

Role and responsibilities of government

Have public expectations changed?

Authors

John Curtice, National Centre for Social Research
Alex Scholes, Scottish Centre for Social Research

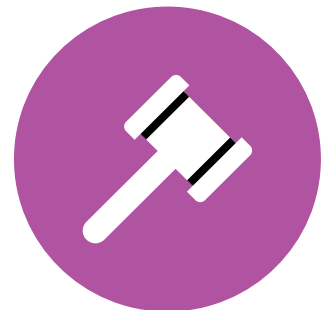
British Social Attitudes 40



Role and responsibilities of government

Have public expectations changed?

The last forty years have witnessed considerable change in the scope of government activity, in the levels of taxation and spending, and in the scale of defence spending in particular. But while voters may have ideological preferences in respect of the role and size of government, have their attitudes also been affected by the changes that have occurred in the role of government and by the changing circumstances with which government is faced? And in so far that is the case, have voters accepted the changes that have taken place – or have they sometimes reacted against them?



Acceptance of a reduced role for government has been reversed by recent crises

- By 2006, only 31% thought it was definitely the government's responsibility to control prices, down from 59% in 1985. Now the figure stands at 68%.
- In 1985, 45% reckoned it was definitely the government's responsibility to reduce income differences between rich and poor. By 2006, only 25% expressed that view.
- After the financial crash, 41% said the government should definitely reduce income differences and now, after COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, 53% feel that way.

Voters have reacted against changes in overall spending

- In 1983, only 32% said that taxes should be increased and more spent on health, education and social benefits. But the reduction in spending under the Conservatives saw support rise to 62% by 1997.
- After increases in spending under Labour, by 2010 only 31% backed more taxation and spending. Then reductions under the Conservatives saw support increase once more to 60% in 2017.
- But voters have not as yet reacted significantly against the large increases in taxation and spending occasioned by COVID-19; 55% still say taxation and spending should be increased.

The public have noticed the long-term decline in defence spending

- In 1990, only 8% felt that defence spending should be increased. Now 42% are in favour.
- Despite considerable controversy at the time, in 1983 60% said that having its own nuclear weapons made Britain a safer place to live. 65% take that view now.
- Multilateral nuclear disarmament (56%) is more popular than a unilateral approach (23%), though the balance of opinion now is somewhat narrower than in the 1980s.

Introduction

The proper role and size of government is much debated. What activities and responsibilities should the state undertake – and thus, in turn, how ‘big’ should government be? For some, the state should play a minimal role (primarily focusing on defence and the maintenance of social order, necessities that the market cannot provide) and thereby free the private sector to pursue the economic growth upon which living standards (and public services) ultimately rest. Others look to a bigger state that not only regulates but also promotes economic activity, reduces the inequality that can flow from the operation of the market, and provides effective public services.



However, as well as reflecting people’s longer-term ideological position, attitudes towards the role of the state may also be influenced by circumstance, such as the state of the economy, current levels of taxation and spending, levels of inequality, the quality of public services, and the level of the threat to the country’s security. People may, for example, be happy for the state to stand back if the economy is doing well, but might be keen for it to intervene when things appear to be going awry.

Equally, they may be more inclined to see more spending on public services when those services appear not to be delivering than they are when schools, hospitals and so on are thought to be running smoothly. Meanwhile, not only have the policy stances adopted by government changed significantly over the last forty years, but so also have the circumstances with which governments have had to deal.

When British Social Attitudes (BSA) began in 1983, the then Conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher was endeavouring to reduce the role and size of the state, a strategy perhaps reflected above all in the privatisation of industries including telecommunications, energy supply, and water. Meanwhile, although the subsequent Labour government under Tony Blair increased spending on public services, it did not attempt to reverse the previous government's reduction in the role of the state and, indeed, tightened the provision of welfare for those of working age. Meanwhile, under both governments, the economy appeared to benefit from a globalisation of economic activity that resulted in sustained high growth and low inflation, but which also seemingly implied a reduced role and influence for national governments. Meanwhile, underpinning that globalisation was a relatively benign geo-strategic environment that was heralded, in part at least, by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the integration of China into the world economy – a very different position from that in the early 1980s when, following a decision to house US nuclear missiles in the UK, there was intense debate about whether or not the UK should have a nuclear defence capability.

This picture was though disturbed by the financial crisis of 2008 when the intervention of national governments (albeit co-ordinated to some degree) proved crucial in rescuing their economies from a series of interlinked banking failures. However, in the UK at least, the Conservative-led administration that came to power in 2010 sought to rein in the size of the state once more (especially in respect of welfare) so that public spending was consistent with the now weakened prospects for growth. Meanwhile, the last few years have witnessed two further shocks – the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine – that appear to have had an even more profound impact on the role and scope of government and the environment in which it is operating.

Between them these two shocks have engendered unprecedented government intervention in the economy (especially in respect of the labour and energy markets), levels of inflation not witnessed since the 1980s, high levels of concern about the quality of public services (especially the NHS), while the West now finds itself involved in a proxy war with Russia.

As a result, the UK is now experiencing its highest sustained level of taxation and public spending since the 1970s and is threatened with the sharpest decline in living standards since records began (Office for Budget Responsibility, 2023a). Meanwhile, it is also having to assess how to respond to a much-changed geo-strategic environment that threatens the process of globalisation and emphasises instead the security of the supply of goods and services. At the same time, governments across the world are under increasing pressure to make decisions that will avoid the worst consequences of a process of climate change that is already seemingly having an impact on the prevalence of adverse weather events (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2021).

This chapter assesses how the public's attitudes towards the role of government have evolved in the wake of the changing circumstances and public policy of the last forty years. First, to what extent, if at all, did voters, including not least Labour supporters, adjust their expectations of the role of government in the wake of its more limited approach to economic intervention in an increasingly globalised and growing economy? Did the public accept that there was now less need for defence spending or even, perhaps, a nuclear capability? Or did changes in the role of the state occur despite unchanging expectations among the public?

Second, how have voters responded to the changes in the level of public spending? It has been argued that voters respond 'thermostatically' to such changes, looking for reductions in taxation and spending if they rise above voters' desired level but increases if they fall below that level. Is this perspective reflected in the dynamics of public attitudes over the last forty years?

Third, what has been the impact of the shocks of the last decade or so? Have voters embraced or recoiled from the increase in state intervention and in the level of taxation and spending that has ensued? Given the current economic difficulties, are they now more likely to think that the state has a role in controlling prices or protecting people's standard of living or do they feel this is beyond the scope of government? Have they changed their minds about the ideal level of taxation and spending, or do they wish to return to the status quo ante? And in the wake of the most serious conflict on European soil since 1945, how do they now feel about spending on defence and having access to nuclear weapons?

The role of government

We begin our inquiry by looking at people's attitudes towards the roles and responsibilities of government. Since 1985, the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey has repeatedly asked its respondents whether the government should or not be responsible for each of seven possible objectives. These include providing a job for everyone who wants one, keeping prices under control, providing health care and a decent standard of living for the old and unemployed, reducing income differences between the rich and poor, and providing industry with the help it needs to grow.



Table 1 shows for each objective the proportion of people who have said it should definitely or probably be the government's responsibility on the occasions that the issue has been addressed by BSA. It shows first of all that most people most of the time have felt that the government has at least some responsibility for pursuing each objective. Never have less than half said the government should 'definitely' or 'probably' be responsible (the lowest proportion was the 50% who in 2006 said it was the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed). It seems that voters have consistently been inclined to feel that government has a significant role to play in the country's social and economic life. Yet at the same time, in each case there has been some notable fluctuation in the proportion who feel that government has a role. This becomes apparent if we examine the trend over time in the proportion who say that it should 'definitely' be the government's responsibility to pursue each objective. This reveals that the reduction in the role of government that occurred in the eighties and nineties was to some extent at least mirrored in public opinion.

For example, the proportion who felt that it should definitely be the government's responsibility to 'provide industry with the help it needs to grow' fell from 52% in 1985 to 38% in 1996. By 1996, only two in five (40%) felt that it was definitely the government's responsibility to 'keep prices under control', well down on the nearly three in five (59%) who had expressed that view in 1985. Meanwhile, in 1996 only 26% believed that it was definitely the government's responsibility to 'provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed', whereas as many as 42% had held that view in 1985. True, there was little change in the proportion who felt that it was definitely the government's responsibility 'to provide health care for the sick', but it seems that the combination of a less economically interventionist government and what by the 1990s at least was a more benign economic outlook served to persuade people that the government need not necessarily be an active economic player or provide them with a high level of social protection.

Although there was some reversal of this mood at the beginning of the 21st century, by shortly before the eve of the financial crash it was seemingly even more prevalent than it had been a decade previously. In every case, the proportion who in 2006 said that the objective in question should definitely be the government's responsibility was markedly lower than it had been ten years previously. Even the proportion who said that it should definitely be the government's responsibility to 'provide health care for the sick' stood at 68%, down 13 points on 1996. But this mood did not survive the financial crash – at least for a while. In particular, in 2012 a record 58% now said that it should definitely be the government's responsibility to 'provide industry with the help it needs to grow', suggesting that the governmental rescue of the banking system had a particular impact on perceptions of the role of government in stimulating the economy. On many other items, also, the public mood had appeared to revert to more or less what it had been in the mid-1980s. That said, the fact that the financial crash had relatively little adverse impact on the level of unemployment perhaps explains why the proportion who said that it was definitely the government's job to 'provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed' or 'provide a job for everyone who wants one' was, at 21% and 27% respectively, still well below what it had once been. Moreover, it seems that just four years later the shock of the financial crash had worn off. In most cases the proportion who in 2016 said the objective in question was definitely the government's responsibility had returned to much the same level that had previously been recorded in 2006.

It seems then that, other than in the immediate wake of the financial crash, the public had come to expect less of their government than they had done in the mid-1980s. It appeared that some at least now felt that the government should indeed play a somewhat more limited role in the economy and society than had once been the case – though there was still relatively little support for the idea that government had no role at all in pursuing our seven objectives. However, as in the case of the financial crash, COVID-19 and its aftermath have seemingly resulted in another sharp reversal of that mood. Indeed, in many instances the proportion who in our latest survey say that an objective is definitely the government's responsibility is at a record high. The proportion who think the government definitely should be responsible for keeping prices under control (68%), for providing industry with the help it needs to grow (63%), and for reducing income differences between the rich and poor (53%) is higher in 2022 than at any other time since 1985. Those who think it should definitely be the responsibility of government to provide health care for the sick (89%) and to provide a decent standard of living for the old (81%) is also at a record high. Meanwhile, even though, much like the financial crash, COVID-19 has had little long-term impact on the level of unemployment, the proportion who think it definitely should be the responsibility of government to 'provide a job for everyone who wants one' (34%) is still at its highest since 2000, a consequence perhaps of the introduction of a government-funded 'furlough' scheme during the pandemic, while the proportion who think it definitely should be the responsibility of government to 'provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed' (38%) is at its highest since 1990. The experience of a pandemic and its associated lockdown, together with the economic difficulties that have subsequently ensued, including the return of a high level of inflation, have apparently reversed, for the time being at least, the long-term trend towards somewhat more limited expectations that the public had come to have had of their government. Circumstances, it seems, have made a difference to the public's expectations of their government.

Table 1 Perceptions of the responsibility of government, 1985-2022

Should it be the government's responsibility to...	1985	1986	1990	1996	2000	2002	2006	2012	2016	2022
Provide a job for everyone who wants one	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Definitely should be	36	30	23	26	39	33	16	27	14	34
Probably should be	32	33	38	39	36	39	36	36	34	38
Keep prices under control	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Definitely should be	59	52	47	40	64	53	31	54	29	68
Probably should be	31	37	39	41	31	38	49	35	53	26
Provide health care for the sick	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Definitely should be	85	84	84	81	87	84	68	82	67	89
Probably should be	13	14	14	16	11	12	27	16	29	9
Provide a decent standard of living for the old	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Definitely should be	77	80	77	69	80	79	58	74	52	81
Probably should be	19	18	20	26	16	17	36	22	41	18
Provide industry with the help it needs to grow	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Definitely should be	52	39	41	38	n/a	n/a	27	58	31	63
Probably should be	40	48	50	50	n/a	n/a	54	33	52	32

**Table 1 Perceptions of the responsibility of government, 1985-2022
(continued)**

Provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Definitely should be	42	39	30	26	n/a	n/a	10	21	14	38
Probably should be	38	44	46	46	n/a	n/a	40	38	42	43
Reduce income differences between the rich and poor	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Definitely should be	45	46	40	32	n/a	n/a	25	41	31	53
Probably should be	24	27	30	30	n/a	n/a	38	28	34	28
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1502</i>	<i>1315</i>	<i>1197</i>	<i>989</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>1911</i>	<i>930</i>	<i>956</i>	<i>1563</i>	<i>2175</i>

n/a: not asked

This is not to say that attitudes towards the role of government are unrelated to people's political preferences or to their ideological outlook. As would be expected, in each case Labour party supporters are more likely than their Conservative counterparts to think something should be the government's responsibility, though the gap between the two sets of partisans differs markedly depending on the responsibility in question. The role of government in reducing inequality is a particularly strong dividing line. In our latest survey, Labour party supporters (70%) are much more likely than Conservatives (27%) to state that it 'definitely should' be the government's responsibility to reduce income differences between the rich and the poor. Similarly, 55% of Labour supporters think it definitely should be the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed, while the equivalent figure for Conservative Party supporters is just 22%. Meanwhile, 40% of Labour supporters say it is definitely the government's responsibility to provide a job for everyone who wants one, an outlook that is shared by only 25% of Conservative supporters.

In contrast, there is a greater level of cross-party consensus on those responsibilities which are more universal in character, that is, providing health care for the sick and a decent standard of living for the old. While an overwhelming majority (94%) of Labour supporters think the government definitely should provide health care for the sick, much the same is true of Conservative supporters (89%). Equally, while 89% of Labour supporters think the government definitely should provide a decent standard of living for the old, so also do 83% of their Conservative counterparts. Meanwhile, although in the eighties and early nineties Labour were rather more likely to say that providing 'industry with the help it needs to grow' was definitely the government's responsibility, more recently that division has disappeared. In our latest survey, for example, 65% of Labour and 62% of Conservative supporters expressed that view.

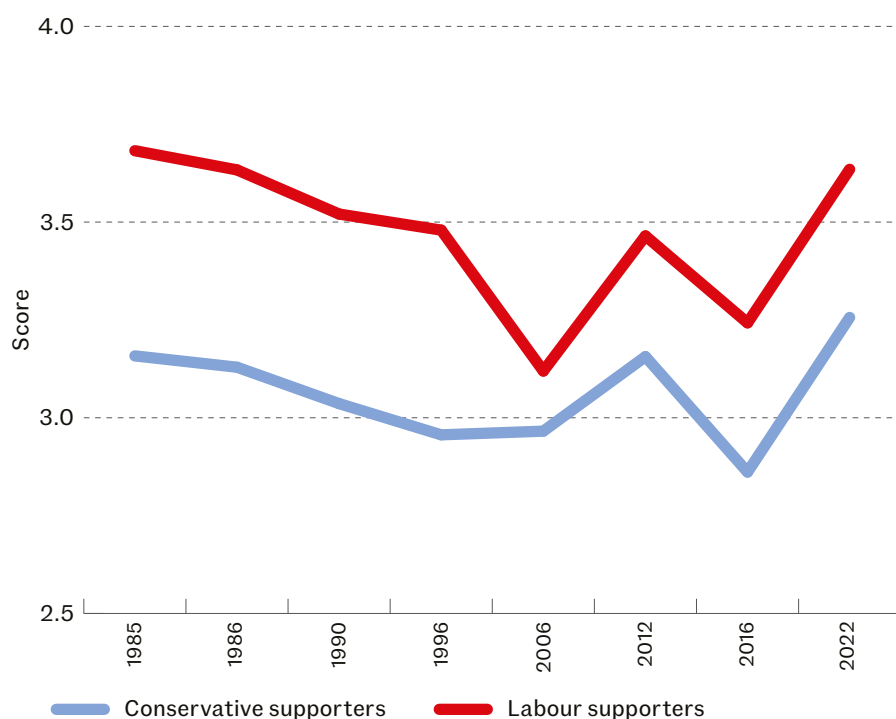
Similar patterns are evident if we examine the pattern of responses by whether someone is on the political left or right. Using our left-right scale (see Technical Details), we compare the responses of the one-third of people who are most left-wing on this measure with those of the one-third most right-wing. The largest gap between the most left and most right-wing groups is on redistributing income from the rich to the poor: 72% of the former think this 'definitely should' be the responsibility of the government, compared with just 12% of the latter. Meanwhile, 49% of those on the left believe that it is definitely the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed, compared with just 19% of those on the right. In contrast, as we saw with party political identification, there is a smaller gap between those on the left and right when it comes to the government's responsibility to provide health care, a decent standard of living for the old, or the help industry needs to grow. Nearly everyone on the left thinks the government definitely should provide healthcare for the sick (94%), but so also do four in five (80%) of those on the right. Similarly, while 87% of those on the left believe it is definitely the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the old, that view is shared by 69% of those on the right. At the same time, there is only a small, eight percentage point gap between the proportion of those on the left who think the government definitely should provide industry with the help it needs to grow (65%) and those on the right who think this (57%). Clearly, some of the responsibilities that government could take on are much less contentious than others.

But if that is the picture now, has it changed over the last forty years? In particular, we might wonder whether those who support a party have been more likely to be influenced by the views expressed by their party?

Was the decline in expectations of the role of government in the eighties and nineties more apparent among those who supported the Conservative governments of that era that set about reducing the role of the state? At the same time, were Labour supporters then also more inclined to take that view in the wake of the relatively non-interventionist stance taken by the Labour government from 1997 onwards? In short, is there reason to believe that the cues sent out by the parties played a role in reducing people's expectations of government? Or is it the case that the changes that have taken place in the role of government and in the circumstances they have faced influenced people's expectations irrespective of their partisan leanings?

To provide an initial summary indication of the evidence on this issue, we use our seven questions to construct a government responsibility index. Each of our seven questions had four possible responses, 'Definitely should be', 'Probably should be', 'Probably not' and 'Definitely should not'. These answers are scored from four to one, with the resulting total divided by seven. Thus, the higher someone's score on our scale, the greater their expectations of the role of government. Figure 1 shows the mean score on this scale by party political identification between 1985 and 2022.

Figure 1 Mean government responsibility score among Conservative and Labour identifiers, 1985-2022



The data on which Figure 1 is based can be found in Table A.1 in the appendix to this chapter.

The expectations that Conservative supporters had of government did become somewhat more limited between 1985 and 1996; their score on our scale fell from 3.16 to 2.96. However, this drop was more than matched by the trend among Labour identifiers, among whom the score fell from 3.68 to 3.48. In short, there is no indication that Conservative supporters were particularly responsive to the then Conservative government's ideological preference for a smaller state. Yet, at the same time, the further decline in expectations of government that was evident by 2006 was apparent among Labour supporters (their score fell to 3.12), while there was no further decline at all among their Conservative counterparts (scale score 2.97). It seems as though Labour's acceptance of much of the rowing back of the state implemented by the Conservative governments of 1979 to 1997 had more influence on the party's supporters than the original pursuit of that policy had on the Conservative government's own supporters – perhaps because Labour's stance represented a departure from the party's previous positions whereas that from the Conservatives did not. In any event, it was the changed mood among Labour supporters that was a particularly important source of the lower expectations of government that was in evidence by 2006. As a consequence too, there was now little difference between the expectations of Conservative and Labour supporters.

However, that near consensus has not prevailed. While the expectations of both Conservative (3.16) and Labour (3.46) supporters were higher in 2012, following the financial crash, than they had been six years previously, the movement in that direction was somewhat greater among Labour than Conservative supporters. Meanwhile, the swing back again towards lower expectations that was in evidence in 2016 was sharper among Conservative than Labour supporters. Thus, although the overall distribution of attitudes was similar in 2016 to what it had been ten years previously, there was now a clear difference once more between the views of the two sets of partisans; indeed, at 2.86, the scale score among Conservative supporters was now at its lowest level yet, whereas among their Labour counterparts it now stood at 3.24.

In short, the experience up to 2016 suggests that when the public mood changes, that change of outlook is typically apparent among both Conservative and Labour supporters, even though at any one point in time the latter are typically more inclined to assign greater responsibility to government. Circumstance matters irrespective of ideological predilection. True, the stance taken by the Labour governments of 1997-2010 appears to have had a particular impact on their supporters, but that development did not survive the financial crash and the loss of office. It thus should come as little surprise that the increase in expectations of government that has occurred in the wake of COVID-19 and the Ukraine war has been apparent among both Conservative and Labour supporters. Indeed, at 3.26, the scale score for Conservative supporters in 2022 is the highest that it has been, while, at 3.63, the equivalent figure for Labour identifiers is only a little below what it had been in 1985.

Still, we have previously noted that there is a greater partisan division in respect of some of the items on our scale than others. Division is most apparent in respect of reducing income differences between rich and poor, providing a decent standard of living for the unemployed, and making sure that everyone who wants a job has one¹. These are the areas where ideological preference matters most, and we might wonder whether the change in attitudes among Conservative and Labour partisans is less marked on these items. In practice, this proves not to be the case. On a scale score constructed on the basis of these three items alone, in 1985 Labour supporters had a scale score of 3.55, by 2006 it had fallen to 2.73 and it now stands at 3.42. Meanwhile, Conservative supporters registered a smaller fall from 2.64 to 2.42 between 1985 and 2006, but now their score stands at a record 2.70. While many voters have an initial preference for a bigger or a smaller state, in practice their attitudes at any one point in time also reflect the circumstances in which they find themselves.

1 A factor analysis of our seven items, also suggests that these three items together comprise a distinct dimension.

Taxation and spending

One of the key functions of any government is to collect taxes and spend the proceeds on public services. Here too we might expect people to have ideological preferences. Some prefer low taxes and less spending in the belief that this would create an environment in which entrepreneurs have the incentives they need to take risks and therefore help deliver the economic growth from which all will prosper. Others prefer higher taxes and spending both because they believe this will reduce inequality and because they think the state also has an important role to play in creating a healthy economy.



However, previous research has suggested that voters' attitudes towards taxation and spending are sensitive to the recent trajectory of government policy (Wlezien, 1995; Soroka and Wlezien, 2010). If a government increases taxation and spending, after a while voters note the improvement in public services and begin to seek a reduction in their tax bill. However, if a government reduces taxation and spending, after a while people notice the deterioration in public services and begin to feel it would be worth paying more tax in order to secure an improvement. In short, the public act like a thermostat. If taxation and spending rise above the level they prefer, they begin to swing in favour of reducing them. But if taxation and spending falls below what they regard as acceptable, they move in the opposite direction.

Since 1983, BSA has regularly asked the following question:

Suppose the government had to choose between the following three options. Which do you think it should choose?

*Reduce taxes and spend **less** on health, education and social benefits*

*Keep taxes and spending on these services at the **same** level as now*

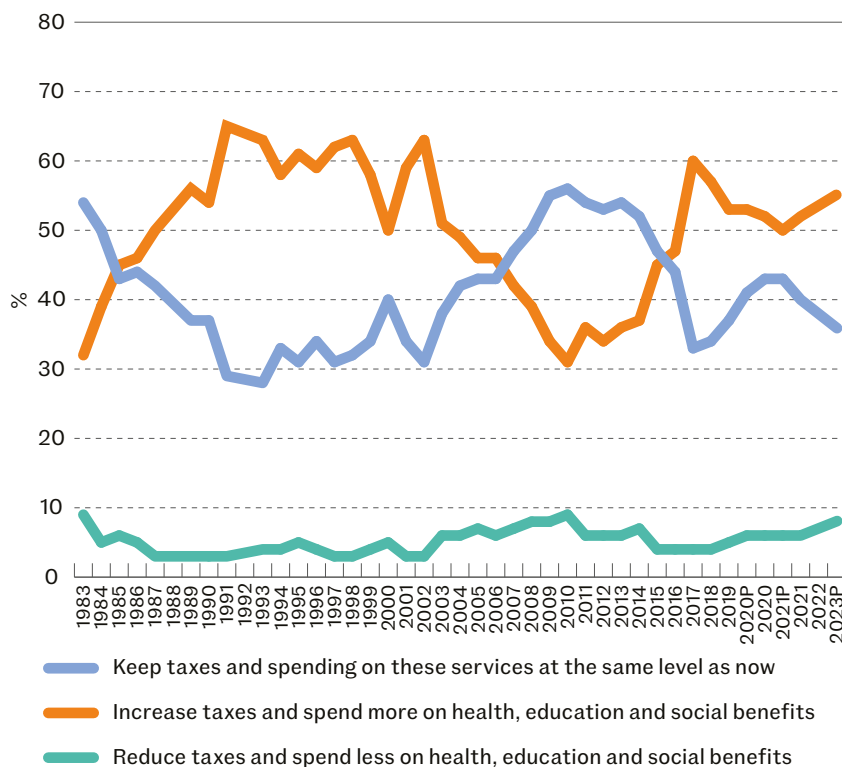
*Increase taxes and spend **more** on health, education and social benefits.*

Given that the question asks people whether they would like taxation and spending to rise or fall from their current level, we would expect that the pattern of response over the years would reveal evidence of any thermostatic reaction that has occurred in response to changes in the level of taxation and spending.

There have certainly been some important changes to taxation and spending during the course of the last forty years. The Conservative governments that were in power between 1979 and 1997 sought to reduce the level of taxation and spending. Indeed during this period, the basic rate of income tax fell from 30% to 23%, while government spending as a proportion of GDP dropped from 41% to 36% (Office for Budget Responsibility, 2023b). In its early years, the Labour government of 1997 to 2010 sought to follow the fiscally conservative stance that had been adopted by the previous Conservative administration, but thereafter it presided over a substantial increase in public spending, accompanied by an increase in the rate of national insurance (in effect a tax on earned income). Meanwhile, the public spending incurred by government to mitigate the impact of the financial crisis of 2008-9 resulted in a significant fiscal deficit which the Conservative led administrations in power from 2010 onwards sought to reduce primarily through spending cuts. Indeed, public spending as a percentage of GDP fell from 46% in 2010-11 to 40% in 2018-19 (Office for Budget Responsibility, 2023b). However, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an even bigger increase in public spending as the government paid the wages of those who could not work during lockdown and increased spending in particular on the NHS. Together with accompanying tax increases, the pandemic bequeathed a position where both taxation and spending rose to record heights as a proportion of GDP (OBR).

Figure 2 shows how people have responded to our question on taxation and spending since the first BSA survey in 1983. During the pandemic the question was also asked on two occasions to members of the NatCen Opinion Panel, which comprises people who have previously responded to BSA surveys, while the most recent data also comes from that source.

Figure 2 Attitudes towards taxation and spending on health, education and social benefits, 1983-2023



Source: 2020P, 2021P, 2023P NatCen Opinion Panel
 The data on which Figure 2 is based can be found in Table A.2 in the appendix to this chapter

Relatively few people ever say that the level of taxation and spending should be reduced. This perhaps is not surprising given that, as we saw earlier, many are inclined to the view that the government should definitely or probably take on a wide range of responsibilities, with the provision of a health service being particularly popular. However, there has been considerable change over time in the proportion who say that taxation and spending should be increased and those who indicate that taxes and spending should be kept at their current level.

In 1983 there was relatively little appetite for more spending; slightly less than one in three (32%) expressed that view. However, that proportion gradually increased during the remainder of the 1980s and by 1991 reached a peak of 65%. Thereafter until 1997 and indeed for a while afterwards, the figure oscillated around the three-fifths mark. In short, just as we would expect if voters were reacting thermostatically, gradually people responded to the conservative fiscal stance of the UK government by becoming more likely to support higher spending and express a willingness to pay for it in the form of higher taxes.

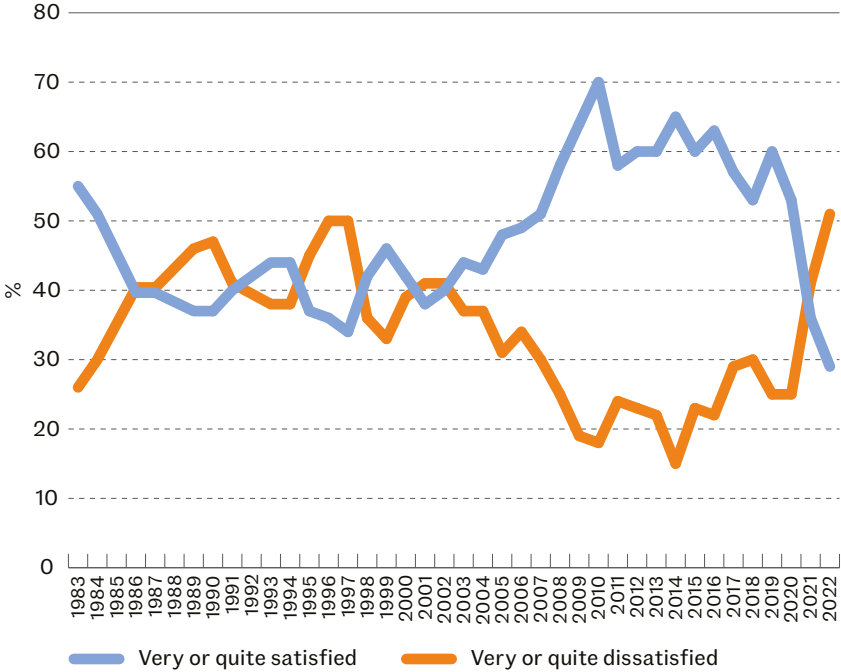
However, as we have already noted, after a couple of years in office, the Labour government elected in 1997 began to increase spending. And public opinion reacted accordingly. Support for more public spending fell and by the time the Labour government was coming to the end of its term of office in 2009 – and public spending had also increased in the wake of the financial crash – a near record low of 34% wanted more spending. This mood was sustained during the initial years after 2010 of what came to be known as Conservative-led financial ‘austerity’, but then public opinion began to swing back again. By 2017, 60% were in favour of more spending, and the figure still stood at 53% in 2019, just months before the COVID-19 pandemic. Once again, it appeared as though the public was reacting thermostatically.

However, despite the rise in spending in the wake of the pandemic, at 55%, the proportion in favour remains much the same now, even though a year or more has elapsed since most of the public health restrictions put in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19 were lifted. There is no sign so far that the public have reacted to the latest record increase in taxation and public spending by swinging away from support for more. This raises the question as to whether the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has led voters to ‘reset’ their public spending thermostat to a higher level than in the past, thereby potentially leaving a legacy of greater support for big government than has hitherto been the case.

It will, of course, be some years before we will be sure of the answer to that question. As proved to be true of the era of fiscal ‘austerity’, it may take a while before people adjust their attitudes to the increased levels of taxation and spending that they are now experiencing. However, there is one potentially important difference between the position now and that of twenty years ago.

The higher level of public spending inaugurated by the Labour government of 1997-2010, not least on the health service, was accompanied by a marked increase in people’s levels of satisfaction with the NHS. In 1997 only around one in three (34%) were satisfied with the performance of the health service, but by 2010 the figure stood at 70% (see Figure 3). However, at present there is little sign of any similar trend in attitudes towards a service that in practice is struggling to recover from the pandemic and whose waiting lists for treatment are at a record high. Rather, the level of satisfaction has fallen to a new record low of 29%. Despite the current high levels of taxation, it may well be that the public will wish to see an improvement in the performance of the public services before it is willing to contemplate any cutbacks in public expenditure.

Figure 3 Satisfaction with the NHS, 1983-2022



The data on which Figure 3 is based can be found in Table A.3 in the appendix to this chapter.

As we might anticipate, at any one point in time Conservative supporters are less likely than their Labour counterparts to say that taxation and spending should be increased. As in the case of attitudes towards the role of government, voters’ initial ideological inclinations are always an influence. True, as Table 2 below illustrates, the difference between Conservative and Labour supporters in their level of support for more taxation and spending has varied somewhat from year to year but there is no sign of any consistent trend towards a widening or a narrowing of that gap between them over time.

Rather, the difference between the two sets of supporters has mostly oscillated in a trendless fashion between 10 and 25 percentage points, while rarely falling outside those limits. However, the absolute level of support for more taxation and spending among the two sets of supporters has changed substantially over time. For when voters begin to react thermostatically, Conservative and Labour supporters typically do so in a similar fashion. For example, at 26%, support among Conservative identifiers in 2011 for more taxation and spending was 19 points down on what it had been in 1995, while the level of support among their Labour counterparts was similarly 24 points lower. Once again, we see that voters' attitudes towards the scope of government are tempered by circumstance as well as being influenced by ideological preference.

Table 2 Support for increased taxation and spending among Conservative and Labour identifiers, 1983-2023

	Conservative	Labour	Con-Lab gap
1983	24%	42%	-18
1987	35%	64%	-29
1991	56%	73%	-17
1995	45%	70%	-25
1999	52%	62%	-10
2003	43%	60%	-17
2007	38%	48%	-10
2011	26%	46%	-20
2015	35%	59%	-24
2019	52%	57%	-5
2023	44%	69%	-25

Details of the unweighted bases for this table can be found in Table A.4 in the appendix to this chapter.

Source: 2023 NatCen Opinion Panel

Defence and security

So far, we have focused primarily on attitudes towards the roles and responsibilities of government at home, such as providing public services, dealing with inequality, and managing the economy. But government also has a vital role to play abroad, not least in providing the country with an adequate defence capability. That role is, however, not lacking in controversy – some feel that spending money on defence and a willingness if necessary to engage in armed conflict is a first duty of government and acts as deterrent against military threat by other countries. Others have doubts about the morality of armed conflict, fear that the availability of arms increases the risk that they will actually be used, and prefer to emphasise instead the role of diplomacy in resolving international disputes. The former view is articulated more often by Conservative than Labour politicians, some of whom at least are more inclined to the latter view.



Defence has rarely been off the political agenda over the last forty years – and has sometimes been the subject of considerable controversy. Not long before the first BSA survey in 1983, the UK had sent a naval fleet to reverse an invasion by Argentinian forces of the Falklands Islands, a British dependency in the South Atlantic also known as the Malvinas. Meanwhile, in response to what was seen as the threat posed by Russia at the time, in the 1980s the UK permitted the USA to place on British soil cruise missiles equipped with nuclear warheads. The controversy this engendered became part of wider debate – and the object of many a demonstration – about whether the UK should retain its own nuclear capability or should unilaterally abandon its weapons. Indeed, the Labour party’s manifesto in 1983 committed the party to unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 reduced the apparent threat from that quarter, and indeed the US cruise missiles were withdrawn from Britain in 1991. However, attention then turned to the Middle East. In 1991 the UK was part of a multilateral force that reversed an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Much more controversially, in 2003 the UK Labour government joined a US invasion of Iraq in the belief that the country had ‘weapons of mass destruction’ that posed a threat to the security of the West. In the event, that belief, which had been widely questioned before the decision to invade, proved inaccurate. Indeed, that experience helps explain why in 2013 the House of Commons voted against a similar intervention in a civil war in Syria, despite widespread concern about the risk that Britain might be the subject of terrorist attacks from some of the insurgent groups associated with the Syrian conflict. Concern about such possible attacks also led to UK involvement in 2001 in an invasion of Afghanistan with a view to toppling the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban regime there, a regime that, however, regained power following the withdrawal of international forces in 2022.

Now, however, following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the threat posed by Russia has moved back to the top of the defence agenda. The Ukraine war has in effect become a proxy war in which western countries, including the UK, are providing Ukraine with weaponry and finance while seeking to avoid direct engagement in the conflict. Meanwhile, despite the extent to which British military forces have been deployed during the last forty years, there has been a long-term decline in expenditure on defence – from over 5% of GDP in 1983 to little more than 2% in 2021 – and in the range of military forces that the UK alone is able to deploy (World Bank, nd). Unlike the recapture of the Falklands, nearly all of Britain’s military involvement during the last forty years has been as part of an international (US-led) alliance.

Once again, we can ask to what extent Conservative and Labour supporters have expressed different attitudes towards defence over the last forty years, and to what extent attitudes have changed in response to the changing circumstances in which the UK has found itself during the last forty years.

Since 1986 BSA has periodically asked its respondents whether they would like ‘to see more or less government spending in military and defence’. Table 3 reveals that there has been a marked change in attitudes. In 1990 nearly half (48%) said that they would like to see less spending on defence while fewer than one in ten (8%) indicated that they would like more.

By the mid 1990s the proportion wanting less spending had fallen to around a third while around one in five now wanted more. Meanwhile, by 2006 the balance of opinion had tipped in favour of more spending with slightly more (28%) expressing that view than saying that spending should be reduced (23%). This change of mood was even clearer when the issue was revisited in 2016, while in our most recent survey, conducted after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, support for spending has edged up a little further to above the 40% mark.

Table 3 Attitudes to spending on military and defence, 1985-2022

	1985	1990	1991	1993	1994	1996	2006	2016	2022
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Spend more	17	8	14	21	19	17	28	39	42
Same as now	43	39	39	40	45	46	43	37	35
Spend less	36	48	43	33	32	31	23	20	18
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1502</i>	<i>2430</i>	<i>1224</i>	<i>1268</i>	<i>975</i>	<i>989</i>	<i>930</i>	<i>1563</i>	<i>1052</i>

It seems the public may well have reacted thermostatically against the reduction in defence expenditure during the last forty years. At the same time public attitudes may also have been influenced by the apparent increased risk to the domestic security of British citizens that has seemingly posed by some of the conflicts in the Middle East, a development that for some may have brought the issue much closer to home.

As we noted earlier, the issue of nuclear weapons, and in particular Britain’s own independent nuclear weapon capability, was a subject of particular controversy when BSA was first launched in 1983. In that year’s survey and during the remainder of the eighties we asked:

Which of these statements comes closest to your own opinion on Britain’s nuclear defence policy?

Britain should rid itself of nuclear weapons while persuading others to do the same

Britain should keep its nuclear weapons until we persuade others to reduce theirs

The first option is commonly referred to as ‘unilateral’ disarmament, while the latter is termed ‘multilateral’ disarmament. Table 4 shows the pattern of response we obtained in the eighties and nineties – and the answers we received on asking the question again in our latest survey. In 1983, despite the efforts of anti-nuclear campaigners, over three in four (77%) favoured a multilateral approach while slightly less than one fifth (19%) backed taking unilateral action. Subsequent surveys through to 1990 showed much the same picture, albeit with slightly less support for multilateralism (on average, 70%), and a little more for a unilateral stance (26%).

Table 4 Attitudes towards nuclear disarmament, 1983-2022

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989	1990	2022
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unilateral disarmament	19	23	27	28	25	26	28	23
Multilateral disarmament	77	73	68	69	72	71	69	56
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1719	1645	1769	3066	2766	2930	2797	1052

Note that on the 2022 survey, conducted online, respondents were presented with the option ‘neither of these’, a response that was chosen by 17%. In previous years that response was only recorded if it was offered by the respondent to an interviewer, and the proportion doing so was never more than 4%.

Forty years on, a multilateral approach is still by far the more popular option. That said, the balance of opinion appears now to be somewhat less strongly tilted in that direction. In our latest survey multilateralism is a little less than two and a half times more popular than a unilateral approach, compared with an equivalent figure of 2.8 times between 1983 and 1990. It appears that there is still some debate among the public on this issue.

That said, the perception that having its own nuclear weapons makes Britain a safer place to live is just as widespread now as it was in the 1980s, even though there had seemingly been some decline in that point of view by the mid-nineties.

Indeed, as Table 5 shows, at 65% the proportion who say that nuclear weapons make Britain a safer place to live, always the more common response, is now at a record high. This may be a consequence of a greater feeling of threat from Russia in the wake of the Ukraine war, though in the absence of other readings for more recent years on this we cannot be sure².

Table 5 Perceptions of whether having its own independent nuclear missiles makes Britain a safer or less safe place to live, 1983-2022

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989	1990	1994	2022
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Safer	60	56	54	52	58	55	54	45	65
Less safe	28	32	34	37	31	34	33	37	26
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1719	1645	1769	3066	2766	2930	2797	1165	1052

As we would anticipate, Conservative supporters have always been somewhat more inclined than their Labour counterparts to say that the government should spend more on military and defence. However, although support for more defence spending has increased among both groups over time, the difference between them has widened considerably. As Table 6 shows, up to and including 1996, the proportion in both groups who said that spending should be increased was typically similarly low, while, on average, Labour supporters were only 15 points more likely than those who backed the Conservatives to say that spending should be reduced. The issue did not seem to represent a significant divide in Britain’s partisan politics.

2 The increase in the perception that having nuclear weapons makes Britain a safer place may also have been occasioned by the fact that there is now less concern about the use of nuclear technology for civil purposes. Now, while 46% say that nuclear power stations create a ‘very’ or ‘quite a serious risk for the future’, they are matched by the 46% who say they that they risk is ‘slight’ or hardly exists at all. In 1983 as many as 63% said nuclear power stations posed a serious risk, a figure that rose to 78% in 1986, shortly after the Chernobyl disaster. Meanwhile in 1983, as many as 63% said that waste from nuclear power stations posed a ‘very serious’ risk to the environment, a figure that increased to 72% in 1986, but which now stands at just 23%. Certainly, those who think that civil nuclear power poses a risk are more likely to feel that having nuclear weapons makes Britain a less safe place to live.

However, by 2016, Conservative supporters were now not only 17 points less likely to say that defence spending should be reduced, but they were also 17 points more likely to say it should be increased. Meanwhile, while the balance of opinion among Labour supporters is much the same now as six years ago, an increase in support for more spending among Conservative supporters means they are now twice as likely as their Labour counterparts to say that defence spending should be increased. In short, while the swing in favour of more spending on defence has been apparent across the political spectrum, it has been stronger among Conservative than Labour supporters.

Table 6 Attitudes towards defence spending among Conservative and Labour identifiers, 1985-2022

		Conservative supporters			Labour supporters	
		Spend more	Spend less		Spend more	Spend less
1985	%	22	19	%	13	47
1990	%	8	40	%	7	54
1991	%	16	32	%	15	52
1993	%	22	31	%	21	33
1994	%	22	26	%	20	37
1996	%	16	23	%	18	37
2006	%	32	18	%	23	25
2016	%	48	10	%	31	27
2022	%	67	5	%	32	26

Details of the unweighted bases for this table can be found in Table A.5 in the appendix to this chapter.

In contrast, there has always been something of a partisan divide on nuclear weapons, albeit one in which Conservative supporters have largely been of one view, while Labour supporters have often appeared quite divided. True, in 1983, following Labour's recent switch in favour of a unilateral approach, only 29% of Labour supporters backed unilateral disarmament, while 68% preferred a multilateral approach. However, by 1987 backing for unilateralism among Labour supporters had increased to 44%, not far short of the 52% who preferred a multilateral approach. Meanwhile, even the 68% support for multilateralism registered in 1983 was notably lower than the 90% figure among Conservative supporters, not only in 1983 but also in 1987. In our latest survey, only 26% of Labour identifiers support unilateral disarmament while 55% favour multilateralism, but that still leaves the party's supporters more divided than their Conservative counterparts, 77% of whom favour a multilateral approach and only 8% support unilateralism.

Meanwhile, in 1983, as many as 73% of Conservative supporters said that having its own nuclear weapons made Britain a safer place to live, whereas Labour supporters were divided between the 53% who expressed that view and the 39% who said the possession of nuclear weapons made Britain less safe. Indeed, by 1987 Labour supporters were almost evenly divided between the 41% who said that Britain was made less safe by nuclear weapons and the 47% who took the opposite view. Meanwhile, although three in five (60%) of Labour supporters now believe that Britain's independent deterrent makes the country safer and only one in three (33%) say the opposite, among Conservative supporters no less than 87% say that Britain is safer.

Conservative supporters are largely united in their backing for nuclear weapons, whereas a significant proportion of Labour supporters have their doubts. As a result, the nuclear question is always potentially a source of division within Labour's electoral coalition, among whom attitudes have also varied rather more over time – though even among Conservative supporters the belief that Britain was made safer by its nuclear weapons dipped to 65% in 1994. In short, even on this sometimes emotive issue where firmly held views are often to be heard, some voters have sometimes apparently been willing to change their minds.

Conclusion

Voters do have prior preferences about what they think government should do. Some are more ready than others to say that government should have a wide range of responsibilities, to tax and spend a great deal, and should attempt to be a significant defence power. These initial preferences are reflected in a tendency for those who want a bigger state to back the Labour party while those who prefer smaller government to support the Conservatives, although the characterisation is somewhat in the opposite direction on defence. However, this does not mean that attitudes towards the role of government are immutable. Rather, the public are also sensitive to the changing circumstances within which they find themselves.

People do seem to have come to accept to some degree at least the reduction in the role of government that was sought by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative regime and was largely accepted by Tony Blair's Labour government. After all, the relatively benign economic climate that developed in the wake of globalisation suggested that perhaps there only needed to be a more limited role for government. That said, this did not necessarily translate into a willingness to accept inadequate public services in return for lower taxes. Rather, in contrast to what happened to attitudes towards the role of government, on the bread and butter of government activity people displayed a thermostatic reaction against the direction in which the Conservatives had been taking the country. The Labour government of 1997 to 2010 found itself taking that reaction on board – only in turn to suffer a similar reaction (in the opposite direction) to its eventual expansion of taxation and spending. Meanwhile, there were also signs of a public reaction against the reduction in the UK's military capability that had characterised both Conservative and Labour regimes.

Yet all of this was conditional. The public first began to look to government rather more in the wake of the financial crash of 2008-9, though in the event that mood appears eventually to have dissipated. However, the same cannot be said, so far at least, of the COVID-19 pandemic. Expectations of government in the wake of that public health crisis have never been higher. The public shows no sign so far of wanting to row back on the increased taxation and spending that has been part of the legacy of the pandemic, not least perhaps because of their dissatisfaction with the state of the health service. Meanwhile, there are now also record levels of support for more defence spending. So far as the public are concerned at least, the era of smaller government that Margaret Thatcher aimed to promulgate – and which Liz Truss briefly tried to restore in the autumn of 2022 with her ill-fated ‘dash for growth’ – now seems a world away. What remains to be seen is whether politicians can meet the public’s high expectations.

Acknowledgements

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) is grateful to the King's Fund and the Nuffield Trust for their financial support which enabled us to ask the questions about the NHS which are reported in this chapter. The views expressed are those of the authors alone.

References

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2021), *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*, Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

Office for Budget Responsibility (2023a), *Economic and Fiscal Outlook – March 2023*, London: Office for Budget Responsibility. Available at https://obr.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/OBR-EFO-March-2023-Web_Accessible.pdf

Office for Budget Responsibility (2023b), *Public Finances Databank – July 2023*. Available at <https://obr.uk/data/>

Soroka, S., and Wlezien, C. (2010), *Degrees of Democracy: Politics, Public Opinion and Policy*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wlezien, C. (1995), 'The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending', *American Journal of Political Science*, 39 (4): 981-1000.

World Bank (nd), *Data – Military Expenditure (% of GDP) – United Kingdom*. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=GB>

Appendix

Table A.1 Mean government responsibility score among Conservative and Labour identifiers, 1985-2022

	Conservative supporters		Labour supporters	
	Mean Government Responsibility Score	<i>Unweighted Base</i>	Mean Government Responsibility Score	<i>Unweighted Base</i>
1985	3.16	<i>414</i>	3.68	<i>490</i>
1986	3.13	<i>379</i>	3.63	<i>409</i>
1990	3.04	<i>359</i>	3.52	<i>413</i>
1996	2.96	<i>231</i>	3.48	<i>353</i>
2006	2.97	<i>206</i>	3.12	<i>247</i>
2012	3.16	<i>202</i>	3.46	<i>259</i>
2016	2.86	<i>454</i>	3.24	<i>391</i>
2022	3.26	<i>606</i>	3.63	<i>730</i>

Table A.2 Attitudes towards taxation and spending on health, education and social benefits, 1983-2023

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989	1990	1991	1993	1994	1995
Which should the government choose...	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits	9	5	6	5	3	3	3	3	4	4	5
Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now	54	50	43	44	42	37	37	29	28	33	31
Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	32	39	45	46	50	56	54	65	63	58	61
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1761	1675	1804	3100	2847	3029	2797	2918	2945	3469	3633
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Which should the government choose...	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits	4	3	3	4	5	3	3	6	6	7	6
Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now	34	31	32	34	40	34	31	38	42	43	43
Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	59	62	63	58	50	59	63	51	49	46	46
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	3620	1355	3146	3143	2292	3287	3435	3272	2146	2166	3240

Table A.2 Attitudes towards taxation and spending on health, education and social benefits, 1983-2023 (continued)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Which should the government choose...	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits	7	8	8	9	6	6	6	7	4	4	4
Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now	47	50	55	56	54	53	54	52	47	44	33
Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	42	39	34	31	36	34	36	37	45	48	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	3094	2229	1139	3297	3311	3248	3244	2878	3266	2942	2963
	2018	2019	July 2020 Panel	2020	June 2021 Panel	2021	Jan 2023 Panel				
Which should the government choose...	%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits	4	5	6	5	6	6	8				
Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now	34	37	41	43	43	40	36				
Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	57	53	53	50	50	52	55				
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	2884	3224	2413	3964	2217	2073	2415				

Source: Jul 2020P, Jun 2021P, Jan 2023P NatCen Opinion Panel.

Table A.3 Satisfaction with the NHS, 1983-2022

	1983	1984	1986	1987	1989	1990	1991	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or quite satisfied	55	51	40	40	37	37	40	44	44	37	36	34
Very or quite dissatisfied	26	30	40	40	46	47	41	38	38	45	50	50
Net satisfied	29	21	1	1	-9	-10	-1	6	6	-8	-14	-15
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1761</i>	<i>1675</i>	<i>3100</i>	<i>2847</i>	<i>3029</i>	<i>2797</i>	<i>2918</i>	<i>2945</i>	<i>3469</i>	<i>3633</i>	<i>3620</i>	<i>1355</i>
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or quite satisfied	42	46	42	38	40	44	43	48	49	51	58	64
Very or quite dissatisfied	36	33	39	41	41	37	37	31	34	30	25	19
Net satisfied	5	13	3	-2	-1	6	7	17	15	21	32	46
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3146</i>	<i>3143</i>	<i>3426</i>	<i>2188</i>	<i>2287</i>	<i>2293</i>	<i>3199</i>	<i>3193</i>	<i>2143</i>	<i>3078</i>	<i>3358</i>	<i>3421</i>

Table A.3 Satisfaction with the NHS, 1983-2022 (continued)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or quite satisfied	70	58	60	60	65	60	63	57	53	60	53	36
Very or quite dissatisfied	18	24	23	22	15	23	22	29	30	25	25	41
Net satisfied	52	34	37	38	50	37	41	28	23	34	29	-5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3297	1096	1103	1063	1937	2167	2942	3004	2926	3224	1275	3112
2022												
	%											
Very or quite satisfied	29											
Very or quite dissatisfied	51											
Net satisfied	-22											
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3362											

Table A.4 Unweighted bases for Table 2

	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011	2015	2019	2023
Conservative	676	1095	1053	957	785	806	819	926	1075	963	675
Labour	584	824	1010	1610	1333	1203	1058	1039	943	816	881

Table A.5 Unweighted bases for Table 6

	Conservative supporters	Labour supporters
Unweighted bases		
1985	495	425
1990	866	931
1991	448	425
1993	436	471
1994	294	362
1996	285	418
2006	245	300
2016	557	469
2022	290	359

Publication details

Frankenburg, S., Clery, E. and Curtice, J.(eds.) (2023),
British Social Attitudes: The 40th Report.
London: National Centre for Social Research

© National Centre for Social Research 2023

First published 2023

You may print out, download and save this publication for your non-commercial use. Otherwise, and apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, or by any means, only with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the National Centre for Social Research.

National Centre for Social Research
35 Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0AX
info@natcen.ac.uk
natcen.ac.uk

