

Thailand's financial sector

Bhanupong

Lecture 23

Mark Twain

- “It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble.
- It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.”

Course Syllabus

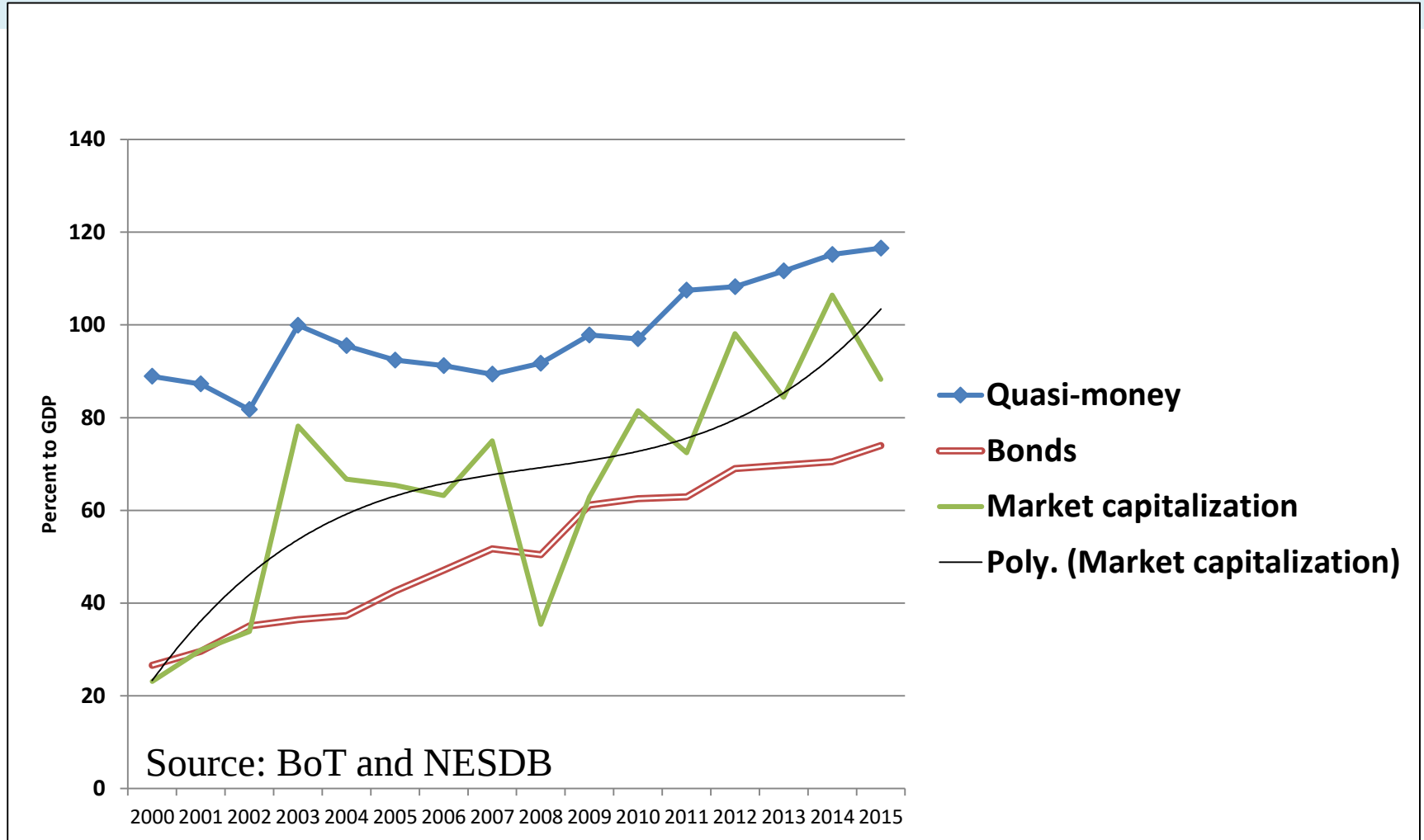
Lecture 23: Financial Sector

- We examine the performance of Thailand's financial institutions. The Thai financial sector emerged from the 1998 crisis, has become stronger and resilient, thanks to foreign capital injection, good governance, and strengthened financial regulations.
- What are the consequences of banking consolidation and penetration of foreign banks?
- What factors are responsible for the resilience of Thai banks during the subprime mortgage crisis and the subsequent global recession?

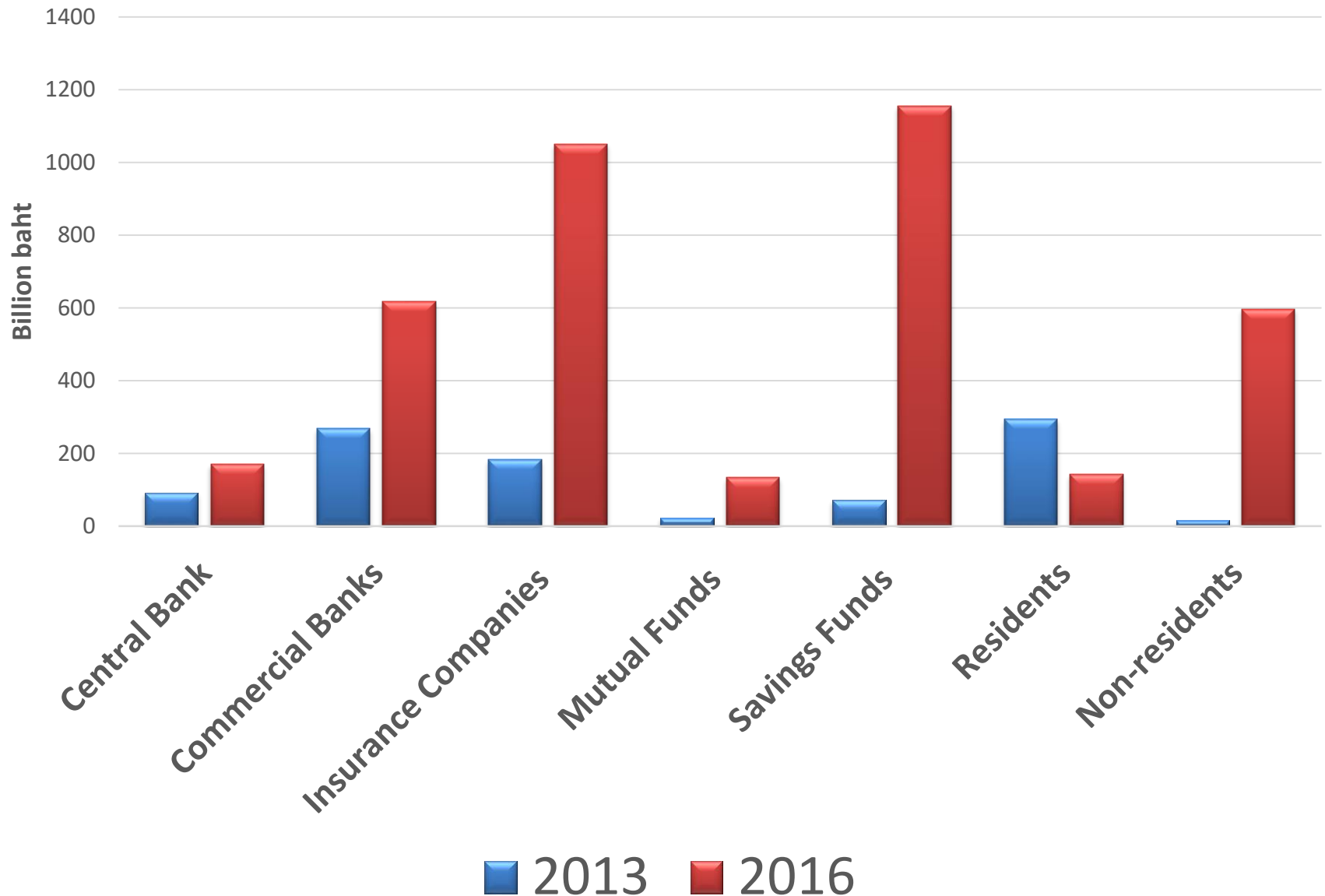
Outline

1. Modes of savings and financing
2. Stock market and commercial banks
3. Good and bad bankers
4. Resilience of the Thai banks
5. Foreign ownership and capital injection
6. Soundness of financial institutions

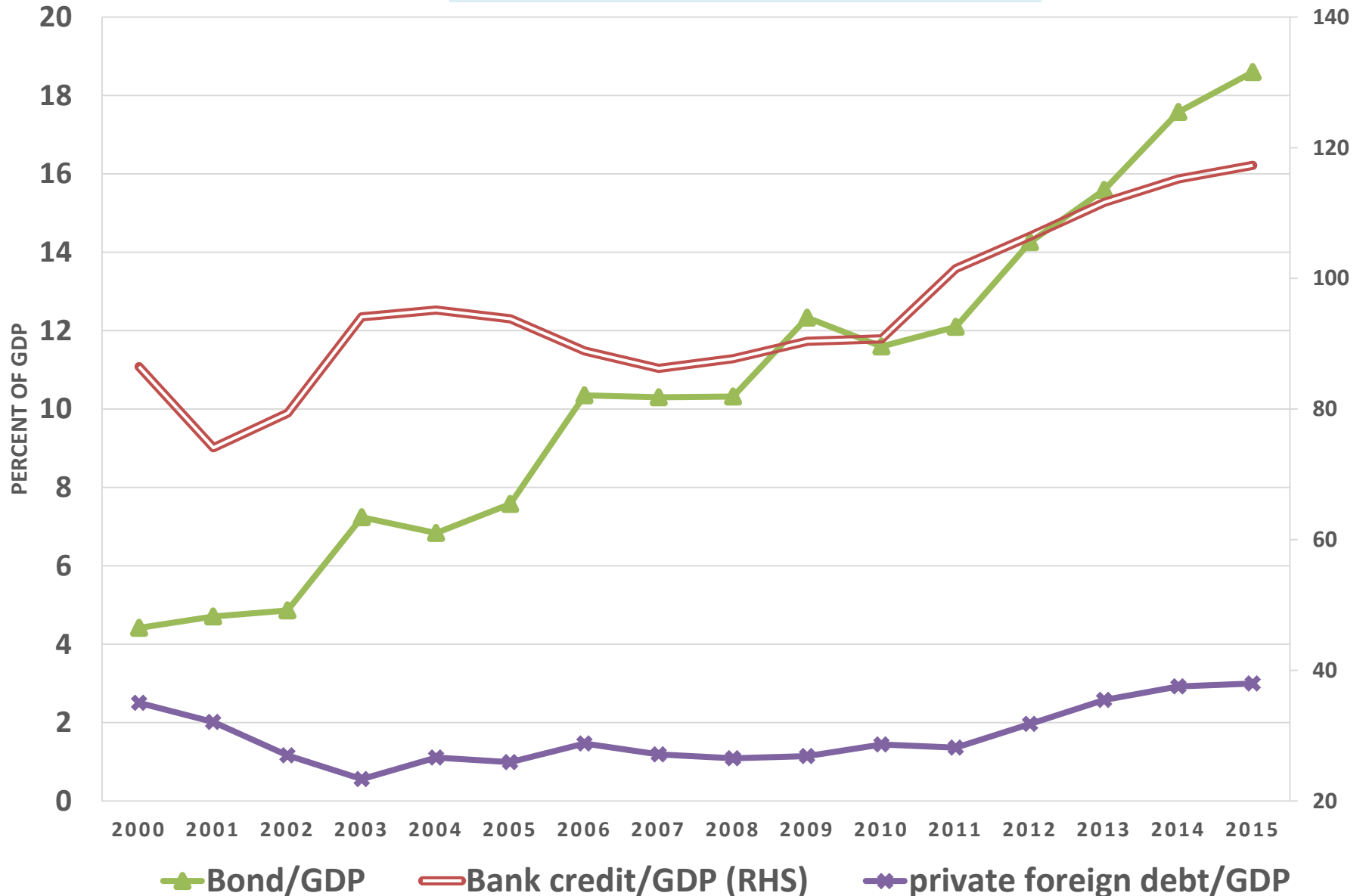
1. Mode of financial savings



Profile of Thai government bonds' holders



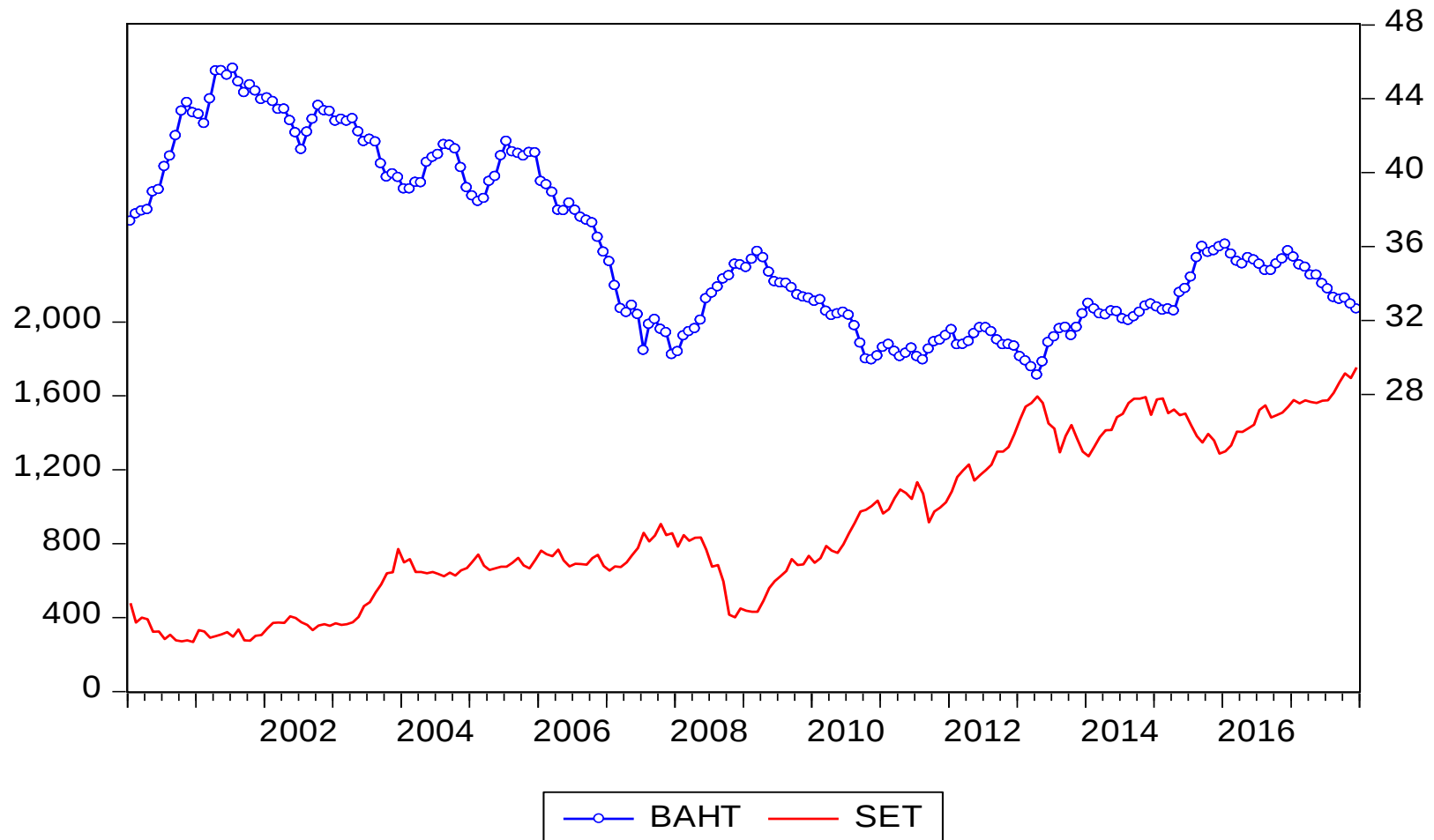
Mode of Financing



SOURCE: BANK OF THAILAND AND STOCK EXCHANGE OF THAILAND

2. Stock market

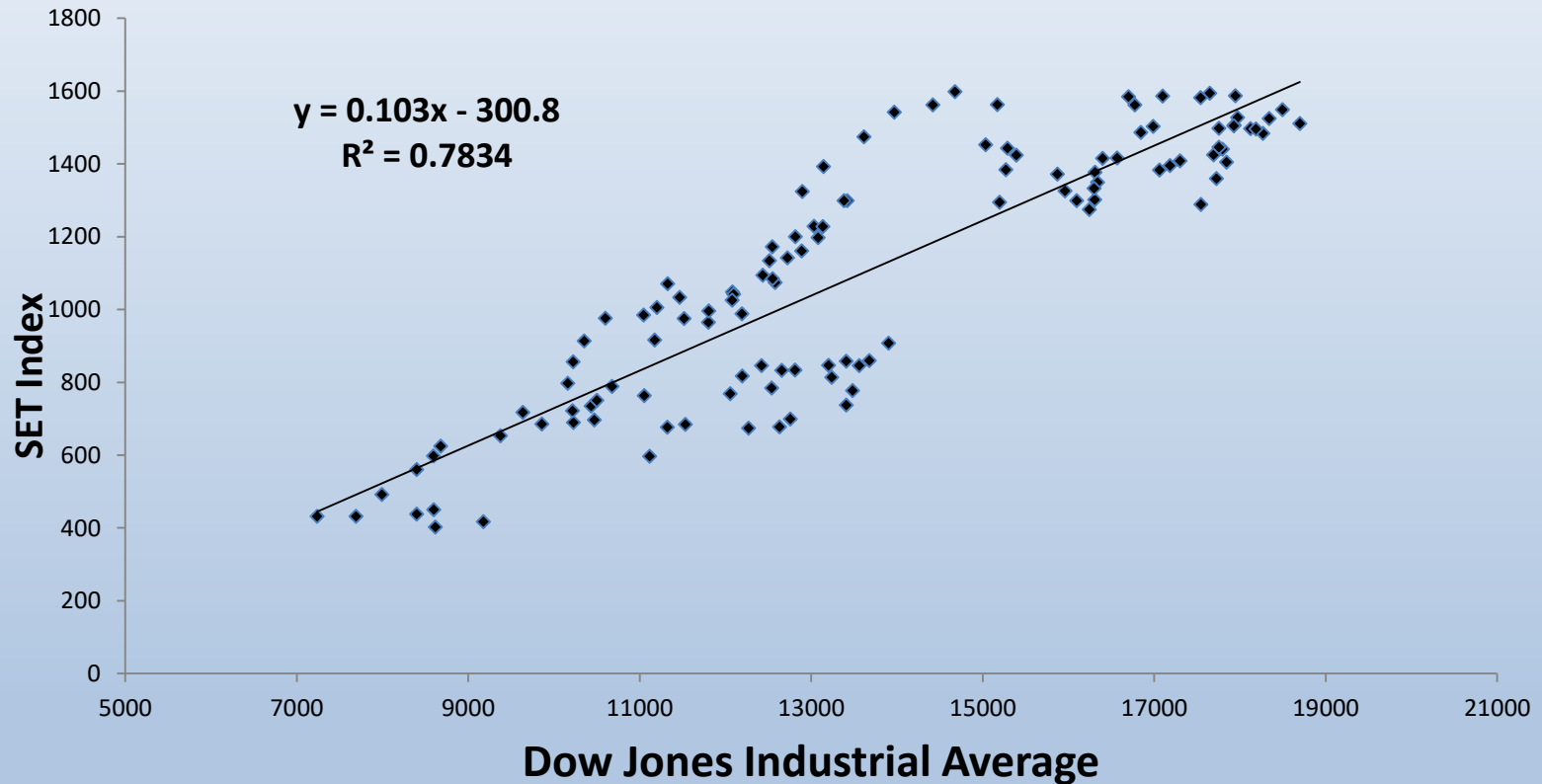
Stock Price Index and Baht/USD



SET v. DJIA

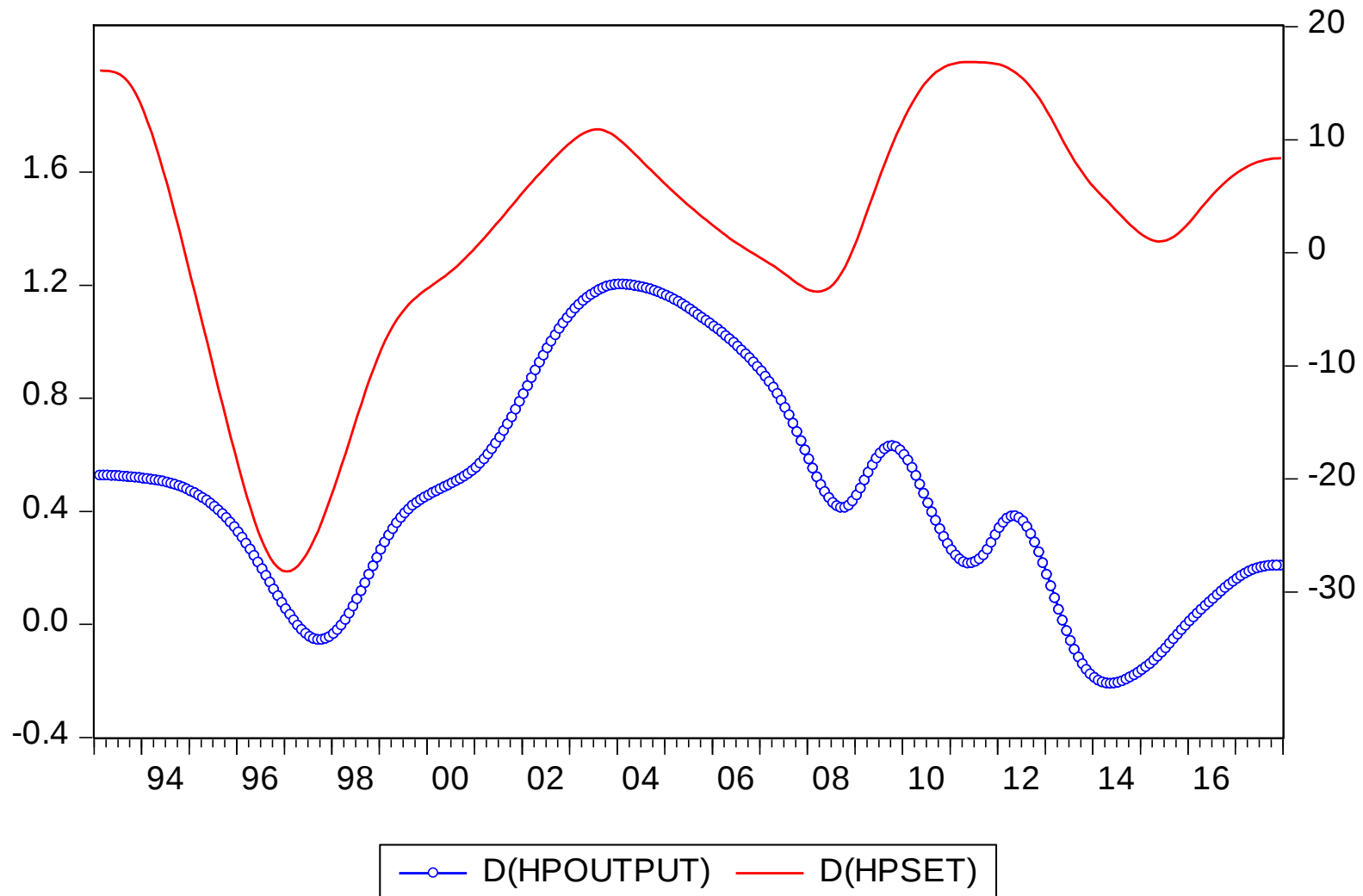
2007-2016

Source: Bank of Thailand and Federal Reserve Board



Any lurking variables?

Figure 5.5 Stock prices and manufacturing output
(cyclically adjusted)

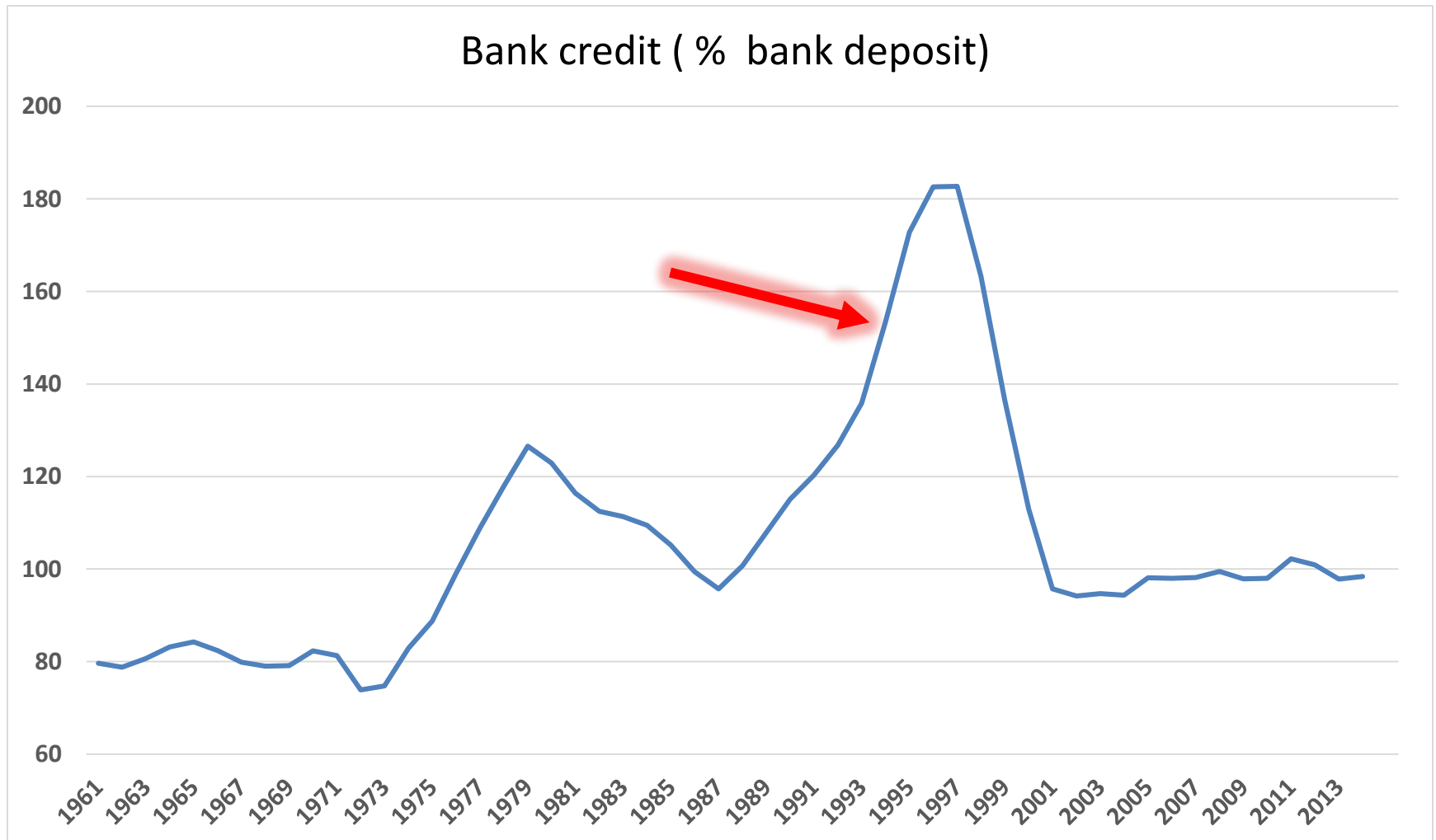


Dichotomy no more: Inseparable sectors

- In the classical world, the real economy is separated from the financial sector in the sense that the money supply does not affect the real sector.
- The only function of the money supply is to determine the price level but has no impact on output and employment.
- A dichotomy between the real and monetary sectors exists in the classical world, where prices and wages are flexible. In the Keynesian world, the two sectors are connected via the interest rate.
- The empirical evidence provided in this chapter indicates that there is also another channel through which the real and monetary sectors are inseparable.
- The stock market is another channel that links the financial and real sector.

Financial Instability Hypothesis

Hyman Minsky



3. Roots of financial distress

- Macroeconomic conditions, industrial and financial policy, and debtor/credit behaviors.
- The better-managed banks succeed in remaining solvent during difficult times.
- The **quality of management** is an essential difference between sound and unsound banks.
- Good bankers become bad ones in four stages
- Mismanagement commonly occur in **the absence of effective regulation and supervision**:

(1) Technical mismanagement

- Inadequate credit analysis
- Political pressures
- Excessive ***risk concentration***
(The Single Lending Limit regulation can correct that problem)
- ***Insider*** Lending
- ***Mismatching*** assets and liabilities regarding currencies, interest rates, or maturities

(2) Cosmetic management

(Trying to hide past and current losses)

- Bankers may keep ***dividends*** constant despite poor earnings.
- Retain smaller share of income ***for provisions against loan loss***, thereby sacrificing capital adequacy.
- Resort to increase net profits on paper (even if the bank must pay more taxes)
- Classify bad loans as good assets to avoid making loss provisions.
- **Recording** future income now and postpone recoding current expenditure (**Creative accounting**).

(3) Desperate management

- When losses are too significant to be concealed by accounting gimmicks, the bad bankers start
- Lending to risky projects at higher loan rates
- Speculating in stocks and real estate markets
- However, the higher risk may lead to further losses and cash flow problem.
- Offering high deposit rates to attract new deposits to avoid a liquidity crisis.
- The higher cost of funds eventually compounds the problems.

(4) Fraud

- Fraudulent behavior maybe rare and sometimes causes initial losses, but once illiquidity appears inevitable, fraud becomes common.
- As the end approaches, bankers grant themselves loans that they are unlikely to repay
- “Swinging ownership” of companies partly owned by banks or bankers.
- If a company is profitable, the evil banker will arrange to buy it from the bank at a low price,
- If the company is unprofitable, the bad banker will sell it to the bank at a high price.
- In essence, the bad banker just robbed the bank.

Bangkok Bank of Commerce (BBC)

Former BBC (Bangkok Bank of Commerce) boss was jailed for 155 years for fraudulent behaviors.

More recently, we have learned about ***Panama Papers***, which were the results of journalist investigations on offshore companies set up by Mossack Fonseca, a law firm in Panama.

4. Vulnerable and resilient sector

- The Thai financial sector was vulnerable and weak in the late 1990s.
- The lack of prudential regulations and sufficient capital funds made capital control relaxation in the early 1990s premature liberalization.
- The ensuing fast and large capital inflows led to subsequent financial turmoil.

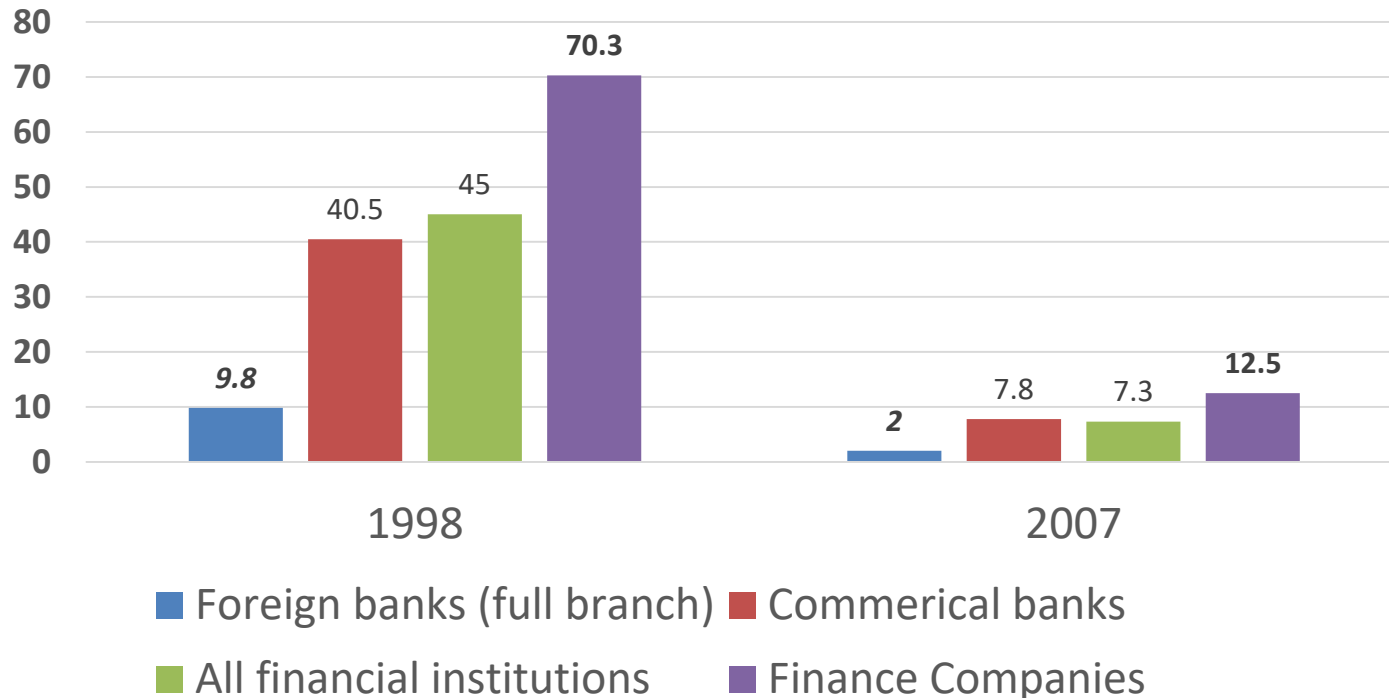
Benefits and costs of opening up

- Since the 1997 financial crisis, the Thai economy has tightly integrated into the world economy through international trade and capital flows.
- As such, it cannot wholly shield itself from external shocks.
- The Thai financial sector has emerged from the 1998 crisis and become stronger and more resilient, thanks to foreign capital injection, good governance, strengthened financial rules, and economic recovery.
- By opening up the financial sector to foreign participation, the financial sector has become more efficient, taking the benefit from competition effect and technology adaptation.

Stronger and more resilient

- The strong performance of the corporate sector enabled banks to reduce Non-Performing Loans (NPL) further.

NPLs: Ten years after the AFC



Thai Financial Sector and the GFC

- The global financial crisis during 2007–2009 led to the export collapse and output contraction in 2009.
- The debacle of the world's financial institutions and stock market crashes in 2008 had *a negative impact on the Thai stock market*.
- ***The rapid economic recovery***, despite the political turmoil in 2010, provided opportunities for banks to ***expand credit and enjoy the benefits from rising interest rates***.

Banks before the GFC

- The Bank of Thailand established prudential rules and regulations before the eruption of the GFC in 2008.
- With low exposure to export sector, commercial banks invested little in collateral debt obligations (CDOs) backed by the US subprime loans.
- Thai banks has remained healthy and did not suffer from the GFC.
- *Thai banks, large and small, have received foreign capital injections.*

ABSTRACT

The Global Financial Crisis and Resilience of the Thai Banking Sector

BHANUPONG NIDHIPRABHA

The Thai economy is vulnerable to external shocks because of its high exposure to trade and capital flows. Despite its adverse consequences on the real sector of the Thai economy in 2009, the global financial crisis had little impact on the Thai financial sector. The healthy performance and resilience of Thai financial institutions can be attributed to the financial reforms undertaken after the Asian financial crisis and the favorable macroeconomic environment.

JEL classification: G01, G21, G28

5. Benefits from globalization (foreign penetration)

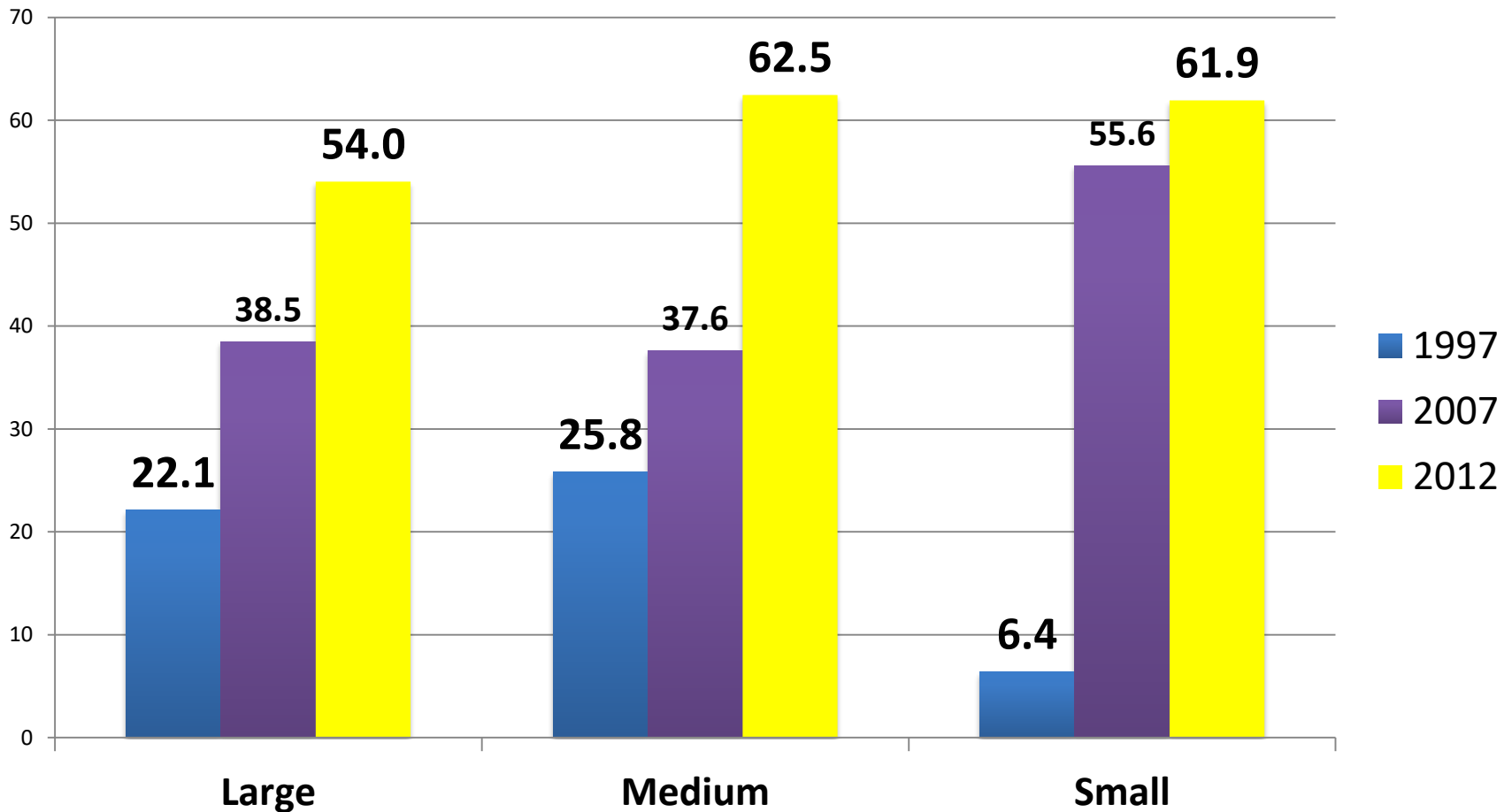
- Financial institutions and their regulators cannot resist the global trend of foreign penetration.
- By opening up the financial sector to foreign participation, the financial sector has become more efficient, benefiting from competition and technology adaptation.

5. Benefits from globalization (foreign penetration)

- Financial restructuring would be impossible without allowing foreign banks to acquire shares of less efficient private and public-owned financial institutions.
- With foreign capital injection, monetary authorities can maintain **system solvency** while lessening the burden of financial bailouts, although the enormous burden from FIDF's bailouts are still looming large until today.
- Financial Institutions Development Fund (**FIDF**)

Foreign ownership in Thai banks

(% total equity)



Ready for the next banking crisis?

- The exploitation of **economies of scale and scope** improved efficiency in their operation.
- All of these factors are the result of financial reforms undertaken after experiencing the financial crisis in 1997.
- Thai banks have been well prepared for the global financial crisis as they have learned a valuable lesson on ***being conservative*** and ***observing stringent prudential rules*** and regulations.

Too big to fail: A syndrome

- Too big to fail is a bank that is so essential to the Thai economy that its failure would be catastrophic.
- Big doesn't refer to the size of the bank. Instead, it means it's so interconnected with the rest of the economy that its failure would be a big event.

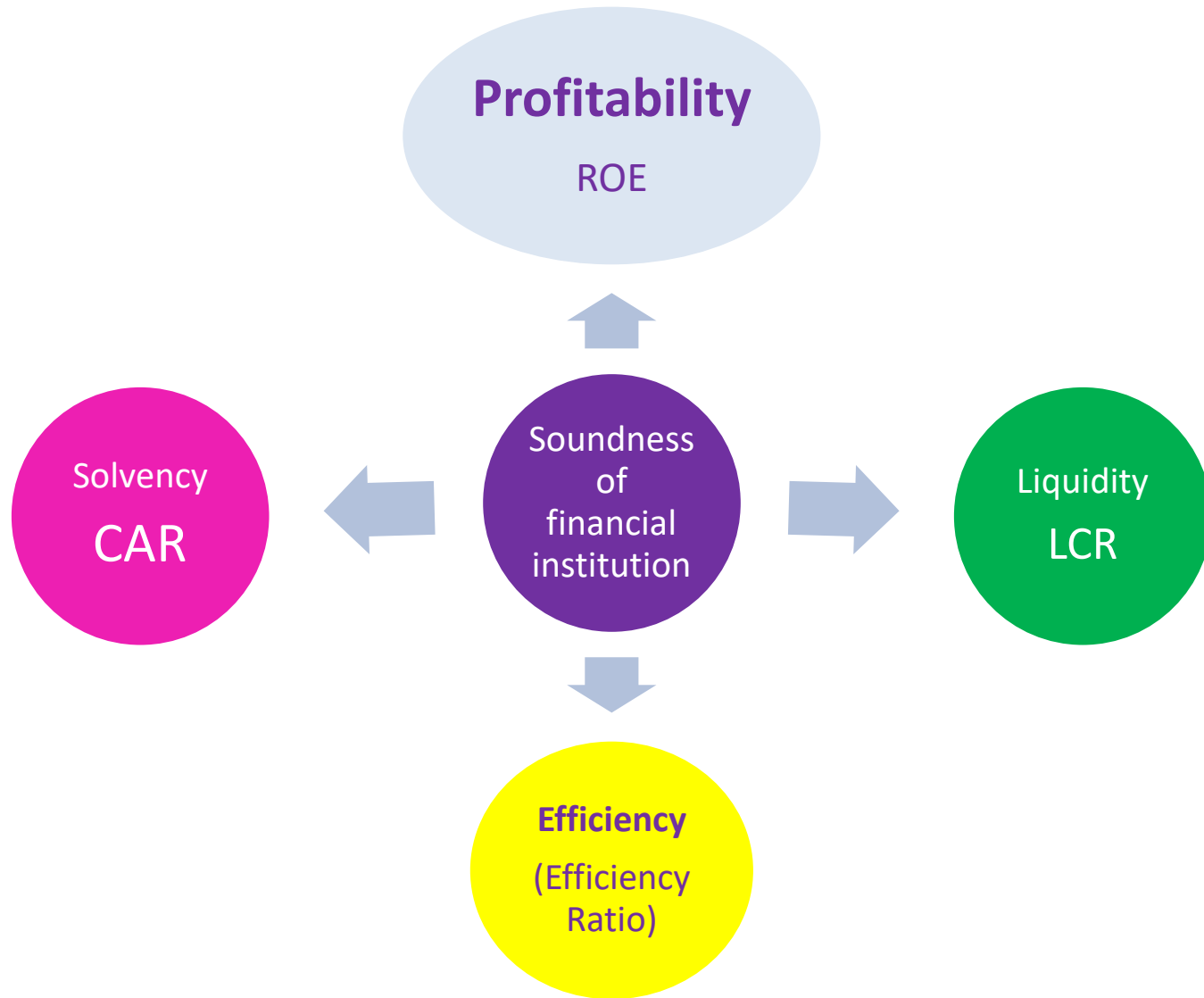
What should the central bank do?

- In the future, there would always be some banks that fail because of ***the vulnerable nature of financial firms***; the monetary authorities must distance themselves from the too-big-to-fail syndrome.
- *Moral hazard* arises as the central bank is the lender of last resort, always standby to provide liquidity when things go wrong.
- It takes time for depositors to learn to protect themselves and realize that **deposit insurance** program does not prevent them from any losses caused by future failure of financial institutions.

6. Soundness of financial institutions and their four measurements

- (1) Profitability (ROE, ROA) depends on, among others, *interest margins, NPLs, and loan growth rate*.
- (2) Liquidity (Liquid assets to short-term liabilities)
- (3) Solvency (Capital Adequacy Ratio: CAR)
- (4) Efficiency (Efficiency ratio)

Soundness of financial institutions



(1) Determinants of bank profitability

- Banks receive interest and non-interest incomes, the latter must be raised to offset interest income decline during the economic slump.
- The major components of bank cost are interests from deposits and bank borrowings, plus operating costs, loan lost provision and bad debt write-off.
- Banks exploit ***economies of scale and scope*** to ***reduce the cost*** of providing services.

A measurement of profitability

- The **large interest margin** between lending and deposit rates bodes well for the monopoly rent of commercial banks.
- The transfer of wealth from consumers to banks can be reduced by allowing foreign entry in line with liberalization of the services sector.

Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE)
are measurements of profitability

$$ROE = \frac{\textit{profit}}{\textit{Equity}} = \frac{\textit{profit} / \textit{Assets}}{\textit{Equity} / \textit{Assets}}$$

$$ROE = \frac{\text{Return to Assets}}{\textit{Capital} / \textit{Assets}}$$

$$ROE = \frac{ROA}{\textit{Capital} / \textit{Assets}}$$

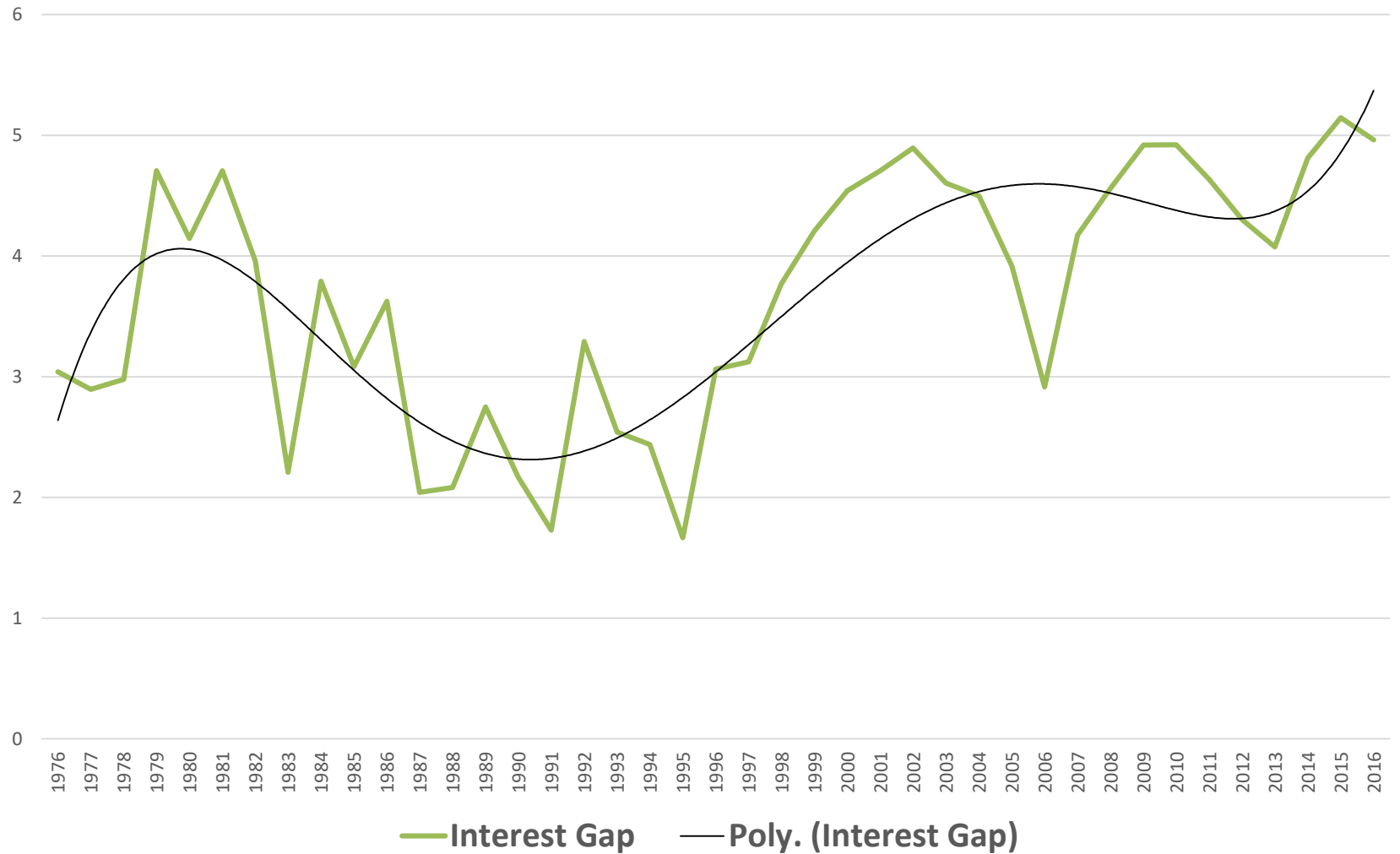
Profit and interest spreads

- The large interest spread between lending and deposit rates bodes well for the monopoly rent of commercial banks.
- The transfer of wealth from consumers to banks can be reduced via allowing foreign entry in line with liberalization of the service sectors.

Interest Gap ($r_L - r_D$)

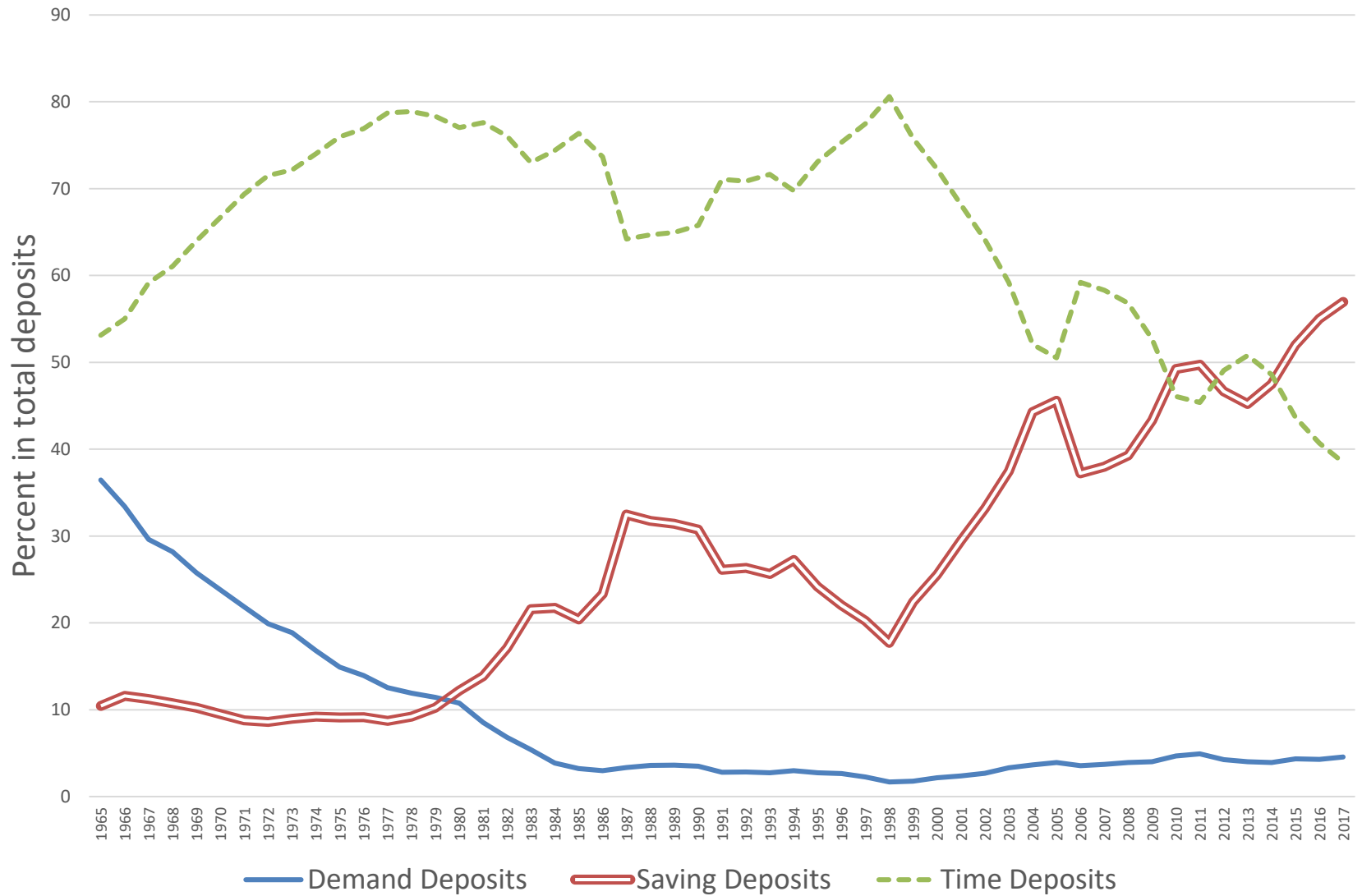
- Interest rate spread is the interest rate charged by banks on loans to private sector customers minus the interest rate paid by commercial or similar banks for demand, time, or savings deposits.
- The terms and conditions attached to these rates differ by country, however, limiting their comparability.

Interest Gap: lending vs Deposit Rates

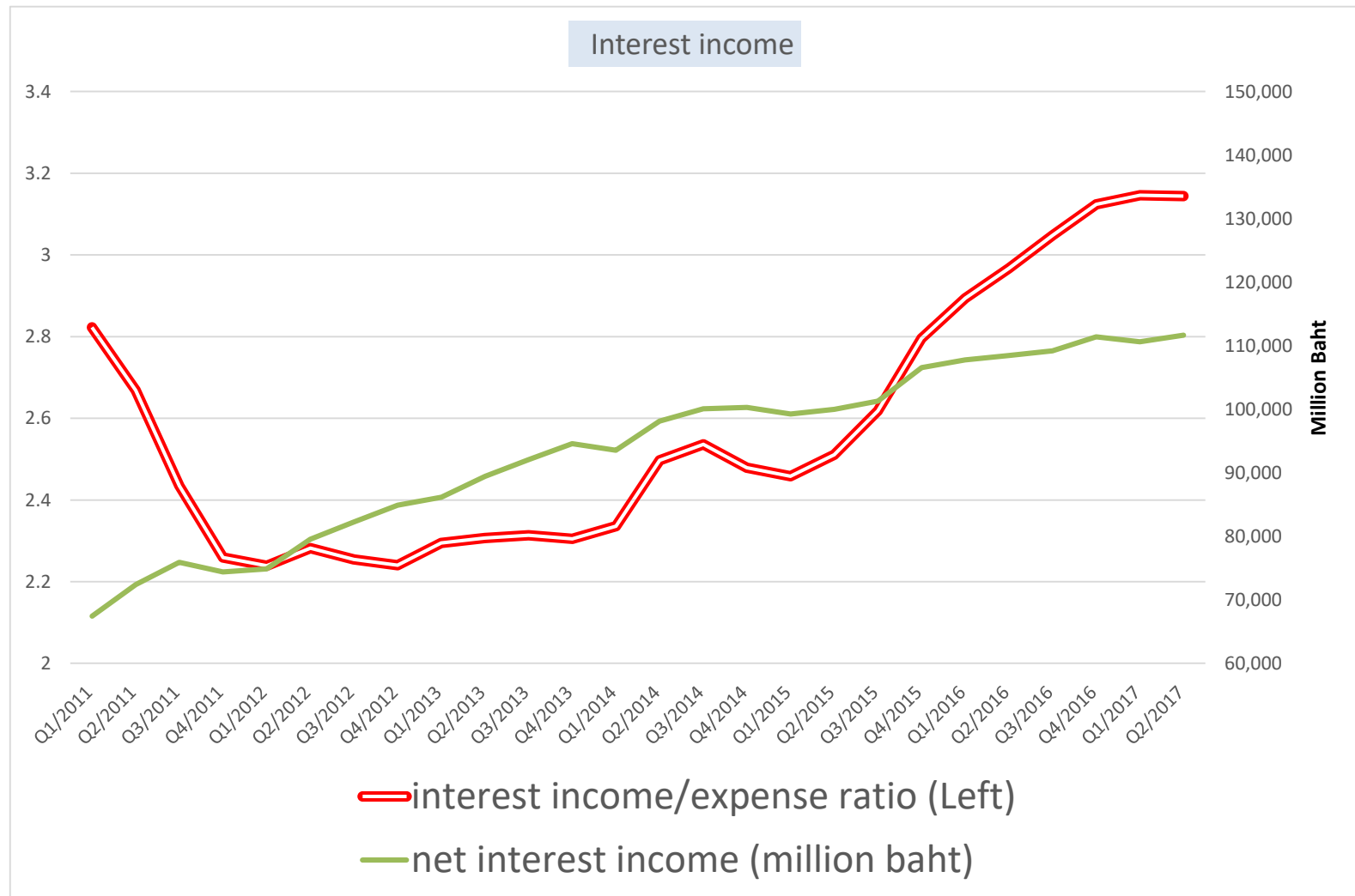


Structural Change in Bank Deposits

Source: Bank of Thailand



Interest income rises steadily despite the slowdown of loan growth, thanks to **widening interest gap**.



KTB admits lending growth target miss

Bangkok Post, November 1, 2018

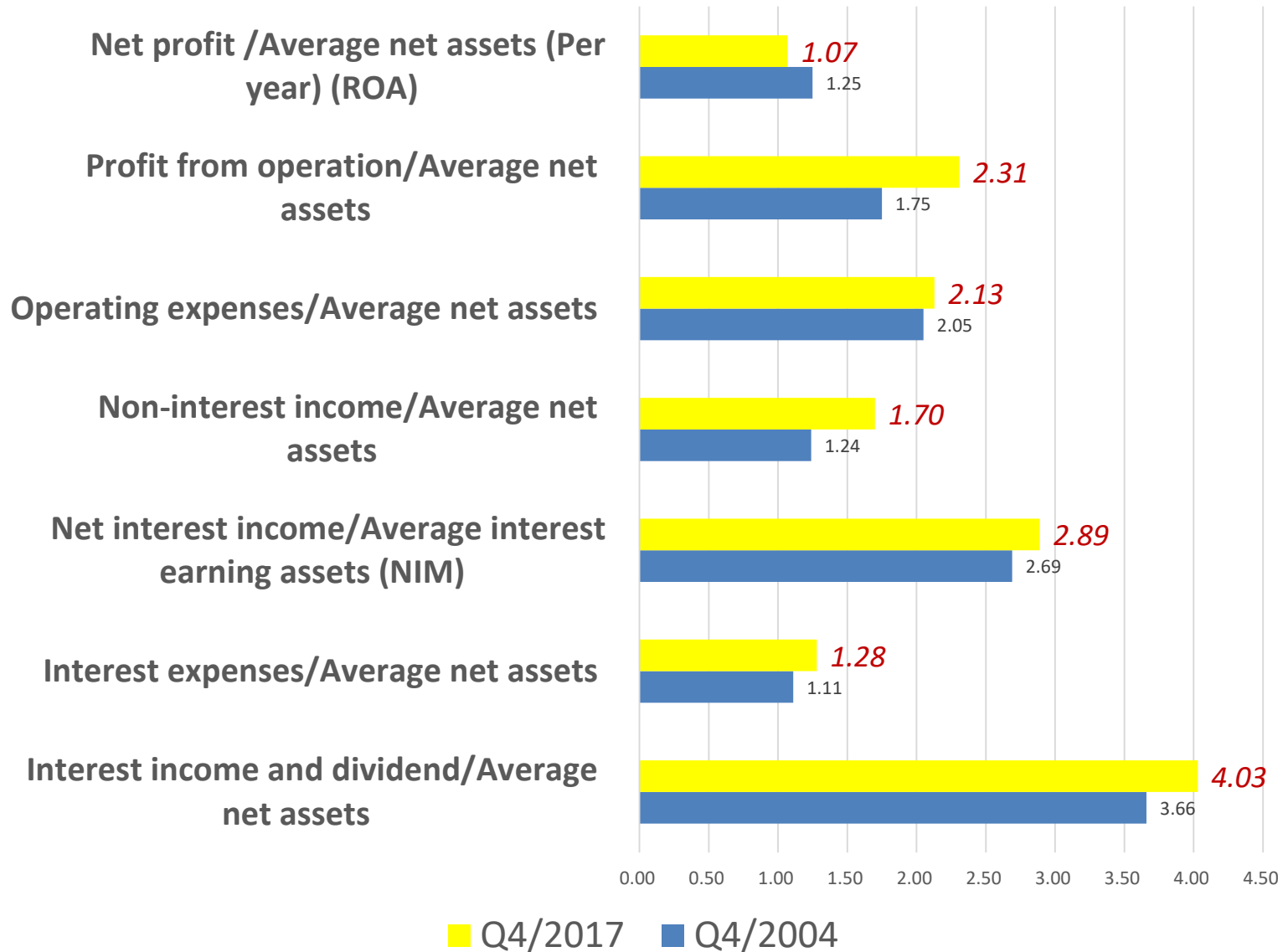
Krungthai Bank (KTB), the country's fourth-largest lender by assets, estimates its loans outstanding will grow less than 2% this year, missing its 5-7% target, as a major portion of lending borrowed by credit cooperatives was refinanced to other banks.



Around 50 billion baht worth of loans extended to credit cooperatives was refinanced, leaving the bank's credit cooperatives loans outstanding at 70 billion, said president Payong Srivanich.

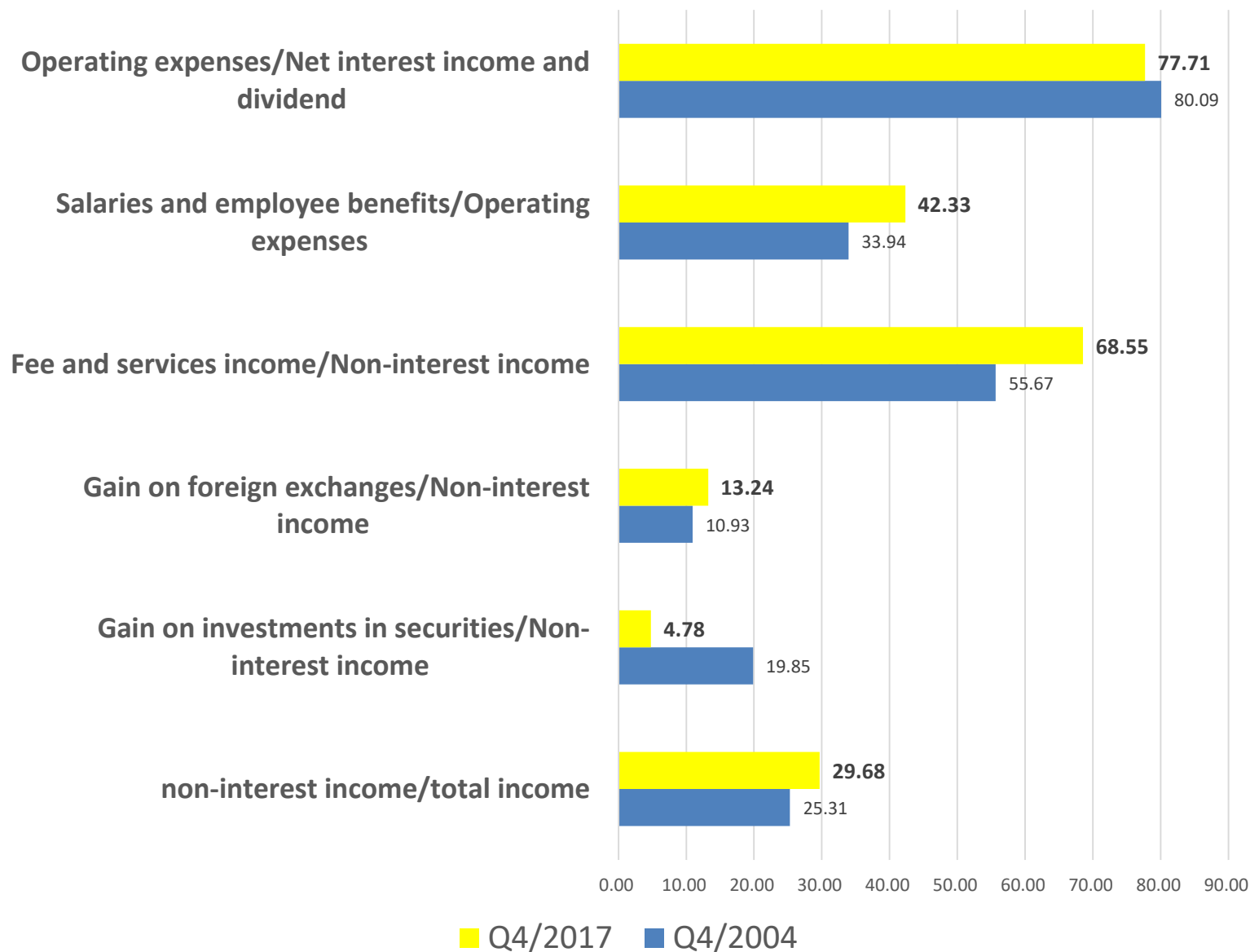
Bank Profitability

Source: Bank of Thailand



Banks' structure of Income and Expenses

Source: Bank of Thailand

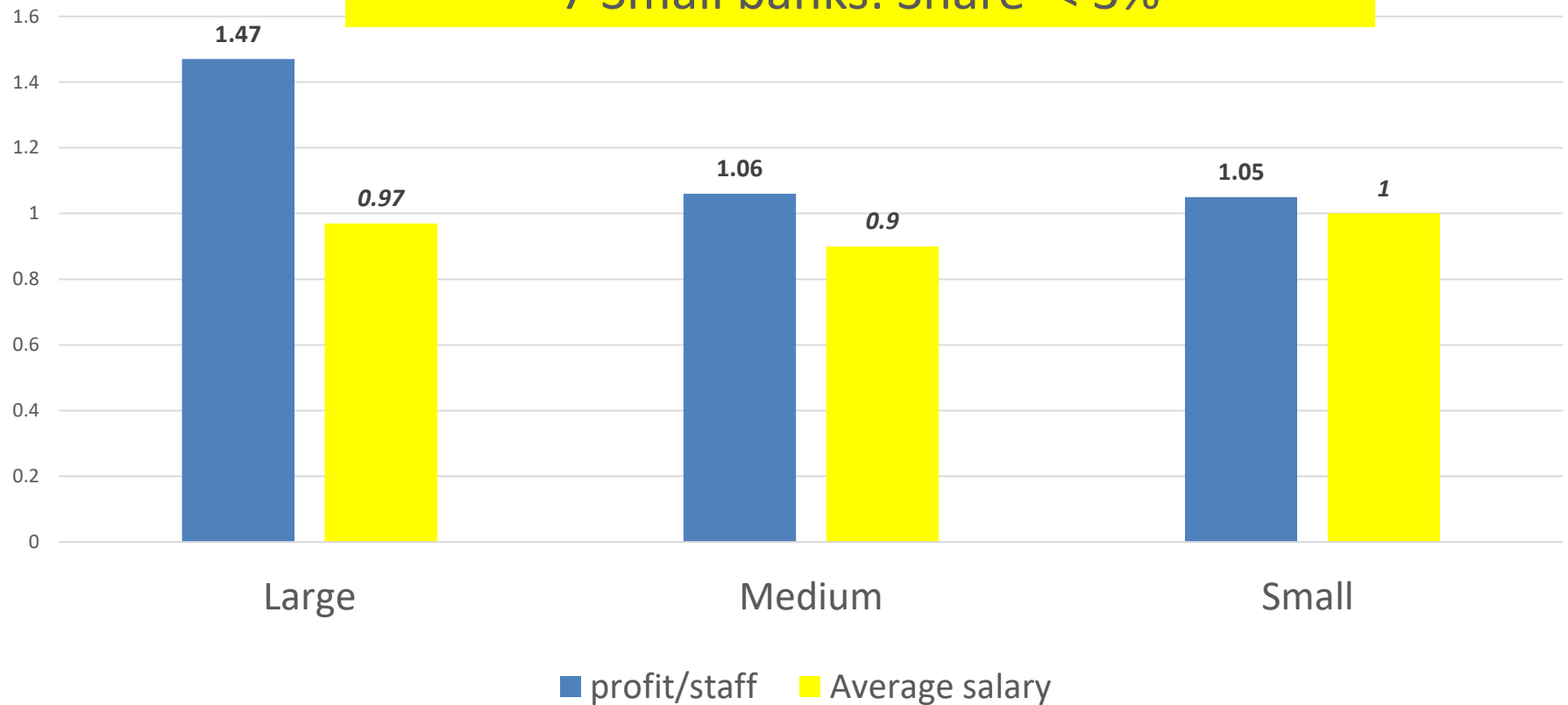


(2) Efficiency Ratio: Average Productivity
Thai banks in 2016
(million baht)

4 Large banks: Share (S) of Total Assets >10%

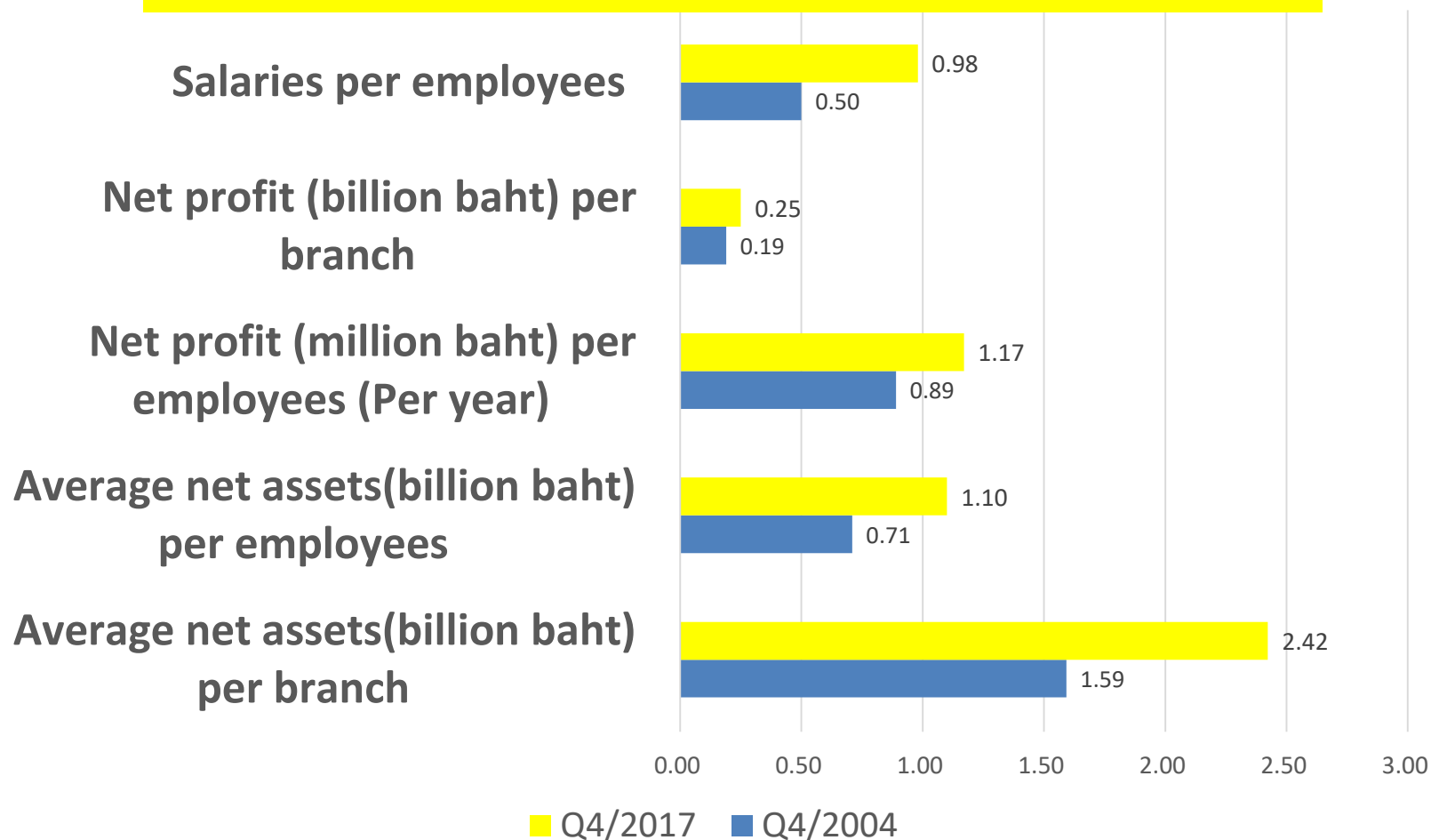
3 Medium banks: 3% < Share <10%

7 Small banks: Share < 3%



Bank Efficiency: Average Productivity of Staff and Branch

Source: Bank of Thailand



(3) Solvency: Quality of Bank Assets and NPLs

- A nonperforming loan (NPL) is the sum of borrowed money upon which the debtor ***has not made his scheduled payments for at least 90 days.***
- A nonperforming loan is either in default or close to being in default.
- Once a loan is nonperforming, ***the odds*** that it will be ***repaid in full*** are considered to be substantially lower.
- They inevitably will have to be written off or restructured (haircuts or payments extended).

Possibility to recover the principal or foreclosure the collaterals

- Once a loan is considered nonperforming, banks may have the opportunity to recover the principal:
- In particular, loans backed by specific assets, such as a home loan or vehicle loan.
- In these instances, the bank may begin the process of foreclosure, on a home, or move to seize the property, such as with a vehicle.

Pace hopes to emerge from massive debts

On the average, 84 million Baht a unit

SET-listed developer Pace Development Corporation Plc looks set to continue sales of the remaining residential units worth around 5 billion baht at MahaNakhon tower to reduce debts.

Chief executive Sorapoj Techakraisri said the company's total debts will fall below 10 billion baht by the middle of the year from 15 billion at present after securing 14 billion from the sale of assets at the country's highest building, MahaNakhon, to duty-free retailer King Power International Group.



The skyscraper effect

- The skyscraper effect suggests that there is a positive correlation between the development of mega-tall skyscrapers and a recession in a country.
- The skyscraper effect was developed by British economist, **Andrew Lawrence**, in 1999.
- The Barclays Capital Skyscraper Index is an economic tool to forecast impending financial downturns by observing the construction of the world's next tallest building.

The Intuitively simple concept is related to the Austrian Business Cycle Theory

- First, a decline in interest rates at the onset of a boom drives land prices. Second, a decline in interest rates allows the average size of a firm to increase, creating demand for larger office spaces. Third, low interest rates provide investment to construction technologies that enable developers to break earlier records. All three factors peak at the end of the growth period

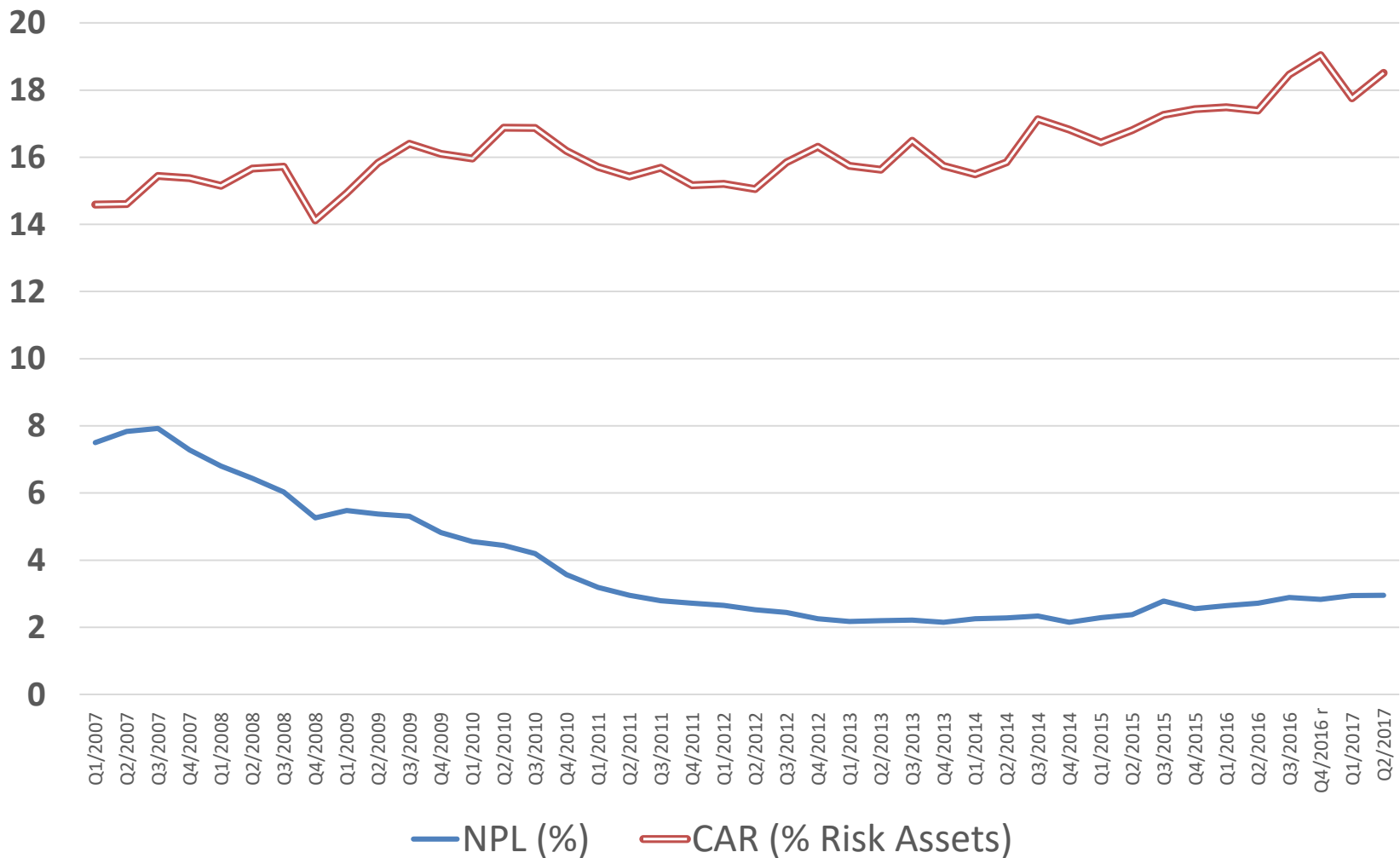
Capital Adequacy

- Equity (E) + Liabilities (L) = Assets (A)
- Liabilities = Deposits + Borrowings
- If borrowing is in USD, a massive devaluation would make net equity negative: technical bankruptcy
- Net Equity = Assets – Liabilities
- Despite negative equity, technically bankrupt, banks can still operate as long as they have sufficiently large liquidity to prevent **bank runs**.
- The central bank performs the role of “the lender of last resort.”

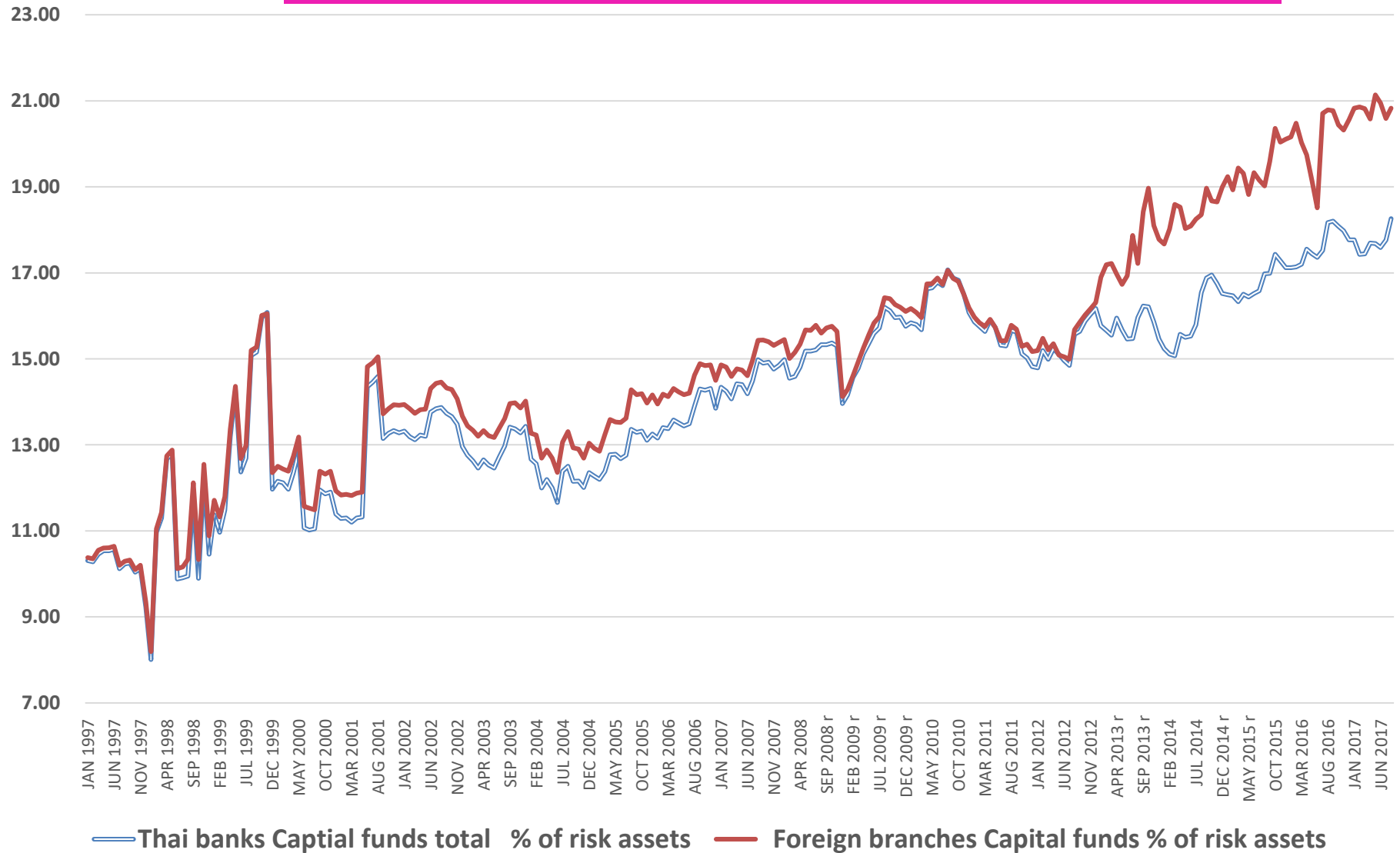
Capital Adequacy Ratio: (Equity/Risk Assets)

- When Assets (loans) turn into NPLs or bad loans, Net Equity can become negative as value of asset declines.
- When writing off bad assets, equity (E) must be written off at the same time.
- If E is not large enough, net equity can become negative (banks are technically bankrupt).
- The higher the ratio of equity to **risk assets**, the safer the deposits when banks have troubles with bad lending.
- That is why capital injection by government (FIDF) or foreign banks can bail out troubled banks by enhancing the capital adequacy.

Commercial Banks' Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) Capital to Risk Assets (%)



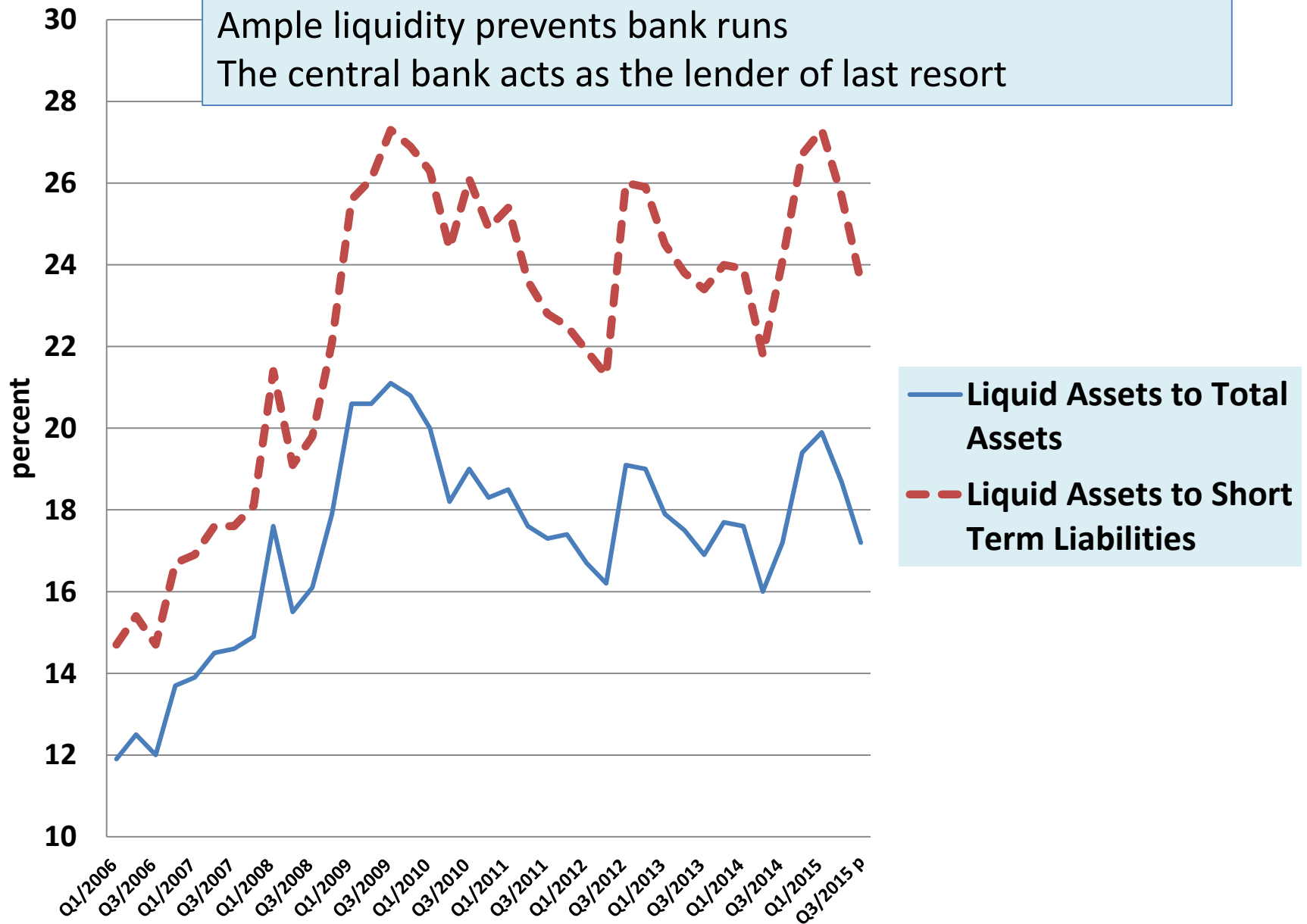
Capital Adequacy: Thai vs. foreign bank branches



(4) Liquidity

Ample liquidity prevents bank runs

The central bank acts as the lender of last resort



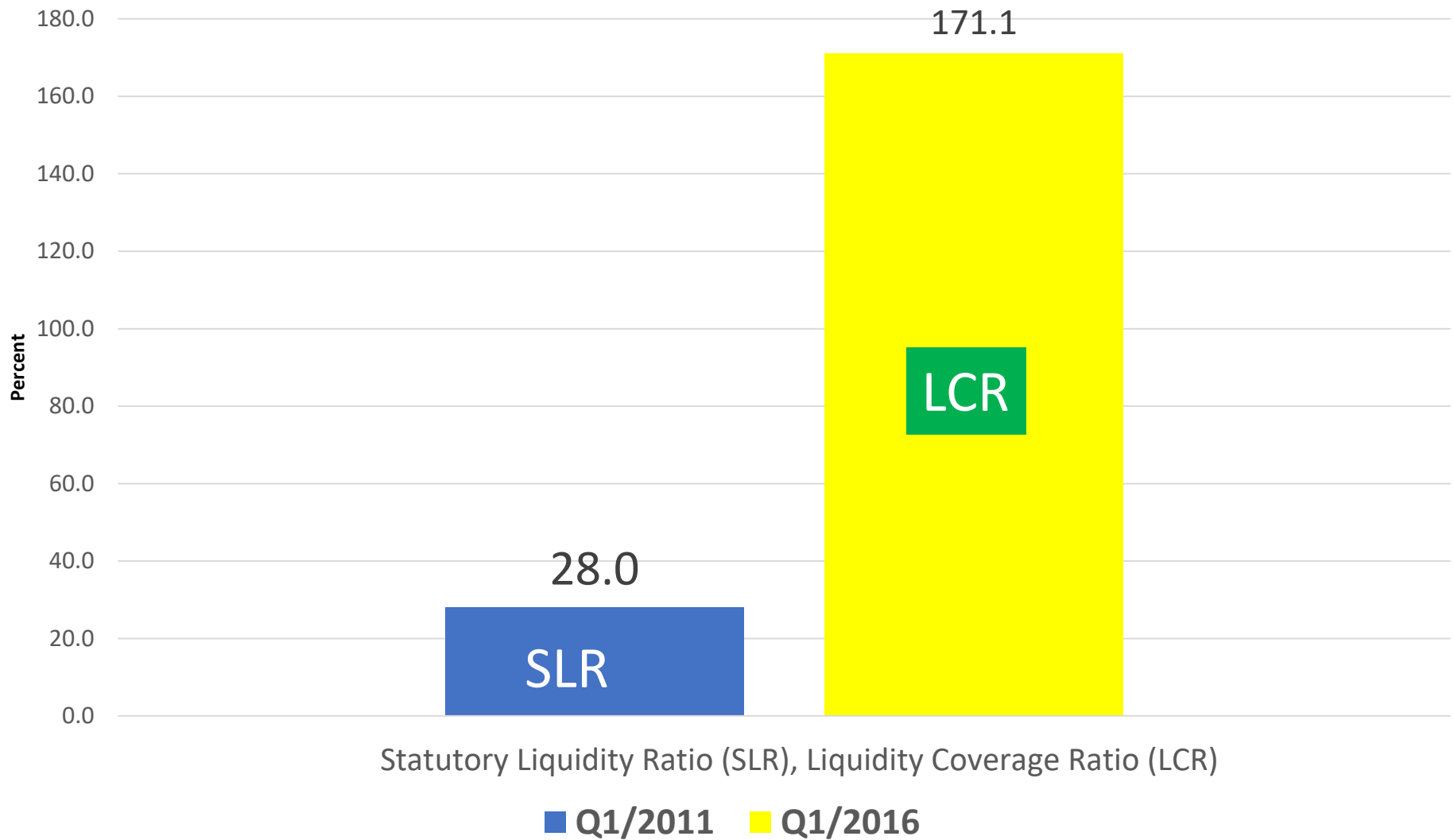
Basil III: Rule Change from legal reserve (liquidity) requirement to LCR

- The liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) refers to highly liquid assets held by financial institutions to meet short-term obligations.
- The ratio is a generic stress test that aims to anticipate market-wide shocks.
- The LCR assures that financial institutions have the necessary assets on hand to ride out any short-term liquidity disruptions.

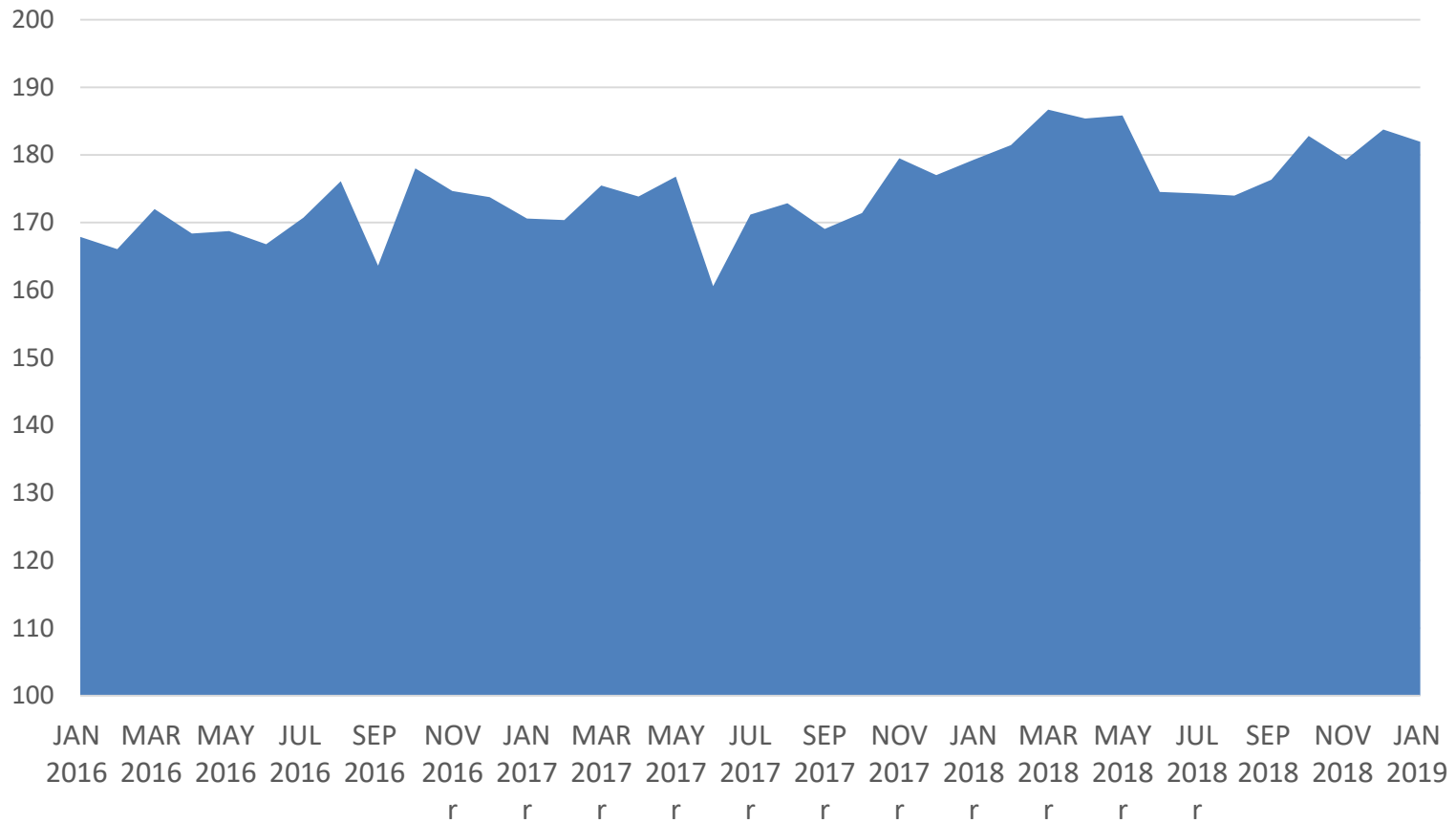
LCR must be above 100%

- Thai banks are required to have a 100% LCR, which means holding an amount of high quality liquid assets that are ***equal*** to or greater than its expected ***cash outflow*** over the next 30 days
- Highly liquid assets can include cash, Treasury bonds or corporate debt.

Change from Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) To Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR)



Loan Coverage Ratio (LCR) for banks in Thailand



The Way Forward: More Conservative Bank Management

