

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear reader,

2020 has been a remarkable year, to say the least. It was a year that left millions dead, shocked economies, shaken governments, disrupted trade flows, altered workflows, and left the world changed, perhaps forever. It was a year that shifted the Zeitgeist, altering how we view the world and the very meaning of normalcy.

Extreme weather events such as wildfires demonstrated the growing urgency of the global climate emergency. Political dissatisfaction and public anger spilled on to the streets across the world in Hong Kong, the USA, and India. It was a year of bold and dynamic changes in public leadership in many parts of the world, of shifts in the nature of several democracies, and of significant evolution of (mis)information wars. It was a year of the pandemic – but also of incredible effort on the part of frontline workers, medical professionals and the global scientific community.

In the midst of all this turbulence, we looked to our governments for stability and security – two essential justifications for the existence of nation states. But how did they fare in their response to change and chaos? What strategies did they employ in the face of new and unfamiliar threats? And to what extent is the system capable of purposeful policy action, given regimes' past choices? These responses, naturally, were varied. But in several ways, they were also remarkably similar.

As researchers and students of public policy, in this issue, we chose to examine response patterns, evaluate effectiveness and efficiency, explore underlying theoretical explanations as well as provide recommendations. We believe that state response is one of the most important things that policy designers and students can focus on today, and perhaps even go on to shape someday. Indeed, the papers in this issue raise timely questions on topics ranging from state response to the COVID-19 pandemic to the global climate emergency. We are thrilled and proud to be able to provide a platform to such outstanding research and thank the authors for their efforts and cooperation.

We benefited from the wisdom and hard work of our incredible team of editors from the School of Public Policy – all of whom came with vastly different life experiences that enriched this issue. Furthermore, this journal would not be possible without the unwavering support from the School of Public Policy, in particular Paul Sullivan and Jemima Warren. We also are grateful for the assistance of the Houghton St. Press; the PSJ looks forward to years of collaboration with this network of journals at the LSE.

We hope that you enjoy reading this issue.

– Richa and Caroline