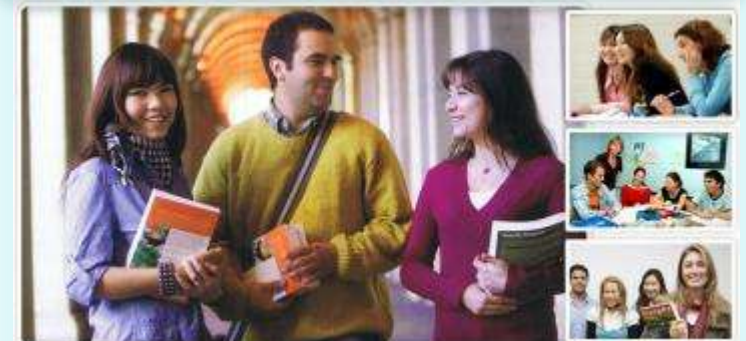# International Higher Education Student Mobility :

A Case Study of Thailand

Professor Paitoon Sinlarat

Dhurakit Pundit University, Thailand

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- The dynamics of student mobility and the internationalization of higher education have changed profoundly since the 1990s

- Twenty years ago, the primary motivations to study abroad were related to academic, political, geo-strategic, cultural and development aid issues and considerations.

- At the time, countries took a favorable view of the mobility of students and academics as an opening to the world, in the hope of creating international networks of elites.

- Today, even though the original motivations remain valid, cross-border education is being increasingly driven by economic considerations.

- International student mobility is the main form of cross-border higher education. In 2004 , there were 2.7 million students worldwide studying outside their own countries; in other words, almost three times as many as 20 yrs. ago.

- International students choose their study destinations according to their region of origin.

- This paper aims to investigate the global situations and flows of higher education students mobility and explore the international tertiary students mobility in Thailand as a case study.

The World's Tertiary Students Mobility Flows

- In 2007, over 2.8 million students were enrolled in educational institution outside of their country of origin. This represents 123,400 more students than 2006, an increase of 4.6 percent

- China sends the greatest number of students abroad, amounting to 421,148. The other major countries of origin are India (153,300), the Republic of Korea (105,327), Malaysia(46,478), etc.

- The global outbound mobility ratio in 2007 was 1.8 percent. This means that about 2 out of 100 tertiary students left their home countries to study.

- United States hosts the largest number of share of the world's mobile students at 595,900 or 21.30 percent.

Higher Education in Thailand

- There are eight categories of post-secondary education institutions in Thailand-public university with limited admission, autonomous public universities, open universities, the Rajabhat University, the Rajamongala University of Technology, public vocational colleges, private universities and private colleges.

- There are currently 143 higher education institutions in Thailand (77 public and 66 private universities and colleges) under the supervision of the Higher Education Commissions Office .

Economic Impact on Higher Education

- The enrollment declined from 2,054,426 in 2006 to 1,970,644 in 2009. Both public and private universities faced with the declining enrollment of students

- The economic crisis in Thailand led to a decreased rate of economic growth, declined from 4.9 percent in 2007 to 2.5 percent in 2008 and the contracted to 2.2 percent in 2009.

- In 2007, about 18 percent of graduates were unemployed and rose to 28.98 percent in 2008. Unemployment is believed to be due to a mismatch between employers' demands and graduates' qualification and due to a reduction in job openings which came about as a result of the economic crisis.

- Economic downturn had an impact on higher education institutions in a variety of ways-reduction in endowments and some promised donations were delayed. The financial crisis also affected the market value of university endowment funds.

Reform of Higher Education in Thailand

- The Thai higher education system is facing a crisis. There is a lack of qualified graduates in the science, technology and professional fields. Several endeavours have been made to increase access to higher education and improve its quality. A policy and roadmap was issued for the functioning of the Ministry, based on government policy, on going strategies of the Ministry of Education and relevant agencies.

International H.E. Student Mobility in Thailand

- International H.E. education has become a growing business as a result of globalization and liberalization process that has caused free flow of cross-border education. International cooperation in education is essential to education development in all countries.

- For Int'l tertiary programmes, 53 higher education institutions were offered in 2007. Among these, 844 programmes were offered by 30 public universities and 23 private universities.

- In 2009, there were 19,052 int'l students in Thailand under supervision of the Office of Higher Education Commission. About 87.75 came from 40 countries in Asia. Among these, 47.20 percent migrated from China South America represents 8 countries of origin with 27 students, 9 of them came from Brazil. We include the AIT which based in Thailand - a branch in Vietnam, the total number will be 19,872.

Table 2 : Number of International Students Study in Thailand classified by Region of Origin, 2010

Region	Number	Highest Country of Origin[1]
Asia (40 countries)	16,667	China (8,993)
Europe (31 Countries)	1,084	Germany (215)
North America (8 Countries)	959	U.S.A. (818)
Africa (31 Countries)	243	Nigeria (49)
Australia (6 Countries)	71	Australia (55)
South America (8 Countries)	27	Brazil (9)

Remark : [1]Number of students in brackets.

Source : Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education

Table 3 : Top Ten of Origin for International Students Studying at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand, 2005, 2009 and 2010

	2005		2009		2010	
	Country	Number	Country	Number	Country	Number
1	India	112	Pakistan	109	Pakistan	106
2	Bangladesh	94	Nepal	95	India	95
3	Nepal	87	India	83	Nepal	94
4	Myanmar	84	Indonesia	78	Sri Lanka	59
5	Cambodia	63	Sri Lanka	61	Myanmar	56
6	P.R. China	62	Myanmar	60	Indonesia	52
7	Laos	61	Bangladesh	42	Vietnam	39
8	Indonesia	45	Vietnam	39	Bangladesh	38
9	Sri Lanka	39	Cambodia	34	France	28
10	Vietnam	39	Laos	34	Cambodia	26
Total 1-10		686		635		593
Total Thai students		674		937		874
Total international students[1]		911		822		775

Remarks : 1Excludes Thai students and also Vietnamese students studying at the AIT Branch in Vietnam

Source The Registry Office, Asian Institute of Technology

- Thai students also migrated to study in other countries. These were 6,215 and 5,373 Thai students under the supervision of the Civil Service Commission, studying abroad in 2005 and 2009, respectively. Majority of Thai students moved to the U.S. as Their host country.

Table 4 : Thai Students Studying Abroad under the Supervision of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) of Thailand, classified by Top Ten Destination Countries in 2005 and 2009

No.	2005[1]					2009[1]				
	Country	Government Scholarship	Official on Leave	Other	Total		Country	Government Scholarship	Official on Leave	Other	total	
					Number	%					Number	%
1	U.S.A.	1,163	622	114	1,899	30.56	U.S.A.	1,225	179	153	1,557	28.98
2	UK	676	191	308	1,175	18.91	UK	911	113	265	1,289	23.98
3	Japan	282	407	-	683	11.09	Japan	427	156	-	583	10.85
4	Australia	208	277	13	498	8.01	China	226	99	-	325	6.05
5	France	316	104	1	421	6.77	France	287	31	2	320	5.96
6	Germany	260	97	1	358	5.76	Germany	257	31	3	291	5.42
7	China	132	105	-	237	3.81	Australia	140	86	19	245	4.56
8	Netherland	102	35	-	137	2.20	Netherland	127	16	-	143	2.66
9	India	23	75	-	98	1.58	Italy	65	20	1	86	1.60
10	Canada	44	53	-	97	1.56	Canada	64	21	-	85	1.58
11	Others	263	343	-	606	9.75	Others	244	190	15	449	8.36
	Total[2]	3,469	2,309	437	6,215	100.00	Total	3,973	942	458	5,373	100.00

Remark : [1] As of December 31

[2] With other 34 countries

Source : Office of Civil Service Commission

- Between 2005-2009, China had highest number of students studying in Thailand. During 2004-2005 Myanmar came second large group but Laos had replaced in 2008-2009. During 2008-2009 students flows to Thailand were most from the East Asia and the Pacific Region and ASEAN countries.

Table 5 : Top Five of Forcing Students Studying in Education Institutions in Thailand by Countries of Origin (Academic Years 2005-2009)

No.	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
1	China (1,615)	China (2,698)	China (4,028)	China (7,301)	China (8,993)
2	Myanmar (489)	Myanmar (631)	Vietnam (751)	Laos (1,301)	Laos (1,254)
3	Laos (436)	Vietnam (599)	Myanmar (741)	Myanmar (999)	Myanmar (1,205)
4	Vietnam (409)	U.S.A. (521)	Laos (664)	Cambodia (984)	Vietnam (1,141)
5	Japan (307)	Laos (493)	U.S.A. (527)	Vietnam (895)	Cambodia (1,009)
Total five countries	3,256	4,942	6,756	11,480	13,602
Total all countries	5,321	7,947	10,518	15,917	19,052

Source : Office of the Higher Education Commission.

Inbound and Outbound Mobility

- In 2007, among 7 countries, Australia has a large number of foreign students 211,526 from around the world. Thailand has smallest number of foreign students, 10,967. Australia and New Zealand present 19.5 inbound ratios and 13.6, respectively.

Table 6 : Tertiary International Mobile Students by Host Country and Region of Origin, 2007

Region of Origin	Inbound Mobil Students in Host Country						
	Australia	China	Japan	Malaysia	Rep. of Korea	Thailand	New Zealand
1. Arab States	4,406	-	564	3,574	112	23	328
2. Central + Eastern Europe	1,524	-	1,217	207	374	103	350
3. Central Asia	194	-	1,246	227	1293	44	39
4. East Asia and the Pacific	126,633	-	112,257	13,149	26,903	8,064	23,383
5. Latin America and the Caribean	2,394	-	1,288	40	171	35	319
6. North America and Western Europe	15,912	-	4,301	301	930	1,416	5,472
7. South and West Asia	36,764	-	4,463	5,186	1,123	1,151	2,859
8. Sub-Saharan Africa	6,487	-	531	1,680	187	131	256
9. Unspecified	17,212	42,138	10	40	850	-	41
All Regions	211,526	42,138	125,877	24,404	31,943	10,967	33,047
Inbound Mobile Ratio (%)	19.5	0.2	3.0	3.3	1.0	0.5	13.6

- The top five destinations for outbound mobile students are in Table 7. China has a largest number (421,148) followed by Malaysia (46,473), Thailand (24,455) and Australia (9,968). USA. seems to be the most favorite countries but not for Malaysia.

Table 7 : Top Five Destinations (Host Countries)1 for Outbound Mobile Students by Country of Origins in 2007

| Australia	China	Malaysia	Thailand
Number 9,968	421,148	46,473	24,485
1. U.S.A. (28.68)	U.S.A. (23.49)	Australia(38.07)	U.S.A. (37.09)
2.New Zealand (27.59)	Japan(19.05)	United Kingdom(25.41)	Australia(19.95)
3.United Kingdom(17.77)	Australia(11.97)	U.S.A. (11.62)	United Kingdom(18.55)
4.Germany(3.93)	United Kingdom(11.78)	Japan (4.42)	Japan(7.04)
5.Japan(3.62)	Germany(5.65)	New Zealand(3.72)	Malaysia(3.47)
6.Others[2] (18.41)	(28.06)	(16.76)	(13.90)

Remarks : [1] Percent of students from given country studying in the host countries is shown in the brackets.

[2] The rest of top five destinations.

Source : Compiled from UNESCO Statistics International Flow of Mobile Students, 2007

Figure 1 : Top Five Destinations for Outbound Mobile Students from Malaysia, China, Australia, and Thailand, 2007
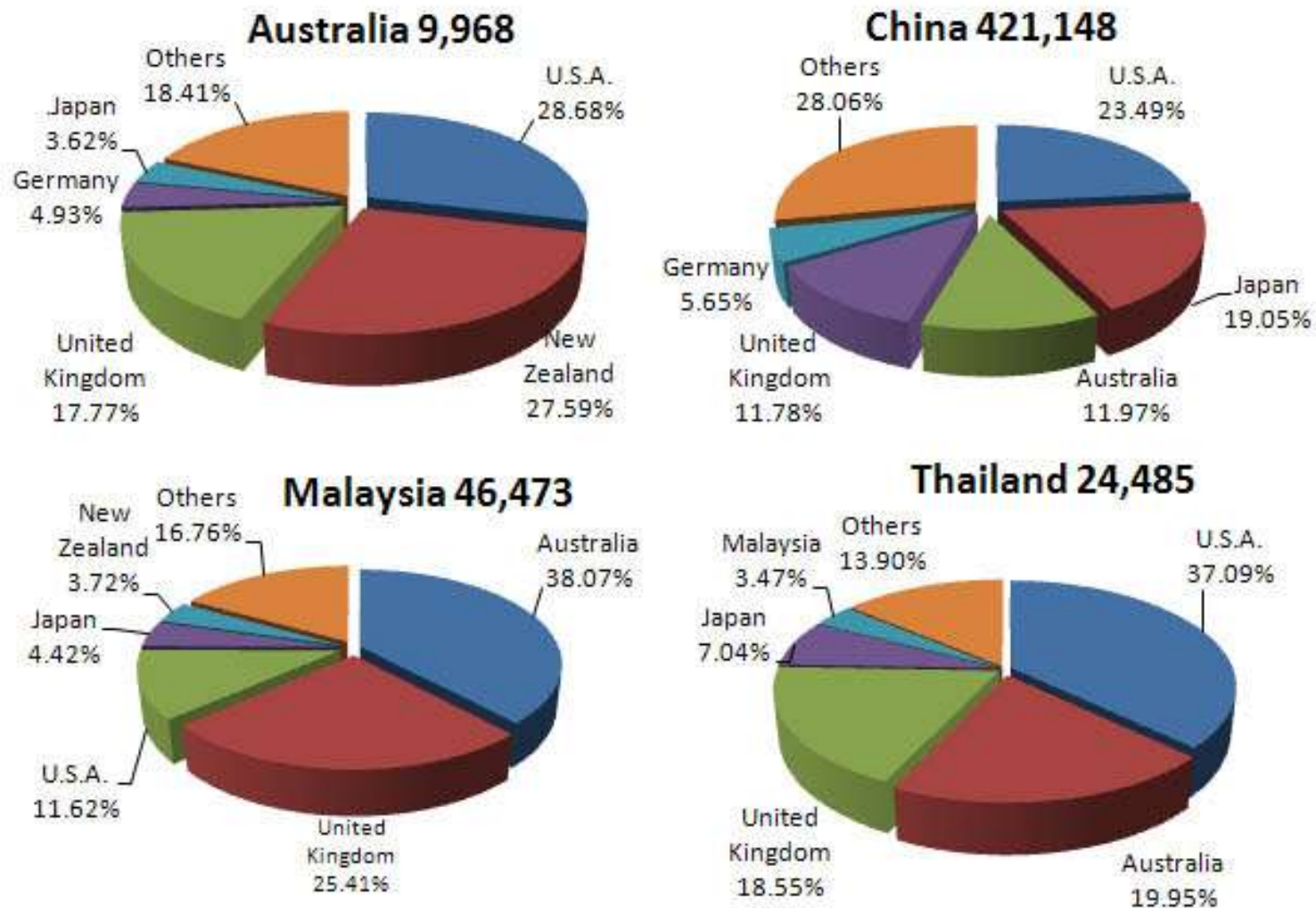
Source : Compiled from UNESCO Statistics, 2007

Outbound, Inbound and Net Flow Ratio

- As mentioned, China send largest number of tertiary students to study abroad (421,148) in 2007, the outbound ratio was 1.9 and inbound ratio was only 0.2 which made the net flow ratio about-1.7. Australia had very high inbound ratio about 18.5 but the outbound ration 1.0 Japan had net flow 1.8 with inbound ratio 3.0. Malaysia and Republic of Korea had – 2.8 and -2.1 of net flow but different patterns of in and out migration. Thailand had 24,485 outbound and 10,967 inbound mobility with -0.4 net flow ratio.

# The Most Popular Fields of Study

- The top five fields of study among foreign students studying in higher education institutes in Thailand between Academic Year 2005 – 2009 were surveyed. It was found that Business Administration is the most popular field of study for three consecutive years, 2004 – 2006 (Table 9). From 2008 – 2009, the most popular field has changed to the Thai language. In 2009, Business Administration came to second popular followed by in International Business, English Language and Marketing. It was found that foreign students studied at the bachelor degree level exceeds those studied at other levels in higher education institutions in Thailand.

Table 9 : Top Five Fields of Study among Foreign Students Studying in Thailand, Academic Years 2005-2009

No	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
1	Business Administration	Business Administration	Business Administration	Thai Language	Thai Language
2	Marketing	Thai Language	Thai Language	Business Administration	Business Administration
3	Thai Language	Marketing	Marketing	English Language	International Business
4	Business English	International Business	International Business	International Business	English Language
5	Business	Thai Studies	Business English	Marketing	Marketing

Figure2 : Source of Educational Expenses of Foreign Students 2005, 2009
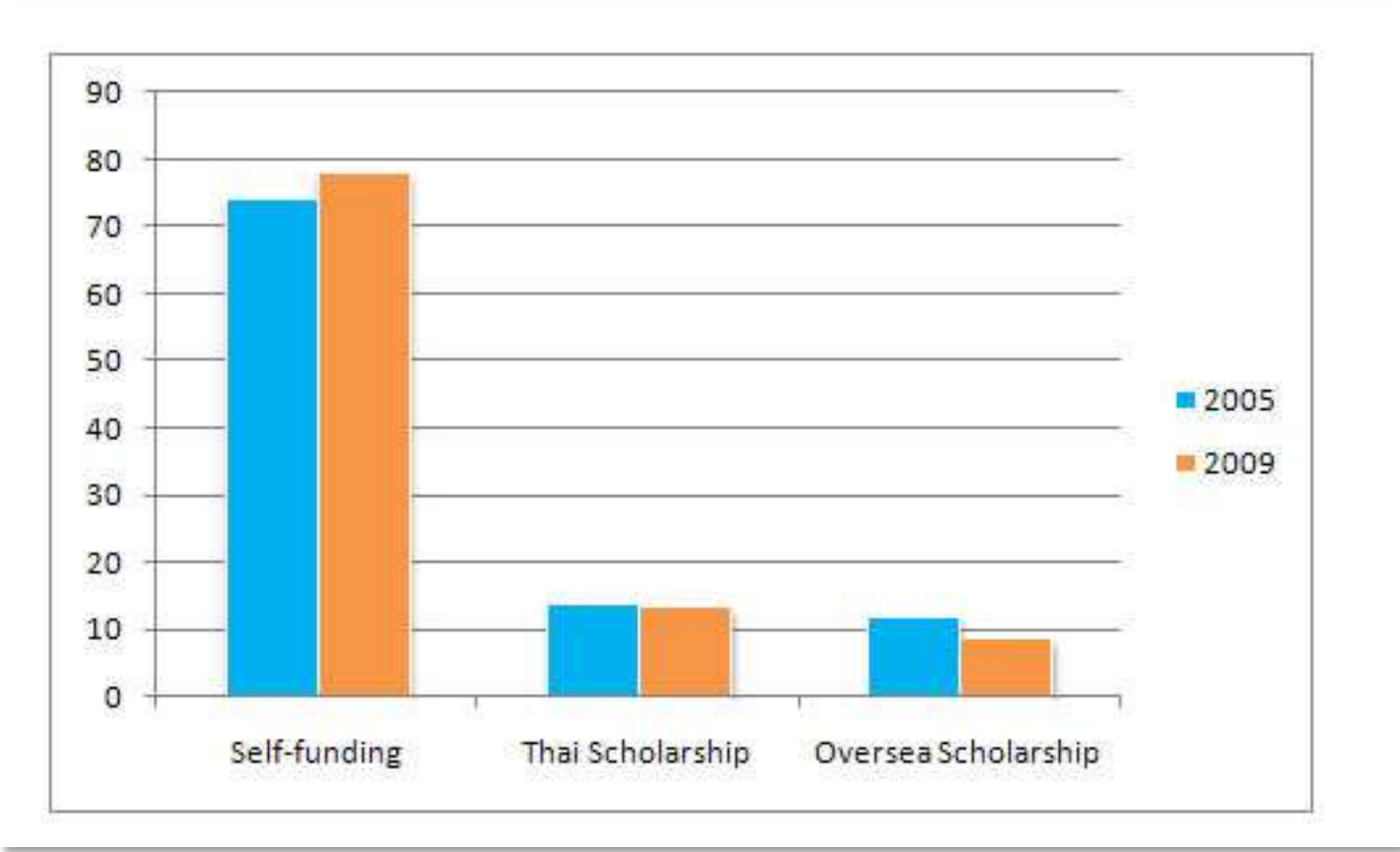
Source : Office of the Higher Education Commission

Concluding Remarks

- Globalization increased migration flows of all types the strategies, followed by institutions of higher learning and the policies of developing countries are combining to create a more competitive, homogenous and globalized arena of higher education

- These are many reasons why student pursues their education abroad. For some, it is chance to broaden cultural and intellectual horizons. Others, to avoid the frustrations of under-resourced universities at home. Many no choice but go to pursue a particular field education.

- The flow of cross border students indicates that the dominant flow continues to be from the developing to developed countries. The U.S. used to be the favorite destination but the trend is changing-Australia and New Zealand are attractive destinations. The foreign students not only mobilize funds but also subsidize the domestic students.

- It should be emphasized that international students are "human being" and not "goods" for international trade. Issues of quality assurance and cultural conflict cannot be ignored.

- Development of international higher education should be the "National Agenda" with the National Committee level, will be very useful.

- The integrations of the ASEAN community programming will begin in 2015, international higher education development issues with the ASEAN social and cultural community will be started with close coordination and effective management systems. We really hope that our dream will come true!!!

Thank You!