

## DEAN'S FOREWORD

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Dear Reader,

I would like to extend my warm welcome to readers of this inaugural issue of *The Public Sphere*. As the first installment of this exciting new publication, it sets the tone for the issues to come. And though I may be biased – and my errors heteroskedastic – that tone is, it seems to me, a perfect expression of what the LSE Institute of Public Affairs is all about.

As Dean, I have had the pleasure of overseeing the Institute's flagship MPA programme as it continues to develop. Although our Institute is still young, we have already established ourselves as an outward-looking, yet rigorously academic, global centre for public policy training and analysis.

Outward-looking, yet rigorously academic: *The Public Sphere* beautifully encapsulates that description. The authors of the articles and essays assembled here have clearly done their homework. And the result – as you, dear reader, are about to discover – is a beautifully presented collection of well-researched policy-focused contributions that could only have been written by our students. Collectively, they are a showcase for the IPA as well as for the wider LSE community in which our Institute is so deeply enmeshed.

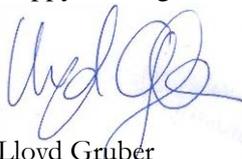
Another hallmark of this inaugural issue is its substantive and methodological breadth. In some ways, this too reflects the training of our students. Our MPA degree does not belong to any single department at the LSE. We are interdisciplinary to the core. Inasmuch as our students have a comparative advantage in tackling policy questions, it springs from their intimate familiarity with – and vigorous enthusiasm for – the tools of social science in the broadest sense. These are the tools that we on the MPA faculty emphasize in our research, and they are the tools around which the entire MPA curriculum is oriented.

The challenges for public policy are multiplying rapidly. The global economy has not yet thrown off the shackles of the crisis in 2008, with high levels of government indebtedness overshadowing much of the debate and discussion. Recent crises in Sub-Saharan Africa and, most recently, in Syria and its neighbours are a reminder of the frustratingly persistent humanitarian challenges confronting the international aid community. And the Arab spring, for all its inspiration and promise, has created enormous political and governance challenges as well.

Looked at in this way, *The Public Sphere* is a counter-cyclical journal: for all the slack in the global economy (and for the problems afflicting global politics) there has yet to be any downturn in demand for first-rate policy analysis and design.

Now, thanks to the pioneering group of MPA students who came together to form this first team of *TPS* editors, that demand is being met. Everything you are about to read – and, indeed, the very inspiration for this journal – came from the students themselves. Thanks to this year's editorial board, and to those of their fellow students who submitted such a stimulating and diverse collection of essays and analyses, we have reached a new Pareto-improving equilibrium. Long may it continue.

Happy reading!



Lloyd Gruber  
Dean, Institute of Public Affairs