



Options for Britain II



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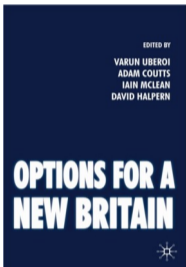
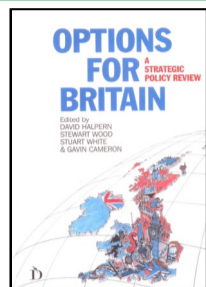


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Background

In 1996 a team of academics and policy experts published *Options For Britain- A Strategic Policy Review*. Examining areas of policy from crime, education and housing to the economy and the constitution, *Options* examined how the government of the day had done since it was elected since 1979, what the salient challenges in various policy areas were and what options an incoming government would have to address them.



In 2008 *Options for Britain II* repeated this process and culminated in *Options For A New Britain*.

What We Did

- ❖ We organised two conferences at which draft policy papers were read, peer-reviewed, and received critical comments from a discussant.
- ❖ The papers on individual areas of public policy were turned into chapters for the edited volume *Options For A New Britain*, launched in Whitehall in March 2009.
- ❖ The papers on cross-cutting policy areas were collected for a special issue of *Political Quarterly*.

The changing importance of issues in Britain 1997-2008

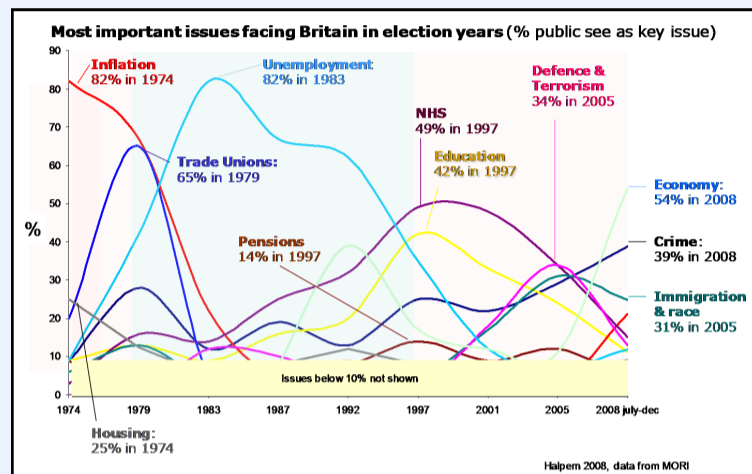


Figure 1

Aims

This project was an exercise in bringing existing research experience to bear on options for a range of public service and policy options, rather than the conduct of primary research. Accordingly, we aimed to draw on research expertise to secure expert review of past performance and future options in:

- ❖ traditional areas of public policy (such as housing; education);
- ❖ areas that underpin public policy as a whole (the economy, the constitution);
- ❖ new areas of policy (climate change, extremism); and
- ❖ forms of intervention and management that cut across substantive policy domains, such as regulation and measurement of public sector performance.

Greenhouse gas emissions: efficiency gains have been almost cancelled out by growth in population and consumption

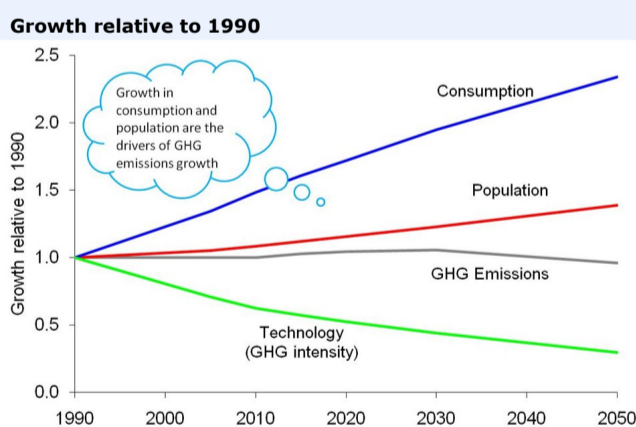


Figure 2

Findings

Public concerns have shifted dramatically over the past decade (Figure 1). Figures 2 and 3 show trends in two different policy areas: greenhouse gas emissions and house building.

House building has not risen to meet demand while planning restrictions have resulted in 300-400-fold increases in land prices

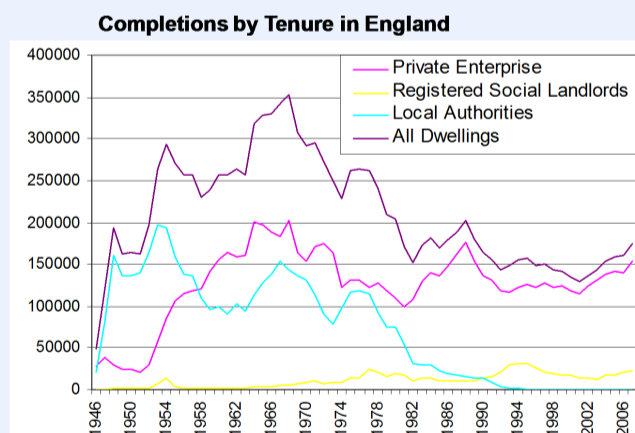


Figure 3

Scorecard for the UK:

- ❖ Since 1997 the UK policy process has performed well on science policy; health; Northern Ireland; the constitution;
- ❖ fairly well on crime, education, foreign policy;
- ❖ and poorly on the environment, transport, housing and planning. We hypothesize that these areas are difficult because the average voter wills the end but fails to will the means.

Find out more...



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