Editorial

British Politics (2013) **8**, 231–232. doi:10.1057/bp.2013.21

Welcome to the third issue of the eighth volume of *British Politics*. Our first contribution is from Grant Jordan and Paul Cairney. Aiming to identify the fundamental characteristics of the British policymaking system, the authors analyse a number of approaches within the policy-styles literature, including debates around the ‘Westminster model’, ‘governance’ and majoritarian government, and contend that attempts to establish a compromise between divergent approaches, though appealing, should be rejected. The second article for this issue comes from Timothy Heppell, and examines the party leadership strategy of David Cameron in terms of the logic underpinning the Conservative party’s entry into coalition government. Exploring issues such as portfolio allocation, electoral reform, fiscal readjustment and tuition fees, the article analyses this strategy as an attempt to reconstruct and occupy the centre ground of British politics.

Following this, our third contribution, from Philip Lynch and Richard Whitaker, examines the strategies adopted by the Conservative party and UKIP in relation to the issue of European integration. The article charts the way in which UKIP has sought to raise the salience of the EU issue and to emphasise its own radical nature, and explores the Conservative response to the UKIP challenge in its attempt to develop a distinctively soft Eurosceptic position and to defuse the EU issue. Our fourth article is from Alison Plumb and David Marsh and examines patterns of Parliamentary support over the issue of fox-hunting. In particular, the authors focus on the way in which the debate around fox-hunting played in both the main political parties during the passage of the Hunting Bill. The article shows that the hunting case reveals a different pattern than that found for voting on other conscience issues in the UK Parliament, with Party an almost a perfect predictor of voting in the two main parties.

The fifth article in this issue is by Paul Chaney and examines the electoral discourse associated with state decentralisation. Through an analysis of manifesto proposals for Scottish and Welsh devolution from 1945 to 2010, the article locates party policies on devolution as part of a contested discursive process embedded in concerns to maintain the union state. The final article for this issue comes from Cathy Gromley-Heenan, Johnny Byrne and Gillian Robinson, and examines the use of ‘peace walls’ and barriers in Belfast. In a context of government intentions to dispose

of such barriers during the course of the next decade, the article outlines primary research into the nature of public opinion on this issue.

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