

Maintaining British Uniqueness

Britain's role and identity during the CSCE in Helsinki (1972-1975)

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Master Thesis

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Key Words: British identity, Three Interlocking Circles, CSCE, Cold War, British foreign policy, British foreign relations

Research Question: What role did Great Britain adopt at the CSCE process in 1972-75 with special consideration to the interlocking circles theory?

Hypothesis: Due to the evolvement of a pro-European domestic government I believe that the theory of three interlocking circles was no longer applicable at the beginning of the CSCE process in Helsinki (1972-1975) and that the British government mainly aligned with EC policies to fulfil its newly generated role as EC member state. I further assume that Great Britain used the CSCE as a platform to establish a unique status within the EC and reserve itself an exceptional position in the transatlantic forum.

Introduction

In years to come the citizens of Europe and North America will look back at this meeting and regard it as a turning-point in our history, a turning-point not only in what we hope to achieve here, but also in marking the developments which have made our meeting possible.¹

As Harold Wilson, Prime Minister of Great Britain correctly predicted during the opening session at the final summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki on 30 July 1975, the Conference rapidly became the most meaningful forum to discuss Cold War issues like détente, disarmament and human rights among European nations, as well as the United States and Canada. Especially the European Community (EC) member states understood the CSCE as an opportunity to demonstrate their cohesion and significance as a recently expanded regional organisation on the global stage. Furthermore, the EC felt particularly affected by the CSCE and its outcomes since its member states had much higher stakes in the process than for example the US. The focus of US foreign policy at that time lay within other areas in the world such as Vietnam, the Middle East and China.² Therefore, the EC put emphasis on a commonly formulated policy and diplomacy at the CSCE to not be undermined by the superpowers, called “European Political Cooperation” (EPC). The EPC served as ‘a mechanism designed to coordinate the foreign policy stances of the EC member states’.³ Simon Nuttall explained that ‘the pillars on which Political Co-operation rests are the inter-governmental method and the rule of consensus. The Member States take part in a highly developed process of consultation, without abandoning, at least in theory, whit of their national sovereignty.’⁴ This turned out to be a challenging task for the EC since the new member states Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark that joined the EC during the first enlargement in 1973 still had to adjust their new roles as part of the EC. Especially Great Britain is considered among scholars a highly conflicted nation within the CSCE process due to its longing for exceptionalism.⁵ The research about Great Britain’s role at the CSCE still leads to major

¹ Wilson, H.: “Speech at the opening session of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki”, Helsinki 30. July 1975, Retrieved from: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/49805ee6-3bda-4149-bf17-b7be2241af79/publishable_en.pdf, Last Access: 19.02.2020.

² Hanhimäki, J.: “They Can Write It in Swahili”: Kissinger, the Soviets, and the Helsinki Accords, 1973-75”, in: *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 1, Edinburgh 2003, pp. 37-58, p. 40.

³ Romano, A.: “The EC Nine's Vision and Attempts at Ending the Cold War”, in: Bozo, F. (eds.): *Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945-1990*, New York 2012, pp. 134-146, p. 135.

⁴ Nuttall, S.: *European Political Co-operation*, Oxford 2011, p. 12.

⁵ To understand the debate about Britain’s conflicted relation with the EEC and partly the US see: Saunders, R.: *Yes to Europe! The 1975 Referendum and Seventies Britain*, Cambridge 2018, pp. 31-34. Saunders captures the different debates scholars held about Great Britain and its process of European integration in the 1970s. Even though he does not directly draw a connection to the CSCE the debate indeed applies to the case study.

differences amongst academics. Therefore, the following research will examine what role Great Britain adapted during the CSCE process in Helsinki from 1972-1975 and will be analysed through the lens of the three interlocking circles theory.

Maintaining 'British Uniqueness' seems to be a never-ending quest for British politicians since the end of World War II. By completing the Brexit and exiting the European Union it appears that Great Britain might regain its exceptionalism, which it partly lost in the 1970s. The decolonisation, the transformation to a bipolar global order and the shift to a more pro-European British government with the election of Edward Heath as Prime Minister in 1970 led to a degradation of Great Britain from a global to a middle power as the first chapter of this thesis will demonstrate. The critical stance of Great Britain towards its self-perception and its idea of its role in the global context kept restraining common European projects and ideas. Applying the concept of the three interlocking circles to this timeframe demonstrates that the British self-awareness as well as its foreign policy were designed to reserve Great Britain a unique role after the Second World War ended. The three interlocking circles theory, first an idea developed by Winston Churchill in 1948 and later a politically produced narrative to justify and emphasize British exceptionalism, presents Great Britain as the indispensable mediator between the US and Europe and keeper of the transatlantic dialogue. Churchill explained his metaphor of the transatlantic world in a speech held in 1948 as follows:

The first circle for us is naturally the British Commonwealth and Empire, with all that that comprises. Then there is also the English-speaking world in which we, Canada, and the other British Dominions and the United States play so important a part. And finally there is United Europe. These three majestic circles are co-existent and if they are linked together there is no force or combination which could overthrow them or even challenge them.⁶

The theory is important for the following research since it provides the principles Britain wished to act upon during the early 1970s. The theory explores British self-perception or at least the role it wanted to play during a process where the major superpowers and the newly formed regional powers came to one table. Applying the theory of three interlocking circles to this case study will eventually challenge the debate of British scepticism towards the CSCE as well as the debate claiming that it was in stronger support for either the US or the EC policy.⁷ The theory of the three interlocking circles offers an insight into British foreign policy agenda during

⁶ Churchill, W.: "Conservative Mass Meeting: a speech at Llandudno", 9 October 1948, in: *Europe Unite: Speeches 1947 & 1948*, London 1950, pp. 416-418.

⁷ Jack, F., Bozek, G.: "Britain, European Security and Freer Movement: The Development of Britain's CSCE policy 1969-1972", in: Davy, R. (eds.): *Cold War History*, Vol. 13 No. 4, London 2013, pp. 439-461, p. 440 & Romano, A.: "The EC Nine's Vision and Attempts at Ending the Cold War", p. 142.

the CSCE process and, therefore, is a useful tool to analyse the British role during the CSCE. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to readjust the theory slightly to apply it to the evolving circumstances. The circle of the British Empire will be replaced for the research and be called the British circle. Due to the decline of the Commonwealth which will be examined more closely in the first chapter and the fact that the Commonwealth countries besides Canada did not play a bigger part at the CSCE the circle will be reduced to the core of the British Empire which is Great Britain itself.

The existing opinions among scholars concerning the British position during the CSCE widely differ. Felix Jack and Grenfell Bozek argue that Great Britain indeed held a meaningful role during the negotiations and that ‘despite being sceptical about the results of the CSCE, the British therefore played an active role in the Western alliance’ by supporting certain common Western policies ‘to mitigate the causes of insecurity in Europe: the division of Europe, the Soviet elite’s lack of exposure to non-Marxist-Leninist influences, and the potential for the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe to become unstable.’⁸ However, Kai Hebel claims that Great Britain’s focus lay on two main policies it wanted to achieve during the CSCE which were to maintain strength and unity within the Western alliance during the CSCE process and to spread scepticism about Soviet policies among the Western states. Hebel considers that Britain wanted to act as a mediator as well as maintain the role of ‘moderate hardliners’.⁹ With this theory, he also tries to explain the widely spread assumption among academics that Britain followed a rather sceptical and detached policy towards the CSCE. Martin Brown, for instance, discusses that ‘while supportive of détente in general, London remained hesitant about the utility of the CSCE in particular’ implying that the CSCE would never be a political priority to Britain.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Angela Romano formulated the common aims of the nine EC members for the CSCE. As stated by Romano the nine EC countries agreed on a policy in which they shared the ‘conception of détente as a means to overcome the partition of Europe.’¹¹ Meanwhile, Anne Deighton explains that Great Britain was not able to accept its declining status after the Second World War and therefore needed to create an exceptional role in which it could express a

⁸ Jack, F., Bozek, G.: “Britain, European Security and Freer Movement: The Development of Britain's CSCE policy 1969–1972”, p. 440.

⁹ Hebel, K.: “Die “Brückenbauer”?: Großbritannien als transatlantischer Vermittler in der KSZE 1972-1978“, in: Peter, M., Wentker, H. (eds.): *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975-1990*, Berlin 2014, pp. 99-120, p. 102.

¹⁰ Brown, M.: “A very British vision of détente: The United Kingdom's foreign policy during the Helsinki process, 1969-1975”, in: Bozo, F., Rey, M., Rother, B., Ludlow, N. (eds.): *Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945-1990*, New York 2012, pp. 139-156, p. 139.

¹¹ Romano, A.: “The EC Nine's Vision and Attempts at Ending the Cold War”, p. 142.

positive self-image. In order to maintain the 'British Uniqueness' the three interlocking circles were conceptualised, securing a British extraordinary role in the transatlantic context.¹²

The thesis will furthermore challenge the debate about the CSCE in Helsinki itself. Especially the narrative of the Western bloc will be echoed from a new perspective since the theory of the three interlocking circles offers a different lens to look at the process. Most studies researching the CSCE from a Western perspective have taken angles into account that emphasised either the superpower détente or the human rights narrative. Laurien Crump and Susanna Erlandsson argue that 'the focus even of recent volumes on Cold War Europe tends to remain on particular themes, such as détente, European security or the end of the Cold War, instead of approaching the concept of smallness as a starting point' which only allows a one-sided narrative of the two blocs without valuing the unique perspectives of individual nations that might have pursued different aims that had a much more self-serving purpose than promoting human rights or securing the inviolability of borders.¹³ By applying the concept of the three interlocking circles, the CSCE transforms into an arena that was exploited by different nations – in this case Great Britain – to obtain a new status in the bipolar world order and a transatlantic sphere. Therefore, this thesis will not join contemporary research that highlights the Western perspective on human rights and superpower détente but will emphasize the narrative of the CSCE as a platform to nurture the nation's individual power status.

The issue about Great Britain's role at the CSCE still raises many questions and divided assumptions among many scholars. Did Britain want to fulfil a role as mediator, or did it mainly align with EC policies as the pro-European government came into existence? The research will make a valuable contribution to not only historical but also contemporary ongoing debates about British diplomatic relations during the Cold War and after, the CSCE process in general and British exceptionalism, a discussion which is due to the ongoing Brexit situation still a relevant discourse. Furthermore, academic literature lacks research on this field of study, which consequently makes this thesis a significant piece of work in this specific research area. This thesis aims to explore the research question not only with a historical angle but combine it with a political science perspective. Marrying these two fields will be essential for analysing the British role during the CSCE in Helsinki. The CSCE as the main object for this project delivers

¹² Deighton, A.: "Britain and the Cold War 1945-1955", in: Leffler, M., Westad, O. (eds.): *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. I, Cambridge 2010, pp. 112-132, p. 125.

¹³ Crump, L., Erlandsson, S.: "Introduction, Smaller powers in Cold War Europe", in: Crump, L., Erlandsson, S. (eds.): *Margins for Manoeuvre in Cold War Europe. The Influence of Smaller Powers*, London 2019, pp. 1-10, p. 1.

a most interesting case study since it was the first time ever that Great Britain participated in a transatlantic forum as an EC member, while participating in the EPC. Therefore, the CSCE is a suitable example to examine the British role in both, its membership in the EC and in a transatlantic panel. By making use of these different research perspectives and analytical methods the thesis will not only contribute to the debates of the British identity within Europe and the world but will also conquer a new narrative for the CSCE. By making use of the three interlocking circles theory, the British identity crisis after the Second World War, and the pro-European Heath administration which was so far mostly ignored by different scholars in this context, the thesis will put emphasis on the different layers the Conference represented such as a European layer, a transatlantic layer, and a superpower layer. Exploring the case of Great Britain allows me to take all these layers into account and to ultimately unravel the British role in the CSCE.

The research question shall be examined in three chapters. The first chapter will trace the roots of Great Britain's shift from a global to a middle power and its admission to the EC due to the election of Edward Heath and how he shaped the British political landscape with a rather pro-European policy. Moreover, Heath's visions and ideas of Great Britain's and the EC's role in a global context will be closely examined to explore a connection to the CSCE. The focus will hereby rely on the third and successful application of Great Britain to join the EEC. The first two applications will only be briefly discussed. The second chapter will introduce the CSCE to provide a historical context in which the main analysis will proceed. Nevertheless, the main section of the chapter will deal with the attitude and conduct the British delegation had towards the CSCE. In this regard, the chapter explores if the British attitude aligned with other Western allies within the EC and the US. Catching the different prevailing moods will help to grasp the motivations that drove the British delegation and will eventually lead to a better understanding of the role Great Britain wanted to play at the CSCE. The last chapter will focus on the analysis of the British aims and strategies at the CSCE. The chapter will explore possible connections between the Heath administration and the policymaking at the CSCE, the methods and strategies the British diplomats implemented on the process as well as the aims the British delegation supported during the negotiations. While analysing all these different aspects the concept of the three interlocking circles will be applied. Furthermore, the British admission to the EC, the Anglo-American special relationship as well as the British identity crisis will be considered while examining the different factors that have influenced the British role at the CSCE. The last two chapters will heavily rely on the use of primary sources to ensure a wide set of material and impressions of involved actors. The primary sources will

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be mainly retrieved from the Documents on British Policies Overseas (DBPO). The collection holds a variety of primary sources from Britain's Foreign and Commonwealth Office and diplomats who were closely involved in the CSCE process. The sources were produced during the 20th century and deal with diplomatic matters especially with the policymaking at the CSCE. The final section of the research paper will collect all findings to formulate a conclusion. This thesis will rely on British sources only since the aim of this thesis is to analyse the British self-perception and to examine the approaches adopted by the British diplomats to secure a certain status within the CSCE. Hence, other archives and primary sources, that deliver for instance a German or French perspective on the British conduct at the CSCE, will miss the aim of the thesis.

Chapter 1: British Decline and Searching for a New Role

Britain left the Second World War as one of the Big Three, but it was just a matter of time before it would face the bitter reality: The great British Empire was in decline. Many policymakers tended to close their eyes to this fact, trying to hold on to the British traditional role as a world power and the Commonwealth as its safe haven to overcome any obstacles challenging this self-perception. Nevertheless, the evidence for the decline of the British influence in the world and the rising of other regional powers, especially in Europe, was too striking to ignore. This chapter examines the three factors that I believe are the most conspicuous ones when it comes to the strengthening of the British identity crisis. Moreover, these elements, including the 1956 Suez crisis, the economic decline of the British empire and the Anglo-American ‘special relationship’, had a striking effect on the shaping of the British identity up to the 1970s and therefore directly influenced the British conduct at the CSCE as well as the transformation of the three circles. This chapter will draw attention to the factors that most advanced the British role at the CSCE and were so far neglected by other scholars. Especially the examination of Prime Minister Edward Heath will make a unique contribution to the existing research about the role of Great Britain at the CSCE, since his visions and ideas had a great impact on the conduct of the British delegation at the conference. Even though Heath’s visions delivered a foundation for the British policymaking at the CSCE his person was mostly ignored by modern research. This thesis aims to process the omitted approach and to add different perspectives to the field of study by majorly including Edward Heath’s visions and the British identity crisis.

The Suez Crisis

The roots of the decline cannot be traced back to one certain event since various factors of different nature advanced the decay of the British Empire. However, the Suez crisis of 1956 was the first incident that proved that Great Britain’s influence in world affairs significantly diminished. The Suez crisis originated in 1955 when British officials wanted to arrange a Western controlled regional security organisation in the Middle East and hoped to convince Egypt to join the Central Treaty Organisation by promising financial support for the economically important Aswan Dam. When negotiations about the funding of the Aswan Dam between Britain, the US, and Egypt became more difficult, since the President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser signed an arms deal with Czechoslovakia in 1955 and therefore sympathised with the Soviet Union, the Western powers decided to not grant any financial support for the Dam.¹⁴

¹⁴ Blair, A.: *Britain and the World since 1945*, London 2014, p. 49.

As a consequence, Nasser decided to nationalise the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956. Former British Prime Minister Anthony Eden saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate that Great Britain still had great power in the Middle East and used soon after Nasser's decision economic as well as diplomatic measures on Egypt to force them to the negotiation table.¹⁵ When Nasser refused to carry on the negotiations Great Britain saw no other solution but to involve the military. Together with Israel and France and without consulting the US, British officials began the invasion of the Suez Canal.

The consequences of the invasion would eventually leave marks on British self-perception and serve as the beginning of a change of mindset of the British role in the world. The British government had to face harsh criticism for its decision to invade the Suez Canal. Especially its wartime ally the US felt neglected since they have not been consulted and the Soviet Union threatened to launch nuclear reprisals. Eden justified his actions in an address to the House of Commons on 31 October 1956, with the words

Of course, we deplore it, but I do not think that it can carry with it this corollary, that we must in all circumstances secure agreement from our American ally before we can act ourselves in what we know to be our own vital interests.¹⁶

His words emphasized the wish of many British politicians to still play a relevant role in global affairs without having to consult the actual global powers at that time. As it turned out in later events, Great Britain had to accept that this wish could not be realised. Eden was forced to withdraw the British troops after the UN General Assembly voted for a ceasefire on 2 November 1956 following a US proposal. After the invasion of the Suez Canal, Great Britain realised that the power of its imperial phase in global affairs was lost. The Suez crisis represented the first time that the British government miscalculated its world status after the Second World War and was forced to reflect its position in the world.¹⁷

The Suez crisis proved to British politicians, that they had to search for a new role to still be relevant in the global context and not to entirely diminish their status to a middle power. It was inevitable to keep denying the British decline of influence on global affairs. Therefore, the role as a transatlantic mediator might have appeared as emergency solution to keep an

¹⁵ Grob-Fitzgibbon, B.: *Continental Drift Britain and Europe from the End of Empire to the Rise of Euroscepticism*, Cambridge 2016, p. 218.

¹⁶ Eden, A.: *Address given by Anthony Eden on the Suez Crisis*, London 31.10.1956, Retrieved from: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2001/11/5/1f1f8095-9e91-45de-a754-56a6644c7fdf/publishable_en.pdf, Last Access: 07.05.2020.

¹⁷ Blair, A.: *Britain and the World since 1945*, pp. 50-53.

extraordinary status in the world. In this context, the concept of the three interlocking circles assists as theoretical framework to understand the exact position Great Britain wanted to adopt. Implementing the theory shows that British politicians had indeed the urge to create a unique role for Great Britain in between the global and regional power. The Suez crisis shaped the major identity crisis Great Britain experienced in the following decades and which found its peak within the CSCE negotiations when Britain had the final chance to play a proactive role as global power by supporting the US policies. Another reaction could be that British officials lost confidence in their abilities to act as global power and would rather turn to the other EC members and accept their status as one of many regional powers. However, the Suez crisis would have a lasting impact on the British identity and its appearance at the CSCE in Helsinki and therefore a final shaping on the three interlocking circles theory.

The Decline of the Commonwealth

Another effect that had a significant impact on the British global role was its economic position after the Second World War. The economic decline was a long-term process which became one of the main reasons for Great Britain to reconsider its options to maintain a meaningful global player and to eventually give up on the illusion to achieve this goal with the Commonwealth. Even though Britain emerged the Second World War as one of the victorious powers and was economically not as damaged as other Western European states, its situation quickly deteriorated within the decades after the war ended. In comparison with other European nations, for example, West Germany or France, the British economy experienced a relatively slow expansion.¹⁸ After the war, the EEC countries rose to become the global centre of economic growth while the economic situation in other parts of the world experienced a stagnation.¹⁹ The decision of mainly Labour politicians to prioritise the Commonwealth as the core trade partner instead of recognising the great changes that took place in Western Europe would later contribute to its conversion from a global to a middle power.²⁰

There were different reasons to keep holding on to the Commonwealth, even though it slowly became obvious to British officials that the proceeds were not as promising to justify the continuing interest in the British Empire. The trade with the Commonwealth was perceived more as a tradition and a monument in remembrance of British world dominance than an

¹⁸ Haeussler, M: "The inward looking outsider? The British press and European integration, 1961-1992", in: Ikonomidou, H., Andry, A., Byberg, R. (eds.): *European Enlargement Across Rounds and Beyond Borders*, Abingdon 2017, pp. 77-98, p. 79.

¹⁹ Blair, A.: *Britain and the World since 1945*, p. 56.

²⁰ Tomlinson, J.: "The Decline of the Empire and the Economic 'Decline' of Britain", in: *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 13 No. 3, Oxford 2003, pp. 201-221, p. 209.

economic advantage. For former Prime Ministers like Harold Macmillan and Harold Wilson, the encapsulation from the traditional links would mean to give up sovereignty as well as British global influence.²¹ Mathias Haeussler sensed that the reasons for the British reluctance to join the EEC also had a strong political nature. He interprets that “politically, the supranational character of the EEC, as well as its somewhat vague aim for an ‘ever closer union’, had comparatively little appeal to a country whose sovereignty and strength of institutions had seemingly just been vindicated, or even strengthened, by the country’s wartime experience.”²² Haeussler’s observation meets the concept of the three interlocking circles theory since it assumes that Britain would not bind itself to a particular actor when it comes to global affairs but to act as individual power. Avoiding the entrance into the EEC indicates Britain adhering to the option of being the third interlocking circle.

Nevertheless, with the economic growth of the European continent, the Common Market gained importance until it was almost inevitable for Great Britain to ignore the option to join the EEC. However, the Common Market was regarded as the last resort. Various other possible economic solutions were explored before accepting that the future for Great Britain laid within Europe. Alternatives to the EEC like maintaining global trade relations to the Commonwealth or the establishment of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) on 4 January 1960 turned out as constraining options for Great Britain economically as well as politically.²³ As realist theorists claim, for example, Ellinor Zeino-Mahmalat, a hegemon must require the will to take a leading role and the resources to maintain its world dominance.²⁴ Therefore, to ensure a continuing trade relation with the Commonwealth, Great Britain had to invest a vast amount of resources that it did not possess.²⁵ The economic decline of Great Britain in the time period between the end of the Second World War and the CSCE emphasized its great dependence on either the US or the EEC at least when it came to economic matters. This dependence also could have an impact on the Britain’s conduct at the CSCE. Since it chose to enter the EC to improve its economic position it would be evident that it rather supported economic aims and policies that were beneficial for Western Europe rather than fulfilling its role as mediating circle between the EC and the US.

²¹ Grob-Fitzgibbon, B.: *Continental Drift Britain and Europe from the End of Empire to the Rise of Euroscepticism*, p. 209.

²² Haeussler, M: “The inward looking outsider? The British press and European integration, 1961-1992”, p. 79.

²³ Rossbach, Niklas H.: *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74*, London 2009, p. 21.

²⁴ Zeino-Mahmalat, E.: *Hegemonie ohne Gefolgschaft? Die Neuordnung der Regierung Bush jr. Im Nahen und Mittleren Osten zwischen regionaler Machtbalance und hegemonialer Stabilität*, Berlin 2006, p. 19.

²⁵ Blair, A.: *Britain and the World since 1945*, p. 49.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth countries sensed that Great Britain could not hold on to its status as hegemon of the Empire anymore and started to turn to other powers, primarily the US and the Soviet Union, to establish trade relations.²⁶ Great Britain realised soon after the creation of EFTA that it had no advantages. Although the Free Trade Association did not demand any involvement of the national government it divided Europe into the Six, the Seven and the eastern bloc states which had a counterproductive effect on the aims of the EEC.²⁷ The failure of these options forced British policy-makers to a fundamental reevaluation of the EEC which seemed now as the only alternative left to ensure Great Britain a secure existence and role in the world. As the Commonwealth countries slowly left Great Britain as their hegemon behind, the circle of the British Empire began to crumble, leaving only the United Kingdom as remainder to foster the circle. The EEC was considered especially by MacMillan and Wilson as a convenient primarily economic partnership for Great Britain rather than an advantageous political ally. Wilson declared his intentions to enter the EEC at the platform of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe on 23 January 1967 with the words:

I want the House, the country and our friends abroad to know that the Government are approaching the discussions I have foreshadowed with the clear intention and determination to enter the European Economic Community if, as we hope, our essential British and Commonwealth interests can be safeguarded. We mean business.²⁸

Wilson's declaration is once more evidential for his purely economic interest in the admission to the EEC, with political advantages only playing a minor role. Moreover, the EEC was regarded as lifeboat for the Commonwealth rather than a chance for Great Britain to move on and leave their global power status behind. This thinking still prevailed in the late 1960s only a few years before the CSCE commenced. If this mentality dragged on to the CSCE with Britain only valuing the economic aims of the EEC but not the EPC, it could manage to keep up its desired role as transatlantic mediator by supporting American aims within the EC machinery.

²⁶ Alexander, P.: "From imperial power to regional Powers: Commonwealth Crisis and the Second Application", in: Daddow, O. (eds.): *Harold Wilson and European Integration: Britain's Second Application to Join the EEC*, London 2003, pp. 188-210, p. 195 & Grob-Fitzgibbon, B.: *Continental Drift Britain and Europe from the End of Empire to the Rise of Euroscepticism*, p. 317.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 310.

²⁸ Wilson, H.: "Address given by Harold Wilson", in: *Council of Europe-Consultative Assembly. Reports of the debates. Eighteenth ordinary session (Third Part). 23 to 27 January 1967*, Strasbourg 23.01.1967, Retrieved from: https://www.cvce.eu/de/obj/address_given_by_harold_wilson_strasbourg_23_january_1967-en-3ea15ccc-11b8-4783-8083-405f2b2cf404.html, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

The Anglo-American Relationship

Nevertheless, there was one more reason to resist the decision to join the EEC. Besides the Commonwealth links, the Anglo-American relationship was thought of as a key factor to preserve Britain as a superpower, especially by Macmillan and Wilson. But as Britain's influence in world affairs and its global economic position crumbled, also its illusion that the 'special relationship' to the United States would secure its world power succumbed to the reality that Britain's future would lay within Europe. The idea of a shared world hegemony after the end of the Second World War and Britain becoming one of the three interlocking circles that would govern global affairs faded when the Commonwealth lost its significance as a strategic partner and the US became more influential. This led to the circumstance that 'the British power has been never on par with American power, not to mention the improbability of reversing their power positions. The power imbalance between the UK and the US has been an established reality up to the present.'²⁹ From that point on, it was no longer possible to recognize Great Britain as a world power, and dependence on the US had to be accepted, a realisation that was already triggered by the events of the Suez crisis in 1956.

However, British policymakers felt that the US, like the Commonwealth, would provide the former global hegemon with the connections and resources it required to restore its lost status. Committing to the EEC instead would have meant that Britain needed to let go of the special relationship to the US and neither Macmillan nor Wilson were ready to fully support this decision. Especially Wilson emphasized during his legislative period that the US had to be considered a more important ally than the EEC. For him, Britain was 'no European' country, or to put it in Jim Callaghan words, who served as a cabinet minister under Wilson and who was a great opposer of the EEC admission, the British were 'Atlantic Europeans' not European Europeans.³⁰ Before British policy-makers started to consider the entry into the EEC, different alternatives which originated from the Anglo-American relationship were explored to help maintain the British dominant role in global affairs. Wilson, for instance, 'turned to President Johnson for help in the British economic crisis which occurred soon after Labour assumed power, and he gained American assistance in obtaining a major bail-out for sterling.'³¹ The US developed exclusive treaties that would allow Great Britain unique access to American nuclear

²⁹ Xu, R.: *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, London 2017, p. 49 f.

³⁰ Grob-Fitzgibbon, B.: *Continental Drift Britain and Europe from the End of Empire to the Rise of Euroscepticism*, pp. 309 & 359.

³¹ Colman, J.: *'Special Relationship'?: Harold Wilson, Lyndon B Johnson and Anglo-American Relations 'At the Summit', 1964-8*, Manchester 2004, p. 20.

technology. It was hoped, that if Britain could not preserve its world power status economically, it would be able to establish itself as a nuclear power to maintain its global influence.

However, British politicians soon realised that Britain's remaining power was founded by the US. Britain as a global player was only able to exist as 'Junior Partner' of the US and as soon as American policy-makers would cancel its financial support or special treatment in the matter of superior trade agreements, Great Britain would slip from a global power to a middle power which would even fall behind the other European states.³² Although Macmillan and Wilson were reluctant to join the EEC, they both had to admit during their mandates that Britain's future neither laid within the Commonwealth nor as an equal partner to the US and that the sun of the British Empire had set once and for all. The entry to the EEC was seen for both as 'a lifebelt for its economic and political survival' rather than a chance to define the British role in a new context and transform Great Britain from a global to a European power.³³

When it became apparent that there was no other option for Great Britain than to join the EEC, many policy-makers and Labour Members of Parliament assumed that Britain could still have both, the European hegemony within the EEC as well as the US special relationship which would secure them their unique position as the transatlantic mediator. But especially French officials feared that with the entrance of Great Britain to the EEC, the US would raise its influence in European affairs.³⁴ Therefore, French President Charles de Gaulle made it evident to both Macmillan and Wilson that he was not willing to allow the British double standard by vetoing the first and second British applications to the EEC on 14 January 1963 and on 27 November 1967.³⁵ Macmillan and Wilson failed to establish a new British role by not being willing to fully renounce its global status.

With the delay of Britain's admission to the EC, Macmillan and Wilson gave away valuable time that the United Kingdom needed to adjust to its new function as part of the European circle. Because of the late actions of the former Prime Ministers and their misbelief that the future of Great Britain lay within the American or Commonwealth circle, Britain had no binding attachment to either circle when the CSCE began and still had the opportunity to

³² Blair, A.: *Britain and the World since 1945*, p. 59.

³³ *Ibid.* p. 70.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 60.

³⁵ Ludlow, P.: *When Britain first applied to join the EU: what can Macmillan's predicament teach us?*, 15.04.2016, Retrieved from: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2016/04/15/when-britain-first-applied-to-join-the-eu-what-can-macmillans-predicament-teach-us/>, Last Access: 03.04.2020 & Lekl, C.: General de Gaulle's second veto, 08.07.2016, Retrieved from: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/general_de_gaulle_s_second_veto-en-9aae82cd-d0da-4468-90dd-d1a50f905e9f.html, Last Access: 03.04.2020.

function as mediating circle. The admission to the EC took place too late to fully integrate Britain into the EC circle. Therefore, the CSCE became the scene where the consolidation of the British role as transatlantic mediator would either be confirmed or shattered. It is important to keep in mind that Great Britain entered the CSCE negotiations while still involved in a major identity crisis, trying to find a new role in the world. This circumstance is mostly ignored in contemporary literature researching the British role at the CSCE but had a powerful impact on its conduct as discussed in later chapters.

Heath's vision of Britain in Europe and the EEC

Only with the election of Edward Heath as Prime Minister in 1970, the British political landscape experienced a fundamental rearrangement of priorities. As a convinced pro-European, Heath's vision of Great Britain becoming a part of the EEC already developed in the early stages of his political career.³⁶ In his opinion, the EEC was not Britain's last option to save some of its fading global power, but a chance to improve the political and economic situation of Great Britain and Europe itself. During his studies at Oxford University, Heath already sympathised with Conservative sentiments, without becoming an actual political theorist. Heath was described to rather apply political measures practical to existing issues than to only apply them in theory. Sharing the main ideas with the Conservative party, Heath eventually became a Member of Parliament in 1950.³⁷ Before being appointed Prime Minister in 1970, Heath passed through various political stages in his career, many of them strengthening his pro-European visions. While Prime Minister, Macmillan entrusted Heath first with the Ministry of Labour and after with the function of the Lord Privy Seal and as such managed the first EEC application, which greatly shaped Heath's comprehension of Britain's future role in Europe. Niklas Roszbach considers Heath as 'a non-ideological issue-oriented politician mostly identified with the question he felt most strongly about, namely membership of the EEC.'³⁸ After the Tory Party lost the election in 1964 it realised that it needed the qualities Heath had to offer and that his visions could pave the way back to the top. Heath was announced shadow chancellor in 1964 and just one year later appointed leader of the Tory Party. As such, Heath

³⁶ Grob-Fitzgibbon, B.: *Continental Drift Britain and Europe from the End of Empire to the Rise of Euroscepticism*, p. 315.

³⁷ Edward Heath: *A profile of the former UK prime minister*, 04.10.2017, Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-33772016>, Last Access: 10.04.2020.

³⁸ Roszbach, N.: *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74*, p. 17.

transformed the Tory Party to a 'European Party' which shared his ideas of Great Britain becoming part of the EEC.³⁹

Through his various experiences in different political positions Heath developed a clear vision of how Britain and the EEC should unify and which role Britain, the Commonwealth and the 'special relationship' to the US should play in this matter. Heath's conceptions of Britain's future coincided with different metaphors and analyses which were created by different members of the conservative party. The first was a survey processed by Lord Carrington, one of the conservative politicians, about Britain's future in the world in 1965, in which he concluded that Britain should take an active role in European integration 'to create a new grouping of near equal standing to the superpowers' with the Western European states at heart.⁴⁰ Another was a metaphor that was created by Oliver Wright, the private secretary to Harold Wilson. Wright compared British foreign policy to a four-legged chair, each leg representing a different union or diplomatic construct in which Britain played a part, namely, the Commonwealth, Europe, the UN and the Atlantic Alliance with the US. In his metaphor, Wright interpreted 'the Commonwealth leg was growing ever shorter, the United Nations leg had found itself hamstrung by the Soviet Union and President Johnson seemed far less committed to the leg of the Atlantic Alliance than Kennedy had been before him. For this reason, the British government had to turn to Europe, the only leg left standing [...].'⁴¹

He additionally claimed that Britain could only survive in a unified Europe that was not divided by different blocks. Heath shared these visions of Great Britain and was of the firm conviction that neither the Commonwealth nor the US should be a priority in Britain's future. Instead, Western Europe in general should rise to a global superpower besides the US and the Soviet Union.⁴² As far as Heath was concerned, he also had developed the concrete role Britain should play once it had entered the EEC: instead of being one of the interlocking circles in a transatlantic context, Heath wanted to shift Great the British position in the European framework with Britain functioning as the balancing and mediating power between West Germany and France.⁴³ The concept of the three interlocking circles would also experience a

³⁹ Grob-Fitzgibbon, B.: *Continental Drift Britain and Europe from the End of Empire to the Rise of Euroscepticism*, p. 317.

⁴⁰ Rossbach, N.: *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74*, p. 18.

⁴¹ Grob-Fitzgibbon, B.: *Continental Drift Britain and Europe from the End of Empire to the Rise of Euroscepticism*, p. 310.

⁴² Rossbach, N.: *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74*, p. 21.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 18.

shift in its context. If Heath would succeed to establish Great Britain as a European mediator instead as the transatlantic mediator, the concept of the three interlocking circles had to be applied to a European context. This example demonstrates that the theory can be implemented on various levels and can furthermore help to explain the dynamics of different power layers at the CSCE. It can not only be applied to its original purpose, to explain the connection between the transatlantic main actors - the EEC, the US and Great Britain - but could also examine the relations between other actors on different levels. Hence, the theory must be regarded as an important component to analyse the diverse roles of individual nations and their correlations between other involved parties.

It was no surprise that Heath's first official act after his election to Prime Minister was to initiate the third application of Great Britain to the EEC. To achieve a successful admission, Heath was aware that he had to loosen British ties to the Commonwealth as well as to the US. Even though De Gaulle had left the office of the French President shortly before Heath won the General Election on 18 June 1970 and the new President Georges Pompidou was keen about Britain's application, Heath did not want to risk another rejection of entering the EEC because of its close relation to the US.⁴⁴ Heath undertook certain measures to emphasize that the main priority of British foreign policy in the early 1970s would be the admission to the EEC. Therefore, Heath changed the terminology to characterise the relationship between Great Britain and the US. While US President Richard Nixon kept referring to the connection between the two countries as 'special' Heath would depict the relation as 'natural'.⁴⁵

Henry Kissinger interpreted Heath's conduct towards the US as Anti-American sentiments and as reluctance to maintain a good relationship to the US. Many scholars agree with Kissinger's perception of Heath's attitude towards the US while Niklas Roszbach and Alex Spelling have a different opinion of his aims. Roszbach and Spelling both agree that Heath was not as enthusiastic about the Anglo-American relationship as Macmillan or Wilson but that he at the same time did not wish to harm the connection. Heath simply shifted the British priority from a transatlantic to a European sphere which did not mean that he desired a break with the US.⁴⁶ Heath understood that the US was an important ally to realise the British admission to the EEC and in the long-term European détente. In the American mentality, Great Britain still

⁴⁴ Blair, A.: *Britain and the World since 1945*, pp. 81 & 82.

⁴⁵ Roszbach, N.: Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74, p. 22.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22 & Spelling, A.: "Edward Heath and Anglo-American Relations 1970-1974: A Reappraisal", in: *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 20 No. 4, Abingdon 2009, pp. 638-658, pp. 640-642.

functioned as the main connector between the US and the members of the EEC. Heath partly accepted this status by trying to make US policy understandable to the EEC countries, especially the French and vice versa.⁴⁷ Hence, Heath did not entirely abandon Churchill's three circles theory, but he adjusted it to a modern context in which Europe gained a greater priority than the US.

Edward Heath conducted a transformation of priority for Great Britain which concluded in the admission to the EEC on 1 January 1973.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the entry into the EEC was just the beginning to reconstruct the British role in the world. Henceforth, the task for British policymakers was to find a new place for Great Britain in the European as well as the transatlantic context. Britain's admission to the EC is in so far interesting since all involved actors hoped for different advantages of the outcome. While European countries hoped that Great Britain would function as a balancing power within the European Community as counterweight to West Germany and France, Heath himself shifted this hope to a transatlantic stage. He wished to establish a counter-power to the US that was able to operate in a global context. The US and especially Kissinger had nurtured the hope that if they supported the British entrance into the EC, it would support US policies among the EC countries. But with the election of Heath as Prime Minister Kissinger quickly realised 'that Britain would not be a Trojan Horse for US power and influence'.⁴⁹ The up-coming Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe was the first time that Great Britain as a new member of the EEC had to represent itself in a forum in which both, the European as well as the transatlantic circle, were represented and in which it had to decide whether it wanted to maintain its role as the third circle or engage with either the European or American one. Therefore, the CSCE was the moment when the British role for the up-coming decades would solidify or, to put it in Heath's words: 'This was the task we felt we had been given in June of last year - to find for this country a new way in this new world.'⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Spelling, A.: "Edward Heath and Anglo-American Relations 1970-1974: A Reappraisal", pp. 647-649.

⁴⁸ *The EEC and the Single European Act*, 04.2013, Retrieved from: <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/legislativescrutiny/parliament-and-europe/overview/britain-and-eeec-to-single-european-act/>, Last Access: 10.04.2020.

⁴⁹ Ryan, D.: *The United States and Europe in the Twentieth Century*, London 2003, pp. 92-93.

⁵⁰ Heath, E.: *Leader's speech*, Brighton 1971, Retrieved from: <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=118>, Last Access: 27.05.2020.

Chapter 2: Britain and the CSCE in Helsinki (1972-75)

One of the most important phases for Great Britain to pave this new way in the new world was the CSCE. The first part of this chapter will briefly examine the origins of the CSCE and what it meant to the EC member states, in order to provide a historical context for the following chapters. The second section will analyse what attitude the different participating nations - and especially Great Britain - had towards the pan-European forum. To question the British attitude towards the CSCE is essential to understand if British officials even considered the CSCE as a powerful platform that would be suitable to promote a certain British role in a transatlantic context. If Great Britain felt reluctant towards the conference it would have less likely tried to exploit it to create itself a certain role and, therefore, would not have been too involved to promote Western aims. Furthermore, the chapter will shed light on the controversial debate that is reflected in contemporary literature about the British attitude towards the CSCE. As stated in the Introduction, many scholars have interpreted the British attitude towards the CSCE differently, some depicting it as sceptical and reluctant while others claimed that Britain regarded the conference as an important opportunity to construct itself a particular role in a transatlantic context. Therefore, it is important to examine the British attitude to see if the British diplomats even regarded it a suitable stage at which Great Britain could establish a new role.

The CSCE in Helsinki (1972-75)

The CSCE turned out to be ‘the biggest (and first) European multilateral gathering since World War II’ and therefore was also the first transatlantic forum in which Great Britain appeared as a member of the EC.⁵¹ The idea for a pan-European forum that would deal with security in Europe originated from a request issued by the foreign minister of the Soviet Union Viacheslav Molotov in 1954. The Soviet Union was eager to establish some form of a conference in which all European countries would participate. The reason for the interest in a pan-European forum was to secure the transformation of borders that occurred after the Second World War especially in Eastern-Europe. The Soviet Union hoped ‘that a multilateral declaration would legitimise and stabilise their European empire’ and that the present European borders would become inviolable.⁵² The idea of Molotov failed since the invitation excluded important Western strategic partners like the US and Canada. Therefore, the NATO countries decided to turn down

⁵¹ Hanhimäki, J.: “Détente in Europe, 1962-1975”, in: Leffler, M., Westad, O. (eds.): *Crisis and Détente, The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. 2, Cambridge 2010, pp. 198-218, p. 212.

⁵² Davy, R.: “Helsinki Myths: Setting the Record straight on the Final Act of the CSCE, 1975”, in: *Cold War History*, Vol. 9 No. 1, London 2009, pp. 1-22, p. 2.

the Soviet proposal.⁵³ The fact that the Soviet Union did not exclude Great Britain from the invitation is further evidence for its lost global status. The Soviet Union did not regard Britain as such a great threat as the US to disrupt the plans to secure the European borders, confirming the establishment of the bipolar world only including Moscow and Washington.

A new attempt made by the Warsaw Pact countries on 17 March 1969 to establish a pan-European security conference was successful. The issued 'Budapest appeal' did not include preconditions for the forum which allowed the US and Canada to participate in the conference. The NATO member states, as well as neutral and non-aligned countries, agreed to participate in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, as it came to be called. When the preparatory talks took place in Dipoli close to Helsinki on 22 November 1972, 35 nations were represented including the US and Canada. The only European country which did not take part in the conference was Albania. The different stages of the conference which took place in Dipoli on the outskirts of Helsinki, Geneva, and Helsinki concluded in a three-day summit from 30 July 1975 to 1 August 1975 during which the Helsinki Final Act was signed by the leaders of the participating nations.⁵⁴ The Final Act did not operate as a legally-binding document but was considered a code of conduct that the different nations should follow in terms of security, economic relations, human contacts, and follow-up meetings that monitored the violations of the agreed measures.⁵⁵

Even though most Warsaw Pact countries prioritised the negotiations of European security and the inviolability of borders and the NATO countries emphasized a common interest in human contacts, the neutral and non-aligned states still had different aims of their own to implement in the negotiations. Especially the EC member states viewed the CSCE as great opportunity to appear for the first time as a Western European Community. In this regard it is important to distinguish the NATO and EC machineries since, while also participating in the NATO, the EC member states had a separate institution to vocal a common political agenda in the form of the EPC in which the European perspective was superior to the transatlantic one. The EC nations 'considered it [the CSCE] a suitable platform for the incipient European Political Cooperation' and could act for the first time as a supranational entity. The fact that 'The CSCE thus gave rise to a particular kind of European détente as distinguished from the

⁵³ Ibid, p. 2.

⁵⁴ CVCE: *Chronology of CSCE meetings (1972-1992)*, 01.08.2016, Retrieved from: https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/chronology_of_csce_meetings_1972_1992-en-1f70db04-45ed-42dc-9b97-3ae969a5a173.html, Last Access: 28.04.2020.

⁵⁵ Davy, R.: "Helsinki Myths: Setting the Record straight on the Final Act of the CSCE, 1975", p. 4.

customary bipolar superpower détente' offered the European nations the opportunity to increase their power in European matters and not to make it yet another centre for superpower confrontation.⁵⁶ In the case of Great Britain, all these factors seemed to advance the adoption of a pro-European strategy at the CSCE and to align with the EPC aims and framework. Also, since the CSCE was created to promote European détente, Great Britain had much higher stakes in the process as a European country or EC member than a global player like the US did.

The British Attitude towards the CSCE

To examine the role Britain played during the CSCE negotiations in Helsinki with special consideration of the three circles theory it will be necessary to examine its attitude towards the conference in order to get an idea of the motives that drove British diplomats to adopt certain strategies. When looking at early sources of the Documents of British Policy Overseas, it appears that scholars that depicted Britain as sceptical towards the CSCE are, at least partly, right.⁵⁷ In an early written Draft Position Paper which was produced on 25 February 1972, prior to the beginning of the preparatory talks and Britain's admission to the EC, the source expresses doubts about the necessity of a pan-European conference dealing with security issues. The document refers to a Committee Paper, which was already drafted in 1970, and which listed different arguments that should evaluate the requirement of such a conference. It was concluded 'that a Conference was unlikely to do the West much good [...] and that there was no reason for Britain either to encourage or to oppose the movement towards a Conference'.⁵⁸ Charles Wiggin, who served at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) during the CSCE negotiations, depicted the conference as 'inevitable rather than desirable' and the Head of European Integration Department Rodric Braithwaite even designated the conference as 'judicious political warfare'.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Crump, L.: "Forty-five Years of Dialogue Facilitation (1972–2017). Ten Lessons from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe", in: *Security and Human Rights*, Vol. 27 No. 3-4, Leiden 2016, pp. 498-516, p. 501 f.

⁵⁷ Jack, F., Bozek, G.: "Britain, European Security and Freer Movement: The Development of Britain's CSCE policy 1969-1972", p. 440 & Turner, M.: *Britain's International Role, 1970-1991*, London 2010, p. 30.

⁵⁸ "Draft position paper [EN 2/15]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1972, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923010330?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 01.05.2020.

⁵⁹ Wiggin, C.: "Minute from Mr. Wiggin to Sir T. Brimelow [EN 2/15]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1972, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923009468?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020 & Braithwaite, R.: "Letter from Mr. Braithwaite to Mr. Allan (Luxembourg) [WDW 1/1]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1972, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923016294?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

The initial scepticism of Britain towards a pan-European forum on security issues could be traced back to the earlier discussed identity crisis Britain underwent in the last decades and still triggered a superpower attitude towards European affairs and a rather detached position when it came to continental concerns.⁶⁰ This impression is strengthened by the fact that Great Britain only became an official member of the EC after the NATO countries agreed on participating in the CSCE. Therefore, its greater involvement in European matters was not required yet and it would still have the opportunity to establish itself as the third circle to secure Western cohesion or promote US policies and aims, integrating more into the global circle. Moreover, Britain still found itself in a fragile and weakened position since it had only entered the EC after the conference had started and already grew more distant from the Anglo-American relationship due to Heath's Eurocentric visions and therefore saw its remaining influence endangered. This could be another reason for the British delegation to adopt a rather careful approach in the beginning of the conference.

In this context, it is important to keep in mind that Great Britain was not the only European country that was sceptical about the CSCE. All NATO and EC member states had different attitudes towards a security conference that seemed to be connected to the potential benefit or successful implementation of national hobby horses from the different states. Angela Romano depicts the atmosphere within the EC with the words: 'Amongst the Nine EC members, there were sceptics, mediators and front-runners in terms of the approach' once more emphasizing that even though, 'most EC member states shared a similar conception of détente' there still were differences on how to feel about the CSCE.⁶¹ The general mood was characterised in a letter of Rodric Braithwaite to the Head of Chancery at the British Embassy to Luxembourg James Allan, in which Braithwaite explained the different attitudes the member states had towards the conference and made a direct connection with the potential national aims. For example, according to Braithwaite's report, The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) had 'the biggest national stake in the conference. [...] They therefore neither wish nor wish [sic] to be seen to be delaying the move to a conference.' The French on the other hand 'inclined in private to argue that a conference would enable the Allies to pursue [...] a [sic] "peaceful roll-back"' i.e. that the conference would lead to a loosening of the Soviet Union hold on East European countries' whereas 'Italian officials are particularly sceptical about the value of a conference.' Other countries, like Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Canada, which are called

⁶⁰ Macleod, A.: "Great Britain: Still Searching for Status?", in: Le Prestre, P. (eds.): *Role Quests in the Post-Cold War Era: Foreign Policies in Transition*, Montreal 1997, pp. 161-186, p. 166.

⁶¹ Romano, A.: "The EC Nine's Vision and Attempts at Ending the Cold War", p. 142.

the 'wet front', 'believe that a conference could negotiate a genuine détente and that the West must avoid being provocative either before or during the conference.'⁶² Nations that had higher stakes in the process and would have benefitted the most from a positive outcome of the conference like the FRG, which hoped to establish a better relation with the German Democratic Republic, as well as France which could have emerged from the conference as a Western European leader, were more in favour of a conference since it provided the opportunity to improve the individual situation.⁶³ Other countries that would not have directly benefitted from a conference since they were not in a geographically or politically critical situation, like Italy and Great Britain, were cautious to commit immediately to participate in the negotiations and had therefore evinced reluctance towards a pan-European conference. Therefore, the British delegation might not have considered the CSCE as a suitable platform to promote a more important and powerful role for Great Britain.

British scepticism towards the CSCE at the beginning of the negotiations seemed to align most with American views of the CSCE. Since the US is considered the second interlocking circle, it is important to examine their stance of the CSCE as well, especially because Great Britain had strongly followed the US model in the past. If the British delegation were to align its attitude towards the CSCE with the US throughout the whole process, this would mean that Great Britain had a greater interest in maintaining a global power posture and therefore would integrate more in the US circle, neglecting its mediating position and abandoning the intermediating circle. In the letter from Braithwaite to Allan, Braithwaite wrote that 'The Americans think (as we do) that nothing good or sensible is likely to come from the conference. [...] However recently the Americans appear to have been coming round to our own view that, like it or not, a conference is politically inevitable'.⁶⁴ As mentioned before, the US as a global superpower had rather little interest in the negotiations. Since the conference would only cover European matters, the US did not feel that the CSCE should become a priority in foreign affairs. The US preferred to deal with Cold War issues on a bilateral agenda that would result in direct negotiations with the Soviet Union instead of a conference in which

⁶² Braithwaite, R.: "Letter from Mr. Braithwaite to Mr. Allan (Luxembourg) [WDW 1/1]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923016294?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

⁶³ Hanhimäki, J.: „Détente in Europe, 1962-1975“, p. 198.

⁶⁴ Braithwaite, R.: "Letter from Mr. Braithwaite to Mr. Allan (Luxembourg) [WDW 1/1]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923016294?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

smaller powers could take part. Therefore, the US had a greater interest in maintaining superpower détente instead of shifting the détente to a European context.

Furthermore, the US believed that the West could only emerge as a loser from the CSCE. In the American - and especially in Henry Kissinger's - view, the conference was constructed to serve as a platform in which the Soviet Union could legitimise its status and borders in Europe and the Western nations could not accomplish any political or economic achievements and therefore made the conference 'a project of the "socialist bloc"'.⁶⁵ Henry Kissinger recognised that the CSCE would have the potential to address human rights issues and to implement guidelines that would protect them, nonetheless he argued that in the end it 'would lead to nothing'.⁶⁶ In a letter from Counsellor and Head of the Chancery at HM Embassy in Washington John Graham, to Head of the East European and Soviet department of the Foreign Office Julian Bullard written on 12 March 1973, Graham wrote that the Attorney General of New Jersey William 'Bill' Hyland 'took the line that the [sic] CSCE was not important' and 'that he could not conceive that the Russians would agree to anything disadvantageous to them and there was therefore no point in having a showdown about it'.⁶⁷ Graham further claimed 'that nobody at the top of the Administration had really focussed on CSCE' citing the report of Hyland.

The conduct of the US administration was justified by British officials declaring that the US delegation tried 'maintaining their low profile position and leaving the lead with the EEC countries' and that 'they seemed anxious to let the Europeans make the running'.⁶⁸ The fact that British diplomats were mitigating the absence of US involvement in the early CSCE process or diplomatic affairs that were of greater importance to European states in general, can be traced back to British awareness that the US was a powerful partner in the negotiations that should not be neglected. Even though they might not share the US perceptions of the CSCE in the further

⁶⁵ Hopmann, T.: "The United States and the CSCE/OSCE", in: IFSH (eds.): *OSCE Yearbook 2000*, Baden-Baden 2001, pp. 63-81, p. 63.

⁶⁶ Graham, J.: "Letter from Mr. J.A.N. Graham (Washington) to Mr. Bullard [EN 2/6]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1973, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923013341?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

⁶⁷ Fall, B.: "Sir Julian Bullard", in: *The Guardian*, 02.06.2006, Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/jun/02/guardianobituaries.mainsection1>, Last Access: 05.05.2020 & Sullivan, R.: "Byrne Picks Hyland as Attorney General", in: *The New York Times*, 20.12.1973, Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/12/20/archives/byrne-picks-hyland-as-attorney-general-byrne-picks-investigations.html>, Last Access: 05.05.2020 & Graham, J.: "Letter from Mr. J.A.N. Graham (Washington) to Mr. Bullard [EN 2/6]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923013341?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

⁶⁸ Graham, J.: "Letter from Mr. J.A.N. Graham (Washington) to Mr. Bullard [EN 2/6]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923013341?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020 & Tickell, C.: "Submission from Mr. Tickell on CSCE: Multilateral Preparatory Talks [WDW 1/1]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1972, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923016724?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

process, British officials were aware that the Western delegations could not afford to upset such an important ally as the US since it is the only Western power, that was able to exercise global influence. This attitude reflected in general Heath's idea of the Anglo-American relationship. As discussed in the first chapter, Heath was also eager to maintain a good relationship with the US while focusing and prioritising on the EC. Moreover, the British delegation saw an opportunity in the US reluctance towards the CSCE. Great Britain exploited the American lack of enthusiasm to provide the EC with a greater leeway to vocal specific European aims towards the Soviet Union. The British delegation utilised its position as mediating power to encourage the other EC delegations to use the given opportunity without upsetting the American delegation as the following paragraphs will demonstrate more specifically. The concept of the three interlocking circles is applicable to the different attitudes of the participating nations, particularly since the British delegation leveraged its mediating power to provide the EC countries with a greater platform for their aims by simultaneously avoiding irritation of the American delegation. This argument will be further explained when it comes to the British strategy and aims during the CSCE. This awareness also sheds light on the British consciousness, that it was not able to rely on its former world power status anymore and had now fully regressed to a regional power.

Unlike the US attitude, the British soon seemed to feel differently about the CSCE. The reconsideration of the situation shows, as many later documents discuss, the first measures that should be taken to secure a successful conference, which would mean no setbacks for the Western nations. Nevertheless, the British diplomats declared themselves in favour of a careful approach and rather followed 'a more circumspect stance to a conference'.⁶⁹ A Draft Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation to the Multilateral Preparatory Talks of the CSCE expressed the urge 'not to commit ourselves to attend a Conference unless the results of the Multilateral Preparatory Talks (MPT) are such as to justify it. Ministers wish [...] to establish that enough common ground exists among the participants to warrant reasonable expectations that a Conference will produce satisfactory results.'⁷⁰ Later documents showed greater effort towards the conference and even condemned the reluctant behaviour of the US. In a telegraph written by Anthony Elliott, the British ambassador in Helsinki at the time of the MPT, on 18 December 1972 to Crispin Tickell, the Head of the Western Organisations Department, that oversaw the

⁶⁹ Jack, F., Bozek, G.: "Britain, European Security and Freer Movement: The Development of Britain's CSCE policy 1969–1972", p. 451.

⁷⁰ "CSCE: Draft Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation to the Multilateral Preparatory Talks [EN 2/29]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1972, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923009925?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

CSCE negotiations, Elliott stated that the Americans had ‘been passive to a fault’ during the MPTs.⁷¹ This impression was also shared by other British diplomats as the negotiations continued. Anne Warburton, who served as Counsellor to the UK's Geneva Mission to the United Nations, wrote in a telegraph on 20 October 1973, that ‘the Americans [...] are generally still lying pretty low’, whereas the Shadow Foreign Secretary at that time, James Callaghan, accused the American delegation of slowing down the negotiations and acting inflexibly to avoid ‘re-opening arguments in Washington.’⁷² The subsequent distancing of the British delegation from the US was a reaction to the American indifference to the CSCE. As a result, Britain integrated more and more in the European circle, hoping that it could increase its influence on the conference through the EC member states and thus gain a more important status.

The real commitment British diplomats invested in the conference is shown in a letter written by David Hildyard, Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, in which he stated that ‘We should not cause unnecessary delays but nor should we allow ourselves to be bullied by pressure or threats from the Russians [...] or by US concern to bring the Conference to an early conclusion.’⁷³ The evolving criticism by British diplomats of the abstention and even manipulation of the CSCE by the US had the effect that Great Britain had overcome its initial scepticism and wanted to achieve a successful conference. The changing attitude of the British delegation had a direct impact on the role and relations Britain maintained throughout the CSCE. Reflecting on the changing attitude with the special consideration of the three interlocking circles theory, Britain was instead of acting as a mediator taking up a position in favour of the ally that appeared to be most beneficial to the respective situation. When the theme and setting of the conference still seemed vague, British officials feared a negative outcome of the conference that would harm the Western cohesion and their own influence but as soon as the negotiations produced tangible results, the British took the CSCE indeed seriously and

⁷¹ Tickell, C.: “Submission from Mr. Tickell on CSCE: Multilateral Preparatory Talks [WDW 1/1]”, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923016724?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

⁷² Warburton, A.: “Miss Warburton (UKMIS Geneva) to Sir A. Douglas-Home no. 496 Telegraphic [WDW 1/18]”, in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, Geneva 1973, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923012970?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020 & Callaghan, J.: “Mr. Callaghan to Sir P. Ramsbotham (Washington) no. 1035 Telegraphic [WDW 1/6]”, in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1974, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923012505?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

⁷³ Hildyard, D.: “Mr. Hildyard (UKMIS Geneva) to Mr. Callaghan no. 617 Telegraphic [MWP 1/11]”, in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1974, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923010348?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 05.05.2020.

therefore shifted from a global-superpower perspective to a rather regionally centred view.⁷⁴ In this regard, the concept of the three interlocking circles helps to comprehend the shift that occurred in the context that Great Britain considered itself in. As soon as Great Britain entered the EC it considered the CSCE as a new opportunity to regain a powerful status and, therefore, experienced a change in its attitude in the later stages of the negotiations. The realisation of this opportunity made the British delegation reevaluate the impact the CSCE could have on its international reputation and influence and as a result aligned their attitude to the EC. Great Britain experienced a transformation to an EC-centric perspective that had a great impact on the role it eventually played at the CSCE.

The fact that many British diplomats feared the endangering of successful negotiations by the inactivity and reluctance of the US, invalidates the argumentation that Britain had a rather sceptical attitude towards the CSCE, at least as the negotiations consolidated. It was more a sceptical attitude towards the outcome of the negotiations, fearing a constraining effect on the Western unity or a strengthening of the Soviet Union and the Brezhnev doctrine in Europe but many diplomats recognized that a pan-European dialogue was important for all European nations and necessary to establish European détente. Moreover, the British delegation adopted a careful attitude in the beginning of the negotiations due to its weakened position in the transatlantic alliance. It was not yet a member of the EC and due to the Heath government the Anglo-American ‘special relationship’ has been downgraded to a ‘natural’ one, loosening the bond between the two nations and, therefore, the access of Great Britain to global influence. Nonetheless, as soon as Great Britain entered the EC as official member the attitude of the British delegation rapidly transformed as it saw new opportunities to strengthen the British role in the multilateral forum. In this regard, Angela Romano’s assertion that ‘London considered the conference inevitable, not especially dangerous and likely to offer some good opportunities, the first of which was the chance to present a European common front’ greatly reinforces the assumption that Britain hoped to use the CSCE as platform to strengthen the EC’s influence on a transatlantic level.⁷⁵ The criticism many members of the British delegation expressed during the early stages of the CSCE confirm a willingness to commit further to European affairs and act as their defender. This also validates the fact that the British delegation tried to provide the EC with a greater platform to promote its aims by exploiting its self-proclaimed role as mediating power as well as the reluctance of the US to strengthen the EC’s position within the

⁷⁴ Jack, F., Bozek, G.: “Britain, European Security and Freer Movement: The Development of Britain's CSCE policy 1969–1972”, p. 440.

⁷⁵ Romano, A.: “The EC Nine's Vision and Attempts at Ending the Cold War”, p. 139.

transatlantic alliance. Therefore, a shift in the three circles becomes visible in which Great Britain adapted its attitude towards the CSCE to the meaning of the negotiations to follow EC members, and experienced a greater integration in the European circle. The shift of the British attitude towards the CSCE indicates, due to the passive conduct of the US, that the British delegation might have felt obliged to replace the US as leading and most influential Western power and take a greater part in the negotiations. Jussi Hanhimäki also observes the indifference of the US towards the CSCE as ‘disturbing to a number of America’s NATO allies’ and utilises Great Britain as a prime example to illustrate his argument. He draws a direct causal link between British criticism towards the reluctant American attitude and ‘the conservative Heath government that [sic] adopted a determinedly ‘pro-European’ posture after 1970’.⁷⁶

The British admission to the EC and the sudden involvement of Great Britain in the EPC had increased the stakes for Britain in the CSCE negotiations and, as a result, had a great impact on the transforming attitude. Even though scepticism was the initial attitude of Great Britain towards the CSCE, there is no evidence that it had a greater influence on the role Britain adopted during the conference. The argumentation of Martin Brown, that the CSCE would never be a priority in British foreign policy only applies to the early stages of the negotiations.⁷⁷ The sources mainly correspond to the reasoning of Felix Jack and Grenfell Bozek explaining that ‘if British expectations were not high, they nevertheless worked diligently to defend Western unity’.⁷⁸ In a further development, Britain indeed considered the CSCE as an important pan-European platform to keep the East-West dialogue going, even though some other EC members would have a greater benefit from a positive outcome.

⁷⁶ Hanhimäki, J.: “They Can Write It in Swahili’: Kissinger, the Soviets, and the Helsinki Accords”, p. 40.

⁷⁷ Brown, M.: “A very British vision of détente: The United Kingdom’s foreign policy during the Helsinki process, 1969-1975”, p. 139.

⁷⁸ Jack, F., Bozek, G.: “Britain, European Security and Freer Movement: The Development of Britain’s CSCE policy 1969–1972”, p. 461.

Chapter 3: British Aims and Strategies at the CSCE

The next chapter will deal with the different aims the British delegation tried to pursue during the CSCE and the various strategies it applied to achieve those. This chapter is of great importance for the whole thesis since it sheds light on the role Britain tried to establish for itself. As mentioned before, different states had different priorities, objectives, and hobby horses they wanted to see fulfilled during the CSCE process and that would ultimately define the role they played during the negotiations. The different intentions defined the approach the states implemented on the CSCE. The independent ambitions of the states sometimes even predominated the collectively formulated objectives. To know the aims that the British delegation tried to follow throughout the whole process is essential to understand if the British delegation shared rather EC oriented objectives fulfilling their role as a regional, European power or if the delegations strived for purposes with a global meaning to revive its role as a world power in a transatlantic setting. In this context, it is also important to observe the methods and strategies on how the British delegation planned to achieve its aims. The strategies used, offer a concrete idea of the role Great Britain ultimately wanted to play at the CSCE.

Maintaining Western Cohesion

When looking at the sources of the Documents of British Policy Overseas one can immediately determine one of Britain's primary objectives at the CSCE. The British delegation was eager to maintain Western unity throughout the whole conference. Great Britain regarded Western cohesion as fundamental to bring the CSCE to a successful conclusion and already declared it the top priority of the British delegation in early stages even though British representatives were still sceptical about the conference in general. In a Draft Position Paper, composed on the 25 February 1972, British officials clearly emphasized that 'to maintain Western unity, on which our security chiefly depends' should be one of the West's main concerns.⁷⁹ John Thomson, a member of the British delegation to NATO, wrote in a letter to the Permanent Under-Secretary at the British Foreign Office Sir Thomas Brimelow on 5 April 1972 that 'there should be a common allied position on substance.'⁸⁰ Another member of the British delegation to the NATO, Sir Edward Peck, emphasised in a letter to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the importance of Western cohesion with a quote from Lord

⁷⁹ "Draft Position Paper [EN 2/15]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923010330?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020.

⁸⁰ Thomson, J.: "Letter from Mr. Thomson (UKDEL NATO) to Sir T. Brimelow [WDW 1/1]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1972, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923012109?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020.

Melbourne stating "It doesn't matter what we say as long as we all say the same thing". The same phrase might be used [...] to define the object of political consultation between allies.⁸¹

The reason British officials regarded the maintenance of Western unity as core priority was based on the feeling that the Soviet invitation to a pan-European conference would be utilised as an instrument to divide the Western alliance and to weaken not only the European but the transatlantic consensus.⁸² If the Western alliance were unable to uphold their unity, the Soviet Union would gain greater influence in Western Europe. Another reason that played a major role for Great Britain to maintain Western cohesion was, according to Kai Hebel, to not endanger the process of European integration. The recently expanded European Community was still fragile, and the CSCE served as a practical test to see if the EC could remain a greater power in a transatlantic or even global context. From a British perspective, the failure of Western cohesion would equal a malfunction of the EC project. For the British diplomats, the operability of the EC in a transatlantic forum might even have had a greater meaning since Great Britain only just joined the EC after a longstanding procedure. A new reorientation, especially since the admission to the EC was for many politicians regarded as last resort to maintain some of the British power status, would be interpreted as confirmation of the decay of British influence.⁸³ Hebel's argument will be examined more closely in the later discussion of this chapter.

The concern for the fragility of the Western unity that British diplomats expressed on various occasions, was not unreasonable. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the different participating states had strongly varying stakes, ideas, and aims that influenced their conduct at the CSCE.⁸⁴ Since 'the Allies disagree about the nature and value of a Conference, and about how hard a line to adopt on matters which might embarrass the Russians' the British delegation felt entitled to fear a clash within the alliance.⁸⁵ In this context, it is important to recognize that Great Britain did not exactly fear a conflict between the NATO and the EC member states but the US and the EC. Thomson spoke of the 'risk of a clash between the US and the Davignon

⁸¹ Peck, E.: "Sir E. Peck (UKDEL NATO) to Sir A. Douglas-Home [WDW 1/9]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1972, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923010353?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020.

⁸² Brown, M.: "A very British vision of détente: The United Kingdom's foreign policy during the Helsinki process, 1969-1975", p. 125.

⁸³ Hebel, K.: "Die "Brückenbauer"? Großbritannien als transatlantischer Vermittler in der KSZE 1972-1978", p. 101.

⁸⁴ Romano, A.: "Détente, Entente, or Linkage? The Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in U.S. Relations with the Soviet Union", in: *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33 No. 4, Oxford 2009, pp. 703-722, p. 705.

⁸⁵ "Draft Position Paper [EN 2/15]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923010330?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020.

countries' whereas Tickell wanted 'to avoid any European/American row about the [sic] CSCE'.⁸⁶ Great Britain identified the issue as one between the two traditional circles and did not set the circles in a more modern context by, for instance, defining the issue as a clash between NATO and EC. This is mainly related to the distribution of stakes and the associated risks of the individual countries, which has already been discussed in the previous chapters. Also, the fact that the US delegation was the most reluctant one among the Western allies only intensified the differences. Hence, it was primarily the risk of the US and the EC disputing over the CSCE since their ideas of the best outcomes and investment in the conference differed the most. The differences between the EC and the US mainly consisted of 'America's global responsibilities and the EEC's regional interests' as Henry Kissinger had depicted them and were most likely to clash at a conference that was designed to share these 'global responsibilities'.⁸⁷ Depicting the preservation of the Western unity as an important condition not only to the advantage of national needs of Great Britain but to the whole Western alliance in general, made the presence of a mediating power an indispensable necessity and paved the way for the British delegation to adopt the role of Churchill's third interlocking circle.

The CSCE and the risk of a US-European dispute offered the perfect opportunity for Great Britain to fulfil its self-proclaimed role as a transatlantic mediator. Many sources create the impression that the British delegation indeed seemed to recognize this chance and worked towards the establishment of itself as the connector between the global and the European sphere. Thomson for instance saw Great Britain 'well placed to take a leading part in trying to establish the largest possible area of common ground' on general matters of the CSCE.⁸⁸ Moreover, a draft position paper stated that 'the Alliance is notoriously unable to make up its mind' on various matters concerning how to negotiate with the East and that 'in this situation the need and the opportunity for Britain to play an active role is perhaps greater than in the past.'⁸⁹ Brian Fall explained in a minute to Crispin Tickell that one of the greatest assets of the British

⁸⁶ Thomson, J.: "Letter from Mr. Thomson (UKDEL NATO) to Sir T. Brimelow [WDW 1/1]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923012109?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020 & Tickell, C.: "Letter from Mr. Tickell to Mr. M.D. Butler (Washington) [WDW 1/1]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1972, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923012274?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020.

⁸⁷ Hanhimäki, J.: "They Can Write It in Swahili": Kissinger, the Soviets, and the Helsinki Accords", p. 40.

⁸⁸ Thomson, J.: "Letter from Mr. Thomson (UKDEL NATO) to Sir T. Brimelow [WDW 1/1]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923012109?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020.

⁸⁹ "Draft Position Paper [EN 2/15]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923010330?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020.

delegation was that it possessed 'a reputation for talking sense in the Nine and the Fifteen'.⁹⁰ It becomes apparent that many diplomats still held on to the idea of British uniqueness by not wanting to entirely commit to one party in particular but by declaring Great Britain as the natural mediating power. However, the question that remains is if the British delegation used the role of the mediating power to consolidate their uniqueness or if they used it as a diplomatic tool to strive for another purpose.

Many sources confirm that the British delegation seemed to develop different strategies to implement its role as transatlantic mediator between the EC member states and the US solely to maintain Western unity. One of the main issues that would have disturbed the cohesion in the alliance was the existence of two forums for political consultations of the West namely the Davignon machinery and NATO.⁹¹ In a letter from Edward Peck to Alec Douglas-Home, Peck stated that 'the problems [...] arise almost entirely out of the overlap between political consultations in the Davignon machinery and in NATO.' Furthermore, Peck explicitly depicted the fears of the US who were 'mainly worried by the idea that it will be impossible to persuade the eight to budge in NATO once they have agreed their line in Davignon.'⁹² As a result, the British diplomats decided that it would be necessary to 'maintain at the MPT the close consultation with our partners and Allies which has marked the detailed preparatory work in Davignon and in NATO.' In his letter, Peck realized that 'the emergence of Western Europe as a political entity is a great achievement but it could set up new strains. This makes it even more important to have a forum where Europe and the US can consult together, and that forum can, in present circumstances only be NATO.' As for practical measures and strategies to solve the issue a British draft brief for the CSCE suggested to

- (i) have regular meetings of the Nine in Helsinki, and (ii) use the NATO machinery in Brussels (perhaps with some coordinated reporting procedure from Helsinki) to ensure that the Alliance is able to consider and where necessary react to developments in the MPT. If such is the case,

⁹⁰ Fall, B.: "Minute from Mr. Fall to Mr. Tickell [WDW 1/4]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1974, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923014735?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020.

⁹¹ The Davignon Report which was issued in 1970 was the predecessor to the EPC and regulated the consultations of foreign policy among the EEC member states. For further information please see: *The Davignon proposals*, Retrieved from: <https://www.cvce.eu/en/collections/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58a-d4686a3e68ff/56b69a5e-3f16-4775-ba38-b4ef440fdccb>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

⁹² Peck, E.: "Sir E. Peck (UKDEL NATO) to Sir A. Douglas-Home [WDW 1/9]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923010353?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

the delegation, while playing a full part in the meetings of the Nine, should keep in close touch with the other members of the Alliance, and particularly with the Americans.⁹³

The diplomatic approach of the British delegation urging to keep close consultations with especially both the EC caucus and the US but to also promote greater consultations between the two actors is significant proof for the British ambition to act as the transatlantic mediator. The fact that the mediation attempts mostly aimed at the Nine and the US once more emphasises the British perception that they held an exceptional key position in a traditional transatlantic context. Applying the theory of the three interlocking circles to the issue of consultations demonstrates that Great Britain indeed reserved itself the role as transatlantic mediator between the 'original circles'. By establishing the EC and the US as main actors which needed consultancy, British diplomats were able to exploit their special political concepts and advantages like the 'special relationship' and the British 'experience as global power' to solidify their role as transatlantic mediator.

Strengthening the European Community

Nevertheless, when closely examining the strategies and approaches used by Great Britain to maintain Western cohesion, it conveys the impression that the British delegation seemed to nurture its role as a mediator for a different purpose. An in the contemporary literature hardly observed intention of the British delegation at the CSCE was its attempts to strengthen not only the EC position in a global context but also to strengthen the British role within the EC. As much as the British diplomats tried to accomplish a common allied position and mediate between the US and the EC to prevent a clash within the alliance, the delegation adopted a tangible transformation in its mediating position shifting it from an intermediate transatlantic to a rather EC-centric one. Even though the sources hardly directly imply that Great Britain should aim to provide the EC with a more favourable position in the global context, some documents reveal that the CSCE delivered the perfect platform for 'a test case for the development of foreign policy co-ordination among the Nine.'⁹⁴ Anthony Elliott rebuked the reluctance of the Americans after the first 200 days of the negotiations but interpreted this circumstance as a major opportunity for the EC to prove its qualification to last within a transatlantic forum and to also establish itself as a global power. Elliott wrote: 'But that thrust

⁹³ "CSCE: Draft Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation to the Multilateral Preparatory Talks [EN 2/29]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923009925?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

⁹⁴ "Steering Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation to Stage II of the CSCE [WDW 1/18]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1973, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923016413?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

the main burden of defending Western positions upon the Nine, and they passed the first real test of their ability to develop and execute a common policy with flying colours', confirming that to strengthen the EPC among the superpowers was an important achievement for the EC member states.⁹⁵

Further evidence for the British objective to expand the EC's global influence was the previously mentioned argument by Kai Hebel who claimed that Great Britain feared the constraint of European integration when a failure of Western cohesion would occur.⁹⁶ Moreover, Angela Romano argues that 'at the first EPC ministerial meeting in November 1970, the member states endorsed the Belgian proposal of developing a distinct collective approach to the CSCE, despite the existing NATO consultations on the same subject. This was aimed at promoting the international role of Western Europe', proving that certain political approaches and aims of the EC at the CSCE were designed to strengthen the EC's international status.⁹⁷ Even though Great Britain was not member of the EC at that time, it must be assumed that it followed the same approach after its admission to the EC. Romano also identified the preservation of the European integration process as one of the British main priorities during the CSCE in Helsinki.⁹⁸ If European integration were to collapse, Great Britain would lose the platform in which it could have revived its global status. Therefore, it was of great importance for the British delegation that the EC was able to formulate and implement a successful common policy that would not harm Western unity.

To promote Western European objectives and secure an influential EC position within the CSCE, the British delegation exploited in certain matters its Anglo-American 'special relationship' to convince the US delegation to support EC aims during the negotiations. Edward Heath's assessment about the Anglo-American relationship and the meaning of the US for the EC seemed to play an important role in this context. The British delegation appeared to implement Heath's belief that the US must be regarded as a powerful ally helping to build up an influential European Community without becoming a priority for national British ambitions. Consequently, the British diplomats realised that 'it would clearly be contrary to our interests and indeed to European interests generally as understood by most West Europeans to antagonise

⁹⁵ Elliott, A.: "Mr. Elliott (Helsinki) to Sir A. Douglas-Home [WDW 1/2]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1973, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923011939?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

⁹⁶ Hebel, K.: "Die "Brückenbauer"? Großbritannien als transatlantischer Vermittler in der KSZE 1972-1978", p. 101.

⁹⁷ Romano, A.: "Untying Cold War knots: The EEC and Eastern Europe in the long 1970s", in: *Cold War History*, Vol. 14 No. 2, Abingdon 2013, pp. 153-173, p. 158.

⁹⁸ Romano, A.: "The EC Nine's Vision and Attempts at Ending the Cold War", p. 139.

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the US'.⁹⁹ The decision that the British delegation had to restrain its former US-oriented policies to help enforce EC formulated aims was already addressed in the early stages of the CSCE. Explaining the different strategies of maintaining Western cohesion in a steering brief, the British delegation was sure that 'we shall find ourselves arguing at times against the Americans, who will tend to believe that a Conference can be prevented from happening at all.'¹⁰⁰ The reluctant position of the American delegation was considered one of the main threats to Western unity and, therefore, for the EC position in the CSCE. Hence, the British diplomats focused their mediating abilities to convince the US delegation to be led by the EC during the negotiations but at the same time wanted the Americans to advocate for EC objectives. The third circle can thus be interpreted not as a concept to secure Great Britain as a transatlantic mediator but to strengthen the EC's position in the CSCE.

A major point in which the British delegation persuaded the Americans to support EC aims was the establishment of follow-up meetings. The US regarded the creation of further meetings after the CSCE in Helsinki as damaging move for Western nations whereas most European states declared themselves in favour of a follow-up machinery. To enforce the EC objective, the British delegation mobilised its role as the transatlantic mediator and the asset of the special relationship to persuade the American diplomats in agreeing to cooperate. Especially James Callaghan was eager to convince the US delegation to adapt their policies for the benefit of the EC. Callaghan wrote on 17 May 1974 to the British ambassador to the United States Peter Ramsbotham:

I know that their attitude to follow-up has so far been restrictive, and it would obviously be bad for Western Europe and for the Alliance as a whole if they failed to participate effectively in whatever arrangements were made. But I do not think it either realistic or in the Western interest to take a negative line on proposals designed to continue the dialogue without an unnecessary amount of bureaucracy. I am encouraged by the record of Mr. Hattersley's recent conversation with Sonnenfeldt to think that the Americans would be open to persuasion.¹⁰¹

Great Britain was indeed using the CSCE as a platform to execute its role as the third interlocking circle. But by doing so, the aim was not to establish its role as a transatlantic

⁹⁹ Peck, E.: "Sir E. Peck (UKDEL NATO) to Sir A. Douglas-Home [WDW 1/9]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923010353?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

¹⁰⁰ "Steering Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation to Stage II of the CSCE [WDW 1/18]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923016413?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

¹⁰¹ Callaghan, J.: "Mr. Callaghan to Sir. P. Ramsbotham (Washington) No. 1126 Telegraphic [WDW 1/19]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1974, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923013027?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 24.05.2020.

mediator but by persuading different allies and especially the US to build up the EC's power in a transatlantic or even global context. For this purpose, Heath's ideas of the new world order served as a model in which the European Community should play an equally important role as the United States and the Soviet Union. The Heath-sponsored vision that the future of the UK laid in the European Community and not in the Commonwealth or special relationship with the US had also been taken into account in the application of negotiation mechanisms and the fulfilment of the UK's role during the CSCE.¹⁰² Edward Heath's pro-European policy was indeed visible in the British policy at the CSCE and executed a major influence. The effort of the British diplomats to establish the EC as a powerful actor among the superpowers was no hopeless task. Almost one year before the CSCE would culminate in the drafting of the Helsinki Final Act, Anthony Elliott claimed 'the NATO delegations on the whole rally willingly to a lead from the EEC caucus' and proofed that the EC indeed was regarded as a major actor at the CSCE or, as Daniel Möckli put it, 'a key driving force'.¹⁰³

Securing British Power

In this regard, it also became clear that Great Britain had the intention to also strengthen its position in the EC and instrumentalised the CSCE to do so. As the conference went on and the US played a fairly reluctant role while the EC rose more and more to become one of the Western main actors, Great Britain took certain measures to stage itself as one of the leading nations in the Western alliance. The rethinking of the opportunity to revive at least part of Britain's lost global influence did not occur until later in the conference. On different occasions, British diplomats assimilated the British status with one of the leading powers of the Western alliance namely West Germany, France, and the US. In a letter addressed to Sir Killick, Mr. Hildyard wrote 'We are making a determined effort to this end together with the French, the Americans and insofar as they can, the West Germans', referring to move on with drafting the principles on the human rights basket.¹⁰⁴ The British officials seemed not wanting to appear as mediators but as one of the leading nations to settle important concerns and to guide the remaining nations throughout the CSCE. A piece of even more significant evidence for British ambitions to take

¹⁰² Rossbach, N.: *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74*, p. 18.

¹⁰³ Elliott, A.: "Mr. Elliott (Helsinki) to Mr. Callaghan [WDW 1/4]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1974, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923015322?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 24.05.2020 & Möckli, D.: *European Foreign Policy During the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity*, London 2008, p. 99.

¹⁰⁴ Hildyard, D.: "Letter from Mr. Hildyard (UKMIS Geneva) to Sir J. Killick [WDW 1/4]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1974, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923012509?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

a leading role in the EC was created by Anthony Elliott in correspondence with Alec Douglas-Home. In an analysis of the first 200 days of the CSCE negotiations Elliott explained that 'the detached position of the French, the special preoccupations of the Germans, the eccentricity of the Italians and the public silences of Benelux increasingly made it necessary for us to give a lead, if the Nine were to continue to follow a positive line and enjoy the initiative in the talks.' He continued to state that 'we shall have little choice but to act as one of the leaders of the West.' He closed his observation with the words 'If Britain is not to act as a major European power in the context of the CSCE she can hardly hope to be a Power anywhere.'¹⁰⁵

Elliott's remarks arose from the still profound identity crisis of Great Britain, which was to be compensated by the establishment of Britain as the leading EC power. With the Western bloc mostly being led by the EC Nine, since the US remained in the background, the UK saw a new opportunity to exert global influence rather than a mediating role in a transatlantic context. Instead of maintaining British uniqueness by remaining in the third interlocking circle, the opportunity to become a powerful European power with global influence might have been more attractive to contemporary politicians. The increase of British influence and power within the EC can also be regarded as an extension of Heath's visions for Great Britain to play a role in a more powerful EC that could stand up to the superpowers the US and the Soviet Union. Heath's vision of Britain as part of a powerful Europe was shifted into a new context in which Britain would play a leading part in an influential Europe. The British power imbalance would therefore not be compensated by Britain acting as a transatlantic mediator but by Britain operating as a Western European leader with global influence. Regardless of how British officials tried to stage Great Britain's role at the CSCE, whether it was as a transatlantic mediator or as leader of the EC, the main intention was to reserve Great Britain a special role and therefore to maintain British exceptionalism. The fact that the British diplomats were eager to claim an extraordinary position within both the transatlantic forum, and the EC, conforms to the model of the three interlocking circles. Applying the concept on the British conduct at the CSCE helps to understand the role Great Britain intended to play, not only in a transatlantic but in a global context. Therefore, the concept of the three interlocking circles must be regarded more in the field of research since it aids to comprehend the diverse dynamics between the actors and the role individual nations intended to adopt within the three circles.

¹⁰⁵ Elliott, A.: "Mr. Elliott (Helsinki) to Sir A. Douglas-Home [WDW 1/2]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923011939?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

The main effort made by the British delegation to execute some individual power was within the discussions about the Third Basket that covered the issue of human contacts. Even though basket III was regarded as the most important Western concern in which also the US showed certain interest, the British delegation viewed it as a subject in which it could assume the leadership of the EC. David Hildyard conceded that 'it was in Basket III, however, that we made the biggest impact with our initiative for a package deal which led to a breakthrough after many months of impasse.'¹⁰⁶ One of the impacts Hildyard referred to was a phrase that caused the CSCE to seek the 'freer and wider dissemination of information of all kinds' as well as a paragraph that dealt with the improvement of employment conditions for journalists.¹⁰⁷ The British delegation was majorly involved in the negotiations about the third basket despite scholars claiming that Great Britain viewed the conference with scepticism.¹⁰⁸ The involvement and assertiveness of the British delegation in processing significant additions to the human rights section at the CSCE did not only prove that Great Britain reduced its scepticism towards the conference but that it was also willing to use it as a platform to gain a dominant position among the Western alliance.

The fact that British diplomats actively tried to strengthen the EC's position in a transatlantic context also partly invalidates the argument that Great Britain's conduct was not affected by a national hobby horse as they have claimed during the CSCE more than once. In a paper, issued by the FCO on the implications and prospects for British policy at the CSCE, it is stated that the British delegation had a 'major asset in that we are free from the commitment to individual hobby horses which distorts the perspective of a number of participants; and we are therefore able to take the overall view.'¹⁰⁹ A similar observation was made by Brian Fall who claimed that the British delegation had 'the freedom to look at the Conference as a whole without the commitment to particular hobby horses which distorts the perspective of many other participants.'¹¹⁰ Indeed, most of the British priorities at the CSCE like maintaining Western

¹⁰⁶ Hildyard, D.: "Sir D. Hildyard (UKMIS Geneva) to Mr. Callaghan [WDW1/22]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1974, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923013035?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

¹⁰⁷ Hebel, K.: "Propaganda tools and idealistic goals: Britain and the Cold War politics of human rights in the CSCE, 1972-73", Mariager, R., Molin, K., Brathagen, K. (eds.): *Human Rights in Europe during the Cold War*, Abingdon 2014, pp. 113-136.

¹⁰⁸ Brown, M.: "A very British vision of détente: The United Kingdom's foreign policy during the Helsinki process, 1969-1975", p. 139.

¹⁰⁹ "Paper by the FCO on the CSCE [WDW 1/4]", in: *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, London 1974, Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923017171?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 23.05.2020.

¹¹⁰ Fall, B.: "Minute from Mr. Fall to Mr. Tickell [WDW 1/4]", Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1923014735?accountid=14772>, Last Access: 22.05.2020.

unity and the enforcement of basket III during the negotiations aligned with the common formulated Western-allied position in general. Nevertheless, the urge of the British administration to gain a greater and more important role in the European context than executing a mediating role in the transatlantic one impeded the intention to act as a neutral interlocking circle. Even though British diplomats might not have acknowledged the securing of the EC and its own position during the CSCE as a national hobby horse, it indeed indicated initial signs that the British delegation was occupied by the idea of finally gaining an influential role for Great Britain that would end the decade-long identity crisis and restore British uniqueness.

The analysed sources clearly demonstrate that the British delegation tried to use its position as a transatlantic mediator to promote the EPC's common approach for the CSCE. In doing so, Great Britain hoped to advance the EC's position in the bipolar dominated world order to create a powerful platform on which it could raise its own role in the global context to a leading position. Even though the British delegation claimed that it had no intention in pursuing any national hobby horses, the strengthening of the EC's position received more focus as the British admission to the EC consolidated as the conference went on. Especially the reluctant position of the US was exploited by the British delegation to establish the EC as a leading power in the CSCE process. Nonetheless, the core priority of the British delegation was, after providing the EC with an advanced position in the global system, to recreate its own role as a leading one within the European Community. The British urge to revive its unique and powerful status was translated into the CSCE. As such it served as a test case to see whether Great Britain could act as a leading nation in a transatlantic forum.

Conclusion

Great Britain's role at the CSCE was tagged with many labels like 'bridge builder' or 'moderate hardliner', but exceedingly few scholars regarded Great Britain as a great supporter and leading power to defend EC policies.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, this analysis has illustrated that the British delegation indeed tried to establish a rather EC-centric policy that would especially pave the way for the EC to stand up to the US and promote a European détente instead of a superpower one. It held up its unique role as mediator between the US and the EC to ensure American support towards EC policies and to increase the EC's influence on the agenda-setting at the CSCE without the US forcing a superpower narrative at the conference. Indeed, Great Britain actively resigned itself to the role of a transatlantic mediator but its aims in doing so had a rather national or EC-centric background. The principal aim of the British delegation at the CSCE while mediating between the two Western main actors, the EC and the NATO caucus led by the US, was to maintain British uniqueness by providing the EC with a more powerful position in the multilateral forum and to advance its own role within the EC as a leading power.

This analysis has demonstrated that it is important to take different angles and perspectives into account while researching the field of the CSCE and especially while examining the role of Great Britain at the conference. The British role at the CSCE is the perfect case study to emphasize the importance of the national, regional, and global layers that touched one another at the pan-European détente conference in Helsinki. In this regard, it is even more crucial to promote the greater consideration of the concept of the three interlocking circles in contemporary research since it is an important model to unravel the different power layers and find the core role of Great Britain at the CSCE. Even though, the concept of the three interlocking circles was originally constructed to reserve Great Britain a unique role in the world, the theory can be applied to different case studies. The concept offers an interesting approach to not only analyse the British role at the CSCE but also for other nations that engaged with the different circles. The theory accomplishes to create new perspectives to the role of individual states at the CSCE and should therefore be regarded in prospective research. The British delegation was able to move between the three circles, instrumentalising them to enhance the position of the EC at the CSCE and to establish Great Britain as one of the leading powers within the EC. Leveraging its role as transatlantic mediator allowed the British diplomats to interact with the different power dynamics at the CSCE on a regional, transatlantic

¹¹¹ Hebel, K.: "Die "Brückenbauer"? Großbritannien als transatlantischer Vermittler in der KSZE 1972-1978", p. 102.

as well as a global level which makes the British perspective so important for the research of the CSCE. Using the three circles to understand the British role at the CSCE is therefore essential for future research in this area.

The analysis further draws attention to the fact that scholars must begin to link historical events that majorly interfered with the national biography of each country to the political and diplomatic conduct at the CSCE. In the case of Great Britain certain factors and developments like the identity crisis that had been caused by the loss of its superpower status or the introduction of a pro-European government led by Edward Heath still had a great impact on the British role, the aims it promoted and the strategies it implemented to achieve those objectives at the CSCE. Hence, contemporary scholars must observe the historic past of different actors and nations at the CSCE to be able to reflect the full degree of the national motifs, attitudes, and aspirations and to comprehend the role different states played in the whole context. Especially the work of individual politicians and diplomats advanced the policymaking at the CSCE. The British role was decisively shaped by the visions and ideas of Prime Minister Edward Heath. His pro-European concepts, the thought of strengthening the EC to establish a counterweight to the superpowers, and to simultaneously consolidate the British power in a new, regional context are crucial aspects that were in so far neglected by many scholars and academics researching the role Great Britain played at the CSCE. Heath's vision of a new world order in which the EC plays a bigger part than just to act as a regional power was represented in many measures taken by the British delegation at the CSCE such as their late, great involvement in the CSCE process as well as their distanced conduct towards the US.

An important observation that the study has shed light on is that the CSCE did not only serve as a conference that should enact European détente by promoting subjects like security measures and human contacts but that it was also used as a platform for individual states to improve their status and influence in a transatlantic setting that even reached a global character considering the participation of the two world powers. Especially Great Britain made use of this opportunity and was one of the pioneering nations that interpreted the CSCE as a platform that could be utilised as a steppingstone for its international influence. As Anne Deighton has put it 'to ensure that Britain still had a 'say' was more important, and the fora for that were Western institutions: the EC, as well as NATO.'¹¹² After Great Britain overcame its initial scepticism towards the CSCE that rose from the fear to fully lose the remaining power and

¹¹² Deighton, A.: "Ostpolitik or Westpolitik? British foreign policy, 1968-75", in: *International Affairs*, Vol. 74 No. 4, Oxford 1998, pp. 893-901, p. 894.

influence that Great Britain had left, the diplomats changed their perspective and understood the CSCE as an opportunity to revive their former influence not as a mediating power but as a leader of the EC, using the position as the transatlantic mediator to realise this vision.

Moreover, the thesis has provided a new approach to the current debate of Britain's decision to leave the European Union. Anne Deighton explained that the 'Brexit is a reminder of the UK's historical reluctance to make a wholehearted commitment to continental Europe unless under pressure. [...] We see the Leavers' obsession with the idea of the UK's continuing international leadership characterised by the so-called 'Anglosphere', the Commonwealth, a desire for sovereignty, for a go-it-alone autonomy'.¹¹³ The British longing to play a greater and exceptional role than just being part of a regional community has been part of the British identity ever since the downfall of the British Empire. Therefore, the theory of the three interlocking circles can not only be regarded as a useful concept to comprehend the British role in a setting that was predominated by Cold War dynamics and the bipolar world order but can still be applied to the contemporary debate and explain the British identity and position in a modern context.

Picking up the contemporary debate of the role of Great Britain at the CSCE, many scholars introduced crucial points that endorse many of the core arguments this analysis has raised. Nevertheless, this analysis accomplished to look at the British role from a different angle, interpreting the CSCE not only as a pan-European forum promoting East-West détente but a platform to challenge the bipolar world order by giving smaller states and especially the EC member states the opportunity to gain greater power in a transatlantic as well as a partly global context. The study aligns with the argument that Laurien Crump and Angela Romano raise, that 'in both the East and West, the multilateral settings had provided smaller powers with a scope to increase their margins for manoeuvre, either vis-à-vis each other or vis-à-vis the superpower' only that in this case the context needs to be applied to bigger powers within the EC namely Great Britain.¹¹⁴ While many academics like Kai Hebel, Felix Jack, and Grenfell Bozek correctly identify Great Britain as a transatlantic mediator at the CSCE, which also made an active effort to preserve the European integration and promote Western aims, most of the existing studies do not observe the British role at the CSCE beyond the context of the CSCE

¹¹³ Deighton, A.: "Brave New World? Brave Old World?", in: *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 28 No. 1, Cambridge 2019, pp. 31-34, p. 31.

¹¹⁴ Crump, L., Romano, A.: "Challenging the Superpower Straightjacket (1965–1975): Multilateralism as an Instrument of Smaller Powers", in: Crump, L., Erlandsson, S. (eds.): *Margins for Manoeuvre in Cold War Europe. The Influence of Smaller Powers*, London 2019, pp. 13-31, p. 25.

itself.¹¹⁵ This means that hardly any concepts were considered that explain the British role after the Second World War while simultaneously trying to analyse it. The research about Great Britain at the CSCE must include a wider range of theoretical frameworks that deal with the issue of the British identity and longing for exceptionalism as represented by the three interlocking circles in order to receive tangible results about the intentions Great Britain had in Helsinki.

As for the CSCE itself, the theory of the three interlocking circles helped to reinvent different narratives and reinterpret the conference as a whole. The thesis distances itself from the traditional angles, academics have so far used to look at the CSCE. Scholars who have analysed the conference from a Western perspective mostly regarded the CSCE as a forum in which the US could enforce the superpower détente or the Western bloc could vocal its demand for the greater implementation of human rights in the Warsaw Pact countries. But applying the concept of the three interlocking circles to the CSCE creates a new narrative that focuses on the position of individual nations within the Western bloc and the role they intended to play. The concept manages to deemphasise the conventional approaches academics have utilised to analyse the CSCE and provides a new lens that projects different perceptions from individual perspectives on the CSCE. Implementing the concept of the three interlocking circles to the CSCE reveals that the pan-European forum was also considered as an arena to fashion the status of individual nations.

¹¹⁵ Hebel, K.: "Die "Brückenbauer"? Großbritannien als transatlantischer Vermittler in der KSZE 1972-1978", p. 102 & Jack, F., Bozek, G.: "Britain, European Security and Freer Movement: The Development of Britain's CSCE policy 1969–1972", p. 440.

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