

British Conservative Scepticism towards European Union Re-examined.

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The issue of Europe has created fundamental problems for party management for both the major British parties in recent decades. However, this article clearly reveals the extent of contemporary Conservative euroscepticism and the marginal position in the Parliamentary Conservative Party of those Conservatives with pro-integrationist views on Europe. The Conservative Party has always prided itself on being a 'broad church' containing a variety of Conservative political groups and attitudes ranging from centre right interventionists to neo-liberal idealists. It has been the ascendancy of the neo-liberal idealists which has most coloured British Conservative politics in recent times. And British Conservatism has been hard to ignore in relation to the process of globalisation, at least since the long 'Thatcher decade' and the rise of this neo-liberal ascendancy. Thus, the article also examines the increasing importance of what may be termed the 'globalist ideology' within the Conservative Party, particularly vis-à-vis European integration, and how this has unexpectedly re-emphasised and bolstered the traditional nationalism and support for parliamentary sovereignty within the Party.

Ironically, however, it may be argued that parliamentary sovereignty in its purest form allowed the Conservative leadership to pass the European Communities Bill in 1972 and to proceed with the Maastricht Treaty twenty years later in 1992. A truism of course but it should be noted, in short, that both these fundamental but contentious Bills on Europe only became law by virtue of the support of Liberals and Labour rebels in Parliament who were prepared to support the Conservative leadership on the matter. Indeed, the Conservative Eurosceptical rebels of the 'Maastricht wars' have now emerged as the new custodians of party policy. Iain Duncan Smith, who won the 2001 leadership contest, rebelled against the party whip ten times on the Maastricht Bill. Bill Cash, the new Shadow Attorney General, registered an amazing 50 dissenting votes, while Ann Winterton, the new Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, was not far behind with 48 dissenting votes (Baker et al, 1997b). Bernard Jenkin, Shadow Defence and John Whittingdale, Shadow Trade and Industry, only registered such dissent twice but we could have no better picture of a Party moving in an increasingly eurosceptical direction than the present composition of the Shadow Cabinet. Remarkable, when one remembers the political commentary in the press at the time that it was 'hard to imagine them anywhere near the Cabinet' (Baker et al, 1993). Not only do we find 'sceptic' MPs running the party but as we see from our tables below, we also have ample empirical evidence to show this eurosceptical shift in Conservative MPs' attitudes to Europe between 1994 and 1998.

Conducting the survey

The extent of the euroscepticism in the Conservative Party is revealed in the following tables derived from our surveys of British MPs conducted in 1994 (ESRC R000231298) and 1998 (ESRC R000222397). We employed 24 attitude statements on the various aspects of European integration to both surveys which are thus, directly comparable. These statements elicited 'Likert type' responses of *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neither*, *disagree* and *strongly disagree*. A sample of the wide range of issues covered by these statements are set out in Table 1 through Table 4 below where we have 'collapsed' the responses into agree and disagree categories.¹

Sovereignty, institutional and constitutional matters

The British Conservative Party has, of course, played its part in the past as the self-proclaimed and relatively united British 'party of Europe', (although the anti-European dissidents in Conservative ranks were numerous enough to oblige the Heath Government to rely on pro-European MPs from other parties to win the crucial parliamentary votes on entry in 1971). In part, this was motivated by a wish to strengthen European defences against communism, and also to safeguard liberal democratic institutions in Germany. As a result, the disappearance of Soviet Communism after 1989 was of great significance with regard to attitudes towards the EU, since anti-communism had provided British Conservatism's main external enemy in the post-war era. With the need to defend Europe much reduced British Conservatives have, if anything, displayed an even greater 'Atlanticist bent', emphasising economic and cultural ties to the USA, rather than ties with Europe. At the same time the potential rise of the now reunited German state to political as well as economic European pre-eminence reawakened fears of Germany among some British Conservatives, particularly because of their perception of a Franco-German 'axis' pushing forward a self-interested European agenda at the expense of British national interests.

Other developments have further weakened Conservative attachment to Europe. Firstly, the economic, cultural, and social trends associated with 'globalisation' have both begun to threaten the nation-state and national identity (Baker and Seawright, 2000) while at the same time making their defenders all the keener to protect them. At the same time the implementation of the Single European Act (SEA) after 1992 has accelerated the pace of European economic and political integration. Many British Conservatives reacted in a hostile way because so many of the forms of political identity which they have traditionally promoted have often been closely linked to an appeal to the sovereign British nation-state, which now appeared threatened by legal and administrative encroachments emanating from Brussels and Strasbourg.

British Conservatives have long given primacy to the nation state. Linda Colley's study of the formation of British national identity traces this back to an eighteenth century fear that

¹ The response rate from the Conservative MPs was 33 per cent for 1994 and 42 per cent for 1998. Questionnaires were anonymous but MPs could return a separate identity-coded postcard which enabled us to test against known Party groupings and ideological categories. All in all, taking into account the controversial nature of the issues covered, we believe we obtained a satisfactory degree of representativeness from the tests we deployed (see Baker et al, 1996 and Baker et al, 1999).

Catholic France posed a threat to the mainly Protestant, traditions and institutions of British national life. National symbols like John Bull and Britannia, and slogans like the ‘free born Englishman’ were developed in reaction to such fears. Although often largely English, and London based, the British political class wisely resisted the temptation to promote English nationalism and instead poured their energy into constructing a new British national identity based around Empire and reverence for Parliamentary institutions and customs, including sovereignty and independence. (L. Colley, 1992; G. Newman: 1987; G. Haseler: 1996).

Conservative accounts of the nation stressed the common values of national culture – common institutions, a shared history and common values – constructing an idealised ‘imagined community’ (B. Anderson, 1989) Reverence for Parliamentary sovereignty was the lynchpin of this vision, depicted as developing not from the abstractions of first principles, but rather evolving organically over past centuries, self-selecting the very best of national traditions and moral fibre. This was contrasted highly favourably with French nationalism based upon Roman law, Catholicism and intolerant feudalism. This view was famously endorsed and promoted in Edmund Burke’s conception of the ‘conservative nation’ as an ordered and integrative community. As Philip Lynch sees it:

This notion of a state based patriotism is a limited one, shunning ideological nationalism and universalistic prescriptions in favour of empiricism, parochialism (including nostalgia and mythology) and philosophical scepticism.

Lynch asserts that the enduring hold of this ideology within modern British Conservatism has been largely due to its intuitive philosophy and because it has not been static, but has developed over time, adapting or reacting to change, and even proving capable of gradually absorbing some of the themes espoused by its rivals, including ideological nationalism, racism and democratic populism. (P. Lynch, 1999, p. 8.)

As a result of this view of national sovereignty as an indivisible entity, any trends which undermine the nation-state as the core political entity can also be viewed as weakening British Conservatism and its governing project. At the heart of modern British Conservative statecraft is the defence of executive autonomy – expressed as parliamentary sovereignty, as Bulpitt (1986) saw it representing the ability to govern is the essential sphere of ‘high politics’ relatively insulated from both domestic and external pressures. British sovereignty is therefore of real and symbolic importance in the Conservative politics of nationhood. In this vision both democracy and legitimacy are located in the nation state, which is the basic unit of all legitimate democratic politics. In concrete policy terms today, this means seeking either a more intergovernmentalist and decentralised EU, or (a minority voice but a growing one) a wholesale reestablishment of Parliamentary sovereignty and British political independence through withdrawal from the EU. Table 1 outlines the hardening of attitudes of this particular mindset within the Party, regarding sovereignty and constitutional matters.

TABLE 1

ATTITUDES ON SOVEREIGNTY, INSTITUTIONAL
AND CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neither Agree Disagree	Strongly disagree/ Disagree
1.1 Britain should withdraw from the EU.			
1994	-	-	-
1998	26%	11%	63%
1.2 An act of Parliament should be passed to establish explicitly the ultimate supremacy of Parliament over EU legislation.			
1994	50%	17%	33%
1998	69%	7%	24%
1.3 The Commission should lose the right to initiate legislation.			
1994	60%	6%	34%
1998	61%	10%	29%
1.4 The key to closing the 'democratic deficit' is strengthening the scrutiny by national parliaments of the EU legislative process.			
1994	79%	11%	10%
1998	84%	10%	6%
1.5 Subsidiarity reinforces the federalist tendency in the EU.			
1994	28%	13%	59%
1998	45%	14%	41%

Note: Not all rows sum to 100% due to rounding.

We see in table 1 the growing wish for the reestablishment of Parliamentary sovereignty but moreover, in 1994, UK withdrawal from Europe was viewed as so far off the elite agenda that a question was not asked in the 1994 survey. However, in 1998, we found that over a quarter of Conservative MPs, at 26 per cent, were prepared to accept this 'nuclear option' and 11 per cent were undecided on the question. Although, it is clear from our data in table 1 that Mr Hague, post 1997, still had fundamental problems on the issue of Europe with a small number of Conservatives from the pro-European wing of the Party opposing the Party's inexorable sceptic path.

Monetary policy

This concern with sovereignty is mirrored in the party's attitudes to European monetary policy. The Party employed, to good effect, populist anti-*euro* policies at the 1999 European Election. However, general elections tend to be won or lost on the 'big issues' of the economy, health and education, as the Party was to so painfully find out. However, as clearly set out in table 2, the MPs attitudes have hardened against European monetary policy from an already sceptic high in 1994 but a more united, anti-European Conservative Party might still hope to gain from adopting a populist policy critical of the EU. In this electoral and party management arena there are some distinct advantages of adopting a hostile attitude towards Europe. In addition, key newspapers, owned by Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black, have continued to hound the Blair Government over the issue of keeping the Pound and have relentlessly attacked Europe as irredeemably bureaucratic, high tax, undemocratic and centralising. The distinct disadvantage is of course to be viewed by the general public as a single issue group obsessed by the issue of Europe.

TABLE 2

ATTITUDES ON MONETARY POLICY

Strongly agree/Neither Strongly Disagree/
Agree Disagree

2.1 Britain should never permit its monetary policy to be determined by a European Central Bank.

1994	63%	7%	30%
1998	66%	9%	25%

2.2 Britain should never rejoin the ERM.

1994	48%	16%	36%
1998	64%	6%	30%

2.3 Joining the Single Currency will signal the end of the UK as a sovereign nation.

1994	48%	11%	41%
1998	66%	6%	28%

2.4 It is essential that there should be a national referendum before the UK enters a single currency.

1994*	50%	5%	45%
1998	97%	2%	2%

*the question in 1994 read: ‘There should be a national referendum before the UK enters a single currency’.

National security

European integration once found favour from interventionists and from neo-liberals in the Conservative party alike because of the important security arguments which swayed many Conservatives, concerned as they were to strengthen Western Europe against communism, and to safeguard the relatively new liberal democratic institutions in Germany. The disappearance of Soviet Communism after 1989 was of great significance with regard to Tory attitudes towards the EU, since anti-communism had provided British Conservatism’s main external enemy in the post-war era. With the need to defend Europe much reduced in the post-Soviet era, many British Conservatives have been free to display their Atlanticist bias, emphasising Britain’s economic, political and cultural ties to the USA, rather than its ties with Europe. At the same time the potential rise of the now reunited German state to political as well as economic pre-eminence in Europe reawakened fears of a German resurgence among some British Conservatives, fanned by the perception of a Franco-German ‘axis’ pushing forward a self-interested European agenda at the expense of British national interests. These fears and anxieties are clearly evident in table 3 where near unanimity amongst Tory MPs is found regarding the common foreign and security pillar.

TABLE 3

ATTITUDES ON NATIONAL SECURITY

	Strongly agree/Neither Strongly disagree/ Agree Disagree		
3.1 Britain should block the use of QMV in the areas of foreign and defence policy.			
1994	85%	9%	6%
1998	90%	1%	9%
3.2 A single European Army would undermine rather than underpin the security of the UK.			
1994	73%	12%	15%
1998	83%	7%	10%

Economic policy

Statements 4.6 and 4.7, in table 4 below, highlight the extent of the neo-liberal attitudes to economic policy within the contemporary Conservative Party. However, statement 4.2 gives a clear indication of the level of hostility towards any EU level strategy on such neo liberal policies. This approach informs the attitude of many British Conservative Eurosceptics on the European Union and European integration. The European Union is viewed as a long-term Franco-German project designed ultimately to create a federal super-state which would impose unacceptably high levels of taxation, spending and regulation on all its component parts, making the UK economy uncompetitive in global markets outside the EU. If successful

it would undo the hard-won market disciplines, created during the Thatcher era in the 1980s, as an expression of the democratic preferences of the majority of British people.

This ‘global ideology’ of the Party is found in the hyperglobalist perspective which is one of three strategic perspectives which are crucial in understanding the attitudes inside the Conservative Party concerning the process of EU and Britain’s role within it. These three positions are; *hyper-globalism*, *intergovernmentalism* and *open regionalism*. A short synopsis of these three strategic perspectives are set out below for a fuller account of these perspectives vis-à-vis the Conservative Party’s attitudes to Europe, see Baker *et al* (forthcoming).

TABLE 4

ATTITUDES ON ECONOMIC POLICY

	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neither Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	
4.1 In principle there should be a European Union strategy on deregulation			
1994	53%	9%	38%
1998	50%	7%	43%
4.2 In principle there should be a European Union strategy on privatisation			
1994	25%	14%	61%
1998	33%	11%	56%
4.3 VAT taxation should be harmonised within the EU.			
1994	23%	5%	72%
1998	12%	1%	87%
4.4 Personal taxation should be harmonised within the EU.			
1994	3%	6%	91%
1998	1%	2%	97%
4.5 Company taxation should be harmonised within the EU.			
1994	17%	7%	76%
1998	10%	2%	88%
4.6 A reduction in social costs placed on the employer is essential for job creation in the EU.			
1994	89%	2%	9%
1998	94%	3%	2%

4.7 Inflexibility in European labour markets is the principal cause of unemployment.

1994	71%	14%	15%
1998	87%	3%	10%

4.8 The EU's budget should be enlarged.

1994	10%	8%	82%
1998	6%	3%	91%

Europe and Globalisation : a new British Conservative agenda?

From the outset it should be recognised that these three strategic perspectives are ideal types, designed to isolate strategic options, and therefore not necessarily entirely distinct from each other in the discourses and factions of party politics. Indeed, there can be considerable overlap and even deviations from these notional norms in practice, given the way ideological symbols are used in political debate.

Hyper-globalisation.

The first perspective in the globalisation debate is hyper-globalism. The proponents of hyper-globalism argue that the changes introduced by globalisation are so profound that they have altered irrevocably the political economy context of national policy-making. The powers of the nation-state are depicted as being 'hollowed out' by a huge increase in capital mobility due to the computerised financial and commercial flows which have created for the first time a global (as distinct from international) economy whose major ebbs and flows national governments are simply powerless to control.

The policy implications for this are considerable, since there is little, if any, room left for discretionary policies aimed at protecting, subsidising, or fine-tuning the national economy. The programmes and policy stances of national governments in the preceding era of social democracy, including Keynesian economic management aimed at giving priority to growth and employment, simply no longer work. Instead, priority must be allocated to maintaining macroeconomic stability, defined narrowly as the control of inflation and fiscal balance. It is suggested that Governments which attempt to pursue traditional interventionist or social democratic objectives quickly lose the confidence of the financial markets, as the British Government did in the IMF crisis in 1976, the French Government in 1981/2 and the Swedish Government in 1994. As Margaret Thatcher put it in a memorable phrase: 'You cannot buck the market'.

Much of the more esoteric discourse of hyper-globalism is both anti-political and fatalistic and, in some of its variants, supremely optimistic about the benign opportunities and long-term effects of largely, if not entirely, unregulated global markets. Nations and states can wither away with little noticeable long-term ill-effects for popular democracy or general human well-being. Their only task is to facilitate the adjustment of the national economy and

national institutions to the requirements of global competition, removing all forms of regulation, for example, friction in labour markets that hinder market flexibility, and are properly concerned with reducing all extraneous burdens on industry, especially taxation and social costs, to the absolute minimum. The standpoint of hyper-globalism is, therefore, a difficult one for any political party to embrace, since most political parties are rooted in the institutions of the nation-state, for which hyper-globalism, in its more extreme formulations, sees no future.

But there is a way of reconciling an attachment to the concept of the nation as the key agency in governance, with a belief in the economistic and deterministic hyperglobalist perspective. Indeed, this position has come to represent the dominant strand of thinking within the British Conservative Party over recent decades. In this approach, a programme of low taxation, low government spending, deregulation and privatisation is combined with strong attachment to national sovereignty and the nation-state as the guarantor of national identity and national independence. The national policy making constraints of globalisation are welcomed because they rule out the kind of social democratic and socialist measures which are viewed as incompatible with British national identity, forcing the government to set the people free whatever its ideological predilections.

As we have seen this approach informs the attitude of many British Conservative Eurosceptics on the European Union and European integration. In its most highly developed form, the correct policy for Britain flowing from this analysis is to regain parliamentary sovereignty in order to seek to become a de-regulated, privatised, low tax, low welfare, low union, low public spending, offshore island, which would take full advantage of its links with markets in North America and East Asia. But what remains central to this perspective is the vision of national political and economic independence – seen as crucial for protecting the economic policy which can help the economy adjust best to globalisation, while leaving the nation state intact to represent national traditions and proper democratic accountability.

The implications of this approach is to deem the EU, with its federalist and protectionist practices and intentions, to be a dangerous obstacle to such natural developments in the global marketplace. At its most extreme it leads to the advocacy of complete withdrawal of Britain from the EU; at the very least, it seeks to reverse the federalist tide to the position pre-Maastricht.

Intergovernmentalism

A second broad position in the globalisation debate argues strongly against the accuracy of the globalisation thesis as a model of the real world in which we now live and defends the continuing viability of social democracy and other competing nationally-based economic policy regimes. This view recognises that there have been significant changes in the way in which the international economy has been organised in the last thirty years, but it insists that it has not mutated into a global economy, and that nation-states, on the whole, have not declined in power. The globalisation thesis is depicted therefore as seriously misleading on the extent and scope of the changes in the international economy and how they have affected politics. In this model the world economy is still *international* rather than *global*. A global economy is defined as driven by supranational forces and co-ordinated by transnational institutions such

as transnational corporations, while an international economy is one which is managed through bi-lateral and multi-lateral negotiations between nation-states and in which therefore the sovereign nation-state remains the key administrative and political institution.

Seen from this perspective, the contemporary 'international' economy is based on large annual trade and investment flows between three dominant centres - North America, Europe, and Japan. But, these flows, though sizeable, are seen as relatively small in relation to domestic GDP and do not amount to the all-embracing supranational global economy pictured by many theorists of globalisation. If certain market-orientated policies are being imposed through the world economy on all states, even the most powerful like the US, the explanation is to be sought in the policies pursued by the dominant *states* in the international economy and not in impersonal, structural economic forces operating purely at the global level. The key assumption of intergovernmentalism is that the world economy remains an international economy rather than a global economy and therefore that what happens in it still depends to a significant extent on 'real politics,' that is, on the political will, democratic choice and political programmes of its constituent states.

At one time this perspective would have embraced protectionism as a central focus for policy, as in the Social Imperialism of the Chamberlainite wing of the Conservative Party which dominated its thinking on economic policy in the first half of the twentieth century. This tradition has all but disappeared and, in fact, support for protectionism is now very limited in the UK. Support, however, for the notion that the nation state is still capable of playing its traditional post World War II role in economic management and regulation is still strong within the Conservative Party. For some Conservatives it is simply a case of national government pursuing traditional economic objectives, but doing so in a more light-footed manner, where possible in concert with Britain's closest trading allies in Europe while avoiding adverse reactions from the markets.

Open Regionalism

The third broad position which has structured the British debate on globalisation is 'open regionalism'. Open regionalists accept the globalization thesis, in that the economic trends which make up the new world economy of the last thirty years are in certain respects qualitatively new, but it does not accept the more extreme formulations of the hyper-globalisation thesis. On the one hand, proponents insist that nation-states remain important political actors on the global stage but, on the other, they reject the claims of intergovernmentalism that there has been no substantial erosion of the capacity of nation-states and in particular, the view that globalisation, in policy terms, represents a set of choices which can be reversed. From this perspective, the changes represented by globalisation, particularly in relation to global financial markets, are real and enduring changes in the very architecture of world politics and have also vitally altered the context for national economic policy making. Certain policy stances and policy choices are simply no longer viable, but this is seen as far from meaning that national governments are left without any real choice as the hyperglobalists argue.

This is, at root, a regionalist perspective of global and national politics. Central to open regionalism is the relationship of the UK to the process of European integration. In this

perspective the development of new forms of regionalism in several parts of the world does not run counter to globalisation, but is rather an important step which helps promote it. It therefore rejects the interpretation of those who see this as prefiguring a return to a world of rival closed economic and military blocs.

The very term *open* regionalism signals that these regional blocs such as the EU are not mere protectionist fortresses, but part of a wider system of new and essentially healthy forms of governance and regulation of the global economy. They remain open to world trade and subject to its rules. Yet, at the same time, they facilitate the creation of a new political space, a process which has gone furthest in Europe, which allows the discussion of common concerns, and the elaboration of new forms of governance, of which the most recent and most important examples have been the project of economic and monetary union and the associated launch of a single currency, the *euro*, at the beginning of 2002. From the perspective of open regionalism traditional goals of national economic management are now best pursued at the collective level of the European Union, rather than left to the nation-state alone.

Adherents of this approach differ on the kind of economic and monetary union which they seek, on how many powers should be exercised at the European level and about how desirable (or necessary) it is to further democratise EU institutions. However, what unites them, is the belief that a regional framework of governance is an indispensable tier in the search for new and better ways to regulate the economy and deal with the new and insuperable challenges posed by globalisation to the old stand-alone sovereign nation states.

The Hardening Attitudes of British Conservative Parliamentarians on Europe

The responses to the statements in our tables 1 through 4 clearly reveal the now even greater level of euroscepticism in the present Parliamentary Conservative Party [PCP], an increase of scepticism from an already extant high that we found in the previous PCP survey of 1994. But, importantly the data also provides an insight into our three positions in the globalisation–regionalisation debate; hyper-globalism, inter-governmentalism, and open regionalism, in relation to the divisions in the Parliamentary Conservative Party over Europe.

To reiterate, these categories are not mutually exclusive and we should expect a degree of overlap in practice, particularly in our first two positions which give priority to national sovereignty and indeed that is what we do find in Tables 1 through 4.

With this crucial ideological dimension in mind, i.e. the split between interdependence and sovereignty in the Conservative elite, we see from the data in the tables that the advocates of national sovereignty within the Party are winning out in the European debate, while the position of the adherents to the open regionalist approach have been further marginalised. We see this marginalisation, of the ‘integrationist Conservatives’, quite clearly by viewing statements (2.1 through 2.4) in our Table 2. Around two thirds of the Parliamentary Party are opposed to the most recent of the ‘common concerns’ of the EU, the single currency project. We should not be too surprised to find that Conservative MPs, once bitten by ERM, are twice shy about the possibility of rejoining it (2.2). Moreover, two thirds of these MPs want no part in a project which they see as sounding the death knell on national sovereignty for the UK

(2.3) and there is near unanimous antipathy to any 'Euro-Keynesian' implication of budget enlargement in table 4 on economic policy (4.8). This antipathy to the elaboration of new forms of governance is starkly portrayed in Table 1.

Whereas the advocates of an open regional approach would not baulk at the supranational strengthening of EU institutions, to resemble the normal 'executive – legislature' relations of a liberal democracy, the vast majority of Conservative MPs' views are still firmly rooted in the institutions of the nation state. Indeed, we find a 19 per cent rise, to 69 per cent in this Parliament, in the number of MPs who believe that a Supremacy Act should be passed which would in reality challenge the Treaty of Rome (1.2). Nearly two thirds of the MPs would like to see the Commission lose its capacity to initiate EU policy (1.3), thus rejecting the idea of the Commission as an autonomous executive. This opposition to the irredeemable federalist conception of the EU is illustrated by the extent of the change in the views of MPs on the concept of subsidiarity. Rather than accept the European meaning of subsidiarity, that decisions should be taken at the most decentralised level of government possible, the greater number of Conservative MPs (45 per cent) now believe that subsidiarity merely facilitates the federalist tendency (1.5); up from the level of just 28 per cent in the previous Parliament who held such a view. Moreover in table 3 eighty three per cent now believe that a single European Army would undermine the UK's security (3.2), while 90 per cent would like to see QMV blocked for foreign and defence policy (3.1).

Furthermore, when open regionalists talk of the 'democratic deficit' in the European Union, they usually advocate the strengthening of the EU Parliament, in the belief that this would make the EU more accountable to the people of Europe. But, in stark contrast, an overwhelming majority of Conservative MPs view the 'democratic deficit' as being due largely to a lack of scrutiny by national parliaments (1.4).

Examining in more detail the statements in Table 4, cognisant of the MPs' views on the constitutional issues from Table 1, we see that the future debate within the Conservative Party may well be one of intergovernmentalism versus hyper-globalism'; between those who believe in pragmatic arguments within the present European structures in order to obtain their goals and those who believe that this can only be achieved by a fundamental re-negotiation of the UK's position vis-à-vis those structures. The problem for William Hague was similar to his predecessor's, most of his MPs did not believe that such desirable goals of 'reducing employers' social costs' (4.6) and 'flexibility in labour markets' (4.7) can be procured through a principle of a European strategy on deregulation (4.1), or indeed through one on privatisation either (4.2). There is no better illustration of this antipathy to European structures and European solutions to such issues than taxation. Only one per cent of the MPs could accept the harmonisation of income tax (4.4), while the numbers advocating the harmonisation of 'Company Tax (4.5) and VAT (4.3) have all but halved since our first survey in 1994.

In conclusion, if the necessity for Britain joining EMU eventually becomes economically overwhelming this could make the issue of Europe 'in or out' the single most dangerous policy issue for any future Conservative administration.² A referendum on the issue would

² The British Debate on EMU is explored further in Andrew Gamble & Gavin Kelly 'Britain and EMU' in K. Dyson (ed) *European States and the Euro* Oxford, Oxford University Press 2001

certainly see the party and its business backers badly divided. The split between the intergovernmentalists and open regionalists will also be further exposed (within Labour too), but for the Conservatives the hyperglobalist option of withdrawal from the EU altogether would also surface as a real possibility, with powerful elite, local constituency and possibly even electoral support for such a strategy.

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