
Editorial

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Welcome to the second issue in this fourth volume of *British Politics*. In this there are two main themes: the ideas and practices of British political parties, and the political impact of internet technology. Our first main paper for this issue comes from Stuart White. This charts the evolving approach of the Liberal Party to issues of ownership during the post-war period, and examines the party's attempt to find an alternative to the dominant capitalist and socialist ideas that have underpinned the Conservative and Labour parties, respectively. Our second main paper, from Nick Randall, deals with the emergence and development of New Labour. In a novel interpretation, Randall utilises insights from the growing literature on temporality to highlight New Labour's partisan construction and mobilisation of memory as a political resource for its programme of modernisation. In our third main paper, Andrew Denham examines changes in the selection of Conservative party leaders; highlighting the fact that the selection process has, historically, shifted from one dominated by a 'magic circle' towards a more formal system of 'Hague Rules' – a system, which the author argues, is likely to endure for the foreseeable future.

Our final main paper for this issue, from Nigel Jackson and Darren Lilleker, examines the impact on British political life of the increasingly ubiquitous technology of Web2.0 through an analysis of the use of weblogs and social networking sites by Westminster MPs. The paper finds that there is limited evidence for the emergence of 'e-representation' within the British political system, but that the potential exists for its development in the future. In a similar vein, our 'Beyond the Mainstream' contribution for this issue also considers the political impact of Web2.0 technology. Drawing on contemporary surveillance studies and information technology approaches, David Willis and Stuart Reeves use a study of Facebook to demonstrate the potential use of social networking sites as a means of gaining political advantage through data-mining. Finally, we conclude this issue with a short 'reply' piece from Colin Hay, who continues the 'roundtable' debate on political representation highlighted in our previous issue, by responding to comments from David Marsh.

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