

# EE460: Tourism industry *Vulnerability and resilience*

Bhanupong

Lecture 20

# Outline

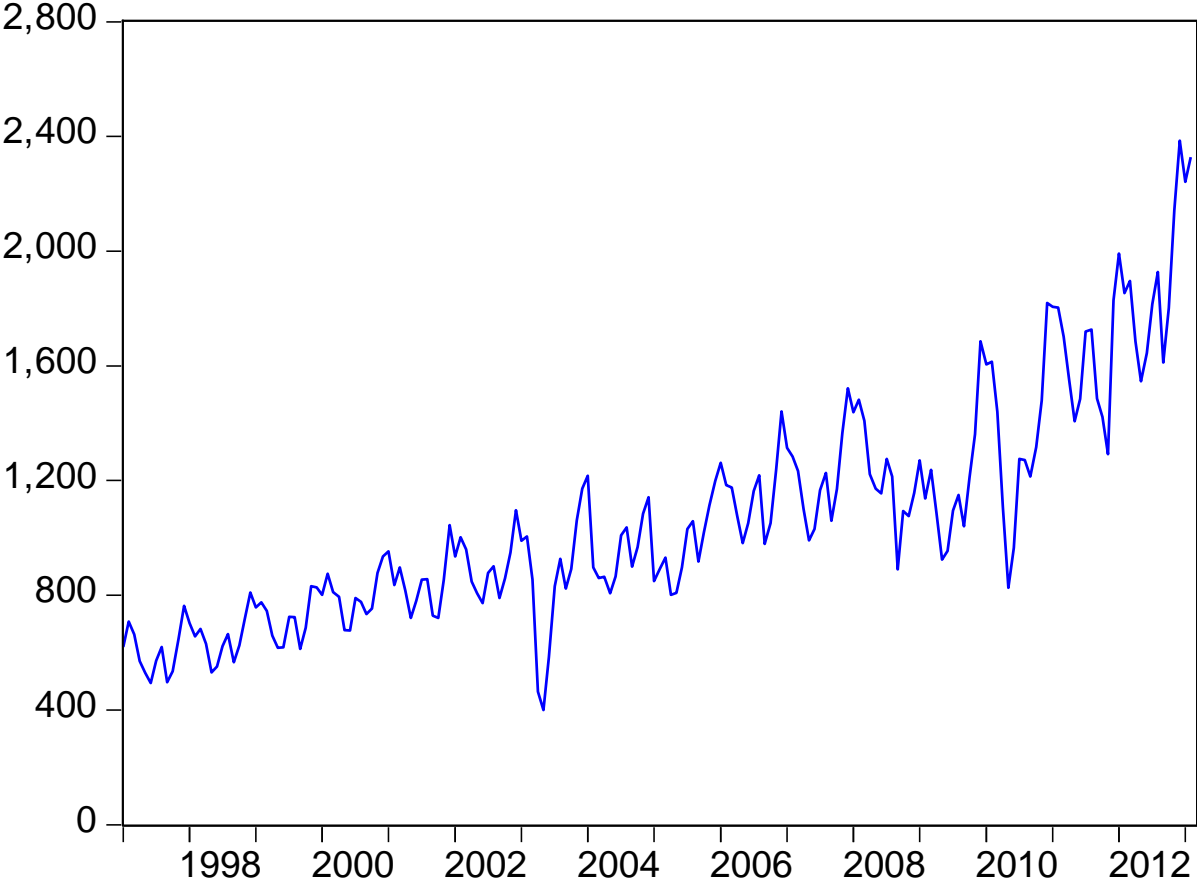
- Background
- Shocks and vulnerability
- Coping with disasters
- SARS, Avian flu
- The 2004 tsunami disaster
- Impact of global recession and political instability
- The great deluge of 2011
- Microeconomics of hotel business

# Characteristics of the tourism industry

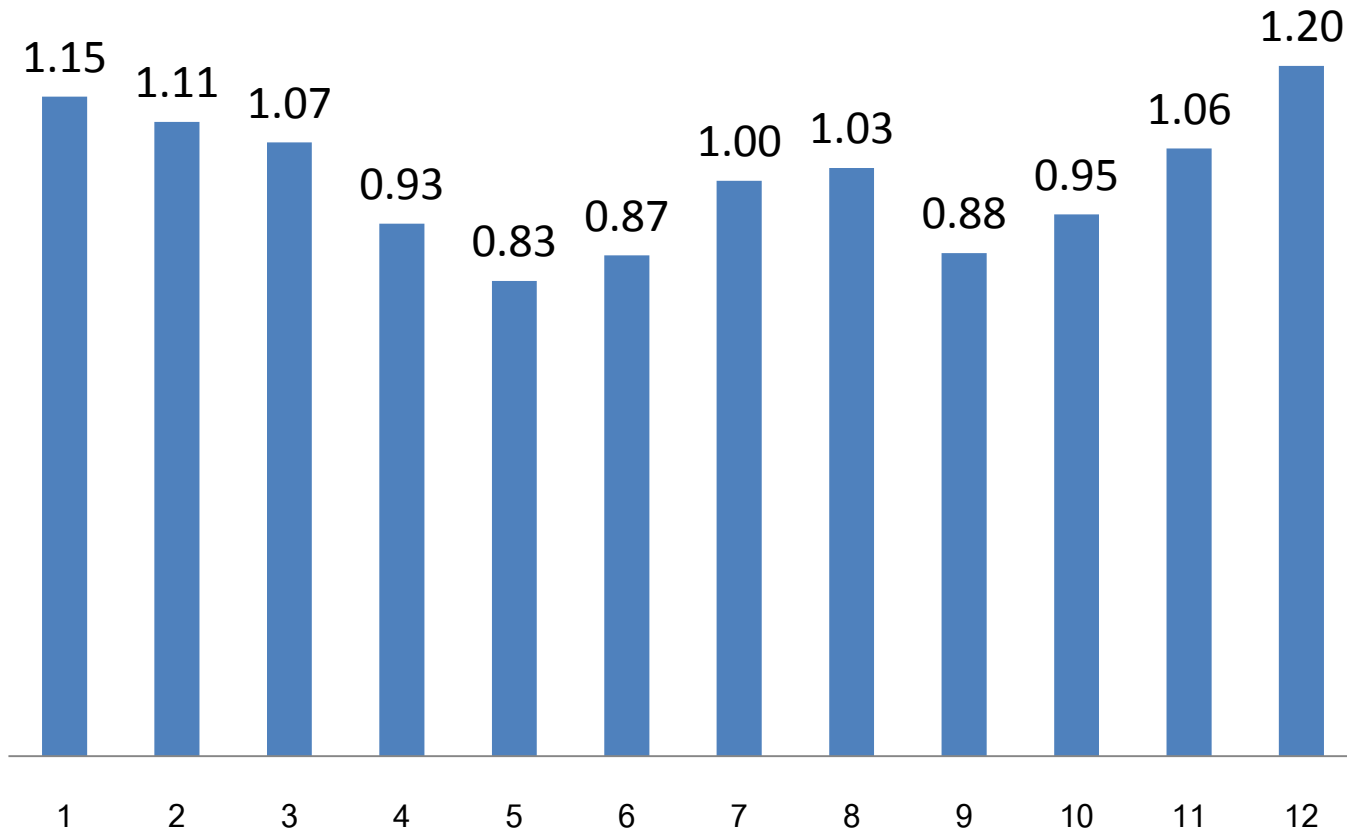
- Overall tourism income of the country is approximately 16 % of GDP.
- Cultural capital and natural capital stock
- Highly labor intensive: employment and migration.
- Strong linkages to other sectors.
- Net foreign exchanges.

# Number of tourists: Jan 1997-Feb 2013

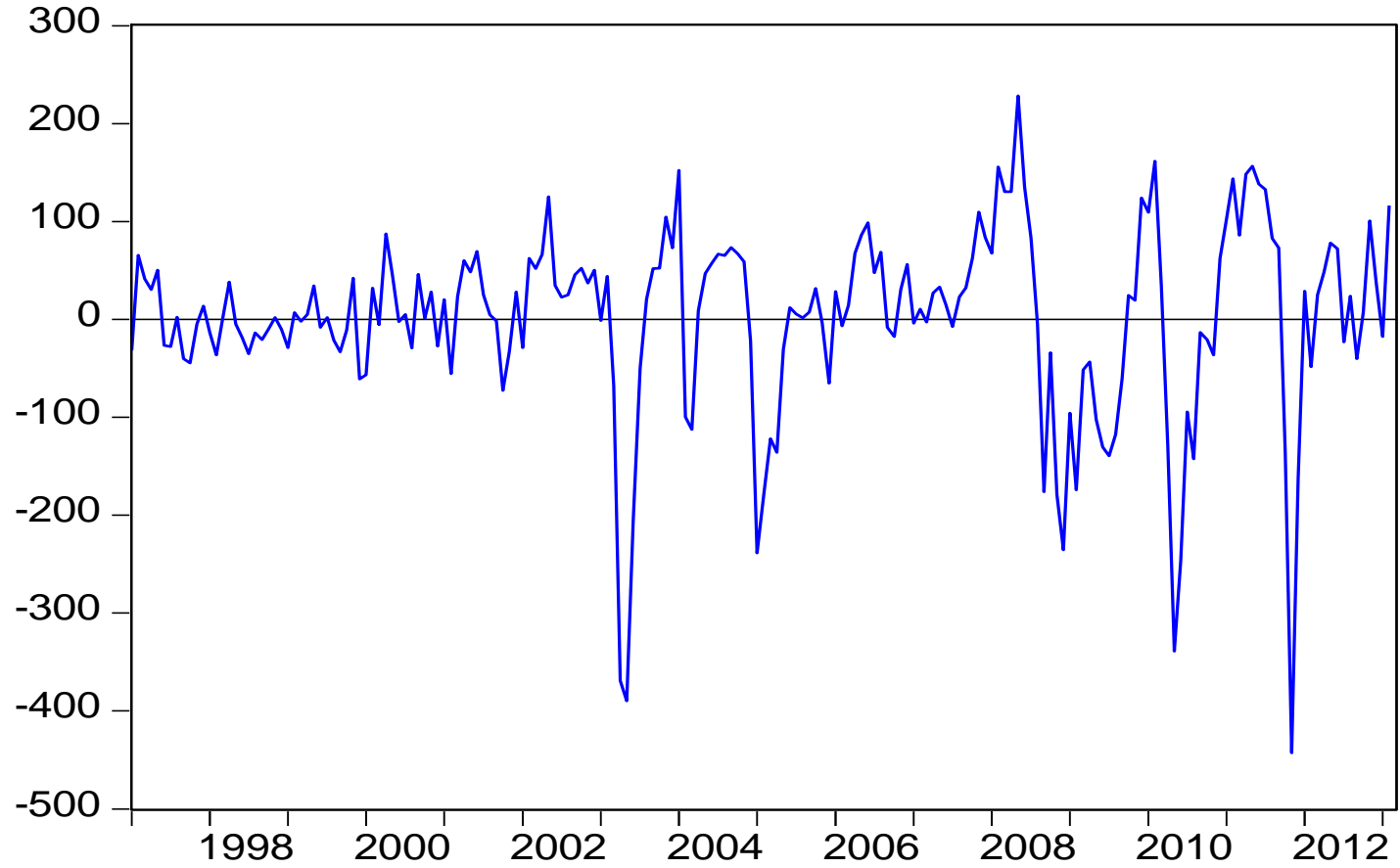
VISITORS



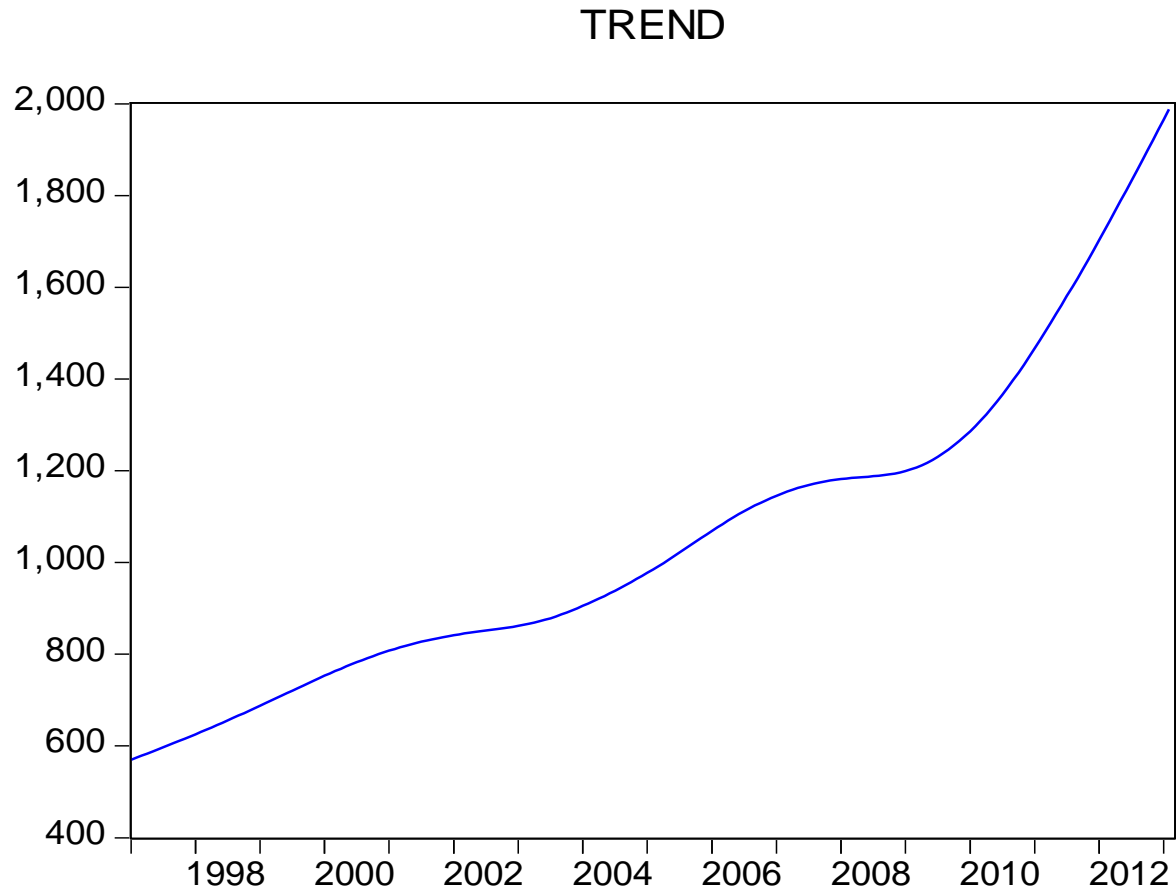
## Number of tourists: Ratio to moving average



# Deviation from trend

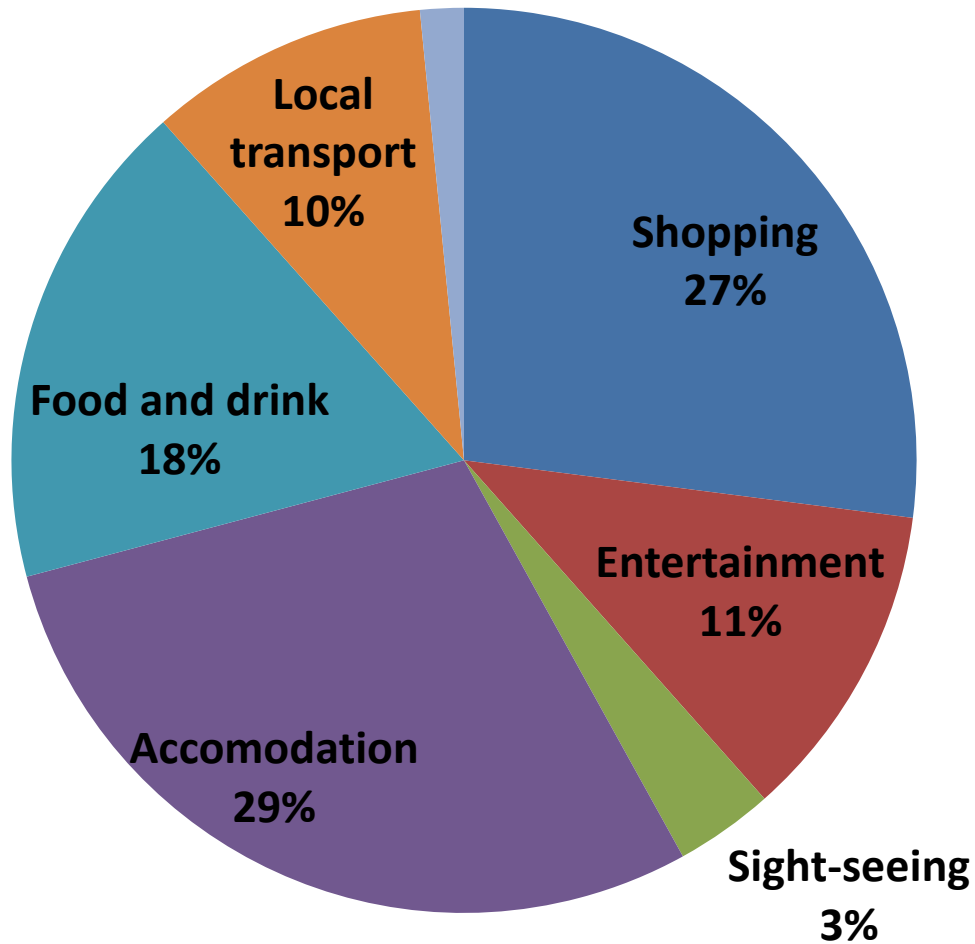


# Trend of visitors



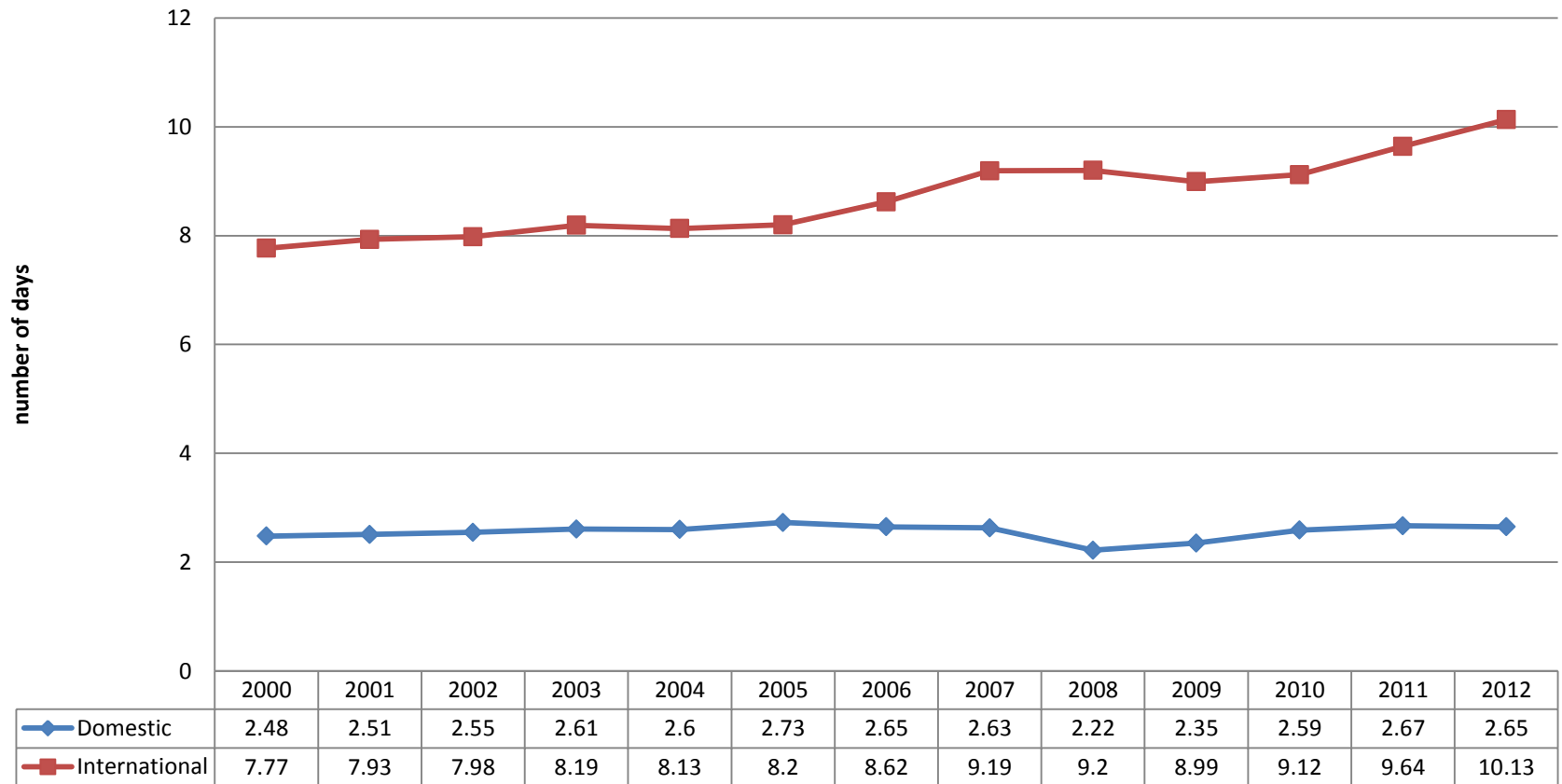
**Miscellaneous  
2%**

## **Pattern of international tourist spending in 2011**

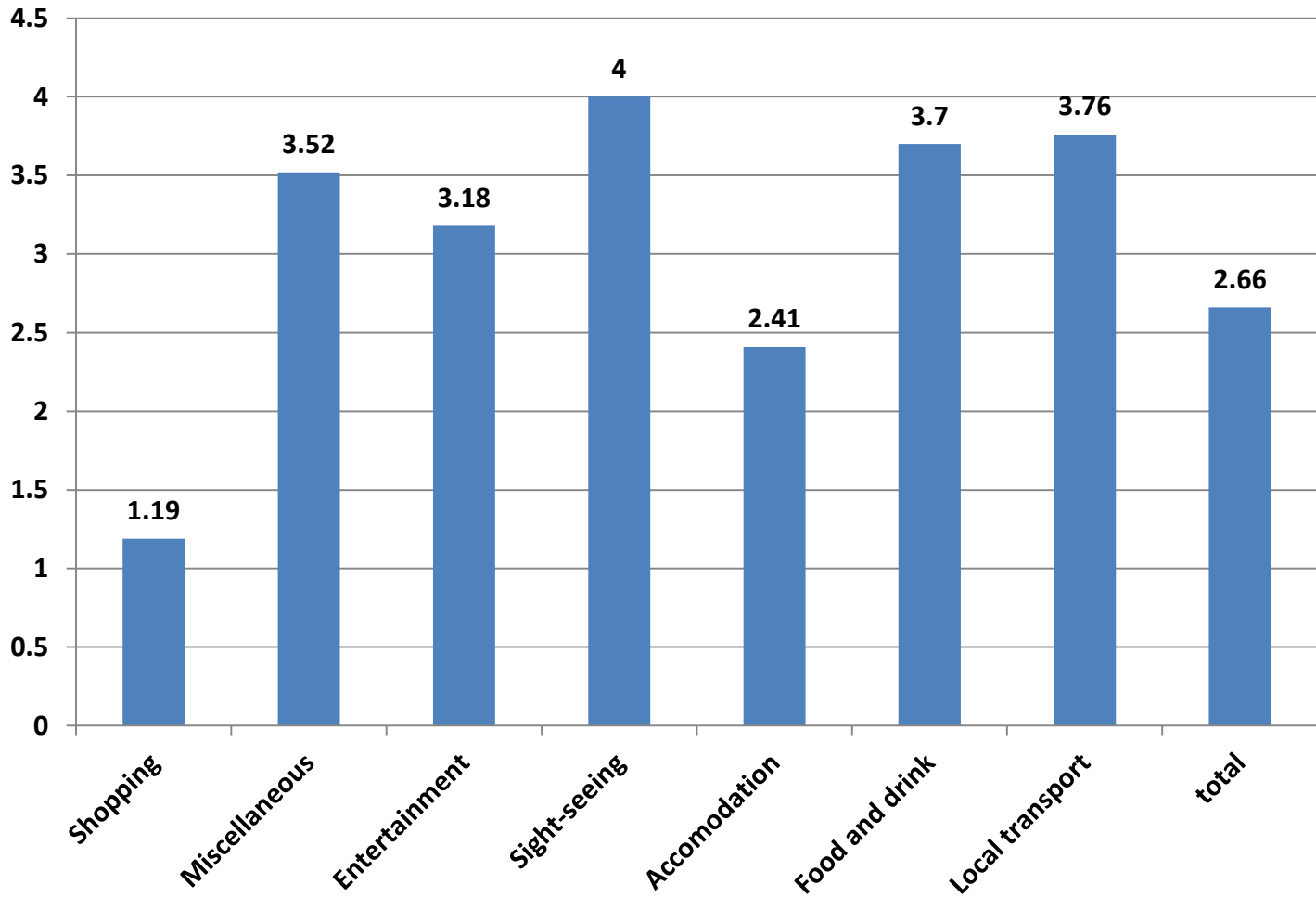


# How long will you stay in Thailand?

Average length of stay

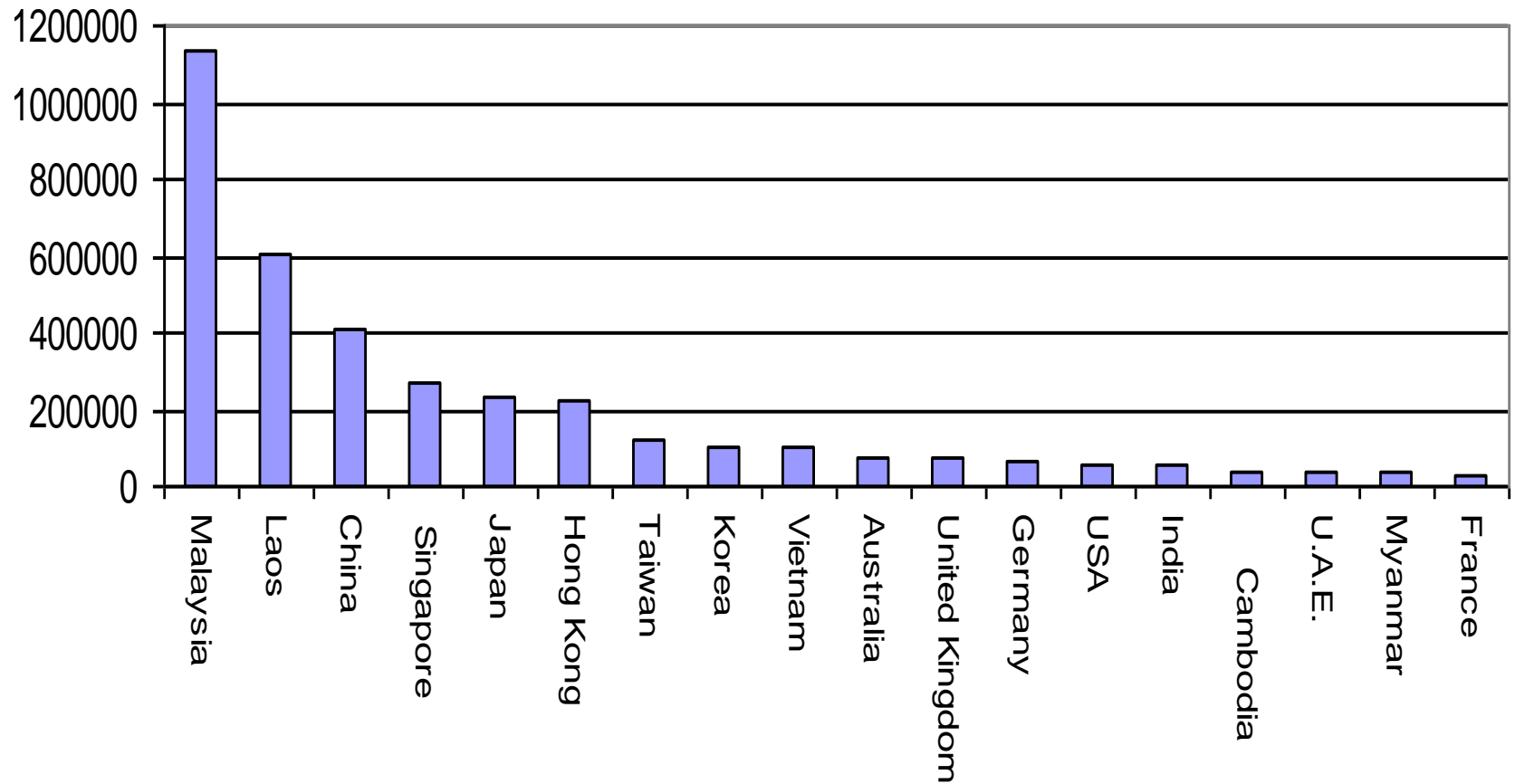


### Tourists' Spending Pattern in 2011 (% increase)



# Where were Thais on their holidays?

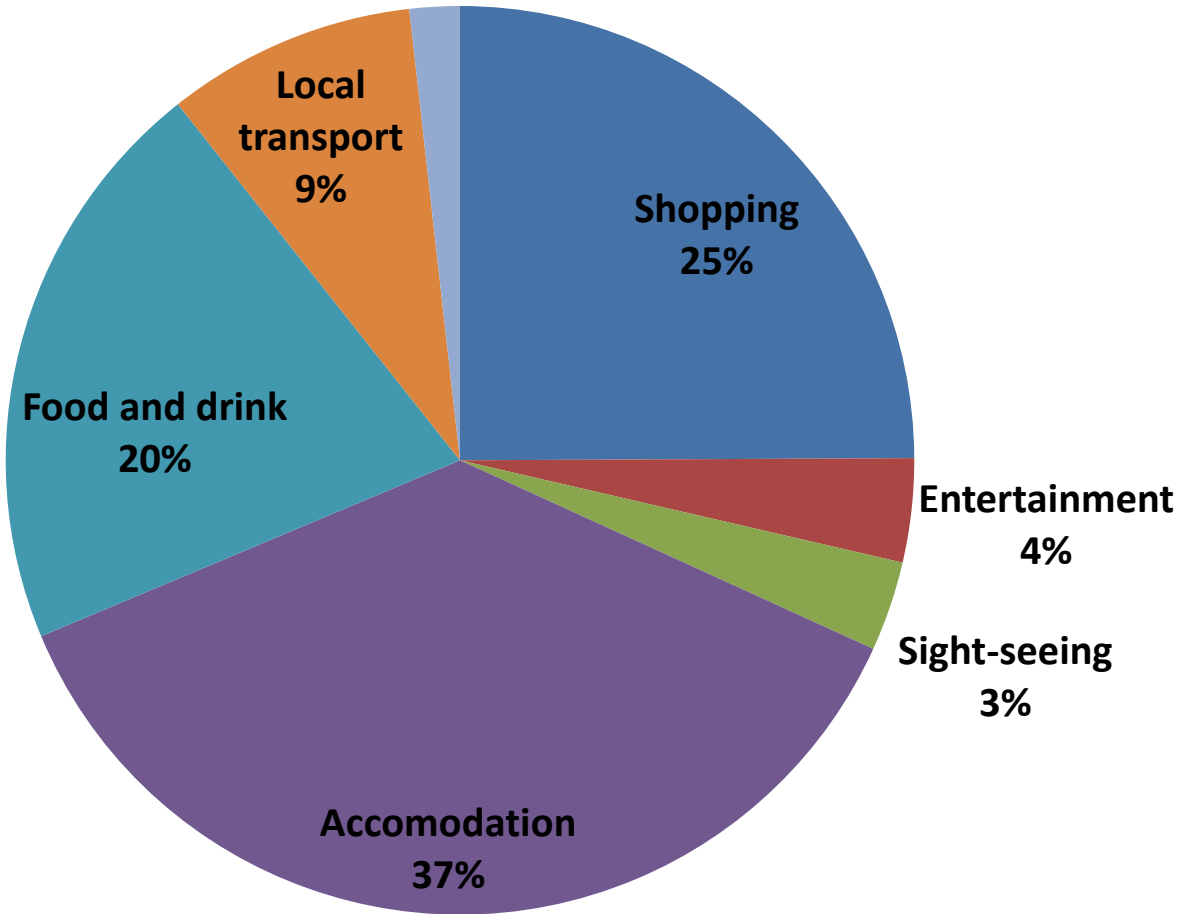
Outgoing Thai tourist (number of person) in 2007



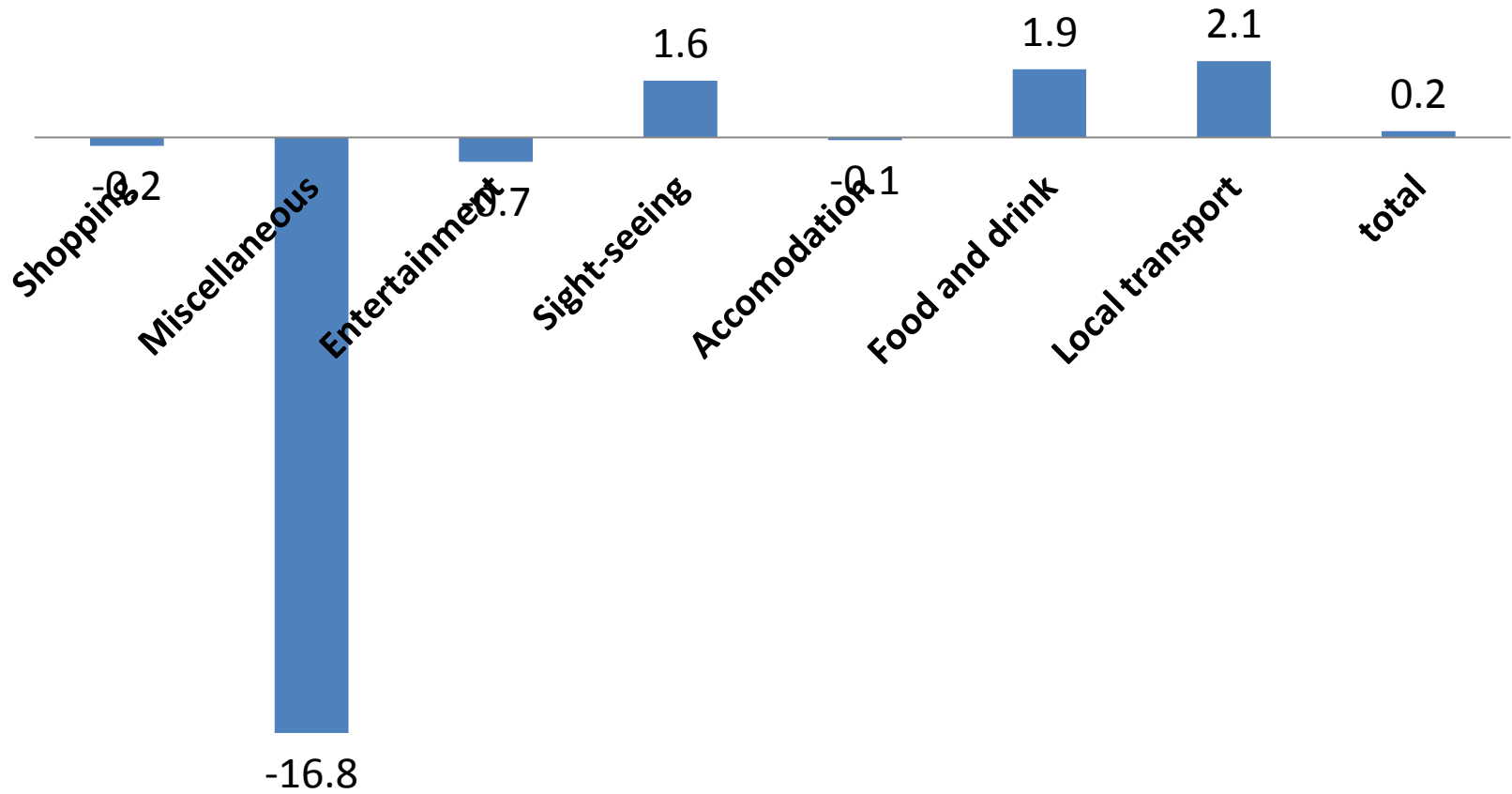
# Thai tourists' spending pattern in 2011

Miscellaneous

2%



### Thai tourists' spending in 2011



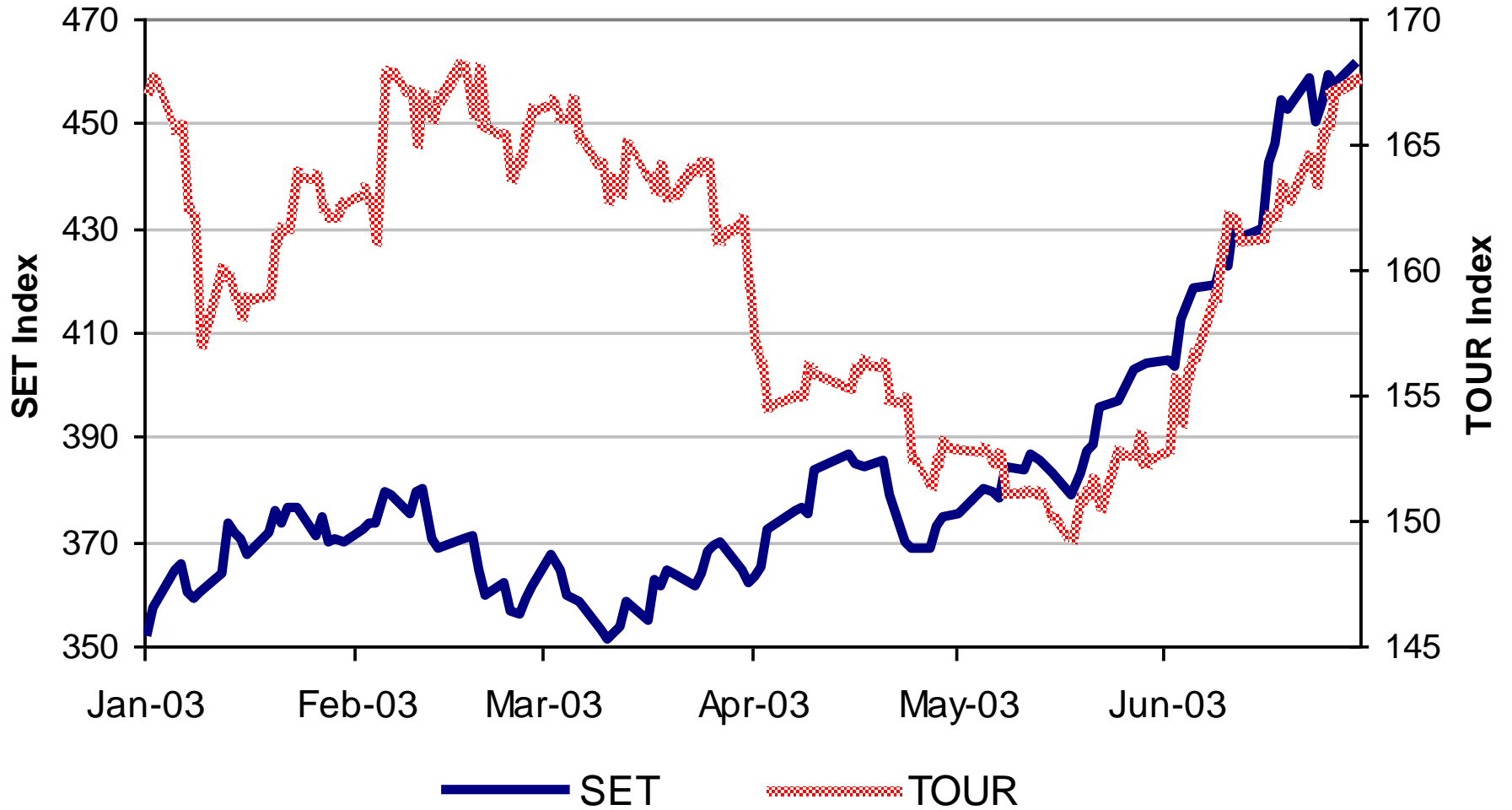
# Determinants of tourism demand

- Income
- Relative prices
- Exchange rates
- Transportation cost (oil prices)
- Perception of safety
- Preferences
- Shocks
- Specify the demand for tourism in Thailand

# When SARS attacked in 2003

- Tourism industry suffered considerably from **travel restrictions**.
- The plunge in hotel share prices in April 2003 was more severe.
- The patterns of recovery in share prices are similar for the tsunami and SARS.
- How did the shock affect the stock market?
- Avian Influenza pandemic

# SARS Impact on the Stock Market



Source: Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET)

# The road to recovery

- Physical destruction by the tsunami still left some facilities to serve visitors after the disaster.
- The survival of the industry heavily relied on the demand side.
- International visitors dropped by 10 % in 2005Q1, reducing income by 7.8%
- How did the industry survive?

# Phuket

- Physical damage was less than **20** percent, but the negative image was more difficult to revive.
- The tsunami destroyed the Phuket tourism industry by **40 billion** baht, due to a **40%** reduction in number of tourists.

# Krabi: Phi phi island

- Number of tourists dropped from 1.9 million in 2004 to 0.7 million in 2005, causing a decline in revenue from **18** billion to **6** billion.
- However, the hotel occupancy rate rose to 80% as airlines resumed their direct flights to Krabi.

# Phanga: khao lak

- The most severely hit province
- The number of hotel rooms was reduced from 6,000 rooms to 1,200 rooms.
- Revenue declined from **8 billion to just 200 million** baht in 2005.
- High season started in November.
- November 2005 witnessed a recovery by 100 % fully booked hotels, but the number of rooms was reduced more than half in Khao lak.

# Media coverage

- Tsunami struck during the peak holiday season and destroyed some of the most popular tourist resorts.
- Initial concerns over the impact on the tourism industry were ***over stressed***.
- International media aggravated the depressive tourism industry through fears.
- But Thailand does have other sandy beaches aside from Phuket, Phangna, and Krabi

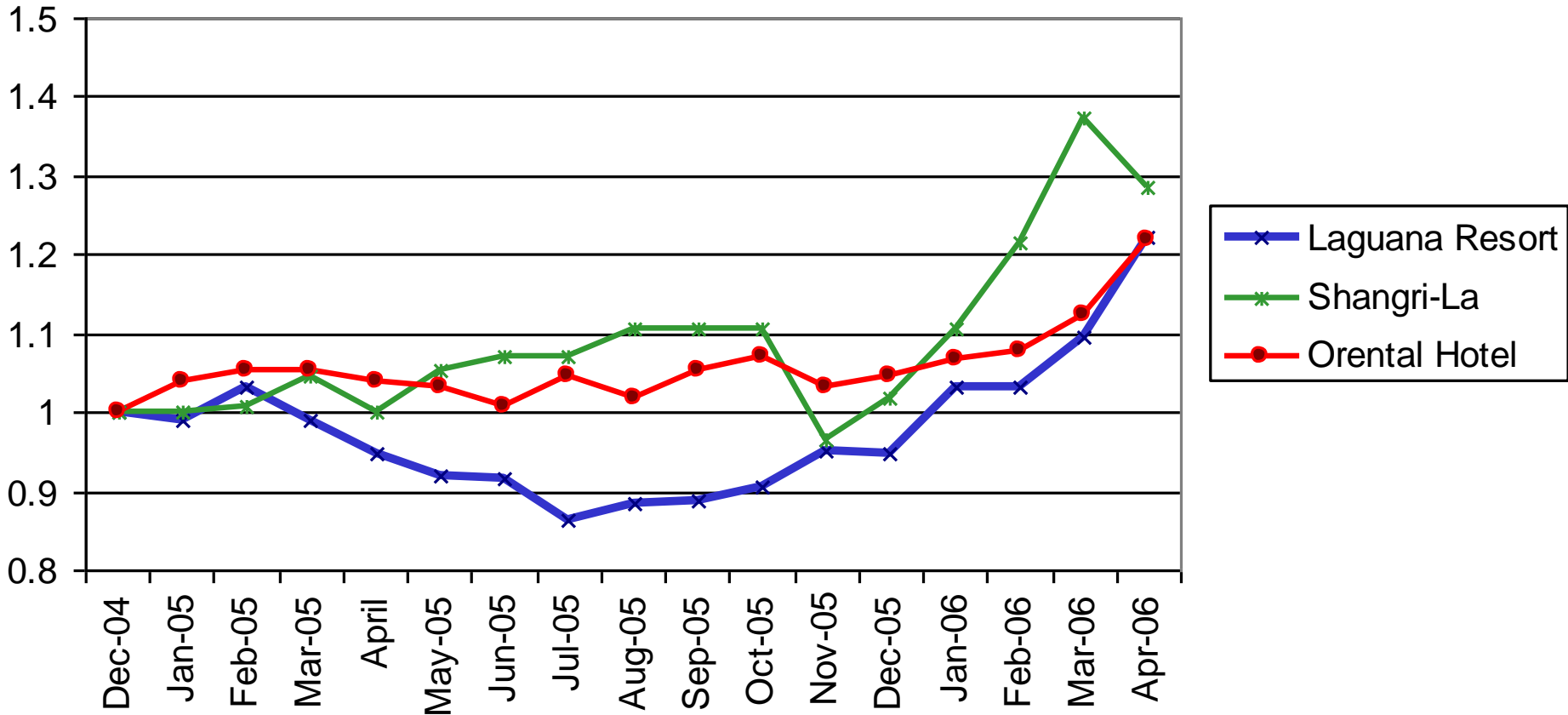
# Impact on the stock market

- The Securities Exchange of Thailand (SET) index fell by **one** percent, while the hotel index fell by 2.5 % on December 27, 2004.
- It took the SET index **four days** to rebound to pre-tsunami level.
- It took the overall **hotel** stock for **one month** to regain its ground.

# Andaman exposure

- Hotels with Andaman beach exposure (Laguna resort) suffered,
- But other hotels (Oriental and Shangri-la) benefited from migration of visitors from the three southern provinces.
- Hotel concentrating their operation in these provinces suffered losses, while other hotels with diversified locations were able to maintain their revenues.
- **Diversification** is the key to resilience.

## Asymmetric impact of tsunami on hotel stocks



# Policy responses to the tsunami

Tax exemption to tsunami victims

28 billion budget allocation for reconstruction

20 billion baht of soft loans by the Bank of Thailand.

Bank of Agriculture provides three-year interest-free credit to affected farmers.

Government Saving Bank and SME Bank have become more active in lending.

Consumption smoothing hypothesis

# Demand matters most

- With massive capital injection, supply constraint is not a problem in the long run.
- A sustainable recovery requires a demand pull from private and public sectors.
- There was a shortage of labor supply in the hotel business, pushing higher wage rates as the industry slowly recovered.

# The right way to help

- Thailand can handle the finance of tsunami disaster by her own resources.
- **International assistance** should be directed to other countries with greater needs for help.
- But Thailand asked for one thing:
- A reduction to tariff barriers and ***greater market access*** to Thai products.

# A friend in need is a friend indeed

- The EU cut down the tariff rates on imported shrimp from Thailand.
- The tariff declines from 12 to 4.2 percent for fresh shrimp, from 20 to 7 percent for processed shrimp. (The return of the GSP for another three years)
- There is ***no limit*** to imports of shrimp from Thailand into the EU ( as the share of Thai shrimp in the EU is small).
- Japan offered to help by cutting the tariff rates of 20 agricultural products to **zero** to help Thai farmers hit by drought and the tsunami.

# Shocks and rebounds



## The high cost of the airport (Bangkok) shutdown in 2008 (2014)

- The shutdown of the two airports by People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) protesters from Nov 25 to Dec 4, 2008 Thailand **290** billion baht in lost revenue in tourism, service and transportation sectors, according to a report by the central bank.
- The cabinet endorsed a one-billion-baht budget to be used for reviving and stimulating the tourism industry.
- Association of Thai Travel Agency called on the government to weaken the baht to **37** to the US dollar, in order to ensure the sector's growth and efficient competitiveness.

- Suvarnabhumi Airport currently serviced less than 600 flights a day, against more than 700 prior to the airport crisis.
- Thai Hotel Association called on the government to issue an **airport-closure guarantee**, which would certify a payment of Bt350,000 per person next time international visitors were left stranded in circumstances similar to those in 2008.

# Global recession impact on tourism industry

- Tourists from Thailand's main markets had fallen gradually since 2008Q4.
- The number of travelers from Scandinavia has declined 10 per cent, from other European countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands and England, 30-40 per cent and 90 % from China.

# What drove tourists away

- Added to the flu pandemic was the effect of the seizure of Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang airports by supporters of the People's Alliance for Democracy late last year.
- The Songkran riots (April 2009)
- The disruption and cancellation of the Pattaya Asean summit.
- Federation of Thai **Tourism** Associations (FETTA), believed that arrivals to Thailand would be well below the government's target of 15 million in 2009; the 11 million figure was more likely.
- Bangkok shutdown in 2014?

# What have we learned from experiencing various shocks?

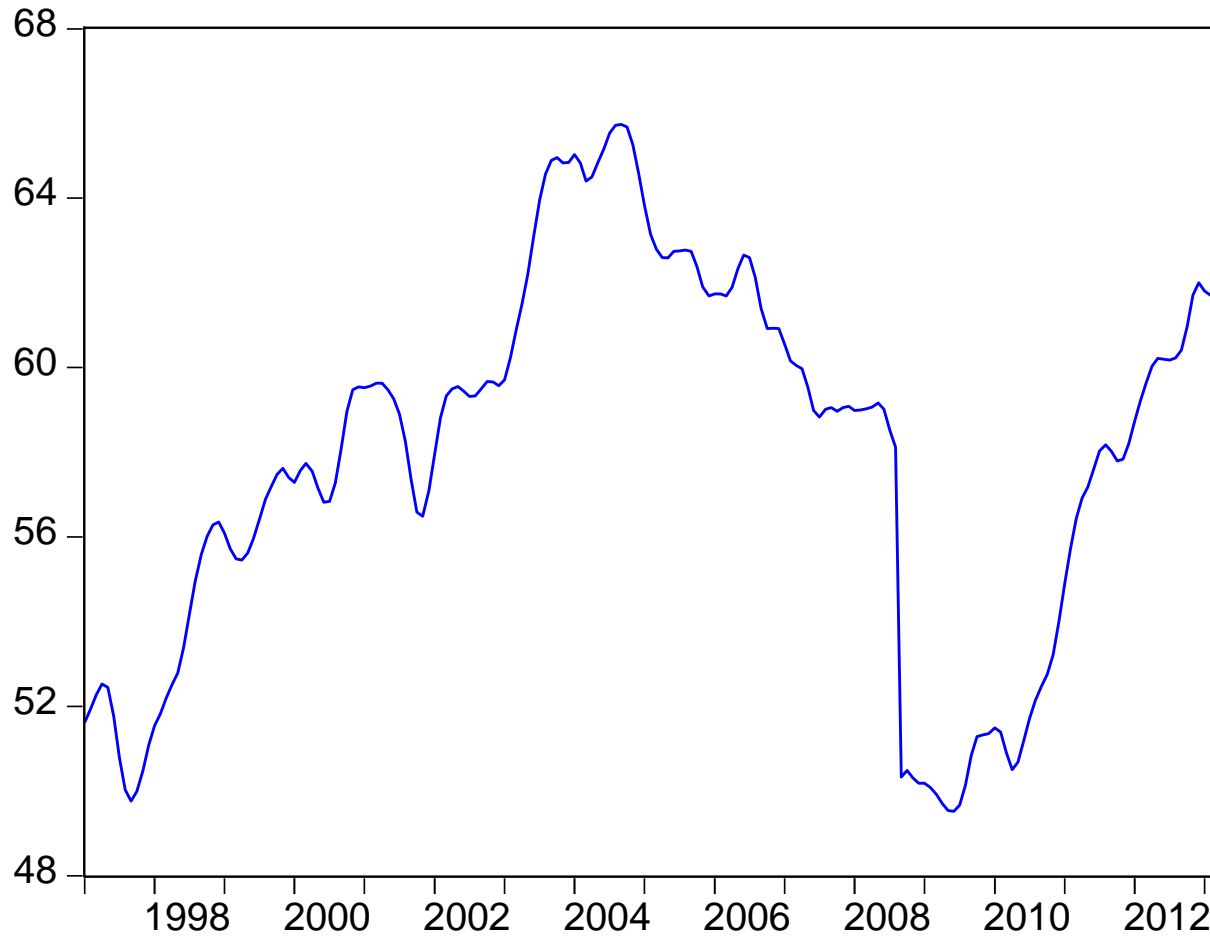
- Random shocks perturb the steady growth path of the economy.
- A random shock can turn a *mild* recession into a *severe* recession if confidence is lost.
- As a part of confidence-building public investment, the tsunami warning system, with cooperation among countries to share and maintain the system, can serve as an invaluable public goods in the Andaman region.
- Don't forget about transparency (who is afraid of the swine flu?)

# Vulnerable but resilient

- Tourism industry is constantly bombarded by both external and internal shocks: SARS, Avian Influenza, oil price shocks, tsunami, terrorist bombing, military coups, and political violence.
- The industry is vulnerable to loss of confidence that induces negative spiral.
- Give it time, the industry will rebound after experiencing new unexpected shocks.

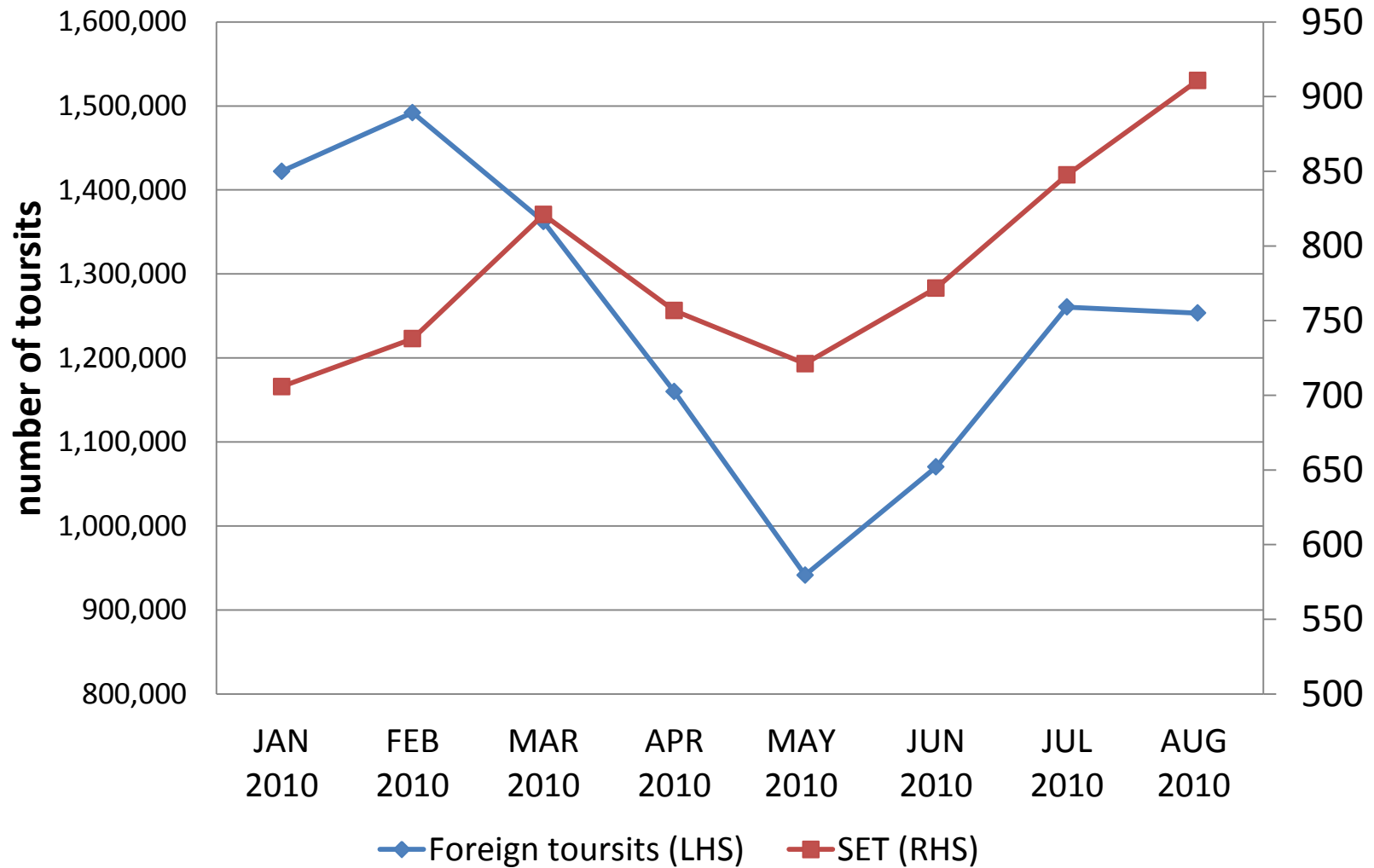
# Hotel occupancy rate

Final trend-cycle

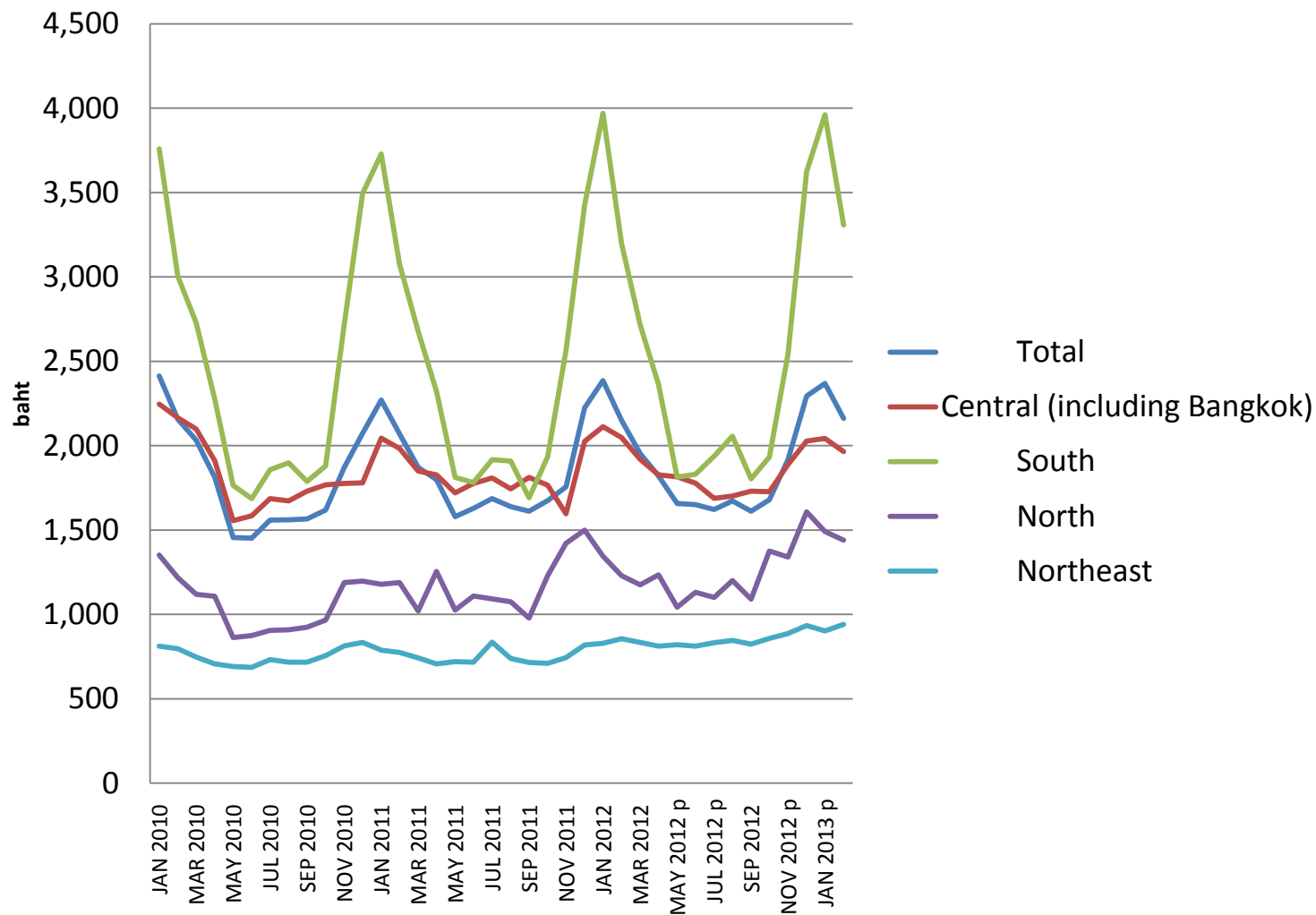


- The average occupancy of hotels in key tourism areas, especially in southern and northern Thailand, was close to the normal low-season rate of about 55% to 60%.
- A notable revival in Asian visitors is being seen this quarter.
- The council has also forecast trips by Thai tourists at 90.72 million this year, a rise of 5% from last year, with revenue of 390 billion baht.

## Toursim and stock market sentiment

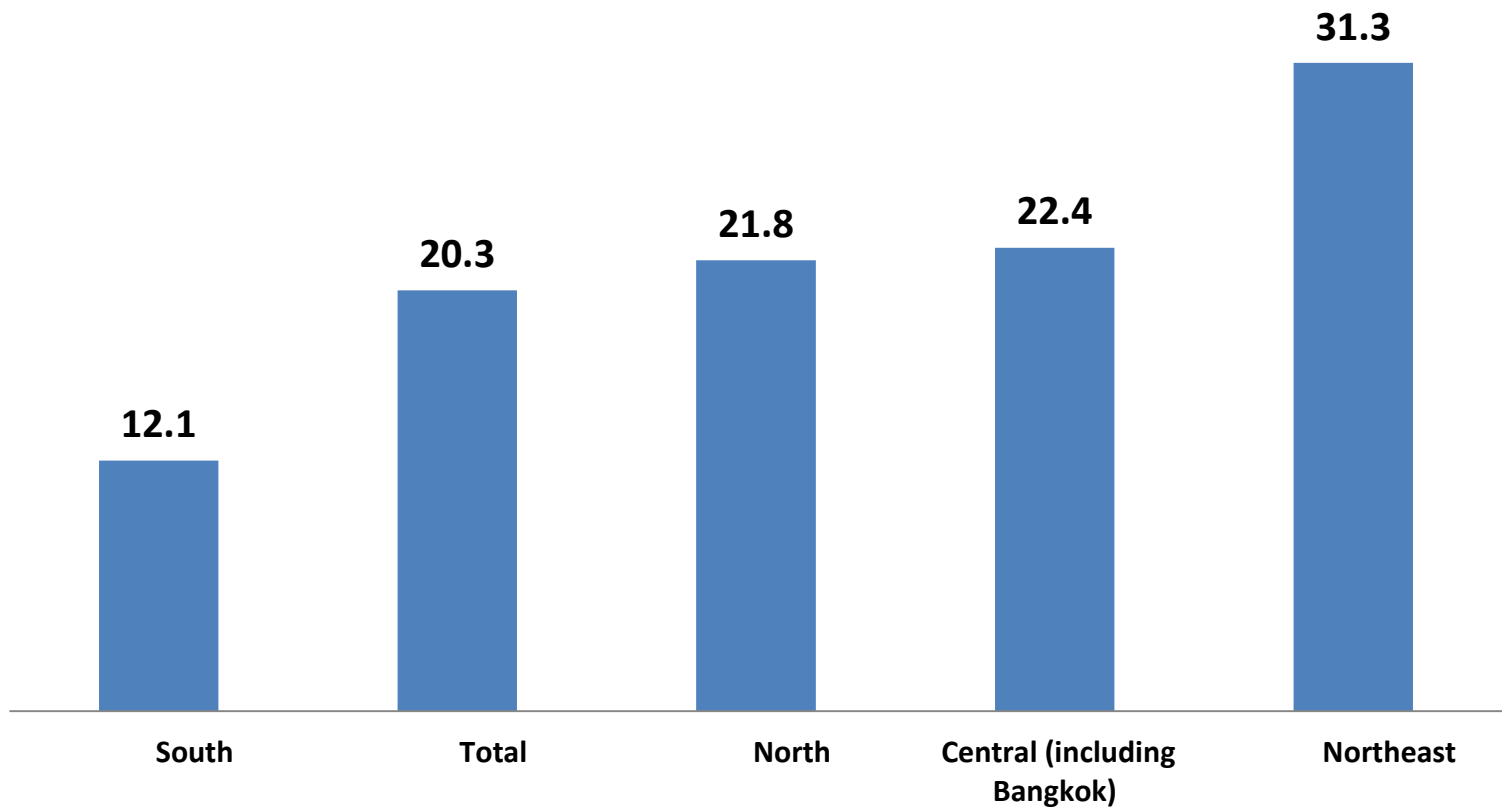


## Average room rate



Source: Bank of Thailand

## Revenues generated by meeting and seminar packages average share: 2010-2012



# Points to ponder

- If the tourism industry is flexible and resilient, it would regain its steady state growth path in time after encountering a shock, provided that appropriate policy responses are applied.
- How can we make the tourism industry flexible?
- What is an appropriate policy response to a triple-dip recession?