

Access and Allies: European Center-Right Parties and the Collective Development of Campaign Management in the 1980s^{*}

It appears obvious that election campaigns in North America and Western Europe changed in similar ways over the last half of the twentieth century, but the jury remains out on the questions of how and why. Rather than joining these far-reaching deliberations at once, pick up one of the case files and venture back in history to see how and why acted out: The stage is set in Bonn, West Germany in 1981. Election campaign operatives from Europe's leading center-right parties are gathered to form a seminar group on recent developments in their trade. They all represent member parties of the European Democrat Union (EDU), a transnational organization constituting an opposite number to the Socialist International. The times are on their side, as conservative and center-right electioneering has been blossoming in the shape of Margaret Thatcher's 1979 election victory in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan's win in the United States in 1980. Increasingly oriented towards ideas and techniques used in marketing, the campaigners are developing their manner of handling the media, of employing opinion polls, of fundraising, and of organizing campaign management (later this would be studied by a wide group of scholars (e.g., Kavanagh 1995; Luntz 1988; Newman 1994; Scammell 1995). One of those present, Peter Radunski, had already written a book about it (1980)). Several of the attendees are closely familiar with campaigning in the United States. To the less well-connected participants, the group offers a previously unseen point of access to the new ideas and techniques of the era, be it those of a neighboring country or something more distant.

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Now put down the case file. The huge questions of why and how campaigns have changed in the age of television and beyond, remain unsettled. Yet, the channel of campaign transfers that was visible in those historical documents represents part of the answer, and it has not been explored by scholars beyond the observation that it did indeed exist among several transnational “platforms” (Plasser 2002:252). Drawing on archival sources documenting the group’s activities through the 1980s, this article investigates the role of the EDU seminars in spreading campaign techniques in that period.¹ While the overall impact of the seminars on the campaigns of each participating party can only be determined by a long series of case studies, it does remain possible to explain how the seminars came to be, how they served to enable transfers, and what this means for our understanding of global campaign development.

Over the last two decades, the fields of communication studies and political science have produced a range of research dealing with mainly contemporary changes in election campaigns in Europe and the Americas. Comparative projects have addressed similarities and differences between countries, and there have been debates over how to explain the transnational spread of campaign techniques, particularly in terms of “Americanization” and “modernization” (e.g. Butler and Ranney 1992; Esser and Pfetsch 2004; Farrell and Webb 2000; Negrine 1996; Norris 2000; Plasser 2002; Scammell 1997; Swanson and Mancini 1996). Only to a minor extent has this literature engaged in close-up investigations of specific transfers and their preconditions and facilitators. In a recent contribution to the study of how political communication changes, Negrine et al. argue for a gathering of the threads and a refocusing of the debate under the headline of “professionalisation” (Negrine et al. 2007). Within this volume, as a means of moving ahead, Negrine calls for “a more historically informed and more detailed investigation of the underlying causes of change and the ways in which such change is conceived and explained” (p. 28). This call for a stronger historical

awareness should be related to Ryfe, who has made a similar request in an article reviewing the scholarly roots and directions of political communication as a field of research (2001). Ryfe argues that history's attention to detail and context offers greater insight into "the way in which actors struggle with and against the conditions that structure their experience." (p. 414). This article is a historian's unsolicited contribution to answering the calls of Negrine and Ryfe.

Such interdisciplinary endeavors present opportunities for those who seek common ground. Ingram reminds us that history and the social sciences share basic principles in forming questions and analysis, as both rely on theories, on assumptions of generally applicable principles, and on the search for summarizing propositions that account for "most of the evidence" (1997:54). Admittedly, there is always a risk of running into debates over approach, methodology, presentation and purpose, as historians and social scientists have not resolved the differences indicated by the inter in interdisciplinary. This risk can be minimized by clearly stating one's point of departure. Most historians, the present one included, will operate under a principle fundamentally at odds with many social scientists: The primary aim of research is to interpret and explain the past in its own right and within its own context. Accordingly, the social scientist's aim of identifying general explanations or models is rejected, or at least remade and subordinated as the aim of refining ideal or summarizing concepts that help the analysis of the historical question at hand.

In the present field of study, these differences are evident in dealing with the concepts of Americanization and modernization. To this historian, they represent potential syntheses of how campaign practices may have spread and converged at a specific time and place, and they are eligible for application only at the close of analysis. Subsequently, the historical narratives of this article were not constructed in order to test the validity of a preconceived theory or model. The primacy of evidence and narrative in the presentation may appear overly

descriptive to the social scientist; yet, to the historian, it is exactly in the construction of the narrative – in that analytical description – that explanation takes place (Ingram 1997:53).

While it may be that the twain shall never meet entirely, this article is motivated by the conviction that Ingram is correct in judging that historians and social scientists should continue to seek cross-fertilization. He concludes that “they provide different techniques by which to address a variety of related questions” and therefore “must struggle to understand one another” (p. 63). Indeed, the historical research presented below is indebted for many of its analytical concepts to the social sciences that dominate the field of political communication; still, those concepts are applied according to the discipline into which they have been transferred. This is not a historian’s attempt at political science; neither do I believe that to have been what Negrine or Ryfe encouraged. Thus, like its topic, the article is subject to processes of cultural transfer and adaptation.

The first part of the article discusses the establishment of the EDU and its seminar group, arguing that global and regional politics were as important to the seminar initiative as pressures from mediatization (Asp 1986) or modernization. Subsequently, the topic is the organization of the EDU seminars and its direct impact on the process of cultural transfer that was inherent to these exchanges of experiences. Each seminar facilitated a collective interpretation of campaign techniques, meaning that practices that were native to one participant’s culture, or frequently to the United States, could be picked apart and reassembled to fit that of others. Rather than Americanization, whatever its definition, such processes point out the complexity of the global flow of culture (Negrine 1996:164). The next section of the article is an examination of how the multilateral learning community represented by the seminars also served as a catalyst for otherwise unlikely bilateral relationships. The Norwegian conservative party, Høyre, is used as a case to study such connections, shedding light on the topic of initiative and agency in campaign transfers. The final section discusses the

seminars, the bilateral relationships, and the EDU in the context of international relations, showing how the opportunities for campaign exchanges relied on a network maintained largely for purposes of foreign policy. Whether explained as modernization or Americanization, this points to the significance of placing the process within its historical context. Towards the end follows a discussion of how the conclusions of this article challenge and add to the concepts used by the literature to explain how and why campaigns change.

A By-product of Politics

In 1978, ten Christian democratic and conservative parties from Northern and Western Europe formed the European Democrat Union. The establishment followed years of deliberations, and when this new International finally came about, the glue that held it together was an identity as a common front against communism, as well as ambitions of a greater center-right impact in the European Community. Moreover, the member parties had their own strategic objectives (Johansson 1997; Tobisson et al. 1998). The EDU was given a minor secretariat in Vienna with an executive secretary, and there was a board in the shape of a steering committee consisting of a secretary general or international secretary from each member. The steering committee reported to an annual party leader conference, the EDU's highest authority (Tobisson et al. 1998).

Before the EDU was founded, the members had relied on less institutional structures to maintain relations with sister parties abroad. There would be reciprocal visits of high level staff and representatives to national conventions and during the final stages of election campaigns. Such contact had engendered a loose network of like-minded parties: however, it had entailed no systematic program for the exchange of experiences or any commitment to a common cause.

The nascent EDU soon moved to institutionalize relations with friendly parties in other regions of the world, and notably in our context, with the United States. The EDU became a

co-founder of the International Democrat Union (IDU) in 1983, with the US Republican Party among the overseas co-founders. Since 1981, EDU representatives had made several trips to the United States, establishing contacts and exploring possibilities for closer cooperation.² In July 1982, the Democratic and Republican parties were both present for the first time as observers to the annual EDU party leaders' conference. Whereas the Democratic Party remained reluctant towards this transnational partisan association, the Republican Party decided on joining (Pinto-Duschinsky 1991:51).³

In June 1980, the EDU steering committee agreed to establish an "expert-group", meaning an internal committee, devoted to the study of election campaign techniques. Expressing their enthusiasm, all members of the steering committee agreed to name a representative to the group, which held the same voluntary membership and temporary nature as the EDU policy committees.⁴ The declared aim of the new group was "to improve the planning and execution of election campaigns among EDU parties, which indirectly will give concrete proof of the value of party cooperation in the EDU framework."⁵ In addition to the obvious interest in helping member parties win elections, the declared aim suggests that the EDU members needed to justify their activity on the home front. By taking home "concrete proof" of the usefulness of traveling to meetings, in the shape of campaign improvements, the various party leaderships expected to gain support for the more lofty policy discussions in working groups on topics such as employment or energy.⁶ Put simply, the establishment of the campaign group was significantly motivated by concerns unrelated to campaigning, making domestic processes like mediatization or modernization insufficient explanations for the construction of this transnational channel. The construction came about because the desire to maintain a transnational organization within that particular historical context made it opportune.

The seminars were considered important enough to the larger center-right agenda for them to merit integration into strategic enterprises such as the research and training foundations affiliated with the CDU and the Austrian member party, ÖVP. Throughout the 1980s these foundations furthered their cause by providing the EDU with institutional, financial, and academic support, including for the campaign group. The ÖVP channeled its efforts for the EDU through its Political Academy, where the campaign group was allowed to convene regularly and where the EDU's secretariat was situated. The EDU's executive secretary throughout the 1980s, Andreas Khol, was also the Academy's director.⁷⁸ In Bonn, West-Germany, the CDU-affiliated Konrad Adenauer Stiftung channeled part of its already well-established international outreach (Pinto-Duschinsky 1991) into the EDU campaign seminars; at different times during the 1980s, the campaign group received assistance in the shape of facilities, funding, lectures, and research.⁹ The academic orientation of both foundations complemented the practical experience contributed by the participating campaign operatives. Outside these contributions, the group depended on each member's willingness and ability to allocate resources.

Interpretation, Mediation, Sanitation

The EDU campaign seminar group convened at an average rate of twice a year throughout the 1980s, with seminars ranging from one to five days. A three-man steering committee was tasked with directing the group's activities following its elevation to permanent status in 1982. Swedish, German, and British representatives dominated the steering committee.¹⁰ The seminars typically centered on a set of specific campaigns as case studies, from which the national representatives would report before their experiences or plans were discussed among the participants. In addition, seminars would occasionally be devoted to specific aspects of campaigning, such as polling, local campaigning, direct mail, or communication strategies.¹¹ At these seminars, case studies would still be included on the

agenda, but interspersed with lectures from specialists in each area. The group would stay in touch throughout the year, reinforcing a sense of community, as a mailing list was compiled for the mutual distribution of campaign material.¹²

Multinational campaign seminars are particularly significant for the discussion of campaign transfers in Europe, as campaign staff there has tended to keep to itself domestically, confining skills and technology within ideological or partisan camps (Plasser et al. 1999). This marks a clear contrast to the dynamics of the American field, where campaign managers and consultants incessantly have moved, and still move, between candidate organizations and cooperating partners. The EDU seminars in effect helped fill a vacuum in the Western European center-right parties, as they created a permanent European body for a systematic exchange of experiences and ideas. Plasser has argued that such “transnational platforms . . . have played a central role regarding the professionalization of political parties” (2004:244). The timing of the campaign group’s establishment, although clearly influenced by factors unrelated to campaigning, adds to its importance in functioning as a catalyst for transfers. It coincided with great development in the campaigning of several major EDU member parties. Among such participants were the Conservative Party of the UK and the CDU of West Germany, who both acted as mediators of American innovations, to which we shall return below.

The modus operandi of the EDU seminars is in itself of great interest, as it offers an addition to the current literature’s understanding of how campaign practices move between cultures, how they are adopted, or how they seemingly originate within nations and parties. Comparative or global works on campaign development tend to miss or downplay such multinational efforts, most often discussing each country separately (e.g. Negrine et al. 2007; Swanson and Mancini 1996). Plasser et al. have identified these seminars as a type of transnational “platform” from which campaign knowledge has spread in a region less prone to

independent consultancy (1999:102-3); however, they do not elaborate on how that platform has helped the transfer of campaign techniques and ideas across borders. Exchanges between ideologically similar parties are given brief mention by Blumler et al. (1996); yet, the distinct significance of the multilateral channel, or arena, is not addressed. In a cultural analysis, that aspect of the EDU campaign group becomes particularly relevant, as it brought with it a collective interpretation of new practices that would not be possible in a bilateral relationship. The deliberative nature of the seminars and the diverse experiences of the participants facilitated a dynamic and complex treatment of the topics that were discussed.

In an illustrative example of this mode of operation, from a seminar in 1984, the representatives from Norway, the UK, Austria, and West Germany all gave 90 minute presentations of their local and regional campaigns, followed by plenary discussions of the same length. Towards the end of the seminar, having heard all the presentations, the participants formed working groups to formulate common conclusions that were subsequently presented and discussed again in plenary.¹³ After the seminar, group chairman Tobisson, a Ph.D. in political science, produced a memo specifying several of those conclusions.¹⁴ Thus, rather than simply listening to a set of separate campaign stories, the participants actively and collectively pursued abstractions that stood a chance of being applied in the various countries.

According to Scammell (1997), the frequent absence of such academic or abstract reflection among US political consultants has served as an impediment to the transfer of their knowledge abroad. What she terms their “folk wisdom” (p. 16) is tied to specific environments and experiences, meaning that it will travel less easily than theoretically developed aspects of campaigning. The seminars represented a method to challenge and perhaps overcome such obstacles, which could reasonably be conceived as commonly present among campaign practitioners in Europe as well. Obviously, even without those obstacles, any transfer would depend on how the individual representatives handled their de facto role as

gatekeepers. They decided which new ideas to report on back home, and case studies should consider whether their level of seniority or area of expertise affected the choice of actual techniques to be transferred.

In terms of influence from the United States, the collective interpretation by fellow Europeans must be regarded as particularly important. The cultural transfer would have been more difficult otherwise, going from the consultancy-dominated, candidate-oriented, advertising-intensive campaigns of the United States, to parliamentary, party-oriented campaigns within state-dominated media systems in many European countries. Furthermore, the seminars not only provided a method to absorb the American ideas, they represented a channel of exposure to those ideas in the first place.

The EDU campaign seminars began at a time when the sympathetic Republican National Committee was thoroughly revitalized in terms of campaigning and fundraising skills, and leading European parties such as the Conservative Party and the CDU were already appropriating US techniques (Kavanagh 1996; Radunski 1980; Scammell 1995). The Republicans rather than the Democrats were the ones breaking new campaigning ground towards the end of the 1970s, making their link to the EDU all the more interesting (Luntz 1988). American influences flowed into the seminars along two main avenues. One took the form of direct contributions by American seminar speakers, the other represented an indirect influence by way of European campaign operatives with personal experiences from the United States. We shall begin with them.

On the surface, there is little to indicate that the campaign seminars were more than groups of Europeans getting together, exchanging European ideas. Yet, US campaign practices were a self-evident part of the seminars, as were the continuous efforts to prepare them for transfer to the member countries. Not only by way of the topics chosen for discussion, such as direct mail or communication via television, but indirectly in the shape of

leading participants who were among Europe's foremost campaign operatives at the time. Some were managers in charge of entire campaigns – others specialists in certain areas. The aforementioned Peter Radunski of the CDU participated in the group from the beginning and throughout the 1980s, as he managed campaigns for Helmut Kohl and the CDU (Kaase 1992:163).¹⁵ He also wrote several articles and a book (1980) on campaigning, in which he included a systematic evaluation of campaigns in the United Kingdom, France, and the United States as he discussed “modern campaigning” in West Germany. The book's academic frame of reference was built on the growing American and British literature on the development of campaigns and mass communications.

From the British Conservative Party, which had been successful in breaking new ground with its polling and orientation towards television in the 1979 election, Roger Boaden helped lead the group from 1983, leaving his seat on its steering committee to Harvey Thomas in 1985.¹⁶ At the time, Boaden had direct mail among his party responsibilities, and he actively propagated for the adaptation of techniques developed by the Republicans. EDU documents show that he was intimately familiar with the most recent advances in the field, as well as with the various players that were involved within and around the Republican Party.¹⁷ The British mediation of US influence was hardly weakened when the image and presentation specialist Harvey Thomas took over for the Conservative Party on the campaign group's three-man steering committee. Thomas had learned his trade by setting up tours and events for US evangelist Billy Graham in the 1960s and 70s and brought his skills back to the United Kingdom when he began working for the Conservative Party in 1978 (Scammell 1995:101-3).

Towards the end of the 1980s, by virtue of their personal backgrounds, the Austrian participants in the campaign seminars also represented a significant indirect influence from American campaigns. Fritz Plasser, today a professor in political science and a leading academic on the topic of global campaign development, brought his insights to several

seminars in 1988 and 1989. A couple of years earlier, in 1986, he had submitted his habilitation treatise on the party systems of Austria, West Germany, and the United States.¹⁸ Appearing with Plasser was Peter Marboe, general manager of the ÖVP.¹⁹ Before his appointment in 1987, Marboe had spent 17 years in the United States working for Austrian public diplomacy and media outreach (“Marboe” n.d.). These strong personal backgrounds, each reflecting academic or professional familiarity with US political communication, were complemented by occasional contributions from participants with more specifically limited experiences from the United States.²⁰

In terming these influences “indirectly” American, it should be understood that they were not merely subject to a detour on their way to the recipient. By passing through a different country, a cultural transfer takes place, leading to a certain alteration of that which is being transferred. Kroes refers to the function of the relayer as “mediation” (1996:176). What Radunski or Thomas contributed at the campaign seminars were not American, but rather “Germanified” and “Britified” versions of US campaign innovations. That does not, however, alter the fact that they provided the other member parties with an important channel for discovering those originally American practices and ideas, in a sense acting as mediators. The mediated practices may even be thought of as ready-made Europeanizations, easier to digest. Where certain American campaign features would be perceived as irrelevant or even inappropriate in Europe, similar techniques having been “culturally sanitized” by a European country could very well appear desirable (Notaker, forthcoming).

On some occasions US influences were directly represented at the EDU seminars, in the shape of American participants or speakers. In 1983, the Republican National Committee’s director of direct mail, Joe McCeney, presented his party’s fundraising techniques at a four-day campaign seminar in Vienna.²¹ Two years later, in November 1985, the EDU and representatives from the Republican Party were joint hosts for a five-day

campaign seminar in Washington DC, and in 1989, Ronald Reagan's celebrated pollster Richard Wirthlin was an invited speaker at an EDU campaign seminar in London.²²

In spite of the contention that these appearances represented direct influences from the United States, one should ask the question whether a forum like this could ever transmit direct influences. In line with the suggestion above, that these gatherings were naturally collective, one could argue that by definition they would inject a diverse set of references and interpretations to every presentation or discussion. Still, the difference is clear; With an American speaker, the influence would at least not have been filtered before.

A more consequential transatlantic exchange of campaign experiences might have come about in 1982, when there were discussions about the inclusion of a campaign management committee in the Inter-Party Group, the pre-IDU global center-right forum. The proposals were not, however, followed up in a systematic manner.²³ In 1990, as the IDU planned its activity for the years to come, campaign seminars were again considered, with the explicit suggestion that they would increase the organization's importance to the member parties, and thus contribute to the continued life of the organization.²⁴ This time, the idea materialized and the first IDU campaign seminar was co-hosted with the EDU in London in 1991, although with nobody from the United States on the list of participants.²⁵ The IDU was not, however, an important force in itself when it came to the transfer of campaign techniques in the 1980s. Its importance was greatest as a facilitator of bilateral cooperation with the Republican Party.

These obvious influences from the United States notwithstanding, the significant mediation and (re-)interpretation of US campaign techniques at the EDU seminars serve to highlight several problems with the concept of Americanization. In dealing with US influences in Europe in general, the concept has been criticized for disregarding adaptations made within each receiving culture and implying the substitution of a static local culture with

an imported American one. Kroes has argued that Hannerz' anthropological concept of "creolization" is a better fit for the analysis of such local appropriation (Hannerz 1992; Kroes 1996). This and other perspectives from the interdisciplinary literature on US influences in Europe post-1945 should be considered for future case studies of campaign transfers within the field of political communication (for reviews of the US influences literature, see Gienow-Hecht 1999; van Elteren 2006; Danielsen 2008).

Catalyst of Bilateralism

The institutionalized framework of the EDU and IDU provided the participants with acquaintances constituting a network covering both Europe and the United States. Several member parties actively sought to engage in bilateral cooperation within that network. The following is an assessment of how one member, the main Norwegian conservative party, Høyre, made such bilateral initiatives and what role the EDU played as a facilitator. I will first make a few general observations before treating two bilateral relationships that provided Høyre with particular access to American campaign techniques and their European-adapted versions. These are the relationships with the Republican Party and with the Conservative Party. The dynamics of these relationships – their initiative and control – help us understand opportunities and limitations in what Plasser called "platforms" (2002).

In general, the EDU network provided Høyre with an increased number of access points in parties not only all over Europe, but all over the world as the IDU was established (Heidar et al. 1997: 90-97). This access was not maintained simply by the ideological link between like-minded parties, but rather by institutionalized relations. An approach to a foreign sister party, therefore, no longer relied only on the good will of those involved. The EDU opened doors and strengthened ties. On the matter of sharing campaign knowledge, the seminars meant access to internal processes and competence that relied on personal trust between the participants. Within the traditional networks, where parties invited each other to

rather passively attend congresses or election watch parties, the main contact had often been an international secretary who in turn would attempt to mediate contact with the people Høyre wished to meet. Particularly in relation to the cooperating parties in big countries, such as West Germany and the United Kingdom, the campaign group had the very specific effect of allowing Høyre's central office leadership to become personally acquainted with leading campaign operatives. The establishment of such direct lines of communication was particularly evident in the relationship with the Conservative Party.

We have seen that the British sent specialized staff from their central office to contribute to the running of the EDU campaign group. Høyre appears to have appreciated the access to that resource, as the central office called on its British counterpart for assistance in importing specific campaign techniques, as well as for personal contributions of time and skill. On occasion, Høyre approached the British staff upon returning home from seminars, to obtain further advice or material relating to topics that had been discussed. This was the case after a seminar in Vienna in 1983, where Boaden presented a Conservative Party program for the central encouragement and facilitation of local unit outreach on the grassroots level. Under the heading of "Impact 80s", the local units received four booklets with instructions on recruiting volunteers, on identifying issues of importance to the local population, on getting covered by local media, and on producing their own newsletter called "In touch". The program caught the interest of Høyre's chief of organization, Sverre Granholt, who sent a telex to Boaden from Oslo not long after the seminar, asking whether he would be so kind as to send him the "Impact 80s" program "which you showed us in Vienna".²⁶ Boaden shipped the pack over, no questions asked, and Høyre's central office went to work on the material shortly after. A special committee was set up to translate and adapt the program for use in Norway.²⁷ By 1984, the "In touch" newsletter had become "I kontakt", in a literal translation of the newsletter's name.²⁸ In Oslo alone, a summary for 1984 stated that 300,000 copies of "I

kontakt” had been circulated by borough units that year.²⁹ Granholt continued to follow the program as it progressed in the United Kingdom, actively pointing out its success there as he encouraged the local units to prioritize their newsletters.³⁰ It is possible he would have been able to obtain the program without the EDU, but as it happened, that institutional link served as an effective facilitator in a bilateral exchange that had been induced by the multilateral seminar cooperation.

Initiatives to exploit the attractive contacts across the North Sea were not limited to the import of specific techniques or ideas. Harvey Thomas was repeatedly invited by the central office to speak at internal party conferences, for which the secretary general would present Thomas with specific requests relating to Høyre’s own campaign planning.³¹ Thomas does not appear to have charged a fee for any of the appearances, underscoring the mutual perception of belonging to the same community, serving the same cause. Although peripheral to Høyre’s overall planning, the appearances by Thomas were clearly out of the ordinary in terms of employing foreign expertise. Any greater integration of foreign consultancy would have been likely to raise eyebrows in the Norway of the 1980s.³² Notably, his contributions took place at the initiative of Høyre, as did that of Boaden in the above. In other words, the transfers were almost entirely guided by needs the Norwegians had identified themselves. This would resonate with the modernization concept, where transfers and innovations are explained as following changes in the recipient society (Swanson and Mancini 1996).

Although Høyre already had a certain access to the American parties through official channels such as the United States Information Agency (USIA), the IDU offered a more direct relationship in terms of communication and its emphasis on shared purpose. We have seen that the Republicans participated in EDU’s global affiliate IDU from the outset in 1983. They were also occasional observers at EDU high-level meetings throughout the 1980s.³³ The de facto international secretary of the Republican National Committee from 1982 to 1990, Keith

Schuette, became Høyre's key contact in Washington, DC.³⁴ He was first acquainted with Høyre's people as an observer at several EDU meetings in Europe, and in 1988 Høyre sent a five-man delegation to the Republican National Convention, where Schuette was in charge of the international political leaders' program.³⁵ He would also interact with Høyre staff when a former prime minister from the party, Kåre Willoch, served as chairman of the IDU from 1987 to 1989. This personal relationship between Schuette and a select group of Høyre staff was of significant importance for Høyre's ability to receive help from the Republican Party, since it provided a permanent and direct line to someone who would appreciate their call.

In his capacity of secretary general, Svein Grønner was also Høyre's chief international liaison during the second half of the 1980s. Grønner would write, call, or fax to Schuette whenever Høyre had representatives traveling to the United States, asking for relevant meetings to be set up. It was Schuette's impression that Høyre sought "to make the most of it" when they were overseas.³⁶ For instance, when Høyre's chief of computer resources was attending a conference in the United States in 1989, Grønner faxed Schuette ahead of the trip, asking whether it was "possible for you to make a short programme, enabling him to meet the computer people from the RNC and other interesting bodies". Grønner then outlined three particular topics that he would like to have included in the program, all to do with fundraising and the potential use of computers.³⁷ The topics for Grønner's requests were areas of expansion for Høyre, particularly with regard to telemarketing. In other words, reinforcing the argument about the British above, the contact with the United States was guided by processes already started by Høyre.

The specificity of Grønner's requests did not in itself pave the way for an easy transfer of skills, ideas, or technology across the Atlantic. Schuette, given the international nature of his work, was well acquainted with European electoral systems. That was not, however, necessarily the case with those he set up to brief the visitors on a given subject. He

later observed that the presentations were often poorly adapted to a foreign setting, and remarked that “these guys couldn’t find Norway on a map if you gave them the first three letters”.³⁸ Joseph Gaylord, a leading Republican official who interacted with Høyre on several occasions, pointed to the related problem of differing political cultures, systems, and jargon, as he discussed his own attempts at conveying campaign skills to Norway and other foreign countries.³⁹ Both Schuette’s and Gaylord’s assessments fit Scammell’s argument cited above, that US campaigning expertise has been rooted in US experiences rather than in easily exported abstractions.

The preponderance of Norwegians traveling to the United States, rather than vice versa, illustrates the nature of the bilateral relationship that grew out of the EDU/IDU framework, allowing us to understand why that window on the world of campaigning appeared in the first place. While Grønnern and Granholt were eager to appropriate US practices of fundraising, phone banking, direct mail and computer technology, their Republican partners remained mainly passive, responding to requests rather than taking the initiative. In a larger context, the exchange’s reliance on Norwegian initiatives reflected a difference in the perception of its purpose. For Høyre, the exposure to American competence had a great value in itself. For the Republicans, the cooperation could be seen as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

The Terms of Transfer

The American willingness to contribute, like the institutional backing of the Austrians and the West Germans, must be understood in relation to the larger context of transnational center-right cooperation. The EDU and IDU were not primarily geared towards the refinement of member party organizations. Rather, they were ideologically defined creations of the Cold War, with the issue of European integration as another strong motivation in the case of the EDU. Accordingly, the EDU spent its first two years focusing exclusively on policy

development and the consolidation of non-socialist political alternatives outside the Soviet sphere of influence. The choice of topics for the first committees established by the infant organization, is ample illustration. Before there was a campaign seminar group, the EDU had put together research committees on “Eurocommunism”, “European structures”, “employment”, and “energy and environment” (Tobisson et al. 1998:116-21).⁴⁰ As a global organization, the IDU was obviously less preoccupied with European integration than the EDU, making the Cold War the single most important context for American participation. Schuette said the IDU “was at its best” when it constituted an “international ideological counterweight to the Socialist International”.⁴¹ Joseph Gaylord expressed similar views when he said there was a sense of “a brotherhood right-of-center”, and that he “always took time when asked”.⁴² The emphasis on that larger framework, and the IDU’s role in fighting the Cold War, is evident in the institutional setup of the American parties’ international operations.

The Democratic and the Republican Party were affiliated with one non-profit foundation each, respectively the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and the National Republican Institute for International Affairs (NRIIA).⁴³ Both received the majority of their funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which had been established by the US Congress in 1983, with the purpose as stated on its inauguration day by President Ronald Reagan: “to do a little selling of the principles of democracy” (Reagan 1983). NDI and NRIIA were among a total of four associated foundations that received funds through the NED. The NED itself was subject to partial oversight by the USIA and the State Department, and it depended on Congress for annual grants. Specific budget allocations to the four foundations and their projects were made by NED’s board, which consisted of leaders from the two parties, the trade unions, and the US Chamber of Commerce (Pinto-Duschinsky 1991:47-8). Since it was in his capacity of

President of the NRIIA that Schuette carried out his IDU liaison work on behalf of the Republican Party, he personally tied the transnational activity of the Republican Party together with federally funded foreign policy initiatives.⁴⁴ According to Pinto-Duschinsky, the NRIIA played an “important role” in the IDU in the 1980s (1991:51).

Given these affiliations, it could be argued that the access to US expertise, as provided to Høyre through the EDU and IDU, was a result of concerns similar to those behind the access provided by the USIA. Given the indirect nature of government influence on the NRIIA, and the USIA’s status as an official agency of the federal administration, there are obvious differences in the degree to which they could be politically directed. All the same, they were both foreign policy instruments, each adapted to their purpose. To Høyre, however, the seemingly blurred lines between the motivations of foreign policy and partisan activity were less of an issue. To Grønner and Granholt, there appears to have been a marked difference between the sporadic invitations from the USIA on the one hand, and on the other the IDU’s opportunity for direct contact and mutual trust, with Schuette in particular.

As we ask why Høyre’s window on the world of campaigning appeared, it becomes clear that although the bilateral initiatives to exchange campaign experiences overwhelmingly came from Norway, the relationships were by-products of the Cold War. If we adopted the concept of campaign technique imports as taking place according to a what Plasser et al. (1999:102; see also Plasser 2002:18-19) have called a “shopping model”, where the recipient picks and chooses the goods that best fit his purpose, we should remain conscious that the mall in this case was built and the goods were supplied because it served the purpose of the exporter. The framework of the IDU and EDU was outside Høyre’s control, meaning that the access points were there at the mercy of more powerful participants. The use of those points, however, appears to have been entirely guided by Høyre’s own priorities and domestic pressures. In other words, the United States did not direct the dissemination, and it only partly

directed the range of choice. The most continuous influence from US campaigning came not from Washington, but indirectly by way of the British, Austrian, and West German EDU seminar participants, all of them with their own agenda for European and global cooperation.

Conclusions

This article has applied historical research to explore and understand one particular point of contact between different actors in the development of North American and European election campaigns in the 1980s. Such studies help explain how transfers are at all possible. In the case of the EDU, the collective interpretation at the seminars facilitated cross-cultural exchanges of ideas and practices which might otherwise have been rejected as unfamiliar or even undesirable. To the overall issue of global campaign transfers this means that by gaining direct knowledge about each channel of transfer, we are enabled to better understand each process of adaptation, or creolization. Currently, the literature does not appear to grant the process of mediation the central role that this article would suggest is appropriate. In the concept of modernization as presented by Swanson and Mancini (1996), the key explanatory argument is that campaign innovations or imports are caused by changes of conditions in the receiving society. The same premise is central to the professionalization concept more recently advocated by Negrine et al. (2007:10). Indeed, the case study of Høyre's bilateral relationships supports the thesis that the receiving party initiates transfers according to its own perceived needs. However, this article argues that imports and transfers depend not only on domestic incentives, but also on the type and availability of channels of transfer to facilitate them. Therefore, existing concepts of campaign change need to integrate mediating instances in order to provide a comprehensive explanation of how transfers take place and how they affect the global or regional convergence implied by "Americanization".

Mediation is important not only as a step inherent to the transfer process, but also as a vantage point for the study of what Ryfe termed "the conditions that structure [the actors']

experience” (2001:414). From the historian’s point of view, the transnational communication among 1980s campaign operatives on the European center-right must be explained in the light of the era’s international relations. It is evident that for its very existence the EDU relied strongly on Cold War alliances and concerns. Hence, so did the EDU campaign seminar group; it was access for allies. Herein lies a challenge for the concepts of modernization, Americanization, and professionalization; historical context is not easily integrated into general models of explanation. Obviously, this leads back to the introduction’s question of differences between social sciences and history. Whereas the social sciences may seek the inherent nature of campaign development processes as such, the historian will aim to explain each process as an integral part of its spatial and temporal context. Such disparity notwithstanding, this article has asserted that where concepts and explanations can be mutually suggested, transferred and adapted, there is a fertile common ground.

Notes

¹ The documents in question are part of the collection deposited in the Norwegian National Archives by Høyres hovedorganisasjon, the central office of the Norwegian Conservative Party. In the following notes, these are referred to by document name or number, date, box number (e.g. D-0350) and collection name (e.g. PA-583-3).

Collection catalogue available at

http://www.arkivverket.no/fk/classes/fk_arkiv.php?ft=1&qc=f17d929f992f165b0a1fd7aff35d5950&arkivenhetid=4628 (accessed July 23, 2008)

² EDU/1981/554 [Minutes, Steering Committee], June 15, 1981, D-0035; EDU/1982/794 [Minutes, Steering Committee], n.d. [October 1982], D-0350; Fridtjov Clemet to Tom Vraalsen, Permanent mission of Norway to the United Nations, October 25, 1982, D-0384, PA-583-3 (Høyres Hovedorganisasjon collection), Norwegian National Archives, Oslo, Norway.

³ IPG/1982/004 [IPG acronym for Inter-Party Group. Discussion paper, working structures], n.d., D-0350, PA-583-3.

⁴ “Minutes of the 7th Meeting of the Steering Committee”, June 20, 1980, D-0348, PA-583-3.

⁵ “Proposed work programme for the EDU Expert Group on Election Campaign Techniques”, n.d., D-0348, PA-583-3.

⁶ For a list of EDU’s temporary and permanent internal committees, see “Annex”, in Tobisson et al. (1998:116-21).

⁷ Khol was director of the academy (orig. “Politische Akademie”) 1974-1992. “Andreas Khol – Curriculum Vitae”, <http://doku.oevp.at/artikel.aspx?where=013281&bhcp=1> (accessed August 22, 2007)..

⁸ EDU/1984/1070 [Minutes, campaign managers’ seminar], September 17, 1984, D-0351, PA-583-3.

⁹ Khol to EDU parties, September 20, 1984, D-0042; EDU/1986/1364 [Report, campaign managers’ seminar], December 15, 1986, D-0353; Peter Gluchowski, “The socio-demographic bases of EDU-parties”, September 1981, D-0349, PA-583-3.

¹⁰ EDU/1982/745 [Report on election campaign techniques], n.d. [presented to Steering Committee on May 28, 1982]; EDU/1982/760 [Work programme EDU 1982/1983], June 23, 1982; EDU/1982/794 [Minutes, Steering Committee], n.d. [October 1982], D-0350; EDU/1984/1070 [Minutes, campaign managers’ seminar], September 17, 1984, D-0351; EDU/1985/1199 [Report by the Executive Secretary], October 3, 1985, D-0352; “Rapport fra Svein Grønnern. EDU – Communication Seminar – London 28.-29. juni 1968[sic]”, July 8, 1986, D-0098; EDU/1987[sic]/1326 [Agenda, campaign managers’ seminar], August 26, 1986; EDU/1986/1364 [Report, campaign managers’ seminar], December 15, 1986; EDU/1987/1419 [Minutes, Steering Committee], June 30, 1987, D-0353; Andreas Khol to Svein Grønnern, July 7, 1987, D-0372; EDU/1988/1483, February 3, 1988; EDU/1988/1544 [Work programme EDU 1988/1989], June 16, 1988, D-0355; EDU/1989/1679 [Report by the Executive Secretary], September 13, 1989, D-0356; Khol to Grønnern, November 11, 1990; EDU/1990/1834 , n.d., D-0357, PA-583-3.

¹¹ EDU/1982/745, n.d., D-0350; Khol to Clemet, August 8, 1984, D-0351; EDU/1984/1054 [Report by the Executive Secretary], June 20, 1984, D-0351, PA-583-3.

¹² Rolf Pettersen and Sverre Granholt to [n.n.], November 11, 1984, D-0091; EDU/1984/1091 [Mailing list, campaign material], March 4, 1985, D-0352, PA-583-3.

¹³ Khol to Clemet, August 8, 1984, D-0351, PA-583-3.

¹⁴ Tobisson received his doctorate at Gothenburg University in 1973 on the bargaining rights of government employees in Sweden: Lars F. Tobisson, “Framväxten av statstjänstemännens förhandlingsrätt: en studie av en beslutsprocess” (dr.fil. dissertation, Gothenburg University, 1973); EDU/1984/1070 [Minutes, campaign managers’ seminar], September 17, 1984, D-0351, PA-583-3.

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- ¹⁵ “Nominations to committee-work of EDU as per October 14th, 1980”, n.d., D-0348, PA-583-3.
- ¹⁶ For UK campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s, see Scammell (1995) and Kavanagh (1996); EDU/1984/1053 [Work programme EDU 1984/1985], June 18, 1984, D-0351; EDU/1985/1162 [Minutes, Steering Committee], June 17, 1985, D-0352, PA-583-3.
- ¹⁷ EDU/1983/927 [Memo, direct mail seminar program], September 20, 1983, D-0350, PA-583-3.
- ¹⁸ An edited version was published as Plasser, Fritz. (1987). Parteien unter Stress: zur Dynamik der Parteiensysteme in Österreich, der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den Vereinigten Staaten. Vienna: Böhlau.
- ¹⁹ EDU/1988/1558 [Summary, Party Leaders’ Conference], August 30, 1988, D-0354; EDU/1989/1623 [Minutes, campaign managers’ seminar], March 3, 1989; EDU/1989/1703 [List of participants, campaign managers’ seminar], October 11, 1989, D-0356, PA-583-3.
- ²⁰ EDU/1987/1326, August 26, 1986, D-0353; EDU/1989/1623, March 3, 1989, D-0356, PA-583-3.
- ²¹ EDU/1984/1054, June 20, 1984, D-0351, PA-583-3; Joe McCeney, personal correspondence (email), October 5, 2007.
- ²² EDU/1985/1199, October 3, 1985, D-0352; EDU/1989/1623, March 3, 1989, D-0356, PA-583-3.
- ²³ IPG/1982/002 [Discussion paper, working structures], n.d.; IPG/1982/004, n.d., D-0350, PA-583-3.
- ²⁴ IDU/1991/013 [IDU acronym for International Democrat Union. Memo, political plan], n.d., D-0379, PA-583-3.
- ²⁵ IDU/1991/1981 [Report by the Executive Secretary 1990/91], August 14, 1991, D-0359, PA-583-3.
- ²⁶ Granholt to Roger Boaden, telex order, n.d., D-0370, PA-583-3.
- ²⁷ Boaden to Granholt, telex, October 16, 1983, D-0370; Granholt to Edgar Hellerød et al., November 17, 1983, B-0020, PA-583-3.
- ²⁸ “Sekretærsirkulære Nr.2”, February 1, 1984, D-0091, PA-583-3.
- ²⁹ “I kontakt”, n.d., Ge-0033, PAO-134 (Oslo Høyre collection), Oslo State Archives, Oslo, Norway.
- ³⁰ “Sekretærsirkulære Nr. 3”, March 1, 1985, D-0093, PA-583-3.
- ³¹ “Program – fylkessekretærkonferansen høsten 1986”, n.d., D-0276; Grønnern to Harvey Thomas, February 8, 1989, D-0373; “Toppkandidatuttrening”, January 25, 1989, D-0206; [n.n.] to Thomas, March 16, 1990, D-0374, PA-583-3.
- ³² Foreign consultants were barely employed in the Norwegian 2005 parliamentary campaign, although Joe Trippi of Howard Dean fame gave a lecture to Sosialistisk Venstreparti (The Socialist Left Party) on grassroots campaigning in the fall of 2004. (Ole Mathismoen, ”Med SV inn i fremtida,” *Aftenposten*, November 6, 2004, 4.)

³³ The Democratic Party sent observers to EDU meetings and early IDU gatherings but did not join among the IDU founders. The relationship with Høyre during the 1980s remained correspondingly remote.

³⁴ Schuette's formal position was President of the National Republican Institute for International Affairs, to which we shall return below.

³⁵ Grønnern to Keith Schuette, July 18, 1988, D-0372, PA-583-3; Interview, Keith Schuette, April 28, 2005, Washington, DC.

³⁶ Interview, Schuette.

³⁷ Grønnern to Schuette, March 15, 1989, D-0374, PA-583-3.

³⁸ Interview, Schuette.

³⁹ Interview, Joseph ("Joe") Gaylord, April 28, 2005, Washington, DC.

⁴⁰ The committee structure was regularly altered, as new policy areas appeared on the horizon.

⁴¹ Interview, Schuette.

⁴² Interview, J. Gaylord.

⁴³ NRIIA was later renamed the International Republican Institute (IRI), under which name it still operates.

⁴⁴ Schuette was president of the NRIIA 1984-1990. Schuette to Grønnern, August 8, 1990, D-0375, PA-583-3.

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