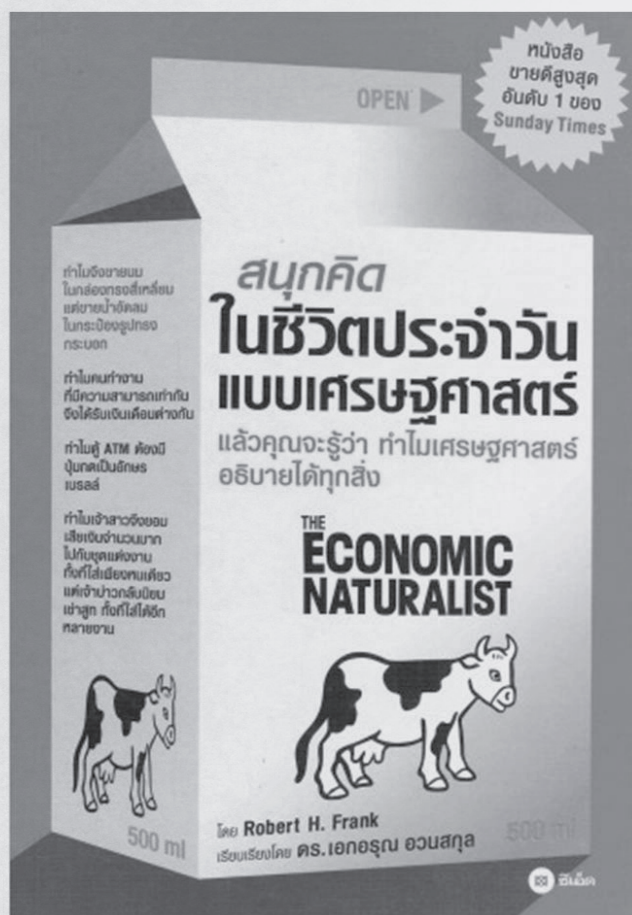


Book Review



The Economic Naturalist: Why Economics Explains Almost Everything

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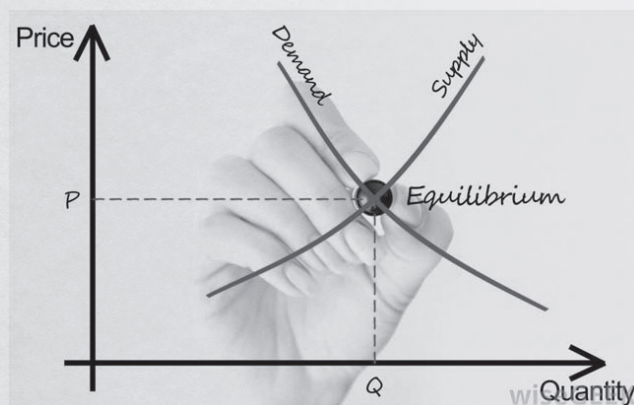
This book was well written by Robert H. Frank, who is also an author of *Luxury Fever* and *The Winner-Take-All Society*. The original copy of ‘*The Economic Naturalist: In Search of Explanations for Everyday Enigma*’ was initially in English, however, the version read by the reviewer for this article was in Thai. This was translated by an expert named Dr. Ekarun Aunsakul. The Thai translation started to be launched in Thailand in 2012. Its high quality was guaranteed by Sunday Times as the number one best seller.

What the reviewer found interesting in the background of this book is that it was simply initiated through the responses of the students in Robert’s class as they submitted papers for the economic naturalist writing assignment, which required the student “to use a principle, or principles, discussed in the course to pose and answer an interesting question about some pattern of events or behavior that you personally have observed”, as stated in the introductory chapter of his book. This was when Robert, the author, asked his students to write in the simplest way as they can and without any uses of complicated algebra or graphs. One of his students, Bill Tjoa, raised a question about the ATM keypads, which was claimed to be one of the best titles. This student wondered “why the keypad buttons on drive-up cash machines have Braille dots” and it attracted Robert’s attention.



Credit: <http://www.robert-h-frank.com/ENIntroduction.pdf>

In the reviewer's opinion, the most important perspective of this book is that the readers' point of view on economics may be significantly changed in a positive ways. This book explains economics simply and interestingly through economic naturalist examples that the author had collected for years.



Credit: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-supply-and-demand.htm>

While talking about economics, people generally reflect it on two of the most famous topics; demand and supply, including graphs and equations representing them. The book remarkably explores economics in everyday human behavior, answering what is stated in the title of the book 'Why Economics Explains Almost Everything'. Fascinatingly, the author is able to use simple economic principles in explaining various questions in our daily life, such as:

- Why is the milk carton usually in a rectangle shape while the pop can is in a cylinder?
- Why does the peanut cost nothing while the mobile battery is expensive?
- Why do the workers with comparable capability receive salary at different levels?
- Why do some consumers purchase the products and service at higher price compared to the price that others buy?
- What is the difference between the personal interest and the common interest when discussing on the high heel shoes and the school uniform?
- What is about 'possession'?

- Why is the biggest dog the winner?
- Who is the natural economist on the road?
- Why does it have to be on the first-come first-served basis?
- What is an unofficial market for the personal relationship?

What is special in this book in the reviewer's opinion is to apply economics in the real situation. The author does not let economics stay as theory principles in the book but brings it out to daily life, which is actually called as a real application. It seems that the author expects the reader to be able to see economics in another perspective, which is closer to our living. Nevertheless, there is one point in the title of the book that might be worth taken into account. Instead of declaring that 'Economics Explains Everything', the title mentions 'Economics Explains *Almost* Everything'. This might be interesting for the readers to find the answer in the book themselves or for those who have read the book but not yet found the answer, they can extend their discussion onto the question. In conclusion, the reviewer highly recommends anyone who either has or has no foundation of economics but would attentively like to perceive it in a real world to read this amazingly-written book.

References

Robert H Frank. (2012). *สนุกคิดในชีวิตประจำวันแบบเศรษฐศาสตร์*, กรุงเทพฯ: ซีเอ็ดดูเคชั่น.