic in his dealings with the UK's European partners throughout 1994-1997.¹¹ Whether the pro-Europeans of the CPP are also a political faction has not been addressed by this study and as such this represents a further avenue for research. What can be said, however, is that the task facing the Prime Minister, John Major, during the next few years was to manage and control the existence of potential latent factionalism within the party over the European issue for

¹⁰ A single-issue faction is representative of a deep fundamental division within the party. Whilst factional activity can exist over a range of issues, it is when the faction seeks to replace the party leadership with its own agenda rather than to seek influence over the development of policy that a faction has moved into the realms of a party split. Party splits can also coexist within a party for a period of time. When the political split seeks support from a wider base of the political party or the electorate then the party split will attempt to break away from the parent party or seek to establish itself as the party leadership as discussed in chapter one.

¹¹ See Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" pp 115-117 for a brief account of the activities of pro-Europeanists within the CPP during the 1990's.

the remainder of the Conservatives' term in office. If, for one moment, we assume that the pro-Europeans of the party are a political faction then a point of distinction between political factions within the CPP can be made in terms of their ideological base. Factions on the "right" of the Conservative Party, which the FSG predominantly were, were constrained in their opposition by having a lack of alternative parties within the British political system to join, facing only the prospect of forming a new party. This is in contrast to factions on the "left" of the Conservative Party, who if dissatisfied with their leadership, could leave the party to join the Labour or Liberal Party. In recent years a few pro-Europeans have, in fact, left the CPP allegedly because of their party leader's stance on Europe and have joined the Liberal Party. Some recent examples include the departures of Emma Nicholson and Peter Temple-Morris. Arguably, it is easier to join an existing party than to create sufficient support to create a new one. It may be for this reason, that the Prime Minister in the early stages of negotiating European policy was superficially more amenable to the concerns of the pro-Europeans, who could have found immediate satisfaction within the Labour Party on this issue.

I further substantiate my claim that the activities of the FSG during the course of the Maastricht debates constitute an intra-party faction, by testing their activities against Rose's criteria of a political faction. Rose has been the main academic opponent to date of the argument that the CPP could be a factional party. Whilst I test the characteristics of the FSG against Rose's definition of a faction, I consider Rose's definition to more closely resemble a party split. According to Rose, a faction would display the following characteristics: a relatively structured philosophy; leadership; technical expertise; cadres; communication networks and rewards.¹² These characteristics are explored in more depth below.

Factional Ideology

Rose believed that a faction would possess an ideology, which is "important in so far as common adherence to shared political values may cause politicians to act together."¹³ The FSG had an ideology in so far as its members shared concerns over the implications for the UK if the Maastricht treaty was ratified. As was shown in Chapter three, these concerns were also indicative of more deeply held fundamental beliefs about British politics. Their concerns over the Maastricht Bill were sufficient for these MPs to come together for political action. The ideology of the FSG did not relate to shared values over other policy areas, only European integration, although there may have been some agreement between members on other issues. Rose claimed that factions may use their ideology to justify their activities as beneficial to the wider party whilst the policies of the 'electoral party' are electorally damaging. The Fresh Start Euro-sceptics tried to justify their activities to their constituencies, the rest of the parliamentary party and the British people, claiming that they were the true defenders of the British public, and were the only group to offer the electorate a choice on

¹² Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" pp 323/4.

¹³ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 323.

Europe. As already mentioned, the use of this tactic was even more prevalent during the 1997 election campaign.

Factional Leadership

'Leadership' is a requirement of a faction according to Rose as it "gives a recognised focus and stature to what otherwise may be a coalition of second string politicians."¹⁴ Rose suggested that the leader of a faction should be of 'national stature' so that the debate is instantly moved to the front benches. The chairman of the FSG, Michael Spicer could be deemed to be a leader of the FSG, possessing 'front bench' stature, gained from prior ministerial experience. As was seen in Chapters five and six, the FSG operated a system of collective leadership in their decision making although a number of leading figures were identified by members of the group, who appeared to be the leaders of each of the three main sub-groups within the FSG. A number of other members within the group had previous cabinet experience and this enhanced the credibility of the group. Given the small parliamentary majority at the time, the fact that the whole group opposed the Government in the division lobbies, was sufficient itself, to give the activities of the FSG 'front bench' attention. Michael Spicer had little stature outside parliament however, any attention to his actions being brought by the press and the group itself. The group, therefore, had no one of current cabinet stature who was instantly recognisable to the general public. The group was obviously aware of the advantages to be gained by having a person of senior status within their ranks because the group ceremoniously highlighted any speech made by the three Euro-sceptic Cabinet Ministers of the time, which attacked the Maastricht and EFB Bill in some way, although they were not formally linked to the FSG. As was seen later, most of the group also gave their formal support to John Redwood (an Ex-Minister of national stature) in the 1995 Conservative leadership contest claiming him as their Euro-sceptic champion.

In discussing the need of a faction for a leader are there any special qualities which a factional leader should possess? In the 1970's, Rose suggested that Enoch Powell fulfilled most of the qualities required for leading a faction within the Conservative Party, when he said, "he is of senior ministerial stature, articulate, able to exploit the press and broadcasting media, in disagreement with the party leadership on many issues."¹⁵ In Chapter one it was shown how this study disagrees with Rose's argument, that for a faction to exist, it must be concerned with more than one issue. This study, therefore, argues that it is not necessary for a factional leader to disagree with the party leadership on a number of issues. Rose claimed however that Enoch Powell was not a factional leader, instead he was a "voice rather than a leader."¹⁶ Rose is correct in this assertion since Powell was not a factional leader. In fact he gave voice to the expressed concerns of a wider ideological split in the party at the time, which Norton has characterised as the development of an alternate

¹⁴ He gave the example of 'Anuerin Bevan' of the Labour Party in 1951 as an example of how "the emergence of a leader can make a tendency crystallise into a recognised faction." Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 323.

¹⁵ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" pp 322-3.

¹⁶ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" pp 326-7.

party view.¹⁷ Powell, although a person of senior stature was not interested in leading a faction within his party, preferring to follow his own interests. Rose's interpretation of the qualities of a factional leader are useful however, in determining whether there was a clearly identifiable leader of the FSG. Michael Spicer, for instance, did act in concert with the wider members of the party and in his role of Chairman of the FSG, effectively acted as leader of the faction, albeit decisions were taken collectively. A good leader, however, facilitates collective decision-making. Rose also argued that acting as a 'factional leader' can result in a "reward for future governmental office within the electoral party." In this case study, recognition as a factional leader, even membership of a faction, was regarded as a threat to career prospects. It was the belief of a number of Euro-sceptics that both Edward Heath and John Major in both the EC legislation debates of the 1970's and 1990's, made it clear that opposition to their European policy would be a bar to career advancement.¹⁸ It may well be the case, therefore, that the reason the FSG operated a system of collective leadership was precisely to prevent the Government from pinpointing individuals and using this strategy in the future.

In contrast to a leader of a political party, a factional leader may or may not have the consent of the faction's members to speak on its behalf. The FSG, it was shown, operated a system of collective leadership and no one member had consent to speak on the group's behalf. As the internal party debates continued over European issues after the Maastricht and EFB debates were concluded, some of the Euro-sceptics did rally, throughout the next few years, around a number of leading political figures of front-bench stature namely, Norman Lamont and John Redwood.

Party leadership elections arguably constitute periods of crisis within a party, whereby the various parts of the party's political spectrum mobilise around their chosen candidate. At such times of pressure within a party, factional activity may become heightened to the extent that a leader is formally chosen to represent the group, and ultimately to avoid their own dissolution or displacement within the party. The choosing of a formal leader by a political faction may mark their movement towards a party split through its quest to mobilise mass support. During the CPP leadership contest of July 1995 a number of Euro-sceptics supported John Redwood, allegedly a previous cabinet Euro-sceptic on the "right" of the party. This can be seen as the desire of some of these party members to try to shift the party leadership back to the 'right'. A few Euro-sceptics did express to me and also to the press, that they were dissatisfied with the whole policy platform of the party at this time but there was not collective agreement on this point amongst the Euro-sceptics interviewed.

¹⁷ Norton, P "Conservative Dissidents" p 249.

¹⁸ Chris Gill, however, was subsequently appointed to the Government's whip office.

Factional Technical Expertise

Rose argued that 'technical expertise' is a further criterion for a faction "in so far as a faction is pressing detailed proposals."¹⁹ One tactic employed by the Fresh Start rebels was to challenge the Maastricht Bill on the basis of technical argument. As has been shown, the FSG had their own research network and were well briefed on the policy implications of the Treaty. Rose claimed that MPs belonging to a faction will "at most ...seek to influence action upon detailed proposals rather than to originate policies derived from expert knowledge." He continued to argue that most MPs have 'general opinions' on issues, where in the 1970's Rose found that "opinion on the common market out-placed expert knowledge."²⁰ Within the FSG there were certainly a number of individuals, 'the troopers,' who held general opinions as opposed to specific technical knowledge. These members were happy to defer for advice to the technical expertise of other members of the group such as Bill Cash, Sir Teddy Taylor and Iain Duncan-Smith. The fact that all members of the group were not technical experts does not in any way diminish their credibility and in fact facilitated the group's organisational effectiveness, for it enabled a division of labour, whereby members could pursue specific areas of concern, or fulfil other roles whilst the so called technical gurus provided information briefings for the whole group, needed for presentation of their arguments in parliament.

Factional Cadres and Communication Networks

Rose believed that a faction would need 'cadres' who would be "necessary to support and implement the programme of a faction, giving to a small body of men the semblance of a 'mass movement.'"²¹ The FSG had both a hard core and a periphery of cadres who attempted to achieve the goals of the group by way of 'group roles,' and ultimately by opposing the Government on Maastricht in the lobbies. Rose saw communication networks as an important feature of a faction in that "groups of people are informal and intermittent, relying upon face to face contacts around the palace of Westminster."²² The FSG relied heavily on face to face contacts with members of other parties and those within their own party, to try to increase their support. Through these informal communication networks they tried to justify their position and to educate others, and as a result tried to increase their showing in the division lobbies. These communication networks were important in helping to ease recriminations from those members of the party who, although supportive of the Maastricht Bill, were sympathetic to the aims of these individuals. By conveying their opinions to others, the FSG were able to inform others outside the group of their intended actions and/or meetings, with the hope of attracting more support. As was seen in Chapter five, for example, informal communications between MPs are often the basis by which opposition groups emerge. In addition, these informal communications had the tactical strategy (outside the formal channels of communication) of conveying their opinion to the political leadership of the party in the hope that they could influence the weight of informal opinion on the backbenches and thus bring

¹⁹ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 323.

²⁰ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 323.

²¹ Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 323.

²² Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 324.

influence to bear on the Maastricht Bill and/ or the way in which the Government tactically had to ensure its ratification. As was seen during the 1971-2 EEC debates, Heath allowed a free vote on the October vote on the principle of entry in 1971 precisely because it was the opinion of the party whips that the Government was more likely to be victorious if he did so.

Factional Rewards.

In terms of rewards, Rose claimed that factional leadership could lead to an appointment in office, which he observed, may be given to “decapitate potential opponents within the electoral party.”²³ Not one of the Euro-rebels of any period was later offered a position in office as the result of a being a leading member of any of the Euro-sceptic groups. Of the 1971-2 rebels, the only rebel offered any type of appointment was William Clarke, who Edward Heath proposed as a Member of the House of Lords. It was observed however, in Chapter seven that Bill Cash was offered an appointment to the Foreign Office, although prior to the formation of the FSG, which he declined. It was the general conclusion of all the Conservative-rebels interviewed however, that later appointment to office was unlikely because of their opposition to European legislation. Whilst I was unable to find any evidence of Rose’s rewards being offered to the Euro-rebels to prevent their rebellion, this reward may occur in other circumstances of factional activity.

It is clear from the above that the organisation of the FSG fulfils Rose’s criteria of a faction. Any points of distinction that arise occur from Rose’s assertion that factions must exist over more than one issue. It should be pointed out here that whilst I regard the European issue as evidence of a single issue faction within the CPP, the European question itself, as seen in chapter four, is inherently a multi-issue one. As was mentioned earlier, the ‘anti-European faction’ of the party is composed of a number of political tendencies who found that their different reasons for opposing the various EC Bills, could be united on this issue in order to achieve a common aim, in respect of their different reasons for opposition.

Sub-factions

The nine EFB rebels who were no longer in receipt of the party whip through their failure to support the Government during the EFB debate, or through their displeasure with the Government’s handling of the situation, are a sub-faction of the FSG. As was identified in Chapter five, the FSG itself housed four different sub-groups, which were concerned about particular aspects or implications of the Maastricht Bill and who approached the Bill from a different perspective or background.

The EFB rebels formed as a further sub-group of this wider group, based on their collective concerns about a particular aspect of the Government’s European policy and their readiness to challenge their party leadership over it. The remainder of the FSG chose to support the Government for their own reasons on this Bill as discussed in Chapters six and seven. The formation of this sub-

²³ Rose, R “The Problem of Party Government” p 324.

group further demonstrates that the nature of a political faction, is to influence party policy and that a faction can evolve and endure over different issues of concern to individual MPs. The Government's decision to use the vote of confidence device again, in order to exact the support of the Euro-sceptics on the EFB, is illustrative of one of the mechanisms available to party managers to try and pre-empt collective opposition to a Bill by an intra-party faction. What was different about this group of nine compared to rebel groups in previous and later debates on EC legislation, was that as a result of the Government's response to their opposition by withdrawing the party whip, these EFB rebels were firmly cemented together into a sub-faction of their own, after the Bill was passed. As a result of their period of ostracization from the main party, these nine members became a close knit group and drew on the support of their friends from the wider faction of the FSG for support, many of whom campaigned for their return to the party as full Conservative members.

What was important about the time spent by this group outside the official auspices of the CPP was that it demonstrated how such a group could act as an internal pressure group on the party leadership, which was made more effective given the Government's reduced majority of one during this period. In this situation the group had the opportunity to threaten to defeat the Government on other areas of policy which it wanted to push through the House (if in alliance in the division lobbies with the opposition parties).²⁴ If the Conservative Party had doubted the ability of a political faction to exert influence on party policy prior to the Maastricht debate, they could no longer ignore the potential for influence by this pressure group of whip-less Euro-sceptics during 1993-4.

In terms of factional criteria, the Group of nine represents a sub-faction of the FSG. They also fulfil both the necessary and contingent factors of a faction developed in Chapter one. The group of nine clearly fulfilled the definition of a faction in that they readily admit that they were an "organised, cohesive" grouping. They were 'political' by definition of being an MP, and, acted in a political forum.²⁵ The aims of the group were to seek influence and determine the policy of the Conservative Government on its European policy. They had a political purpose, defined by their aims in Chapter five. They possessed the ability to affect outcomes, after the loss of the whip, by effectively holding the Conservative Government to ransom on the basis of its small majority in the Commons. They also held the element of surprise, as the Conservative Government never knew what they would do next.

This group also fulfilled the contingent characteristics of a faction. The group came together in order to address specific issues of principle, for example, the principle of not joining a single currency. Whereas the wider CPP remained visibly divided on the issue of Europe at this time, this sub-faction was able to present a united front on the European issue. Wherever they appeared, often

²⁴ As has been discussed earlier, a number of the EFB rebels voted against the Government on VAT increases on fuel.

²⁵ In other words, in the House of Commons and the public political sphere of the country.

together, they all spoke the same language and expressed the same aims. Their unified stance was further demonstrated in their adoption of a 'one for all' stance, where they refused to accept the whip back unless it was offered to all of them simultaneously. This sub-group's parasitic nature was shown by their use of ready-made Conservative organisations as a platform for their activities. They made use of the Conservative Associations as venues for their public performances and were able to feed off the support of their wider network of colleagues in the FSG. Without such forums they would have had to rely exclusively on the media, and any resultant publicity from this, for support.

It is clear from the above that a sub-faction may display the same behavioural characteristics as its umbrella faction. Indeed, as a faction is a smaller version of a political party, which may occur over one or more issues, a sub-faction is a smaller version of a faction. The distinction that needs to be made however, between a political faction and a political party, is that the latter desires political office, whereas the former does not. Once the pursuit of political office becomes the objective of a political faction, this collective entity becomes a party split. Claims, which were evident amongst other members of the CPP and in the press that the EFB Euro-sceptics were in effect, a party split are, therefore, incorrect. Had the group of nine been unconfident of their own particular survival or of the whip being reinstated, this group could have developed into a party split by seeking to run as a separate party. One rebel of the group at one point during their ostracization, commented that very briefly, they had entertained this idea when they lost the Whip.²⁶ According to Mrs Gorman, however, the Group never considered splitting away from the Party as she believed this would make them appear "irresponsible to the Party Activists" and as a result some of them may have been de-selected as Conservative candidates.²⁷ It was the return of the whip, which prevented them from splitting at a later date. According to one of these rebels, the group also did not split away from the main party because they saw they had no need to. It was their belief that, as a sub-factional group, they were in a position to bring sufficient pressure to bear on their party leadership on various issues. The challenge for the leadership of the party by John Redwood in June 1995 created the opportunity for this group of nine and other known Euro-sceptics to attempt to forge a split within the party²⁸ when they backed Mr Redwood on the basis of his views on European policy.²⁹

²⁶ Sir Teddy Taylor MP to author – September 1995.

²⁷ Teresa Gorman MP to author – January 1996.

²⁸ Their attempts to overthrow John Major and install John Redwood as a leader, is their most illustrative example of how close they came to becoming a party split, metaphorically, without actually leaving the Conservative Party. They were foiled however if this was their aim. Had John Redwood secured the party leadership, the outcome could have been very different where a reaction from some pro-Europeans of the Party would have erupted.

²⁹ Mr Redwood had resigned his position as Welsh Secretary due to his disagreement with his Government's European policy, shortly before his challenge for the leadership of the Conservative Party.

The implications of a factional CPP

The existence of this faction within the CPP could be extrapolated to form a template for future factional behaviour within the Party. The CPP may in fact be factional in other policy areas. If this is correct, then what are the implications of this? Firstly, leaders of a factional party need to manage and control competing factional interests contained within it, in order to implement a policy programme when in office. In Chapter one, I suggested that the CPP, based on a case study of intra-party rebellion to European legislation during the last two decades, may not be as leader-centric in determining the direction of party policy and shaping the behaviour of its members as was once thought. In the case studies of the 1970's and 1990's European debates, the Conservative Government, although uncertain of winning in the division lobbies, was able to procure ratification of its European legislation only by trying to manage division within the CPP on the Bills. Maor recently argued that "a party's ability to shape policies depends less on 'cohesion' than on the dynamics of internal groupings with dissension in parliament occurring when 'winning' in the division lobbies is relatively certain."³⁰ Up until the advent of the 'New Labour Party' the British Labour Party traditionally, has been perceived as a party of factions, where the role of the party leadership was to control the factions within it.³¹ If factional labels are applied to the CPP, then the role of the party managers and leadership likewise, would also be to control and manage internal division to prevent any serious dissatisfaction, which could develop into a split.

During the 1971-2 EC debate, the Maastricht treaty and the EFB debates, the respective party leadership and party managers, the whips and constituency chairman, employed a number of tactics and strategies in bringing pressures to bear on their recalcitrant MPs, to try to ensure support for the party leadership on its European policy Bills. This was done to ensure ratification of the Bill and to preserve as far as possible, equilibrium within the party, so that different interests and opinions which naturally exist within the party over the European issue, could be managed and controlled. This would be to ensure stabilisation of the status quo of the CPP and as far as possible to limit the ability of a faction to check the wider electoral aim of the CPP for which these individuals united together in the first place. That is, to secure office based on a common set of interests in which most of them agree. Party managers, therefore, need to prevent a faction becoming so displaced and dissatisfied with the existing party leadership that they break off to form a new party or join an existing one which, may directly threaten the survival of the current political party if in office with a small majority. Or, if in opposition, to prevent the party from having insufficient numbers to be capable of forming a party of Government after an election. Finally, leaders of political parties, as

³⁰ Maor, M "Political parties and Party Systems. Comparative Approaches and the British Experience" London, Routledge, 1997 p 167. (Hereinafter, Maor, M "Political parties and Party Systems").

³¹ Following the failure of the 'Tribune Group' (one of the best know examples of a faction within the Parliamentary Labour Party PLP) to support the left-wing leader, Tony Benn, for example and the purge of the left-wing extremists from the PLP in 1982, the left-wing of the PLP split. Garner, R and Kelly, R "British Political Parties" p 174 and for a brief account of factionalism and group activity within the PLP see pp 174-6.

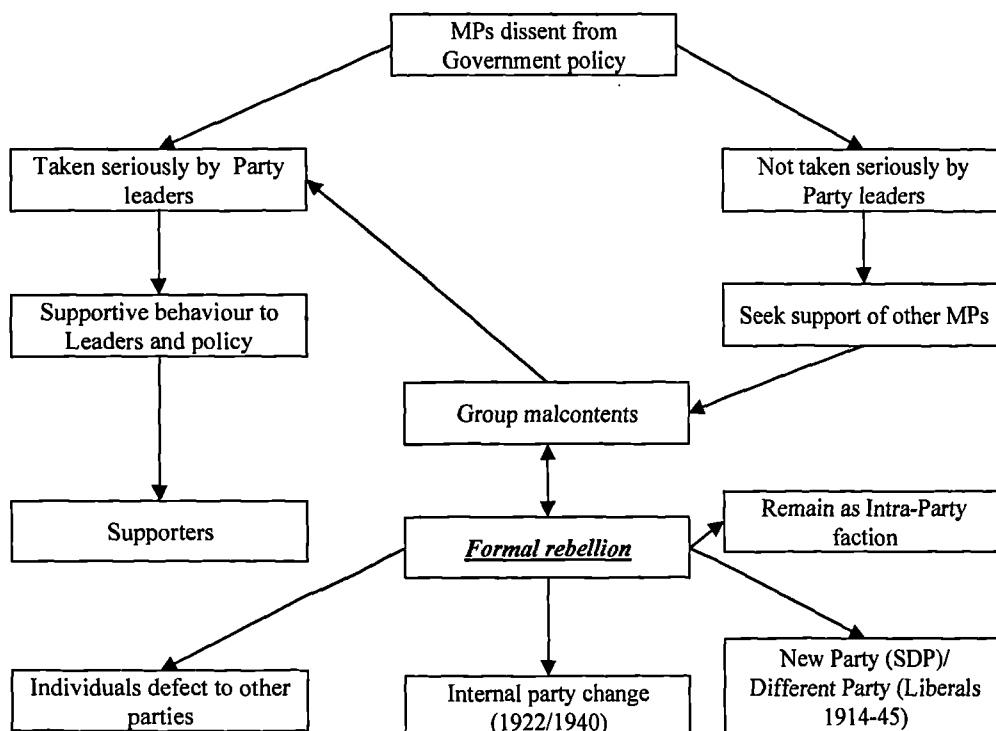
argued in earlier chapters, try to preserve the image of party unity amongst public opinion, which traditionally has been merciless to divided parties.

In Chapter seven the various strategies and tactics deployed by the party managers in order to control factional activity and independent political dissidents were discussed in relation to the four European Policy Bills. The use of these tactics by the party management illustrates my claim that in fact, this is what party managers do. It should be noted that I am not suggesting that the many different roles performed by political parties are now redundant.³² I am only suggesting that the control of the party may not be so firmly placed in the hands of the leadership and that factions, themselves, exist and play a large part in the policy concerns of the Conservative Party, the conduct of party politics and policy making than was previously thought to be the case.

Responsive Party leadership

Of course, if all this is true, then the differing abilities of party leaders to manage intra-party factions may result in different outcomes in every case. The level of factional activity that may occur publicly is, therefore, dependent on how the issue is managed by the party leadership.

Model 8.1
A model of party dissent and its consequences



Perhaps more importantly, the activities of a faction are dependent on their perception of the party leadership's handling of the matter. This is further illustrated in Model 8.1. This is when the important element of trust comes in. Earlier, I argued that one reason why intra-party opposition to the SEA was minimal, apart from the other reasons outlined in chapters four to seven, was because Mrs Thatcher was a successful party manager in terms of satisfying the needs and demands of the embryonic Euro-sceptic faction within the party. Mrs Thatcher knew that there were a number of members within the party who could be deemed to be Euro-sceptical from her dealings with the CERG and was also aware that a number of the 1971-2 Euro-sceptic rebels from the Heath administration were present within her party. In the early stages of her leadership, she engendered a degree of trust amongst her Euro-sceptics. She was seen to both listen and act in response to the concerns of her Euro-sceptic members of the party. It was, therefore, the fact that Mrs Thatcher was trusted, and cultivated this trust, as opposed to her own behaviour, to a large extent by the Euro-sceptics within her party, which prevented the development of any sizeable opposition to the SEA. Whether Thatcher's Euro-sceptic stance was deliberate or not in terms of her assessment of the balance of opinion on European issues within the party. She had got her strategy right for party management of European issues within the party in advance of the SEA being brought before the house for debate. Opposition from party members did in fact arise to her European policy as the length of her term as leader progressed, but increasingly from the pro-Europeans and ideological "left" of the party. Ludlam also argued for instance that from 1985 Mrs Thatcher suffered from pressures from the party's 'confederalists', which were visibly evident through the cabinet resignations of Howe and Lawson.³³

It is when the element of trust breaks down between a group of concerned backbenchers and their party leadership that a political tendency may become a political faction or when a party faction will fight more vocally and ardently in the division lobbies to defend their interests. In the 1970's Norton, for instance, charged Sir Edward Heath's management of the EC entry issue as causing much of the increase in dissension within the party. Clearly Edward Heath was not seen to listen to the concerns of his anti-European members of the party, nor would he make any concessions to them, which gave rise to their opposition in the division lobbies. Heath, it should be remembered, however, was constrained by having to accept the EEC treaty in its entirety, which constrained his ability to offer any concessions to the anti-market MP of his party. However, it was his refusal to listen to the balance of opinion within the Party on European legislation and reject the treaty, which led directly to intra-party dissent on this Bill.

Similarly, in the 1990's over the Maastricht treaty a number of the FSG members lost trust in Mr Major on his ability to manage a specific area of the party's European policy. It is doubtful however, that had Heath listened to the concerns of his backbenchers there was little he could have done to have prevented dissension, given that he had accepted in full the requirement of

³³ Ludlam, S in Ed's Ludlam, S & Smith, M "Contemporary British Conservatism" p 109.

membership of the EC.³⁴ In contrast, John Major had limited room for negotiation on the Maastricht treaty in advance of the debate in parliament. Arguably, he did listen to the concerns of his backbenchers to the extent that he secured opt-outs for Britain on EMU and the Social Chapter, but failed to concede to Euro-sceptic demands for a referendum on the Bill. Factional activity of course may never have reached, or will reach in future, such a level as was displayed by the FSG over the Maastricht treaty. As the party leadership may meet the demands of concerned MPs which prevents them forming as a faction. A party leadership may find that it is able to satisfy the demands of a faction before organised conflict stage is reached. It may well be the case, therefore, that in order to control and manage factional activity the party leadership considers the concerns of collective interests within the party when devising party policy.

It is arguably easier to control factions where policy has been initiated by the Conservative Government in response to an issue, rather than to a Bill which has not originated from the party leadership or from within the party. It may be the case that intra-party factions are more likely to occur within the CPP on policy Bills where the Government is not the agenda setter. If this is the case then it is likely that we will witness more factional activity within the CPP in the future, given that one of the key changes brought about by EU membership is that it is the EU rather than the British Government, which increasingly is the policy initiator in a number of domestic and external policy areas. In the case of the Maastricht Bill, ratification was hindered by external considerations. That is, it was not directly devised by the Conservative Government but the member's states of the EU. It was an external treaty, which the British parliament had to decide upon. The best that the Conservative Government could do in advance of the Maastricht debates, to prevent dissent and internal conflict within the party, was to obtain the opt-out on the single currency and the Social Chapter, the two issues which would have caused more internal opposition to the Bill than occurred had their inclusion remained.

If the events and turmoil of the CPP of recent years over the European question are seen in this factional light then I believe it is easier to understand what has been happening over the last few years internally within the party. For not only have the various party leaders of the CPP had to satisfy the increasingly disparate demands of the anti-and pro-Europeans of the party but also simultaneously, has had to satisfy Britain's European counterparts. It is when the party leadership risks disaffecting a large section of the party, whether by ignoring completely the motives of the party or by trying to appease opposing factions within, satisfying neither, that factional activity will become particularly visible and vehement in the eyes of the party members. The role of the party leaders, therefore, is the management of internal party factions in order that they can best manage the overall political objective of the party -that of the pursuit and retention of political office. Maor's recent conclusions support this view, where he has argued that since "party leaders, can no

³⁴ Had Heath's style of management been different, it is doubtful the outcome would have been different as not one of the rebel's I interviewed stated that his style was not a factor that caused their rebellion.

longer take the conformity of their party's groups for granted, the political role of party whips has become more burdensome."³⁵

If this scenario of the role of party leaders being to manage intra-party political entities is believed which I tentatively suggest is the case, then the way in which the Conservative Party has been traditionally conceived in the post war period might need to be rethought in light of a factional party. If this is so, then current conceptualisations of British party politics may move away from a presidential system on the surface, to a system of factional party politics at the core. After all, it is only in appearance that the American system is portrayed as presidential. In essence, it is a system in which the various concerns of interest groups compete and contest in Congress and within the administration. The potential for British party politics to be similarly viewed as a system of factional party politics or even cross factional party politics is not too impossible to imagine, especially if either the policies of the two main parties become indistinguishable in a number of policy areas as has been alleged in the past with 'Butskellism' or with 'New Labour' in the future, or with electoral reform leading to a permanent coalition Government.

A provisional framework of factional activity?

The first subsidiary aim of this study was that on the basis of a faction's existence in the CPP existed, whether it would be possible to proffer a provisional framework for behaviour of a Conservative political faction. That is, could a mode of behaviour be identified which could be expected to occur in the future if a faction existed and secondly, which could be used to facilitate future identification of political factions within the CPP? It should be noted that what follows, is only a provisional framework and not all encompassing, as it is limited to an analysis of the European debates, which may have created its own set of behavioural characteristics. The advantage of this case study of Euro-sceptic rebels within the party, is that it provides a formula which can be employed to help understand the internal political processes for resolving policy conflicts within the CPP in the future and/or the last few years.

The definition supplied by myself, together with the necessary and contingent features outlined in Chapter one, provide defining behavioural characteristics which can be expected of a political faction. Where it is not possible to be clear from the above case studies, is whether factional activity, will always take the form of voting against the party line in the division lobbies, or whether this was peculiar to the European debates. Norton's table of seven stages of intra-party dissent is useful here in that he has set out various stages at which intra-party dissent can occur.³⁶ Norton suggested that a scale of dissent can be identified where opposition in the lobbies was the extreme form of dissent. In terms of factional activity it is not assumed that there is a necessary follow on from each stage of Norton's classification to the next stage, as some of this dissent may

³⁵ Maor, M "Political parties and Party Systems p 165. See pp 165-166 for Maor's analysis of increased role of whips as the result of increased intra-party dissent.

³⁶ See Chapter one.

take place individually before a faction is formed or whilst in existence. It is argued that a faction may emerge once attempts as individuals or as a political tendency or interest group fail to have any influence as a faction represents the mobilisation of individuals. Voting as a group against Government/party leadership in the lobbies is only one of many possible methods of organisation to bring influence to bear on a policy Bill.³⁷ Factions, are prepared to utilise all forms of dissent in any order and/or simultaneously.

How far a political faction is prepared to go in defying their party leadership initially depends on an assessment of how important influencing a particular policy Bill is to the members concerned. Maor for instance, suggested that intra-party dissidents have to assess the costs and benefits of any rebellion.³⁸ How far the party leadership is prepared to meet and accommodate their concerns is also another factor for consideration. For instance had John Major agreed to Euro-sceptic demands for a referendum on the Maastricht treaty, then much of the opposition in the division lobbies, according to interview sources, would have disintegrated. Some compromises were in fact reached between the Government and some Euro-sceptics, which curtailed some opposition, in return for their support in the division lobbies on the Maastricht treaty.³⁹ But it was the failure of the Government to meet the demands overall of the collective group which sustained the opposition of the FSG throughout the Bill's progress through Parliament. Since the Government was not prepared to give way to the rebels or be unduly influenced by them, they chose the only manner remaining open to them in order to try and influence the outcome of the Maastricht treaty. This was to defy the Government in the division lobby. Had John Major, however, been clear that there was absolutely nothing to be gained from dissent in the division lobbies then the Euro-sceptics may not have organised their activities to the extent they did.

Norton's scale of the progression of intra-party dissent is useful as a reference for the different stages of activity, which could be expected at which factional activity, may present itself in seeking to influence a policy Bill. It does not necessarily follow however that factional activity may start at stage one because the battle lines may have already been drawn and all or one of the same stages may also be employed simultaneously.

A factional party?

I have argued that the European rebels within the CPP constituted an embryonic single issue faction in 1971-2, and remained as a latent faction within the Party during the 1980's. With the formation of the FSG in June 1992 over the Maastricht treaty debates in Parliament, this latent faction crystallised into an overt faction. It is clear, therefore, that the European rebels have existed as a faction within the CPP since the 1970's to date. Most other academics have not acknowledged the

³⁷ As was seen in Chapter six, other methods include, common representations, interventions during the debates etc.

³⁸ Maor, M "Political Parties and Party Systems" p 147. This relates to an assessment of party loyalty or disloyalty and whether this is conducted individually or through factional behaviour.

³⁹ As informed by a few Conservative MPs to author in interview.

existence of factions in the CPP over an extended period, or indeed ever. My argument that such a faction has existed is, therefore, likely to be contested by some academics. If as I suggest, factions exist within the CPP why have other academics not acknowledged this? Two possible explanations are given here. The first is that a certain extraordinary event is needed in order to generate a higher level of concern than normally is the case to crystallise the activities of a political tendency into a political faction. In Chapter five, for example, I found that three interrelated circumstances which led to the formation of the Euro-sceptic faction. These were John Major's leadership of the CPP, his small majority in Parliament and the Maastricht treaty, which caused like-minded Conservative MPs, to mobilise and form the FSG, organised for political action to prevent ratification, or amendment, to this Bill.

Secondly, this thesis suggests, albeit tentatively, given it is confined to a study of Conservative European debates, that factional activity has always been evident as form of activity within the CPP. John Barnes is sympathetic to this view and has argued that "contrary to received opinion, it seems quite clear from the activities of the 'Tariff Reform League', the 'Compatriots', the 'Die-hards', the 'Empire Industries Association,' the 'YMCA' Group, the 'Tory Reform Group,' the 'Progress Trust,' and the 'Suez Group,' through to the foundation of the 'No Turning Back Group' in 1985 and 'Conservative Way Forward' in 1990, factionalism has been endemic in the party."⁴⁰ Given that the activities of these groups are based on broad issues and themes in British politics, it would be expected that factional activity is in fact endemic to all British political parties and not just the acknowledged example of the Labour Party.⁴¹

Since this research was undertaken, a number of academics have in fact postulated that 'factions' and their activity may, in fact, be an acceptable method of both conceptualising and analysing intra-party dissent within the CPP. Ludlam has recently argued that "the once-conventional view of the CPP free of internal tendencies, factions and ginger groups has long been challenged, and from the perspective of 1995 it is hard to imagine how such a view was ever credible."⁴² In respect of the European question, Ludlam speculated whether the Euro-sceptics represented a broader Thatcherite factional phenomenon within the party, but found no evidence to support this due to a lack of collective activity by the FSG in other areas of the then current leadership's party policy. He concluded however, that the activities of the Euro-sceptics within the party do not establish a faction because this faction did not develop across other policy areas.⁴³ In distinction from Rose, and in agreement with Janda, I have found that political factions on the basis of this case study could exist within the CPP over one issue which the FSG has exemplified to be the case. As a single issue faction the FSG sought to ensure that all aspects of the Maastricht treaty were fully explored in the debates and during Committee debates on the floor of the House, to ensure, as far as

⁴⁰ Barnes, J "Ideology and Faction" pp 344-345.

⁴¹ For Rose's Discussion of factions in the Labour Party see his article "Parties, Factions and Tendencies."

⁴² Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 98.

⁴³ Ludlam, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p117.

possible, that the implications for the UK if the Bill were ratified, were not overlooked or obscured during its debate in parliament before the House made its decision to support or reject the Bill.

The problem to date in talking of factions within the CPP is that in assessing opposition behaviour of Conservative MPs, comparisons are made to factions within the Labour Party, where the occurrence of factional activity frequently occurs across a wide policy agenda based on clear ideological differences of the left and right wings of the party.⁴⁴ There are two problems with such analysis. Firstly, the internal structures and mechanisms through which party politics is conducted and policy formulated are different between these two parties. The second problem is that by comparing the collective behaviour of MPs between the two parties, connections are only made to a particular type of faction, to the exclusion of all others. Janda has documented various other types of factions, which may develop as discussed in chapter one for example. The exercise of trying to find evidence of factional activity such as occurs in the British Labour party has precluded any analysis of single-issue factions within the Conservative Party.

If the claim is to be made that factions may always have been evident within the CPP but in a different format to those in the Labour party, whose factions mobilise over a number of policy areas and represent divisions based on an ideological philosophy as opposed to a faction on an issue, then factions also may not have been associated with the CPP. Firstly, because of a problem of definition and conceptualisation of a faction as opposed to a party split as discussed in chapter one. Secondly, the different internal structures of the respective parties have given rise to beliefs that the CPP is incapable of containing such entities, or that the Party works hard to make them disappear. Rose's claim that historically Conservatives have resisted factions is valid here. He claimed that the Bow Group in 1951, resisted the "pressures of members to turn it into a pressure group."⁴⁵

Conservative Party managers may also have been more adept at utilising the internal party structures to manage and control the development and activities of factions within the Party before they reach conflict stage. Baker, Gamble and Ludlam suggested for instance, that up until the mid 1980's the CPP had successfully managed to subdue the level of dissidence within the party over Europe where "the cohesion of neither the Conservative Party nor British Government was seen as threatened by Conservative division over European integration."⁴⁶ They argued however that since the mid 1980's, "divisions within the Conservative Party's parliamentary leadership over European integration have caused immense political damage at the highest levels of the party and of Government."⁴⁷ This would suggest that party leaders, up to this point, have been more successful

⁴⁴ See Maor, M "political Parties and Party Systems" pp 155-60 for his discussion of ideological conflict within the Labour party and position of various sub-groups.

⁴⁵ He claimed purpose of this Group was to "provide a channel of Conservative thought and research on political problems and social problems of interest to the Conservative Party. " Rose, R "The Problem of Party Government" p 325.

⁴⁶ Gamble, A "The Conservative Nation" 1974, quoted by Baker, D, Gamble, A and Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions" p 164.

⁴⁷ Baker, D, Gamble, A and Ludlam, S "Whips or Scorpions" p 164.

in managing factional activity and/or that it may just be that the specific issue of Europe has generated such high levels of concern within the CPP, which resulted in factional activity.

Claims that the social base of the CPP has changed in recent years and which are indicative of an increasing propensity of MPs to dissent are not entirely helpful in resolving this European problem. In Chapter three little evidence was found to support the claim that increasing intra-party opposition to party policy was the result of a changing social base of Conservative MPs. A number of the FSG members for instance were also the same MPs who opposed the 1971-2 EC Bill and in some cases the SEA. Additionally, if the development of factions within the party were the result of a changing social base then it would be expected that this would have been publicly evident. I suggest here, three reasons why this has not been the case. The first explanation is that the party leadership may have met the demands of a faction before visible conflict stage is reached. Secondly, in respect of the Maastricht rebellions, the length of the Conservatives term in office, combined with the frustrations felt by a number of Euro-sceptic MPs following the leadership battle of 1990 may be helpful in explaining the virulent form of organised opposition. Finally, factionalism may have occurred in other policy areas but not at the same level as occurred over the European issue. Norton's table of dissent may be useful here. It was clear for instance from Norton's study of the 1970-74 parliament that a notable increase in Conservative intra-party dissent was evident in this period over a number of policy areas, but most conspicuously on the EC entry debate.⁴⁸ It is my conclusion that it is the specific issue of European integration that has resulted in the conspicuous development of a single-issue faction within the CPP.

The outcome

If factionalism is potentially endemic within the CPP, Conservatives should have little fear in acknowledging their existence. Although the recent events of the general election of May 1997 suggests that the price of party disunity is electoral disaster, factions as suggested in Chapter one, can have a valuable role to play in the formulation of party politics and democratic life of British politics. In fact Ludlum's assertion that "fear of electoral annihilation" which forced the Maastricht rebels to "capitulate"⁴⁹ no longer holds given the behaviour of some party members during the 1997 election campaign on the European issue. I have suggested that one role of contemporary party leaderships is the management of opposing factions within their party in order to get the party's policy agenda accepted. When in office, party leaderships are faced with the tremendous task of having to balance all their activities. The development of factional groupings within the CPP or within any political party should not be maligned merely as maverick groups that seek to harm the party when in office. For in any party it is unusual not to expect discussion and even disagreement between members over policy to occur. What has been the problem for the CPP has been the historical attitude of the press, the CPP and the country to condemn the development of an intra-party alternate view of policy. The demands of the press, the CPP and the public for unity within

⁴⁸ This was discussed on Chapter 2, p 3.

⁴⁹ Ludlum, S "The Spectre Haunting Conservatism" p 120.

the party cannot be ignored by the party leadership if they are to remain in office. An understanding of factions and how they may best be managed is therefore essential if future party management is to maintain unity at a level acceptable to the electorate. Whilst Major's style of management as a "conciliator"⁵⁰ was ineffective in dealing with factions, Thatcher's more effective style did not ultimately meet with the approval of her party. A new style of management is therefore needed from leaders of the CPP in the 21st century.

One final problem which has challenged the Conservative party's ability to portray a unified image in recent years is that this issue does not divide members among conventional and public cleavages such as left-right. The emergence of a new basis of party alignment along intergovernmental/supranational issues was forced upon the party by this issue, in juxtaposition to existing alignments. A party therefore used to resolving differences along traditional left-right splits has had a new axis with which to contend.⁵¹

To deny that group opposition within the CPP should be allowed to exist is unnatural. The existence of such views should exist for democratic arguments if nothing else. Indeed, as noted earlier, Kitzinger claimed that in respect of the 1970 period and debate over re-entry that if the "anti-market campaigns had not existed, the Government and European movement ought to have invented them."⁵² He went on to state that, as it was, "the balance of campaign was unequal, and to have had the balance more equal would have thrown grave doubt on the vitality of British democracy."⁵³ Maor, similarly, is supportive of the positive role intra-party dissension can have for a party. He has argued that "dissension in parliament could be considered functional to party stability in that, it operates, at times, as a channel for the diffusion of dissent."⁵⁴

The development and activities of an intra-party Euro-sceptic faction may be an ephemeral entity in the medium to long term in the Conservative parliamentary party. Only the future will reveal how long the issue of Europe will remain a central issue for the party. As long as the European issue remains, an anti-European faction will remain within the party. The aim of this faction will be to continue to try and change the party's public position on European issues. They have already moved a step closer to this mark, in that they believe they already represent the majority view of the Conservative Party on Europe. Even if in the future, they secure a party leadership that is 'acceptingly Euro-sceptical,' factional activity will continue within the party on European issues. For in this case, an already developed pro-European faction would intensify to counter-balance a Euro-sceptic leadership, whilst the Euro-sceptic faction would continue to organise in order to sustain any gains achieved. The immediate aim of the 'anti-European faction' of the CPP, therefore, is to convert these opinions into cohesive organised activity, in order to change the policy platform

⁵⁰ Seldon, A "Major A Political Life" London, Phoenix, 1997, p 738. See pp 735-44 for his discussion of management choices faced by Major.

⁵¹ This point was discussed in more detail in Chapter three.

⁵² Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 250.

⁵³ Kitzinger, U "Diplomacy and Persuasion" p 250.

of the Conservative Party leadership on Europe. Ultimately, whichever route is taken in the association of factions within the CPP, that they have always existed or that they represent a new phenomenon, this study has provided the first in-depth case study example of factional activity within the party and a provisional framework of analysis against which future activity can be tested.

⁵⁴ Maor, M "Political Parties and Party Systems" p 167.

Appendix 1

List of MPs interviewed or who completed questionnaire.

Lord William Clarke of Kempston - September 1994.
 Nicholas Budgen – September 1994
 WGO Morgan – September 1994
 Sir Eric Bullus – September 1994
 Sir John Farr – September 1994
 Sir Carol Mather – October 1994
 Lord Harmar Nicholls – October 1994
 Rupert Allason – November 1994
 John Carlisle – November 1994
 Bill Cash – November 1994
 John Sutcliffe – November 1994
 Iain Duncan-Smith – November 1994.
 Sir George Gardiner – November 1994
 Harry Greenway – November 1994
 Teresa Gorman – November 1994 and January 1996
 Bernard Jenkin – November 1994
 Bill Walker – November 1994
 John Whittingdale – November 1994
 John Wilkinson – November 1994
 Sir Trevor Skeet – November 1994
 Roger Knapman – December 1994
 Andrew Hunter – December 1994
 Sir Roger Moate – December 1994
 Michael Spicer – January 1995
 Walter Sweeney – August 1995
 Warren Hawksley – September 1995
 Sir Teddy Taylor – September 1995
 John Townend – October 1995
 Sir Richard Body – October 1995
 Sir Rhodes Boyson – October 1995
 Sir Peter Fry – October 1995
 Tony Marlow – October 1995
 Neil Hamilton – June 1986

MPs who completed shorter questionnaire

Nicholas Winterton – November 1994
 Jonathan Aitken – August 1995
 Ann Winterton – August 1995
 Michael Brown – October 1995
 The Rt. Hon Lord Tebbit – July 1996

MPs who provided information instead of completing a questionnaire or as well as

Sir Eric Bullus – September 1994
 Teresa Gorman – November 1994 & January 1996
 Toby Jessel – October 1994
 Barry Legg – July 1995
 Michael Spicer – January 1995
 Sir Peter Tapsell – October 1994

MPs who answered a few short questions

Anthony Coombs – July 1995
Winston Churchill – July 1995
Julian Critchley – July 1995
Eric Forth – July 1995
Peter Griffiths – July 1995
John Greenway – July 1995
The Rt. Hon David Howell – July 1995
Dame Jill Knight – July 1995
The Rt. Hon Michael Jopling – July 1995
Sir David Marshall – July 1995
The Rt. Hon Sir Patrick Mayhew – July 1995
Michael Mates – July 1995
The Rt. Hon David Mellor – July 1995
Marion Roe – July 1995
Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith – July 1995
George Walden – July 1995
Nirj Deva - August 1995
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The Guardian (1970-2), (1986), (1990-97).

The Times (1970-2), (1986), (1990-97).

The Financial Times (1970-2), (1986), (1990-97).