

Editor's Introduction

It is a dark moment for democracy and for human rights in Southeast Asia. The persecution of civilians by the junta in Myanmar continues and appears to be intensifying. Airstrikes have taken place against villages on the pretext that they were shielding resistance fighters. Extrajudicial incarcerations are taking place across the country and there are numerous examples of atrocities being committed as a form of intimidation. The recent Cambodian election resulted in a landslide for Hun Sen's ruling Cambodia People's Party (he has since passed the position to his son) – hardly surprising considering that the only real opposition, the Candlelight Party, was banned from contesting the election by a technicality pronounced by the National Election Committee (Mao, 2023). Meanwhile, its Thai counterpart was performing a similar role by suspending the leading of the general election winning Move Forward party, Pita Limjaroenrat, from parliament through another technicality (Reuters and Online Reporters, 2023). The winning coalition have been unable to form a government because of a bloc of 250 senators handpicked by the junta who ruled the country since the coup of 2014 and whose (unlikely) support in large numbers is needed for any incoming government to be formed. Vietnam is still jailing people for dissent expressed on Facebook pages. Even Singapore, often thought of as a beacon of progress (relatively, anyway), has shown its brutal side by executing a woman found guilty of trafficking 30g of heroin (Cai, 2023).

These are not isolated incidents. They are the results of decades of elites holding power who do not recognize the legitimacy of any opposition. The ways in which elite formation and reproduction have taken place in each country is different but the results for the majority of the people are the same: opaque institutions, unexplained decision-making processes and wasted opportunities. With the world experiencing, in July 2023, what seems certain to be the hottest month ever recorded, it is difficult to find much optimism that national leaders will respond in the required way to the enormous changes that would be required to deal with the results of the climate change crisis.

A recent information brief by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) on the deteriorating conditions of the labour market in Myanmar indicate just how difficult life is there now for so many people – quite apart from the depredations of the junta and the desperation of the nationwide resistance. The economy had scarcely recovered from the coronavirus pandemic when the military coup took place and people have also had to contend with natural disasters such as Cyclone Mocha in May of this year, as well as the ongoing impacts of the global climate emergency. The amount of decent jobs available has declined as public sector positions have been lost and some at least of the foreign firms involved in manufacturing there having withdrawn. More people are moving into precarious self-employment and the number of people working in agriculture with higher-level or tertiary education has increased by 10%. Women are particularly badly hit, as ever, female unemployment at twice the level of male unemployment and women receiving 42% lower severance payments than men. With real wages having decline by 15% between 2017 and 2022, 70% of households have had to liquidate their assets, reduce their savings or borrow from others to make ends meet.

Recently, the fashion firm H&M announced that it was withdrawing from the Myanmar factory sector (Reuters, 2023). Many other companies have withdrawn, mostly with the support of the people. John Lewis Partnership, for example, announced that it would be gradually withdrawing from sourcing gems such as rubies from the country (Zan, 2023). However, the H&M situation is slightly different in that it employs mostly women in the factories of its supply chain and these, as noted above, are already suffering. The company notes various labour abuses that are alleged to have taken place. Nevertheless, a former British Ambassador to Myanmar, Vicky Bowman, who is now director of the Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business, regrets the decision and argues that the women workers would have been

better off if the company remained in business. These are often difficult decisions to make and there are rarely answers which are clearly the right thing to do.



Krirk University celebrated the 6th International Conference on Sustainable Management (ICSM) in Bangkok in April of this year. It was the first time that we have been able to welcome delegates to our campus and the face-to-face nature of presentations helps make for a different dynamic than online presence, although we have done what we can to make the best of what has been possible. I am pleased to announce that a revised version of one of the prize-winning papers, Intercultural Communication Analysis of Korean TV Dramas within China in the New Media Era by Zeguang Liang, is included in this issue.

I am also pleased to announce that a team led by Dr. Yu-Chih Lin has been working on creating and documenting Krirk University's response to the challenge of the Sustainable Development goals of the United Nations. Information is available at: <https://sdgs.krirk.ac.th>.

Universities are vital parts of communities and it is appropriate for them to take a lead in helping those communities understand change and how it will affect them. For years, many universities in Thailand have taken a role in helping the physical development of poorer areas of the country through infrastructure building projects and, more recently, have been involved in recording instances of local wisdom and helping to extend its value in other contexts. In common with many other societies, Thai society generally shows respect to those involved in education and those of us who work in universities have a duty to reward that respect by spreading the benefits of the knowledge that we have created and accumulated to the benefit of all.

In this issue, I am pleased to be able to welcome six double-blind peer-reviewed papers from a range of different subjects. Authors are from not just Thailand and China but also Taiwan and Nigeria. Earlier versions of some papers were presented at different iterations of the International Conference on Sustainable Management (ICSM) held here at Krirk University.

In the first paper, Liang Ze-Guang considers Korean TV dramas shown in China as part of the *Hallyu* of Korean culture promoted overseas and analyses various shows, especially *Descendants of the Sun*, according to a model of intercultural analysis.

In the second paper, John Olubunmi Falolu, Eucharia Ebelechukwu, Lieay Olusola Oguntola and Akin Ademuyiwa evaluate the promotion of language and cultural programmes in French and Russian in Nigeria. This is an important contribution to subaltern and postcolonial studies and is most welcome in the *ASEAN Journal of Research*.

In the third paper, Zhang Hui, Kanokkan Kanjanarat and Sarayut Khan look at the influences of teacher job satisfaction and job performance on turnover tendency using a sample of educational institutions in Guizhou in China.

In the fourth paper, Li Han and Han Hsing-Yu examine the influencing factors of the improved expectation model for delivery platform users in the post-epidemic era. The pandemic caused many changes, many of which have been hidden by the effects of other events and it is important to continue to explore how peoples' lives and livelihoods have been changed as a result with a view to enhancing standards of living and personal aspiration.

In the fifth paper, Yang Su-Li and Han Hsing-Yu consider the financing aspects caused by the USA-China trade dispute on Chinese small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises.

In the sixth paper, Bashir Abdul-Rasheem examines Sunnah approaches to terrorism and counter-terrorism in Nigeria. This is also a subject I did not anticipate being addressed in these pages but I am delighted to be able to do so her.

In the managerial practice section, the noted Taiwanese composer Ho-Chung Yeh shares his approach to conducting technique based on a lifetime of practice at the highest possible level.

A number of book reviews are included to complete this issue. People interested in submitting a book review and, indeed, a paper of any sort should contact the editor directly, at: dr.john.wal@staff.krikk.ac.th. I hope you enjoy this issue and I look forward to producing Vol.2, No.1 in January, 2024.

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