

Key findings

Social attitudes in an age of austerity

In a period of extended recession, and with the Coalition government having embarked on a severe programme of cuts to public services, we ask how the British public is reacting. Are people looking to the state to protect public services and social welfare, or are they turning away from government being the answer? With nearly three decades of data covering three recessions and five prime ministers, British Social Attitudes is uniquely placed to answer these questions.

Role of the state

There are initial signs of increased concern about the impact of public expenditure cuts on public services such as health and education. But there is also a longer-term hardening of attitudes towards redistribution and welfare.



The proportion calling for the government to **increase taxes and spend more** on health, education and social benefits rose for the first time in nine years – up five points to 36%. The principle of a tax-funded health service available to all is supported by a clear majority: 73% oppose the idea of the NHS being “available only to those with lower incomes”.



Set against this, neither redistribution in general nor **welfare benefits** in particular are as popular as they once were. During the previous recession in 1991, 58% agreed that “government should spend more on welfare benefits even if it leads to higher taxes” – more than double the proportion who think this now (28%).

Social divisions

There are signs of increasing social divisions, particularly in terms of attitudes towards welfare recipients and immigrants.



The **most vulnerable in the labour market** are viewed far less sympathetically than before, despite Britain's current economic difficulties. This change predates the recession, and the trend has continued in recent years. From 2008–2011, even support for more spending on benefits for disabled people unable to work fell from 63% to 53%.



There is increased concern about **immigration**, another trend that predates the recession. The proportion thinking that “Britain's cultural life is generally undermined” by immigration has increased, with 47% taking this view, up from 33% in 2002.

 **This summary highlights public attitudes on two different themes: the role of the state, and social unity** 

Introduction

Four years on from the banking crisis of 2008, Britain remains less wealthy than it was before the crisis began. Growth remains elusive at best. The coalition government has embarked upon a programme of cuts the size of which has not been seen since the Second World War (Chote, 2010). The result? The British public has been presented with a rude reminder of the potential fragility of its material wellbeing.

How are people reacting in this extended period of recession and austerity? In this short summary, drawing on evidence from our 29th British Social Attitudes report, we provide some answers. The summary highlights public attitudes on two different themes: the role of the state, and social unity. In doing so, we focus in particular on two very different potential responses. The first is what we might call the social democratic reaction, in which people rediscover their faith in the role of the state. Having seen market mechanisms and private sector institutions fail so visibly, they increasingly value the state's role as a provider of important public services and necessary social protection, and perhaps even as a way of achieving a more equal society. Awareness that few people's jobs or incomes are safe leads to increased sympathy for those who have fallen on hard times, including those who require support from the welfare state. This response might see a feeling of solidarity, a sense that 'we are all in it together', and perhaps a belief that the better-off should shoulder more of the financial burden.

But one can also imagine a different reaction, one that points towards far less reliance on a centralised state. People may increasingly feel that the state is the problem and not the solution. A government that cannot pay its way is seen as profligate and wasteful, leading to an increasing desire to cut back both on taxes and on spending. There might be a growing feeling that people should look after themselves in times of trouble rather than expecting government or the rest of society to 'bail them out'. We may also see increasing social division, as people believe that others, whom they see as less 'deserving', are taking things (jobs, benefits, or access to state services) away from them.

The longevity and impartiality of British Social Attitudes puts us in a unique position to assess Britain's reaction to austerity. The survey series was created by NatCen Social Research in 1983, shortly before Margaret Thatcher's second election victory. Many key questions are repeated each year, and three decades of data now cover seven elections, five prime ministers and three recessions. This allows us to put current responses to austerity into a longer-term perspective. Perhaps what is happening to the public mood is little different from what has happened before – no more than a cyclical response to the ups and downs of economic activity. But if what we are seeing now differs greatly from the past then we may be uncovering evidence that the country wants to move in a different long-term direction.

We start by shedding light on how people view the role of the state, focusing on taxation and public services, the NHS, welfare and inequality. We then look at the extent to which austerity is drawing us together, or pushing us apart. Finally we look at what austerity means for families and explore the pressures that they are facing.

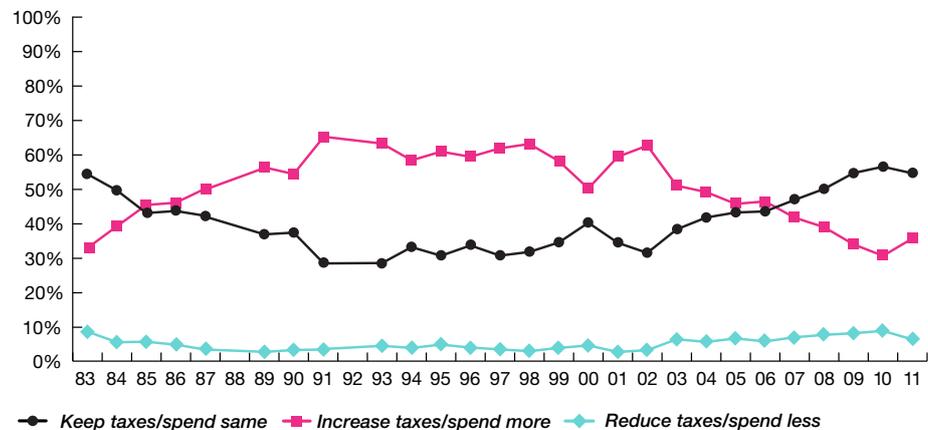
What do citizens want from the state?

Every government makes tough decisions about how much it should tax and spend. Previous research indicates that attitudes towards taxation and spending are cyclical (Soroka and Wlezien, 2005; Wlezien, 1995). So when public expenditure goes up, people’s appetite for better public services is increasingly satisfied. Their support for further increases then falls away as their concern turns instead to the amount of tax they are paying. But when expenditure is reduced, support for more spending increases, as people become dissatisfied with the state of public services.

This pattern is clearly illustrated in Figure 0.1, which shows responses to our long-running question about taxation and public spending. When British Social Attitudes first began in 1983, only one third (32 per cent) wanted to see government “increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits”, while 54 per cent wanted to “keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now”. But as the efforts of the Thatcher government to curb public expenditure began to bite, so the public mood changed drastically. By 1991, when the economy was beginning to enter recession, no less than two-thirds (65 per cent) said they wanted to see taxes and spending increase. Thereafter, the figure remained consistent at around three-fifths until 2003, from which point it fell repeatedly in reaction to the substantial increases in public spending that took place under the then Labour government. By 2010, only 31 per cent wanted to see increased public spending, dipping below the figure recorded in Thatcher’s heyday in 1983. But in 2011, the proportion calling for an increase in taxation and spending rose for the first time in nine years – up five points to 36 per cent – while 55 per cent would like to see spending levels stay as they are. This is a modest increase, but it could well be the first sign of a reaction against the public spending reductions that the government has begun to implement, and which are set to accumulate between now and 2017.

In 2011, the proportion calling for an increase in taxation and spending rose for the first time in nine years

Figure 0.1 Attitudes to taxation and spending, 1983–2011



The data on which Figure 0.1 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

68%

choose health as their priority for more government spending

Of all Britain’s public services, the NHS has a special place in the public’s heart. Since the survey began, it has consistently been the most popular target for additional spending, with 68 per cent per cent choosing it in 2011 as either their first or second priority for more spending (education is the second most popular, at 61 per cent). Any possibility that the NHS might no longer be primarily a universal service free to all at the point of access meets with widespread and largely unchanging levels of opposition. As our Health chapter shows, the proportion opposing the idea of the NHS being “available only to those with lower incomes” meaning that “contributions and taxes could be lower and most people would then take out medical insurance or pay for health care” has remained consistent at around 70 per cent for more than 20 years. So when it comes to the principle of a tax-funded health service available to all, majority public opinion has remained largely unchanged.

However, the public is now showing signs of concern as to whether this principle will continue to guide the NHS in the future. When asked whether they think that “in 10 years’ time the NHS will still be paid for by taxes and free to all”, just under half (47 per cent) say yes while almost as many (44%) say no.

But this is not to say that the public think the NHS is perfect. Our Health chapter offers insights into a number of findings about people’s views on the NHS and how it might change. We have seen satisfaction with the NHS fall for the first time in 10 years: from a high of 70 per cent in 2010 to 58 per cent now; a sign perhaps of early unease about the possible impact of funding restraint, no doubt fuelled by the recent controversy about NHS reform.

And there is an appetite for modest, though possibly not radical, change. Over half (55 per cent) believe that “a few changes” are needed to “the health care system in Britain”, while another third (32 per cent) think it needs “many changes”. Only small minorities (five per cent in both cases) believe either that no changes are needed or that it “needs to be completely changed”.

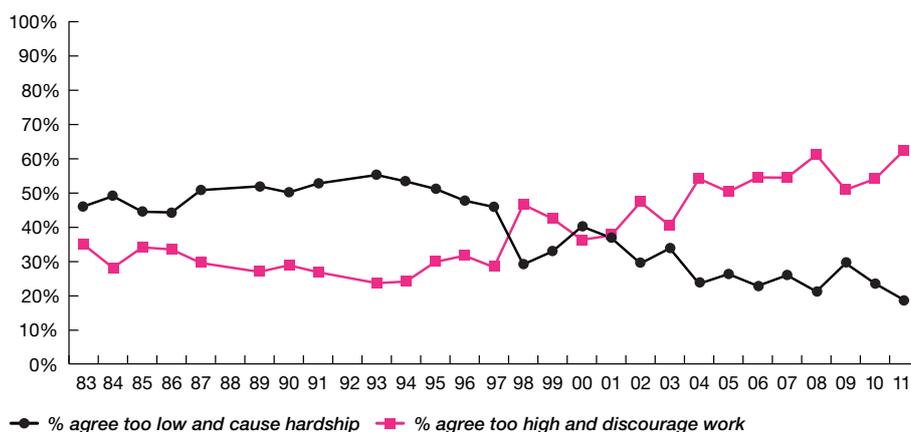
There are signs of some support for the central plank of the coalition government’s reform, a more localised system that has GPs in charge of deciding how a substantial proportion of the NHS budget should be spent. Although only a third (34 per cent) think decisions about “how money is spent on your local NHS” should be made by local GPs, even fewer (30 per cent) think that these decisions should be made by the government. The remainder opt for other forms of local decision making, by either the local council (17 per cent) or local people in general (17 per cent).

So while the public retains its support for the state funding of the NHS, there is some appetite for more localised decision making.

One British Social Attitudes finding that has attracted considerable comment over the last few years has been its identification of increased public scepticism about the benefit system and a growing concern that welfare benefits may have a counterproductive impact on their recipients. So what impact has austerity and recession had on public support for government action in this area?

We would expect attitudes towards unemployment benefits to be among the most responsive to recession. Figure 0.2 shows how people have responded since 1983 when asked to choose between two statements about benefits for unemployed people: that they are “too low and cause hardship” or that they are “too high and discourage them from finding jobs”. The findings show that attitudes were indeed shaped somewhat by the recession of the early 1990s, with the proportion of people thinking unemployment benefits were too low increasing from 46 per cent in 1986 to a peak of 55 per cent in 1993. But the proportion who felt this began to fall away when Labour came to power in 1997, and then continued to fall in spite of the buoyant economy of the early years of the 21st century. By 2007 the proportion feeling that unemployment benefits were too low had seemingly settled at around the 25 per cent mark. Since then there is little evidence of a change of mood, despite the recent recession; indeed our latest reading in 2011 shows that the proportion who consider unemployment benefits too low has shrunk still further (to 19 per cent). Responses to other questions, considered in our Welfare chapter, show a similar trend. So, for example, during the previous recession in 1991, 58 per cent agreed that “government should spend more on welfare benefits even if it leads to higher taxes” – over double the proportion who think this now (28 per cent in 2011).

On attitudes towards unemployment benefits there is little evidence of a change of mood since 2007, despite the recent recession

Figure 0.2 Attitudes to unemployment benefits, 1983–2011

The data on which Figure 0.2 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Of course some benefit recipients might be looked upon more kindly than others. The retired, for instance, are often seen to be part of a ‘deserving poor’ that excludes groups like single parents or the unemployed (Taylor-Gooby and Martin, 2008). Indeed the current government’s attitude towards welfare appears to draw a distinction between those in retirement and others in receipt of benefits (Cameron, 2012). Table 0.1 shows how attitudes towards benefits for various groups have evolved over the last 10 years or so. It shows that people do indeed make a distinction between different groups. At one end of the spectrum there is almost universal support for increasing government spending on the benefits paid to those who care for someone who is sick or disabled (75 per cent), whereas very few people back increased spending on benefits for unemployed people (just 15 per cent). But perhaps the most striking feature of this table is the trend common to each and every group – namely that support for more spending on benefits has fallen since 1998, and in many cases quite markedly between 2008 and 2011. As we might expect from the results we have seen so far, in some cases this trend began well before the recession. So, for example, the proportion favouring more spending on benefits for disabled people who cannot work fell from 74 per cent in 1999 to 64 per cent in 2006. But it has fallen even further since then – down from 64 to 53 per cent – and the same is true for almost all the groups in the table. If anything (unlike our findings on taxation and spending), here it seems that the recession has prompted a wish to see the strings of the public purse tightened even more securely.

Table 0.1 Attitudes to government spending on different benefits, 1998–2011

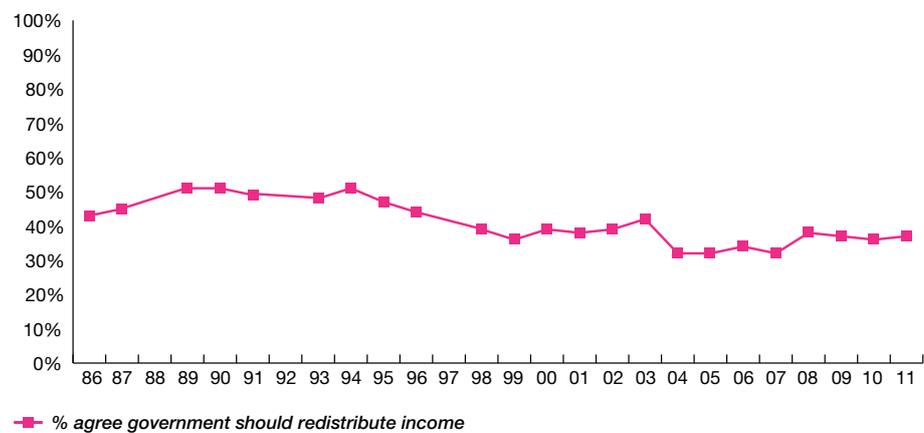
% would like to see more government spending on benefits for ...	1998	1999	2002	2004	2006	2008	2011
... unemployed people	22	25	22	15	16	15	15
... disabled people who cannot work	74	74	72	65	64	63	53
... parents who work on very low incomes	70	71	71	64	68	69	58
... single parents	35	34	40	36	39	38	29
... retired people	73	71	74	74	73	73	57
... people who care for those who are sick or disabled	84	84	84	82	84	85	75
<i>Weighted base</i>	3146	3143	3435	3199	3228	3333	3311
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3146	3143	3435	3199	3240	3258	3311

37%

agree the government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well-off

Britain's changing attitudes to welfare mirror another clear trend of the last two decades – a move away from a belief that government should attempt to deliver a more equal society through income redistribution. Before Labour came to power in 1997, the proportion agreeing with the view that “government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well-off” consistently remained well above 40 per cent, even hovering around 50 per cent during the recession of the early 1990s. But from 1998 onwards only once has the figure been higher than 40 per cent, with 37 per cent agreeing in 2011 (Figure 0.3). While that is higher than the levels seen between 2004–2007, there's little sign here that the advent of recession – or even the public disquiet about the amounts of money paid to corporate chief executives (not least those in charge of some of Britain's banks) – has rekindled support for a more redistributive state to the levels that existed last time a Conservative Prime Minister occupied 10 Downing Street. This is also despite the fact that Labour's attempts to reduce inequality failed to reverse the large growth in inequality that occurred between the late 1970s and early 1990s (Hills et al., 2010).

Figure 0.3 Agreement that government should redistribute income, 1986–2011



— % agree government should redistribute income

The data on which Figure 0.3 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

Britain clearly entered this recession less convinced than before that it was government's responsibility to alleviate inequality

Britain clearly entered this recession less convinced than before that it was government's responsibility to alleviate inequality, either through income redistribution or welfare provision.

A nation united or divided?

Earlier we wondered whether, in times of austerity, we would find evidence of growing unity, a feeling that ‘we are all in it together’, or instead whether there might be an increasing sense that in times of trouble people should look after their own and not expect others to help them out. On the evidence from our Welfare chapter presented earlier, it is clear that Britain entered recession far less supportive of welfare provision than it once was. This change of mood, which began under a Labour government and which recession has done little to reverse, appears to represent a fundamental long-term change that leaves Britain looking like a more individualistic society, one in which those on benefits are judged more harshly than in the past and seen as less deserving of public assistance.

In 1995, 39 per cent thought that the “number of immigrants to Britain” should reduce “a lot”; by 2011 this had risen to 51 per cent

Our Immigration chapter also helps shed light on the question of social unity or division. As an island nation with a global imperial legacy, the question of who we allow to join ‘us’ has a unique resonance. The chapter examines how views about migration have changed, covering a 15-year period which saw the largest inflow of migrants in British history, as well as recession and growing concern about integration among specific migrant groups. Overall, it finds an increasing desire among the public to see less immigration – in 1995, 39 per cent thought that the “number of immigrants to Britain” should reduce “a lot”; by 2011 this had risen to 51 per cent, with a further 24 per cent thinking the number should reduce “a little”. It is also clear that the cultural and economic impacts of migrants on Britain are increasingly seen as negative. In 2011, 52 per cent thought “migrants coming to

Britain from other countries” were “generally bad for Britain’s economy”, up from 43 per cent in 2002. There was an even bigger increase in the proportion thinking that Britain’s cultural life” is “generally undermined” by immigration, with 47 per cent taking this view in 2011, up from 33 per cent in 2002.

What impact has austerity had on public opinion in this area? While our data do not allow us to pinpoint precisely when these attitude shifts took place, our Immigration chapter points to one clue about the possible impact of recession on public opinion. The attitudes of different social groups towards the economic impact of immigration have become increasingly polarised over the last decade. While all groups have become more concerned, the trend has been most pronounced among those without qualifications and among less-skilled workers. While 40 per cent of people in professional occupations assess the economic impact of immigration negatively (up from 36 per cent in 2002), the same is true of 62 per cent of those in routine manual work (up from 51 per cent). A similar pattern is found for income: 39 per cent of people in the top income quartile make a negative assessment of the economic impact of immigration (unchanged since 2002), compared with 61 per cent of those in the bottom quartile (up from 47 per cent in 2002). So while economically comfortable and culturally more cosmopolitan groups show little change in their assessments of the economic impacts of immigration, economically and socially insecure groups have become dramatically more hostile.

Like our findings on welfare, this suggests a clear sense of ‘them and us’, in this case perhaps reflecting the dual impact of increased immigration and recession. The chapter also finds that some migrants are seen to be more easily integrated into ‘us’ than others – Britons are not opposed to migration across the board, but strongly favour migrants they perceive as socially beneficial and easy to integrate (for example, there is less opposition towards highly qualified professionals than there is towards unskilled labourers).

 **The advent of devolution in Scotland and Wales in 1999 has seen the share of public spending received by these parts of the UK come under closer scrutiny** 

Our Immigration chapter focuses on the boundaries of the United Kingdom and those who cross them. But of course there are other boundaries within the British Isles that are relevant to this theme of unity and division. As our Scottish independence chapter shows, the advent of devolution in Scotland and Wales in 1999 has seen the share of public spending received by these parts of the UK come under closer scrutiny. Spending per head in Scotland and Wales has long been higher than in England, a position that, it is argued by defenders of the status quo, recognises the greater needs and lower population densities of these countries (but see Holtham, 2010; McLean et al., 2008). The devolved bodies are free to determine how they will spend much of this money, a situation that has resulted in the free provision in one or more of the devolved territories of services which still have to be paid for by many people in England (university tuition and prescriptions, for example). There are clear signs that this is beginning to generate resentment in England. Before 2007 only around a quarter of people in England felt that Scotland received “more than its fair share of public spending”, but in 2007 this rose to a third (32 per cent) and since 2008 has consistently been around the 40 per cent mark, standing at 44 per cent now. We cannot be sure this change has been exacerbated by the recession, but it clearly echoes earlier findings that austerity has been accompanied by decreasing support for government activity that redistributes resources from one set of citizens to another.

Families under pressure

We have already seen that, in spite of its profound consequences for people’s lives, the recession has not led to increased sympathy for those who have fallen on hard times. Our Work and wellbeing chapter describes how, not surprisingly, feelings of job insecurity have become more widespread, with only around a quarter (23 per cent) saying it is “very true” that their job is secure, down from 32 per cent in 2004. This decline has been almost entirely experienced by women; in 2004 they were far more likely than men to describe their job as secure, but now there is little difference between the sexes.

1 in 5

(22%) have taken a pay cut in the last three years

Demands in the workplace have also increased somewhat. Nearly nine in ten (88 per cent) workers agree that their “job requires them to work very hard”, up from 78 per cent in 2004. Meanwhile, the rewards of work have decreased; one in five (22 per cent) have taken a pay cut in the last three years, while a quarter (24 per cent) say they have “had to do less interesting work”.

These trends cannot be good news for families. As well as reductions in pay and in the average number of paid working hours, more people report working unsocial hours, and there have been small but significant increases in the proportions of people saying that they worry about work when they are at home. Eight in ten (80 per cent) say they “keep worrying about work problems” when they are not working, up from 73 per cent in 2004.

British Social Attitudes has charted a huge decline over the last three decades in traditional views about gender roles (Crompton and Lyonette, 2008). This decline continues: only 10 per cent of working men and women agree that “when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women”, down from 15 per cent in 2004. It is clear that the recession and its impact on households has done nothing to reinforce traditional views of men’s and women’s work roles, and may even have eroded them further.

Conclusions

So what’s the verdict? How has the British public mood shifted in response to the most sustained recession since the 1930s? Are we seeing a renewed faith in a social democratic state, or have people lost confidence in the merits of a strong state? Is there an increasing sense of social solidarity, or are we heading in a more socially divisive and individualistic direction?

There is certainly some evidence of continued faith in the role of the state. There are initial signs of increased concern about the impact of public expenditure cuts on public services such as health and education. But these appear to be no more than a cyclical reaction to the prospect of reductions in public expenditure rather than evidence of a new public mood. It is also clear that people continue to believe in a universal and publicly-funded NHS.

But the more striking message is a transformation in Britain’s attitudes towards the creation of a more equal society, an aspiration that in part might be delivered through welfare benefits. Neither redistribution in general nor welfare benefits in particular are as popular as they once were. This is by no means a recent change and certainly predates the recession. It primarily reflects a change in public attitudes during Labour’s years in power between 1997 and 2010.

These findings point towards an increased sense of ‘them and us’, with the most vulnerable in the labour market being viewed far less sympathetically than before, despite Britain’s current economic difficulties. This sense of division is also clear in our Immigration chapter, which finds increasing concern about immigration in general, and about its economic and cultural impacts in particular. Although increased opposition to immigration predates the recession, austerity may well help explain the fact that concern about its impacts has grown the most among those who are themselves the least well-qualified or skilled. Finally, we also see evidence of geographic division, with an increasing sense of resentment in England about what is seen to be the ‘unfair’ share of public spending received by Scotland, something that may have been exacerbated by austerity.

Our results have clear implications for the coalition government. With less than half the Parliamentary term having passed, the number of people wanting to see more public spending is already on the increase and satisfaction with the NHS has fallen for the first time in a decade.

Neither redistribution in general nor welfare benefits in particular are as popular as they once were

In contrast, there is much evidence of support for the Coalition's pledges to control welfare spending and immigration. With Ed Miliband and Labour also pledging action in both areas, these will clearly become battlegrounds in any upcoming general election, and all parties will be keen to ensure they are in tune with public concern on these key issues.

If austerity will loom large in people's memories of these times, so surely will the London 2012 Olympics. Britain's 65 medals came from across the four nations; from those educated in private schools and state schools; from those with every privilege to those brought up with multiple disadvantages. Some believe that the true legacy of the Games will be to bring Britain together once more. But for now, the 29th British Social Attitudes report tells a rather different story.

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Appendix

The data on which Figure 0.1 is based are shown below:

Table A.1 Attitudes to taxation and spending 1983–2011

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989	1990	1991	1993
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reduce taxes and spend less	9	5	6	5	3	3	3	3	4
Keep taxes and spending the same	54	50	43	44	42	37	37	29	28
Increase taxes and spend more	32	39	45	46	50	56	54	65	63
<i>Weighted base</i>	1761	1645	1769	3066	2766	2930	2698	2836	2945
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1719	1675	1804	3100	2847	3029	2797	2918	2945

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reduce taxes and spend less	4	5	4	3	3	4	5	3	3
Keep taxes and spending the same	33	31	34	31	32	34	40	34	31
Increase taxes and spend more	58	61	59	62	63	58	50	59	63
<i>Weighted base</i>	3469	3633	3620	1355	3146	3143	2302	3287	3435
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3469	3633	3620	1355	3146	3143	2292	3287	3435

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reduce taxes and spend less	6	6	7	6	7	8	8	9	6
Keep taxes and spending the same	38	42	43	43	47	50	55	56	55
Increase taxes and spend more	51	49	46	46	42	39	34	31	36
<i>Weighted base</i>	3276	2130	2167	3228	3082	2184	1134	3297	3311
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3272	2146	2166	3240	3094	2229	1139	3297	3311

At **NatCen Social Research** we believe that social research has the power to make life better. By really understanding the complexity of people's lives and what they think about the issues that affect them, we give the public a powerful and influential role in shaping decisions and services that can make a difference to everyone. And as an independent, not for profit organisation we're able to focus our time and energy on meeting our clients' needs and delivering social research that works for society.

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The data on which Figure 0.2 is based are shown below:

Table A.2 Attitudes to unemployment benefits, 1983–2011

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1989	1990	1991	1993
% agree too low and cause hardship	46	49	44	44	51	52	50	53	55
% agree too high and discourage work	35	28	34	33	29	27	29	27	24
<i>Weighted base</i>	1761	1645	1769	3066	2766	2930	2698	2836	2945
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1719	1675	1804	3100	2847	3029	2797	2918	2945
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
% agree too low and cause hardship	53	51	48	46	29	33	40	37	29
% agree too high and discourage work	24	30	32	28	46	42	36	37	47
<i>Weighted base</i>	3469	1199	3620	1355	3146	3143	3426	3287	3435
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3469	1234	3620	1355	3146	3143	3426	3287	3435
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
% agree too low and cause hardship	34	23	26	23	26	21	29	23	19
% agree too high and discourage work	40	54	50	54	54	61	51	54	62
<i>Weighted base</i>	3272	3199	3210	3228	3082	3333	1134	3297	3311
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3276	3199	3139	3240	3094	3258	1139	3297	3311

The data on which Figure 0.3 is based are shown below:

Table A.3 Agreement that government should redistribute income, 1986–2011

	1986	1987	1989	1990	1991	1993
% agree government should redistribute income	43	45	51	51	49	48
<i>Weighted base</i>	1315	2424	2529	2349	2644	1327
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1321	2493	2604	2430	2702	1306
	1994	1995	1996	1998	1999	2000
% agree government should redistribute income	51	47	44	39	36	39
<i>Weighted base</i>	2957	3145	3103	2546	2478	2991
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2929	3135	3085	2531	2450	2980
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
% agree government should redistribute income	38	39	42	32	32	34
<i>Weighted base</i>	2821	2929	3634	2610	3539	3744
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2795	2900	3621	2609	3559	3748
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
% agree government should redistribute income		32	38	37	36	37
<i>Weighted base</i>		3576	3963	2951	2810	2841
<i>Unweighted base</i>		3578	3990	2942	2791	2845

At **NatCen Social Research** we believe that social research has the power to make life better. By really understanding the complexity of people's lives and what they think about the issues that affect them, we give the public a powerful and influential role in shaping decisions and services that can make a difference to everyone. And as an independent, not for profit organisation we're able to focus our time and energy on meeting our clients' needs and delivering social research that works for society.

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