

America's Post-Cold War Grand Strategy-Makers and the Policy Planning Network

Naná de Graaff & Bastiaan van Apeldoorn

Department of Political Science, VU University Amsterdam

De Boelelaan 1081, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

email: n.a.degraaf@vu.nl; e.b.van.apeldoorn@vu.nl

Preliminary first draft. Please do not cite or circulate without authors' permission

**PAPER TO BE PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION, PANEL ON 'US FOREIGN POLICY
MEETS ELITE STUDIES', SAN FRANCISCO, U.S.A., APRIL 3, 2013.**

Introduction: Corporate Elite Power and the US Political System

Soon after he stepped down earlier this year Obama's Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner landed a job as a distinguished fellow at the US's most venerable and most central think tank cum policy planning institute, the Council on Foreign Relations. Quite a few had expected Geithner to go to work for the sector whose interests he had arguably served so well during Obama's first term (in spite of initially intense discontent with the Obama's administration's ultimately heavily diluted regulatory reform), i.e., to go to Wall Street. But just as there is a so-called revolving door between Washington and Wall Street and more broadly between American government and the corporate sector, so there is also a close nexus between the US state and what is known as the US policy planning network (Domhoff 2009), with senior policy-makers often having several ties to key policy planning bodies before entering government and returning to them, as well as affiliating themselves with new ones, after leaving government service as members, directors, trustees, fellows and in other roles (usually not full time as in the case of Geithner's new job).

Geithner illustrates this nexus well. Not only was Geithner already a member of the CFR before he was appointed by Obama, as well as having served as a senior fellow of the Council in 2001, he was also previously inter alia a member of the Trilateral Commission, a participant of the Bilderberg conferences (arguably both key transnational private planning bodies), a trustee of the defence-oriented Rand Corporation and a member of the Group of Thirty, a private club that has played an influential role in global financial governance (on the latter see Tsingou 2012). Although not yet doing a stint at Wall Street, Geithner's return to the CFR does not make him far removed from the power of American finance (and not just because the CFR is also located in New York). As other key American think tanks, the CFR is mainly funded by

big corporations, while an overwhelming majority of its board members are also directors at these large corporations. Among the many corporate funders of the CFR we find for instance Wall Street giants such as Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and JP Morgan Chase.¹ The policy planning network, i.e. the world of leading think tanks, foundations, advocacy groups etcetera, is thus closely intertwined with American corporate capital, together in our view constituting an integral corporate elite that, as a subset of the US capitalist class, finds itself at the apex of American society.

In this paper we seek to empirically map the extent and exact topography of the policy-planning affiliations (seen as part of this corporate elite) of selected top-level American (foreign policy) officials or what we will call American grand strategy-makers of each of the last three post-Cold War administrations (Clinton, Bush, Obama). We will also show how the policy planning networks of these three administrations, which show considerable overlap next to some distinctive networks, is heavily interconnected with the corporate community. Although we cannot fully develop that argument within the scope of this paper, the analysis presented here is part of larger (book) project about what we identify as the *social sources* of American post-cold war grand strategy. Our analysis thus far (see for an earlier rendition Van Apeldoorn and De Graaff 2012a) shows that one hand the post-Cold War American grand strategy has continued to be oriented to what we argue has been its overarching aim throughout much of the 20th century, that is, securing an 'Open Door' to US capital around the globe, premised on a particular American brand of imperialism that is oriented towards establishing global hegemony through creating and maintaining an 'open' liberal world order (Williams 2009; Layne 2006). On the other hand, we argue that the three different administrations that have been in office in the post-Cold War era have pursued this goal with varying means: from Clinton's promotion of neoliberal globalization and global governance to Bush's 'war on terror' and Obama's search to maintain US primacy in the face of a crisis-ridden economy and a rising Asia.

If we want to make sense of both the continuities of and variations within US grand strategy we have to go beyond the 'systemic' level and focus on the actual grand strategy-makers and the social context in which they operate and to which their agency responds. This analysis leads to a twofold claim (which again cannot be substantiated within this paper but see Van Apeldoorn and De Graaff 2012a and our forthcoming book Van Apeldoorn and de Graaff 2014):

1) *Continuities* of post-Cold War US grand strategy can be explained in terms of the overall world view of US grand-strategy makers, which we in turn see as partly shaped by the ideology and interests of the leading sections of the US corporate community to which US grand-strategy makers are closely linked.

2) In spite of this continuity there is limited but nevertheless significant *variation* in terms of the ways and means by which this 'Open Door imperialism' is reproduced. Explaining these variations requires that we take into account the changing global structural context but also the actors and the ideas through which they interpret these changes and respond accordingly.

Ideas that inform both the continuity and the variation in America's Open Door grand strategy are partly articulated and propagated through the US's many policy planning bodies. The latter can be important carriers of these ideas that ultimately underpin policy. While there is quite some literature on the role of think tanks and the like in the formation of US foreign policy (see below), the starting point for this literature is formed by the think tanks themselves, analyzing their agency and determining to what extent they have influenced policy-making (Abelson 2006). We, however, depart, from the other end by focusing on the grand strategy-makers themselves and analyzing how they are embedded in particular social networks and how these networks may help us to account for the ideas that guide them in shaping American grand strategy.

Earlier work regarding the pre-administration career patterns of a selection of key grand strategy makers within each of the last three post-Cold War administrations has already shown how, while some have made most of their career in government, a majority has had top-level positions within the corporate community. Our data moreover show that of those grand strategy-makers with corporate affiliations the vast majority return to high-level positions within business after leaving government (and sometimes again return to government years later, etcetera). This indicates that they are thus not only closely linked to the corporate elite, but are to a large extent indeed themselves part of this elite. We have furthermore observed a dominance of transnational capital within these networks (Van Apeldoorn and De Graaff 2012a, 2012b).

It is important to underline that while the US state apparatus is thus partly managed by members of America's corporate elite, this does not make the state beholden to narrow corporate interests (even if sometimes this might play a role in individual cases) as these state officials, once they assume office also take on a different role in which they no longer directly represent a particular corporation but the US government, and are expected to take a more general and longer-term view regarding the overall geopolitical interests of the US state. Yet in doing so, we claim, *their world view is likely to be shaped to a very large extent by their social position as (former) members or affiliates of a class conscious corporate elite.*

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: first, we will briefly outline some of the debates on - and approaches to - studying the foreign policy-planning process, and hence the important role played by think tanks and similar bodies, and outline our own approach. Then, in the second section we will briefly discuss our method and data followed by a presentation and discussion of our empirical findings on the grand strategy makers connections to policy-planning institutes, and how this policy-planning network is affiliated with the corporate community through both direct

funding and through corporate interlocks of the policy-planning directors. We will conclude by summarizing the main findings and how these will form a basis for further study.

The Corporate Elite and the Foreign Policy-Planning Process

Although it is a relatively scarcely researched domain, there is a rich and varied body of literature that examines how so called 'policy planning institutes' such as think tanks, research institutes and advocacy groups contribute to and influence policy making in the US (e.g. Abelson 2006, 2002, 1996, Smith 1991, Domhoff 1967, 2009, Shoup and Minter 2004 [1977], Dye 1986, McGann and Weaver 2000, Parmar 2004, 2012, Burris, 2005, 2008). Two major approaches can be distinguished within this body of literature (see e.g. Abelson 2006), one that stresses the elitist nature of the policy planning process and the organisations that it entails (refs), and one that starts from a pluralist framework, emphasising the diversity of organisations and initiatives that compete within a the policy-making arena (refs). Abelson (2006), in addition, identifies what he calls institutional approaches which focus on for instance the historical evolution of think tanks, how they have developed from more traditional research institutes to policy advocacy organisations that market ideas, above all that of the free market.

Although we subscribe to the importance and merits of an historicizing approach, we argue that also the more 'traditional' policy planning institutes, such as the CFR, have been promoting particular policy ideas since the early 20th century – in the case of the CFR, ideas bounded up with a liberal globalist American foreign policy, or what we call Open Door ideology, as extensively documented by several in-depth case studies (see e.g. Parmar 2004, Shoup and Minter 2004 [1977]). As briefly outlined above the Open Door ideology is in essence about the opening up of markets and areas

for the expansion of US transnational capital i.e. the establishment of so called free markets, and this is hence not a relatively new trend (cf. Abelson 2006) but has been at the heart of one of the main policy planning institutes that has been influential in American foreign policy for nearly a century.

Indeed, although American civil society is of course populated by myriad organizations representing a plurality of interests – including organized labour, (I)NGOs advocating particular ‘principled issues’ (environment, human rights, cf. Sikking 1993), it is well documented by several studies how the policy-planning network overall (and certainly within the policy areas key to business / transnationally oriented capital, including foreign policy) is dominated by the corporate community (see among others Domhoff 1967; 2009; Dye 1986; Parmar 2004; Shoup and Minter 2004 [1977]). Inderjeet Parmar for instance explicitly analyses the role of *elite* networks linking the US state to think tanks like the Council on Foreign Relations (Parmar 2004) and the ‘big 3’ foundations of American philanthropy (Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie, Parmar 2012). Although not adopting the term corporate elite, Parmar shows how these organisations were not just historically rooted in American corporate capitalism but how the social background of successive generations of its leaders reveals their close ties to America’s largest international corporations, a fact that Parmar sees as significant in shaping their world view (Parmar 2004: ch.3 and 2012: ch.2). Adopting a Gramscian perspective and on the basis of extensive archival research, Parmar argues that the leaders of these private elite bodies ‘were part of a historic bloc of private and state elites cohered by a long-term globalist hegemonic project’ (Parmar 2012: 31), and on the basis of detailed case studies show how US foreign policy is in fact dominated by this hegemonic elite.

Parmar’s important work on the one hand renews the important ‘power elite’ research tradition within American sociology (C. Wright Mills 1956) by applying it to a policy field normally outside its purview (see further below) and reformulating it in

Gramscian terms). On the other hand, Parmar, both draws upon and criticises earlier neo-Marxist work on the role of elite policy planning networks, in particular the seminal work of Shoup and Minter (2004 [1977]) on the Council on Foreign Relations. Explicitly viewing society not simply in national terms but also as extending on a transnational plane (at least at the elite level) through processes of transnational class formation Kees van der Pijl's earlier work also pays attention to the role of the close links between fractions of the elite of the American capitalist class on the one hand and imperialist strategies of the US state on the one hand, especially within the realm of Atlantic relations and through the forging of transatlantic elite links (van der Pijl 1984, for a critique see Parmar 2004: ch. 8). Within the same tradition and also drawing upon (but somewhat differently than Parmar) Gramscian historical materialism is the study of Stephen Gill (1991) on another key private planning body, the Trilateral Commission.

What this body of critical literature shows is that the *policy-planning process* that takes place through the activities of think tanks, foundations, advocacy groups and other policy-planning bodies located in civil society, is to a large extent shaped by the interests and world views of the corporate elite, in particular those that are managing / directing transnationally oriented capital. Here, the non-profit and (formally) non-partisan nature of these organizations is fundamental to the exercise of corporate elite power inasmuch as it seeks to transcend the level of narrow corporate lobbying and formulate and propagate the general interests of big business at the level of ideas and (policy) discourse production, but representing these corporate class interests as within the *general public interest*.

In our study we also adopt a critical political economy perspective (partly inspired by a Gramscian understanding of (class) power; see Van Apeldoorn and De Graaff 2012; see also Van Apeldoorn 2002). We thus share the above discussed literature's view of the nature and role of policy planning networks in American politics. Our point of departure for this research is however, as indicated, not so much

the think tanks themselves as how American state managers responsible for formulating and implementing US grand strategy are linked to them and how these links may help to account for how these grand strategy-makers define the overall geopolitical interests and goals of the US. And subsequently how they, interpreting the changing global context, think those interests can be best secured and those goals most effectively attained. This is hence not a study of the agency of the corporate elite through e.g. the policy-planning network shaping public policy, but a study of the agency of policy-makers, in this case, grand strategy-makers and how this is influenced by their embeddedness in particular (corporate) elite networks.

From this perspective we will below identify and map the policy planning networks that are most extensively connected to the three administrations of Clinton, Bush and Obama through membership of their respective key grand strategy makers. In particular we will show how key foreign policy makers are extensively embedded in the policy planning networks of e.g. think tanks (prior and after and sometimes also during their formal government appointment) and that: a) the policy planning networks to which they are connected are extensively funded by the corporate community; and b) that the directors and trustees of this policy planning network (which partly overlaps with the grand strategy makers) are themselves an integral part of the corporate elite through their extensive interlocking directorates.

The Social Networks of Grand Strategy-Makers: The Corporate Elite and the Policy-Planning Networks of the Clinton, Bush and Obama Administrations

For our network analyses of the post-Cold War US grand strategy makers we collected biographical data on 87 key cabinet-ranking officials and senior advisors involved in the

making of US grand strategy, 30 (with some overlaps between Clinton and Obama) from each of the three administration since the after the Cold War ended – i.e. of Clinton, Bush 43 and Obama – in the starting year of each administration (1993, 2001, and 2009). These officials include next to the President and his senior staff and advisors: the Vice-President; the Secretaries of State and Defence and their Deputies; the National Security Advisor; the Director of the CIA; the Ambassador to the UN; the Secretaries of the Treasury and Commerce; the US Trade Representative, and the Director of the National Economic Council.

For the analysis of the composition of the corporate links of each administration's 'grand strategy-makers' we included all formal top-level positions within a company, that is, executive, (founding) owner / partner, non-executive board, and advisory board positions. All corporate affiliations that we were able to find were in fact top-level positions thus defined, that is to say, that the numbers reported do not include anything below board level or equivalent (including advisory boards). We need to add that although we consulted many different sources it is still likely that the figures presented are somewhat of an underestimation, especially the more one goes back in time (i.e. for the Clinton administration).

For the analysis of the policy planning affiliations of the grand strategy makers we included all types of formal membership, either as director, trustee, fellow or similar functions, i.e., incidental or more indirect affiliations such as ad-hoc events or participation were not included. The only exception in this respect was made for the Bilderberg group in which case we also included participants, because arguably, participating in the annual meeting of Bilderberg constitutes the core of its policy making activities. Both for the corporate affiliations and for policy planning membership we distinguished between those positions occupied at some time in the period until and including the year in which a person entered the respective administration, and those after.

We collected our data from hundreds of online sources, including US government websites; websites of the individuals affiliations (e.g. company, university, and think tanks websites); annual reports of affiliated companies and policy planning bodies; *Businessweek*; *Forbes*; *Who's Who*, newspaper archives via *Lexis Nexis*, and books via *Google Books*. By combining information from many different (trustworthy) sources we have been able to find many more (both past and present) affiliations, as well as information regarding the period during which they were held, then one would find in any single bibliographical sources, including e.g. the often used *Who's Who* or existing online sources such as *Muckety* (both of which are rather incomplete, do not provide a time indication and in the case of *Muckety* do not indicate the nature of the relationship or provide any sources that one can check). Each affiliation was double checked in most cases and verified with a formal source. Although we cannot claim that our data are complete in the sense that we may still have missed a few important affiliations (especially affiliations of much longer ago of certain Clinton officials) we believe we have compiled the most exhaustive and accurate database regarding policy planning network and corporate affiliations of these close to 90 policy-makers. On the basis of this extensive biographical mapping we employed Social Network Analysis (see e.g. Scott 1991, Wasserman and Faust 1994, Scott and Carrington 2011), making use of the software programme UCINET (Borgatti et al, 2002). With Social Network Analysis (SNA) patterns in the relations between for instance individuals and organizations can be visualized; SNA allows for an analysis of relational data instead of a comparison of attributes of actors or units. Below we will first present a summary of our findings on the corporate affiliations of the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations' grand strategy makers, before turning to the empirical core of this paper: the foreign policy planning networks.

Our findings – see Table 1 below for an overview – show first of all that a very high percentage of our selected grand strategy-makers (have) had top-level corporate affiliations, that is, as executive, director, senior advisor or e.g. partner in a law firm.² If we only look at those affiliations that officials had before entering the respective administration – which we argue must be seen as important in shaping their particular outlook – the percentages are 50 percent of the selected grand strategy-makers of Clinton, and 73 percent in the case of both the Bush and Obama administrations. Our data also show that of those grand strategy-makers with corporate affiliations the vast majority return to high-level positions within the corporate community after leaving government (and sometimes again return to government years later, etc.). A significant portion of the key grand strategy-makers of the post-Cold War era are hence so-called ins-and-outers, moving back and forth between government and the corporate community. This indicates that they are thus not only closely linked to the corporate elite, but are to a large extent indeed themselves part of this elite.

Table 1 Number of corporate linkers and corporate affiliations per administration

	Clinton	Bush	Obama
Total	22 (190)	27 (178)	22 (129.)
Before	15 (41)	22 (89)	22 (113)
After	20 (149)	21 (72)	7 (16)
Revolving Door (before and after)	13	15	7

Sources: Own data collection.

Explanatory note: the numbers refer to the number of grand strategy-makers in each administration (out of a total of 30) that held corporate affiliations either before or after serving in that administration or both (revolving door). The number between parentheses refer to the total number of affiliations held by these grand strategy-makers. Of course, because of the time element these numbers are considerably higher for Clinton, while for Obama the totals ‘After’ are as of yet low.

On the basis of a sectoral analysis of these links we have drawn two main conclusions. The first is that we find a relative dominance of the ‘financial’ and ‘law firms / consultancy’ sectors in all three administrations, and more generally a dominance of transnational capital. The affiliations to the financial sector include links to Wall Street’s leading financial institutions. Moreover, the ‘law firms / consultancy’ sector involves an overrepresentation of global business consultancy and international law firms which sell their services predominantly to big transnational corporations and the financial sector. In addition, it turned out that a high proportion - respectively 35 (Clinton), 46 (Bush) and 37 (Obama) per cent - of the connected corporations have a Fortune 500 notation.³ A second important finding is that notwithstanding the relative dominance of ‘finance’ and the ‘law firms / consultancy’ sector, there is still a diversity of sectors, with all major industries represented – indicating a broad social base in terms of the links between the grand-strategy making core of US government and US capital. If the two best represented sectors are taken together this still leaves around 50 per cent distributed among the remaining sectors. A network analysis of the individual big linkers revealed an extensively linked network with a prominent place for transnational capital (see Van Apeldoorn and De Graaff 2012b). As much as 62 per cent of these connecting companies were Fortune 500 (Global 500 in one case) notated companies; including major US TNCs such as Coca Cola, Chevron, Time Warner, and Ford, as well as global financial giants such as Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and ‘too big to fail’ AIG.

In sum, our analysis of the corporate affiliations shows that a large majority of grand strategy-makers in all three administrations have had many high-level positions with often large transnational corporations from a diversity of sectors, though with a relative dominance of (transnational) finance. As indicated, our argument in this respect is that this does shape their particular world view and how they tend to

construct the interests of the US, especially because these affiliations in many cases display a revolving door pattern indicating that the actors concerned are not just closely tied to but actually *themselves members of the corporate elite*. These findings, although showing some variation, above all reveal much continuity in terms of the high degree of connectedness to the corporate elite, the sectoral composition of these corporate affiliations and overall the transnational orientation of the capital thus represented. These continuities we suggest go a long way in explaining why also after the end of the Cold War the main tenets of America's Open Door imperialism continued to be reproduced.

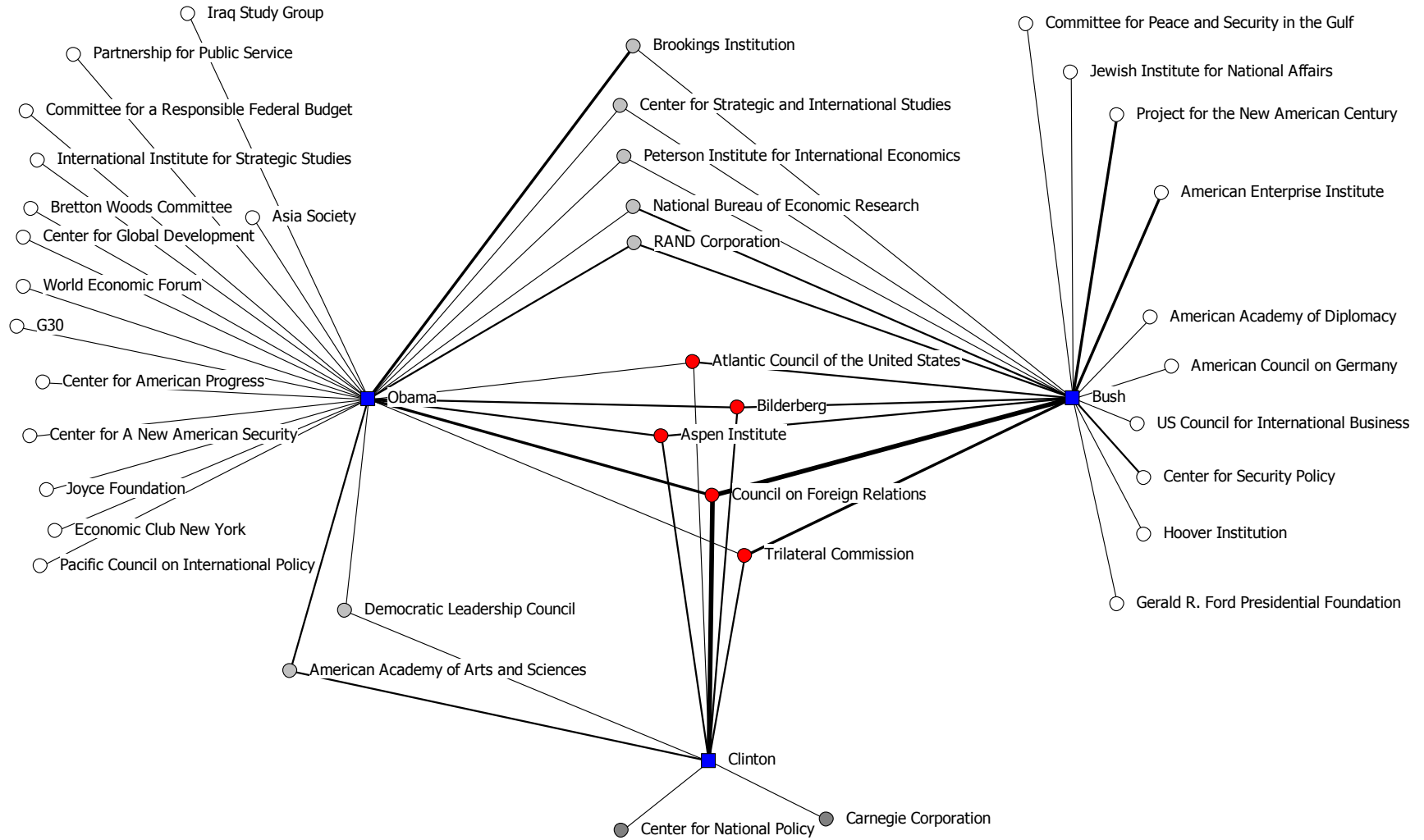
However, as indicated, we observe variation in grand strategy as well. Precisely since the 'right strategy' – in conformity with corporate elite interests – always has to be reproduced and renewed, it will also tend to vary over time depending not only on the wider structural global context but also how, in light of this context, the actors concerned interpret 'their' interests, and how to serve them. Next, we will analyze the affiliations of the grand-strategy-makers with the policy-planning network and the politico-ideological orientations that go with them, which we argue produce both continuity in the grand strategy and varying *interpretations* of how to best pursue this within a changing structural global context. For this analysis only the affiliations that the selected grand strategy makers had with policy-planning institutes, think tanks, policy advocacy groups and research institutes *before* assuming their government position were included.

The Policy-Planning Networks

Figure 1 below shows the policy-planning network of all three administrations in a two-mode network; that is, including both actors (the grand strategy makers) and their affiliations (the policy planning institutes in this case). The results were clustered per

administration in order to make the graph readable. The individual actors (grand strategy makers) here thus make up the ties (lines) between the administrations and the policy-planning institutes. The number of actors connected to a particular policy-planning body is expressed through 'tie strength', i.e. the thicker the line, the more affiliations with this particular policy-planning institute. The graph below only shows the policy-planning institutes that are connected *by at least two actors*, what in the literature is identified as the 'inner circle' or 'big linkers' (e.g. Useem 1984).⁴ This network hence consists only of the most prominent policy-planning affiliations.

Figure 1 Policy Planning Networks - Clinton, Bush, Obama; *prior* affiliations



Key: Red = three administrations Grey = two administrations White = one administration **Sources:** Data collection by authors

The Core Network

As the graph in Figure 1 above shows there is substantive overlap in terms of policy-planning network affiliation between the three administrations, with many bodies linking two or even all three administrations. In the latter category we find the *Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)*, the *Trilateral Commission*, the *Bilderberg Group*, the *Aspen Institute*, and the *Atlantic Council of the United States* – with which (many) grand strategy makers of all three administrations had prior affiliations. Affiliations with the *Brookings Institution*, the *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*, *RAND Corporation*, *Peterson Institute for International Economics* and the *National Bureau of Economic Research* are shared between the Bush and Obama administrations. In fact there is more (bipartisan) overlap between these two administrations than between the Obama administration and the previous democratic administration, with Clinton and Obama only sharing two institutions (the *Democratic Leadership Council (DLC)* and the *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*).

The *national* (that is, rather than transnational) policy-planning bodies of this shared network (between two or three administrations) are – as confirmed by our data – all quite central and (with the exception of the DLC) bipartisan. The largest and most central think tank here is the CFR, which has been at the heart of the US foreign policy establishment since the 1920s. The CFR is closely connected to the corporate elite, and can be seen as a constant in shaping and propagating an internationalist consensus forming the ideational underpinning of what we have here called America's Open Door imperialism (Parmar, 2004; Shoup and Minter, 2004).⁵ Another very central think tank appeared to be the Aspen Institute, founded in 1950, with an annual budget of nearly \$70 million, and perhaps the most extensive base of corporate sponsors (see Figure 2 later). Although the Aspen Institute has played a critical role in advocating and diffusing of the neoliberal ideology throughout the 80s and 90s, many of the links in the

network above are with the Aspen Strategy Group, which is a group of national security experts focused providing foreign policy and strategic military advice. This central body thus seems to perfectly embody the Open Door ideology, combining free market ideology with national security strategies. The Atlantic Council of the US is also an explicitly internationally oriented body, a self proclaimed 'non-partisan network of leaders who aim to bring ideas to power and to give power to ideas' by promoting 'constructive U.S. leadership and engagement in international affairs based on the central role of the Atlantic community in meeting the international challenges of the 21st century' (ACUS 2013: <http://www.acus.org/>).

The Brookings Institution founded in 1916 has been particularly keen on and persistent in keeping its character as an independent, non-partisan research institute and is often described as more liberal and left-of-centre (Abelson 2006:63), while the CSIS – established in 1963 - is more explicitly focused on foreign policy advise with as its mission: "to inform and shape selected policy decisions in government and the private sector" (Abelson 2006:92) and to provide "strategic insights and policy solutions to the world's decision makers" (CSIS 2013: <http://csis.org/>). We also find an significant overlap between Bush and Obama officials with respect to the *RAND Corporation*, a major policy institute and 'government contractor' (Abelson 2006:18) focused on national security and defense (technology). The *Peterson Institute for International Economics* and the *NBER* lastly, are both focused more on economic studies and the advancement of economic knowledge and innovation rather than foreign policy.

Next to these national institutions, the *Bilderberg Group* and the *Trilateral Commission* can be regarded as key *transnational* planning bodies (e.g. Gill, 1991) with in recent decades a predominantly neoliberal outlook. These quintessential transnational planning bodies are indeed also extensively linked to all three administrations.

Especially the policy planning institutes that connect all three administrations or are shared between the Bush and Obama administrations (as of the two connecting

Clinton and Obama one is exclusively affiliated to the Democratic Party and the other much less relevant with regard to foreign policy) can be regarded as constituting an extensive and solid common core that is shared between the different administrations. It creates a continuous platform for the forging of common interests within a broader Open Door ideology and bridging partisan and (other) ideological divides.

The Distinctive Networks

Beyond these significant overlaps there are however also distinctive policy planning networks connected to each of these administrations through the affiliations of their respective key grand strategy makers. The most distinctive of the three networks is that of the Bush administration, which is characterized by the prominence of two explicitly neoconservative think tanks (see e.g. Parmar, 2005, De Graaff and Van Apeldoorn 2010): the *American Enterprise Institute* and the *Project for the New American Century*, which have respectively eight and ten grand strategy-makers connected to them. Other neoconservative think tanks/advocacy groups connected to the Bush network are: the *Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs*, a very influential hawkish pro-Israel lobby group with many neoconservatives connected to it, the *Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf*, a group that lobbied for the removal of Saddam Hussein, and the hawkish and highly influential foreign policy think tank *Center for Security Policy*. Furthermore, there are several affiliations with the *Hoover Institution*, characterized by Domhoff as one of the core ultraconservative think tanks (2009:103). Additionally – yet, less extensively linked – we find the more neutral foreign policy oriented the *American Academy of Diplomacy*, and the *US Council for International Business*, alongside the *American Council on Germany*, and the *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation*.

The prominence of many outspoken neoconservative think tanks in the Bush network must be seen as a key factor in the administration's grand strategy-making.

Although the global structural changes, and in particular the 9/11 attacks (on the latter see Parmar, 2005), acted as a catalyst of the changes implemented by Bush, they offer only an incomplete explanation as in fact the ‘war on terror’ –especially as it was waged above all against Iraq – cannot be seen as the only logical response available within those circumstances, not even within the bounds of the Open Door. As such we should not underestimate the role played by so-called neoconservative intellectuals constructing this particular policy alternative long before 9/11 and implementing it once that window had opened and many of them had become officials in the new administration (De Graaff and Van Apeldoorn, 2011).

The distinctive ‘Obama network’ generally less outspoken and has more neoliberal (internationalist) oriented organizations, with a transnational and transatlantic focus. Apart from the *Partnership for a Secure America*, which is a nationally oriented (self proclaimed bi-partisan) think tank for US national security and foreign policy – and the *Center for a New American Security*, characterized as more hawkish with a focus on national security and a strong leading role for the US in the world, most affiliations can be said to have a strong transnational orientation in line with a neoliberal perspective. Shared with the Clinton administration are the now defunct *Democratic Leadership Council*, which has been characterized by Domhoff as part of what he calls the liberal-labor coalition (2009:113), but was also seen as a corporate friendly organization with at its core the ideals of an international third way, and under the leadership of Bill Clinton was pushing for balanced budgets, free trade, tough-on-crime policies, and welfare reform, and the *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, which is more explicitly organised towards facilitating scientific research. In general, the Obama network, while less extensive and with fewer strong ties than especially the Bush network, combines some more hawkish and militaristic elements that are very characteristic of the latter, and some of the more neoliberal internationalist features that it shares with the Clinton network. Next to the failures of the aggressive unilateralism of the preceding

administration, the latter features may also help to account for the renewed emphasis on cooperation and global governance by the Obama administration, while the hawkish elements are in line with the continued emphasis on the use of force under Obama, as illustrated by e.g. the increasingly notorious drone wars.

Above we have shown how the grand strategy makers of three latest post-Cold War administrations have established both overlapping networks and distinctive networks of policy planning bodies. We found a strong and extensive core of central policy planning institutes that arguably accounts for much of the continuity in terms of what we have identified as the Open Door world view as well as distinctive networks that might be expected to account for the diverging interpretations and thus variation in (the means with which) the Open Door ideology is translated into grand strategy. Next, we turn to an assessment of how these policy planning bodies are related to the corporate community.

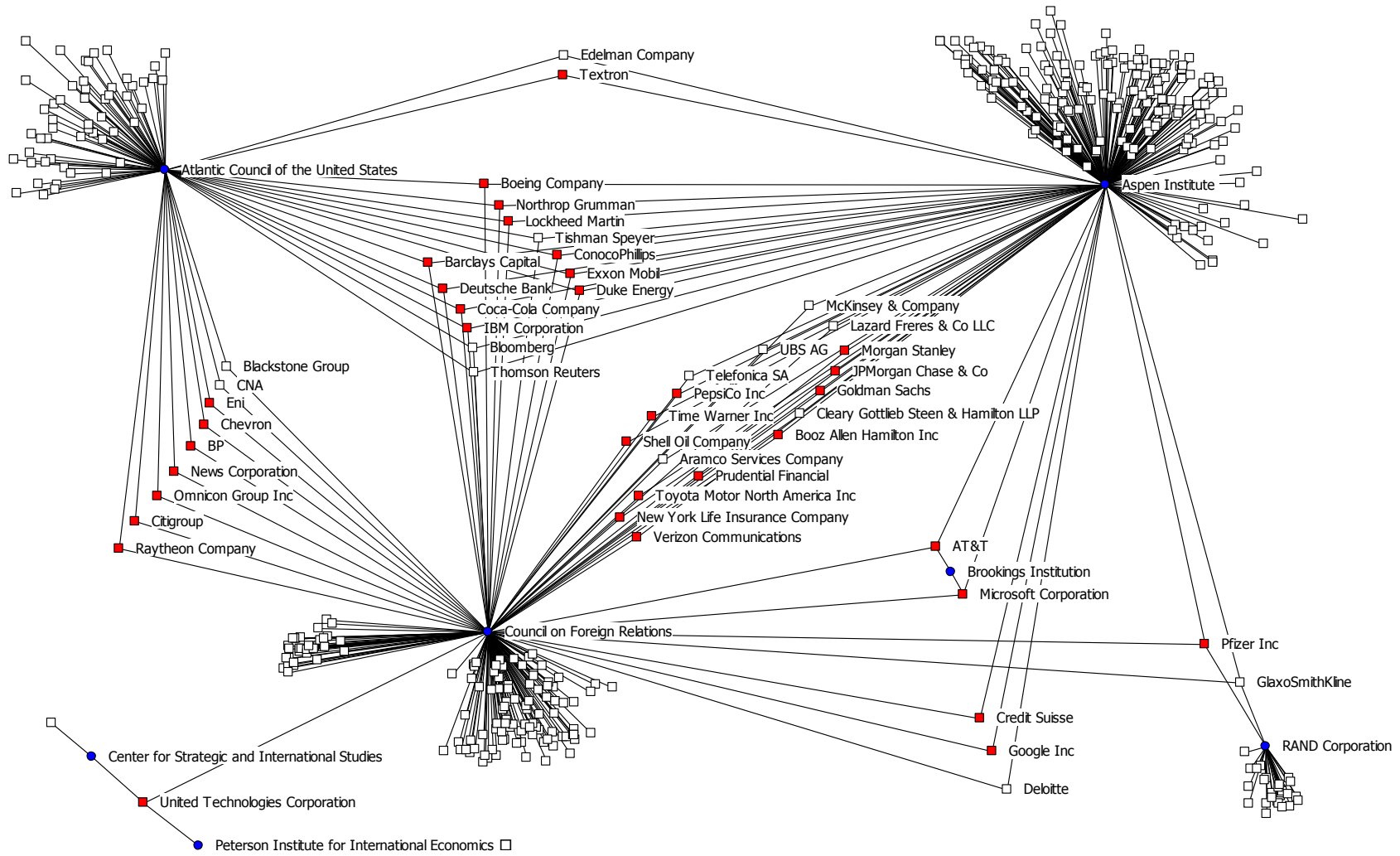
Interlocks Between the Policy Planning Network and the Corporate Elite

In this section we will show how the close and extensive involvement of the corporate community with the policy planning network – that has been shown above to be central to our selection of grand strategy makers (defined as shared by at least two actors and at least two of the three administrations) – is configured. We will do this first by way of a mapping of the corporate funding of (a selection of) these policy planning institutes. Second, we will make an assessment of the extent of corporate interlocks of the current directors and trustees of this central policy planning network since membership of the corporate elite colours the world view and perceived interests of these actors and hence also the way they will govern the policy making institutes that they are affiliated with. A handful of these directors turned out to also be – or have been – part of our selected grand strategy makers

Figure 2 below shows the corporate funders of the central policy planning organisations. Yet, it should be noted that it only provides extensive and full data for a few of these bodies: Aspen, CFR, RAND and the Atlantic Council, since the other organisations do not disclose their data on corporate funding. Nonetheless, it gives a firm impression of the configuration and extent of corporate funding and allows for a few observations. For the sake of comprehension and readability in this graph only those companies were labelled that provide funding to two policy planning institutes or more, i.e. it shows the 'inner circle' of corporate funders (cf. Useem 1984).

A first observation that can be made is the dominance of transnational capital within this inner circle, of the 49 major corporations, 35 had a Fortune 500 notation or a Global 500 notation, two of these had a F1000 notation. Secondly, we find a rather evenly dispersed and diverse representation of different sectors within each of the bigger 'clusters' of companies : finance, energy, defence, media, entertainment and technology.

Figure 2: Corporate Funders of the Grand Strategy Makers' Policy Planning Network



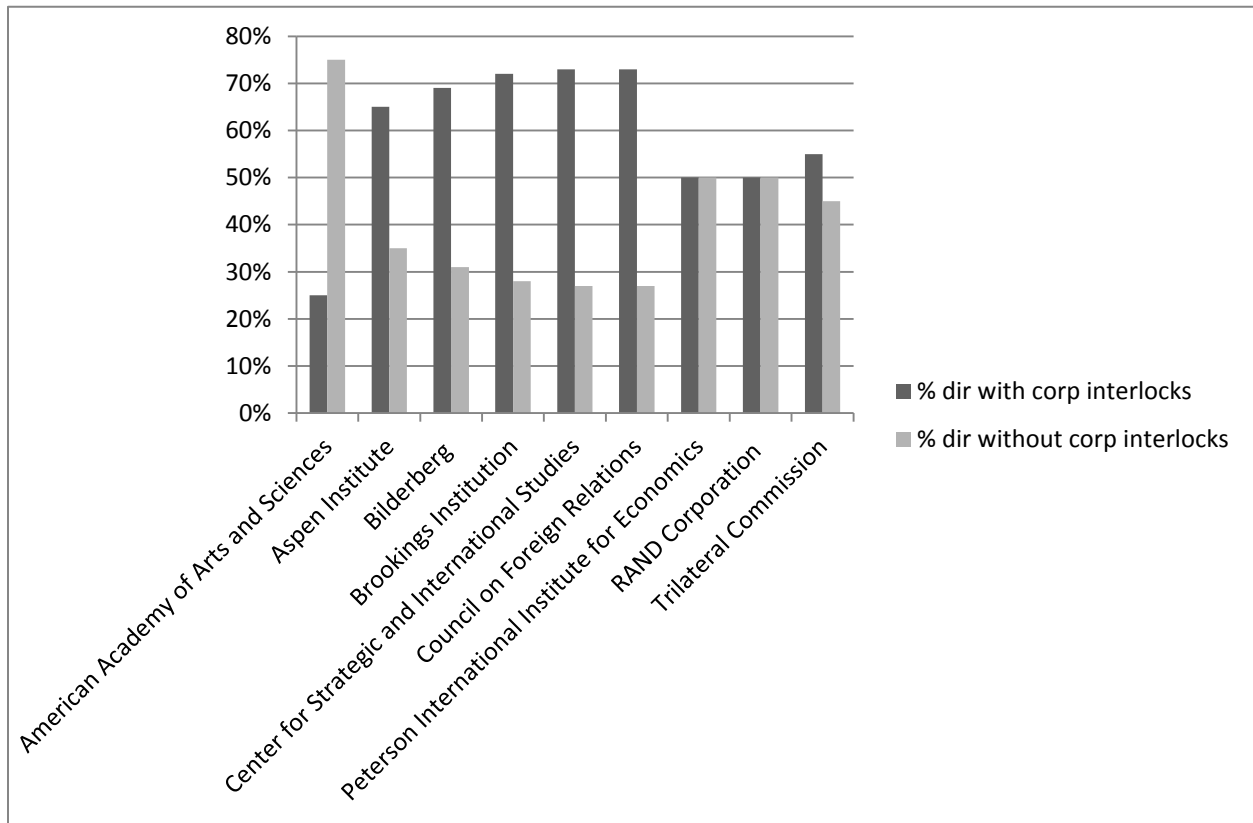
Source: data collection by authors

Key: Red nodes = F500/G500/F1000 notation

Thirdly, the network reveals that while Aspen, CFR and the Atlantic Council are extensively connected, RAND corporation has only two shared connections (i.e. share corporate funders) with Aspen and the CFR. This might have to do with a more explicitly defence oriented character of RAND which might also attract a particular type of funders, and also with the fact that, as Abelson documents, it receives the majority of its more than \$200 million budget from the US air force, US army, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (see Abelson 2006: 75).

Now that we have sketched the broader contours of corporate funding of the policy planning network that is central to the grand strategy makers analysed in this study, we shift the attention to the directors and trustees of these policy planning institutes. It should be noted that we have here only included self-reported corporate affiliations on the respective policy planning institute website, which is an underestimation of the actual number of corporate affiliations and might be biased towards more prominent affiliations such as executive function, while non-executive function might be particularly underreported. Also we did only include current corporate affiliations. Although inclusion of past corporate affiliations would have increased the numbers substantially current corporate affiliations are a more direct indication of corporate elite membership and of a concomitant diffusion and coalescing of corporate elite interests and worldview. Figure 3 below shows the total number of directors or trustees with and without corporate affiliation per policy planning body, expressed in percentages in order to compensate for the varying size of the boards.

Figure 3 Corporate interlocks of the policy planning directors*



Source: data collection by authors

* Note: missing in the graph are three of the shared policy planning bodies, for which data was not available: the US Atlantic Council of the US, the National Bureau of Economic Research, and the (now defunct) Democratic Leadership Council

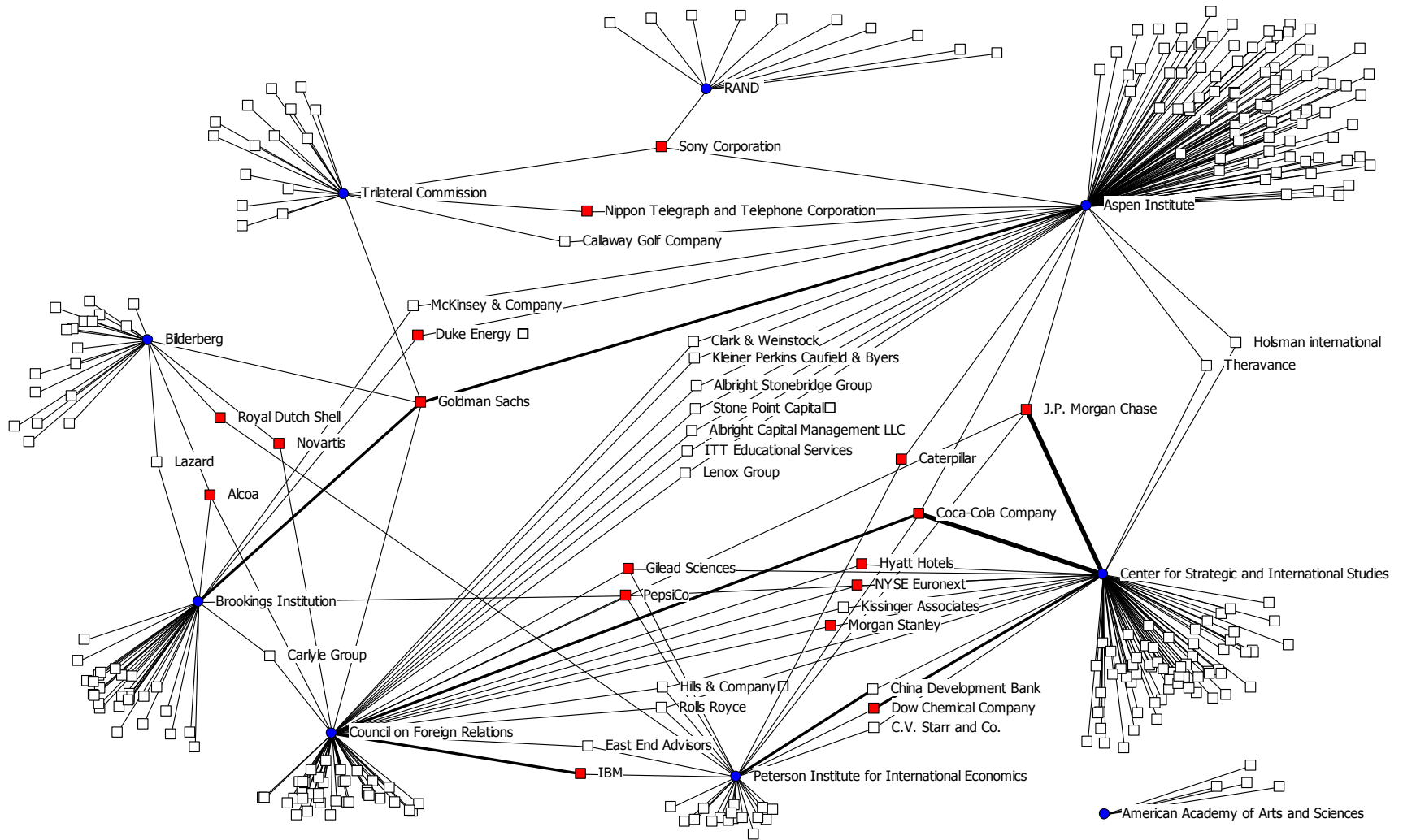
We see that – apart from the *American Academy of Arts and Sciences* - all these central policy planning bodies had at least half of their boards composed of directors or trustees with simultaneous corporate interlocks. In the case of Aspen, CFR, Brookings, CSIS, and Bilderberg the share of directors or trustees with corporate membership even ranges around 70 percent. Combined, more than half of the directors and trustees governing the policy planning institutes that have been central to the last three post-Cold War administrations are thus closely affiliated with the corporate community

through their simultaneous corporate board memberships. These directors connect to a total of 318 different companies (see for the most closely connected firms Table 2 below). In other words, we find that a substantial number of these directors are – as is the case for the grand strategy makers themselves - part of the corporate elite while directing the policy planning process.

Next, we will see how these corporate interlocks of the policy planning institute directors are configured. For this overview all the (current) corporate affiliations of each individual director have been clustered per policy planning institute. The ties between the firms and the policy planning institutes should be interpreted carefully, since a connection between two policy planning bodies can be established by one director that sits at multiple policy planning boards. It is thus not necessarily the case that each tie represents a different person. The tie strength, however, does give an indication of the number of directors linking the firm to the policy planning institute and Table 2 below provides a list of those firms that are ‘big linkers’ (i.e. >2). Yet, also in this graph only the companies that connect two different policy planning institutes have been labelled in order to make the graph readable.

What does appear from the network presented in Figure 4 below is again a substantial presence of transnationally oriented capital, since 17 out of the 38 companies have a F500 , F1000 or G500 notation (here coloured red). Also, it is interestingly to see that all these bodies are connected through one or several corporate interlocking directorates, while again RAND only has one connection to Aspen and the Trilateral Commission, where the American Academy of Arts and Sciences has none and is completely isolated.

Figure 4 – Corporate Affiliations of Policy Planning Directors Clustered per Policy Planning Institute



Source: Data collection by authors

Key: Red nodes = F500/G500/F1000 notation

Tie strength expressed no of ties

A more precise indication of the extent of interlocking and the presence of transnationally oriented capital can be found when looking more closely at the selection of the companies that are linked by two or more directors. As Table 2 below shows we find here a selection of major American TNCs such as PepsiCo, Coca-Cola Company, IBM, Alcoa, Caterpillar and Dow Chemical Company, but also non-American TNCS such as Shell and Sony, as well as financial giants such as Goldman Sachs, with the most affiliated directors by far (7), and J.P. Morgan Chase. Many of these companies were also central in the corporate elite networks of the grand strategy makers themselves.

Table 2 Selection of most extensively interlocked corporations (>2)

Firms	No of affiliated PP-Directors	F500 / G500*/F1000** Notation 2012
Goldman Sachs	7	80
PepsiCo	4	41
J.P. Morgan Chase	4	16
Coca-Cola Company	3	95
Dow Chemical Company	3	47
IBM	3	19
Sony Corporation	3	87*
Royal Dutch Shell	2	1*
Blackstone Group	2	657**
Morgan Stanley	2	68
McKinsey & Company	2	x
Novartis	2	157*
United Airlines	2	76
NYSE Euronext	2	519**
China Development Bank	2	x
Alcoa	2	115
Caterpillar	2	46
Callaway Golf Company	2	x
Hyatt Hotels	2	600**
Kissinger Associates	2	x
Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers	2	x

Source: Own data collection

Within this selection of the most extensively connected companies to the policy planning bodies, we also get a clearer picture of the dominance of transnational capital - both US and non-US originating - indicated by the Fortune 500-1000 notation (or a Global 500 notation for the non-US domiciled firms). Almost all of these companies had such a notation in the year 2012, and more than half of them within the respective top 100. Moreover, we find a selection of major corporate law firms, which dominantly work for transnational capital. McKinsey in its company profile for instance mentions that about two thirds of their clients are F1000 listed firms (see Hoovers 2013). It is also interesting to find the China Development Bank amongst these companies, which might be an indication of how the US corporate / policy planning elite is trying to integrate / starts to involve with / reaching out to Chinese transnational capital.

Conclusion

In this paper, which is part of a broader study on the social sources of US post Cold-War foreign policy making, we have focused on how the key grand strategy makers of the last three post-Cold War administrations have been affiliated with the so called foreign policy planning process. On the basis of an extensive and systematic mapping and with the help of Social Network Analysis, we have identified a central network of policy planning institutes to which many of these key foreign policy makers from all three administrations have been affiliated before entering administration. This central network consisted of many bodies that in the literature are established to be key think tanks and / or policy planning bodies, such as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Aspen Institute, Brookings Institutions, and the RAND corporation. Additionally some prominent transnational policy planning bodies were part of this central network, in

particular the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg Group. Beside this shared (bipartisan) network, we found that each administration, in particular Bush and Obama, established distinctive networks, with the network affiliated to the Bush administration being the most outspoken due to its neoconservative elements.

After having established the nexus between our selection of US state managers and the policy planning process and giving an indication of how this nexus is configured, the second part of our analysis dealt with the question how this central policy planning network is entwined with the corporate community. We did this by providing a (partial) mapping of the corporate funders of the central policy planning institutes, which revealed a clear dominance of transnational capital, both US and non-US, as indicated by the very high percentage of Fortune 500 and Global 500 notated firms in the population of 'big corporate funders' (i.e. those companies that are funding several of the policy planning bodies). Another way in which we assessed the relation between the central policy planning network and the corporate elite was to analyze the extent of corporate interlocking of the policy planning directors. Here we found that in all but one case half or more (in many cases around 70 percent) of the policy planning directors have simultaneous corporate board memberships (i.e. interlocking directorates). In other words, our findings in this respect confirm and illustrate the extensive interlock between the policy planning process and the corporate community that has been identified in earlier research on this topic but from a different angle. Again, we did find a significant role and place for transnational capital also in this regard. In the list of most extensively interlocked firms we found a predominance of Fortune 500 and Global 500 notated firms as well as some major corporate law firms which provide a majority of their services to major TNCs.

In sum, the findings presented in this paper provide a systematic and empirically grounded analysis of the configuration of links between US post-Cold War foreign policy makers and the policy planning process, as well as both the latter's intimate

relation to the corporate elite. The next step will be to see how the here observed patterns in the connections between grand strategy makers, the foreign policy planning institutes and corporate elite networks, influences policy making itself and to what extent it can explain both continuities and change in US (grand) strategy making.

Bibliography (incomplete / in progress)

Abelson, Donald E. (2006) *A Capitol Idea: Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Abelson, Donald E. (2002) *Do Think Tanks Matter? Assessing the Impact of Public Policy Institutes*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Abelson, Donald E. (1996) *American Think-Tanks and their Role in U.S. Foreign Policy*. London and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's Press.

Borgatti, Steven., Everett, Martin. and Freeman, L. (2002) *Ucinet for Windows: Software for Social Network Analysis*. Analytic Technologies: Harvard, MA.

Bottomore, Tom (1993 [1964]) *Élites and Society*. London and New York: Routledge.

Burris, Val (2008) 'The interlock structure of the policy-planning network and the right turn in U.S. state policy', *Research in Political Sociology* 17 (*Politics and Public Policy*): 3-42.

Burris, Val (2005) 'Interlocking Directorates and Political Cohesion among Corporate Elites', *American Journal of Sociology*, 3 (1): 249-283.

Herman, Edward S and Noam Chomsky (1988) *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books (Random House, Inc).

De Graaff, Naná and Bastiaan van Apeldoorn (2011) 'Varieties of US Post-Cold War Imperialism: Anatomy of a Failed Hegemonic Project and the Future of US Geopolitics', *Critical Sociology*, 37(4): 403-27.

Domhoff, G. William (1967) *Who Rules America?* Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall.

Domhoff, G. William (2009) *Who Rules America?: Challenges to Corporate and Class Dominance*, Sixth Edition. McGraw-Hill: New York.

Dye, Thomas R. (1986) *Who's Running America? The Conservative Years*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Gill, Stephen (1991) *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haas, Ernst B. (1990) *When Knowledge is Power: Three Models of Change in International Organizations*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press.

Hoovers (2013) *Company Profiles*: http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/cs/company-profile.McKinsey__Company_Inc.46fb3e18326ccceb.html (accessed 27 March 2013).

Layne, Christopher (2006) *The Peace of Illusions. American Grand Strategy from 1940s to the Present*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press.

McGann, J. G., & Weaver, R. K. eds. (2000) *Think tanks and civil societies: Catalysts for ideas and action*. London: Transaction Publishers.

Parmar, Inderjeet S. (2004) *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of the Role and Influence of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1939-1945*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Parmar, Inderjeet S. (2005) 'Catalysing Events, Think Tanks and American Foreign Policy Shifts: A Comparative Analysis of the Impacts of Pearl Harbor 1941 and 11 September 2001', *Government and Opposition* 40(1) (2005): 1-25.

Parmar, Inderjeet (2012) *Foundations of the American Century*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Scott, John and PJ Carrington eds. (2011) *The Sage Handbook of Social Network Analysis*. London: Sage.

Scott, John (1991) *Social Network Analysis. A Handbook*. London, Newbury Park, New Dehli: Sage Publications.

Shoup, Laurence H. and William Minter (2004 [1977]) *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Lincoln, NE: Authors Choice Press.

Sikkink, Kathryn (1993) 'The Power of Principles Ideas Human Rights Policies in the United States and Western Europe', in: Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane eds. (1993) *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, Ch. 6.

Smith, James A. (1991) *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite*. New York: Free Press.

Useem M (1984) *The Inner Circle. Large Corporations and the Rise of Business Political Activity in the U.S. and the U.K.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Van Apeldoorn, Bastiaan (2002) *Transnational Capitalism and the Struggle over European Integration*, London and New York: Routledge.

Van Apeldoorn, Bastiaan and Naná De Graaff (2012a) Corporate Elite Networks and US Post-Cold War Grand Strategy from Clinton to Obama. *European Journal of International Relations*, Online first, June 22, 27 pp.

Van Apeldoorn, Bastiaan and Naná de Graaff (2012b) 'The Limits of Open Door Imperialism and the US State-Capital Nexus'. *Globalizations*, 9 (4): 539-608.

Van Apeldoorn, Bastiaan and Naná de Graaff (2014) *American Grand Strategy and Corporate Elite Networks*. New York and London: Routledge.

Van der Pijl, Kees (1984) *The Making of the Atlantic Ruling Class*. London: Verso.

Wasserman, Stanley and Katherine Faust (1994) *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications*. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, William Appleman (2009 [1959/72]) *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition. W.W. Norton & Company: New York.

¹ The data on Geithner are from our own database on which the empirical analysis of this paper is based, see below.

² Although we consulted many different sources it is still likely that we missed several of them. These figures are thus probably an underestimation, especially the more one goes back in time (i.e. for the Clinton administration). In addition note that if someone held several positions consecutively *within* the same company or held / holds several positions within the same company and or a subsidiary we have counted these as one corporate affiliation only.

³ Measured as a Fortune 500 notation in that respective year or previously. (http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500_archive/full/1955/).

⁴ Useem defined as the 'inner circle' those directors that serve at two or more large corporate boards (1984:64).

|