



## The New Southbound Policy and Moving Abroad Trend among Thai Students' Decision to Further Study and Resettlement in Taiwan

Polwasit Lhakard\*

*International Doctoral Program in Asia-Pacific Studies (IDAS), College of Social Science, National Chengchi University, Taipei, 166 Taiwan*

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### Abstract

The New Southbound Policy is one way for Taiwan to adapt to changes in the political geography and society in today's world. This is considered as a soft power strategy to attract more students from Thailand to study in Taiwan. The study was conducted to understand the factors influencing Thai student's choice of studying in Taiwan and to resettle in Taiwan by using qualitative research and collecting data through in-depth interviews. There were 12 key informants which included Thai students who were studying in Taiwan, who were on the way to study, and who had already graduated and were currently working in Taiwan. Data analysis was done through content analysis. The results of this research showed that there are 3 factors influencing students' decision to choose Taiwan for their further study and resettlement. First, regarding education, a wide variety of courses are offered in both English and Chinese. There are scholarships, public relations from the ROC (Taiwan) government agencies and Taiwan education agencies. Secondly, it is about job opportunities and a long-term stay such as job opportunities after graduation. Finally, it is related to political problems such as government administration. These factors attract students to choose Taiwan as their destination for further study and resettlement.

### Introduction

In the face of economic globalization, Taiwan has made significant adjustments to balance the economic development along with the country's democracy and governance processes towards cooperation in various regions across the world, especially in ASEAN (Acharya, 1997). As for the country's manufacturing, it has transitioned from labor-intensive industries to high-tech industries. Additionally, Taiwan's ROC government has

put an emphasis on cooperation through the New Southbound Policy (NSP) in four areas: 1) Economic and trade collaboration 2) Talent exchange 3) Resource sharing, and 4) Regional connectivity, to create business opportunities for entrepreneurs who are interested in investing in ASEAN and South Asian countries. Expansion of the future economic and trade collaboration for Taiwanese entrepreneurs has been emphasized. The Executive Yuan or the Legislative assembly then

presented an action plan to implement the New Southbound Policy on September 5th, 2017. In terms of education, building mutual understanding in the areas of language and culture, student exchange for both short-term programs and academic degree programs, collaborative research projects in various fields, and joint training of highly skilled people needed for Industrial 4.0 (Ministry of Education, 2017a), along with Thailand's development policy focusing more on science and technology and the granting of more study abroad scholarships, have created an opportunity for Thai students. As a result, the number of Thai students going to study in Taiwan is increasing every year as well as the number of scholarships.

The researcher conducted this research by bringing the conceptual framework of Taiwan's NSP integrated with social phenomenon in order to apply the universal principles of management to analyze the research that is useful to studying concepts and behaviors of the new generation in Thailand (Ritzen, 2016). The researcher focused on the factors influencing the choice of further study and resettlement of Thai students. Certain questions were formed such as does the New Southbound Policy help to encourage students to become more interested in Taiwan? Furthermore, does the social phenomenon happening in Thailand today motivate students to select further study and resettlement in Taiwan? Therefore, Taiwan's policy implementation is interesting in terms of planning strategies and tactics internationally for building long-term soft power in the region (Yang, 2018).

### Objectives

1. To study the factors supporting Thai students' decision to choose Taiwan for their further study and resettlement according to the New Southbound Policy.
2. To study Thai students' decision to choose Taiwan for their further study and resettlement according to the phenomenon of moving abroad.

### Literature Review

This section aims to review the idea of New Southbound Policy (NSP) and the phenomenon of moving abroad to explore Thai students' decision to select Taiwan for their further study and resettlement.

#### New Southbound Policy

The "New Southbound Policy" is based on building strong relationships with Taiwan's partners by leveraging Taiwan's culture, education, technology, and

economic and agricultural assets to expand its power among ASEAN, South Asia, Australia and New Zealand. In 1994, Former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui encouraged state-owned enterprises to invest in ASEAN countries, as part of the Go South Policy 1.0. Later, in 2003, Former President Chen Shui-bian continued the Go South Policy 2.0, but no public participation, resulting in limited success. In 2016, Taiwan's NSP was implemented and driven (Chan, Yang, & Tai, 2020). The first and recent creation of this policy is that it was people-centered. Second, there was cultural diversity and people were involved. As for Taiwan, this policy's focus is to help the country adapt to changes in the political geography and society in the world today by seeking new cooperation, especially with 18 southbound countries, including 10 ASEAN countries, 6 South Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand. This NSP has been successful in many areas (Lin & Sung, 2020) such as educational projects, tourism, medicine and also regional connectivity through a large number of agreements with target countries. Additionally, its success can be seen through the continuous increase in budgets for the NSP since 2017 from 4.4 billion baht to 7.4 billion baht in 2019, with the ability to attract more investments from target countries from 6.9 billion baht in 2016 to 11.7 billion baht in 2018, or up to 66% (Hou, Chen, & Tsai, 2016), Taiwan's various exchanges with Thailand are driven and the most important one is educational exchanges. The Taiwan government has provided scholarships to more Thai students and Southeast Asian countries to study in Taiwan, known as the New Southbound Scholarship. Due to such a policy, more Thai students are coming to study in Taiwan. In 2017, it was found that there were 2,125 Thai students attending higher education in Taiwan, and in 2018 the number increased to 3,236 students. This is because the Thai government is pushing the Thailand policy 4.0 forward in order to develop basic industries and heading towards 10 core industries. These industries include the automotive sector, smart electronics, processed agricultural products, high-value tourism, food, machinery and robots, digital economy, biochemicals, medical hub, aviation and logistics. Therefore, this year, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Thailand has responded to the need of Taiwanese businessmen in Thailand by selecting scholarship students who wish to study in Taiwan in accordance with the need of such personnel in the future. It is considered the collaboration by both sides to promote education, economy and

industrial development (Focus Taiwan News Channel, 2018).

### The Social Phenomenon, “Moving Abroad” Trend

The social phenomenon of the new generation’s moving abroad trend is connected to the emergence of a Facebook group called, “Let’s Move Abroad” (later renamed, “Move, Let’s Move Our Hips”) at the beginning of the month. This has become a shocking phenomenon as more than 700,000 new members have joined the group in just 3 days, and today the number has already surpassed 1 million people as of May 13, 2021. It has also become a topic in the online world with both support and criticism from people widely across society. According to the survey results among this group, the number one reason for this trend includes politics, livelihood, and dissatisfaction with the government’s management, especially anemic handling of the COVID-19 situation at that time. This led to the new generation, that included high school students and university students, to exchange their ideas about what steps must be taken for moving abroad. This creates a unique exchange phenomenon that has never happened before in Thailand through the questions related to the economy for their security and career advancement in life, attainment of a better quality of life, safety and good mental health as well as receiving proper management and welfare, free from political conflicts or wars that affect one’s own welfare, and staying in a place with the least effects of weather variations and natural disasters. (Olssen & Peters, 2005). This makes the phenomenon of the new generation wishing to move abroad become a concern, and this can lead to a “brain drain” or substantial emigration of workforce which can seriously affect the country’s economy (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). Therefore, the building of good quality of political climate is an important part of alleviating this problem. This is a political expression of the new generation who cannot use political institutions as a channel to express their demands to the authorities or they have already done that but have not yet received any response back. Currently, there has been no research conducted to explore the factors influencing the decisions of Thai students in Taiwan on their decisions for further study and resettlement, reflecting accumulated political problems in Thailand. Since the political structure cannot be changed now, then the new generation has expressed and released their frustration by looking for opportunities to

leave Thailand. They also want to show how they feel and to find inspiration and ways to exchange conversations in moving abroad, whether it is about further study or work.

### Conceptual Framework

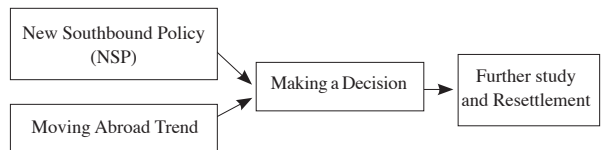


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

### Research Methodology

The qualitative case study was conducted in this research to understand the phenomenon involved and explore the factors supporting Thai students’ decision to choose Taiwan for their further study and resettlement through an analysis of the New Southbound Policy and Moving Abroad phenomenon.

#### Unit of Analysis

The population includes Thai students who are studying in Taiwan, who are coming to study in Taiwan, who have already graduated and are working in Taiwan, and other people involved. Selecting samples or key informants was done by using purposive sampling. This study was based on the results of qualitative study in order to develop a complete understanding of the NSP and moving abroad trend. Therefore, the study focused on key informants who had direct or indirect experience with these events. Key informants were selected using purposive sampling. The students were divided into bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctor’s degree in both social sciences and sciences, as well as Thai and Taiwan education officers and Taiwan education agent. This allows us to see the issues involved in making decisions on further study and resettlement together with Taiwan’s policy formulation. They were divided into 2 groups: 1) Key informants: 9 students, and 2) Secondary key informants: 1 Taiwan education agent, 1 Taiwan government officer, and 1 Thai government officer. The demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1. The data given by these informants plays an important part in clarifying the phenomenon.

**Table 1** Thai students studying in Taiwan and people involved

No.	Age	Position	Levels of Education	Faculties
1	19	Student	Bachelor's degree	Business Administration
2	25	Student	Master's degree	Data science
3	21	Student	Bachelor's degree	International Relations
4	35	Student	Master's degree	Computer Engineering
5	22	Student	Master's degree	Computer Engineering
6	29	Student	Doctor's degree	Medical Science
7	30	Student	Master's degree	Information Engineering
8	30	Student	Doctor's degree	Chemistry
9	34	Student	Master's degree	Business Administration
10	41	Thai government officer		
11	28	Taiwan government officer		
12	36	Taiwan education agent		

### Research Tools

The researcher used a semi-structured interview as a tool to collect data from three groups of key informants. The research tools to validate the content by experts on studies and migration were used. They contained questions for in-depth interviews. Face-to-face interviews were available at the convenience of the participants. The narrative interview consisted of open-ended questions about the factors supporting Thai students' decision about their further study and resettlement. There were questions about the New Southbound Policy in terms of providing the information about universities, faculties, scholarships, public relations, and a survey of the factors influencing the choice of further study and resettlement regarding economy, society and politics. An interview lasted between 20 and 40 minutes (30 minutes on average). The data was collected from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

### Data Analysis

This study used data synthesis based on a tertiary source using documents along with content analysis and thematic analysis according to the data obtained from in-depth interviews and participant observation and a focus group.

### Ethical Considerations

The study protocol was consistent with the ethical guidelines of the 1975 Declaration of Helsinki as reflected in a prior approval by the Institution's Human Research Committee.

### Results

The researcher divided presentation of the findings according to 3 factors that support or influence Thai students to choose Taiwan for their further study and resettlement. In order to get a clearer picture, there

will be sub-headings under each topic divided into tables and details as follows:

**Table 1** : The Tables Presenting the Research Findings of The New Southbound Policy and Moving Abroad Trend & Thai Students' Decision to Further Study and Resettlement in Taiwan.

Main points	Subpoints	Findings
1. Education system	- A wide variety of courses offered in both English and Chinese. - Scholarships - Public relations from Taiwan government agencies and Taiwan education agencies.	There is an English curriculum in addition to Chinese. According to the New Southbound Policy, Taiwan's government has promoted scholarships using public relations through agencies and social media, which are resources for finding courses and universities.
2. Job opportunities and a long-term stay	- Job opportunities after graduation	There is a demand for high-potential individuals especially in technology by giving an opportunity to attract high-skilled manpower using the Employment Gold Card, accumulating years of employment for foreigners in Taiwan with permanent residence permits.
2. Political problems	- Government administration	According to the economic and political problems, people in the country feel that there is no opportunity to grow in life, leading the new generation unable to cope with the inefficient political structure. Therefore, they have to find a way out by making decision to go abroad.

### 1. Education system

According to the study and data collection, it was found that the education system, scholarships and public relations are the main influencing factors because all of the interviewees referred to a quality education system. As for rankings, Taiwan's education system is among the top world-class education. In Asia with the QS Asia University Rankings 2020, 11 Taiwan's universities ranked in the top 100 Asian universities. In addition, up to 33 Taiwan's universities ranked in Times Higher Education World University Rankings among the top 250 universities in the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, Taiwan's cost of living is low. This then attracts more and more people from many countries to come and study in Taiwan every year (Marginson, 2007).

**A wide variety of courses offered in both English and Chinese:** In Taiwan, there are courses taught in English for bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctoral degree, with 54 universities offering more than



100 courses covering all fields of study. Many of these courses have been accredited by the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) and many have been given internationally recognized accreditation. For example, business administration programs are accredited by AACSB, acronym for Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, which is a global organization providing internationally recognized accreditation for business management and accounting programs. Currently, only 5% of educational institutions worldwide have been accredited by this organization (Mohamed, Chang, & Huang, 2020). The accreditation provided by AACSB will help confirm that graduates from those institutions have a higher chance of being employed (Hunter, 2018). There are more than 34 faculties in universities in Taiwan and courses offered are popular among Thai students. In addition, there are various levels of language proficiency offered for the courses taught in Chinese as many universities in Taiwan offer specialized courses in education, business and medicine. This allows international students ability to choose appropriate courses that match their language proficiency level. According to the New Southbound Policy, the Taiwan government has created the website, 'Study in Taiwan', as an information source for courses and universities. Students can find any course suitable for them. Besides, levels of language proficiency used in teaching are given, this then allows them to assess and choose a course that is right for them (MOE in Taiwan, 2001).

*"I have chosen to study a Master of Business Administration which is accredited by AACSB, in which there are only a few institutions in Thailand accredited by this organization. In addition to study abroad helps us understand more about business, studying in a Chinese-speaking country also leads us to take additional Chinese language courses, allowing us to obtain Chinese language skills. As we all know and cannot deny that the Chinese language will play a major role in the near future."* (Student No. 9)

*"Approximately eighty percent of courses are taught in English, but some are taught in Chinese. Even though we do not have foundation skills in Chinese, textbooks are in English or assignments can be submitted in English. At first, I was worried about studying, but after I was able to adapt myself, my Chinese language skills have improved as I can learn more vocabulary from listening to lectures, and also teachers see that we are foreigners, so they really try to help and care for us. This*

*makes me feel like I can improve my Chinese language skills."* (Student No. 2)

**Scholarships:** A scholarship is a top factor for consideration when Thai students choose to study abroad, especially in Taiwan. Due to the need to attract students and top talents to study in Taiwan, the New Southbound Policy then offers scholarships to many ASEAN countries (Tiezzi, 2018) including Thailand. The number of Thai students studying in Taiwan is increasing every year. According to the data from the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) (2021), 3,236 Thai students came to study in Taiwan, compared to only 952 students in 2015. There are 8 main types of scholarships as follows: Huayu Enrichment Scholarship for Thai students, which is a scholarship for studying Chinese; MOE Taiwan Scholarship, which is a degree scholarship offered by the Ministry of Education (MOE); International Higher Education Scholarship Programs of Taiwan ICDF; Academia Sinica Taiwan International Graduate Program (TIGP); Scholarship programs offered by universities and each university supports its own scholarships; MOFA Taiwan Fellowship offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; MOE Short Term Research Award; and Research Grant for Foreign Scholars in Chinese Studies. Supporting students through the various and large number of scholarships is the result of the Taiwan government's commitment to building relationships with foreign countries, including Thailand. Additionally, Taiwan's education quality has been recognized internationally more and more. This is a key reason leading to more Thai students applying for those scholarships. Besides, Taiwan government's promotion of education using the Southbound Policy, which began in 1990 and was revised into the New Southbound Policy in 2016, has been enhanced to create opportunities for international relations in the areas of trade, investment and culture. This offers students more opportunities to study in Taiwan (Yang, 2016).

*"I decided to study in Taiwan because of scholarships. They are tuition fee waiver scholarships, with living allowance and dormitory fee exemption. It is really worthwhile to study here. In addition, when considering the scholarship competition with other scholarships offered by more popular countries such as Japan, the UK or America, I felt that applications and interviews are less stressful and not as many applicants as in other countries."* (Student No. 4)

*"In addition to scholarships offered by the university, there are also research studies that allow*

*students to become research assistants and get paid hourly. Therefore, not only don't you have to pay tuition fees, but you also can earn money while studying. It makes me feel that coming to study here is definitely worthwhile; to gain knowledge and not to be a burden to my family as they do not have to send me money."* (Student No. 5)

**Public relations from Taiwan government agencies and Taiwan education agencies:** According to the New Southbound Policy, the expansion of cooperation in the education sector has been implemented and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Thailand has increasingly applied social media to make it easier for interested people to access more information, including building an information service for education through the LINE app at the beginning of 2018 under the account name of TTedu. It is used as a source of information for education while you also can use Thai language to ask for more information (Hsieh, 2016). In addition, the complicated process of document authentication from the Consular Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been made easier such as graduation certificate from Thai to English. More convenient visa application is also provided, that is, no need to show financial statements. Besides, previously there were only 6 hospitals that conducted medical examinations for students before going to study in Taiwan but this year the number has increased to 48 hospitals. Furthermore, there is a website created by the Ministry of Education (Taiwan) (Tang, 2019), a Taiwan Education Center in Thailand to provide guidance to Thai students applying to study in Taiwan which is operated under the program of recruiting foreign students to study in the Republic of China (Taiwan), and the policy of promoting teaching Chinese as a foreign language by the Ministry of Education. Currently, there are 3 Taiwan Education Centers in Thailand. The Bangkok Office is located in Kasetsart University (Bangkhen Campus). The Northern Office is located at Mae Jo University in Chiang Mai and the Northeastern Office is located at Rajamangala University of Technology Isan in Nakhon Ratchasima. As a result of such implementation, more and more Thai students come to study in Taiwan. Today, there are also Taiwan specialized education agencies such as JNJ, Orimos, Taipei Connection and Hooray Taiwan, and many more study overseas education agencies. According to statistics in 2017, the number of Thai students enrolled in higher education in Taiwan was 2,125 and then in 2020 it increased to 3,236. China is the

country with the largest number of students choosing to study further education in Taiwan at 30,000 students in total last year, followed by 17,000 students from Malaysia, 13,000 students from Vietnam, 12,000 students from Indonesia, 9,000 students from Japan, and Thailand was ranked 10th in this list. The popular fields of study for Thai students are business administration and engineering (Statistical Bureau of MOE in Taiwan, 2019).

*"Nowadays, many students are interested in Taiwan. Due to Taiwan's shortage of students studying in their own country, and together with the policy in need of building relationships with ASEAN countries; this has led to an increase in international courses for students from all over the world to come to study. The main reason that motivates students to decide to study in Taiwan is all about a large number of scholarships offered and the cost of living that is not much different from Bangkok."* (Taiwan education agent)

*"To follow their New Southbound Policy, the Taiwan government has provided services for students who want to study further through either LINE App or Youtube for both students and those who are interested in finding more information. It must be admitted that from such policy, more work is proactively operated. In addition, Taiwan government agencies would like to cooperate with more Thai educational institutions to promote more knowledge exchange and student/staff exchange."* (Taiwan government officer)

According to the findings, Taiwan's education system using the New Southbound Policy combine with the quality education system results in the need to increase educational internationalization. There is then a clear educational policy from the creation of the environment for students from different countries to learn together and internationalization support in higher education. This has been done by providing scholarships to countries in Southeast Asia, resulting in the increasing number of foreign students coming to study in Taiwan every year. The total number of scholarships issued is also increasing. At the same time, Taiwan government has developed an information system to disseminate education in Thai that covers all subjects in education. The more the learning is convenient for students, the more it attracts students to study in Taiwan.

## **2. Job opportunities and a long-term stay**

From the research findings, Taiwan has attracted skilled people to come to work in the country, especially in technology by relaxing visa, residence, and work permit rules/requirements. In addition, benefits

such as insurance, taxation and retirement are added to create better working environment. Job opportunities and a long-term stay is one of the factors that Thai students use in their consideration of going to study in Taiwan, since the opportunity to work abroad is not only to get an average income higher than in Thailand, but also to gain experience. In addition, when years of employment are accumulated, there is an opportunity for foreigners in Taiwan to apply for Employment Gold Card and an Alien Permanent Resident Certificate (APRC) that requires the applicant to be residing in Taiwan for 5 consecutive years. It is a 4-in-1 card, which includes a work permit, visa, Alien Resident Certificate (ARC) and multiple re-entry permit in the same card.

**Job opportunities after graduation:** Taiwan needs high-potential people especially in the technology field. That is because of the declining birth rate. Besides boosting fertility rates, migrant workers are also one of the keys to increase population growth. The government has extended their measures to attract skilled workers and enable them to continue working in Taiwan in three areas which include new foreign workers' importation to Taiwan, allowing skilled workers to continue working in Taiwan, as well as expanding sources of employment for migrant workers. Today, labor importation from outside country is also considered as another way to increase population growth. There are more than 700,000 foreign workers in industrial and household sectors combined (Science, Technology Policy Research & Information Center, 2015). How to enable skilled workers who adapt to Taiwanese society and accept Taiwanese values to continue working and residing in Taiwan is the key to importing the foreign workforce. This also includes over 50,000 foreign students and overseas Chinese students studying in Taiwan. Originally, the opportunity to work in Taiwan was already opened up for them. Over 80% of international students applying for a work permit in Taiwan were approved. Currently, more than 10,000 international students graduated each year, and nearly half of them choose to work in Taiwan after graduation. Today, Taiwan has started the entry for international students to senior high school in Taiwan in the hope that students will have the opportunity to study in universities in Taiwan and choose to continue living in Taiwan, generating motivation to attract more talents to further stay in Taiwan (Klimaviciute, 2017).

*"I chose to study computer engineering because not only is Taiwan the best and well-known for this field, but it also gives me the opportunity to find a job here at*

*a salary that is higher than in Thailand and the cost of living is not that much different. There is also the opportunity to stay longer and apply for a long-stay visa. It is easier to build up a fortune in Taiwan than in Thailand. Due to the fact that there is a good public transport system, there is no need to buy a car. There are also a lot more opportunities to work with well-known technology companies. As Taiwan's population is shrinking, this provides an opportunity to find the way to work and stay in Taiwan after graduation."* (Student No. 7)

*"Before coming here, I had the intention of finding a job while studying and after graduation because I thought staying here would allow us to learn Chinese quickly and to practice speaking with local people by being in a Chinese speaking environment. With knowledge and skills in Thai, Chinese and English, I think finding a job here will not be difficult. Since there are many Taiwanese companies that run their businesses in Thailand, and also many companies and factories here import Thai workers, this makes me think that working here should not be difficult and I can earn more in salary than in Thailand."* (Student No. 1)

Nowadays, Taiwan offers opportunities for high-potential individuals who work in the fields of sciences and technology, economics, education, arts, culture, sports, finance, law, and architectural design to apply for the Employment Gold Card. They can apply through online system without going to the government office themselves. This card is valid for 1-3 years depending on applicant's qualifications and it can be renewed. The nations that received the most Employment Gold Cards are as follows: the United States with 103 people, Hong Kong with 44 people, England with 35 people, Denmark with 24 people, Malaysia with 23 people, Korea with 20 people, Singapore with 19 people and others.

### 3. Political problems

It cannot be denied that the moving abroad trend for Thais has something to do with politics because political problems are the cause of brain drain which refers to the phenomenon in which a country loses individuals who have received advanced training at home. It is a large-scale emigration of skilled and talented individuals from one country to another country. In the past, this phenomenon often occurred in developing or underdeveloped countries that have both economic and political problems, causing people in the country to look for new opportunities and opportunities in life. This

makes the new generation unable to deal with an inefficient political system, and therefore show their decision by leaving and moving abroad more and more (Rukumnuaykit, 2009).

Government administration: Administration is one of the factors that leads students to decide to leave the country and to seek resettlement. This happens especially in countries with “bad politics” and “high inequality” (Saxer, 2014). Bad politics also creates high inequality because the political sector is the one that allocates resources and set the rules and regulations in the country. It is undeniable that inequality occurs in our country because many resources are fixed to a few capitalist groups, and capital groups are like supporters of political parties to gain privilege access or to manage resources, seemingly resulting in monopoly. There are a few privileged groups, so this leaves a vast majority of people who are unable to access or receive inefficient services especially in resource ownership. This makes the new generation feel that they have no dreams (Pasuk & Baker, 2012) as they do not have the same social capital as some groups. They then have to depend on the patronage system, which leads to corruption. Management in the welfare state still does not improve people’s quality of life as good as it should be. Looking to the future, the new generation cannot see their own future if they are still in the country when compared to countries with better quality of life, such as retirement benefits that rely on social security payments or old-age allowance if compared to the rising cost of living (Chang, 2011). This is an important issue since Thailand is preparing to enter an aging society. How does the Thai government plan to handle this? It makes the new generation unable to see their future. However, they know that it is not always easy and beautiful in another country because of the culture, weather, food and a status of being a second-class citizen, and fear of taking over the jobs of its citizens. Nonetheless, the government administration creates sharing of emotions for most people who feel hopeless and want to risk or go for it rather than living without knowing whether in the future they will be able to break free from the income trap and to have good quality of life (Mazzarol & Souta, 2002).

*“It is frustrating before the emergence of the moving abroad trend. After a military coup, the administration and authoritarian concepts only facilitate a small group of people which is contrary to the reality that there are still poor people in the country. Therefore, the younger generation who cannot see their own future*

*like me, want to study and work abroad. With the fact that Taiwan has a course that I want to study and offers a scholarship, then it is not difficult for me to decide to study in Taiwan. I also intend to work here and if there is a chance, I want to change my nationality because for me it is unacceptable that the government runs the country with such administration, especially during COVID- 19 outbreak.” (Student No. 3)*

*“Actually, it is a very unfortunate situation for Thailand as the new generation of Thai people are just as talented as foreigners. However, it is a pity that we have inefficient and ineffective political and administrative system. Instead, it drives these young people to live abroad and pushes them to find a way to study abroad and find a job there and do not want to return to their home country. That reflects the new generation’s trust towards the government. These people do not have trust and confidence to encourage themselves to continue staying in this country. As for me, I want to continue working in Taiwan because there are labs, tools and more stable income than in Thailand. I feel that living here is happier than living in Thailand, instead of watching the news or seeing the government’s operation failures.” (Student No. 8)*

According to the findings, the main reasons can be because of injustice, social opportunity, lack of basic welfare, poverty, low employment rate, political stability, no safety in life, and the crime rate. Based on the data from Boston Consulting Group (2020), it was found that the 10 countries where Thais are most interested in moving to work are as follows: 1. South Korea, 2. China, 3. Switzerland, 4. Canada, 5. Taiwan, 6. England, 7. The United States, 8. Singapore, 9. Australia, and 10. Japan. These countries are viewed as having political stability, large economy, and a standard political system in taking care of the people in their country. Currently, there is a problem with the political system in Thailand, causing people in the country feel that there is quite a problem in their government administration in terms of living in Thailand today.

## Discussion

By using a conceptual framework to expand more cooperation with countries in ASEAN and South Asia, Taiwan has developed a more international education system by offering courses taught in English covering all fields of study in order to attract foreign students. There is a total of 164 higher education institutions in



Taiwan; they are differently outstanding in academic research, teaching methods and techniques. Of these institutions, there are 105 universities (42 public universities) and 59 colleges (12 public colleges) with 93 vocational schools. Education in Taiwan consists of 22 formal educational levels, generally starting from 2 years in preschool education, 6 years in elementary school, 3 years in junior high school, 3 years in senior high school, 4 years in college or university (7 years for medical school), 2-4 years for a master's degree, and 4-7 years for a doctorate (MOE in Taiwan, 2019a).

As Taiwan has high-skilled professionals, therefore advanced ideas have been developed continuously. According to the World Economic Forum's Competitiveness Report 2018, Taiwan ranked the 5th country in investing the most in research and development, and the 2nd country with the most patent applications. It also ranked the 4th country in terms of creativity and innovation. These outcomes cannot be achieved without a broad vision, a clear policy, and a serious and continuous joint action. Apart from being a country with cutting-edge technology, study in Taiwan is continuously developed, including teaching methods and strategies as well as the strengths of each institution committed to researches and teaching. Thus, Taiwan is a good place for further study. In addition, the government also encourages foreign students to study further in Taiwan by providing annual scholarships along with the New Southbound Policy in conjunction with the "Thailand 4.0" policy to leverage existing industries and develop new industries targeting 10 key industries: automobiles, electronics, smart agriculture, value added of tourism, foods, robotics, automation, digital economy, fuels, biochemistry, medical care and aviation. Therefore, Taiwan offers opportunities for international students to study in universities in Taiwan focusing on 10 targeted industries in accord with the Thailand 4.0 policy (Kumpa, 2016). There will be degree scholarships and short-term scholarships for exchange students as a first step to help Thai students understand advantages of studying in Taiwan and considering the country as the top choice in Asia for their further study, and to encourage Thai students to study in Taiwan. This resulted in, before the New Southbound Policy being implementation, more than 1,500 Thai students going to study in Taiwan. After the New Southbound Policy implementation, the number of Thai students going to study in Taiwan has been significantly increased. In 2016, there were 1,771 students (a 11.3% increase), 2,125 students (a 20.0% increase) in

2017, 3,236 students (a 52.3% increase) in 2018 and 4,001 students (a 24.0% increase) in 2019. According to the number of international students who come to study in Taiwan, Thai students moved up 2 places from 10th to be ranked 8th, which is an obvious result of the said policy (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Thailand, 2021).

As for job opportunities and a long-term stay, Taiwan's New Southbound Policy aims to build up the relationship between Taiwan government and the ten ASEAN member countries and six South Asian countries. The above-mentioned policy is designed to leverage Taiwan's culture, education, technology and economic and agricultural assets to strengthen Taiwan's unification and also to benefit Taiwan in attracting high-potential people to become resources of the country in various areas and to work in Taiwan for the long-term (Harwood, 2010). Taiwan stated that this creates a new model where all countries and people can join its benefits together according to the goals of the New Southbound Policy, evidently following Nye Jr's conceptual framework (2011 as cited in Bumrungrasuk, 2014). Taiwan has amended its "Nationality law". There are 149 foreign professionals, from 5 continents of the world, who specialize in different fields. They are granted the Republic of China (Taiwan) citizenship. Currently, the Ministry of the Interior (Taiwan) has expedited a draft amendment easing conditions for foreign professionals who love Taiwan to fully become Taiwanese citizens. A number of foreign professionals applying for the Republic of China (Taiwan) citizenship is increasing every year. Of these 149 people, 65 people specialize in education which is the largest group, followed by economics and medicine, 24 in each field (Glaser, Kennedy, & Mitchell, 2018). Foreign professionals who are skilled and specialize in different fields have created various new models and images for Taiwan's industry and culture. According to MOI statistics report, foreign professionals who are granted the Republic of China (Taiwan) citizenship are at the average age of 50, while the most common age range is 40 to 44 at 28 people. Then, 27 people are in between the age of 45 and 49 and 27 people are in between the age of 55 and 59. While the youngest group is only 32 years old and most of them are youth and working-age groups. In terms of nationality, Americans is the largest group with 38 people granted, followed by Malaysians with 37 people granted. When being divided by continents, it was found that Asia was the continent with the largest number of naturalized R.O.C. citizens, a total

of 61 people, accounted for 40.9%. Besides Malaysia, this number also includes Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, etc., then followed by the Americas with 46 people, accounted for 30.9%. Currently they are residing in various cities in Taiwan, with 121 people living all over 6 cities, accounted for 81.2%. Of these people, 53 live in Taipei which accounts for 35.6% (MOE in Taiwan, 2017b). This is in accordance with the study from Oxford Economics (2021), shown in Global Talent 2021 report, forecasting that Taiwan's talent in 2021 will be ranked the largest shortage of all 46 countries surveyed. In addition, IMD's World Competitiveness Center revealed in the IMD World Talent Report 2016 that Taiwan was ranked 24th out of 61 countries with readiness and investment attractiveness. This shows that Taiwan needs to improve recruitment and employment of foreign professionals to attract potential people to work and live in Taiwan. The Act for the Recruitment and Employment of Foreign Professionals ("Foreign Professionals Act") aims to attract foreign professionals to work and live in Taiwan in order to fill talent and skill gaps in the country. These people will help Taiwanese companies scaling internationally and build relationships with other countries in terms of politics and economy, as well as to increase trade negotiations. The government has amended the Act to ease some requirements on visa, work and living. The act also offers improved health insurance, taxation and retirement benefits for three main groups: 1) Foreign professionals, 2) Foreign special professionals, and 3) Foreign senior professionals. As to the success of the New Southbound Policy in order to attract foreign professionals from different countries to work in Taiwan, under "The Act for the Recruitment and Employment of Foreign Professionals", many privilege policies such as "Employment Gold Card", which is a combination of four different certificates or a 4-in-1 card (including work permit, a resident visa, Alien Resident Certificate (ARC) and re-entry permit allowing unlimited entry and exit from Taiwan) have been issued. Regarding the number of approved card applications, more than 500 cards were granted in the first quarter of 2021, the highest in several years. Americans accounted for the largest part of these cards at 933 people, of which about 800 applicants hailed from backgrounds in economics and technology. Most of them are in "Taiwan's Silicon Valley" (Ho, 2014). In addition, to attract foreign professionals from various fields to come to Taiwan, the National Development Council (Taiwan) proposed the "draft Amendments to the Act for the Recruitment and

Employment of Professionals" to relax regulations on work permit, shortening the required length of continuous residence to 3 years and extending the preferential tax period for foreign special professionals from 3 years to 5 years in the following year (MOE in Taiwan, 2019b). The said draft was reviewed by the Executive Yuan and has already been submitted to the Legislative Yuan for consideration. Due to Taiwan government's New Southbound Policy, online gaming and e-commerce industries in Taiwan are looking for huge business opportunities in Southeast Asia. As a result, these markets need more talents from ASEAN countries. With readiness to offer a good rate of pay and decent fringe benefits, they are now also recruiting professionals who are proficient in Thai and enthusiastic in the service industry. This makes such jobs one of the top choices among new immigrants (Mok & Lo, 2001).

As for political problems, it is the factor that leads many countries to face brain drain. The younger generation tries to escape from political problems by relocating to other countries with a better quality of life. The political problems have caused manpower drain and human capital drain. It takes a lot of time and money for a person to get education, equipped with skills and knowledge but after they graduate, they just choose to go abroad. The problems of brain drain occurs when people have the opportunity to leave their country and do not return. Generally, emigration is normal for humans since ancient times, whether moving after finding new areas or leaving a country because of the wars such as Chinese immigration, which is becoming a big wave of overseas Chinese in many countries. However, the phenomenon that has been discussed lately and many countries consider it important as a policy is the phenomenon of 'brain drain'. It is a large-scale overseas migration of people with specific skills or knowledge. In the past, this phenomenon often occurred in developing or underdeveloped countries with economic and political problems that led people who lived in the country to look for new opportunities (Mahmoud, Rapoport, Steinmayr, & Trebesch, 2014). Even in Taiwan, in the late 1960s and 1980s, many Taiwanese students began to study in the United States. Most of them studied in science and engineering. The statistics showed that only 10% in the 1970s and 20% in the 1980s of those students returned to Taiwan (Chetpayark, 2021). At that time, these overseas Chinese students grew up in a repressive political climate under martial law in Taiwan, controlled by military regime which lasted 38 years, including the

Kuomintang- led Government of the Republic of China regime. As for politics at the time, authorities deprived academic freedom. Researchers and academics who criticized the government were all affected with their jobs and were blacklisted. These factors encouraged students, during that authoritarian era, to escape from political instability as well as conflict over uncertain relations with mainland China and to settle in a new country. The Taiwan government sees the problem of this brain drain phenomenon and has urgently improved its policies focusing not only by investing in new technology, but also improving the political climate that was once ruled by a one-party military dictatorship and under martial law transition to become a democratic nation. What Taiwan did was to accept the fact that this problem existed and then the government set up a committee to address this issue. Opinion polls were conducted to get the answer why Taiwanese people went to study in the US and chose not to return. It was found that there were pull factors, especially better career advancement and income in the United States, and also politics which was a fundamental driving force in the country. In that era, the Kuomintang was still a strong dictatorship. As there were pressures from student movements and periodic labor movements (Pfütze, 2014), Taiwan government decided to ease the political climate instead of using tough repression. This happened in parallel with open politics, democracy, reversing brain drain (Bhula-or, 2020) and technological advances. Taiwan has now become a high-income country along with being a democratic nation. This lesson reflects Miller and Peters' work (2020) saying that if citizens emigrate to democratic countries and learn about civil rights and democratic society of destination countries as well as understand the tools to develop democracy, that will be a threat to authoritarianism itself. A diaspora can create 'Political Transnationalism'. As Taiwan gets high marks for its democracy, its progressive political institutions and the long history of fighting authoritarianism, which encourages Thai students to choose Taiwan for a location in order to study and to understand the concept of democracy through the past political attitudes for the new generation (Ahmed, 2012).

According to the above findings, further study and resettlement are likely to happen more and more. Additionally, Taiwan has the New Southbound Policy, aiming at expanding both bilateral and multilateral cooperations. This gives Thai students the opportunity to choose Taiwan as their destination for further study

because of its quality education system, international curriculum, scholarships, and the opportunity to work after graduation. As Taiwan itself also has a shortage of skilled workers, especially in technology, this makes Taiwan open to immigration. The researchers' views that if this trend continues, there will be a significant brain drain, especially for the working age population. When looking at the demographic aspect, Thailand is now entering an aging society and, in the future, will become a super-aged society where the government welfare may not be able to support it, along with fewer workers in the market. This causes the new generation to acknowledge the obstacles or no opportunity to build their wealth or to change their social status. This study allows us to see the conditions and factors in such a phenomenon. In addition, it shows that developed countries have the opportunity to attract professionals from developing countries as they have good economic status, stable and efficient political systems which create security for people in their country. This then leads to the opportunities of migration, starting from further study and then continue with work after graduation. This is in line with the Boston Consulting Group's (2020) survey results that showed that even though the popularity of Thais working overseas reduced to 46%, among adolescents it turned out to be up to 60%. While less than 45% of people with higher education are likely to work abroad. This is in accordance with the trend of Thai students studying abroad as well as seeking employment after graduation.

### Recommendations

1. Future studies should be conducted in a broader range with students who go to study and emigrate to other countries and see whether they make the same or different decisions?
2. This study can be broadly extended through studying the prevention of brain drain.
3. This study can be used to analyze and investigate the skills for Thai students in the digital world.
4. This study can be used for policy design to attract high-potential workers into the country.

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