

Editorial Introduction

Upon celebrating its third year of publication, Thammasat Review of Economic and Social Policy (TRESP) has successfully applied for inclusion in Thailand Citation Index (TCI) database, Tier 2. In the evaluation, 65 out of 114 applied journals passed the comprehensive criteria. This can be considered a satisfactory start for our young journal. We are grateful to all our contributors, the boards, the reviewers, the authors and the readers.

This issue contains a well-diversified combination of quality research findings that have important policy implications, particularly for developing and emerging countries. In the first article, “The Impact of Migration on Poverty and Inequality in Myanmar”, Zin Shwe, doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Economics, Thammasat University, expands on the established literature on migration and remittances by looking at whether internal migration with remittances in Myanmar has a poverty and inequality reducing effect. The research article makes use of the 2015 Myanmar Poverty and Living Conditions household survey which provides cross-sectional survey data on households which members who have moved to another region for economic reasons, and which households are receiving remittances. A counterfactual approach is undertaken to estimate the effects of migration and remittances, in address concerns regarding selection bias.

The article examines the impact of migration and remittances by categorizing households based on agro-ecological region, low or high income, and rural or urban. The results indicate that, while migration with remittances has an overall effect of decreasing poverty and inequality at the

national level, the effect is higher in certain regions and types of households compared to others.

The article notes that the results are in line with the general literature on urbanization and development, with migrants moving from rural areas to more urban areas to seek better labor opportunities. The author also notes that the results show that households with higher levels of human capital are benefitting more from migration and remittances, due to commiserate higher returns from the labor market. The article concludes that, for internal migration to have a stronger poverty reducing and inequality reducing effect, more needs to be done to link low income households with better labor opportunities.

The second article in this issue, “Thailand’s Personal Data Protection Act: An Understanding from the Perspectives of European Privacy Law” by Tanatas Bumpenboon from the Bank of Thailand, analyses the upcoming introduction of the Thailand Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) and the implications it has for companies which do business ‘in Thailand’. It is a timely exploration of how the introduction of the PDPA may affect businesses in Thailand with regards to collecting and managing customers’ data by looking at selected cases involving the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The issue of data collection and processing is a complex and multi-faceted issue made even more difficult by the transboundary nature of the information on the internet, and the overlapping regulations that businesses must abide by. The article presents the example of businesses in Thailand which must already abide by the GDPR due to the fact that it serves customers who are nationals of EU countries, businesses which must now also take PDPA regulations into account.

The main focus of the article is on how businesses should operate in order to comply with PDPA regulations with

regards to legally and transparently collecting and managing data. Based on rulings pursuant to the GDPR, the article outlines how consent from customers may be obtained in line with the PDPA. In the absence of consent, the article also outlines other ways that businesses may be able to legally obtain the right to collect and process individuals' data, while also highlighting how companies in the EU have run afoul of the GDPR.

As aforementioned, this article is as timely as it is necessary; many businesses in Thailand will run the risk of contravening regulations laid out in the PDPA without realizing it when its major provisions come into force. The author concludes by stating that, going forward, businesses will need to ensure that they are fully respecting the privacy rights of individuals in the new regulatory environment.

The third article of this issue, “Happiness determinants in a Buddhist community” by Sauwalak Kittiprapas of Rangsit University and International Research Associates for Happy Societies (IRAH) examines a challenging field in economics – the economics of happiness – from a Thai Buddhist perspective. The author studies the determinants of happiness for a community in Thailand located in Bangkajao. The area is known as ‘Bangkok’s green lung’ due to its closeness to Bangkok, and its relatively large green spaces. The article makes use of a survey of inhabitants, with a particular focus on Thai Buddhist concepts of inner peace and sufficiency economy principles promoted by the Government of Thailand, to attempt to determine how these two factors impact the happiness of the residents of Bangkajao.

The article suggests that these two ideas help to promote a way of thinking which runs counter to conventional consumption-driven economic growth, encouraging people to seek happiness through inner peace rather than satisfying materialistic needs. The explanation links the idea of

sustainable development, offering an alternative pathway to achieving sustainable development while increasing the happiness of the population.

The article finds that, beyond a subsistence level of income, happiness derived from income is relative to an individual's perception of their social group. Absolute increases in the level of income beyond the subsistence level does not guarantee increases in happiness. The article also explores the determinants of happiness for various disaggregated groups. The findings show that lower income groups derive greater happiness from Thai Buddhist concepts of inner happiness and self-sufficiency, while higher income groups focus more on income levels. Moreover, compared with younger generations, older generations are less concerned with levels of income and are more concerned with inner happiness. The author suggests that the Government should focus more on promoting achieving happiness through sufficiency and inner peace, and encourages the protection and enlargement of green spaces which are also found to be positively correlated to happiness. This can be considered an interesting case study in one selected location. Nevertheless, it remains an issue of a more comprehensive debate within wider perspectives and substantial proofs in the future research by scholars from various disciplines.

Thammasat Review of Economic and Social Policy (TRESP) is a young biannual double-blind peer reviewed international journal published in June and December. Its first publication was in December 2015. The Faculty of Economics, Thammasat University and the Editorial Team of TRESP seek to provide an effective platform for reflecting practical and policy-oriented perspectives that links the academic and policymaking community. Having devoted to our 'knowledge-for-all' philosophy so as to drive our society forward, the Faculty decided that TRESP published in an open

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