

INTRODUCTION

This issue begins with a highly topical discussion of the changing relationship between Hong Kong and Mainland China. **Kerry Liu** argues that an important backdrop to political unrest is the declining economic significance of the former British colony for President Xi Jinping's new China model.

Anthony J. Evans sees the 'natural' rate of interest as an important concept lying behind monetary economists' analysis of the macroeconomy. He uses productivity data to estimate the natural rate for the UK from 1998 to 2018.

Social trust is important for the success of economic policy. Using evidence from 34 European and Asian countries, **Nurullah Gür** suggests that high levels of trust may help to encourage behaviour which mitigates climate change.

Benedikt Koehler has written extensively about the relationship between religion and economic thinking. In this issue he explores the economic ideas of the early Christians.

Macroeconomic mismanagement by central bank authorities may provoke populism at the ballot box. **Ryan H. Murphy** finds that recessions foreshadow both a lower probability of a dictatorship becoming a democracy and a higher probability that a democracy becomes a dictatorship.

Olufemi Adewale Aluko examines the connection between foreign aid and foreign direct investment. His empirical analysis highlights the mediating role of institutional quality and financial development.

In the Discussion section, **Ben Ramanuskas** highlights the 'limits of liberalism' when it comes to consent for potentially harmful erotic practices and body modification. **Geoffrey Owen** outlines the life and economic stance of the British journalist Harold Wincott on the 50th anniversary of his death, and **Walker Wright** explains why trade openness helps the poor.

In this issue's Review Article, I discuss the fear that robots and artificial intelligence threaten job loss, unemployment, and greater income inequality.

J R Shackleton
Editor