
Editorial

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Welcome to the fourth issue of volume seven of *British Politics*. Our opening contribution for this issue comes from Joni Lovenduski. In this, the author explores attitudes towards Prime Minister's Questions from MPs and the general public, arguing that this provides a political ritual that serves to uphold a gender regime in the House of Commons. Our second main article comes from Iain Pirie, and examines the representation of the economic crisis in the British print media. The article analyses the way in which the dominant narrative of the crisis as having been the result of excessive public spending by Labour was constructed and consolidated, and examines how debates on reforms of the financial system have been sidelined as a result.

The third contribution for this issue is from Sherilyn MacGregor and Gavin Bailey. Here, the authors present the findings of an empirical study into the opinions and experiences of the citizenship process created by New Labour. Considering its effectiveness as part of a policy of enhancing community cohesion, the article maintains that the current process serves to reinforce a sense of 'otherness' and encourages an instrumental approach to obtaining 'British' national identity. Our fourth main article for this issue, from Peter Dorey and Mark Garnett, examines the notion of the 'Big Society'. The article claims that although this provided the Conservatives with a much-sought 'post Thatcherite' narrative, its deployment against a backdrop of spending cuts has served to undermine the coherence of its central themes, and hence its political utility. The final contribution for this issue is contained in our Forward Thinking section, and is somewhat experimental. On the basis of a collaborative class project, led by Nicholas Allen, involving final-year undergraduate students at Royal Holloway, University of London, this article explores the distribution of influence within the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition government, and aims to highlight some of the linkages between research and teaching in Political Science.

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