

Editor's note for the inaugural issue of *FREP*

I am delighted to announce the publication of the inaugural issue of *Fulbright Review of Economics and Policy (FREP)*, Emerald's new journal in the fields of economics and public policy. *FREP* is a peer-reviewed, open-access international scientific research journal, hosted by Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management (FSPPM) at Fulbright University Vietnam (FUV) and sponsored by FUV. The journal aims to promote publications that employ rigorous analytical tools and advocate for evidence-based policy. In the context of increased complexity, this path enables us to move from "contemplation to application" and to take a different position in the world of public policy journals. It has been almost two years in the making and was challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the strong collaboration and trust among the editorial board, advisory team and contributors have created a thought-provoking journal.

With an editorial board and an advisory team of leading and senior professors in various economics and public policy disciplines at renowned universities worldwide, *FREP* publishes not only rigorously peer-reviewed original scholarly articles but also other types of research, such as practitioner papers, perspectives and review articles, on a semiannual basis.

The inaugural issue of *FREP* presents a diverse selection of pertinent articles from established scholars and young academics. The journal not only focuses on economic issues but also covers a broad range of policy areas in social development, governance and public administration of interest to readers – international agencies, academics, researchers, policy professionals, policymakers and practitioners, local communities and nongovernment organizations. This diversity in policy themes is reflected in the first issue.

The first group of articles provides insightful discussions of various economic issues. Dwight Perkins, the Harold Hitchings Burbank Research Professor of Political Economy at Harvard University, examines the political factors behind the significant variation of per-capita gross domestic product of Southeast Asian countries, which ranges from less than US\$ 5,000 to more than US\$ 97,000. The author considers a number of factors, such as wars, extreme politics, political instability and kleptocratic governments and leaders, and how they affect the development of various countries within the region. The author concludes that countries that avoided political extremes have the highest per-capita incomes today.

Cuong Le-Van, an Emeritus Professor at Paris School of Economics, and his coauthor, Nguyen To-The, a lecturer at VNU University of Economics and Business, Vietnam National University, explain how the wage bonus system affects an economy. They show that a wage bonus scheme enhances labor productivity. Furthermore, the results reveal that improved production may cause increasing returns through the wage bonus externality effect, and when the incentive mechanism is sufficiently strong, the economy may experience optimal paths of physical capital without limit.

David Dapice (who was an economics professor at Tufts University from 1973 to 2017 and continues to work as the Vietnam Program senior economist at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard



University) discusses why Vietnam was recently charged as a currency manipulator by the United States (US), and why those charges are less than conclusive. He argues that the Vietnamese dong (VND) has been kept stable in real terms against the dollar since 2015 and attributes the sharp improvement in Vietnam's bilateral and overall trade balance to increases in China's labor costs as well as trade frictions between the US and China. He concludes that the US's recent decision not to impose punitive tariffs on Vietnam's exports may reflect Vietnam's serious and effective negotiation in addition to the country's significant value in a regional context to the US.

Also looking at a critical issue in Vietnam, Minh Ha-Duong, research director at the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), and Hoai-Son Nguyen, National Economics University (Hanoi, Vietnam), estimate the reduction of electricity poverty in Vietnam. They regard human development as also needing subjective measurements to indicate well-being. Using data from national household surveys spanning 2008 to 2018, the authors employ a self-reported satisfaction indicator to complement objective indicators. The authors find a reduction in inequality in electricity use among Vietnamese households during the investigation period.

Hoang Van Khieu, a young academic from Gutenberg School of Management and Economics, Germany, uncovers the relationships between budget deficits, money growth and inflation in Vietnam over the period 1995–2012, a period during which inflation skyrocketed in the country. Using a structural vector autoregressive model of five endogenous variables, the author shows that positive shocks to money growth led to a rise in inflation, and that budget deficits had no significant effects on money growth and, therefore, inflation. The results thus support the hypothesis that fiscal and monetary policies were relatively independent.

The second group of articles focuses on emerging social issues. Colin Williams, a professor in the Management School at the University of Sheffield, and his colleague at Sheffield, Jan Windebank, a professor in the School of Languages and Cultures, evaluate contrasting policy approaches to tackle self-employment in the informal sector in Europe. The authors use data reported from the special Eurobarometer survey 92.1 conducted in 2019 across 28 European countries that included more than 27,565 interviews. Based on probit regression analysis, the authors reveal that the likelihood of participation in informal self-employment is significantly related to the level of vertical and horizontal trust.

Martin Powell, a professor of Health and Social Policy at the University of Birmingham, explores the extent to which the long debate in England over the funding of long-term care has involved learning from abroad. The author documents that the reports and cited studies in this field tend to focus on a handful of countries, such as Germany, Japan and Scotland, and most of the studies have few details about settings. More importantly, only a few studies provide clear policy analysis and recommendations for policy changes. The author finds that although [Mossberger and Wolman's \(2003\)](#) framework is used infrequently, it seems to be well-suited for providing policy suggestions.

The final article is one of the very few studies to examine the association between gender-based violence and contraception use and opens up debate about the links between these two factors. Thao Thi Nguyen, graduate student of Sara Neal, and Sarah Neal, an associate professor in Global Health at the University of Southampton, determine the prevalence of contraception use among Pakistani women and assesses the factors that influence contraception use focusing on the experience of gender-based violence. Based on the 2018 Pakistan Demographic Health Survey, the authors find a slow increase in the contraceptive prevalence rate and use of modern contraceptive methods over the period from 2006 to 2018.

Through a handful of highly selected articles covering a wide range of topics and approaches, this inaugural issue highlights different subjects regarding emerging socioeconomic matters, spanning from developed countries in Europe to the developing

world in Asia. As such, I believe that this first issue is suitable for readers with a wide range of interests in contemporary policy issues.

The second journal issue will focus on policy responses for a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery. This is an emerging issue given the profound global impacts of the pandemic on public health as well as on social and economic progress. In this upcoming issue, we aim to publish quality research articles from scholars all around the world that provide rigorous discussion of responses to resilient and sustainable post-pandemic recovery and development at the national, regional and global levels. For more information, please consult the journal's website or contact the Editorial Office via .

On a final note, I would like to express a deep appreciation to our editorial board members and distinguished contributors and reviewers for the time and effort that they put into the journal. Their tremendous support has made this inaugural issue possible. Any quality research articles that you wish to submit, either individually or collaboratively, are much appreciated and would make a significant contribution to the early development and success of the journal. All types of papers will be subject to the journal's double-blind review process. In addition, I thank you in advance for your contribution to the *Fulbright Review of Economics and Policy* and hope you and your loved ones stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,
Thai-Ha Le, *Editor*
July 2021

Thai-Ha Le

Reference

Mossberger, K., & Wolman, H. (2003). Policy transfer as a form of prospective policy evaluation: Challenges and recommendations. *Public Administration Review*, 63(4), 428–441.