

THE CONSERVATIVE DILEMMA

Jon Trickett



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The Conservative Dilemma

“I am their leader. I must follow them.”

Andrew Bonar Law

“We are not retreating. We are just advancing in another direction.”

General McArthur

The Tories are in trouble. The day to day problems they face are self-evident.

But here we speak of a much deeper problem. They have not won an election for more than 20 years. In addition, as Tim Montgomerie, the editor of the Conservative Home web site has pointed out, no PM in almost 40 years has managed to increase his/her vote share between elections. They need to find a new identity in a modern Britain which they barely understand. Their core demographic is shrinking and under threat from UK Independence Party (UKIP), whilst the values of newer groups of voters stand in clear contrast to their core vote. Finally, they are relying almost entirely upon their lead upon an aging cohort of voters whilst younger and even middle aged voters show no serious inclination to vote for them.

The Conservative Party faces a deeply problematic future in its search for a parliamentary majority. This is not simply the view of a Labour politician. This is also the opinion of Lord Ashcroft, one of the Conservative Party's main strategists, who believes that his party will “struggle to piece together two fifths of the electorate”. We will in part rely on Lord Ashcroft's polling to explain the Tory dilemma and draw on wider sources in order to avoid the accusation that the data is lacking in objectivity. Other sources will be used to demonstrate that Ashcroft's research is accurate, though his conclusions mark the triumph of hope over reason.

Introduction

In the 20th Century it was often said that the Conservative Party was arguably the most successful political party in any Western Democracy; between the first post war election and 1997 the Conservatives were in power for 52 years. The party continually reinvented itself and was repeatedly elected into power. In 2010 they surprised many by appearing to adopt a cloak of liberal social attitudes and inclusiveness which led to the Coalition government.

But in May this year we passed the 20th anniversary of the last time the Conservatives obtained a majority in the House of Commons.

Despite their record of success in the last century, it is possible to postulate that they are facing an existential crisis which began to emerge most clearly following the 1992 election. The membership of the Conservative Party reflects most closely a social group and a set of values which are in rapid decline in Britain. They have lost half their membership since 2005. It is for this reason that the accusation that they are ‘out of touch’ has had such resonance in recent months.

This crisis and the consequential battle for a new identity were never properly resolved in the years of opposition after 1997. Indeed, the hunger for power and re-election prevented a proper debate taking place.

The debate about what a modern Conservative Party would look like has now begun in earnest. It is highly unusual, for a political party to attempt to discover its identity when in office and it is possible to see that the high command of the Government is becoming preoccupied by internal party management issues rather than government, precisely because their party fudged the issues whilst in opposition.

However, this paper will argue that the struggle within the high command of the Conservative Party reflects a wider problem than simply internal political management. In order to win an outright majority in normal times the Tories now need to reach well beyond their historic base of traditional Conservative voters, which will be termed for the purposes of this pamphlet the “True Blue Tories”.

In the 2010 election, they managed to secure the support of a second group of voters. These were people who had rarely voted Conservative

before and make up what will be called the '2010 Cohort' in this pamphlet. The problem for the Party is that the 2010 Cohort are substantially at variance with the characteristics, values, and attitudes of the True Blue Tories. The tensions in holding together this highly conflicted electoral base are the explanation for the conflict which we can now see within the Governing party.

In any event, even the coalescence of the True Blue Tories and 2010 Cohort failed to deliver a majority. In order to win outright, the Party needs the support of a further group. These are what Lord Ashcroft called the Tory "Considerers"; people who thought about voting Conservative in 2010 but in the end couldn't bring themselves to do it. This group didn't in the end convert into Tory voters because they feared that the Conservatives would not protect the NHS and were largely for the rich and privileged rather than for 'people like us'.

Both the 2010 Cohort as well as the Considerers have now deserted the Conservative Party for reasons which shall be explored in this pamphlet.

I. The Conservatives battle for an identity

Beneath the suave exteriors, the blue silk ties and Savile Row suits, sophisticated dinner parties, the faux bonhomie and the coded sentences, tribal hatreds threaten to consume sections of the leadership of the Conservative Party.

Flashes of the venom which now has entered into leading Conservative circles occasionally spill over into the public domain. One of the Conservative's leading modernisers Francis Maude allowed his frustration to show for an instant when he said "The Conservative Party will always suffer if it is seen as it is trying to turn back the clock to an imagined golden era". Who else could he have been turning his fire on but Thatcherites like Liam Fox or Norman Tebbit? Or what about Nick Boles MP who said 'Only by showing we really are on the side of ordinary people will we turn the Conservative Party back into a truly national party'? We can deduce from this that he clearly sees his party as a regional party which is seen as representing only the elite.

But here is a riposte from a senior Tory activist writing in the Telegraph 'The party need to have courage to stand up for its traditional values. We should be unashamed about promoting our ideals and principles. Most voters want controlled immigration. Most oppose European integration. And most share our support for freedom under the law and free markets.'¹

And finally there is the Mayor of London. Boris Johnson used an interview in *The Sunday Telegraph* to make a direct appeal to his party's core values, presenting himself as a "tax-cutting Conservative" in an attempt to place himself as a potential leader of the Party's right wing.

Now, we can choose to interpret these contending ideas and factions as a curiosity; a part of the detritus of every day politics and a reflection of the seething personal ambitions which poison so much of Westminster life.

To do so would be a mistake and would trivialise the issues at stake.

For the Conservative Party faces an existential threat. And all of these surface tensions reflect the underlying decay of the Conservative's traditional social base.

The more perceptive amongst them understand the need to change. Lord Ashcroft put it succinctly when he said "The need for new supporters is a mathematical fact."²

But they are in reality thrashing around for a new meaning in a period of rapidly shifting demographics which they can barely understand let alone control.

All of this will make fascinating social and political history, but for Labour it is far more important than that. In order that Labour can win again we need to understand the processes with which the Conservatives are attempting to struggle and to adapt our strategies accordingly.

Throughout this paper I will argue that the Conservative Party's electoral base is deeply fragmented and undergoing fundamental change. This explains the increasingly frenetic character of their internal party debates and equally the attempts to gerrymander the constitutional structures of the British political system for their own advantage.

It is not the purpose of this paper to suggest that there is an iron law of politics that they cannot win again. However, it is clear that the

long decades of the hegemony of a certain form of Toryism have now come to an end.

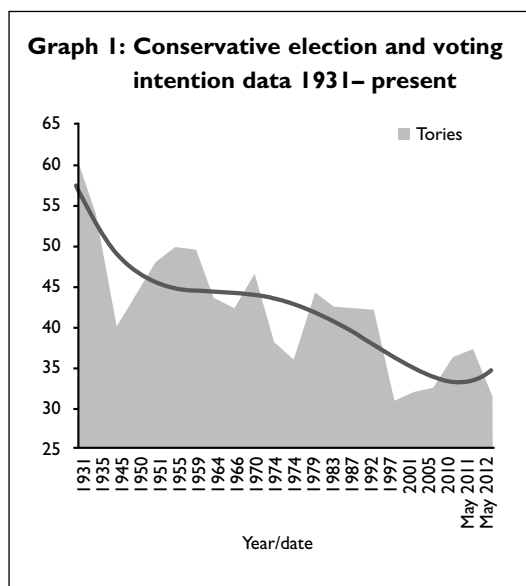
2. 1992–2005 elections – change in British social, political and economic attitudes

In retrospect the 1992 election marked a turning point for the Conservatives. It was the last point at which they were able to construct a Commons majority based on attaining a vote of 14.1 millions spread geographically across the country as a whole. Since then, they have never secured more than 10.6 million votes.

The Conservative Party have failed to gain a majority in the Commons and more importantly they have failed to mobilise voters in sufficient numbers across wide swathes of the country to sustain such a majority. It has widely been noted that their support is retreating from urban areas, Scotland and Wales, as well as the north of England.

Graph 1 shows the long term secular decline in the Conservative’s share of the vote; each peak lower than the last.

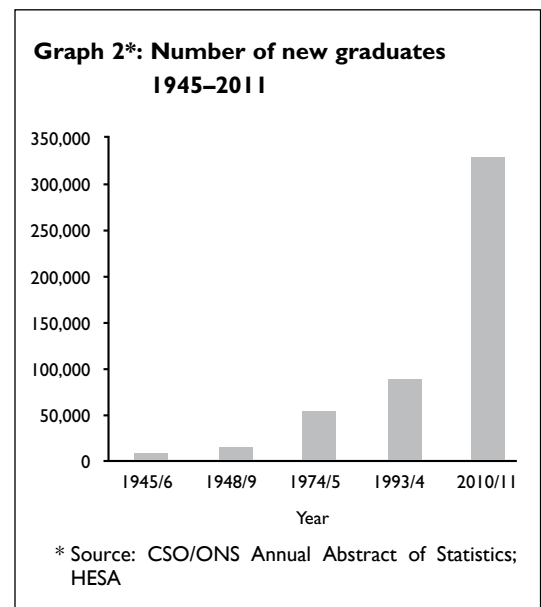
Britain was changing. The Conservatives failed to appreciate this fact.



We will look at three distinct groups of issues which are symptomatic of the wider Conservative dilemma: the economy/inequality; public services; and social mores.

It is not the central purpose of this paper to explain all the factors which underlie the loss of a significant Tory vote. But what is clear is that the British Middle Class – for so long the bedrock of Conservative voters – was undergoing profound changes in its origins, size, composition, role, and values.

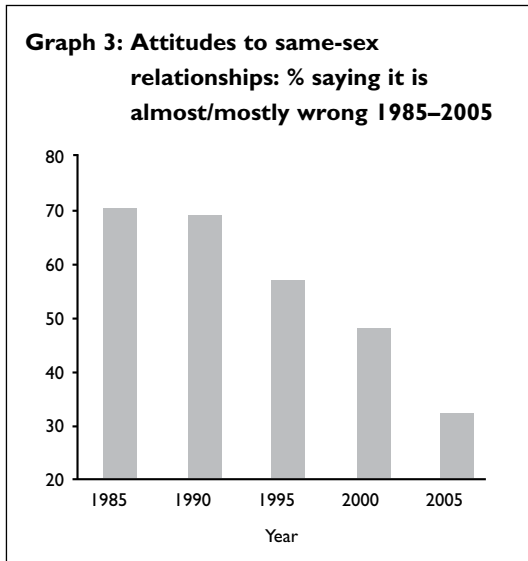
Take one factor, education, illustrated in **Graph 2** which shows the number of new graduates emerging from our universities in selected years over the period since the war. It is beyond the scope of our considerations here to analyse the impact of this change, but it clear that the consequences of middle class professions becoming increasingly the preserve of degree level educational qualifications is likely to have been profound. The values, expectations and social mores of hundreds of thousands of people per year going through our universities inevitably will have a transformative effect on the middle



class over the generations.

More tolerant social mores on a range of issues, but particularly life style choices, have begun to emerge. Take for example attitudes to same sex relationships and gay marriage. **Graph 3** the shift in public opinion in the issue in a matter of only 20 years. In 1985 70% of the British public were

opposed to same sex relationships. By 2005 it had already declined to 31%.

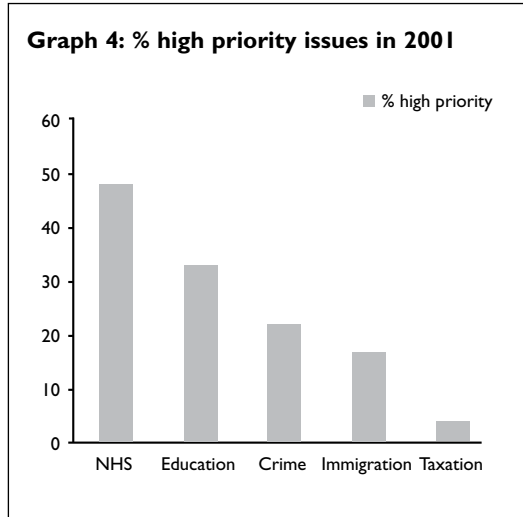


This may be a totemic issue for those voters who do not belong to the True Blue Brigade. If they are to reach out beyond this core vote they need to show a more modern face on same sex relationships. Cameron appeared to have understood this when he announced that the Government would legalise gay marriage.

As we know, however, this attempt to reach out beyond the core vote simply re-emphasised how much the rump of old True Blue Tory values still held sway within his Party. He was forced to concede a free vote for his MP’s in the Commons when the votes are eventually taken. The manoeuvre thereby only served to remind non-core voters why it was that they had not voted for the Party in 2010.

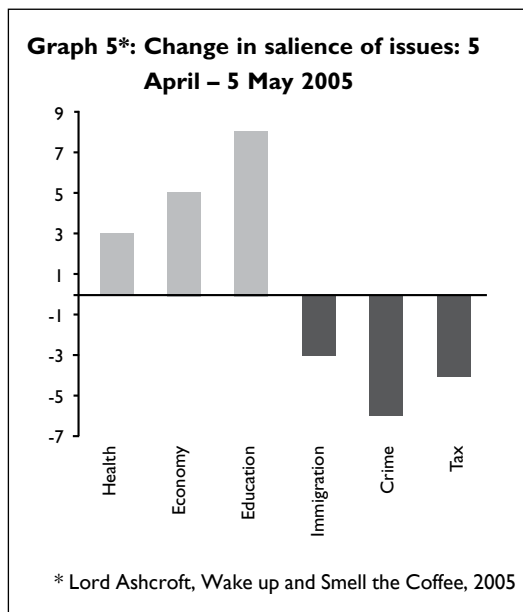
The complexities of these social changes and the troubles the Conservative Party face have clearly not been fully understood by the Party. Indeed, they chose to put up three right-wing leaders to between 1997 and 2005, each of whom proved to be a failure in connecting with social forces beyond the core vote.

In 2001, William Hague fought an election on tax cuts, with another shift to a right-wing focus. Again this was completely out of kilter with the public mood. As shown in **Graph 4**, the main priorities for people were the NHS and education, in stead of crime, immigration and taxation.



Very similar information can be produced to show the disconnection between the then leadership of the Tory party and the electorate in 2005.

It is interesting to watch how the British public reacts to the different issues which are raised by the political parties during an election campaign. **Graph 5** shows that analysis of issue salience for the 2005 General Election, traditionally centre-right issues such as tax, crime and immigration became less salient in people’s voting intention during the campaign whilst centre-left issues, such as health, education and the economy became more salient in the minds of voters. That the Conservative campaign focussed almost exclusively on issues such as immigration limits and reducing crime rates must be counted as a major failure for the Conservative Party and its leader Michael Howard.



At the end of this election, the Tory vote remained stubbornly below 9 million votes. Failure to adapt to the changing electorate was met with disastrous consequences; in 2001, the Conservatives only managed to attract 8.3 million voters, this increased slightly to 8.7 in 2005. This latter result was achieved despite the fact that Labour itself had seen a very significant decline in its own aggregate vote (Labour had lost almost 3 million votes between 1997 and 2005). The Conservatives had failed to reach beyond the True Blue Tory vote, which appears to stand at about just over 8 million voters.

Following the 2005 election, it was clear that some in the Conservative Party realised that the demographic shifts which we have talked about, coupled with a series of right-wing Conservative leaders, was endangering the Party's survival.

Francis Maude, known as a moderniser within the Conservative Party, stated in a speech to the 2005 Conference that the Conservatives needed a new leader that "*understands and reflects Britain today*".

Also after disappointing election results in 2005, Lord Ashcroft commented that:

"The Conservative Party had changed little since it was booted out of government eight years previously to a resounding national sigh of relief. Even after these eight years in opposition, the party was thought less likely than its opponents to care about ordinary people's problems, to share their values or to do what it promised. Many voters believed the party was out of touch and cared most about the interests of the well-off."

The battle for the Conservative leadership was fought with these underlying tones of concern. Even a right-winger like Liam Fox, in his bid for the leadership, claimed to want to fix "broken Britain" and was insistent that he was on the left for certain social issues.

It was David Cameron, the candidate who claimed he would "switch on a whole new generation" of Conservative voters, who was charged with the task of making the Conservatives electable, modern and more acceptable to the electorate.

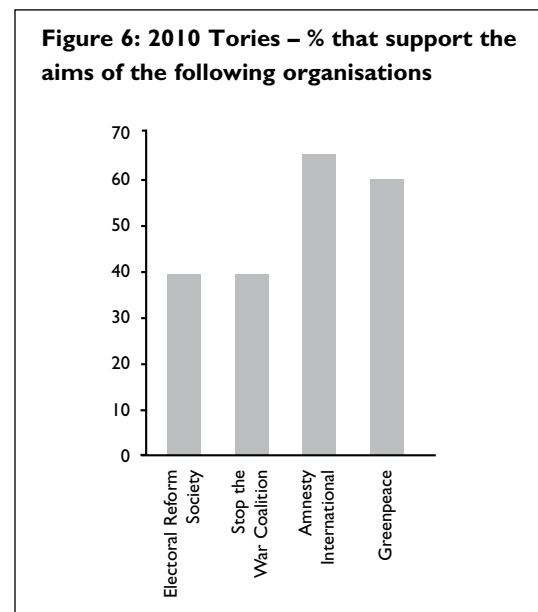
David Cameron made symbolic changes to the Conservative Party. He changed the Party logo

to a tree in an attempt to be perceived by the electorate as more environmentally friendly; it also indicated a change in direction for the Party in order to bring in a "new generation" of voters that Cameron had promised.

3. 2010 General Election³

David Cameron was meant to be the leader that secured the Conservatives a majority in 2010; however, he failed to do so.

Graph 6 shows that Conservative voters in 2010 had more liberal attitudes to certain institutions. This was because Cameron had secured the votes of electors who were not part of the True Blue Tory core vote.



From Lord Ashcroft's 2011 analysis, two categories of Conservative voter can be identified: what I have labelled the "True Blue Tories" and the "2010 Cohort". The True Blue Tories are the Conservative Party's core group of supporters that are generally aligned to right-wing issues, such as crime, immigration and taxation. They are also less likely to be socially liberal and support issues such as gay marriage. Ashcroft puts this group at about 8.2 million people. The 2010 Cohort had rarely/never voted for the Conservative Party before and tends to be

more socially liberal and protective over public services. They number about 2.5 million voters. There is also a third group who did not vote for the Conservative party in 2010, but considered doing so yet could not quite manage to bring themselves to vote for them for a variety of reasons. They are the ‘Considerers’ and consist of nearly 2 million people.

The Conservatives desperately need to appeal to all three groups to even have a chance of gaining a majority at the next election, but the tensions surrounding these three groups are nuanced and complex. Worst of all for the Conservatives, a significant section of the True Blue Tory base is – as we shall see – showing signs of deep anxiety about the ‘liberal’ aspects of the Cameron Group’s politics to the extent that significant numbers are now looking to UKIP. At the same time, the 2010 Cohort has almost entirely deserted the Party, alienated by the Governments approach on a number of touchstone issues.

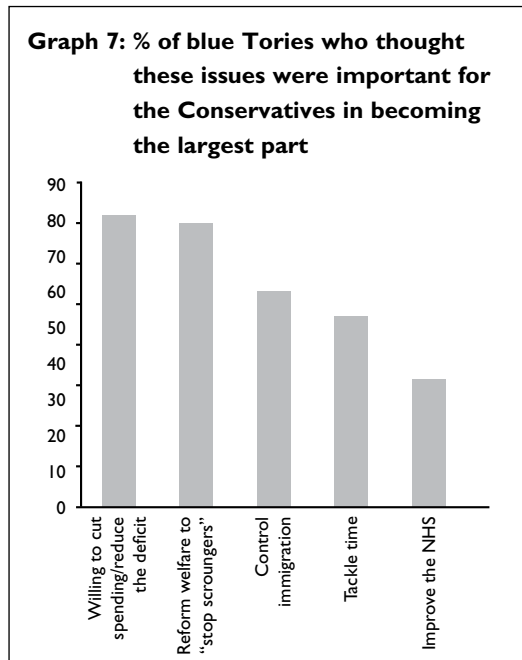
4. True Blue Tories

The True Blue Tories are an insufficiently large group to secure a Conservative victory, but are still vital for the Conservatives to survive.

They are traditionally right-wing and prioritise issues such as immigration and crime; they are the voters William Hague and Michael Howard appealed to. For example, when True Blue Tories were asked why the Conservative Party scored the highest share of the vote in 2010, they said that the Party’s policies on cutting excessive spending, reforming welfare and controlling immigration were what attracted voters. This is shown in **Graph 7**.

Box 1 shows the issues that persuaded them to vote Conservative again 2010.

Box 1	
True Blue Tories	
■	74% thought the Conservatives would tackle crime
■	81% voted because they thought the Conservatives would control immigration
■	65% preferred Conservative policy on the EU



Worryingly for the Conservatives, 35% of Conservative Party members could see themselves voting UKIP in the next general election. Just like previous Conservative Party leaderships, the True Blue Tories do not recognise the electorate’s further shift away from traditional Conservative values. When polled by Lord Ashcroft, only 1% of this group thought people did not vote Conservative in 2010 because they saw them as being too right wing.

5. The 2010 Cohort

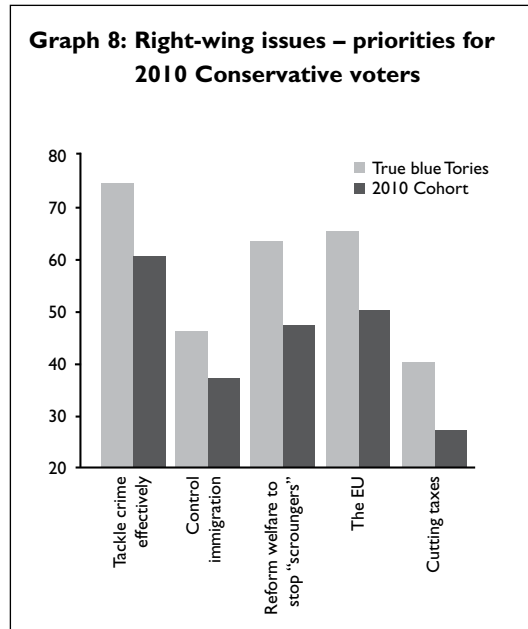
17% of Conservative voters in 2010 had rarely voted for the party before. We have termed them the “2010 Cohort”. This group was vital in the Conservatives securing more votes than Labour in 2010.

Lord Ashcroft’s analysis shows that 31% of the 2010 Cohort had no religion, compared to only 19% of True Blue Tories.⁴ 42% of the 2010 Cohort lives in an urban area, compared to only 33% of True Blue Tories.⁵ Also, 15% of the 2010 Cohort cohabits with their partner, compared with 7% of True Blue Tories. Indeed, True Blue Tories are 10% more likely to be married than their 2010 Cohort counterparts.⁶

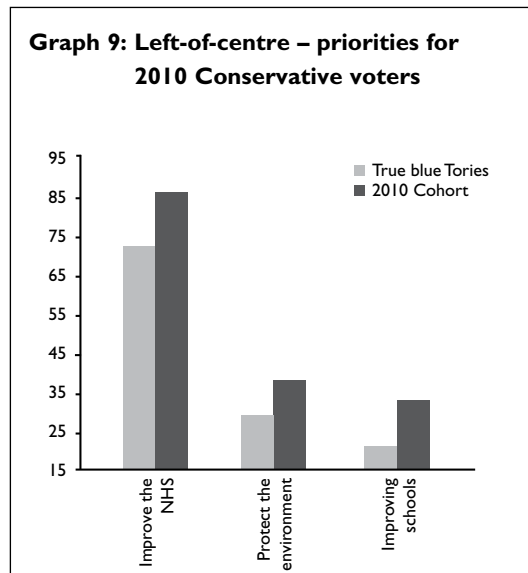
The composition of this group is problematic for the Conservatives. Statistically different from the True Blue Brigade in their social composition, values and political motivation, their voting

behaviour is measurably distinct. And they have now almost entirely deserted the Conservatives.

Graph 8 shows that centre-right issues are of a higher priority to True Blue Tories than to the 2010 Cohort.



Graph 9, by contrast, shows that the 2010 Cohort are somewhat more predisposed towards centre left issues more than the True Blue Tories.



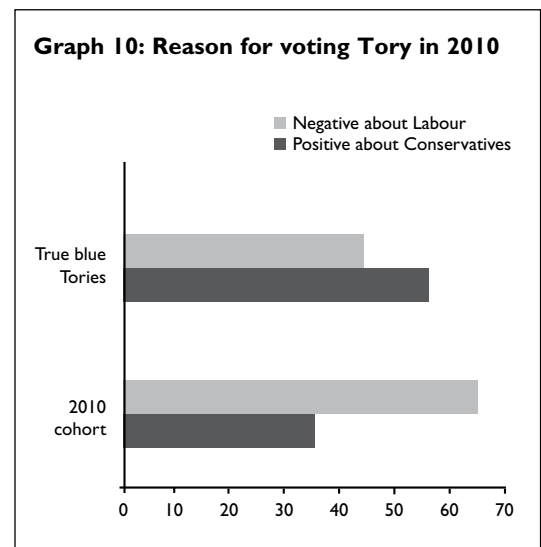
The conflict between modernisers and True Blue Tory supporters is clearly exemplified in the recent position taken by the established church in relation to gay marriage. The Church

of England was habitually described as the ‘Tory Party at prayer’, and without doubt it was traditionally one of the primary social bases of True Blue Conservative England. In his search for the millions of people who do not feel attracted to True Blue Tory values, Cameron has espoused gay marriage. But this posture has brought directly into conflict with the Church, as we have seen.

This analysis is confirmed in an article on the Conservative Home website, written by Paul Goodman (12.6.2012) as follows:

“The only strategic reason for seeking to introduce gay marriage, therefore, is to seek to win younger, and doubtless new and urban-based voters at the expense of older and more ruraldwelling ones who tend to vote Tory, and to do so without any grasp of in which seats Christian or gay voters – who tend to line up on either side of the debate – are concentrated, and indeed how the numbers break down more broadly. To make such a move, therefore, is a gambit straight out of the Blair textbook – a “Clause Four moment” based on the dual premise that the base of a political party has nowhere else to go (though the Christian vote, if that’s the right phrase for it, is extremely diverse) and that such moments exist in the first place.”

Most importantly, the 2010 Cohort were more likely to vote Conservative in 2010 due to negative feeling about Labour, rather than positive feelings about the Conservatives. **Graph 10** shows that this is completely reversed with True Blue Tories.



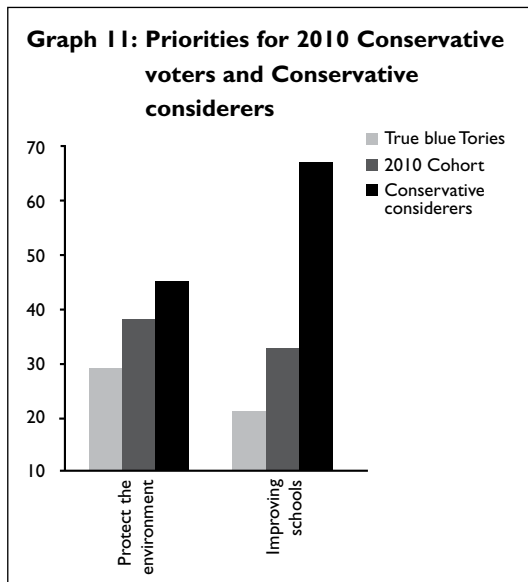
By early 2011 the Government's record was beginning to take its toll on the support of the 2010 Cohort.

When polled, only a few months into the new parliament, 40% of the 2010 Cohort did not want a majority Conservative government and 54% could see themselves voting Labour at the next general election.

The first few months of 2012 saw the dam burst for 2010 Cohort support. The NHS reforms coupled with a deeply unpopular and unfair Budget led to support for the Conservatives descending to the levels of the 2005 and 2001 elections. In other words, the 2010 Cohort and the Considerers had abandoned the Party, which was back at its core support levels (31–33%).

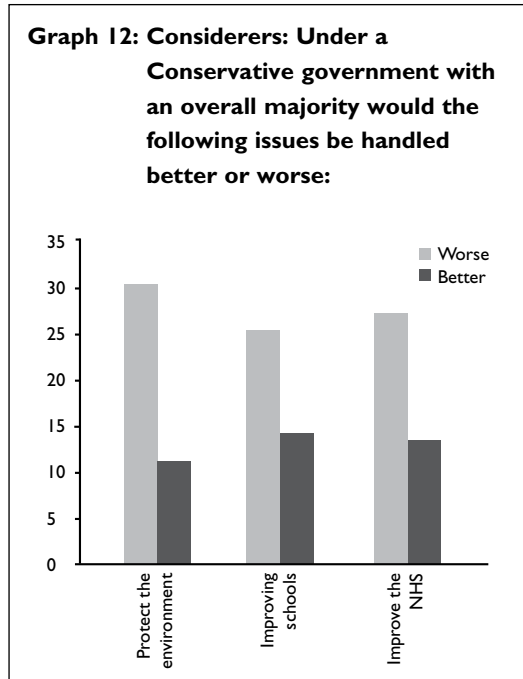
6. Conservative Considerers

The Conservative Considerers, those that Considered voting Conservative but thought better of it, create further tension for the Conservatives. We should recall that failure to convert this group into active voters will mean that the party cannot form a majority government.



Graph 11 shows that the considerers tend to be more in line with the values of the 2010 Cohort, but feel, for example, that the environment and improving schools are a much more

important issue than the 2010 Cohort. The main difference between the Considerers and the 2010 Cohort was that the former did not trust the Conservatives enough to actually vote for them.



Graph 12 shows how worried the Considerers were about a Conservative majority. It may have been that they felt the risk to the NHS, environment and schools was too great and therefore resisted voting Conservative in 2010.

The 2010 Cohort has now abandoned the Conservatives and the Considerers have moved significantly away from them, leaving behind the core Conservative vote: the True Blue, as is shown below.

7. The Double Threat

“My right flank has been pushed back, my left flank is giving way – Excellent – Now we attack!”
General Foch

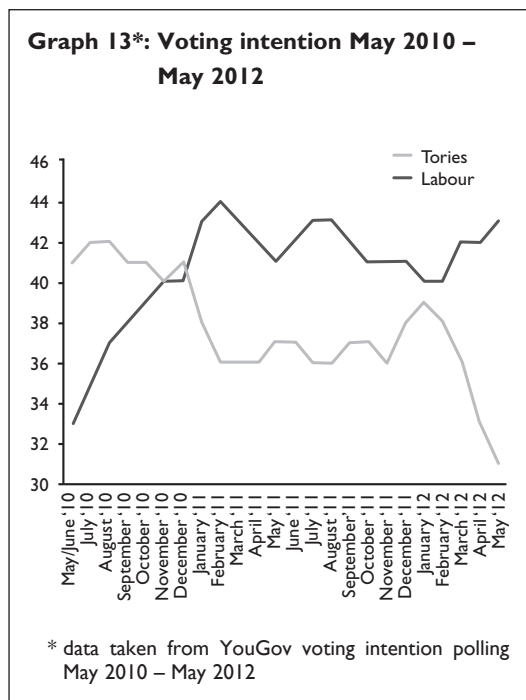
The Tories face problems on both flanks.

To the right are a substantial group of electors; the True Blue Tories. These voters are not present in sufficient numbers within the population to give a majority and in any event many are manifestly unhappy with Cameron and his liberal conserva-

tism. These people are restless and are showing an increasing propensity to vote UKIP.

On the other flank are those people who reflect the wider values of the majority and who had either voted, or considered voting, for David Cameron. Deeply anxious about the Tories on public services (especially the NHS), and about whether the party are for the wealthy and privileged, they have now moved strongly away from Cameron's Conservatism in reaction to events in recent months. **Graph 13** below shows a striking collapse in Tory voting intention from late winter 2012 to present.

8. Spring 2012: The NHS + the Budget

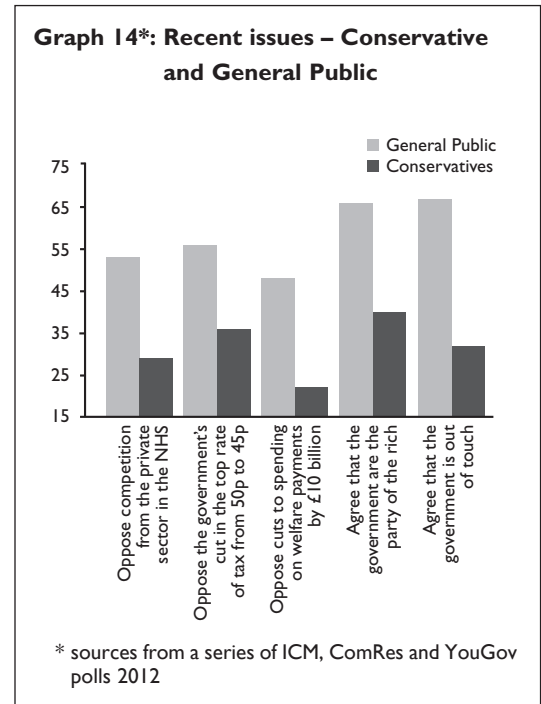


We have seen the fragility of the electoral base which Cameron had constructed in 2010. It is surprising that the Conservative high command decided to choose the issues where they are most vulnerable to expend with such energy in the spring of 2012.

A piece of legislation to redraw the institutional structures of the NHS and a budget which gave tax handouts to the rich, were inevitably bound to remind voters why they had been so sceptical

about the Conservatives in 2010. In effect the party re-toxified itself on precisely those issues where the public were most concerned.

The following data in **Graph 14** illustrates the wider public's views on a range of issues in spring 2012.



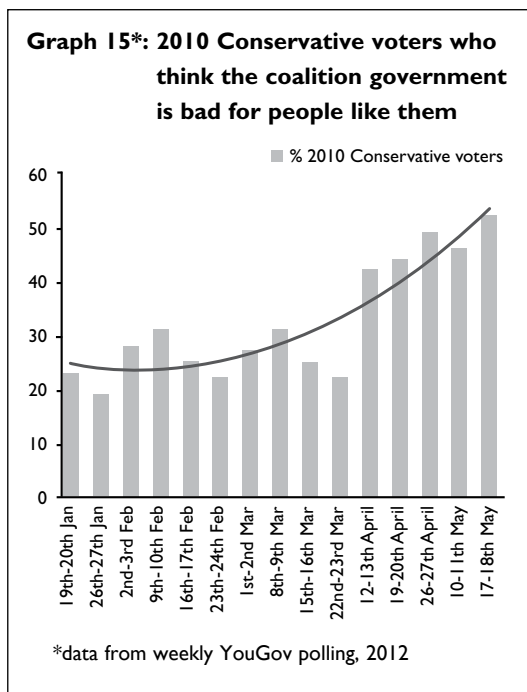
The NHS is a hugely valued by the public. The public listed the NHS second in a poll of institutions that make people proud to be British; with only British history coming first.⁷ In fact only 12% of the public actually supported the Government's NHS reforms and over half actively opposed it. As we can see, however, it is not simply the perception of an NHS under threat which has damaged the Conservatives. The public has reservations even about Welfare Reform when carried out by the Tories. And the perception which the public have that the Tories are a party of the privileged has been significantly reinforced by the Budget.

What is striking about the graph above, however is how much at variance with the general public Conservative voters actually are. This demonstrates a central fault-line in the Party's problem in constructing an electoral majority. For the data above clearly demonstrates that if the Cameron group attempt to camp out on the central views of the 8 million or so True Blue Tory voters, then it is exceedingly difficult to construct a majority in the country.

9. UKIP

On the other hand, if the high command decides to move away from their core vote, there is now a credible alternative to voting Conservative. This alternative is UKIP. As we shall now see, there is a very high propensity among the True Blue brigade to turn to UKIP. Even a relatively small percentage of voters deserting to UKIP will deprive Cameron of his majority in 2015.

It is notable that in recent polling, shown in **Graph 15** that a rapidly rising proportion of 2010 Conservatives have come to have major doubts about the Tory-led government.



This dissatisfaction has been converted into a much higher propensity for Tory voters to switch their vote to UKIP. Whilst in December 2010, about 3% of them indicated an *intention* to vote UKIP, this number had increased to over 10% in June 2012. The local election results in May showed that in some solid Conservative areas such as the South East and South West UKIP managed to gain 38% and 36% of the vote respectively.

This therefore is the Conservative dilemma; their core vote is constitutes a declining and backward-looking group which is increasingly out of touch with modern Britain. Some Conservative politicians have shown that they understand this

problem. Francis Maude raised his concerns, as one of the party's modernisers, saying that the Conservatives were still "defined by backward-looking social attitudes".

What Maude has failed to show, on the other hand, is how he can reconcile modernisation with the party's core vote. Any move away from the values of this group in order to build an alliance of voters capable of delivering a majority will inevitably jeopardise the True Blue Tory voters who are already restless and have an increasingly credible alternative political home in UKIP.

10. Resolving the Dilemma?

Behind the scenes, it is clear that some Tory strategists have accepted that it will be very difficult to build an electoral majority on present trends. But they have hit on a cunning plan. They will attempt to maximise the number of Tory voters based on a policy fudge seeking to bridge between the core vote and modern Britain. They will seek to gerrymander British constitutional structures in an attempt to prevent the Labour opposition from building its own majority whilst seeking to filch as many parliamentary seats back from the Lib-Dems as possible.

They have developed a four part strategy of tinkering with elements of the constitution to secure their objective. In the words of Lord Rennard, one of the Lib-Dems most formidable strategic thinkers their objective is clear:

"Their strategy is based on attempting to ensure an overall Conservative majority in the future – even if they fail to win a single extra votea grand plan to ensure that the Conservative domination of the 20th century is followed by Conservative hegemony in the 21st."

As Lord Rennard has implied, this would be the institutional hegemony secured by a party which lacks ideological hegemony in the population for its values, principles and programmes.

The four aspects of this grand plan are well-known. What has been less well discussed is the way in which these form a coherent whole:

- A. The current set of boundary changes have been widely and authoritatively reported as having been likely to have given the Tories a parliamentary majority in the Commons (working with their allies amongst the Unionists) without securing a single additional vote;
- B. A piece of legislation before parliament at the moment will change the way in which electors are registered to vote. Ostensibly designed to reduce the likelihood of voter fraud, the changes could well reduce the numbers of voters registered especially in areas of higher mobility such as the large cities and university towns. Lord Rennard warned his colleagues that “*Lib Dem strategists should be wary about this*”. The same advice might well have been given to other parties equally;
- C. The Government is seeking to make party political advantage from the present inter-party discussions about party funding reform. Of course, the present system of funding has rightly fallen into disrepute, but the discussions must not be used to achieve asymmetrical advantages as between the different parties;
- D. The central tenet of this paper has been to demonstrate that the Conservatives seek to rule a country where about two thirds of the voters are opposed to their values and policies. In order to win under first past the post the Conservatives and their allies must – in effect – ‘balkanise’ the anti-Tory vote, by dividing their enemies into different political camps. If the majority of people who are not Tory share out their votes between different political parties then they can win a majority of seats. In any event, it is clear that there are those on the Right (e.g. the Murdoch press) who are actively encouraging the anti-Tory Scots to vote Scottish National Party (SNP) rather than Labour. Finally, Cameron has set up his Commission to investigate the West Lothian question, the independence of which is questionable; the membership was agreed between the Conservatives and Lib-Dems, without any input from Labour. The objective here must surely be to weaken the role in the Westminster parliament of anti-Tory MP’s from Scotland.

II. Are there lessons for Labour?

The most often quoted law of politics in the democratic age is that elections are always won in the centre. Following the defeats which began in 1979, Labour lost its sense of self-confidence and occasionally gave the impression that it had come to believe that in order to win we had to camp out on a politics which was wholly centrist and even centre right.

But the evidence which we have seen in this paper indicates that the political centre of gravity has – in recent times – moved substantially away from the Tory’s traditional political and ideological base.

This does not mean that the Labour Party is guaranteed an easy ride. There is much to be done in order for Labour to become the party of government at the next election. Nor should we conclude that we can move simplistically to the left.

The analysis in this paper does however show that the long era in which the old Tory ideological hegemony is over (at least for now). This will give the Labour Party the space to put an end to triangulation on to Tory territory and to establish its own independent identity based on our abiding values of community, justice and equality.

As Tony Blair said “we are best when we are boldest.” Boldness in these new times will mean asserting Labour’s identity in the confident knowledge that there is a new centre in British politics.

Endnotes

- 1 Don Porter, The Telegraph 09/04/2012
- 2 Lord Ashcroft, p8 *Project Blueprint*
- 3 This section is indebted to the work of Lord Ashcroft in *Project Blueprint*.
- 4 Lord Ashcroft, *Project Blueprint* p 220, Table 109
- 5 Ibid p 222, Table 110
- 6 Ibid p 240, Table 119
- 7 Channel 4 Britishness Poll 2012

About Compass

Compass is an ideas and action based pressure group with over 50,000 members and supporters around the country.

We are committed to help build a Good Society; one in which there is far greater social, political and economic equality; where democracy is deepened at every level of the state, our workplaces and communities; where the sustainability of the planet is made an urgent priority and we recognise our interconnected fate across all nations; a society where the market is made to work as the servant of society.

We organise regular events and conferences that provide real space to discuss policy, we produce thought provoking pamphlets and we encourage debate through our website. We campaign, take positions and lead the debate on key political issues. We're developing a coherent and strong voice for those that believe in greater equality and democracy as the means to achieve radical social change.

As the planet gets hotter and the poor get poorer we're campaigning collaboratively with progressive politicians of all parties, pressure groups, trade unions, think tanks, NGOs, academics, activists, campaigners and across civil society.

Compass wants to see a transformed Labour Party working with other parties, organisations and individuals in pursuit of this goal of the Good Society.

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