

Private institutions are required to obtain recognition not only from educational offices but also the Office of Investment and the Ministry of Health—the latter if they run a health care program. To make matters more intricate the educational offices that grant accreditation vary based on the kind of credentials institutions require. While degree-granting institutions (12+3 and 12+4) are accredited by the central office of the Ministry of Education, those that grant diplomas (10+3) are licensed by a regional educational office; other low-end credentials are licensed by a subregional educational office.

Registration costs money and time. Institutions that offer a variety of credentials and operate branch campuses in the regions find the procedures especially cumbersome and costly. Many also criticize the lack of requisite expertise and professionalism in certain educational bureaus.

***Third, private institutions are confronted by a shortage of highly qualified personnel.***

#### CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE ENTERPRISE

Private higher education in Ethiopia is a highly regulated enterprise, to the resentment of the community of private providers. While a few skeptics allege shady practices in bestowing recognition, they all decry the stringent regulations. Many contend that some of the imposed regulations, such as the ratio of senior personnel, cannot be met even by some public institutions. Many fear that the ephemeral nature of policies governing private institutions would put them at great financial risk. While many recognize the need to regulate the enterprise to ensure educational quality, many call for a stable and conducive policy, less red tape, and more operational flexibility.

Leaders of private colleges deeply regret the lack of recognition and appreciation for their role in the development of the nation. They also allege that the government treats them as any other for-profit enterprise and insist that the ministry is much more interested in regulating them than in addressing their pressing issues.

Second, most private institutions vigorously complain about the high cost of leased buildings in the capital. No wonder some of the institutions operate in a less-conducive environment, which often is a subject of contestation for accreditation. Many regret the slow progress of the land procurement process and lack of easy access to bank loans.

Third, private institutions are confronted by a shortage of highly qualified personnel. Faculty in areas such as IT and business management are in short supply. The common practice of poaching faculty from public institutions has now also spread to private colleges. Some critics describe these faculty as “taxi” professors and charge that they spend more time in a taxi commuting from one institution to another than in a class. To discourage this, a few private colleges restrict their full-time

faculty from engaging in moonlighting. Private institutions that have already established brand and credibility—and enroll a large number of students—have more full-time faculty than others. A few even brag about their success in poaching faculty from public institutions, especially those based outside the capital.

#### CONCLUSION

Without doubt, private institutions provide crucial service to the nation as the country struggles to increase access. In the light of burgeoning demand for higher education and limited capacity of public institutions, a more favorable policy and a positive attitude toward private colleges are highly warranted. The burden rests as much on the private colleges to address the prime concern of the government in maintaining educational quality and integrity. Some institutions operate in the education landscape with considerable disparity in capacity, ownership, motive, and commitment, hence necessitating a stringent—but fair and expedient—scrutiny. To be sure, “natural selection” will take its course and weed out the weakest institutions. But the government cannot sit idly by until nature takes its course. That said, despite the commendable intentions of the strategy to regulate private institutions, implementing the policy will require meeting many challenges.

There is a need for a more positive and constructive engagement between the private providers and the various regulatory bodies. The establishment of the Association of Private Institutions in Ethiopia, which now comprises half the private institutions, is expected to play a vital role in addressing the issues and concerns of all the parties involved. ■

## Gender Stratification in Japanese Private Higher Education

**MAKOTO NAGASAWA**

*Makoto Nagasawa is a doctoral research associate in PROPHE, at the University at Albany, SUNY. E-mail: mn5391@albany.edu.*

IHE devotes a column in each issue to a contribution from PROPHE, the Program for Research on Private Higher Education, headquartered at the University of Albany. See <http://www.albany.edu/>.

Gender has hardly been studied in the international literature on private higher education, despite both the great international surge in private higher education and the increased attention to gender equality in general. Like social class and ethnicity, gender is a major issue in official and other discourse today, worldwide, and Japan follows that global tendency.

The private sector accounts for 86 percent of Japanese higher education institutions and 77 percent of enrollments,

according to recent research at PROPHE. Other studies have established that the private sector generally trails the public sector in academic prestige. Yet, to understand issues like gender we must explore not only private versus public dimensions but extensive differences across private subtypes.

#### FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES

Four-year universities constitute the best known and most important part of Japanese higher education. (In Japan, all four-year institutions are called *daigaku*, with basically no distinction between *university* and *college*. Examination of trends in female enrollments at these institutions shows that little has changed in recent years. Female enrollments have increased slightly but still amounted to only 38 percent of the four-year university enrollments in 2002. The low figure exists even though the sector includes an ample number of women's-only institutions (with variable academic-rankings). Indeed, along with a few other Asian countries, Japan is among the world leaders in the number of such institutions. Women's colleges account for roughly 12 percent of the number of institutions in this four-year category—and at least 90 percent of them are private.

***Regarding the 2002 total enrollments in graduate schools, another prestigious sector, females make up only 31 percent.***

Whereas enrollments at these private universities have stagnated, the female proportion there has increased moderately. Thus, in this subsector the longstanding correlation between women and private higher education in Japan has intensified. So, a dual reflection of gender stratification at four-year universities exists: (1) fewer females than males in this prestigious sector; and (2) female concentration in the private subsector, which is less prestigious than the public subsector.

#### GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Regarding the 2002 total enrollments in graduate schools, another prestigious sector, females make up only 31 percent. They make up only 26 percent in the public subsector, versus 39 percent in the private subsector. Therefore, regardless of the public-private distinction, females remain greatly underrepresented in graduate schools; and their public share is particularly low. However, female numbers have increased recently (1998–2002), almost doubling in the public subsector.

Including as factors field of study and program level (i.e., master's and doctoral) illustrates the gender gap even more starkly in graduate schools (as in other higher education sectors as well). The higher the level (maximum=doctorate), the lower the female representation. The same holds true for the status of fields. For example, at the doctoral level, engineering is the most male-dominated field (89 percent in the public subsector), whereas home economics is totally female. In general,

the gender gap by field of study is sharper at the doctoral than at the master's level. Furthermore, such gender differences by field persist in both public and private sectors.

#### JUNIOR COLLEGES

Compared to four-year universities and graduate schools, two-year junior colleges are much less prestigious. Compared to the two institutional types just considered, private junior colleges have historically facilitated female access to a remarkable extent. This trend continues today. Junior colleges are dominated by private institutions (88 percent, with 91 percent of enrollments), and women constitute 89 percent of total private junior college enrollments. Among the total of 508 junior colleges in 2005, over 20 percent are women's institutions. Again, females clearly choose gender-linked disciplines. For example, home economics and education represent almost half of the enrollment choices by women. Thus, junior colleges demonstrate gender stratification in all three dimensions: private-sector concentration, high total female enrollments in a less prestigious sector, and field of study concentration. Yet, it is noteworthy that the total enrollments at junior colleges are drastically decreasing (from 416,825 in 1998, to 267,086 in 2002).

#### COLLEGES OF TECHNOLOGY

Colleges of technology also play an important role in gender stratification. This type of educational training is responsible for the rapid development of skilled technicians, promoting Japan's industrialization. In this sector the female presence is minimal. Colleges of technology are dominated by the public subsector and have very low female enrollments (18 percent); total female enrollments have decreased in the past five years, which suggests that these colleges are contributing to a wider gender gap. The fields of study available at colleges of technology are traditionally dominated by males.

***Specialized training colleges represent a vital subtype, given their sizable enrollments.***

#### SPECIALIZED TRAINING COLLEGES

Specialized training colleges represent a vital subtype, given their sizable enrollments. Rather than academic subjects, they provide programs and curriculum for specific licensure, certifications, and vocational training. Like junior colleges, specialized training colleges are mostly relatively low in status and, like the former, mostly private (91 percent). Though it may at first appear that gender equality exists, as females account for 54 percent of enrollments, stark gender stratification is again revealed in fields of study. According to a 1977 survey, females choose educational and social welfare programs (72 percent) and dressmaking and domestic science (84 percent) over male-dominated fields (e.g., agriculture, industry).

**CONCLUSION**

An array of data supports the conclusion that gender stratification is strong on both sectoral and subsectoral levels. Females are overrepresented in the private sector, and at the subsectoral level the gender gap manifests itself in all divisions (four-year universities, graduate schools, junior colleges, colleges of technology, and specialized training colleges); the prestigious sectors have the lower female enrollments. And across these sectors and subsectors the gender gap is aggravated by field-of-study differences. ■

## Diversification within the Thai Private Sector

**PRACHAYANI PRAPHAMONTRIPONG**

*Prachayani Praphamontripong is a doctoral research associate in PROPHE at the University at Albany, SUNY. E-mail: Prachayani@yahoo.com.*

IHE devotes a column in each issue to a contribution from PROPHE, the Program for Research on Private Higher Education, headquartered at the University of Albany. See <http://www.albany.edu/>.

**D**iversification has characterized private growth in higher education worldwide. As in many nations where diversification is a policy imperative to facilitate growth, private higher education institutions in Thailand have evolved diversely in their institutional configuration since the sector was legally created in 1969.

Literature suggests that, typically, institutional diversification signifies variation in private higher education by mission, clientele, source of control, size, and resources. Even where public institutions maintain a majority of enrollments, the private ones usually offer alternatives. Indeed, private institutions often find their niche in the specific interests of individuals and groups with somewhat distinctive characteristics from the general public's. As a typical example, Thai private higher education has become a principal industry producing labor for the job markets. However, while institutional diversification grows, a counterforce is that government policy may promote mimicked growth—distinguished by private sources of funding more than by academic differentiation. Also, apart from imposed policy, these private institutions are motivated by status and market competition to mimic more than to innovate. So, the relative weight of diversification versus copying can be a complex issue. In any event, we know that diversification has been notable and merits our exploration here.

The role of growth in Thai private higher education institutions can be identified and analyzed using Daniel Levy's 1986 three-part typology—wave I: Catholic universities; wave II: elite universities; and wave III: demand-absorbing institutions.

Additionally, however, it is useful to develop a modified category—hybrids. The hybrids can blend any two of the above—and even have aspects of all three. Based on 2003 information, 54 Thai private higher education institutions are identified and analyzed using the following variables: mission, size, programs offered, faculty qualifications, and socioeconomic clientele.

To begin with, the growth of Thai private higher education institutions follows much that has been seen in other countries and conceptualized in international literature. There are eight religion-oriented institutions—all are Christian, except one that is Islamic. These institutions differ from others in that their prime mission is to provide religious service via the study of theology and philosophy. Several—such as nursing schools—follow the goal of ancient missionaries coming to Thailand to offer Western medical institutions. Most of the religious institutions are governed by priests as top administrators, and several have only priests as faculty members. As Thailand is mostly Buddhist, we see a reflection of an international pattern in which minority religions (or ethnic groups) develop their own institutions.

Private elite universities are rare in Thailand—as is the case in most countries outside the Americas. We can identify up to four such universities (three clearly secular). They constitute providers of advanced professional training for specialized business elite groups. These universities differ from others as they are the oldest among the private institutions and have a longstanding reputation in business-related fields. There is some echo of Latin American and other patterns in which the elite status may not imply broadly based excellence but rather niches. Thailand's private higher education institutions are distinctive due to their high socioeconomic clientele, faculty qualifications, and academic excellence in their job-market-attuned programs. As to access, even though elite status is often perceived as involving limited access, Thai private elite universities have been consistently large, each encompassing approximately 10 percent of total private enrollments. Whether for Asia or worldwide, 40 percent of the private sector's enrollments is a large share for the elite subsector.

Following the increasingly global pattern, the bulk of Thai private higher education institutions can be regarded as demand absorbing. Generally, demand-absorbing institutions intend to accommodate an overabundant demand for higher education and are often concerned more with quantity than quality. These institutions have grown enormously in the past decade. All but three hold only a tiny share of total private enrollments, whereas the three account for one-third of the

**Internet Resources**

Visit our website for downloadable back issues of *International Higher Education* and other publications and resources at:  
<http://www.bc.edu/cihe/>.