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Policies and Practices in Thai Higher Education towards Southeast Asian Regionalism

In the Period of the Recent Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012-2016)

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**Policies and Practices in Thai Higher Education towards
Southeast Asian Regionalism:
In the Period of the Recent Eleventh Higher Education Development
Plan (2012-2016)**

Plaiphan Seupsook

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol
in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social, Sciences, and Law,
School of Education, April 2019**

Seventy-Four Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty-Four Words

Abstract

The main objective of the study is to explore higher education policies and practices in Thailand which have been shaped by the regional integration project known as ‘ASEAN Community’. With regard to the influence of regionalisation, the study looks at higher education initiatives at three layers (regional, national, and institutional levels) but focuses on analysis of internationalisation initiatives in Thai higher education. An inductive analysis is conducted through interviews together with documentary analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with policymakers, executives and senior administrators from a government agency, a regional organisation and six universities.

The study reveals that ASEAN has utilised higher education as a vital mechanism to enhance the regional integration and strengthen its global competitiveness. Since Thailand is a member of ASEAN, the government has developed internationalisation in higher education towards the provision of the ASEAN Community aiming to generate intercultural understanding of Thai students and staff, enhance academic cooperation with ASEAN sub-regional countries and external partner countries and promote harmonisation of higher education in Southeast Asia. With these rationales, the Thai government attempts to enhance the international quality of Thai higher education. At the university level, it is found that internationalising policies and practices have also been influenced by the regional and national agendas; nevertheless, the context of individual universities such as location, human resource, and institutional mission has shaped the scope of their international activities. However, the study shows that the internationalising practices in Thai higher education lack ASEAN-oriented contents and need to develop more comprehensive international practices.

Dedication

To Papa who is my inspiration and taught me to believe in the meaning of
Where there's a will, there's a way from my early age.

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Along the way of my puzzled journey, there are many supporters assisting me to find the way of success. I would like to convey my thankfulness, firstly, to the Royal Thai Government (Office of the Civil Service Commission) for providing a full scholarship and kindly assistance during my stay and study in UK as well as my supervisors and colleagues at the Office of Higher Education Commission who encouraged me to apply for the scholarship.

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Last, but not least, without my parents and family members’ encouragement and support, I would not have been possible to deal with all challenges I faced throughout the research journey.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:Plaiphan S..... DATE:....15 April 2019.....

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List of Abbreviations

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AAU	Association of African Universities
ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
AC	ASEAN Community
ACI	ASEAN Citation Index
ACTS	ASEAN Credit Transfer System
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AEI	Asia-Europe Institute
AFAS	ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
AHEA	African Higher Education Area
AIMS	ASEAN International Mobility for Students
AMS	ASEAN Member States
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APQN	Asia Pacific Quality Assurance Network
APSC	ASEAN Political-Security Community
APT	ASEAN Plus Three
AQAN	ASEAN Quality Assurance Network
ASCC	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN-CCI	ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry
ASED	ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEP	ASEAN Student Exchange Programme
AU	African Union
AUN	ASEAN University Network
AUN-BOT	AUN Board of Trustees
AUNP	ASEAN–EU University Network Programme
AUNQA	AUN Quality Assurance
CEPT	Common Effective Preferential Tariff
CLM	Cambodia Laos and Myanmar
CLMV	Cambodia Laos Myanmar and Vietnam
CQOs	Chief Quality Officers
CULI	Chulalongkorn University Language Institute
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EdPEX	Education Criteria for Performance Excellence
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EIL	English as an International language
EU	European Union
EWC	East-West Center
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-region
HAQAA	Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IaH	Internationalisation at Home

IAI	Initiative for ASEAN Integration
IAU	International Association of Universities
IL	Inclusion List
IMT-GT	Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle
IoC	Internationalisation of the Curriculum
LMI	Lower Mekong Initiative
MOE	Ministry of Education
MRAs	Mutual Recognition Arrangements
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NCI	National Citation Index
NRT	New Regionalism Theory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHEC	Office of the Higher Education Commission
ONEC	Office of the National Education Commission
ONESQA	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
PAQAF	Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation
SEAMEO – RIHED	SEAMEO – Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development
SOMED+3	Senior Officials Meeting on Education
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
TQF:HEd	Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education
UCTS	University Credit Transfer System
UMAP	University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace Freedom and Neutrality

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction

As a Member State of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN),¹ Thailand has been committed to strengthening cooperation in political security and economic and socio-cultural dimensions among the ten ASEAN member countries, towards a regional integration project known as the ‘ASEAN Community’ (AC) in 2015. To achieve the mission, the ASEAN has acknowledged higher education as a vital mechanism to promote the awareness and strength of Southeast Asian integration as well as to cultivate human capabilities in the ASEAN countries. This endorsement reveals the importance of higher education in the process of region building and has inevitably influenced higher education policies and practices at regional, national, and institutional levels. In Southeast Asia, there has been an endeavour to establish a common space for higher education to facilitate the ASEAN Community project. Although the harmonisation process has not yet been achieved, ASEAN has launched the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011–2015) and developed various regional higher education policies and programmes such as a student and staff mobility programme, a quality assurance (QA) system, and a credit transfer system to support its regional integration project (Chao, 2014a, 2016; Chou & Ravinet, 2017; Sirat, Azman & Bakar, 2014, 2016; South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation – Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development [SEAMEO RIHED], 2009; Yepes, 2006). These regional higher education initiatives shadow some schemes of the European regional project known as the Bologna Process, launched by the European Union (EU) in 1999 with its intention to create the European Higher Education Area (Chao, 2014b; Dang, 2015; Enders & Westerheijden, 2011; SEAMEO RIHED, 2008). The Bologna process, it has been argued, is a vital instrument for strengthening European integration and increasing its global competitiveness (Barrett, 2013; Huisman & Van der Wende, 2004; Jorge de Melo, 2013, 2016; Robertson, 2006a; Robertson & Keeling, 2008). The implementation of the Bologna

¹ The ASEAN was established in 1967 with the aim to promote economic, social, and cultural cooperation among member countries in order to strengthen regional peace and economic growth to handle other regions’ competitiveness. Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam are the ASEAN member countries. Retrieved from <http://sation.asean.org/>

process has broadly impacted on higher education agenda across the European region with its agenda to create a regional compatible degree framework and mutual recognition on a credit transfer system and academic qualifications (Huisman & Van der Wende, 2004). Due to its effective practices, the Bologna process has become an influential instrument of regional harmonisation in higher education and acknowledged by other regions. For instance, influenced by the Bologna process, in Africa, the attempt to create the African Higher Education Area (AHEA) was undertaken by the Association of African Universities (AAU) in 2007 (Charlier, Croche & Panait, 2016; Cio, 2014). Similar to the EU, the main objective of the harmonisation of African higher education was to enhance the quality of the higher education sector at the continental level and increase the global competitiveness of the region (Charlier et al., 2016). To achieve its goal, the African Union Commission, with the support of the European Commission, launched various initiatives to integrate the region under Africa-EU Strategic Partnerships (Hahn & Teferra, 2013). The key implementation was the Tuning Project, which aimed to facilitate the harmonisation of African higher education through the promotion of QA and curriculum reform. Recently, the initiative known as the ‘Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation’s (HAQAA) project has been undertaken as a core practice to create an African higher education space by promoting the use of a ‘Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework’ (PAQAF) across the region. Apparently, these regional policies and initiatives launched by regional organisations such as ASEAN, EU, and African Union (AU) have an impact on higher education policies and practices in their member countries in different ways (Chao, 2014a; Dale & Robertson, 2002; Huisman & Van der Wende, 2004).

In the case of Thailand, for instance, higher education policies and practices have been influenced by the provisions of the ASEAN Community during the last decade. The Thai government perceives the phenomenon as an external factor that can be both a threat and an opportunity for the nation and Thai higher education. According to the framework of the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (2008–2022), globalisation and regionalisation are considered to have significant effects on the future labour market for graduates since Thailand is committed to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) as well as the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) establishment. Thai policymakers consider the imminent changes to the nation’s society and economy to be a result of the implementation of the global and regional agreements. For instance, the mobility of people, trade, and investments will be increasing within the Southeast Asia region and

between other regions, and this could promote further international cooperation and competition. Therefore, in the higher education sector, to cope with these challenges, the Thai government has launched policies and practices to enhance the quality of Thai higher education in terms of regional and global competitiveness. This is in order to attract international students to enrol in Thai universities and to produce Thai graduates with professional and international skills for global markets.

Given my work experience as a Thai government official of the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), I worked as an educator in the Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy. In this role, I have come across several regional higher education initiatives launched by the Thai government, such as the Thai-ASEAN Student Exchange Programme, and by regional actors like the ASEAN University Network (AUN) or SEAMEO RIHED, such as the promotion of ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS) and M-I-T student exchange programme (currently named ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) programme). These initiatives have been undertaken to enhance ASEAN integration and to harmonise higher education in the region. To achieve the goals, the Thai government encourages Thai universities to engage in these projects. It seems that Thai higher education is being influenced by the provisions of the ASEAN Community. Therefore, I conducted this research based on my professional interest to gain an understanding of the role of higher education in strengthening regionalism, focusing on the Southeast Asia region, especially by looking at regional higher education policies and practices implemented at the regional level as well as at national and institutional levels, particularly in the Thai higher education context, and by exploring how Thai higher education policies and practices have been influenced by the development of the regional integration.

1.1 Research Rationale

As a government official, who has worked in the Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy, the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), the Ministry of Education, Thailand, I have found that the provisions of the ASEAN Community have influenced Thai higher education policies and practices, as identified in the Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012–2016) and the framework of the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (2008–2022) as a significant factor affecting the Thai higher education in the future. In response to the global and regional factors, my work experience has shown that the Thai government has recently initiated and promoted a range

of international strategies including launching student and staff mobility programmes, promoting international accreditation, and hosting international seminars and conferences to encourage international academic cooperation among Thai universities. I have also found that a number of regional higher education projects have been initiated by the ASEAN such as AUN Quality Assurance (AUNQA) and ASEAN Student Exchange Programme (ASEP) as well as other interregional cooperation initiatives such as the ASEAN–EU University Network Programme (AUNP), ASEAN Region (SHARE) Programme, and University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) student exchange programmes. Moreover, sub-regional initiatives have been implemented to increase academic cooperation between groups of countries such as the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) programme which is the student and staff exchange programme among Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. During three years of working as a government official, I understood that these international practices are implemented to cultivate internationalisation in Thai higher education by increasing student and staff mobility and encouraging international academic cooperation with and among foreign universities the region. However, I have doubts about how internationalising policies and practices can be implemented as a vital mechanism to enhance the integration of the ASEAN Community. This ambiguity compelled me to conduct this research to understand the role of higher education in building a region. Essentially, this thesis aims to explore higher education policies and practices in response to the development of the ASEAN Community and to determine why these initiatives have been carried out by policymakers at national and institutional levels.

In the past, very few studies have looked at the relationship between the higher education sector and the emergence of regionalism because there is a ‘double gap’ between regionalism scholars and higher education scholars when considering the relationship between the two fields (Robertson, Dale, Olds & Dang, 2016, p. 15). In other words, regionalism researchers and higher education researchers have paid less attention to research that combines the two different perspectives and investigates the role of higher education in the process of regional integration. Robertson et al. (2016) assert that this gap conceals the fact that higher education has become a part of regional projects and spaces and it could create ‘new theoretical insights into regional projects, their cultural, political and economic dynamics, as well as logics, mechanisms and outcomes’ (p. 15). This point of view offers an insight into my research study that emphasises the necessity to look at theories of regionalism and higher education in order to study the progression of ASEAN integration and explore the ways in which the

higher education sector has become an important mechanism in the process through its political, social, and economic dimensions.

However, some scholars have investigated the impacts of European integration or Europeanisation on national higher education sectors in European countries (see Barrett, 2013; Dale & Robertson, 2002; Huisman & Van der Wende, 2004; Jorge de Melo, 2013, 2016; Marginson & Van der Wende, 2007; Robertson, 2006a; Van der Wende, 2001). In the case of Southeast Asia, since the establishment of the ASEAN Community has been an ongoing process, during the past five years, several scholars have undertaken studies on the effects of ASEAN integration in the Thai higher education context focusing on particular areas such as internationalisation (McBride, 2012), English learning and teaching (Laoriandee, 2014), QA and assessment policies (Rattananunpat, 2015; Sae-Lao, 2013), and Thai higher education policy and planning (Kamolpun, 2015). These studies reveal that Thai higher education policies and practices at national and institutional levels have been shaped by the provision of the ASEAN Community. According to McBride's (2012) study, Thai universities had autonomously developed international strategies and practices that followed the Western models and responded to the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The international practices such as student and staff mobility, international curriculum and teaching, and English proficiency development were fostered with the intention of enabling Thai universities to gain a global and regional reputation and become a regional education hub. Moreover, the development of QA and assessment policies in Thai Higher Education was undertaken by the government to ensure the quality and performance of the universities. It was seen as a tool to gain regional and global competitiveness and facilitate ASEAN integration via universities (Sae-Lao, 2013). According to previous studies, the implementation of internationalisation and quality improvement of Thai higher education have become main issues in the ASEAN Community project. These studies piqued my interest in a range of initiatives implemented at the regional, national, and institutional levels.

In addition, the findings from existing studies suggest that internationalisation in higher education in Thailand needs to be improved so that students are better able to address the challenges of regionalisation and globalisation. For instance, Thai students were found to have low English proficiency skills and low interest in participating in long-term exchange programmes, particularly in ASEAN countries (Kamolpun, 2015; McBride, 2012). Besides, the university curriculums included insufficient intercultural and ASEAN-oriented content in

the classroom (Laoriandee, 2014; Nilphan, 2005). These obstacles cannot be overlooked since the problems concurrently exist and affect Thai higher education and the initiatives towards ASEAN integration. Therefore, this thesis also seeks to explore the barriers facing policymakers and institutional administrators when implementing policy practices.

By looking at university practices, in this thesis, I seek to explore internationalisation policies and practices implemented by first-tier and second-tier universities in Thailand in response to the ASEAN Community project. I became interested in this theme when I found that the majority of student participating in student mobility programmes were from elite universities while very few came from other universities due to the English language barrier. Likewise, the universities that are members of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) are top universities or research universities. These universities regularly participate in regional programmes while others seem to be declining. This leads to the questions that at the university level, apart from top universities, to what extent have internationalising policies and practices been developed in second-tier universities towards ASEAN integration.

Since the study originated from my work experience and is related to my career and position at a government agency, the findings from the research will provide a picture of Thai higher education policy development at the national and institutional levels and its alignment with the regional integration policy of the ASEAN. This will help the Thai government and Thai universities to develop and implement practical policies towards ASEAN integration.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Several scholars have conducted studies on regionalism in Southeast Asia and its effects on the higher education sector in Thailand, as mentioned in the previous section. This thesis will gain new knowledge through in depth analysis of policy documents as well as interviews with national policymakers and institutional administrators along with reviews of literature in relevant to the topics. From the review of relevant literature, it was found that although the role of ASEAN and its higher education policies and initiatives were identified as important to the process of regionalisation, which were influenced by the nations' higher education policies and practices (Chao, 2014a, 2016; Sirat et al., 2014, 2016), these studies did not provide a detailed analysis on how the policies and practices implemented at a particular university responded to ASEAN integration. This thesis provides a comparative analysis of six Thai universities to explore the range of the policy practices and strategies

implemented by these universities that correspond to national policy and the ASEAN higher education initiatives.

As mentioned earlier, the focus of previous studies in the Thai higher education context was to examine the impact of the ASEAN on a specific topic such as internationalisation, English instruction, or QA. However, this thesis seeks to scrutinise a range of higher education policies and practices at the regional, national, and institutional levels with the intention of constructing a holistic picture of the effects of and responses to the process of the regional integration. Therefore, the research methods of policy document analysis and in-depth interview with government policymakers and academic executives were employed in this study in order to explore the diverse perspectives on the phenomenon. Qualitative interviewing provides insights into the research participants' point of views, experiences, and perceptions on the research topic. This method provides detailed answers and responses which allow the researcher to explore the rationales behind the policy implementation and perspectives on the ASEAN Community from the perspectives of Thai government and university executives.

Most earlier studies focus on reviewing the literature is related to the types of Thai universities selected in the studies. Most scholars classify Thai universities as public, private, Rajabhat, and Rajamangala universities. Alternatively, in this thesis, the case studies of six universities were selected from different locations across Thailand – from the provinces in the central, northern, southern, and eastern parts, where the borders are close to the neighbouring countries of Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Myanmar. The reason behind this distinctive approach was based on my work experience, where I found that a university located near a border province tends to engage in more academic cooperation with a university in the neighbouring country. These typical cases can represent a characteristic of ASEAN regionalism in higher education and reveal a further dimension of academic network and policy practices in relation to the regionalisation process. From the literature review, it was found that this aspect has not been discussed in existing studies. The diversity of the current policies and practices being developed at these bordering universities in support of ASEAN integration provide new data.

Therefore, the findings from this thesis will contribute to scholarly literature in the field by providing a distinctive investigation into Thai universities and providing a holistic picture of the effects of and responses within the higher education sector to the process of the regional integration. The knowledge I have gained from this study will be useful to me professionally

as a government official with responsibility for implementing internationalisation strategies at the national level.

1.3 Research Objective

The primary objective of the research is to explore how contemporary higher education policies and practices in Thailand have been implemented in response to the regional integration project of the ‘ASEAN community’. The thesis seeks to provide an insight into the role of the higher education sector in the process of regionalism by looking at the policies and practices at the regional, national, and institutional levels. The research seeks to analyse the development of regionalisation in Southeast Asia by exploring key actors in the higher education sector involved in the region-building process. Focusing on the Thai higher education context, the research will investigate the role of higher education in enhancing the process of the integration and determine the ways in which the Thai government has developed higher education policies and practices in relation to regional integration. The research also aims to explain the coherence of policy implementation at the regional, national and institutional levels. With the in depth analysis, this study will contribute to a better understanding of the development of internationalising, regionalising, and globalising policies of Thai higher education in response to the ASEAN integration project. Moreover, the results of the study present a variety of policies and practices initiated by the Thai government and Thai universities as well as their rationales and obstacles, which are valuable for future policy development in support of ASEAN integration and internationalisation in Thai higher education in response to regionalisation and globalisation.

1.4 Research Question

The thesis seeks to explore the role of the Thai higher education sector in response to the ASEAN integration projects from the perspectives of Thai senior administrators who are involved in higher education policy-making at both national and institutional levels. The study aims to answer the central question:

How have national and institutional policies on higher education in Thailand been shaped by the ASEAN integration project in the period of the recent Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012–2016)?

Three specific questions have been proposed to address the main question.

1. How has the ASEAN initiated higher education projects served as a mechanism to support the regional integration in general?

This question investigates the important functions of tertiary education in supporting the ASEAN integration project. It explores:

1a) how higher education has become an instrument to enhance Southeast Asian regionalism since the formation of the ASEAN;

1b) the key actors in the higher education sector involved in the process of establishing the ASEAN Community at the regional level;

2. How have national higher education policies and practices in Thailand currently been developed in relation to the ASEAN regional integration? The question seeks to look at:

2a) how Thailand as one of the ASEAN member states has played a role in enhancing regional integration from Thai policymakers' perspectives;

2b) how the Thai government administrators in higher education sector have perceived the provision of ASEAN integration and how this influences Thai higher education development policies;

2c) what higher education strategies have been developed in response to regionalisation, who the policy actors are, and what existing constraints are the concerns of the Thai government;

3. Do Thai universities develop internationalising practices in response to regionalisation and globalisation and what might be the differences? The question attempts to discover:

3a) how the provisions of ASEAN integration have been interpreted by senior administrators of Thai universities;

3b) what and why internationalisation policies and practices have been developed in different Thai universities towards the regionalisation phenomenon.

1.5 Overview of the Thesis

The chapters are organised as follows:

Chapter Two illustrates the historical background of Thai higher education development in relation to the political, economic, social dimensions of the country. The different types of Thai universities and government bureaucracy are described in order to explain the authority of the government and its responsibilities towards the Thai higher education sector.

Moreover, the chapter emphasises the development of national policies and current practices in the context of Thai higher education in a contemporary perspective. In line with the research topic, the discussions on internationalisation in the Thai higher education are reviewed.

Chapter Three presents a discussion on the theories of regionalism, regionalisation, globalisation, and internationalisation and their relationship to higher education. It aims to provide a theoretical and analytical framework employed in the study. The model of New Regionalism Theory (NRT) is used as a framework to explain the level of 'regionness' and identify internal and external actors driving the process of ASEAN regionalism. The concepts of globalisation, Europeanisation, and internationalisation are compared and their rationales and effects on the higher education sector are discussed. The chapter aims to broaden the knowledge on the research topic.

Chapter Four explores the reviews of relevant and existing studies regarding the research topics discussed in Chapter Three. It aims to broaden knowledge of the research subjects and gain understanding from previous debates carried out by other scholars. The knowledge will guide the research problems, methods, and further studies on the relevant topic and can confirm or disagree with the research findings. The section includes a wide range of literature on globalisation and higher education reform, regionalisation and its impacts on higher education policy, roles of international organisations and networks in the higher education sector, Thai higher education policy towards regionalisation and globalisation and the effects on internationalisation and QA, and the ASEAN and its impacts on Thai higher education.

Chapter Five discusses the research methodology adopted in this study. Within the qualitative approach, data are collected by interviews with elite participants from Thai government and universities and by documentary research. The methods of data analysis employed in the study are thematic analysis and content analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the credibility of the findings and ethical issues.

Chapter Six is the analysis chapter, which explores the roles that the higher education sector plays in the ASEAN by highlighting the discourses of education and higher education emerging in ASEAN documentary sources in line with the evolution of the ASEAN and its purposes. The results show that the ASEAN's higher education projects aim to develop the ASEAN's human resource capacity, create a better understanding of the multicultural society, improve educational quality, and enhance the ASEAN's economy towards regional and

global competitiveness. These projects have been launched by several key actors such as the SEAMEO RIHED and AUN with the support of their partners such as ASEAN+3 and the European Union.

Chapter Seven investigates the role of Thailand in ASEAN integration. It argues that the Thai government recently considered the importance of ASEAN integration as an opportunity and a threat. The findings reveal that internationalisation strategies have been developed as a tool to enhance the nation's capacity to address regional and global pressures. Enhancing higher education quality and student and staff capacity and increasing academic cooperation between Thai universities and other universities in the ASEAN are some areas of concern.

Chapter Eight looks at the policies and practices at the university level. The case studies are comparatively analysed in this chapter. The findings demonstrate that the leaders of universities have similar perspectives on the effects of the ASEAN while the ways to respond to the process of integration are diverse according to the contexts of each university such as location, human resources, and institutional mission. The findings show that the models of international strategies are similar, but the scopes of their implementation are varied.

Chapter Nine presents the conclusion to the thesis. The findings from Chapters 6-8 are discussed as the responses to the subordinate research questions and finally the main research question is answered. The recommendations for further studies are also outlined.

CHAPTER 2

Thai Higher Education: A Contemporary Perspective

Introduction

The chapter aims to provide a brief background of higher education development in Thailand as well as the overview of the bureaucracy and its function. Four types of Thai universities are described to gain understanding of the general context of the higher education system. Another focus of the chapter is the current policies and practices formulated by the Thai government. The contemporary policy practices are outlined and discussed in relation to the evolution of the knowledge-based economy. The chapter argues that the recent reform of Thai higher education has been oriented toward globalisation and regionalisation.

2.1 Higher Education in Thailand

2.1.1 Historical background of Thai higher education

The first university in Thailand was founded in a period characterised by the building up of the nation's sovereignty against prevailing western countries by constituting the socio-political structure in Thai (Siam) society according to the intention of his majesty (Pimpa, 2011). Higher education was first introduced in Thai society in 1902 with the specific purpose of training graduates to become government officials in order to help develop the Thai bureaucracy or 'state authority' towards realising the national modernisation plan.

The earliest higher education academy, called the Royal Pages School, was built as a sector of the Ministry of Education (Nilphan, 2005). In 1916, the first university, Chulalongkorn University, was found by King Rama VI with his intention to produce a number of civil servants to modernise the kingdom. The priority disciplines were law, international relations, commerce, agriculture, engineering, medicine and health science and teacher education (Pimpa, 2011).

Under this system of absolute monarchy, Nilphan (2005) describes Thai higher education during in this period as being established for and administered by ruling elites since government work was defined as a prestigious job for royal members and high status individuals. Later, according to the first constitution of Thailand in the government of Pridi

Banomyong, higher education was more concerned with providing education for all people in the country. Thus *Thammasat lae Karn Mueng* University (recently named Thammasat University) was established in 1934 to serve qualified people who finished secondary school and wanted to access tertiary education.

The launch of this second university changed the position of higher education from educating mainly elites to the wider population. Although the two foremost universities were intended to have dissimilar targets, their university system was influenced by the French model adopted by elites and leaders who graduated from Western countries such as ‘the idea of a university council, made up of senior chair holders’ (Nilphan, 2005). This structure of university management in this early phase was influenced by western models of higher education, although it was operated by Thai people. The purposes of this early establishment of higher education involved political and social movement in the country and articulated aspects of the impacts of the colonial countries on the Thai higher education system.

In the subsequent period of military government and university students’ political movements during 1930s-1950s, the universities were governed by the National Education Council established in 1959 under the Prime Minister's Office with the aim to directly monitor students and administer universities (Nilphan, 2005). In 1977, the Ministry of University Affairs was founded to direct the universities in Thailand. In 2003, there was significant reform of the Thai bureaucracy system, as a result of the Ministry of Education Regulatory Act B.E. 2546 (2003) in order to merge several educational bureaus under the Ministry of Education for managerial and developing purposes. Since then, the Council was reorganized in terms of its bureaucratic structure and became the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC). The role of ONEC was eventually changed to be responsible for national education at all levels by proposing the scheme of national education policies and standards, collaborating with other educational agencies to implement the policies and plans, and evaluating education provision according to the national plans (Office of the National Education Commission [ONEC], 2003). Meanwhile higher education in Thailand was administered by the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC).

2.1.2 Thai higher education bureaucracy

The Ministry of Education in Thailand is now comprised of the Office of the Minister, the Office of the Permanent Secretary, the Office of the Education Council, the Office of the Basic Education Commission, the Office of the Higher Education Commission, and the

Office of the Vocational Education Commission. The six principle agencies have been responsible for enhancing national education under the Ministry of Education since the reform of the Thai bureaucratic system in 2003. The contemporary role of these principal agencies is to propose educational policies and their implementation to enhance the quality of education and increase human capacity, correspondingly relevant to the national decrees and mandates such as the National Economic and Social Development Plan, the National Education Act, the Government policy, and the Ministry of Education's policy.

The Thai higher education system has more recently been governed by the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) which in turn is under the supervision of the Board of Higher Education Commission. The Board of Higher Education Commission consists of a chairperson; nine functional committees from relevant government agencies; a representative from a private sector, from a local administration, and from a professional association; up to fourteen academic and educational experts appointed by OHEC; and the OHEC Secretary General as a secretary and a committee member.²

As stated in the Organisational Governance fiscal year B.E. 2554 (2011), the functions of the OHEC are outlined as follows. To;

- formulate policy recommendation and higher education standard guidelines in responding to the National Economic and Social Development Plan, the National Education Act and international commitments;
- distribute financial support and provide budget allocation to Thai higher education institutions (HEIs) in agreement with the government criteria and regulation;
- enhance personnel, human resources and students' competencies including supporting students with disabilities and difficulties as well as cooperating with HEIs to promote research and innovation of knowledge for national development;
- propose approval/disproval of HEIs' establishment and improvement;
- develop educational monitoring and evaluating systems and criteria for the HEIs and innovate the higher education database system; and
- perform secretarial duties for the Higher Education Commission

² Constituent of the Higher Education Commission. Retrieved October 25, 2013 from <http://sation.mua.go.th/users/he-commission/index.php>

- undertake other missions as stated in the Regulation and as appointed by the Office, the Ministry and the Cabinet (Office of the Higher Education Commission [OHEC], 2012b)

OHEC is in charge of eight bureaus including General Administration, Policy and Planning, Community College Administration, Cooperation and Promotion, Standards and Evaluation, International Cooperation Strategy, Student Development, and Personnel Administration and Development (OHEC, 2012a).

Based on the background of the Thai higher education development and its reorganisation, several key aspects are emphasised. Firstly, the significant role of higher education as a mechanism to enhance the country's development and sovereignty is highlighted. Secondly, the key aim for universities is to produce educated Thai citizens for the national economic and social development. These are noted in the context of tertiary education in Thailand being dominated by factors within and outside the country, such as from western colonial powers and from domestic politics.

2.1.3 Types of Thai higher education institutions

In investigating the Thai higher education system, it is important to understand the different types of higher education institutions, aside from their management at the ministry level. The tertiary education in Thailand encompasses the levels of education beyond the 12-year basic education and after the completion of the upper secondary (Mattayom) and the lower vocational and technical education.

As mentioned in the previous section, Thai higher education has been developed for a decade with the main purpose of developing the country and educating Thai citizens. In 1943, following the foundation of the first two universities of Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, Silpakorn university, Kasetsart university, and Medicine (Mahidol) university were established to be responsible to the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University respectively. Subsequently, three provincial universities were set up across the country in Chiang Mai (the north), in Khon Kaen (the northeast), and in Prince of Songkla (the south) as the pathway of the education decentralisation programme according to the 1st National Economic and Social Development Plan in 1961. Since then, the number of universities has continually increased in response to the later National Higher Education Development Plans which aims at promoting tertiary

education to rural parts of the country. In the period of the Sixth National Higher Education Development Plan (1989-1991), the government encouraged the growth of private tertiary institutions by distributing financial support. Forty teachers' colleges located nationwide were upgraded and developed to universities. As a result, currently, there are 157 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)³ under the endorsement of the Office of Higher Education Commission, which are commonly divided into three main categories as follows:

Public HEIs are comprised of two models of institutions which are 23 autonomous universities and 58 bureaucratic universities. The Bureaucratic universities are subdivided into 11 universities, 38 Rajabhat universities and 9 Rajamangala universities of technology. The idea of *autonomous universities* was initiated as a result of the first 15-Year National Plan for Higher Education Development, (between 1990–2004), with the intention of allowing universities to become self-governed. The universities have freedom to manage their budget allocation, recruitment, and the formulation of their own administrative policies. Decision making will be authorised by the university council. However, the standards of curriculum, programme and academic qualifications have to follow the criteria legislated by the government. Partial public funds (block grant) are contributed to the universities.⁴ *Rajabhat universities* are public universities which were upgraded from teachers' colleges to universities. Regarding the Rajabhat University Act, the initial objective of Rajabhat universities is to promote tertiary education for local people who live in regional areas of the country. Thus the focus of these universities is on teaching and supporting community learning and development rather than research. The forty Rajabhat universities are supervised by the Rajabhat council under the Ministry of Education. They are located nationwide and are distributed in the following way; eight universities in the north, five in the south, fifteen in the middle, and twelve in the northeast.⁵ The last type of Public HEIs in Thailand is called *Rajamangala universities* which were developed from the Institute of Technology and Vocational Education in correspondence to the Rajamangala University of Technology Acts B.E. 2548. The institutions offer courses focusing on science and technology in taught, conducting research and practical modules. Each university has their own academic council

³ List of Thai Higher Education Institution. Retrieved February 15, 2016 from <http://sation.mua.go.th/muaold/>

⁴ Source: "History of autonomous university development in Thailand: from past to present". Retrieved from http://legal.tu.ac.th/tu_51/tu_control/pdf/

⁵ Source: Rajabhat University Act B.E. 2547. (2004). Retrieved from http://sation.bol.mua.go.th/PRB_UNIV/06.pdf

and committees to formulate policies, manage institutional governance, plan and assure standard of programme and curriculum.⁶

Private HEIs are comprised of 43 universities, 11 institutions, and 20 colleges. The private institutions directly manage their administrative functions and budget, and organise the university council and committee according to the rules and guidelines promulgated in the Private Higher Education Institution Acts B.E. 2546. However, all programme, curriculum offers, and academic standards, are monitored by the government.⁷

Community colleges: The main vision of community colleges is to provide education and professional training to the local community. Currently, a total of twenty colleges is located in twenty provinces nationwide. The programme have been developed to strengthen careers and the quality of living of people in each community. The community colleges are directly supervised by the Bureau of Community College Administration, OHEC, and Ministry of Education. Each college has an academic council to implement academic administrative functions. The awards offered by from the colleges are lower than Bachelor's such as certificates and diplomas.⁸

Based on different historical backgrounds, locations, and governance structures, Thai universities have formulated the institutional policies and strategies in respect to their institutional capability and resources, such as funding, students and staff, geographical position, facilities, mission and so on under the frameworks of the Higher Education Development Plan and the 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand. This perspective stimulates the challenges of this research in attempting to investigate individual cases of Thai universities in making responses to regionalism. However, the criteria for selecting the cases will be explained further in the methodology section. It should be noted that although community colleges are grouped in tertiary education, the investigation excludes them since the mission and programme taught and offered in the colleges are not the same as those offered by the universities.

⁶ Source: Rajamangala University of Technology Acts B.E. 2548. (2005). Retrieved from http://council.rmutp.ac.th/documents/2prb_2548.pdf

⁷ Source: Private Higher Education Institution Acts B.E. 2546. (2003). Retrieved from <http://sation.mua.go.th/users/he-commission/doc/law/private46.pdf>

⁸ Source: "Background of Community College in Thailand". Retrieved from http://cc.mua.go.th/static_history.php

2.2 Thai Higher Education in the Knowledge Based Economy

2.2.1 Contemporary policies of Thai higher education

The formulation of policy on higher education development in Thailand has been framed in relation to the National Economic and Social Development Plan with the aim to foster national economic and social development under a five-year timeframe of policy implementation. In earlier periods, Thai Higher Education Development Plans - from the First to the Sixth Plans –focused primarily on producing graduates to serve national labor markets and increasing equality and access to tertiary education. The government supported the policy by stimulating the establishment of new public and private universities in rural areas nationwide (Ministry of University Affairs [MUA], 1986). Later since 1987, the First 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (1990-2004) was initiated by the Ministry of University Affairs (recently renamed the OHEC), as the master framework of the Seventh Higher Educational Development Plan to the Ninth Plan. The key purposes of the creation of a Long Range Plan were to sustain programme and strategies for a dynamic and enduring development. In the First 15-Year Long Range Plan, higher education development was further planned for enhancing the nation’s competitiveness, in particular to cope with regional and global pressures (MUA, 1990). It seems that the circumstance of globalisation and regionalisation was first mentioned as the external force of the Thai higher education development plan.

Recently, the implementing phase is in the Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012-2016), and is constituted under the framework of the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (2008-2022) in alignment of the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016). The primary vision of the Development Plan in 2016 is concerned that Thai higher education will function as a knowledge resource, enhance potential human resource; establish the sustainable development of the nation; promote life-long learning in the society on the basis of economic sufficiency, as well as improve educational quality to meet international standards for becoming a higher education leader in ASEAN. This current policy explicitly conveys the significance of reforming the Thai higher education towards regionalisation and globalisation. The four strategies to achieve the mission of the ministry policy is known as the ‘LEGS’ strategy. Its definition is explained in the Eleventh Plan as follows:

L = Leader of Change Management for Quality Education (All for Quality Education and Quality Education for All) – to enhance higher education educational management at both government and institutional level and increase Thai HEIs’ role in the ASEAN region especially on Higher Education Manpower Mobilisation;

E = Educator Professional – to promote professional and skill development and reforming teacher status and payment;

G = Graduated with Quality and Social Responsibility – to develop university admission, the quality of international programme and curriculum and enhance competence of graduates;

S = Satang Utilisation – to distribute financial support for HEIs to improve academic excellence and to support students for further education

In response to the integration of the ASEAN Community project, the Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan highlights the effects of the liberalisation of ASEAN Community in 2016 on the Thai higher education and emphasises six areas of concern for higher education development as follows: 1) developing international curriculum focusing on English and ASEAN countries’ languages; 2) promoting ASEAN studies emphasising culture, sociology, economics, politics and laws; 3) advancing graduates’ proficiency in English, cross-culture communication and international skilled labour; 4) increasing international cooperation with other universities in the region; 5) enhancing staff and lecturers’ expertise; and 6) strengthening the higher education quality corresponding to Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQF:HEd) (OHEC, 2013a).

These strategies are determined as the pivotal framework for the HEIs in Thailand to implement and carry out individual institutional development plans. Consequently, there have been immense changes of policy actions at governmental and institutional levels. It is therefore particularly important to conduct research on how the government and universities have put these strategies into practice and to what extent they are responding to the process of regionalisation. The example of previous studies on this topic is presented in McBride’s (2012) work on major internationalisation strategies of higher education in Thailand influenced by the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The author argued that Thai universities have autonomously implemented internationalisation strategies which are influenced by the Western models and a Southeast Asian regional bloc called the ASEAN Economic Community. These strategies include improving English language ability,

fostering faculty and student mobility, developing international curriculum and producing students for a globalised world.

2.2.2 Current policy practices

According to the Framework of the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (2008-2022), several policy programme have been launched to strengthen higher education development in Thailand. One of the purposes is to classify HEIs into four groups including: 1) research and graduate universities; 2) specialised and comprehensive universities; 3) 4-year universities and liberal arts colleges; and 4) community colleges. This new bureaucratic structure aims to strengthen the quality and standard of each group of HEIs as well as to facilitate the distribution of financial support. Recently, there are nine universities named to become national research universities; these are Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University, Mahidol University, Kasetsart University, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Chiang Mai University, Khon Kaen University, Suranaree University of Technology, and Prince of Songkhla University.

To establish the research networks of science and technology and promote its quality and resources, in 1999 the project - *Centres of Excellence* (Inter-university Academic Consortium) was launched comprising 71 academic divisions from 25 universities/research institutions. There are 11 Centres of Excellence focusing on the following areas; Innovation in Chemistry; Environmental Health and Toxicology; Hazardous Substance Management; Petrochemicals and Materials Technology; Energy Technology and Environment; Agricultural Biotechnology; Postharvest Technology Innovation; Mathematics; Physics; Biodiversity; and Medical Biotechnology (OHEC, 2012a).

With the purpose of ensuring educational standard and quality among the Thai HEIs, in 2000 the *Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA)* was established as an external quality assessment agency framed within the terms of the 1999 National Education Act. In line with this, the Ministerial Regulations regarding Systems, Regulations, and Methods for Internal Quality Assurance were announced as a mechanism of the academic quality assurance and assessment for all HEIs in Thailand in 2003. In addition, in 2009, the *Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education*; TQF:HEd was declared as a set of guidelines and criteria for planning and developing qualified programme and courses at every level in the institutions. These projects clearly demonstrate Government intention to improve Thai higher education quality in supporting the Development Plan.

2.2.3 Internationalisation in Thai Higher Education

Strengthening internationalisation in Thai HEIs is another key attainment underlined in the national educational development plan. The government has encouraged the HEIs to promote student and staff mobility through bilateral and multilateral academic cooperation with foreign universities/institutions. The total number of international programme offered in the Thai HEIs has also increased from 727 programme in 2006 to 1,017 programme in 2012 (OHEC, 2012b). Moreover, according to the survey of the number of collaborative programme between Thai and foreign HEIs, it was found that in 2012 the Thai HEIs provided 114 joint programme awarded in a joint, a double, and a national degree (from bachelor to graduate diploma).

The collaborative programme is mutually designed between the partnership universities. Degrees conferred in these programme are either a joint degree, in which graduates are awarded one degree acknowledged by the joint venture universities or a double degree, in which graduates will be awarded two degrees from the two partners. With the increasing numbers of international programme and collaborative programme, the Thai higher education system has attracted foreign students to study in Thailand. The number of foreign students enrolling in the Thai HEIs has increased year on year, from 11,021 students in 2007 to 20,309 students in 2011. The majority are international students from China, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Cambodia respectively (OHEC, 2013b).

At present, the Thai government has carried out several supporting projects in order to promote academic mobility between the HEIs in Thailand and other countries and strengthen students' capabilities to cope with the international education. These projects include the Thai-ASEAN Student Exchange Programme, the ASEAN International Mobility for Students, the ASEAN University Network, the ASEAN Citation Index Development, the Project of Promoting English Language Teaching and Learning, as well as other Languages in Neighbouring Countries.

However, as an official working in the Ministry of Education, I have found that less than half of all Thai universities have taken part in these programme. For instance, the Thai-ASEAN Student Exchange Programme is a student exchange programme supported by the government to encourage Thai students to study in the ASEAN countries for one semester. It aims at fostering Thai students to experience and learn about the society and culture of other ASEAN member countries. Unfortunately, the number of student awardees was below the

expectation since most candidates were unqualified particularly in their English proficiency as well as there was small-scale application. It is therefore necessary to investigate the ways in which Thai universities have participated in internationalising policies and practices towards ASEAN in order to gain better understanding of a variety of policy implementation initiated at an institutional level.

Conclusion

The historical background of higher education development in Thailand demonstrates that the Thai government has considered higher education as an instrument to strengthen the national economic and social development toward the driving forces from within and outside the country. The range of the policy projects has been developed by OHEC in order to enhance the quality of Thai universities including the provision of a Research University project, the development of Centres of Excellence, the launch of internal and external quality assessment and Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. In addition, internationalisation in higher education has become an important strategy to gain the universities' competitiveness towards the regional and global economy. The next chapter leads to the discussion about the concepts of and relationships between regionalism, regionalisation, globalisation, and internationalisation in higher education as a theoretical framework underpinning this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Introduction

To address the main focus of the thesis, ‘how Thai higher education policy has been shaped by the Southeast Asia integration project, namely the ASEAN Community’, studies on multifaceted theories as well as the concepts of globalisation, regionalism, regionalisation, and internationalisation in higher education and their relationships should be revisited. This chapter aims to develop a theoretical and analytical framework to explore the role of higher education in globalisation and regionalisation starting with a discussion on the definitions and theoretical perspectives of globalisation. Then, several theories of regionalism are reviewed in order to gain an understanding of the emergence of a region and its relationship to globalisation. NRT is the analytical framework used to elucidate the way in which higher education projects have become important responses and/or challenges to the processes of regionalisation and globalisation as the key objective of this thesis. Furthermore, the debates on internationalisation in higher education are laid out to review the definitions and practices in the process of regionalisation and globalisation. The last section of this chapter critiques previous studies conducted in the context of Thailand and other countries in order to identify significant issues and ideas relevant to the research topic.

3.1 Understanding the Relationship Between Globalisation, Regionalism and Regionalisation

3.1.1 Globalisation: definition and conceptualisation

To understand the relationship between regionalisation and globalisation, definitions of globalisation first need to be discussed. Although the meanings of globalisation may vary depending on particular views, they are related to interconnections in the world. For example, as a *scale* where actions are generated, globalisation is a global force claiming to have the legitimacy to govern or innovate ideas, such as the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the GATS. Whilst as a *condition of the world*, globalisation signifies world transformation as the outcomes of the development of new technologies, the

shift in political projects, and the links between nation states (Robertson, Dale, Nielsen, Shore & Wright, 2012). Enders (2004) asserts that since the 1970s, the notion of globalisation has changed and broadened, referring to different projects such as information technology, international flow of capital, student and labour mobility, new public management, weakening of nation states, credit transfer schemes, and mutual recognition of university degrees.

Furthermore, Beerkens (2004) explains globalisation through the historical development of four conceptualisations – geographical, authority and power, cultural, and institutional perspectives. As a geographical concept, globalisation is defined as a process of increasing interconnectedness within a worldwide system. However, in the context of power and authority, globalisation represents deterritorialisation or denationalisation, in which power and authority are transferred from the nation-state, due to international competition, in the following directions: ‘downward (decentralisation to foster competition), upward (to supranational bodies) or to the side (to private non-governmental actors)’ (Beerkens, 2004, p. 9). Moreover, globalisation as a cultural concept illustrates how societies engage in cultural diversity, which could become convergent or divergent. The last concept of globalisation, based on an institutional perspective, is referred to as cosmopolitanisation in which societies generate a sense of global citizenship and seek to harmonise the world (Beerkens, 2004; Rizvi, 2005).

In recent times, it has become evident that the power of globalisation is integrating economies, culture, societies, and politics across national territories. From this emerges ‘a proliferation of social connections that are more or less detached from such a territorial logic’ (Van Langenhove, 2011, p. 28). Nation-states have become interrelated by processes of globalisation, which Petrella (1996) categorises into seven types: finances, markets, technology and knowledge, consumption and culture, regulatory capacities and governances, political unification, and socio-cultural processes (cited in Yeates, 2001). For instance, economic globalisation involves the process of transfer of knowledge, investment, labour, and products across territories with the aim of increasing global capital. Transnational corporations are regarded as the driving forces of ‘production and finance, operating on a transnational or global basis in terms of product design, sourcing, production, marketing and sales’ (Yeates, 2001, p. 6). These economic transnational activities illustrate the idea of neoliberal globalisation that has transformed our world.

The GATS, launched in 1995 under the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework, is an example of the process of global commerce, in which the GATS member states have agreed to liberalise 12 core service sectors. The main objective of the GATS is ‘to contribute to trade expansion under conditions of transparency and progressive liberalisation and as a means of promoting the economic growth of all trading partners and the development of developing countries’ (WTO, 2013, p. 2). Education is one of the service sectors framed to supply the four modes of global trading: cross-border trade such as services through internet and teleconference facilities, consumption abroad such as studying abroad, commercial presence such as foreign direct investment from international branches, and presence of persons such as temporary entry workers in another member state (Robertson, 2006b).

With respect to the WTO’s neoliberal approach, education has become the crucial mechanism to drive economic growth and increase ‘value on goods and services, which enables nations to prosper, as well as for the basic growth and continuance of democracy’ (Olssen, Codd, & O’Neill, 2004, p. 13). In other words, education prepares citizens in states to deal with regional and global processes, such as free flows of information, people, or services (Koh, 2007). This perspective demonstrates the influence of regionalisation and globalisation on a nation-state that enable it to connect to the world as a whole.

However, apart from debates on the concepts of globalisation, it is important to interpret the impacts of globalisation on modern states. To this end, three perspectives on globalisation, i.e. from hyper-globalists, sceptics, and transformationalists, are taken into account (Held, McLew, Goldblatt & Perraton, 1999; Marginson, 2011a; Mok, 2006). The three perspectives point out to the distinct power of the globalised world over nation-states. Globalists believe that states are dominated by the global economy, which shifts the national structure and authority, finally leading to world convergence. Against hyper-globalists, sceptics argue that globalists’ ideas misjudge the power of state governments in regulating international movement. Nation states have the authority to determine their actions in the global world. The last interpretation of globalisation, approached by transformationalists, indicates that although nation-states have been transformed by global convergence, their identities are significant. As such, a single world system is not the outcome of globalisation but instead a hierarchy is formed across the world (Marginson, Kaur & Sawir, 2011). The hierarchy refers to inequalities in terms of power, economy, and resources. Marginson et al. (2011) provide examples of inequalities where rich countries receive more benefits of globalisation than poor countries such as access to the internet and educational funding. Moreover, global university

ranking creates a hierarchy of universities, where universities compete to achieve world class status (Deem, Mok & Lucas, 2008). To reach the world class ranking, governments in many countries have attempted to reform their higher education systems by enhancing research performance. For instance, Deem et. al (2008) claim that governments in Asia such as Hong Kong, Japan, and China tend to prioritise a group of leading or flagship universities to advance international research and produce English publications in international indexed journals by providing additional funding for research and facilities. With this practice, a hierarchy of universities has emerged because it is impossible for all universities in one county to be capable of world-class status due to their different institutional contexts (Deem et al., 2008). This research offers an example of a critique of the impact of globalisation on higher education.

Moreover, criticism of globalisation is reflected in Dale and Robertson's (2002) study of the varying effects of regional organisations, which were viewed as subjects of globalisation of education. Their paper provided a framework to investigate the influence of regional organisations on higher education policies and practices within their member countries. Considering globalisation as a process, Dale and Robertson pointed out that the global processes and practices were developed in connection with current state governments and since regional organisations were established by national governments, these local and regional institutions became an important force for enhancing global practices. It was impossible for their influences and roles to be taken over and homogenised by globalisation, but instead regional organisations were viewed as the subjects of globalisation processes and practices. To support the argument, their study provided comparative examples of three main regional organisations including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the European Union (EU), and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to argue that although their main purpose was to motivate international trade within the region, the boundaries of their activities and roles were not restricted to trade issues. Their roles and purposes influenced social infrastructure in terms of human development, which impacted the education sectors at local, national, and regional levels and became drivers of the global processes. Therefore, instead of considering the world as a whole, this thesis focuses on other actors at local, national, and regional levels who have dominated the higher education system. To further the understanding of the relationship between globalisation, regionalisation, and higher education, we need to first explore studies on regionalism and regionalisation.

3.1.2 Theoretical perspectives on regionalism

The topic of '*regionalism*' has been attracting the attention of scholars in diverse disciplines. Boerzel (2011) defines regionalism as 'processes and structures of region-building in terms of closer economic, political, security and socio-cultural linkages between states and societies that geographically proximate' (p. 5). She points out that the definition of regionalism is varied, based on the area under study, such as 'in political science, regionalism is often used synonymously with regional cooperation and regional integration, which could be seen as the opposite ends of a continuum, along which regionalism may vary' (Boerzel, 2011, p. 5). In international relations studies, the early debates on regionalism, emerging after World War II until the 1980s, were dominated by several theories including federalism, functionalism, and neo-functionalism. These initial approaches opposed the Westphalian logic, which had placed emphasis on the sovereignty of the nation-state; 'Territoriality was seen as part of the Westphalian logic and Westphalia implied conflict and war' (Hettne, 2005, p. 546). Thus, it was believed that promoting regional cooperation could solve conflict. The regionalism debates in the aforementioned period were largely in relation to the phenomena occurring in Europe. For instance, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952 exemplified the outcome of functional and technocratic models of regionalism, whereas European integration illustrated the effect of 'functional spillovers leading to economic and (ultimately) political integration' theorised by neo-functionalists, such as Ernst Haas, Leon Lindberg, and Schmitte' (Brestin & Higgott, 2003, p. 168). Neo-functionalism, nevertheless, failed to be considered as the universal theory of regionalism because of its 'Eurocentric' critics, such as Andrew Axline, who stressed political unification as the goal of integration (cited in Hettne, 2005, p. 547). This theory overlooked the power of nation states (Robertson, 2008). Since there have been increasing numbers of regional integration and organisations across the globe, neo-functionalism has not been sufficient to elucidate the new patterns of regionalism, such as preferential and free trade areas, which have shifted towards the global economic sphere (Boerzel, 2011).

Much literature on region building has discussed regionalism, referring to two waves of regionalism (Brestin & Higgott, 2003; Robertson, 2008): *old regionalism* and *new regionalism* (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000; Hettne, 2005). The old regionalism, based on Hettne's (2002) views, refers to neo-functionalism, which explains the inward processes of regional integration led by a super-power from above with specific purposes for relations between

nation-states. Conversely, ‘the new regionalism results from a more comprehensive, multidimensional societal process and took shape in a multipolar world order and in a context of globalisation’ (Hettne, 2005, p. 549).

In the new era of regionalism, various regional formations have emerged in different parts of the world. To understand the complexity and forms of relationships, Hettne (2005) classifies the levels of regionalism into ‘lower level’ and ‘higher level’, with the lower level of regionalism being confined to sub-regions or micro-regions. This type consists of ‘subnational territories’ cooperation, not whole countries. These networks are established by the collaboration of state and non-state actors. As such, this lower level is less formal than the macro-regional form and has more private sector investors. Indeed, the micro-regional form is relevant to macro regionalism, such as supporting economic growth and promoting regional integration known as growth triangles. On the other hand, higher-level regionalism consists of formal integrations containing legal relationships, such as foreign policy between the regions, or inter-regional relations, which link regions across the world together (Hettne, 2005).

To facilitate the understanding of the development of inter-regionalism processes, rather than using the terms of old and new regionalism, Söderbaum and Van Langehove (2006) divided regionalism into *three generations* according to the progress of cooperation in each period. The 1st generation focused on trade or security, such as free trade areas. The 2nd generation of regionalism was a step further than security and economic integration, which also included political, social, cultural and environmental agreements. These close intersectoral connections tended to create more regional coherence than that observed in the past. While the first generation was introverted, the second was extroverted, where states were considered more important actors than the regions for establishing new multilevel governing systems and diverse regional projects. Finally, the 3rd generation moved a step forward to external regions and other countries across the world, by strengthening the authority of regional policies and institutions to increase interregional relations and initiatives. The expansion of inter-regionalism attempted to form a global governance or world order rather than merely reacting to globalisation. As a general definition, ‘... inter-regionalism signifies the condition or process whereby two regions interact as regions’ (ibid, p. 257). The emergence of inter-regionalism has frequently occurred along with global regionalism such as ASEAN-European Union Dialogue Relations, Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and European Union-Mercosur.

Studies on contemporary regionalism need to employ more innovative approaches, which can explain the process of regional integration in relation to both endogenous and exogenous factors. The framework of New regionalism theory (NRT) developed by Mittelman (1996) and Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) facilitates the understanding of regionalism in the context of globalisation as a response or challenge through the levels of regionness and actorness. In relation to the focus of this thesis, the theory of new regionalism can help explain the development of regionalism in Southeast Asia and the evolution of the ASEAN to the present time as well as the ASEAN's relationships within and outside the region.

New Regionalism Theory (NRT)

When studying regional integration, it is important to differentiate the terms regionalism and regionalisation, although they are interdependent. Breslin and Higgott (2003) distinguish regionalism from regionalisation by referring to the former as state-led projects arising from intergovernmental collaborations and agreements. They consider the latter as comprising the processes of integration, spontaneously driven by non-state actors such as private markets or businesses rather than nation-states. This distinction articulates the way to understand the process of regional integration driven by actors, other than those resulting from a formal regional organisation. Per the approach of NRT, Hettne (2005) indicates that regionalisation involves multifaceted processes encompassing increasing levels of regional cohesion, which 'lead to patterns of cooperation, integration, complementarity and convergence within a particular cross-national geographical space' (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000, pp. 457-458). The levels of regionness are regarded as vital endogenous factors of regional cohesion, so they have capacities to act. 'Regionness defines the position of a particular region in terms of regional cohesion, which can be seen as a long-term historical process, changing over time from coercion, the building of empires and nations, to voluntary cooperation' (Hettne 2005, p. 548). Hettne (2005) explains the development of regionness – it occurs when a regional space starts to move from an isolating community to become more regionally complex by intensifying translocal relationships within the communities. The progress then develops into an international society regulated by norms and rules. Afterwards, an organisational framework is established in order to promote regional identity, values, and behaviour through social communication, and the regional civil society plays a role in integrating a regional community. The final level of regionness emerges when a regional community becomes harmonised and a political constitution is legally formed among a group of nation-states

identified as a region-state. The principal characteristics of the five levels of regionness are summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Levels of regionness

Levels of Regionness	Key Characteristics
Regional space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A primarily geographical unit delimited by more or less natural physical barriers - A 'proto-region' marked by ecological characteristics such as 'Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals', North America, the Southern cone of South America - Increasing a kind of translocal relationship
Regional complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A regional social system with widening translocal relations through increased social contacts and transactions between previously more isolated groups - The real starting point for the regionalisation process - Interdependent relations among the constituent units - Increasing transnational contact
Regional society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A regional international society characterised by norms and rules through a more rule-based pattern of relations - The emergence of a range of different actors (state and non-state actors) involved in transcendence of national space - Multidimensional regionalisation containing various processes of communication and interaction in several dimensions (i.e. economic political and cultural) - More formal organised region called a 'de jure' region, constituted by the members of the regional organisation
Regional community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A regional community developed by an enduring organisational framework promoting social communication and convergence of values and behaviour throughout the region - An active subject with a distinct identity, institutionalised or informal actor capability, legitimacy and structure of decision-making in conjunction with a more or less responsive regional civil society, transcending the old state borders - A mutually reinforcing relationship between the 'formal' region, defined by the community of states, and the 'real' region, in which a transnationalised regional civil society also has a role to play
Region-state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A regional institutionalised polity with a more fixed structure of decision-making and stronger actor capability - A new form of political entity constituted out of a voluntary evolution of a group of formerly sovereign national communities - Distinguished from a nation-state where homogenisation within a region suggests compatibility between differences within a pluralist culture

Based on Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000, p.461-468; Hettne, 2005, p.548)

It should be noted that although the levels of regionness are laid out in five evolutionary logics, Hettne & Söderbaum (2000) assert that it must not be taken for granted or seen as a single stage theory, since regionalisation processes can emerge from different points within the levels of regionness under contemporary challenges of globalisation. Moreover, the process of building a region can be deconstructed or moved back by the same actors who reinforce it because it involves issues of political and social transformation.

The analytical theory of regionness can be considered to study the complex processes of regionalisation emerging in multi-dimensions (political, economic, and cultural aspects) at different levels (global, regional, national and local levels), which are driven by state and non-state actors. NRT offers an analytical framework to gain an understanding of not only the way in which the higher education sector, as an internal actor, has played an important role in regionalisation, but also how regions, as actors, have the capacity to act in national, regional, and global spaces. Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) conclude that the distinctive components of NRT are as follows:

NRT approach:

The summary of the NRT approach and its distinctive characteristics is provided below.

- The formation of regions and transnational communities are viewed from a longer historical perspective and the origins of regionness can be traced far back in history.
- NRT is more decentralised and includes the agency of non-state actors and transnational forces.
- territoriality as the basis for community
- NRT emphasises intrinsic commonalities rather than differences based on the presumption that security, peace and the political economy of development and culture should be integrated within the same analytical framework.
- NRT framework is more 'global' in nature and regards that regionalisation is taking shape within the overall context of globalisation.

(Source: Based on Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000, pp. 468-469)

The NRT framework explains the process of regionalisation focusing on the global context as an exogenous factor. Hettne (2002) argues that it is impossible to understand new regionalism without the context of globalisation since 'regionalism is an approach to globalisation, whether promoting it or trying to control it' (Hettne, 2002, p. 329). In contrast to old regionalism which underlines inward-looking and protectionist policies, new regionalism is concerned with an open, export-oriented economy. Therefore, understanding the new theory of regional integration as comprising inside and outside processes provides an angle to look at the role of a non-state-centric actor, the higher education sector, and its regional and interregional

projects and strategies in response to the challenges of globalisation (Jorge de Melo, 2013; 2016; Robertson et al., 2016). Concerning the Southeast Asian region, NRT is a meaningful approach to analyse the establishment of the ASEAN and its level of regionness towards a regional community as well as to explore the role of higher education in response to regional integration.

The next section explains the relationships between globalisation, regionalisation, and higher education in order to illustrate the dimensions of higher education and impacts of globalisation and regionalisation on higher education policies and practices.

3.2 The Relationship between Regionalisation, Globalisation, and Higher Education

In response to global perspectives, contemporary research studies investigate the impacts of globalisation on education in diverse areas such as marketisation/privatisation, knowledge-based economy, transnational education, and internationalisation (see Ziguras, 2003; Lynch, 2006; George, 2006; Kamat, 2011; Ziguras & McBurnie, 2011). In the last decade, the knowledge-based economy has become a vital discourse in higher education reforms in developed and developing countries (George, 2006). Higher education is seen as a mechanism to strengthen the national economy. According to the World Bank (2002), the purpose of higher education in driving knowledge economies is to produce highly qualified graduates to serve global labour markets, generate innovative knowledge, and access global knowledge and transfer it to national development. To perform these functions, higher education management, in particular in Australia, the US, and the UK, has adopted the neoliberal model, which views higher education as a market commodity and competitive (Lynch, 2006; George, 2006). On the other hand, George (2006) argued that in Asian countries, higher education management has followed a state-centric model, which involves state intervention and direction on practices such as curriculum design, funding allocation, and research programmes. The neoliberal model differs from the state-centric model, where national economies of the former are under less state control and depend more on free market competition than the latter (George, 2006). However, the model of neoliberalism for higher education has been criticised for its hegemonic view of lowering state investment and becoming market driven, which is not applicable for the higher education sector as part of public services. Lynch (2006) argues that the market-oriented and competitive approaches have negative impacts on universities such as the decline of the importance of research and

teaching in the arts, humanities and social sciences, as their purpose is based on civil society rather than profit. Moreover, the neoliberal model creates unequal positions among universities whereby elite universities can earn benefits from globalisation and attract outstanding researchers and academics more than the second-tier universities.

Similarly, Altbach (2004) argues that globalisation has transformed higher education in different ways that are related to the unequal status of countries or institutions. He emphasises that industrial countries or powerful universities seem to profit more from globalisation than developing countries or weak universities. For instance, the global academic destinations of international students and scholars are mainly located in the industrialised and economically advanced nations of the world or prosperous countries in which there are potential resources for research and teaching as well as attractive job opportunities for graduates. In respect of multinational higher education initiatives, cross-border higher education ventures and academic initiatives have been largely exported from dominant countries to developing ones. As such, developing countries have become importers seeking to improve their higher education systems to cope with the challenges of globalisation and avoid the ‘neocolonialism of the 21st century’ (Altbach, 2004, p. 24). His study illustrates the way in which globalisation has different impacts on the higher education sector depending on the political and economic position of each country. It shows that although globalisation has the power to facilitate cross-border education globally, a nation-state has the authority to control the power of globalisation in order to protect its sovereignty and interests. In order to control the pressure of globalisation and enhance global competitiveness, many governments in Asian countries, such as Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and China, have attempted to become regional education hubs by increasing the world reputation of their universities and expanding transnational education opportunities (Mok & Yu, 2011).

The quest for creating regional education hubs sheds light on Marginson’s (2011a) ‘glonacal’ era of higher education, which links the position of transformationalist global theorists to the debate on the dimensions of higher education. He notes that ‘the global does not function as a universal container with the other dimensions inside it in descending order of size, regional to national down to local, like interlocking Russian Dolls’ (p. 13). This idea is opposed to the idea of hyper-globalists who favour the dominance of globalisation. This suggests that national governments and individual institutions have developed international strategies and initiatives in higher education, not only in the global direction but also in regional, national,

and local directions. The illustration of higher education in the glonacal dimension is shown in Figure 3.1.

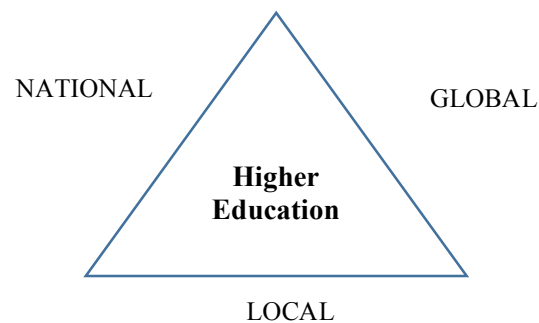


Figure 3.1: Glonacal

Source: Marginson and Rhoades (2002)

In relation to regionalisation in higher education, Marginson refers to higher education and research in Europe as one of remarkable regional practices emerging at a meso-level, between global and national dimensions. ‘It stimulates transformation of local activity and national systems, although there can be opportunity costs – an intense regional focus and interaction may retard other global connections’ (Marginson 2011a, p. 21). Marginson’s (2011a) argument denotes the dominance of regionalisation in enhancing regional cooperation and people mobility in higher education sectors towards the process of globalisation. This leads to the study of new regionalism, which emerges in the context of globalisation, as either a reaction to or/and a dynamic behind globalisation (Robertson, 2008). According to Hettne’s (2002) concept of new regionalism, the distinguishing characteristics of new regionalism are focused on the integration influenced by not only endogenous but also exogenous factors, which indicate globalisation or global players. He argues that ‘the new regionalism took shape in a multipolar world order and in a context of globalisation. It formed part of a global structural transformation. In this transformation a variety of non-state actors were to be found operating at several levels of the global system’ (Hettne, 2005, p. 549). Based on his argument, higher education regional projects can also be viewed as responses to regional and global pressures, as well as constructing a region entity, which could improve its capacity to become more globally competitive, such as in the creation of the European Higher Education Area (Robertson, 2006a). The relationship between regionalisation, globalisation, and higher education is not one-way but higher education has become a subject in the process of regionalisation and globalisation as well. Similarly, higher education policies and practices in

Thailand have been implemented to cope with not only local, national, global but also regional demands. Marginson's glonacal theory provides a framework that reveals important dimensions that have influenced the higher education policies and practices in Thailand, especially since the emergence of regional integration.

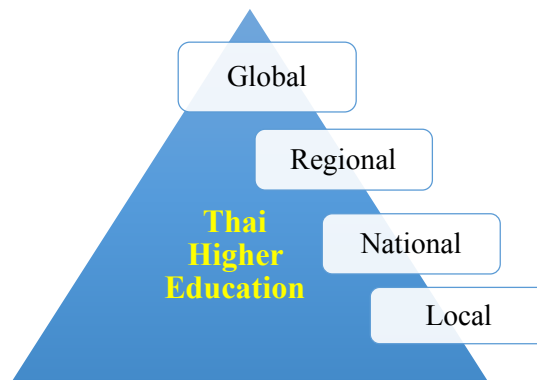


Figure 3.2: Thai higher education's Dimension

Source: Adapted from Marginson and Rhoades' (2002) Glonacal view

In global higher education, Marginson (2011a) argues that world imaginaries of higher education include three dimensions, based on his study on global perspectives and strategies of Asia-Pacific university presidents. The first dimension is the economic imaginary based on neoliberalism which perceives higher education as a global market underpinning the idea that higher education and knowledge are commodities that create economic values. The second dimension reflects the ideas of competition and rankings in global higher education which create a form of status hierarchy in the education market. The last dimension is related to the flow of knowledge source and networks. World imaginaries have influenced practices in higher education. In Marginson's (2011b) study, three kinds of actions shape the global dimension of higher education: acts of imagination, acts of production, and acts of regulation. These actions have influenced policies and practices at national and institutional levels in responses to the three world imaginaries explained earlier. Examples of global outputs are research collaboration, student and staff mobility, networking, international student enrolment, and joint and double degrees.

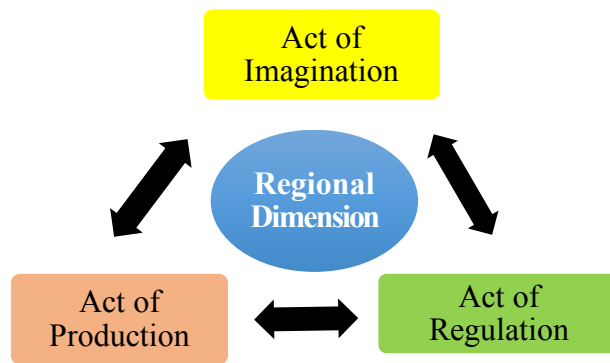


Figure 3.3: Shaping of regional dimensions by nations and institutions

Source: Adapted from Marginson (2011b)

Marginson's three types of action provides a framework to analyse higher education policies and practices which have been shaped by the act of imagination of policymakers at the national and institutional levels towards the ASEAN Community. The next section discusses internationalisation in higher education, as this appears to be a fundamental mechanism that drives the development of regionness and connects the world.

3.3 Internationalisation of Higher Education: Concepts, Rationales, and Trends

De Wit, Hunter, Howard, and Egron-Polak (2015) note that internationalisation of higher education can refer to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period when pilgrims made a long journey for religious reasons and for learning. However, the concept and its practices have developed in response to national, regional, and global demands over time. The impetus for internationalisation of higher education obviously appeared after World War II until the end of the Cold War, driven by national security and foreign policy, since nation-states attempted to maintain peace and mutual understanding as well as reconstruct the nations from the disasters of war (De Wit et al., 2015). Studies on internationalisation in higher education emerged after World War II, focusing on a particular theme in different parts of the world; for example, in Europe and the US, international education was related to *study abroad* whereas in the United Kingdom and most Anglophone countries, the focus was on *international students* (Trahar, Green, De Wit & Whitsed, 2015). In the period of the strengthening of the European Community, the Erasmus programme was launched in the 1980s as an international strategic approach to enhance the region's competitiveness and develop European citizenship together with other European programmes for education and research including

student and staff exchange, joint curriculum development, and joint research projects (De Wit et al., 2015). According to the development of internationalisation, it is apparent that nation-states have regarded internationalisation in higher education as an important mechanism to enhance relationships between countries for politic, economic, and societal purposes. There are many debates on its definitions and rationales, which are presented in the following sections.

3.3.1 Definition of internationalisation in higher education

The conceptualisation of internationalisation in higher education has developed into broader explanations. The well-known fundamental concept is defined by Jane Knight as ‘the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of a higher education institution’ (Knight and De Wit, 1995, p. 17). Based on this definition, internationalisation is divided into two streams:

Internationalization “**at Home**” occurring on campus which includes curriculum and programs (e.g. foreign language study; international and regional studies; and joint or double degrees), Teaching/learning processes (e.g. classroom with international students, returned study-abroad students and international scholars; virtual student mobility for joint courses and research projects), Extra-curricular activities (e.g. international and intercultural campus events; liaison with community-based cultural and ethnic groups through internships), and Research and scholarly activity (e.g. joint research projects; international conferences and seminars; published articles and papers; international research agreements; research exchange programs)

Internationalization “**Abroad**” viewed as cross-border education which embraces Movement of people (e.g. internship or research programs, or full program abroad; and the movement of professors/scholars), Delivery of programs (e.g. franchising, twinning, double/joint degree; delivery includes educational or training programs offered through a partnership arrangement between international/foreign and domestic institutions), Mobility of providers (e.g. having a physical or virtual presence in the receiving country; branch campuses, stand-alone foreign institutions, and some franchise models with responsibility for the program and awards a foreign degree), and International projects (e.g. non-award-based activities such as joint curriculum development, research, benchmarking, technical assistance, e-learning platforms, professional development and assistance)

(Based on Knight, 2004, 2008, pp. 22-24)

With a more updated definition, internationalisation can be explained in terms of being *international*, *intercultural*, and *global*, which are interrelated. Knight (2008) asserts, ‘*International* carries the sense of relationships between and among nations, cultures, or countries. However, internationalisation is also about relating to the diversity of cultures that exist within countries, communities, institutions, and classrooms so *intercultural* seems the best term when addressing aspects of cultural diversity. Finally, *global* is included to provide the sense

of worldwide scope' (pp. 21-22). This definition underlines the idea that internationalisation involves the process of developing an intercultural dimension at institutional, local, national, and global levels.

Recently, there has been a debate on Knight's definition of 'Internationalisation at Home' (IaH). Beelen and Jones (2015) redefine the concept of IaH by arguing that the existing definition is a limited list of on-campus activities which omits the pedagogical aspect of an internationalised curriculum, learning outcomes, and assessment tools. Thus, they propose a new relevant definition of IaH which is 'the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments' (Beelen & Jones, 2015, p. 69). Their redefined concept of IaH includes more meaningful elements of internationalisation of the curriculum which aims to improve international and intercultural knowledge, attitudes and competence of all students on campus. The curriculum can be informally or formally taught, for example, students who participate in mobility programmes can share their study-abroad experiences with other students in a classroom. This activity helps transfer intercultural views to non-mobile students, who form the majority of the student population in a classroom and beyond. Furthermore, De Wit et al. (2015) asserted that internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) has become an essential implementation to improve and assess intercultural and international skills of students and prepare graduates to live and work in a globalised world through the formal and informal internationalised curriculum at home. Based on this definition, it is argued that IoC is viewed as a purposeful implementation in relation to IaH as "there is an obvious overlap with the concept of IaH, in that IoC is also focused on all students, not just the mobile minority" (De Wit et al., 2015, p. 50). According to Leask (2015), IoC underlines the internationalised content, pedagogical methods, learning outcomes, assessment tools, and support services of a programme of study. In order to design and deliver accurate internationalised curricula, it is important that academic staff are engaged in the process and training with continuing support and commitment from their university and departments (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Green & Whitsed, 2015; Leask, 2015).

Aligned with the concepts of internationalisation, there are further dimensions of internationalisation that influence higher education policies and practices in a country and that need to be understood. Teichler (1999) argues that internationalisation of higher education is not isolated but might interact with other factors such as trends, challenges, and pressures. This is emphasised in Van der Wende's (1997) study on the relationship between national

policies and higher education policies for internationalisation. He found that over a period of ten years, internationalisation policies in Europe had been more focused on international activities such as student mobility, staff mobility, foreign language teaching and learning, and cooperative research activities. However, there were existing trends including universalisation, globalisation, internationalisation, or 'regionalisation' which might change the functions of higher education and shift internationalisation policies beyond cross-border mobility and cooperation activities (cited in Teichler, 1999). Van der Wende's investigation reveals that internationalisation policies should not be concentrated merely on a short-term activity or a project-based policy, but rather the policies need to integrate mainstream higher education policy with concerns about the challenges and trends that emerge in regional and global economies (Van der Wende, 2001). Therefore, the discussion on rationales and challenges driving internationalisation policies is important to review.

3.3.2 Rationales and challenges behind internationalisation in higher education

The analysis of rationales influencing internationalisation in higher education should be considered from multiple dimensions, since it is related to socio-cultural, political, economic and academic motivations and emerges at institutional, national, and global levels (Knight, 2005; De Wit, 2002). For instance, internationalisation policies may emerge at a national level when aiming to develop human resources with highly qualified capacity, increasing cooperation through bilateral or regional activities for enhancing economic competition, generating revenue and commercial trades, supporting nation-building agenda, and promoting multicultural and mutual understanding. Conversely, rationales at institutional levels link to the issues of enhancing international branding and reputation, improving international quality and standards, generating additional sources of income, enhancing student and staff development, establishing strategic alliances, and producing research and knowledge relevant to global issues (Knight, 2005, 2008).

Moreover, Van der Wende (2007) explores the challenges and opportunities of internationalisation in higher education in relation to its future scenarios (open networking, serving local communities, new public management, and higher education) as introduced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The consequences of the scenarios may affect the internationalisation process in terms of access, equity, and quality, and a combination of competitive and cooperative opportunities. For example, former challenges and opportunities included issues of inequitable access to study abroad

opportunities, quality improvement due to competitive pressures, and the development of international benchmarking processes. The latter implies the enhancement of regional cooperation such as the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area combined with internal market competition strategies, which is viewed as a reinforcement of the EU's global competitiveness. Therefore, governments need to consider these challenges and opportunities in order to design the national higher education system for higher education institutions 'more globally competitive: national or international cooperation or competition or (more likely) a mix of these four options' (Van der Wende, 2007, p. 282).

At the institutional level, studies on the implementation of internationalising policies have been conducted to scrutinise their challenges and opportunities. For instance, Tan, Pang, Kim, and Lo (2014) explore issues and concerns of managing hospitality and tourism collaborative programme between Asian universities (a host university) and their foreign partner universities (an award university) from academic administrators' perspectives. The finding indicated that the quality assurance (QA) of the programme, including curriculum design, assessment planning, and credit approval, was controlled by the awarding universities while the areas of student admission and administration were directed and operated by the host universities. Therefore, consistent communication between awarding universities and host universities was essential to ensure the alignment of faculty recruitment, course syllabus, and teaching approaches. However, the study found that there were challenges faced by the administrators in managing collaborative programmes in relation to inequivalent local standards framed by institutional and government regulations, lead time for government approval, cultural differences and qualifications of students, inadequate involvement of expertise faculty staff at awarding universities, and processing time for student applications and assessment. Taking these existing difficulties into consideration could be useful to me as a government official working with higher education institutions in framing appropriate strategies to develop an effective international programme. Moreover, most partner and award universities in this study were from western countries. This data reflects the influence of the western partner universities in Asian countries which can lessen the enrichment of building academic partnerships with Asian universities within the region. This should be an important issue to consider when enriching higher education cooperation among Southeast Asian universities.

Nevertheless, the research participants recognised some benefits of internationalisation of hospitality and tourism higher education such as (1) enhancing the university's reputation, creditability, and long-term sustainability; (2) developing the course content in response to

local and global contexts; (3) allowing local students to access local and overseas resources; (4) learning from and cooperating with international best practices; (5) attracting more talents and reaching broader student markets; and (6) producing employable graduates for local and global industry sectors.

Further thoughts on internationalisation in higher education have been broadly discussed in light of novel strategies, difficulties, and benefits. Wihlborg & Robson (2018) introduced a range of recent papers presented at the ECER 2016 conference in Dublin to provide recent trends in research on internationalisation and point out international strategies at national and institutional levels and their limitations. For instance, while investigating current student mobility programmes at Irish universities, Courtois (2017) criticised the increasingly inequitable access to credit mobility and stratification of student participation in exchange programmes and choices of destinations. Another study on mobility programmes was conducted by Groves, Montes, and Carvalho (2017) who identified the impacts and benefits of staff mobility programmes completed by Spanish university teachers who had experience in research overseas. Besides positive aspects such as knowledge sharing, ability development, and access to facilities, the study exposed difficulties in sustaining the benefits of the participants' overseas experience and capacity due to the lack of support from co-workers and executives as well as lack of budget and facilities to resume or conduct new research. The authors suggest that ways to expand the reintegration of faculty staff for maintaining the benefits and fulfilment of mobility programmes and ensuring development of the institution need to be considered. Furthermore, other selected papers provide a contemporary rationale for internationalisation which is perceived as an efficient process to improve the quality of higher education, instead of economic drivers or quantities of exchange students and international academic collaborations (Akdağ & Swanson, 2017). Similarly, Ng and Nyland (2017) found that the motivations behind the implementation of the cross-border collaborative articulation programme (CAP) between an Australian and a Chinese university were different among the two partners. Based on the perspectives of key stakeholders, the participation of the Australian university aimed to increase university income from foreign student enrolments and improve the university's global reputation while the Chinese university intended to improve institutional quality through academic cooperation with an overseas best-practice partnership based on the government policy. Based on the recent studies on current approaches to internationalisation, I have recognised advantages and limitations in these international practices. For instance, although mobility programmes provide an opportunity

for students and staff to learn knowledge from others overseas and develop their international skills, the programmes can cause stratification of student participation and biased choices of destinations. Moreover, implementing international strategies is beneficial not only to enhance the university's global reputation and income but academic collaboration with renowned foreign universities can reinforce and sustain the quality of domestic higher education institutions.

Beside the benefits of internationalisation of higher education, some scholars have criticised the Anglo-Centric conceptualisations of internationalisation practices. The issues embrace topics of English as a lingua franca, neo-liberal ideology, transnational education. It is inevitable that globalisation impacts on internationalisation of higher education. Ng (2012) argues that the internationalisation of higher education in many Asian countries has been influenced by the Anglophone practices from UK, US and Australia which can eradicate the true missions of its process in generating cultural awareness and a sense of global citizenship. Concentrating on neoliberal ideology of market-driven forces, higher education institutions tend to achieve the goals of becoming more globally competitive and increasing revenue. The internationalisation agendas based on economic orientation include marketisation, transnational education, world-class reputation, international benchmarking, and education hubs. Ng (2012) considers that the duplication of these western practices may inhibit other important aspects of an internationalised curriculum in terms of developing cross-cultural understanding, respect and tolerance in society. These objectives are considered as outcomes of implementing internationalising to connect the world as a whole by producing graduates who can live in a globalised world and understand the world's problems. In this regard, to avoid the neocolonial situation, government and higher education institutions need to work together to balance the ideas of competitive economy and civic engagement in internationalisation of research, curriculum and pedagogy as well as academic service areas (Ng, 2012).

Apart from the global quest of economic-driven imperatives, the idea of English as a lingua franca predominant in the Anglophone model has shaped internationalisation policies and practices in Asian countries. In the study of Phan (2013) on the impact of the English speaking West's practices on English language policies in Japan, the author indicates that many Asian countries have promoted internationalisation of higher education through the development of international programs taught in English and the expansion of academic partnerships with Anglophone countries. On the contrary, Phan (2013) argues that the

dominance of English in higher education can threaten a nation's identity and culture such as loss of local language and local knowledge. In the case of Japan, the government has initiated two important policies on internationalisation of higher education named *the Action Plan 2003* and the '*Global 30*' Project. The former aims to foster the nation's identity and culture through English language education while the latter tends to promote English-medium programmes taught in Japanese universities in order to enhance their global competitiveness and attract more international students (Phan, 2013). Based on these two internationalising agendas, Phan (2013) points out that with the concerns about the dominance of Westernisation towards the national uniqueness and disregard of Japanese universities among domestic and overseas students, the Japanese government attempts to create English language policies in connection with the promotion of Japan's identity. This assumes that the Japanese government seems to be unconfident to promote Japanese medium programmes against the West which can undermine the cultural national identities (Phan, 2013).

Majee and Ress's (2018) study illustrates the conflict between the ideology of Euro-American practices on internationalisation of higher education and local demands for social justice in South Africa and Brazil. Due to histories of colonial occupation, the two countries encountered the social issues of inequity and racialism, which caused educational inequities. In the study, the authors highlight that in the era of decolonisation, the governments of the two countries have promoted racial justice and geopolitical redress which includes higher education reform to create equal access to higher education between White and non-White students. In terms of internationalisation of higher education, South Africa and Brazil have become a main tertiary destination for regional students, from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Community of Portuguese-language Countries (CPLP), respectively. However, international initiatives to recruit inbound regional students to the countries are criticised for their purposes of barely upholding the national demands of racial justice, educational equity and decolonisation (Majee & Ress, 2018). For instance, the initiative of regional student mobility carried out by the South African government aims to recruit international graduate talents to study in public universities to strengthen research. Such a goal tends to decrease opportunities for historically marginalised excluded or Black South Africans to enrol or study in the public universities or research universities (Majee & Ress, 2018).

Engaging with some of the critiques of the Anglo-Centric conceptualisations of internationalisation, indicates that the implementation of internationalisation can be

problematic and neo-colonialist. Therefore, the government should balance its internationalisation practices so that they are relevant to the nation's uniqueness or culture by learning from the West, without copying every practice. Not taking this into account may cause social problems such as unequal access to the programmes for domestic students. Moreover, having unqualified staff for the international programmes can reduce the quality of the education. Similarly, internationalising practices in many Asian countries including Thailand have followed Western educational agendas (Mok, 2008). For instance, most international programmes in Thailand are taught in English. The Thai government has encouraged Thai universities to increase their world ranking. Moreover, most international programmes in Thailand are more expensive than courses taught in Thai. Privileging such trends in internationalisation can diminish other important missions of higher education such as the communication of national values and producing globally aware Thai citizens.

In Thailand, Llego (2014) investigated the influence of internationalisation from Thai administrators' and educators' perspectives who worked in the international higher education sector. Based on the study, the concept of internationalisation of higher education defined by Thai participants was referred to as international programmes taught in English, missing other aspects of internationalisation of the curriculum. Although the internationalisation in Thai higher education was influenced by Western models, the launching of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 became a distinctive feature of the international policies and practices in the Thai context to fulfil the regional bloc's specific purposes. Several barriers to implementation were identified due to inconsistent and actual policy at the national and university level, lack of engagement of cross-culture learning and associations with other Southeast Asia countries, deficiency of communication in English and other languages spoken in ASEAN countries of students and faculty members, and shortage of world-class faculty and students in Thai universities. With the endeavour of the Thai government and universities to enhance international education goals, these barriers need to be overcome in order to strengthen regional integration in Southeast Asia.

Regarding regional development, the European Commission announced the publication of *Europe Higher Education in the World* (2013) to deliver higher education comprehensive internationalising strategies so that EU Member States can improve their policy implementation and expand their partnerships. It aims to strengthen EU countries' competitiveness so that they can effectively encounter global challenges. The core areas of

the comprehensive strategies are grouped into three categories: ‘international student and staff mobility; the internationalisation and improvement of curricula and digital learning; and strategic cooperation, partnerships and capacity building. These categories should not be seen as isolated but as integrated elements of a comprehensive strategy’ (European Commission, 2013, p. 4). These strategic approaches require collaboration of actors at all levels, not only the European Commission but also state governments of the EU countries, universities including staff and students, and stakeholders. This model of comprehensive strategies merely emphasising higher education agendas has not appeared in the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011-2015). However, the key internationalising initiatives such as promoting student and staff mobility programmes, using Information and Communication Technology and expanding academic partnerships are communicated in the ASEAN Work Plan as recommendations for ASEAN member countries, universities, regional agencies such as SEAMEO, ASEAN University Network (AUN) and ASEAN dialogue partners to implement, but are not compulsory and do not apply to all level of education.

It is known that internationalisation in higher education involves a range of rationales driven by multiple actors and factors interacting with socio-cultural, economic, and political concerns. This is not restricted to the institutional and national levels but also regional and global ones. The next section provides an extended explanation of the relationships between internationalisation, regionalisation, and globalisation in higher education, which build the theoretical framework of the thesis.

3.4 The Relationship between Internationalisation, Regionalisation, and Globalisation In Higher Education

To study the challenges and responses of higher education towards regionalisation and globalisation, the relationships between internationalisation, regionalisation, and globalisation in higher education need to be analysed. For decades, many studies on the challenges and opportunities of internationalisation and globalisation facing higher education have been conducted, while studies on higher education geared towards regionalisation tend to focus on Europeanisation. However, the phenomena of internationalisation in higher education at other regional levels, such as in Southeast Asia (ASEAN) , South America (Mercosur), and the Africa Union (AU), have informed contemporary debates among scholars. Three concepts that commonly indicate the impacts on higher education, as defined by Van der Wende (2004), are as follows:

Internationalisation assumes that nation states, i.e. societies defined as nation states, continue to play a role as economic, social and cultural 'systems', but that they become more interconnected and that activities crossing their borders increase. Cooperation between nation states is expanding and national policies put a stronger emphasis on regulating or facilitating border-crossing activities.

Globalisation puts emphasis on an increasing convergence and interdependence of economies and societies. In contrast to internationalisation, a denationalisation and integration of regulatory systems as well as a blurring role of nation states are taken for granted. The liberalisation of international trade and global markets are often viewed as the strongest move in this direction.

Europeanisation is often employed for describing the phenomena of internationalisation on a "regional" scale. Cooperation between EU countries and economic, social and cultural activities crossing their national borders are expanding quickly based on the notion that such cooperation is required for stability and economic growth within the region. Its link to globalisation consists in the fact that this regional cooperation also intends to enhance the global competitiveness of the European region as a whole.

(Van der Wende, 2004, p. 10)

From these definitions, it is found that the three terms contain some linked implications such as interconnectedness, interdependence, cooperation, and border-crossing. However, they have different descriptions in terms of developing processes and activities, which are dominated by socio-cultural, political, and economic factors at a particular level. Similarly, Enders (2004) argues that normally the usages of globalisation, internationalisation, regionalisation, and denationalisation emphasise international activities and spread the outreach of higher education, although they may have some differences. Tilak (2011) also notes that 'internationalisation of higher education is viewed by many as a natural extension of and response to the pressures created by many forms of the worldwide wave of globalisation, which has also resulted in increasing demand for higher education of diverse types and natures' (p. 20). Thus, it seems that higher education regionalisation and globalisation inevitably involve internationalisation.

From a political aspect, internationalisation means cross-border activities involving cooperation between countries, which are dominated by nation-states. The international relationships are built on mutual cooperation and observation (Scott 1998, cited in Enders, 2004). However, Marginson and Van der Wende (2007) argue that internationalisation in higher education conveys a cooperative approach rather than political or ideological ideas, while globalisation in the policy context highlights the increasing forces resulting from economic competition globally. While globalisation engages multiple associations among many nation-states, internationalisation refers to any cross-border relationship taking place

between nations or particular institutions located in distinctive national systems. For instance, in higher education policy, internationalisation is viewed as the government medium assisting universities to achieve more global competitiveness. Thus, although the concepts of internationalisation and globalisation are divergent, they contain interactive and mutual connotations, particularly in terms of neoliberal thought.

Internationalisation and globalisation engage in the process of regionalisation in two conflicting ways. Enders (2004) explains that, for example, firstly, the regionalisation in Europe, or ‘Europeanisation’, could be regarded as ‘a benign regional version of the internationalisation processes’ since it engages the process of increasing cooperation or even integration at the regional level through ‘mutual co-operation and *horizontal* interaction at all levels: between national and sub-national governments, between sectors and institutions of higher education across the region, and even region-wide collaboration among corresponding units within universities and colleges’ (p.368). Secondly, regionalisation in higher education can be viewed as a chapter of the globalisation process, generating cooperation among neighbouring countries in order to lessen the force of other parts of the world.

Marginson and Van der Wende (2007) point out three actions of internationalisation in relation to Europeanisation in higher education. These encompass the expansion of international mobility of people and ideas; international cooperation and activities in economic, social and cultural dimensions among EU countries; and the explicit agreement undertaken in a common European higher education area to promote international activities in European countries. On the other hand, EU countries consider international cooperation in higher education to enhance their global competitiveness as a whole (Van der Wende, 2004; Robertson, 2006a). These actions reflect the role of the higher education sector in strengthening a region’s capacity to respond to global challenges.

In Europe, internationalising of higher education has become an explicit mechanism in regionalising and globalising processes. The European Commission has implemented a variety of higher education strategies with the aim of integrating the European community as well as enhancing its global competitiveness. The regionalising strategy was initially accelerated by the launch of the EU’s Erasmus mobility programme. Robertson (2006a) argues that the Erasmus programme was the essential mechanism to culturally strengthen a sense of European citizenship, to economically increase the regional cooperation among a pool of graduates, and to politically consolidate intelligent people for governance. The

strategy was to build a single market and the European Union (EU) under the declaration of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. This strategy addressed higher education from a neoliberal perspective, which focused on creating the European knowledge-economy in order to make the EU competitive in the global economy, especially competing with the US and Australia (Robertson & Keeling, 2008). During this period, the EU's endeavour was to develop its relationship with external partners, such as Asian countries, by expanding higher education cooperation and networks funded by the EU's development agency, EuropeAid, under the platforms of the inter-regional institutional structures of the ASEAN and ASEM. In addition to aiding these purposes, it aimed to increase European visibility for international students in order to attract more talent from other countries to Europe (Robertson, 2008). Therefore, the Bologna Process, under the Lisbon strategy 2000, was endorsed to build a unified architecture of higher education in Europe and a credit transfer system among European universities (Ravinet, 2008; Robertson & Keeling, 2008). With 29 committed signatories in 1999, the Bologna Process was implemented with the aim of creating the EHEA by 2010, under six agendas which included increasing staff and student mobility in parallel with the improvement of national QA, introduction of compatible degree structures, agreement on a credit transfer scheme, and mutual description of qualifications defined in an individual diploma supplement (Robertson, 2006a; 2010; Robertson & Keeling, 2008). With these actions, the European Higher Education Area has become globally attractive and this has increased its external markets. The Erasmus programme and Bologna process have been acknowledged as examples of higher education regionalism. Therefore, Europe is the only region where the process of regional integration has evolved to the level of 'region-state' with a form of political entity where 'it has a fixed and permanent structure of decision-making' (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000; Van Langenhove, 2011, p. 81).

The Erasmus programme and Bologna process have been acknowledged as examples of higher education regionalism. Robertson et al. (2016) define higher education regional projects as containing cultural, political and economic agendas, which are conducted at a regional level such as in the Gulf Region for Mercosur, ASEAN, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the Barents Region. They argue that 'higher education regional projects are also socially constituted and emerge out of the interaction between ideas and imaginaries, as well as strategies that are advanced and reproduced through new social norms. They can involve the whole sector on a grand scale, or be institution-to-institution projects involving several countries' (pp. 15-16). This aspect reveals that a variety of higher education regional

projects have emerged around the globe and been implemented in different ways based on the norms and values of the region in extant time and space. Along similar lines, this thesis focuses on the ways in which the ASEAN has managed higher education regional projects and to what extent the Thai higher education sector, at national and institutional levels, has responded to the regional integration projects.

Conclusion

To gain an understanding of the relationship between globalisation and regionalisation, the NRT was adopted in this study. The NRT is designed to study the development of Southeast Asia's regionness and its relation to globalisation. While globalisation has been the exogenous factor that reinforces regionalism, the endogenous forces within the region and the nation have also become important to integrate the region. With respect to this perspective, my research interest sought to investigate not only how globalisation and regionalisation have impacted the higher education system in Thailand but also to what extent higher education is recognised as a mechanism that drives the regional integration and responds to globalisation. Undertaken within the Thai context, this thesis employs Marginson and Rhoades's glonacal theory to study the dimensions of Thai higher education policies and practices, which have been shaped by national and university administrators' imaginaries. Correspondingly, studies on internationalisation in higher education have been reviewed for the analysis of the concepts and rationales behind the policy implementation at the regional, national, and institutional levels as well as problematises and critiques of the Anglo-Centric conceptualisations of internationalisation. Lastly, the connections between internationalisation, regionalisation, and globalisation in higher education are discussed. The next chapter will further reviews of literature in relevant to these research topics.

Chapter 4

Review of Relevant Literature

Introduction

This chapter critiques previous research conducted on globalisation and regionalisation and its effect on national higher education policies and practices, not only in the context of Thailand but also in other countries. The reviews of these empirical studies enable me to become familiar with the relevant topics and debates raised by previous scholars. This literature review will help to frame my own study by exploring other scholars' work and identifying important elements, ideas, and problems relevant to the research topic. Moreover, the review provides the examples of research methodologies and techniques and identifies gaps in the subject area. Based on my research study, the review of literature is divided into three central themes in relation to higher education policies and practices including regionalisation, globalisation and internationalisation.

4.1 Globalisation and Higher Education Reform

According to Nge's (2012) study on the impact of globalisation on Singapore's higher education sector, the discourse of globalisation influences the internationalisation policies and practices undertaken by the Singapore government and three publicly funded universities including National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Singapore Management University (SMU). With regard to internationalisation in higher education, the study investigated the meanings, rationales, approaches, and strategies stated in the government and university policy documents and examined the ways in which the policies responded to the nation's economic, social, and political contexts and the globalised economy. The results revealed that the government and the universities interpreted the concepts of internationalisation in relation to the ideas of 'going global' or 'to be global universities' (p. 188). It was evident that in the current national context, the three universities had a similar vision of internationalisation strategies, which was to become a leading global university or a world-class university although their institutional specialisation was different. Referring to the mission of fostering global competitiveness, the author categorised three main rationales behind university internationalisation encompassing producing world-ready

graduates, enhancing global competitiveness, and attracting foreign talent. To achieve these outcomes, several international strategies were implemented consisting of student mobility programmes, academic and research collaboration with overseas universities such as joint degree or double degree programmes, and provision of financial support to students and faculty through scholarships and international hiring rate. It was argued that these internationalising strategies corresponded to Singapore's economic and social development policy, which positioned universities as key centres of excellence to produce the nation's talents and lure those from other countries to Singapore. Nge's (2012) study illustrates the ways in which the neoliberal ideology of globalisation has shaped internationalisation in higher education in Singapore. With the focus on enhancing global competitiveness, the Singaporean government considered internationalisation as the key aspect to compete in a global market rather than focusing on a region's purpose.

Similarly, Gomes, Robertson and Dale (2012) investigated the influence of globalisation on higher education by analysing higher education transformation in Latin America and Brazil towards a regional project known as the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and its relation to globalisation. Through the lens of a relational and critical approach, in their study, globalisation is viewed as 'a set of socio-historical phenomena which are interrelated, interdependent and intertwined processes; each one conditions and is conditioned by the others' (p. 223). Thus, the process of globalisation involves power relations occurring in a scalar dimension which contains the relevant chain of global, international, regional, national, local, and institutional segments. Based on this definition, the authors argue that although MERCOSUR and the Brazilian national government have played a role in developing higher education policies and practices in Latin America and Brazil, the practice of neoliberal globalisation has become a dominant force that has transformed the higher education sector. This argument somewhat differs from that of Nge (2012) in terms of drawing attention to the ways in which the process of globalisation intertwines with regionalisation. Considering MERCOSUR's economic integration project, higher education is utilised as a means for strengthening the regional cohesion and enhancing human resources to cope with the global economic competitiveness. The project to harmonise education systems aims to create MERCOSUR's education space to facilitate mobility of students and staff and design comparable and compatible curricula and degrees with the aim of producing qualified graduates to serve the labour market in the region and engage in a knowledge-based economy. Moreover, beyond the regional integration purpose, higher education in Latin

America is involved in a global market in the form of commodification and trading corporations or firms such as in Apollo Global Network and Laureate International Universities. At the national level, during the last two decades, it had become evident that the Brazilian government has promoted privatisation as well as massification of higher education across the country in response to the neoliberal globalisation and regional projects with a triple growth rate of private higher education institutions compared to the public sector in Brazil, making it the largest Latin America market and the fifth global market for education. The findings of Nge (2012) and Gomes et al. (2012) accentuate the importance of internationalisation practices in higher education not only for fostering social and economic development at the national level but also for strengthening regional integration and enhancing global competitiveness.

4.2 Regionalisation and Impact on Higher Education Policy

Europeanisation

With Europe's tangible progress in the regionalisation process, many scholars are interested in exploring its impacts on various arenas including higher education sectors. For instance, Huisman and Van der Wende's (2004) comparative study of national policies for internationalisation of higher education in seven EU countries showed that, apart from the national geographical, political, social, and cultural contexts, internationalisation, Europeanisation, and globalisation had influenced the government and institutional policies of higher education in these countries. The objective of the study was also to look at the impact of (supra) national policies on the higher education institutions in the case-study countries. In the study, the analysis of the European-level policies and the national higher education policies focusing on internationalisation and their relationships were separately reported by a group of scholars in Austria, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom, followed by the international comparative study. These case-study countries were the EU member states involved in regional higher education commitments and programmes such as the Bologna process, Lisbon strategy, Socrates, and ERASMUS programmes. The study found that the government in the European countries responded to European-level policies in diverse ways, particularly interplaying with the Bologna Process such as reforming the two-cycle degree structure in the Netherlands and Austria while minor changes occurred in the UK higher education system and there were sceptical views on its benefits and implementation in Portugal and Greece. Considering the

initiative of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), universities in most countries used the ECTS to mainly facilitate student mobility but not as a compulsory national credit system, except for the Netherlands. Moreover, higher education QA and accreditation systems and the regional networks were developed according to the Bologna Declaration and it was apparent that English language has been a significant lingua franca in international policy development. The study concluded that internationalisation in the national higher education policies underlies the economic rationales of increasing international competitiveness. The strategies include improving the performance of higher education institutions through regional and international collaboration such as student and academic staff mobility, research collaboration, and cross-border providers in education. Consequently, the study identified the difference between the concept of globalisation and the concept of internationalisation and Europeanisation by arguing the former referred to a competitive practice while the latter involved collaboration. Huisman and Van der Wende's (2004) comparative study explicitly presents the impacts of regionalisation on national higher education policies and practices and the ways in which the EU Member countries respond to the supranational policies differently. Furthermore, it introduces the development of higher education policies and their implementation driven by regional organisation and the relationship to globalisation, which leads to a further study in other regions.

To investigate the implementation of the Bologna Process, as an intergovernmental initiative employed in European regional integration and the knowledge economy, Barrett (2013) conducted a mixed-method study to explore its impact on higher education policy reform in European countries by comparing two case studies of Portugal and Spain. The criteria of the Bologna Process on compatible degrees, QA, and degree recognition were explored as a part of the Europeanisation and the creation of the EHEA. Considering a political economy context, the outcomes of the Bologna policy implementation were influenced by three factors comprising of global economic competitiveness, national politics, and leadership of the supranational EU. The analysis showed that these influences caused institutional change in universities, making them agents of regional change. Based on the two case-studies, it was evident that in Portugal, higher education reforms denoted a centralised system, in which the government formulated laws to support the Bologna Process implementation in alignment with the country's traditional binary system, which included polytechnical and university institutions. The higher education policy was reformed to promote internationalisation to support the EHEA through the implementation of the Bologna Process's degree cycle

systems and the ECTS credit schemes while sustaining national interests and values. Moreover, the initiatives of internationalisation in Portuguese universities were arranged with the aim of increasing the enrolment of domestic and foreign students and improving the quality of higher education to become more competitive. These strategic plans included fostering student and staff mobility, cultivating student-centred learning, developing a degree with employment linkage programmes, implementing the National Qualification Framework, and investing in Research and Development programmes. Similarly, in Spanish higher education, the internationalisation policy reforms referred to the Bologna Process with the intention to gain international university ranking in order to attract overseas students and support local students to study abroad. The government responded to the Bologna Process by promoting and supporting internationalisation in Spanish higher education institutions. The provision of the Bologna Process policy implementation was manifest when the government passed several essential laws on reforming the bachelor's degree cycle, launching ECTS criteria, and developing the Spanish Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (MECES) . Unlike the centralised higher education's reforms in Portugal, the Spanish universities in a group of regions had autonomous power based on the federal government system which facilitated their participation in the neoliberal European market. Therefore, the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation, namely Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad sation Acreditación (ANECA) , was established to assess the university quality and qualifications corresponding to the national and regional concerns. At the national level, the qualitative results also revealed that the engagement of academic stakeholders from public, academic, and private sectors influenced the achievement of policy implementation. Furthermore, the statistical results from the study showed that the economic factor measured by gross domestic product per capita (GDP PC) influenced the attainment of higher education reforms. This implied that a country with higher economic growth has greater financial capability to gain Tertiary Education Attainment. These comparative studies conducted by Huisman and Van der Wende (2004) and Barrett (2013) suggest that the higher education sector plays an important role in strengthening Europeanisation in order to enhance the region's global competitiveness. With this provision, internationalisation policies and practices at national and institutional levels have been developed in alignment with regional higher education initiatives such as the Bologna process and ECTS implementation to create the European Higher Education Area.

4.3 Roles of International Organisations and Networks

Many scholars investigated the influence of regional and international organisations on higher education reforms in nation-states. To clearly understand the effects of regional organisations including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the EU, and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) on national education systems, Dale and Robertson (2002) provided a set of organisational variables:

Form and purpose; dimensions of soft or hard power through decisions, agenda setting new rules, and learning or technical advice; nature of direct or indirect effects on education politics or politics of education; processes or means of influence on the education system (strategies such as harmonisation, networking, borrowing, learning); and scope (the extent of their influence on different levels of education through state's sovereignty and autonomy (pp. 18-19).

These differences led to diverse effects on education policies and practices within the regional organisation's members' states. For instance, when higher education was under the NAFTA trade agreement per the rule-based approach, the governments of its partners, including the US, Canada, and Mexico, had lost their power to control universities. This meant it influenced some areas of the state's sovereignty such as determining the national education policy but not the whole sovereignty. In the case of the EU, it was evident that the regional policies and agenda affected the education systems in the EU countries in various aspects since the EU had clear policies and strategies on utilising education as a means for promoting the regional integration and enhancing European competitiveness within the global economy. These strategies were, for example, improving learning and teaching quality and exchange programmes, promoting lifelong learning, creating QA mechanisms, and contributing funding monitored and coordinated by the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) under the European Commission bureaucracy. Thus, the scope of the EU's influences on the national education policies was increasingly affecting both the sovereignty and autonomy in education sectors. In contrast to the effects of APEC, with its soft indirect form of power and concerted unilateralism model, there was little impact of the APEC on national education policy. The agenda setting was focused on sharing best practices, benchmarking, professional networking, and exchanges without obligation. Therefore, there was no deep effect on both sovereignty and autonomy. APEC's concerted unilateralism was considered as 'the *ASEAN model* of incremental institutionalisation and low legislation' (Kahler, 2000, cited in Dale &

Robertson, 2002) . Unlike the comparative studies among individual countries, Dale & Robertson (2002) comparatively analysed the regional organisations and authorities influencing the national policy in their distinctive ways. This model of analysis will be employed in this thesis in order to explain the roles and power of the ASEAN and its scope of effects on Thai higher education policies and practices.

In East Asia, Chao (2014a) investigated how globalisation, regionalisation, and internationalisation influenced higher education reforms in seven East Asian countries, namely Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, Mainland China, and Hong Kong. The comparative analysis firstly focused on investigating higher education policies in these East Asian countries which were developed in diverse ways in terms of the colonial legacy and demographic, political, socio-economic, and cultural factors in each country. In addition, the study investigated the roles of international organisations at a global level such as the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Bank, and WTO and at a regional level such as Asian Development Bank (ADB), ASEAN, SEAMEO-RIHED, ASEAN nation states, East Asian Summit nation-states, and other nation-states. These regional and international organisations and their member nation-states designed higher education policy discourses, which shaped higher education reforms in East Asia. The findings suggest the SEAMEO RIHED was a central actor in forming the regional higher education policy among other regional and global actors. It was found that in all the seven countries in East Asia, globalisation dominated higher education in terms of structural reforms involving access and equity, governance, financing, privatisation, internationalisation, and QA while regionalisation influenced higher education in the areas of QA and accreditation reforms. In terms of internationalisation, the East Asian countries tended to develop higher education focusing on strategies for becoming a regional education hub, encouraging world class universities, promoting regional collaboration through student and staff mobility, and establishing foreign branch campuses.

Chao's (2014) research and Huisman and Van der Wende's (2004) study are similar in terms of presenting a comparative analysis of national higher education policies and practices in several countries, which are influenced by regional organisations and supranational policies. Although the studies were carried out in different regions—Europe and East Asia—the impacts on the national higher education policies outlined in both studies are similar in some aspects, such as the reforms of QA, degree accreditation, and internationalisation. In both studies, the implementation of internationalisation involved regional higher education

initiatives such as student and staff mobility programmes, research and academic collaboration, and cross-border education provision. In addition to the range of regional higher education initiatives explored in the studies, both Huisman and Van der Wende and Chao point out key regional actors that shaped the higher education policies in each region. Particularly, Chao's (2014) study provides a configuration of the main global and regional actors who influenced the East Asian higher education policies by arguing that the SEAMEO RIHED was a core actor while other regional organisations such as ADB, ASEAN, SEAMEO RIHED, ASEAN nation states, and East Asian Summit nations have also shaped the reforms of the higher education policies in the East Asian region. Correspondingly, these regional organisations are significant factors that engage in constructing higher education regionalisation in the ASEAN and potentially affect the Thai higher education policies, which leads to the main investigation in this thesis.

In contrast, further studies on higher education regionalisation argued that regional higher education initiatives such as the Asia Pacific Quality Assurance Network (APQN) were viewed as a sub-set of globalisation rather than an agent of globalisation. Madden (2012) explored higher education regionalisation by investigating the Asia Pacific Quality Assurance Network as one example of actors in higher education regionalisation playing a role in QA norm-setting, regional identity construction, and value assertion through its QA capacity building activities and events in Asia and the Pacific and examined its relationships with international organisations and nation-states. Based on social constructivist theory, the analysis revealed that APQN was represented as a sub-set of globalisation since its QA policies and practices engaged international norms and values established by the three key international actors, as norm entrepreneurs, including the UNESCO, World Bank, and International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in several aspects. For instance, the World Bank viewed QA as a mechanism to reform higher education systems to be more efficient, effective, and flexible to cope with global competition. While UNESCO focused on member cooperation and partnership with other international organisations and cultural diversity, INQAAHE underlined regional networks and inter-regional cooperation based on its members' distinct abilities in engaging in QA policies and practices at the national, regional and global levels. These international norms and values were diffused by the APQN (mainly the World Bank and UNESCO) into QA capacity building at the national level through its activities and events by emphasising the importance of the members' cooperation, equality, and global market engagement rather than

addressing regional identity; therefore, it identified the APQN as a sub-set of globalisation rather than an agent of or a reactor to globalisation. Furthermore, by conducting a case study in Vietnam, the study showed that QA policies and practices in higher education were concerned with the QA norms and values influenced by the World Bank under the collaboration of regional actors such as SEAMEO RIHED and ASEAN University Network. It was apparent that the main purpose of the Vietnamese QA policy was to achieve international standards, so the regional-level engagement was seen as a stepping stone to accomplish the goal. Therefore, the case study concluded that the APQN supported the nation state to supervise higher education sectors and participate in the global market without having to come under the state's authority.

Furthermore, Beerkens (2004) studied the performance and international inter-organisational arrangements of four international higher education consortia in Europe and Southeast Asia by conducting four within-case studies and cross-case comparative analysis of the ALMA Network (the network of four universities in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion), the ASEAN University Network (the network of seventeen universities among ten ASEAN countries), the Coimbra Group (the network of thirty-nine universities from Central and Eastern Europe), and the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (the university network of ten members from Western European countries and one associate member from Mexico). The analysis aimed at evaluating performance based on the compatibility and complementarity of the schemes of each consortium from questionnaire surveys and at exploring its coping mechanisms as strategic and institutional tools in consortium management from interviews with academic and non-academic respondents involved in the consortia. In the study, complementarity referred to the institutional performance in terms of the contribution of resources and strengths among partner universities while compatibility referred to how the institutional partners matched or fit one another. The results of comparative analysis showed that firstly, the higher level of complementarity and compatibility among the partners in a consortium reinforced the increasing level of the collaborative performance of the consortium. Secondly, when the complementarity became unsatisfactory, strategic coping mechanisms were used to improve performance such as searching for new members, determining additional resources, and utilisation of existing sources whereas institutional coping mechanisms were employed in order to increase compatibility among the partners through the enrichment of information communication and relationship management (p. 216). Thirdly, the study argued that the process of globalisation and regionalisation also reinforced

the progress of international inter-organisational arrangements in higher education by increasing interconnectedness between universities, changing relationships between the university and the state, threatening diversity while promoting standardisation, and positioning universities in a globalised world. Although Beerkens' (2004) study focuses on the investigation of the performance of the international higher education consortia, it includes the analysis of the ASEAN University Network as a case study which is another key regional organisation engaging in higher education in Southeast Asia.

4.4 Thai Higher Education Policy towards Regionalisation and Globalisation

Having reviewed the literature on the influences of regional organisations and the effects of globalisation and regionalisation on higher education policies and practices, it is necessary to explore existing studies on higher education policy development particularly in the Thai context. Many scholars have studied the development of Thai higher education which has been shaped by the process of globalisation and regionalisation. Some attention has been given to specific practices such as internationalisation, QA, and English education.

Internationalisation

Nilphan's (2005) study suggests that the policy of internationalisation in higher education in Thailand was influenced by the nation's political and socio-economic context and the global trend of the liberalising market. The author employed Clark's (1983) theory to explore the relationship between the three main actors including 'the state authority, the academic oligarchy and the market' driving the implementation of Thai higher education internationalisation policy (pp. 48-49). It was apparent that the Thai government formulated the higher education policy with the main purpose of enhancing the country's economy by promoting international programmes and improving the world-class quality of research while the universities developed international courses and carried out research as a way to earn additional income from student fees and research funding agencies. Moreover, the demand of the business sector for graduates with qualified English language skills was another rationale behind the development of international programmes. Through the six case studies of Thai universities (three public and three private universities); focus-group interviews with students, academics, bureaucrats and business people; and documentary analysis, the research showed that the internationalising policy was implemented with some difficulties due to several reasons: firstly, the state authority of the Thai government was ineffective in assuring

the quality of international programmes and accomplishing long-term policy goals; secondly, at the institutional level, there was a lack of involvement of academics in producing international research because of short-term interests, high workload, and mismatched schedules as well as the need for gaining institutional income from universities without any focus on quality; and thirdly, international and intercultural curricula were absent in teaching instruction.

McBride (2012) also explored major internationalisation strategies in Thai higher education and the position of Thailand as a hub for international higher education in Asia from Thai perspectives in his mixed-methods study. After 23 semi-structured interviews with senior administrators and representatives from the Thai government, Thai universities, a non-governmental agency, the US Embassy, and the Thai-Fulbright programme, the author conducted a survey to accumulate additional perspectives from Thai higher education faculty members and administrators who were engaged in international programmes in Thai universities. Then, three mini case studies of Thailand's most successful international programmes in Chulalongkorn University, Mahidol University, and Payap University were undertaken. In the study, McBride argued that internationalisation strategies in Thai higher education had been autonomously implemented at the institutional level influenced by the Western models and practices and a unique Southeast Asian regional bloc, namely the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) while the existing policies towards internationalisation of higher education lacked specific and formal details. The study showed that the international engagement of Thai higher education focused on enhancing English language ability, fostering faculty and student mobility, developing international curricula, and producing students for a globalised world. These strategies were implemented for short-term results of creating international research, gaining regional and world-class university rankings, and supporting the AEC's development, which would result in long-term outcomes of strengthening the nation's social and economic progress, making Thailand an educational hub of Southeast Asia. However, several limitations were noted such as the lack of foreign language ability, especially English, insufficient funding and qualified human resources, and lack of an appropriate educational infrastructure due to ineffective government policy while there were several strengths such as the country's geographic location, Thai people's hospitality, a comparable educational infrastructure, recognised medical services, and affordable living costs compared to other neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia.

The studies conducted by Nilphan (2005) and McBride (2012) indicate that the policies and strategies of internationalisation in Thai higher education have been implemented in response to the national, regional, and global factors. While Nilphan's (2005) study demonstrated the relationship between the state authority, the academic oligarchy, and the market involved in policy development, McBride's (2012) investigation highlights the ways in which the internationalising policies and practices in Thai higher education can support the position of Thailand as a hub for international higher education in Asia.

Focusing on the impacts of the ASEAN economic integration on Thai higher education policies and plans, Kamolpun's (2015) study presents how the Thai government and higher education institutions formulated the policies and practices to support the regional economic integration by conducting quantitative and qualitative research to investigate Thai administrators' perspectives from the government agencies, institutions, and policy documents. To understand the roles of higher education in boosting the national and regional economies, the study employed three theoretical frameworks comprising the World Economic Forum (WEF) for economic competitiveness, human capital and economic development, and strategic planning theories. According to the WEF framework (2011), there are three stages of economic development, i.e. factor-driven economies, efficiency-driven economies, and innovation-driven economies and the author argued that higher education is a key factor for fostering economic competitiveness, especially in the last two stages of economic development driven by efficiency and innovation. The study emphasises the roles of higher education in strengthening regional and national economic competitiveness through the policy implementation in the areas of trade liberalisation in higher education services, innovative research and technology transfer, human capital development, and higher education harmonisation. In the Thai higher education context, the perceptions emerged from the surveys of 161 executives of government agencies, the OHEC, and tertiary educational institutions, where the impacts of the regional integration were similar in terms of perceived threats and opportunities. The effects included increasing national and regional competition among universities; fostering of human resource capacity and institutional quality; promoting academic cooperation among universities in ASEAN countries; and attracting ASEAN students to study in Thai universities through the harmonisation of higher education, joint degree programmes, and academic networks. However, the development of institutional policies and the participation in the OHEC's initiatives were varied depending on the type and priorities of the institutions. This argument of Kamolpun's paper stimulated my interest

in conducting qualitative research in order to explore the ways in which Thai universities have developed and implemented policies and practices distinctively towards the ASEAN integration project. Apart from focusing on the economic dimension, this thesis seeks to study the process of ASEAN regionalism and explore roles of higher education as an actor strengthening the regional integration of the ASEAN Community.

Moreover, Kamolpun's (2015) study found that internationalisation practices at national and institutional levels were focused on the implementation of student and staff mobility programmes, credit transfer usage, and information exchange with other universities in Southeast Asian countries aiming to support regional higher education harmonisation. However, the study reported some obstacles addressed by the university administrators on the participation in the mobility programmes such as less interest in studying in ASEAN member countries, low English language proficiency, and low regard given to long-term exchange programmes. Besides, a student mobility programme in ASEAN countries, such as the ASEAN International Mobility Students (AIMS) project, is eligible only for seven public universities. These barriers have also been mentioned by other scholars including McBride (2012) and Nilphan (2005). Considering these issues, it is important to investigate how other types of Thai universities have implemented international and regional higher education initiatives.

It is evident from a number of studies that student mobility programmes are a common approach used by ASEAN and EU countries to promote internationalisation, regionalisation, and globalisation. Since a student mobility programme is considered an important policy strategy in responding to the regional and global quests, it is essential to study its rationales and outcomes which are discussed in Statham's (2015) study. In his research, the investigation of student learning outcomes of study abroad programmes for undergraduate and graduate students from diverse ethnicity, ages, and genders was carried out. These students participated in study abroad programmes from 2010 to 2014 across the US. The research focused on four areas of student learning outcomes: (1) individual and personal growth; (2) global awareness; (3) knowledge development of cultural, geopolitical, economic, and social issues; and (4) cultural competence attained after the students joined short-term or long-term study abroad programmes around the world. The results from 2,385 student survey respondents showed that the length of programme study was a core factor that increased the attainment of all four learning outcomes. For instance, in the area of global awareness, the students who

participated in longer programmes tended to have more chances to engage in and interact with local people and cultural activities and events which allowed them to speak another language, learn about different cultures, and increase awareness of global issues relating to political, economic, and social concerns. Similarly, the learning outcomes in terms of content knowledge and understanding of the values and customs in overseas countries were attained in line with the quantity of student participation in cultural activities. Finally, the author concluded that the students' cultural competence was eventually constructed for the other three learning outcomes since after the students attained personal and interpersonal development, gained knowledge of different cultures and other countries, and understood global issues, their stereotyping and ethnocentric attitudes had considerably declined. Statham's (2015) study gives evidence of learning outcomes of students who had participated in student mobility programmes. These outcomes explain the rationales behind the student mobility strategy in relation to knowledge gained from learning about different cultures in a real-life context. The study suggests that overseas experiences enable students to be aware of international issues and become a regional and global citizen. This intercultural understanding is essential for becoming ASEAN citizens in the ASEAN community.

Quality assurance development

The studies on the QA policy in Thai higher education are important since QA is an important element in the process of regionalisation and globalisation. The QA system was implemented as a tool to guarantee the quality of tertiary education. As stated in the Manual for the Internal Quality Assurance for Higher Education Institutions 2014, the pressure of globalisation and the establishment of the ASEAN has motivated the Thai government and higher education institutions to develop the QA system (OHEC, 2017). Under the provision of the regional and international agreements of free movement of people, skilled workers, and trade in education services, the Thai government thus needs to ensure the quality of Thai higher education institutions to produce qualified graduates to cope with the regional and global challenges. The necessity for QA development was highlighted in Sae-Lao's (2013) study on the development of QA policy in Thailand including its rationales and implementation. The research focused on the driving forces of the policy resulting from national, regional, and global trends as well as the reflections of government and university executives and academics on its implementation. Based on Steiner-Khamsi's theory of policy borrowing and lending in education, it was argued by Lao that QA in education became a

global education policy, which was broadly implemented worldwide. In the case of Thailand, while the QA policy represents a culture of policy borrowing influenced by Western countries such as the US, UK, and Europe and international organisations, it was selectively adapted to the nation's historical, political, and economic context. In responding to globalisation, there were three rationales of QA implementation mentioned by the policymakers: enhancing global competitiveness, engaging global communication, and reaching more global cooperation. In relation to the Southeast Asian regional influence, QA was adopted with the endeavour to promote the mission of ASEAN integration and harmonisation according to Thailand's role in ASEAN leadership. In terms of national development, the study showed that QA was introduced after the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997 when the Thai higher education system became decentralised and deregulated through the articulation of autonomous universities and QA was used to ensure the institutional quality. Moreover, the disciplinary backgrounds, individual experiences, and positions of the university policymakers shaped the ways in which QA was interpreted and implemented. For instance, while the institutional executives tended to be in favour of QA as an instrument to improve the university's international quality and performance, the academics questioned its mechanism and outcome and viewed it as extra paperwork. This study demonstrates another impact of the global and regional factors on Thai higher education practice. According to Sae-Lao's (2013) study, policymakers in Thailand have considered the QA system as an important mechanism to enhance the quality of Thai universities to be domestically and internationally accredited. This suggests that the implementation of QA in Thai higher education aims to foster internationalisation in Thai universities and supports the regional integration project.

However, there are many obstacles to QA implementation, which have been discussed by several scholars. For instance, Rattananuntapat (2015) focused on the investigation of current internal and external QA policies implemented in the Thai higher education context from the perceptions of university administrators, who were in charge of QA implementation in Thai universities. In a mixed-methods research study involving 80 questionnaire respondents and 6 selective telephone interviews, the results revealed diverse aspects of the policies' rationales and approaches as well as strengths and weaknesses of the Thai government's (OHEC) and the external QA agency's (ONESQA) roles. The variety of perspectives were shaped by the participants' backgrounds and positions and university settings. For instance, although most university administrators recognised QA policies as an imperative means for improving

university quality and performance and enhancing the university's international competition and standards, there were some negative perceptions of the implementation due to its time-consuming procedures with a lot of paperwork and documents and control by QA bureaucracy. In addition, the study showed that many Thai universities developed strategic QA plans by employing multiple approaches depending on their institutional context and performance such as audit, assessment, accreditation, Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX), and quality rankings. Regarding the roles of the OHEC and the ONESQA, most university administrators positively acknowledged the role of OHEC in promoting and supporting the internal QA policy implementation at their universities while they tended to doubt the role of ONESQA with its parallel functions to OHEC and the organisation's comprehension of higher institutional contexts. Therefore, in order to advance the Thai QA practices, there were several concerns that need to be addressed. Apart from the university's commitment and support to policy implementation, the author suggested that the QA systems should be reformed by creating an integrated procedure between internal and external QA; updating the existing QA database; and adapting appropriate QA standards, scoring criteria, and indicators to suit different types of institutions as well as ensuring the qualification of QA assessors by an unbiased evaluation. Moreover, the strategy of using rewards and sanctions based on QA results was recommended to promote the effective implementation of the policies. Similar to Sae-Lao's study (2013), Rattananuntapat (2015) pointed out the challenge for QA policy to foster Thai universities' performance and standards to become globally competitive. The studies also outline positive and negative aspects of the QA practices which were diverse depending on the research participants' backgrounds and positions, and their university contexts. Considering the aim of my thesis, several universities were selected to explore the range of policies and practices undertaken in different types of universities.

In another qualitative study on QA in Thai higher education, Thupa-Ang (2015) investigated how executive and academic staff, from three types of Thai higher education institutions, perceived the quality of teaching as well as the contemporary system of QA and the ways to improve these quality practices. The results from the research revealed that for the 27 interviewees the factors that decreased the quality of teaching were a large number of students in one class, huge workload, and lack of motivation. However, they believed that their university provided high-quality teaching to their students. From their perspectives, the ways to improve the quality of teaching referred to two areas: policy improvement and

supportive apparatus. The findings recommended practical policies relevant to the appropriate timeframe and funding, applicable facilities of teaching and learning, and increased salary for academic staff. Considering the organisational aspects, three areas of concern were found to have improved: pedagogical and teaching training and monitoring, performance indicator (PI) system, and teaching reward or promotion. In relation to the QA system in Thai higher education, the analysis showed that most Thai academic staff in the study highlighted the positive benefits of the system in terms of assuring the teaching and learning quality while almost half of the interviewees mentioned its drawbacks such as overload of paperwork. Finally, the author suggested that the quality of higher education in Thailand can be enhanced by fostering professional development such as pedagogy, foreign language skills, ICT usage, and quality of research. These plans can be achieved without political interference, especially in the case of new higher education institutions. QA practice can promote professional development of faculty members and increase a university's reputation although there are debates about the impediments. The focus of QA policy in Thai higher education is to improve and ensure institutional quality not only for national and social development but also for international competition and cooperation, especially since foreign language skills have been mentioned as a fundamental area of competence of instructors.

English education

Laoriandee's (2014) study focused on the impact of the establishment of the ASEAN Community on the teaching of English in higher education in Thailand by investigating English undergraduate courses taught at the Chulalongkorn University Language Institute (CULI). The research focused on the role of English in the ASEAN, English as an international language (EIL), the position of English education and policy in Thailand at the national and institutional levels, and the challenges towards ASEAN integration. The author argued that since English proficiency, IT and computer skills, and knowledge of the ASEAN and its culture were the demands of the ASEAN community, English classes for undergraduate students in CULI were influenced by these aspects. The study found that more ASEAN-oriented teaching contents and materials such as reading, writing, and presentation were included in class activities; however, the focus was on English language teaching rather than the ASEAN subjects. Moreover, the results concluded that to respond to the national policies on higher education aiming at enhancing students' English proficiency and their knowledge of the ASEAN, the university launched several policy strategies such as

increasing the number of English classes, launching an English speaking club, i.e. the CU Gavel Club, promoting the use of self-English-learning software Tell Me More, implementing an exit exam on English for final-year students, and initiating online courses. Furthermore, the research identified four crucial difficulties in teaching English classes to CULI students: '(1) insufficient workforce, (2) lack of communication about policy, (3) teachers' unwillingness to take ASEAN seriously, and (4) limitations in revising course content related to ASEAN' (p. 110). Laoriandee's (2014) research looked into English classes taught in a Thai elite university as a case study in which the institutional policy and practice have been shaped by the establishment of the ASEAN Community. This research is different from the studies of Nilphan (2005) and McBride (2012) in terms of the scope of internationalisation implementation which focuses on English teaching classes and initiatives towards the regional integration project. Apart from higher education initiatives, these scholars identified similar limitations to implementing an internationalisation policy in Thai higher education involving low foreign language competencies of staff and students, lack of concrete internationalising policy from the national government, inadequate funding and infrastructure, insufficient ASEAN-oriented contents and intercultural studies, less engagement of staff in international research. However, neither of these studies provides any descriptive evidence on how these internationalising practices can strengthen ASEAN integration and correspond to higher education policy at the regional level. This opens up another avenue for my research study to explore a range of higher education policies and practices implemented at regional, national, and institutional levels and discuss ways in which the implementation of initiatives has been undertaken to facilitate regional harmonisation.

Conclusion

Corresponding to Chapter 3, several relevant studies on internationalisation, regionalisation and globalisation and their impacts on higher education are reviewed. The studies reviewed in this chapter enable me to Moreover, in the context of Thai higher education, the debates of the implementation of Thai higher education policies and practices towards regionalisation and globalisation are discussed.

CHAPTER 5

Research Methodology

Introduction

This research considers the relationship between the higher education sector and the process of regionalisation. The study explores the roles of higher education in strengthening the ASEAN regionalism and asks the question: ‘How have Thai higher education policies and practices been shaped by the ASEAN Community project?’ This question has been examined from the perspective of policymakers and senior executives and administrators working in the Thai higher education sector. To answer the research question, qualitative research was conducted in Thailand with six universities across the country. The main method of data collection was semi-structured interviews with senior executives working as government bureaucrats and institutional leaders. Moreover, documentary research was conducted in conjunction with the interviews. The data analysis employed in the investigation includes thematic analysis and content analysis. The analysis methods were based on the inductive approach which provides ways to generate or extend theories from enormous data. Finally, the results from the analysis were compared across national and institutional settings to ascertain how they are consistent with the quest for regional integration. In this chapter, the research methodology is discussed and justified, including the research question, philosophical perspectives, qualitative research design, methods of data collection and data analysis, credibility, and ethical issues.

5.1 Research Design

5.1.1 Research questions

The thesis addresses a main question and three specific questions based on the research rationale and objectives discussed in Chapter 1. In order to gain an understanding of the development of Thai higher education policy and its response to the process of the regional integration, the following research questions are addressed:

Main question:

How have national and institutional policies on higher education in Thailand been shaped by the ASEAN integration project in the period of the recent Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012–2016)?

Three specific research questions require consideration in order to answer the main question. These subordinate questions aim to support the research objective by, firstly, exploring how higher education initiatives have been utilised in promoting the regional community by the ASEAN, and secondly, focusing on the Thai higher education context in order to explore how the government and universities have developed their policies and practices towards the regional project. The sub-questions are as follows:

1. How has the ASEAN initiated higher education projects served as a mechanism to enhance the regional integration in general?

This question aims to explore the importance of higher education in supporting the process of establishing the ASEAN Community at the regional level. The analysis seeks to trace back the development of ASEAN regionalism and identify the roles of the organisation and higher education initiatives involved in the regionalisation process.

2. How have national higher education policies and practices in Thailand currently developed in relation to the ASEAN regional integration?

This question focuses on analysing the influences of the ASEAN Community project on the Thai higher education policies and practices. It seeks to explore how the Thai government has launched these policy initiatives in response to the quest of regionalisation as well as to gain an understanding of the rationales behind and constraints of these policy implementations, from the policymakers' perspectives.

3. Do Thai universities develop internationalising practices in response to regionalisation and globalisation and what might be the differences?

The question attempts to study the higher education policies and practices implemented in different universities. The analysis aims to explore a range of policy implementations in particular institutions and to understand how and why the universities have developed internationalising initiatives to support regional integration.

5.1.2 Philosophical perspectives

To get started, since my research is about policies and practices, I firstly determine the aim of this research: ‘for policy’ or ‘about policy’. Then, I define my role in the study; whether I am involved in the process of policy formulation or an outsider to policy planning. The next question is to specify what to investigate; either all political areas or a particular topic such as policy formulation and/or its implementation. The last concern relates to the context; either macro- or micro-level or both (Blackmore, 2005). This framework underpins my research aim which was to explore the effects of the integration of ASEAN on the existing higher education policies and practices in Thailand, rather than to devise a new policy. It should be noted that the process of policy formulation and its implementation are not the main foci of this thesis.

To define my position in the study, I can be viewed as an insider to policy planning based on my current position at a government agency in the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Ministry of Education (MOE). However, before temporarily leaving the bureaucracy to undertake a doctoral degree, my work responsibilities did not directly involve the process of policy formulation (See Chapter 1). I had the opportunity to attend a meeting for drafting the recent Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012-2016) and brainstorming the internal and external factors of Thai higher education, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) were analysed. Through this experience, I learnt that the scheme of the ASEAN Community, especially in the dimension of economic cooperation, has become an important aspect embedded in the SWOT analysis, which has shaped the current national policy strategies. As an insider to policy planning and implementation at the government level, rather than finding a solution or a plan to deal with a particular problem, I was interested in conducting policy research on higher education, namely in investigating how the policies have been generated by the government agency and universities towards ASEAN integration. This was done from both the policymakers and university leaders’ viewpoints, as they are key people who formulate the policies, according to their different circumstances. Thus, the context of this study was the macro (regional and national levels) and meso-level (university level). The micro-level was excluded, since the analysis did not include the perspectives of lecturers or students at departmental level.

Based on the explanation of Ball (2006), policy texts are not straightforwardly interpreted and simply developed into actions. Rather, they contain complex and multiple meanings to be

translated and used interactively via a wide range of actors and interests. Therefore, ‘action may be constrained differently (ever tightly) but it is not determined by policy in the sense of an absolute uniformity across settings’ (p. 46). This argument supports the idea in this thesis that a range of policies and practices can be developed differently based on policy actors’ interpretations of the policy text and the benefits of its implementation. This belief illustrates the *subtle idealism* from an ontological standpoint, which explains ‘beliefs about the nature of the social world and what can be known about it’ (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 1). Within *subtle idealism*, social reality exists for humans’ understanding and beliefs; its meanings are socially constructed and can be possibly shared. This underpins the research approach in that the study of people’s interpretations and experiences, in a particular context, are essential to understanding social phenomena, since there is no universal law governing social behaviour. With regard to my research, I believe that the understanding of ASEAN integration and its influences can be shared among policymakers in the Thai higher education sector. However, the ways of responding to its quests are likely to be diverse, depending on their belief, experiences, and circumstances. As such, this research is an investigation of subjective rather than objective interpretation.

Further explanation of the philosophical perspective is dealt with in the term *epistemology*, which explains ‘the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired’ (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 1). A hermeneutic/interpretive approach is an epistemological stance embedded in this research as Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) state that an interpretive approach offers a framework for researchers who characterise their study as subjective, by seeking to understand the individual based on his/her perspective, meanings, and situations without statistical investigation. The approach leads to the belief that social reality is meaningful and human action is socially constructed (Usher, 1996). This is similar to Crotty (1998) who argues that from an interpretivist perspective ‘actions are only meaningful to us in so far as we are able to ascertain the intentions of actors to share their experiences’ (p. 17). Thus, interpretive researchers seek to understand the social world through research participants’ meanings and actions. Researchers’ personal involvement in investigation favours qualitative measures, since they see the best way to gain knowledge is not to replicate the test but to be able to comprehend people from their perspective and to accurately describe their worldview and actions (Neuman, 2004). This standpoint underlines the research approach in this thesis, which is different from positivist researchers’ work.

There are several reasons why interpretivism is appropriate for this study. Firstly, since the research seeks to explain the role of higher education in enhancing regional integration in Southeast Asia and in the particular context of Thailand, it is essential to explore Thai policymakers' perspectives on developing higher education policies and practices to enhance the regional cohesion. I believe that the initiatives and activities are shaped by the leaders' understanding of the phenomenon of ASEAN Community. Using a positivist approach of directly standardised measurement would not be suitable to achieve this research goal since both the development of higher education initiatives and the process of regionalisation involve human actions and values. Positivist researchers believe that the findings of successful research should have the same conclusions as different research studies when using equivalent instruments (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Expecting the same finding by employing a standardised research tool is not the goal of this research. Having been working in the Thai higher education sector, I found that a range of internationalisation projects has been implemented in Thai universities. Therefore, I am interested in examining how Thai bureaucrats and university leaders interpret and assign meanings and values to the provisions of ASEAN integration and the effects of the policy development and implementation. Through each research participant's distinctive understanding, experiences, and perceptions, I believe that the data emerging in this thesis will be varied. Secondly, apart from considering the subjective understanding, the interpretive approach emphasises the importance of people's *lived experiences*, as proposed by Wilhelm Dilthey. He argued that there are relationships between people's actions and a particular historical and social context where the people live (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Dilthey's idea is linked to the reason why I conducted qualitative interviews in different contexts. Based on my research interest, there are three levels of policy implementation to be studied: the regional organisation, i.e. the ASEAN, the Thai government, and Thai universities. The study of the Thai universities involved two different groups of universities including elite universities and the second-tier universities. Regarding these different contexts, I sought to understand ways in which these settings and background have dominated the informants' responses, hence my positioning of the research within interpretivism. The study of these particular contexts is necessary since they have shaped people's views and actions. The next section discusses the qualitative research design and methods employed in this thesis.

5.1.3. Qualitative research design

The aim of the study was to explore the current policy practices of the Thai higher education system, which has been challenged to respond to ASEAN integration. Hence, a qualitative research study was adopted in order to address the research questions. Instead of hypothesis and theory testing, the research was inductively conducted by analysing themes of data that emerged from interviews with Thai government executives and university administrators. The thematic analysis could potentially lead to determining an extended theory which can explain the roles of higher education in building regionalism and its effects on Thai higher education policy. The inductive approach identifies the goal of qualitative studies as more to do ‘with description, exploration, search for meaning, or theory building’ rather than ‘prediction, control, or explanation or theory testing’ (Rudestam and Newton 2007, p. 37). Thus, a qualitative study provides an in-depth understanding of the phenomena from the participants’ perspectives. In contrast to a quantitative study, which commonly works with numerical data analysis and measurement of determined variables (Punch, 2009), a qualitative study can investigate textual data that occur in naturalistic settings. This study’s strategy values the views and experiences of participants, which are meaningful to it. Taking the naturalistic positions into account, I conducted this study in several Thai universities to gather the policymakers’ and administrators’ myriad opinions based on their experiences.

The inductive logic of research in a qualitative study, as explained by Creswell (2013), illustrates an inductive process of conducting this study which began with gathering information; asking open-ended questions to participants; analysing data to identify themes; searching for broad patterns, generalisations, or theories from themes; and finally, presenting generalisations or theories from past experiences and literature. The study design in this thesis was based on my work experience in the OHEC, Thailand. I found that a variety of policy practices were carried out at the institutional level following the trend of ASEAN integration, where most active universities, which regularly participated in student exchange programmes launched by OHEC were grouped as research or elite universities. The diversity in policy implementation and the gap in programme involvement illustrated the somewhat different ways in which universities responded to the ASEAN agenda. I conducted face-to-face interviews with Thai policymakers and administrators in Thai universities with the intention of increasing my understanding of how they perceived the provision of the ASEAN community and how it influenced the policy development at national and institutional levels. Moreover, the data gathered from these research participants, who work or live in different

settings, and analysis of policy documents allowed me to gather rich data on what is really happening within these particular contexts. The further steps of the inductive approach are discussed in the following sections.

5.1.4 Contexts of study

This thesis focused on the issues of the higher education policies and practices towards the ASEAN phenomenon, implemented within two main contexts: the ASEAN organisation and the Thai higher education sector. To clarify, the unit of analysis was the higher education policies and practices responding to the regional integration, which occurred in three different bounded contexts: the ASEAN, Thailand, and universities. In the context of the ASEAN, most analyses were based on policy documents since I was not able to interview the administrators in the ASEAN Secretariat office in Jakarta, Indonesia. At the national level, the investigation involved participants working in the OHEC, Ministry of Education, whereas at the institutional level, the respondents were from six universities in Thailand. The following diagram illustrates the study levels and contexts.

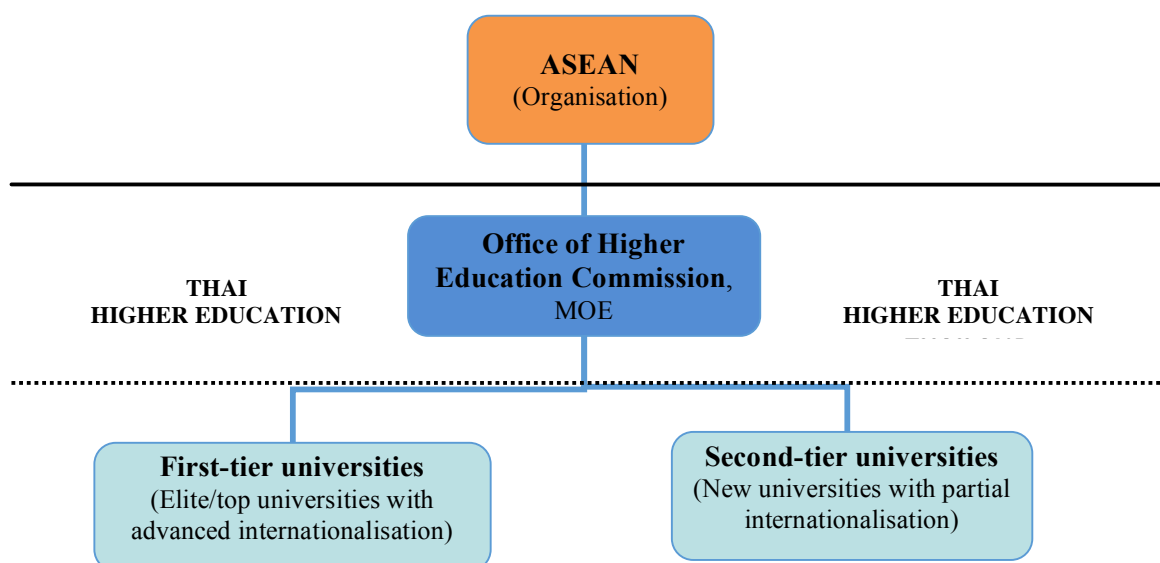


Figure 5.1: Types of research contexts

The six universities were characterised into two groups: those with a high reputation and advanced internationalisation and new universities with partial internationalisation. Moreover, considering the institutional context, the different locations of universities was another specific boundary to be considered.

I decided to conduct interviews with participants from different contexts because I wanted to explore how the particular groups of Thai universities have currently been developing policies and strategies in response to ASEAN integration. According to the literature review, existing studies around this topic have mostly focused on the impact of the ASEAN Community on the Thai higher education policy as a whole. A few scholars have investigated the phenomenon in a particular university setting. Therefore, I conducted the study with the focus on the specific contexts described above to explicitly explore the up-to-date situations within these real settings. In the process of data collection, the data were collected by interviews and examination of policy documents was undertaken within each context. This strategy facilitated access to on-going policies, practices, and rationales behind their implementation, from the individuals directly engaged in the process of policy development in each institution. To deepen my understanding of the research, issues arising in the regional, national, and institutional contexts represent a holistic relationship between the policies and practices at each level. At the institutional level, the key reason for employing different universities was to gain an in-depth understanding of particular universities, some of which have not yet been investigated and have a unique context such as location, which may affect the research findings. For instance, universities located in the northeast of Thailand tend to focus on cross-border academic cooperation with universities in neighbouring countries, such as Laos and Vietnam. Comparing leads to the analysis of differences and similarities between the universities and may contribute to a new explanation of the diversity of actors in the Thai higher education sector involved in the process of the regionalisation.

5.2 Data Collection Methods

5.2.1 Interview

Based on Cannell and Kahn's (1968) definition, 'the research interview has been defined as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation' (cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 411). The objective of this thesis is to explore how ASEAN integration has influenced Thai higher education policy and to what extent the government agencies and universities have responded to it, from the policymakers' point of view. Therefore, the interview method employed in the research involved the policymakers. According to Chadderton and Torrance (2011), 'interviews offer an insight into respondents' memories and explanations of why

things have come to be what they are, as well as descriptions of current problems and aspirations' (p. 54). This method can access explicit and implicit information via policymakers on the process of policy development and practices, which underlines the interpretive paradigm of this qualitative research.

In education research, Tierney & Dilley (2001) discuss several purposes of interviewing, including policy interview. They argue that interview can help researchers clarify 'why a particular plan, strategy, or model has been employed in school systems', '...to study about organisational change and barriers in the implementation process', or '...to understand how overall policies inhibit or promote particular actions' (p. 455). These purposes corresponded to the interview questions formulated in this study, based on the research topic, in order to obtain rich information about the policy strategies from the respondents' experiences and perspectives.

In this thesis, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with open-ended questions, thereby allowing interviewees to answer the questions in their own way or to disagree with the issue or address new issues, as opposed to yes/no responses and a fixed pattern of questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This study adopted semi-structured interview for several reasons. Firstly, it helps the researcher to focus on particular issues in the research terrain (Bryman, 2012). I predetermined a set of questions as an 'interview guide' so the interviewees could respond the research questions. Secondly, because the research involved multiple investigation contexts, the set of interview questions needed to have 'some structure in order to ensure cross-case comparability' of the data collected from various informants (Bryman, 2012, p. 472). Moreover, relevant or new questions could be included during the interviewing since semi-structured interview provides flexibility in addressing and arranging questions that match an interviewee's responses (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin, & Lowden, 2011).

With respect to the features of semi-structured interview, questions were designed on the basis of the research questions. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) categorise interview questions into thematic and dynamic dimensions. The former relates 'to the what of an interview, to the theoretical conceptions of the research topic, and to the subsequent analysis of the interview' while the latter 'pertains to the how of an interview; they should promote a positive interaction, keep the flow of the conversation going, and stimulate the subjects to talk about their experiences and feelings' (p. 131). Thus, the research questions in the study were

developed in light of these two aspects. The questions were open-ended, thereby enabling the interviewer to gain more information from participants and providing better access to the participants' viewpoints, interpretation of events, and experiences (Silverman 2006). In addition, due to the multiple dimensions of Thai higher education, the interviews took place in the participating universities with the leaders and in the government bureau with senior policymakers. Thus, there were two sets of questions, since the interviews were conducted at macro and meso levels based on the research questions, as explained in Section 4.2.2 (See Appendix A for interview questions).

Interview procedure

After developing the interview questions, the interview schedule was arranged. The steps for conducting the interview were based on the practical aspects of interviewing suggested by Punch (2005) as follows:

Interview respondents

In this stage, the research participants are selected by using appropriate sampling methods. The first issue was related to the approach of sampling, i.e. the qualitative research approach. Neuman (2004) states that the primary aim of qualitative sampling is to ensure that specific samples and events can clarify detailed data and establish a deeper understanding of the topic. As mentioned earlier, this research focused on individuals from three levels of policy contexts with the intention of gathering a range of data. Based on the research issues, which are related to the higher education policy and effects of the ASEAN, the research respondents were executive policymakers engaged in the process of higher education policy planning and implementation in the ASEAN, OHEC, and Thai universities. They worked as managers and senior executives, such as adviser to the deputy minister of education, secretary-general, deputy secretary-general, director from the department of policy and planning and international affairs, university president, and vice president. These interviewees were defined as 'purposive samples' because their particular characteristics allowed the researcher to investigate and understand the topic being studied (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003). In all, 21 elite interviewees from eight institutions were selected. Since the study intended to investigate the research phenomena in six Thai universities, rather than within one, several people from each institution were interviewed and the data was analysed in detail before making comparisons.

The second stage was to arrange the interview appointments with the respondents. Since the interviewees were at executive levels, in Thai culture, it would have been inappropriate to contact the prospective participant directly. For the elite interviews, it was important to be aware of how to access and arrange the interview. It was recognised that the elite interviewees would have extremely busy schedules given their status. 'Gaining permission to interview an elite subject is typically required extensive preparation, homework, and creativity on the part of the researcher, as well as the right credentials and contacts' (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001, p. 307). Thus, to deal with this issue, after personally contacting the elite participants' receptionists, the official permission letter including a consent form, a research abstract, my resume, and a response form were distributed to the heads of institutions approved by the OHEC who contributed to the research funding for this doctoral study. In reference to the Thai bureaucratic system, if an official letter is sent to a president or an executive of a university, it must be signed by the Secretary General or his representative of the OHEC. This distinguished letter supports the credentials of the interview arrangement. After receiving the response forms from the invited interviewees, I confirmed the meeting time and date with their receptionists before conducting the interviews. Since the respondents were to be interviewed at their university and workplace and I was not familiar with these, it was necessary to carefully search for the destinations. Preceding the actual interview, I undertook a pilot interview with a colleague, who was in charge of implementing international strategies under academic collaboration between Thailand and other ASEAN member countries. The pilot interview led to some modifications to the interview questions. Furthermore, I learnt how to deliver the questions in a sequence. Additionally, new aspects and updated policies emerged in the pilot interview, which I brought to the real interviews.

Managing the interview

Prior to an interview, I examined the recent policy of each university and the institutional background including history, vision, policy strategies, faculty, and services. The review of each university context also focused on its existing internationalisation situation, which included the number of foreign students, international programmes, and collaborative programmes with its partner universities. This information was mostly found on the university's website as well as in the annual reports of Thai universities published by the Thai government, namely the OHEC. The information I gained from the overview of the universities gave me insights into their policies and practices. This was linked to my understanding of what the interviewees referred to in their policy activities, in relation to their

institutional context. Moreover, I took notes of particular policies relevant to the ASEAN or other internationalising strategies from the documents so I could refer to these and create *prompts* if an interviewee did not address that issue. According to Legard, Kegan, and Ward (2003), *prompts* are described as ‘items to which the researcher explicitly directs the interviewee’s attention rather than ones raised by the interviewee through more open questioning’ (p. 149). It is a tool to stimulate interviewees to explore further thoughts and widen their meaning. One such question was as follows: ‘Referring to the university policy, becoming the education hub of Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries is a goal of your institution. Are there any other programmes that support your university to achieve this goal?’ This kind of question encouraged the interviewees to expand their perspectives.

In the interviews, the conversation took place in the Thai language to enrich information and facilitate the flow of communication between the researcher and the interviewee. In the first stage of the interview, I introduced myself and the research topic, the purpose of the study, and the expected interview duration. An informed consent form was given to the respondents to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of records, confirm voluntary participation in the study, and state the participant’s right to withdraw or ask questions about the research. The opening session began with questions about the interviewee’s work experience, their current responsibilities, and how they were involved in the policy-making process. During the interview, the interview questions were asked without a fixed pattern. However, the outline of the broad questions was noted in a notebook to avoid omitting any important topics and remain within the research boundary.

Recording

Before the interview, the electronic recorder was checked and participants were informed about the recording – all agreed to it. Two recorders were used during the interview to ensure the quality of the sound recording and prevent the loss of data while I took note of any significant ideas or issues that emerged in the interview. When the interview ended, the recorded data were reviewed and transcribed.

Interview with elites

Interviews in this study were conducted with individuals who could be considered ‘elites’. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define elite people as ‘persons who are leaders or experts in a community, who are usually in powerful positions’ (p. 147). The interview respondents held

managerial positions in higher education institutions and state bureaus. Their status and professional skills carried great authority and power in national and institutional policy determination and development processes. Thus, it was essential to consider the power dynamics during the interview process. Kvale and Brinkmann suggest that in respect of the interviewees' authority, the researcher should understand, as far as possible, the social and working background of the respondents as well as their knowledge in the research area in order to be able to address technical terms and produce conformity and symmetry during the interview. In addition, the gender, age and status of the researcher are important issues to consider in interview dynamics (Odendahl & Shaw, 2001). It is likely that a researcher, who is much younger and has a lower status than the respondents, may experience difficulties in addressing serious matters related to the research. To deal with such problems, the researcher should inform participants of the important reasons for discussing those difficult issues and ask for permission before addressing them. This challenge occurred in the interview with some respondents avoiding explicitly addressing some problems in the policy implementation, as they might have felt that this could hamper their institution's reputation. Moreover, some elites are highly skilled at responding to interviews and may give the researcher a glossy picture of their views on a given topic or situation. Thus, one way to handle this situation is to prepare alternative typical questions, through which respondents can present their thoughts in more detail. Such styles of questions are called 'content mining questions' or 'amplificatory probes', which are used when the researcher needs more explanation from the interviewees, for example, when asking questions like, can you give me some examples of the issues? or could you please tell me a bit more about the programme?' (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003, p. 150).

5.2.2 Sampling and population

As mentioned earlier, the research participants had senior level positions in the Thai government and universities. I selected the respondents by using the purposive sampling approach because this research focuses on in-depth understanding of the individuals who work in the particular positions in formulating and implementing higher education policies and internationalising strategies. Their roles and work experience were connected to the research issues of policy planning and internationalisation in higher education. The selection rationales are consistent with Neumen's (2004) explanation of the reasons for using purposive sampling. He asserts three relevant situations: to investigate unique cases, to select

the participants from complex populations and difficult access, and to analyse cases for in-depth research.

Apart from the specific position and department, the participants were selected based on the particular context of institutions. In relation to these particular informants, at the macro-level, the participants were selected from the population responsible for policy development and internationalisation planning in the OHEC and ASEAN. At the meso-level, the respondents were chosen based on the universities they worked for. The intention was to obtain diverse information from two different types of universities. Six universities participated in the research based on their ranking and experience of being involved in international cooperation at the global and regional levels. Moreover, these sample universities were located in the four main regions of Thailand, the centre, the north, the east, and the south, whose territories are close to neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Vietnam. These criteria were developed from my working experience when I found that their internationalising strategies focused on maintaining academic cooperation and relationships with the universities located in the neighbouring countries. This observation reflects Hettne's (2005) theory of *new regionalism*, which describes the lower form of regionalism occurring at the micro-level. According to this form, the translocal relations take place at subnational territories but not the whole country and are mainly driven by private or non-state actors. Thus, it was deemed important to conduct this research in these areas to explore the existing policy practices and how the higher education initiatives launched by these specific universities respond to ASEAN integration.

In total 21 interviews were conducted with policymakers, senior executives, and administrators responsible for particular departments such as policy and planning, international affairs, academic affairs, and international cooperation in different organisations. To clarify, the research settings were divided into three main organisations: a regional organisation relating to the ASEAN, the OHEC, MOE, and Thai universities. The summary of the research informants and contexts are given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Selection of research participants

No.	Position of interviewees	Types of organisations	Numbers of interviewees
1. At Regional Level			
1.1	Executive Director	ASEAN organisation	1
2. At Ministerial Level			
2.1	Executive Directors	OHEC, MOE	4
2.2	Directors		2
3. At institutional Level			
3.1	Presidents and Vice-Presidents	Three first-tier universities (Top ranking/research universities)	6
3.2	Presidents and Vice-Presidents	Three second-tier universities (New universities with minor internationalisation)	8
Total number of participants			21

5.2.3 Documentary research

Document analysis can complement the primary collected data and may be useful for confirming, modifying, and contradicting the findings (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2001). These are called secondary data and have been ‘previously collected for another purpose which may be reprocessed and re-analysed for a new project’ (Jesson, Matheson & Lacey, 2012, p.165). Moreover, Menter et al. (2011) suggest several advantages of using secondary data, for example, it can be employed in the process of policy review and research context. In this study, secondary data from documentary sources were used for several reasons including reviewing the research background and topics; outlining the regional, national and university policies and practices; and supporting the research findings.

Firstly, the documentary sources were used in the stage of literature search to determine the research areas and theories including globalisation, regionalisation focusing on Southeast Asia, internationalisation in higher education, and Thai higher education policy development. This step can assist the researcher to comprehend the groundwork of the project as well as be able to identify the key issues of the research context. For instance, when reviewing the background and contexts of higher education sector in Thailand and the ASEAN, data about current situations and events in Thai higher education and the ASEAN were collected from primary resources other than academic studies, such as official documents, reports, and statements or announcements posted on the Thai government’s and ASEAN’s websites.

These official websites were authorised by the OHEC, the Office of the National Education Commission, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment, Department of Trade Negotiations, the ASEAN Secretarial, and the ASEAN University Network Secretarial. The reviewed data were rearranged into three significant phases, namely the nation building period, early development period, and innovative period (See Key higher education events in Thailand and ASEAN in Appendix B). This table illustrates the important events and initiatives in higher education development undertaken in Thailand, together with those related to the ASEAN, which facilitated a better understanding of the historical background and context of Thai higher education in alignment with the ASEAN's development.

For instance, according to the table, these secondary data were used as supporting evidence for key arguments such as the case for how Thai higher education policy has developed in conjunction with the ASEAN. It shows that in 2009, the ASEAN announced its 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011–2015), with the aims of promoting ASEAN awareness, increasing access to quality primary and secondary education, strengthening the quality of education-performance standards, promoting lifelong learning and professional development, endorsing cross-border mobility and internationalisation of education, and supporting other sectorial bodies with an interest in education. Corresponding to the ASEAN Work Plan, the Thai government announced its Strategies on Preparation for the ASEAN Community in 2010 and then launched its Thai-ASEAN Student Exchange Programme in 2012. Secondary data analysis gave the researcher additional information and laid out a number of important initiatives sequentially. These data became the documentary evidence that highlighted how the government related to and participated in the regional agreement, thereby enabling the researcher to conduct further investigation on policy implementation at the university level.

Secondly, the documentary sources were taken into account when providing evidence to support the research questions. These were related to the issues around the roles higher education plays in ASEAN integration, development of the higher education policies, and current practices towards the phenomenon. Additionally, statistical records presented the situation of international activities such as the number of foreign students, the number of international programmes, and the level of student and staff mobility. Therefore, the sources were selected according to the purposes of the research, which focused on exploring the development of policies and practices in several contexts including the ASEAN, Thai

government, and particular higher education institutions. The policy documents outlined in Table 5.2 were the documentary sources used in the process of data collection.

Table 5.2: Documentary sources

Institution/Organisation	Documents
ASEAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASEAN Blueprints - Statements, Communiques, and Declarations, Frameworks - Roadmaps agreed in ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED) - ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011–2015) - Annual reports - Other documents presenting international cooperation and initiatives
OHEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education’s Policies - The Framework of the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (2008–2022) - The recent Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012–2016) - Annual reports - Other documents presenting international cooperation and initiatives
First-tier universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional policies and plans - Other documents presenting international cooperation and initiatives
Second-tier universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other documents presenting international cooperation and initiatives

During the analysis stage, it was important to be aware that ‘documents can be examined for immediate content, changing content over times and the values that such changing content manifests’ (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011, p. 54). This feature of documentary resources was employed in the study, in particular, to explore the development of policy objectives and strategies of the Thai universities in cooperation with the ASEAN for supporting the diversity of the study’s findings.

5.3 Data Analysis

Based on the types of data transcribed from the semi-structured interviews and the diverse documentary sources, the methods of data analysis adopted in this study were thematic analysis and content analysis. The following sections explain the steps of the analysis.

5.3.1 Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis approach was employed to analyse the data from the interviews. Although it is not explicitly seen as a ‘branded’ method, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that

it is a basic stage of a data analysis process, which facilitates researchers to access a diversity of ‘phenomenological information as an inductive beginning of the inquiry’ (p. 78). It helps new researchers identify key themes of the research questions before starting the rigorous process of data collection and analysis from a variety of sources. In addition, the themes that emerge from the data will lead to further research questions. In respect of these features, it was assumed that thematic analysis may provide observable aspects and extended theories to be applied or adjusted for supplementary interview questions for university representatives after the interviews with government representatives and vice versa.

Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ (p. 79). The basic concept of the method is to generate themes by coding from transcribed data according to the research questions. Braun and Clarke’s step-by-step guide of thematic analysis will be utilised for interview data analysis as follows:

Step 1- Familiarising yourself with your data: Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data; noting down initial ideas.

Step 2- Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, and collating data relevant to each code.

Step 3- Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.

Step 4- Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2); generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.

Step 5- Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

Step 6- Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. (2006, p. 87)

Prior to the process of data analysis, I transcribed data from the audio recording of each interview into the Thai language. The effects of language translation from Thai to English are matters of concern as the interviews were conducted in Thai language. Each transcription contained the identification of the participants, including their name, position and institution, with pseudonyms, such as Gov. A, B, C from OHEC, and P. 1, 2, 3 from Uni. A, B, C. (See Appendix C). The pseudonyms were used to identify an excerpt when referred to throughout the analysis. Since transcribing data was a time consuming process, I decided to transcribe the data into Thai language in order to save time in this stage and become more familiar with the data. Moreover, reading the transcriptions in the original language enabled me to closely read the data and reread them several times and directly interpret the interviewees' meanings from the data. The transcripts were translated into English when the initial ideas or issues were manifest. These excerpts were manually highlighted in different colours and noted with initial codes. One of the concerns was the translation of Thai transcripts into English. Therefore, I asked my Thai colleagues to read some examples of excerpts I translated into English and translate the messages back into Thai. If they were found to be misinterpreted, I needed to revise the translation.

The approach of coding is the next pivotal phase of thematic analysis, which can be done in one of two ways, i.e. it could be 'data-driven' or 'theory-driven' depending on the purpose of coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 88-89). In this research, a more theory-driven coding approach underpins the analysis process. For instance, when coding the concepts of ASEAN integration, relevant ideas and issues in the interview transcripts were found not only on the details of its member countries and dimensions of regional cooperation but also on the statements that demonstrated its benefits and threats to Thailand and Thai higher education. In addition, based on the literature reviews, the topics of the roles of higher education in building a region were found to be related to concepts of internationalising activities such as staff and student mobility programmes, research collaboration, and transnational education; the key actors involved in these activities were students and lecturers, staff in International Affairs departments and regional organisations such as the AUN and SEAMEO RIHED; and benefits and barriers of the policy implementation in each university also emerged during the coding. After close reading and labelling of initial codes, the excerpts from each interview were rearranged in categories under particular themes. The themes that emerged from collating the codes responded to the research problem (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For instance, the theme of *Increasing people mobility* was linked to the concepts of student and staff

exchange programmes, flow of labour, brain drain and brain gain, and exchange of culture and knowledge. Moreover, the themes were categorised into three separate groups according to the interview data from the government agency, the first-tier universities, and the second tier-universities in order to compare the coded data across the universities. Finally, the examples of coding extracts were selected to present the research theories and confirm the responses to the research questions.

5.3.2 Content analysis

Another approach of analysis employed in this study was content analysis where ‘both the content and context of documents are analysed: themes are identified, with the researcher focusing on the way the theme is treated or presented and the frequency of its occurrence. The analysis is then linked to ‘outside variables’ such as the gender and role of the contributor’ (Berelson, 1952; Robson, 2002, cited in Spencer, Ritchie & O’Connor, 2003, p. 200). In this thesis, content analysis was used as the strategy to analyse data from the documentary sources by looking for *latent content* which was concerned with ‘meanings that lie beneath the superficial indicators of content’ (Bryman, 2012). It should be noted that the quantity of content was not measured in the analysis, but instead, the focus was on searching for themes and discourses and interpreting their meaning. According to the preceding definition, the analysis was concerned with the way the content was presented, which was shaped by the author or contributors who produced them and their principles. For instance, in Chapter 5, the analysis of the ASEAN’s key documents was conducted by searching for certain issues or events in relation to education and higher education within the texts, which were produced by the ASEAN organisation and by analysing how their meanings were developed differently corresponding to the ASEAN agenda over years. The analysis confirmed the roles of higher education involved in the evolution of ASEAN regionalism. Moreover, I had reviewed and analysed policy documents of the Thai government and universities as listed in Table 5.2 before interviewing with the informants. The analysis allowed me to overview the institutional contexts and outline the current strategies stated in the documents. This information extended my understanding of relevant issues addressed by the interviewees. In addition, the notes that I had from the document analysis enabled me to ask further questions about the issues if the informants neglected them.

5.4 Credibility of the Research

In order to measure the quality and potential of a qualitative research, reliability and validity need to be taken into account. Reliability refers to the replication of a study under the same setting and circumstances (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). For a qualitative study, this is often a problematical aspect because a social context tends to constantly change. In my research, it would be feasible to repeat a similar study by employing the same methods of interviews and analysis. However, the context of the university may have changed in the future and would not be suitable for comparison with previous research. However, Rudestam and Newton suggest that there are alternative assessments of qualitative research called *internal validity*, in parallel to *credibility* (Bryman, 2012). Bryman defines credibility as the account that ‘a research arrives at that is going to determine its acceptance of others’ (p. 390). To assess the accuracy of the research findings, I utilised validity strategies suggested by Creswell (2013) as follows:

In order to demonstrate the trustworthiness of this research and check the accuracy of data, the process of triangulation by using supplementary data sources was utilised in the study. Together with the interviews, content analysis of institutional policy documents such as reports, statements, and minutes was undertaken in order to confirm factual data in the research. This process allowed the researcher to check the policy actions or programmes mentioned by the respondents against those stated in the annual reports of their institutions.

In addition, a rich and detailed description was used to determine the validity of the findings. This strategy involved the data analysis process when relevant excerpts from each interview were categorised and laid out under a theme. The diverse quotations supported the theme and the finding. Moreover, in order to check the credibility of the research, it is important that the researcher avoid bias and be aware of reflexivity, which ‘entails a sensitivity to the researcher’s cultural, political and social context’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 393). Self-reflection creates transparency in the study such as in the processes of the selection of data and the interpretation of the findings, which could be shaped by the researcher’s background and experiences.

Furthermore, qualitative research has been questioned in terms of external validity, referring to the ‘generalizability of the findings of the study’ (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 113). Since my research involves small groups of participants and particular types of universities, it is emphasised that the findings would be hard to apply to other social circumstances.

Therefore, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that rich description of characteristics and social contexts of participants are needed to provide sufficient details for people's judgment of transferability of the findings to other settings (cited in Bryman, 2012). In the present research, the background and context of each participating university were provided in detail illustrating the two types of Thai universities (See Section 5.1.4 of Context of Study) and the internationalisation culture in the universities in order to support the possible transferability of the findings across the similar universities.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

Blaxter et al. (2001) define ethical issues in relation to topics around 'privacy, informed consent, anonymity, secrecy, being truthful, and the desirability of the research' (p. 158). Ethical issues relate to every step of the research, from the framing of the study topic to the reporting of the research. The first common ethical issue in a research study is informed consent. In my research, a consent letter was sent to the prospective participants to acknowledge their right to confidentiality and data protection. Such a letter informed them about several factors relevant to the research, e.g. the purpose; processes and distribution; benefits, risks, and disadvantages; token for participation; participant's rights to withdraw from the research; issues of confidentiality; and participant's authorisation (Cohen et al., 2011). Since the research involved interviewees from higher education institutions and bureaucrats (OHEC) in Thailand, an official letter together with a consent form was obligatory and had to be directly submitted to the university president and the OHEC's secretary-general for authorisation (See Appendix D). Then, the head of each institution either agreed or assigned a suitable person to participate in the interview. However, an agreement of voluntary participation in the study was made by the participant by filling out a form and sending it directly to the researcher via email or fax. The informed consent form was given individually to the participants to sign on the day of the interview. Moreover, on the day of the interview, I allowed the informants to decide whether they would like to read the transcriptions or have a further discussion on the issues. If they requested to do so, they could directly send me an e-mail. Most of them acknowledged this, but there was no informants requested.

Another significant ethical consideration is participants' anonymity and confidentiality. Lewis (2003) defines anonymity as 'the identity of those taking part not being known outside the research team' (p. 67). There were two groups of identity owners in this research who

needed to be considered: the interviewees from the universities and the OHEC. For instance, the presidents or their representatives, agreed with the clause of anonymity in the interviews. Therefore, if the participants request their identity to be anonymous and to have confidentiality, as Lewis explains, there are ways to avoid ‘the attribution of comments, in reports or presentations, to identified participants’ (p. 67). The name, position, location, and other characteristics of the participants must not be directly or indirectly referred to or identified in the research. In this study, their identity was replaced by using pseudonyms. Respondents were informed that their identity was fully protected by me throughout the research processes, and the decision to protect confidentiality had definitely been taken. In this thesis, to protect the government participants’ identity, I avoided straightforwardly mentioning their positions and bureaus they worked in since these can be inferred by people who worked in the ministry of education in Thailand. For the interviews at the Thai universities, the positions and departments of the informants were mentioned for credibility purpose. Since there are six universities in the study and pseudonyms replaced the universities’ names, with this, I considered that the real names of university participants were protected and unlikely to be identified.

Moreover, the political issue is another ethical concern. Bryman (2012) points out that politics informs social research in different ways, for instance, in the process of gaining access. It demonstrates how the participants wish to engage in the study, whether the study benefits the organisations or wastes their time, and how the study will reflect their reputation. Since the participants in my study were at executive-level positions in organisations, they may not have been available or had enough time to participate in the interview. Bryman (2012) suggests that ‘gaining access is almost always a matter of negotiation, and as such inevitably turns into a political process’ (p. 151). Therefore, seeking alternative access and being able to compromise should be considered. This was especially the case in this research, since it focused on elite interviewees, which may give rise to several ethical issues.

With regard to the method of interview with elites, the power asymmetry between the interviewer and elites should also be taken into consideration (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Since the elites usually work in high positions and are experts in the research area, the researcher had to control the power in the interviews, which was somewhat at odds with Thai culture where younger people have to show respect to the older generation. In this project, most interviewees were at managerial positions and specialists in the research area, and this could have caused tension in terms of dominance by the elites during the interview process.

Thus, as per Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) suggestion about the researcher's role, the research topic, technical words, and the profile of the interviewees should be scrutinised prior to the interview as robust preparation may increase the researcher's confidence and show respect to the interviewees.

Finally, it should be recognised that the researcher's role in this project is that of both insider and outsider to the research. As an insider, I have worked in the same government bureau as some of the interviewees. As an insider, I had access to the appropriate participants owing to a good rapport with them. However, Mercer (2007) points out that being an insider also requires dealing with the familiarity of data, which the researcher might take for granted, ignoring essential details. As a result, familiarity might reduce the robustness of the data. Therefore, I avoided jumping to conclusions when the interviewee mentioned about a well-known policy or activity. To encourage the participant to address more opinions on the topic and explain their meaning, content mining questions, i.e. exploratory probes, were used, as Legard et al. (2003) explain that this is a way of asking questions to explore the views and the meanings that are hidden by the interviewees. In addition, I defined myself as an outsider in this research since I was unfamiliar with the contexts of the universities and their policies and practices. It was essential to manage ways to gain access to the sites to learn about the background and policy information of the sites and to clarify the purpose and benefits of the study to the participant before interviewing.

Conclusion

With my interest to conduct research on Thai higher education policies and practices in building a region, I conducted a qualitative study since I sought to collect rich data from interviews with government policy-makers and university leaders. This chapter has discussed the ways in which I justified the research methodology employed in this study. Aligned with the research questions, I viewed myself as an interpretivist who has attempted to gain understanding of the subjects' perspectives on, and experiences of how Thai HE policies and practices have contributed to regionalism. Therefore, qualitative research was conducted with semi-structured interviews and documentary methods. The informants involved the study were in executive positions in Thai government agencies and universities. For data analysis, I used thematic analysis and content analysis to scrutinise significant themes from interview data. Finally, I demonstrated credibility of the findings and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter 6

ASEAN Regionalism and Higher Education

Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to analyse the relationship between a region-building process in Southeast Asia and the role of higher education regional projects in intensifying regional integration. The evolutionary development of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) integration will be analysed from its earliest periods to its current phase of the 'ASEAN Community' (AC) development. It is argued that ASEAN has initiated higher education projects, undertaken by several key actors, as a means to enhance regional integration and to counter regional and global pressures. In order to explain the relationships between ASEAN regionalism and higher education regional initiatives, the New Regionalism Theory, proposed by Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) will be applied as an analytical framework. The theory of 'levels of regionness' (Hettne, 2002) and the concept of 'actorness' (Hettne, 2005) are key approaches to gain an understanding of the contemporary process of regionalisation, driven by internal and external factors, and to explain the capacity of diverse actors, state-led and non-state, involved in the region building process at the regional scale. The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part explores the historical background of ASEAN regionalism, the concept and development of the ASEAN Community project and the organisational framework including its unique norm known as, the 'ASEAN way,' which has shaped how the process of the ASEAN integration differentiates from the development of the European integration. The second part of the chapter discusses the ways in which ASEAN has utilised higher education as an instrument to integrate the Southeast Asia region and explores key actors driving these implementations. A range of regional higher education projects is explored in the section.

6.1 Emergence of ASEAN Regionalism

Geographically, Southeast Asia is marked and surrounded by natural boundaries such as the South China Sea, bordering Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines, in the south and the Mekong river, interlinking Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, in the north. The label of the particular geographical unit, without international connection, is referred to as a 'proto-region', or a 'pre-regional zone' based on the theory of levels of

regionness (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000, p. 463) as discussed in Chapter 2. However, prior to the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, Southeast Asia was politically and culturally interdependent with the similar *mandala* system referring to ‘a circle of kings in which each ruler enjoyed a claim to universal sovereignty derived from a single and indivisible universal authority’, and was interlinked by trading interaction in the maritime age before the colonial period (Acharya, 1999, p. 59). The commonalities of political systems and maritime commerce created a regional social space where people shared common cultural values and contained trans-local relationships through cross border activities. However, when isolated groups increase social interaction, it creates a regional social system which promotes some level of regionness called a regional complex (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000). At this low level, trans-local contacts and social cohesion has increased among groups of people, and national territories have become less inward orientation than the period of nation-building. Tracing back to the era of nation-state building system (the Westphalian era of Europe), the level of regionness was temporarily weak, because nation states were socially isolated, and there was a lack of mutual trust and external cooperation; politically, national security was high on the agenda; and economically, there was a dependence on self-interest, creating protectionism (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000). “In the Westphalia world order, war became a synonym for conflicts between sovereign states” (Van Langenhove, 2011, p. 25). Similarly, in the Southeast Asia region, prior to the advent of ASEAN, several significant political conflicts had arisen in the region during 1960s. For instance, between 1963 and 1965, Indonesia announced a foreign policy against Malaysia, entitled ‘Konfrontasi,’ and additionally the Philippines opposed the confrontation of the amalgamation of Malaysia (Nesadurai, 2008). Moreover, the hazard of communist dominance in Vietnam was severe and seemed to spread out (Koh, 2007). Thus, the establishment of an international organisation, ASEAN, could be viewed as a resolution to alleviate territorial and sovereignty conflicts among the Southeast Asia countries (Dent, 2010).

6.1.1 History of ASEAN formation

In 1967, the formal intergovernmental organisation, ASEAN, was established by the five nation states in Southeast Asia which are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The preliminary focus of ASEAN regionalism concerned political resolution in the region. There were three ambitions to achieve at the early stage of the ASEAN formation

consisting of reducing intra-ASEAN conflicts, protecting the region from external powers, and enhancing social and economic growth among the member countries, facing communist invasion (Narine, 1998). These main objectives were stated in the ASEAN's founding Bangkok Declaration of 1967 as follows,

“the countries of South East Asia share a primary responsibility for strengthening the economic and social stability of the region and ensuring their peaceful and progressive national development, and that they are determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation” (ASEAN, 1967)

In order to create regional peace and strengthen the region's stability, the government of the five states agreed to promote regional solidarity under ASEAN collaboration and assistance in economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and education matters (ASEAN, 1967). The establishment of the ASEAN organisation confirms the deepening level of regionalisation, creating a regional society or international society in Southeast Asia which involves a variety of transnational actors apart from nation states, in multifaceted regional cooperation and interaction in political, economic, cultural, and social dimensions through a more rules-based pattern of relations (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000). During the first two decades after its formation, security cooperation in ASEAN was diminished by the political tensions between the ASEAN states and its neighborhoods, including the impact of the Vietnam War, the expansion of communism, and the invasion of Cambodia, as well as the dominant roles of China, Russia and the US in the region (Narine, 2008). In order to restore peace in the region, Narine (2008) notes that several ASEAN agreements were reached, such as in 1971 with the Southeast Asia commitment of a 'Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality' (ZOPFAN), and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) signed in the first meeting of the ASEAN states' leaders at the Bali Conference in 1976. However, after the end of the Cold War and the resolution of the Cambodian crisis, ASEAN broadened its intra-regional cooperation in many areas with the purposes of resolving environmental pollution problems and transnational crimes, such as drug trafficking and maritime piracy, building trade liberalisation in the region, and enhancing national development among the member countries (Nesadurai, 2008). During this period, the regionalisation process in ASEAN involved more non-state actors such as markets, private industry, firms and social networks intensifying the region-building. Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) argue that when becoming an international society, regions engage with many types of

transnational actors, encouraging interplay between state, market, and civil society in the regional construction process, which employs more rules-based patterns of relations.

A new phase of ASEAN cooperation, influenced by a more neoliberal ideological project, began after the end of the Cold War and the rise of China and India in the late 1980s (Chao, 2016) when ASEAN focused more specifically on initiating trade policies to enhance regional market liberalisation. In 1992 at the fourth ASEAN summit in Singapore, the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) was agreed by the six members (Brunei Darussalam became a new member country in 1984) to establish a single regional market in Southeast Asia (Nesadurai, 2009). Chandra's (2004) study argues that AFTA has been developed in response to several significant internal and external forces. Firstly, it aimed to deal with international economic competitiveness within the East Asia region in the 1980s and the early 1990s, resulting from the expansion of Japanese investment in Southeast Asia and the rise of the new independent economy, China. Secondly, AFTA intended to strengthen ASEAN economic integration and cooperation in order to handle other regional trade formations such as North America Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and European Union (EU). Thirdly, economic actors in the ASEAN member states, through the network of ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASEAN-CCI), were also important forces in supporting the ASEAN member governments to create AFTA due to the concerns of those international threats and the rapid increase of transnational corporations (TNCs) and industrial firms in the region. Severino (2005) concludes that the four purposes of the establishment of AFTA were "to provide ASEAN with a new purpose in the aftermath of the Cold War, to offset the growth of economic regionalism in other parts of the world and give AFTA members a greater voice and more economic clout in international economic negotiations, to make it easier for multinational corporations to establish themselves at the regional level, and to function as a regional investment area that attracts foreign investment and compete against China on a more equitable footing" (Cited in Narine, 2008, p.419). The first phase of AFTA aims to reduce tariffs and eliminate non-tariff barriers of manufactured goods and processed agricultural products listed in the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) and Inclusion List (IL). The six first-signed countries were committed to reduce the tariff rate to 0 percent of all IL products in 2010 while the last four new ASEAN members including Vietnam, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Cambodia were allowed to accomplish the agreement in 2015 (Nesadurai, 2008). In addition, in 1995, the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) was declared as another approach to enhance economic cooperation in the region and expand the boundary of the service

liberalisation among the ASEAN members further than the commitment under the General Agreement on trade in Services (GATS) (ASEAN, 1995a). It is likely that both AFTA and AFAS can be identified as ‘protectionism’ because they are formulated in order to protect the region’s interests and profits from other core regions. This modern period of the ASEAN building was forced by exogenous or external factors, that is, the challenges from larger regionalisation and globalisation processes known as new regionalism (Hettne, 2005). Although ASEAN embraced the new four member states, including Vietnam, which joined the grouping in 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999, its international society has been criticised because of its limited capacity to resolve regional problems. These failures include, in the late 1990s, the Asian financial crisis, the choking haze pollution resulted from the Asian Forest Fires of 1997-98, and political repression and coups in Cambodia and Burma (Myanmar) (Narine, 2008; Nesadurai, 2008, 2009). Therefore, on the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN, the member leaders agreed to pursue ASEAN Vision 2020 aiming at ‘a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies’ (ASEAN 1997a, cited in Koh & Robinson, 2002, p. 3). To achieve the 2020 vision, regional cooperation was needed to focus not only on enhancing the economic integration but also solving political conflict along the national borders and creating a shared culture and set of values among the ASEAN state members. This vision led to the pledge of creating an ASEAN Community (AC) by 2020, announced in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II at the Bali Summit in 2003, with the intention to advance interactions and cooperation in politics and security, economics, and social culture between its member states (Freistein, 2005). Later, at the 12th ASEAN Summit in January 2007 in Cebu, the Philippines, the establishment of an ASEAN Community had been accelerated to achieve in 2015 under the “One Vision, One Identity, and One Community” concept. The ASEAN Community includes three pillars of cooperation: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). These three pillars are proclaimed as a means to intensify regional integration and social cohesion through a range of regional initiatives and cooperation outlined in their individual Blueprint (see below). The Blueprint defines core characteristics and features of each community summarised in Table 6.1. Assigned to draft in November 2007 in the 13th ASEAN Summit in Singapore, the AEC Blueprint was finalised in the meeting while the other two Blueprints were successfully adopted two years later (ASEAN, 2007a).

Table 6.1: Characteristics and Elements of the Three Pillars

Pillar	Key Characteristic	Element
AEC	<p>a) A single market and production base,</p> <p>b) A highly competitive economic region,</p> <p>c) A region of equitable economic development,</p> <p>d) A region fully integrated into the global economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Deepen and broaden economic integration - Act in accordance to the principles of an open, outward-looking, inclusive, and market-driven economy consistent with multilateral rules as well as adherence to rules-based systems for effective compliance and implementation of economic commitments - Establish ASEAN as a single market and production base making ASEAN more dynamic and competitive with new mechanisms and measures to strengthen the implementation of its existing economic initiatives; accelerating regional integration in the priority sectors; facilitating movement of business persons, skilled labour and talents; and strengthening the institutional mechanisms of ASEAN - Address the development divide and accelerate integration of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV) through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and other regional initiatives. Other areas of cooperation are also to be incorporated such as human resources development and capacity building; recognition of professional qualifications; closer consultation on macroeconomic and financial policies; trade financing measures; enhanced infrastructure and communications connectivity; development of electronic transactions through e-ASEAN; integrating industries across the region to promote regional sourcing; and enhancing private sector involvement for the building of the AEC”
APSC	<p>a) A rules-based community of shared values and norms;</p> <p>b) A cohesive, peaceful, stable and resilient region with shared responsibility for comprehensive security;</p> <p>c) A dynamic and outward-looking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Ensure that the peoples and Member States of ASEAN live in peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment - Promote a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society, regardless of gender, race, religion, language, or social and cultural background, are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the process of ASEAN integration and community building - Seek to strengthen the mutually beneficial relations between ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners and friends - Promote renunciation of aggression and of the threat or use of force or other actions in any manner inconsistent with international law and reliance of peaceful settlements of dispute”

ASCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Human development; b) Social welfare and protection; c) Social justice and rights; d) Ensuring environmental sustainability e) Building the ASEAN identity; f) Narrowing the development gap. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Contribute to realising an ASEAN Community that is people-centred and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN by forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society - Cooperative activities that are people-oriented and environmentally friendly geared towards the promotion of sustainable development. The ASCC shall contribute to building a strong foundation for greater understanding, good neighbourliness, and a shared sense of responsibility - A culture of regional resilience, adherence to agreed principles, spirit of cooperation, collective responsibility, to promote human and social development, respect for fundamental freedoms, gender equality, the promotion and protection of human rights and the promotion of social justice. - Respect the different cultures, languages, and religions of the peoples of ASEAN emphasise their common values in the spirit of unity in diversity and adapt them to present realities, opportunities and challenges - Focus on the social dimension of Narrowing the Development Gap (NDG) towards bridging the development gap among Member States”
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Source: Adapted from ASEAN Blueprints (ASEAN, 2008b; ASEAN, 2009a; ASEAN, 2009b)

In addition, in the line with the pledge of the ASEAN community building, the ASEAN Charter was officially declared by the ASEAN leaders in the Singapore Summit in November 2007, after its Blueprint announcement in January 2007 in Cebu. The demand for establishing an ASEAN charter was first agreed in 2005 at the 11th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in order to serve as ‘a firm foundation for ASEAN in the years ahead and to facilitate community building towards an ASEAN Community and beyond’ (ASEAN, 2005, para. 9). It came into force on 15 December 2008. The Charter comprises thirteen chapters and fifty-five Articles, which identify the Association’s Purposes and Principles; Legal Personality; Membership; Organs; Entities Associated with ASEAN; Immunities and Privileges; Decision Making; Settlement of Disputes; Budget and Finance; Administration and Procedure; Identity and Symbols; External Relations; and General and Final Provisions (ASEAN, 2008a). It is ‘the first comprehensive constitutional document of the Association’ (Nesadurai, 2008, p.226) and provides an enhanced institutional framework as well as conferring a legal personality to ASEAN’ (ASEAN, 2005). The declarations of the Charter and the three

Blueprints demonstrate another step towards further regional integration and towards a more rules-based organisation which delivers obligatory agendas for the ten ASEAN member states to facilitate the community building process.

However, ASEAN has been criticised by scholars interested in regionalism regarding its progress in relation to its norms and values, known as ASEAN Way. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasise this particular characteristic of ASEAN as well as its institutional framework, to show how the Association has become a rules-based organisation and to demonstrate its capacity to act within the region in shaping regional integration projects.

6.1.2 ASEAN organisational framework and ASEAN Way

With a more rules-based pattern of the Association, the regional cooperation and collaboration has been developed and framed under a number of agreements and declarations in several meetings through its bureaucratic structure, such as ASEAN Ministerial Meetings, ASEAN's Senior Officials Meetings, and ASEAN Summit Meetings. Although ASEAN has regularly organised the meetings among the member states and dialogue partners in order to initiate cooperation programme to achieve the goals, it is emphasised that regional cooperation was framed under consensus building and cooperative programme rather than legally-binding treaties with respect to each state members' sovereignty, and through preference groups or informal institutions. This collaborative characteristic is known as the 'ASEAN Way' (Acharya, 1997; Aris 2009; Jetschke, 2011; Koh & Robinson, 2002; Nesadurai, 2008,).

According to Acharya (1997), the ASEAN way is argued to be in contrast to the Western model since it is characterised as both 'soft regionalism' and as 'consensus oriented' interaction. The manifestation of soft regionalism involves informality and appropriateness embedded in the nature of intra-ASEAN cooperation. The approach is to achieve a commitment led by consultations with executives to reach a desired outcome and without 'legalistic decision-making procedures' (p. 329). This unique style tends to avoid conflicts among the member states by attempting to reach a commitment at a level that is also comfortable for the member states. It is an important strategy to attain the achievement in multilateral consultations and negotiations among the ASEAN countries. Another traditional style of the ASEAN way is the attention paid to the care of the members by not embarrassing each other in international meetings. Thus, if there is a controversial matter that has arisen,

ASEAN members would keep it away from the multilateral agenda. Although ASEAN seems to be a multilateral forum, the members prefer to collaborate bilaterally or use inter-personal contacts in order to facilitate the accomplishment of regional inter-state relations. Another dissimilarity of ASEAN from the EU model is the bureaucratic system. The ASEAN secretariat has become a small organisation while its employees and functions are extended. Therefore, according to these distinguishing features of ASEAN way, it is assumed that the development of European-style multilateral institution is not compatible to the progress in this Asian context. Discussed in the next section, the analysis of regional higher education development will demonstrate how ASEAN's norms of non-intervention and consensus-building have been incorporated in the process of decision making.

As has been demonstrated, ASEAN comprises ten countries which are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Subsequently, the organisation has expanded the external relations with countries within the East Asia and other regions. The ASEAN Plus Three (APT) cooperation was found in 1997 with its vision of promoting political and socio-cultural cooperation between the People's Republic of China, Japan, and South Korea in order to enhance development of the East Asian region. ASEAN has also developed relations with dialogue partners between the regions such as ASEAN-European Union cooperation.

This most current phase of ASEAN integration is in the "ongoing regionness process" of turning into the level of regional community as Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) describe:

"a regional community is characterised by a mutually reinforcing relationship between the 'formal' region, defined by the community of states, and the 'real' region, in which a transnationalised regional civil society also has a role to play. The regional civil society may emerge spontaneously from 'below', but is ultimately dependent on the fact that enduring (formal and informal) institutions and 'regimes' facilitate and promote security, welfare, social communication and convergence of values, norms, identities and actions throughout the region" (p. 466).

Based on Hettne and Söderbaum's definition, it can be argued that apart from the formal ASEAN institutions and its member state governments, regional higher education projects have become a crucial actor in supporting the region-building process. The following section

will explore the ways in which ASEAN has utilised higher education as a means to promote the regional integration.

6.2 Higher Education as an Instrument in Building ASEAN

This section analyses the ways in which ASEAN has utilised the higher education sector as an important instrument in enhancing regional integration. It is argued that the discourse of education, particularly focusing on higher education, has significantly engaged in the process of region building since the early phase of the ASEAN formation and developed their meanings and purposes over time. In order to scrutinise the roles of higher education at the regional scale, key documents will be analysed to explore the ways in which ASEAN has emphasised the higher education sector in the process of region building. The analysis also identifies key actors who have also played important roles in developing and implementing higher education regional initiatives in ASEAN.

6.2.1 At the beginning phase

In the early period, the primary endeavour of ASEAN formation was to create peace, security, and stability in the region as stated in the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) in 1967: ‘to establish a firm foundation for common action to promote regional cooperation in South-East Asia in the spirit of equality and partnership and thereby contribute towards peace, progress and prosperity in the region’ (ASEAN, 1967, para. 1). With its political desire, ASEAN attempted to enhance regional cooperation and create a close relationship between the five founding member countries comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Acharya (1999) argues that this vision of the elite founders created a regional identity of ASEAN and promoted a region of cooperation and ‘resilience’ through ‘a mutual respect for the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention’ (p. 66-67). Therefore, in order to achieve its goals, ASEAN considered education as a key mechanism to promote people’s understanding of the Southeast Asian region and as a platform to foster regional collaboration and assistance. The discourse of higher education, was explicitly mentioned in the Bangkok Declaration 1967 regarding its aims and purposes: “to provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres,’ and ‘to promote South-East Asian studies” (ASEAN, 1967, para. 4).

The next ten years after the Association's establishment, the new framework for ASEAN cooperation was adopted in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, Bali in 1976, with the aim of promoting closer cooperation among the member states in particular dimensions including Political, Economic, Social, Cultural and Information, and Security. Based on the Declaration, ASEAN's efforts retain the focus of creating peace and enhancing economic and social development by intensifying intra-regional cooperation in these fields. At this time, education was regarded as an instrument of improving the life quality for people who live in the region, as well as promoting a sense of regional identity. This was explicitly referred in the Cultural and Information cooperation framework:

1. Introduction of the study of ASEAN, its member states and their national languages as part of the curricula of schools and other institutions of learning in the member states.
2. Support of ASEAN scholars, writers, artists and mass media representatives to enable them to play an active role in fostering a sense of regional identity and fellowship.
3. Promotion of Southeast Asian studies through closer collaboration among national institutes (ASEAN, 1976, para. 7)

In order to facilitate these strategies, the first meeting of the ASEAN Education Ministers was arranged in Manila in 1977, where the ASEAN leaders from the Ministry of Education discussed how to strengthen education collaboration in the region. In the meeting, it was agreed that education played a crucial role in ASEAN development. Correspondingly, two educational projects were addressed, according to Joint Communiqué of the First ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting, which included the establishment of the ASEAN Network of Development Education Centres and the need of 'a comparative study of the educational systems of the member countries in order to carry on a more effective collaboration in education in the region' (ASEAN, 1977b, para. 4). As stated in the Joint Communiqué, the Centres was aimed at undertaking educational development such as teacher education reform, test development and information management as well as youth education special education for the handicapped. These projects revealed the role of education in enhancing the prosperity of the ASEAN member countries through educational reform and equal access to education for youths and handicapped people. Moreover, although the idea of an ASEAN University was also mentioned in the document, the launch of the ASEAN Network of Development

Education Centres and an ASEAN University were setback and subsequently developed into the establishment of ASEAN University Network (AUN).

During 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the roles of higher education in regionalising can be characterised as the ‘old regionalism’ stage, based on Hettne (2002), which focused on increasing inward cooperation and concerned with relations between the ASEAN countries. During these periods, ASEAN was attempting to intensify social cohesion between the member countries by increasing social contacts and promoting a sense of regional identity in which the higher education sector had been acknowledged to promote these intentions. This is asserted in the Manila Declaration, announced at the Third ASEAN Summit in 1987:

Member states shall, through education, institutional linkages, and improved flow of information, seek to **enhance awareness of ASEAN**, inculcate in the people the common socioeconomic values and heritage, and **promote mutual understanding of the culture, traditions and ways of life of their nations** (ASEAN, 1987)

This statement has now become one of the fundamental purposes of higher education, i.e., play a role in sharing ASEAN values and culture through the cooperation between educational institutions in ASEAN countries.

6.2.2 After the cold war

After the end of the cold war, ASEAN focused more on fostering intra-economic cooperation in responding to the global neoliberal phenomenon. The establishment of AFTA was framed within 15 years at the Fourth ASEAN Summit in Singapore in 1992. In order to respond to the economic cooperation, higher education was not only engaged in promoting a sense of ASEAN but also supporting regional economic growth through human resource development. This intention was stated in the Singapore Declaration, 1992, regarding ASEAN functional cooperation agreement. In this Declaration, education was referred to as two levels, recognising secondary and tertiary levels, or school and university. The higher education sector was envisaged as playing a role in developing human resource in ASEAN with the idea of creating a university network as stated in the following statement:

ASEAN should help hasten the development of a regional identity and solidarity, and promote human resource development by considering ways to **further strengthen the existing network of the leading universities** and institutions of higher learning in the ASEAN region with a view to ultimately

establishing an ASEAN University based on this expanded network (ASEAN, 1992, p.)

According to the extract, the idea of the establishment of an ASEAN University represents the ASEAN's endeavor to strengthen the network of existing leading higher education institutions. This idea was the forerunner of the later establishment of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) in 1995, agreed by leaders from the higher education sector in six ASEAN member countries, and with initial affiliation of eleven universities from the six countries (aunsec.org). These leading universities were highlighted to be a core actor to promote ASEAN awareness through the development of ASEAN Studies as part of Southeast Asian Studies in the school and university curricula, and the introduction of ASEAN student exchange programmes (ASEAN, 1995b). The university networking strategy implies that the higher education sector has become a significant actor involved in region building and has developed its own sector regionalism.

Following the AFTA agreement, ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) was launched in 1995 with the aim of increasing economic cooperation within the ASEAN member countries by removing trade restrictions and deepening trade in services liberalisation beyond the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) commitments. In 2015, the ninth package of the commitments was ratified under AFAS and education, including primary, secondary, tertiary, adult and short course education, was listed as one of twelve services in liberalisation. Thus higher education has been denoted a type of commodity which can be traded and liberalised in a market. Based on the GATS classification of service delivery modes, higher education services can be divided into four modes: Cross-border Supply, Consumption Abroad, Commercial Presence, and Movement of Natural Person.

Moreover, to facilitate trade in services liberalisation and the mobility of professionals, the agreement of Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) has been addressed in AFAS as follows:

Each Member State may recognise the **education or experience obtained, requirements met, or licenses or certifications granted in another Member State**, for the purpose of licensing or certification of service suppliers. Such recognition may be based upon an agreement or arrangement

with the Member State concerned or may be accorded autonomously (ASEAN, 1995a, p.3).

The implementation of MRAs provides the framework of mutually recognised qualifications of professionals and services among the ASEAN countries. This agreement has stimulated the higher education sector to consider ways to improve the quality of academic institutions in order to produce skilled and qualified graduates to serve both national and regional labour market and to be prepared for global competitiveness. Recently, there are seven signed MRAs which consist of Engineering Services (2005), Nursing Services (2006), Architectural Services and Framework Arrangement for the Mutual Recognition of Surveying Qualifications (2007), Medical Practitioners (2009), Dental Practitioners (2009), Accountancy Services (2009), and Tourism Professionals (2012) (asean.org).

6.2.3 Building the ASEAN Community

Since the 1990s, higher education has been advancing the region-building process not only as a means to promote the ASEAN collective identity but also to enhance regional economic growth through human resource development and trade liberalisation. The significance of higher education in strengthening regional integration is evidently stated in the ASEAN Charter as the principle mechanism to drive the integration of ASEAN, which is to “...develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and life-long learning, and in science and technology, for the empowerment of the peoples of ASEAN and for the strengthening of the ASEAN Community” (ASEAN, 2008a, p. 4-5). In 2009, the expectation of education as a means to develop human resource capacity and establish the ASEAN Community was stated in the Cha-Am Hua Hin Declaration on Strengthening Cooperation on Education to Achieve an ASEAN Caring and Sharing Community:

“the importance of the education sector in contributing to the establishment of an ASEAN Community that is people-centred and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN by forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and where the well-being, livelihood, and welfare of the peoples are enhanced” (ASEAN, 2009c, p.1)

Regarding the commitment to establish the AC, the roles of education have been determined to stimulate the regional integration in the three dimensions of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-

Cultural Community (ASCC). Following the Cha-Am Hua Hin Declaration, the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education was introduced as a framework to enhance education cooperation among the Member States. A range of education initiatives at all levels have been determined in relation to the principles of the three pillars which were summarised in Table 6.2 – 6.4 (Adapted by the author based on ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education, 2012, p.6-8)

Table 6.2: Political-Security Community pillar

Pillar	Characteristic	Action Plan on Education
APSC	a) A rules-based community of shared values and norms; b) A cohesive, peaceful, stable and resilient region with shared responsibility for comprehensive security; c) A dynamic and outward-looking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote better understanding and appreciation of the ASEAN Charter has been translated into ASEAN national languages. - Give greater emphasis on the principles of democracy, respect for human right and peace-oriented values in the school curriculum. - Promote better understanding and appreciation of different cultures, customs and faiths in the region among teachers... - Conduct a regular school leaders' forum as a platform for exchanging views on various regional issues in ASEAN, building their capacity and networking....

Table 6.2 shows that the main function of education in the political and security integration is to further awareness of ASEAN as a rule-based institution by distributing its constitution and its purposes among the Member States. There are three crucial areas to be focused upon, including democracy, human right and peace orientation. ASEAN intends to disseminate these political concepts as ‘story lines’ which “are used to make sense out of sequences of actions....[S]uch a storyline often entails an explanation as to why various goals and means for their realisation are selected” (Van Langenhove, 2011, p. 76). The discourses of democracy, human right and peace have become core values in the ASEAN integration process since the early formation phase. These storylines present what Langenhove (2011) describes as contemporary integration speak, for example, “Integration will ensure peace (for example prevent violent war) in the region” and “Increased regionalism will provide more democracy (the principle of subsidiarity)” (p. 76). Thus, ASEAN has attempted to promote aspects of democracy, human rights and peace in the region as a pathway to strengthen region building. In order to implement this strategy, teachers and school leaders are highlighted as

core actors in diffusing knowledge of cultural differences in order to gain better understanding of the multicultural society in ASEAN.

Table 6.3: Economic Community pillar

Pillar	Characteristic	Action Plan on Education
AEC	a) A single market and production base, b) A highly competitive economic region, c) A region of equitable economic development, and d) A region fully integrated into the global economy .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop national skills framework in ASEAN Member States as an incremental approach towards an ASEAN skills recognition framework. - Promote greater mobility of students by developing a regional catalogue of information materials of education offered in ASEAN Member States. - Support greater mobility of skilled workers in the ASEAN region through regional cooperation mechanisms among ASEAN Member States to be accompanied by efforts to safeguard and improve educational and professional standards. - Develop an ASEAN competency-based occupational standard aimed at supporting the development of ASEAN human resources that are regionally and globally competitive and meet the needs of industries in coordination with the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM) process. - Encourage the development of a common standard of competencies for vocational and secondary education as a base for benchmarking with a view to promote mutual recognition.

Regarding the AEC pillar, higher education is evidently regarded as an important instrument to enhance ASEAN economic competitiveness through the establishment of a single market and the development of ASEAN mutual recognition agreement regarding professionals. Therefore, higher education institutions are required to improve their academic quality to meet a regional or a global standard in order to facilitate the free movement of skilled workers in ASEAN. In the Action Plan, regional higher education initiatives are recommended including the mobility of students and academics and the development of a mutual regional standard. According to the Asian Development Bank (2011), higher education systems in ASEAN Member States are diverse in status and focus in relation to their economic position. Thus, harmonisation of the higher education system has been an endeavour by ASEAN policy-makers in order to reduce the academic status gaps between the low-income and the high-income countries in ASEAN (Chao, 2016). There are a range of initiatives which have implemented to improve higher education quality, such as the

development of a regional quality assurance mechanisms, a regional credit transfer system, student and staff mobility programme and international seminars and workshops. More initiatives will be discussed in the next section.

Higher education has become an important means to cope with the world of globalisation and regionalisation. Developing and harmonising higher education systems in ASEAN are imperative to reaching the goals of the ASEAN community in 2015 because it is acknowledged to be a vital mechanism in cultivating human capacity and resource (Sirat, Azman & Bakar, 2008).

Table 6.4: Socio-Cultural Community pillar

Pillar	Characteristic	Action Plan on Education
ASCC	a) Human development; b) Social welfare and protection; c) Social justice and rights; d) Ensuring environmental sustainability e) Building the ASEAN identity; f) Narrowing the development gap.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a common content on ASEAN for schools as a reference for teacher training and teaching. - Offer graduate courses on ASEAN arts and cultures in universities. - Offer ASEAN languages as optional foreign language subjects in schools. - Promote regional outreach programmes aimed at raising ASEAN awareness among our youth. We acknowledge the existing outreach programmes, such as the ASEAN School Tour, ASEAN Student Exchange Programmes, ASEAN Youth Cultural Forum; ASEAN University Youth Summit, AUN Educational Forum and Young Speakers Contest. - Support wider access of rural communities to quality education by establishing an ASEAN community-based programme for young volunteers to support the learning centers in rural areas and for indigenous people in Member States. - Promote life-long learning in ASEAN Member States in support of the Educational for All (EFA). - Establish an ASEAN educational research convention to promote collaborative research and development (R&D) in the region and as a platform for researchers from Member States to exchange views on various regional issues and concerns. - Promote better understanding and awareness of various environmental issues and concerns in the ASEAN region by integrating it in school curriculum and presenting “ASEAN Green School” awards. - Agree that ASEAN Member States should

Pillar	Characteristic	Action Plan on Education
		consider sharing their resources and consider establishing a regional education development fund to ensure adequate financial support to implement the recommended actions.

According to the ASCC pillar (Table 6.4), higher education has played a key role in building the ASEAN community particularly in enhancing ASEAN people’s capacity and building a sense of ASEAN or the ASEAN identity. With the aim of promoting human development, ASEAN has implemented several education initiatives focusing on academic quality enhancement, lifelong learning, equal opportunity in education, and collaborative research and development. These strategies aim at creating ASEAN citizens with global competitive skills. Moreover, higher education appears to take a part in promoting ASEAN identity in the community by enriching ASEAN’s awareness, promoting better understanding of different cultures and languages among the ASEAN countries, and collaborating on regional concerned issues such as environment. From this point, schools and universities have become the main mechanisms to distribute and exchange knowledge of ASEAN across the region through cross-border mobility programme such as ASEAN School Tour, ASEAN Student Exchange Programmes, ASEAN Youth Cultural Forum etc.

To summarise, this section analyses the development of how education and higher education have been understood as a mechanism in the region-building processes. The discourses of higher education shifted in relation towards the evolution of ASEAN integration. Since the establishment of ASEAN, higher education has become a means of promoting ASEAN awareness in order to create peace in the region and foster a sense of becoming a regional community. It is also apparent that higher education has played important roles in integrating ASEAN particularly in economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Higher education developmental strategies in quality, standards, research and internationalisation have been considered to encourage the enhancement of human capacity and facilitate higher education harmonisation in ASEAN, which will increase the level of regionness towards the goal of the ‘ASEAN Community’. The next section will focus more on how these strategies have been implemented and explore key actors in the higher education sector who have been involved in the process of regional integration.

6.3 Actors and ASEAN Higher Education Initiatives

In this section I explore regional higher education projects implemented by ASEAN key actors and show the ways in which the implementation has supported the region-building process in ASEAN. Considering education as an instrument of ASEAN regionalism, a range of higher education initiatives were launched to promote social cohesion, as well as cultivating human resource competitiveness in the Member States, through regional cooperation in higher education sector. In 2009, ASEAN leaders, together with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation SEAMEO, the ASEAN University Network (AUN), dialogue partners, and other international organisations, developed the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011-2015). Four strategic priorities were outlined comprising: Promoting ASEAN awareness; Increasing access to quality primary and secondary education; Cross-border mobility and internationalisation of education; and Support for other sectoral bodies with an interest in education. These strategies have served as a guideline for ASEAN Member States and higher education institutions to implement. At the regional scale, the leading higher education networks in East Asia are known as the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO), ASEAN University Network (AUN), and the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) (Chao, 2014a; Sirat et al., 2008; Yepes, 2006).

6.3.1 SEAMEO Regional Centre of Higher Education and Development (RIHED)

Prior to the establishment of ASEAN, SEAMEO was established in 1965 with the purpose of enhancing education cooperation in Southeast Asia, with the support of UNESCO. SEAMEO is the ministerial forum for education, science and culture cooperation and development in Southeast Asia. Currently, there are eleven member countries, including ten ASEAN Member States, plus Timor Leste. Indeed, specialising in regional higher education development, the Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development (RIHED) was established in 1959 with the cooperation between UNESCO, the International Association of Universities (IAU), and the Ford Foundation (Nguyen, 2009). Since 1993, RIHED was a regional centre, renamed the Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development, under the structure of SEAMEO and hosted by the Thai government. The main purpose of SEAMEO RIHED is “to foster efficiency, effectiveness, and harmonisation of higher education in Southeast Asia through system research, empowerment, collaboration and development of mechanisms to facilitate sharing in higher education” (SEAMEO RIHED, 2012a, para 1). To achieve the

mission, SEAMEO RIHED has focused on professional training and policy oriented research on higher education development and management as well as supporting higher education collaboration among institutions in the Member nations. In line with this, five objectives were laid out including: empowering higher education institutions; developing harmonisation mechanisms; cultivating globalised human resources; advancing knowledge frontiers, and promoting university social responsibility (SEAMEO RIHED, 2012a). In connection with ASEAN, “SEAMEO RIHED strongly advocates the Harmonisation of Higher Education in Southeast Asia, as a means of meeting the vision of ASEAN leaders” (SEAMEO RIHED, 2012a, p.1). This commitment has been pursued since 2006 when the 1st ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASEM) and the 41st Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) Council Conference was held in Singapore (Yepes, 2006). According to the Joint Statement of the 42nd SEAMEO Council Conference and the 2nd ASEM, the development of collaboration between the two regional organisations was explicitly stated by the Ministers focusing on three priority areas: “Promoting ASEANness among the students in ASEAN, Building ASEAN human resources in the field of education and Strengthening ASEAN university” (ASEAN, 2007b, para. 5). Correspondingly, SEAMEO RIHED has committed to undertaken an agenda on ‘Quality assurance in higher education’ as a core strategy to harmonise higher education in Southeast Asia (SEAMEO, 2012b, p.1).

To embark upon the creation of higher education harmonisation in Southeast Asia, SEAMEO RIHED launched two relevant events in 2008: an open seminar on the Bologna Process and the Future Direction of (Regional) Higher Education and the Conference Series on Raising Awareness: Exploring the Ideas of Creating Higher Education Common Space in Southeast Asia. The former seminar aimed to deliver the background and functions of the Bologna process implementing in Europe as an influential mechanism to develop a regional higher education area. From the lessons learned, the Bologna process reveals three main areas to work on higher education development including a) the access and equity to education; b) the participation of states, higher education institutions, and students; and c) the internal and external quality assurance (SEAMEO RIHED, 2008). These priority issues have been referred as a framework to pursue further actions on the establishment of the higher education area in Southeast Asia. An event was organised in the same year, with the initial support from the Japan Foundation and later the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Australia), entitled “The Conference Series on Raising Awareness: Exploring the Ideas of Creating Higher Education Common Space in Southeast Asia”. This project

continued for eight months carried out by five participating countries in Southeast Asia including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. With the aim of stimulating the importance of the regional higher education area development and brainstorming ways to promote further higher education cooperation in the region, pre-conference workshops were held in each participating country as a platform to discuss higher education issues regarding existing policy, internationalisation, the impact of globalisation, and models of harmonisation process including its benefits and challenges of implementation etc. (SEAMEO RIHED, 2008). The outcomes of the Conference, with participation of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, suggest five priority working areas as a guideline for higher education development, namely Quality assurance; Closer connection between existing education and research area (clusters); Credit transfer system; Mobility system; and Lifelong learning system (Chao, 2016; SEAMEO RIHED, 2008).

After the remarkable Conference series, SEAMEO RIHED has continually promoted the harmonisation in higher education in Southeast Asia through a range of initiatives focusing on quality assurance, student mobility and academic transfer. Regarding the endeavour to develop a Southeast Asian Quality Assurance Framework, ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) was established in 2008 with the aims to promote mutual understanding and shared activities to improve higher education quality assurance and mutual recognition of qualifications in the region (aqan.org). In 2012, SEAMEO RIHED released a study on the quality assurance models in Southeast Asian countries which provided comparative information of diverse quality assurance systems in ASEAN countries and guidelines of further actions as a stepping stone to develop a regional quality assurance system. These three actions included firstly, advancing an agreement on ASEAN quality assurance codes and guidelines as well as developing ASEAN qualification structure and credit transfer system; secondly, strengthening national capacity for internal and external quality assurance practices in each member countries; and thirdly promoting the needs and benefits of quality assurance for the harmonisation process (SEAMEO RIHED, 2012b).

In line with developing a regional quality framework, undertaking student mobility programme has become an important mechanism to facilitate higher education harmonisation in the region. In 2009, SEAMEO RIHED has launched the ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme to stimulate student mobility and strengthen cooperation between ASEAN universities with the goals of enhancing academic and international skills of students for the current regional and global economy. These qualified capacities include

promoting intercultural understanding, critical knowledge and being open-minded (Sirat et al., 2008). In 2015, seven countries (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Japan) have engaged in the AIMS programme with the total of 61 leading participating universities². The exchange programme are offered for undergraduate students, funded by their national governments, to study in a host university for one semester, but not more than six months. Currently, study fields for the programme include Language & Culture; Agriculture; International Business; Hospitality & Tourism Management; Food Science & Technology; Engineering; Economics; Environmental Science & Management; Biodiversity; and Marine Science. With the increasing number of participating universities and government scholarships, it is expected that by 2016 more than 1,200 undergraduate exchange students will be mobilised in the region.

6.3.2 ASEAN University Network

AUN has the purpose of reinforcing the existing academic networks in the region and with dialogue partners. Currently, there are 30 member universities from the ASEAN countries (aunsec.org). Based on the AUN's objectives stated in the Charter of the ASEAN University Network signed by the six member countries, education cooperation primarily focused on the professional level of tertiary education as the following extract,

“The general objective of the AUN is to strengthen the existing network of cooperation among universities in ASEAN by promoting collaborative study and research programmes on the priority areas identified by ASEAN.

The specific objectives are to promote cooperation and solidarity among scientists and scholars in the ASEAN Member Countries; to develop academic and professional human resources in the region; and to produce and transmit scientific and scholarly knowledge and information to achieve ASEAN goals” (ASEAN, n.d., p.8)

Explicitly, the notion of ‘scientists and scholars’ or ‘scholarly knowledge and professional human resources’ suggest that the dominant participating universities tend to be elite and research institutions. These discourses of higher-level education have influenced the AUN implementation.

It is apparent that following the ASEAN Charter, higher education has been determined as an important mechanism to strengthen the regional integration in the political security,

economic, and socio cultural arenas. To achieve the ASEAN's vision in 2020, many activities and initiatives in the higher education sector have been continually launched by several actors at the regional level. This reflects the ways that ASEAN has been endeavoring to utilise higher education to foster the regionalisation, and construct a platform for harmonising the ASEAN higher education area at the same time.

To promote ASEAN awareness, the higher education sector is determined to distribute the sense of ASEAN identity and increase the understanding of diverse cultures between the ASEAN countries. A number of activities and programme were recommended to be implemented. The understanding of becoming an ASEAN Community was expected to be disseminated throughout the institutions by inserting ASEAN related content into classroom instruction, curriculum, textbooks, and other teaching and learning materials. For instance, in higher education, it was suggested that undergraduate or graduate courses on ASEAN arts and cultures should be taught in universities. In responding to this strategy, the AUN with the cooperation of the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI), Universiti Malaya and the East-West Center (EWC) launched the project 'ASEAN Studies Curriculum Design Workshop' in 2009, followed by the two series of workshops on the Development of ASEAN Studies Course for Undergraduate Level in 2011, and the Advanced Workshop on ASEAN Studies Teaching for Lecturers in 2012. With the support of ASEAN-US Technical Assistance and Training Facility (TATF), the workshops successfully conducted the list of sub-topics under ASEAN Studies Course using reference teaching materials which were developed by ASEAN experts from different subject areas. This scheme can be seen and utilised as a course guideline for lecturers to develop ASEAN Studies course in their own universities (ASEAN University Network (AUN) Secretariat, 2012).

In fact, prior to the initiative of the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011-2015), ASEAN has annually organised the ASEAN Student Exchange Programme (ASEP) for 15-18-year-old students since 2000, aimed at boosting student and academic connections and sharing different economic, historical, and socio-cultural aspects of ASEAN countries, which will raise awareness of ASEAN or ASEANness among the youth¹. Likewise, student mobility programme have been arranged to build student and academic linkages among higher education institutions in ASEAN countries by sharing knowledge and enhancing multicultural understanding among the ASEAN students and staff. For instance, AUN has annually organised AUN Student Exchange Programme, hosted by AUN member universities, to promote the mobility of undergraduate and graduate students within their

network. The students are partially or fully funded by the host university to study in an exchange programme for a short term or semester periods or to pursue a degree. The number of student mobility exchanges has been increased from more than 70 students in 2009 to 383 students in 2012. Currently, there are about 262 scholarships provided by the AUN member universities to support the programme (AUN, 2012). In addition, there are other platforms such as Study and Visit; ASEAN and ASEAN +3 Youth Cultural Forum; AUN and ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers Contest; and ASEAN Student Leaders' Forum; these were all initiated by AUN to foster cultural exchange for university students network developing. Most forums are co-hosted by universities from ASEAN Plus Three countries which are Japan, Korea, and China.

A further endeavor to increase student mobility in higher education area is the implementation of ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS) launched in 2010 by AUN. The scheme is basically designed to manage student exchange programme and facilitate credit transferring procedures through a web based system. The system provides grading scales with ACTS Transcript of Record, lists of AUN-ACTS courses, and online applications (AUN, 2012). After launching the scheme, the ACTS course database has expanded with the number of courses offered increasing from 12,282 in 2012 to 19,430 courses offered in 2016. Among the online applications, there were the total of 624 successful applicants during the five-year implementation. Although the exchange courses have been offered between AUN Member Universities, since 2015 three Japanese universities including Kyoto University, Okayama University and Chiba University have agreed to join the programme.

It is noteworthy that the two core student mobility programme developed by AUN and SEAMEO RIHED are claimed as pilot projects for flagship universities. The reasons behind the programmes are to facilitate the procedure of transferring credits, to compare course syllabi and standard, and to attract more student participants (Sirat et al., 2008). Therefore, it is seen as necessary to improve the quality of higher education in ASEAN nations in order to increase regional university cooperation, thus establishing an ASEAN higher education area. Quality assurance has become an important mechanism to reinforce the mobility of academic people and to harmonise the different higher education systems in the region.

Due to diverse quality standards of universities in ASEAN nations, the initiative on the ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) was conducted in 1998 as an

instrument to enhance education quality and create mutual recognition of higher education standards among universities in ASEAN member countries, a response to the liberalisation of education in regional and global economies (AUN, 2004). The AUN-QA implementation is not intended to be utilised only among the AUN university members, and other universities in ASEAN nations are encouraged to be guided by these standards. With that intention, there were a series of handbooks disseminated in the following years, including AUN-QA Guidelines (2004), AUN-QA Manual (2006), IAI QA –Training Manual (2009), Guide to AUN Actual Quality Assessment at Programme Level (2010), and ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education (2011) (Chao, 2016). Moreover, several training workshops have been annually organised to promote and increase mutual understanding of the system. In parallel with the AUN action, SEAMO RIHED has also carried out an alternative scheme on ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework Higher Education in 2011.

The higher education initiatives to promote the ASEAN related-content curriculum, student mobility programme, the ACTS credit transfer system, and the ASEAN quality assurance have been considered to be implemented in the ASEAN member countries. Thailand, as one of the ASEAN member countries, has taken a supporting role in promoting these projects within the nation and among ASEAN countries for many years.

Conclusion

This chapter seeks to explore the roles of education, particularly higher education, in supporting the aim of ASEAN regionalism. The discussion is based on the textual analysis of ASEAN policy documents and statements addressed by the ASEAN leaders. It can be concluded that over the decades, ASEAN has considered the benefits of higher education as a means to increase socio-cultural, political, and economic integration among the ASEAN countries by enhancing ASEAN studies, promoting people's awareness of ASEAN through mobility programme, enhancing human capacity, and harmonising the higher education systems as such. Two main higher education actors, AUN and SEAMEO RIHED, have performed leading roles in supporting the higher education implementation to reinforce the regional integration. The two organisations are located in and hosted by Thailand. As a founding member of ASEAN, the Thai government has enduringly supported ASEAN in various ways. The next chapter provides discussions on the role of Thailand in ASEAN and will explore how the Thai government has implemented policies and practices of higher education in response to the process of region building.

Chapter 7

Thai Government Policies and Practices in Higher Education towards Southeast Asian Regionalism

Introduction

This chapter primarily explores how Thai higher education policies and practices have been developed at the national level in relation to the ASEAN integration project. The objective of this analysis is to look at Thai higher education development towards globalisation and regionalisation. To discuss the analysis, the chapter is laid out in three sections. The first section introduces, from the policymakers' perspectives, Thailand's position in supporting the region-building process. This leads to the analysis of how the Thai government has developed higher education policy to enhance the provision of ASEAN. The second section explores Thai higher education policies and practices highlighted by the Thai policymakers for strengthening ASEAN Community building, including the analysis of rationales behind the national policies and practices. The third section explores how these policy practices have been carried out by the Thai government and how they reflect some obstacles to policy implementation. In short, the chapter argues that Thai policymakers consider the ASEAN Community as a stepping stone to globalisation and attempt to maintain the nation's leading role in the region. Therefore, higher education initiatives have been developed in line with particular internationalisation strategies.

7.1 Role of Thailand in the ASEAN

Stating the Declaration of the ASEAN Concord, Acharya (1999) draws attention to the issue of regional identity at the beginning of the establishment of ASEAN, where ASEAN founders highlighted that 'Member states shall vigorously develop an awareness of regional identity and exert all efforts to create a strong ASEAN community...' (ASEAN, 1976, para. 2). As a founding member of ASEAN, Thailand has explicitly pursued ASEAN integration, and education is considered a significant driving tool. Under the ASEAN Chairmanship of Thailand in 2008-2009, the ASEAN became more concerned with the implementation of education to strengthen the community and to gain regional and global competitiveness for ASEAN peoples. Abhisit Vejjajiva, a Thai Minister and the ASEAN Chair, stated, 'Our

cooperation should also focus on empowering our peoples to be able to compete in a more globalised world through education and human resources development' (Opening Ceremony, 15th ASEAN Summit, 2009). With the agreement of the ASEAN's leaders, the Cha-Am Hua Hin Declaration on Strengthening Cooperation on Education to Achieve an ASEAN Caring and Sharing Community was adopted on the 24th of October 2009, followed by the development of the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011-2015). The ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011-2015) indicates that 'Regional cooperation in education will help ASEAN Member States (AMS) enhance regional competitiveness and prosperity' and the key actors are SEAMEO and AUN (ASEAN, 2012a, p.vii). These declarations were developed in the period of Thailand's Chairmanship and the ASEAN Secretary-General was Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, nominated by the Thai Government and approved by ASEAN Leaders to be the Secretary-General of ASEAN during the period 2008–2012.

In order to make a contribution, Thailand hosted the two centres of the regional higher education organisations, which are the Office of the AUN Secretariat and the SEAMEO RIHED over the past decades. These two regional institutions have played a crucial role in supporting regional cooperation in higher education as explained in Chapter 5, section 5.2.2. The Thai government, represented by the OHEC, MOE and several elite Thai universities, has engaged itself in a number of initiatives of higher education cooperation; the task of selecting the Secretary General of OHEC has normally been assigned to the Chairperson of SEAMEO RIHED Governing Board as well as the Chairperson of the AUN Board of Trustees. Maintaining support for the two core regional organisations of higher education implies that the Thai government has attempted to play a key role in building the Southeast Asia region. To put forward this argument, the ASEAN statements and interviews with Thai policymakers were analysed. From the analysis, four central aspects emerged to denote the roles of Thailand in the ASEAN as follows:

Cultivating 'we are feeling ASEAN'

The Thai government has robustly undertaken innovative ASEAN-related projects aimed at increasing public awareness of the ASEAN regional identity in the country. For instance, in 2009, an ASEAN television channel was launched to broadcast news and information relating to ASEAN member countries to promote the establishment of the AC among Thai peoples. During the opening ceremony of the 15th ASEAN Summit in 2009, Abhisit Vejjajiva, the Prime Minister of Thailand, stated that to build a sense of ASEAN identity was a

fundamental strategy to engage people in the process of regional building. The statement is quoted below:

Enhancing connectivity...required the connecting of the hearts and minds of ASEAN peoples across the region. We need to promote intellectual and cultural connection based on friendship and mutual understanding of our common goals and shared historical heritage. These people to people connections will contribute to the 'we are feeling ASEAN' which is one of the key elements in our community building process... We also need to make ASEAN continue to engage with peoples to ensure that people are given the opportunity to actively participate in and feel a sense of ownership in this ASEAN community building process. (Vejjajiva, 2009b, para. 25)

The Thai Minister's declaration supports the idea of creating a sharing and caring community by using information as a core strategy to connect ASEAN peoples within the region. This affirmation corresponds to the key characteristics of a regional community based on Hettne & Söderbaum's (2000) levels of regionness in NRT. To create the regional community, social communication, mutual understanding of values, and a distinct regional collective identity need to be promoted. The Thai government as a nation-state actor has attempted to advocate values for becoming the AC, especially, in terms of economic growth. However, the quest for building a common regional identity is challenging and far beyond its goal since the Southeast Asian region encompasses diverse religious, cultures, and languages, and conflicts among the countries still exist (Kristina, 2010). Therefore, at this stage, to build a sense of belonging, most Thai policymakers in this study emphasised that it was necessary to promote intercultural understanding among Thai students and to prepare them to live and work in a multicultural society. The theme of multicultural society emerged in the interviews with the Thai policymakers as an imagined society of the AC and as a factor that has influenced Thai higher education sector.

From the policymakers' perspectives, the establishment of the AC can transform Thailand into a multicultural society where people from neighbouring countries come to work and study and vice versa. In the interview with policymakers working in the Ministry of Education, the issues of multicultural society were mentioned by all respondents when asked

about the impact of the AC project. For instance, one of the former Deputy Secretaries-General said:

When Thailand turns into multicultural society, universities needs to prepare their students to be able to conform to the new environment. This includes learning how to understand and respect other peoples from different religious, cultures, and beliefs. The ability can be obtained by looking outward to learn about histories, languages and societies in our neighbouring countries (Gov. B).

To support this role, Thailand launched the ASEAN Student Exchange Programme aiming to enhance the understanding of different cultures and expand networking among young ASEAN peoples and funded the 10th ASEAN Student Exchange Programme in 2010. More than 200 students and educators from all ASEAN member countries participated in the programme (ASEAN, 2012b).

In addition, one of the former Secretaries-General mentioned that when the AC becomes more of a reality, roles of universities would be changed to support not only the country's development but of the region as a whole. Researchers and scholars could become main actors to mobilise knowledge of the ASEAN through regional academic cooperation according to the following excerpt:

In general, one of the roles of universities is to solve the nation's problems. When it becomes borderless, they have to look further than our nation and find out whether the same problem is also happening in other countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Before, it may be published in a book as knowledge, but we neglected to resolve the problem. If we can manage the problem well in our country while the other countries fail, it is a good chance that we can assist them or solve the problem together. This is a new role of Thai universities. (Gov. A)

His perspective implies that to strengthen ASEAN integration, universities should work with foreign universities in ASEAN member countries. Sharing knowledge and extending academic collaboration pave the way for further integration. In this regard, many Thai universities established a research and study centre known as ASEAN Studies Centres on campus. Currently, there are 33 units located in Thai higher education institutions across the country (Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2016). The key aims of these centres is to disseminate knowledge and conduct research in ASEAN-related areas. The centres' activities

include exhibitions, seminars, conferences and collaborative research, which are open to university students and staff and public and private sectors.

Connecting vulnerable ASEAN sub-regional countries

Apart from articulating the sense of the AC in Thailand, the Thai government has persisted in supporting new ASEAN Member Countries including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) to engage in regional integration. In the Fourth ASEAN Informal Summit held in Singapore in 2000, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), which aims to ‘reduce the development gaps among ASEAN Member Countries and expedite greater regional economic integration, promote equitable economic development and help alleviate poverty in’, was announced (ASEAN, 2004, p. 1). Within Southeast Asia, there is an issue concerning the emergence of various sub-regions, constructed by special economic and geopolitical interests, such as the concepts of the ‘strategic triangle’ and the ‘Malay Archipelago Complex’ including Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia. These particular sub-regions have a tendency to intensify their cooperation within their member countries rather than with other Southeast Asia countries (Acharya, 1999; Huxley, 1996). Therefore, the IAI initiative plans have been implemented in order to reduce the economic differences between the ASEAN founding countries and the newest countries, which can accelerate the integration of the ASEAN community. Corresponding to this provision, Thailand, as a founding member of the Association, has continually provided assistance and resources to the new and vulnerable ASEAN member countries. Many academic training and development projects have been convened by the Thai government to assist the countries in Mekong sub-region.

For instance, in 2009, the Training Workshop Project on ‘Production of eLearning Courseware for Educational Personnel of Mid-Mekong Sub-Region’ was co-organised by Assumption University in Thailand with the purpose of enhancing knowledge and experience of technologies to produce and manage eLearning courseware. At the workshop’s opening ceremony Dr Kiattisak Sensai, Advisor to the MOE, Thailand, stated, ‘The development of the usage of ICT in education such as eLearning will bring benefits to Thai peoples especially for students, teachers, and academic staff in the future and... I am sure that the countries in Mekong Sub-region can take advantage of this opportunity as well’.

Similarly, the policymakers in Thai higher education considered that Thailand should provide assistance to our neighbouring countries such as Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar (CLM) in

developing higher education. The following statement demonstrates the opinion of a senior executive in OHEC regarding the importance of the ASEAN connectivity plan.

One of benefits earned from the AC project is the increasing cooperation and collaboration. The integration can enrich the region's global competitiveness but because of unequal economic status, the integration may be hindered. Amongst ASEAN countries, thus, more developed countries need to support vulnerable countries to decrease the gap of quality. (GOV. C)

These perspectives echo the theory of NRT which explains the process of regionalism that occurs in sub- or micro-regional level (Hettne, 2005). Building sub-regions can facilitate regional integration. The support for Thai government programmes will sustain the friendly relations with neighbouring countries, which promotes the regional cooperation. Moreover, data from other interviews indicates some obstacles that prevent CLM countries from participating in the regionalisation in higher education. According to an executive director of a regional organisation in Southeast Asia, 'Quality assurance and benchmarking in higher education are essential to enhance higher education harmonisation in the region; however, the quality assurance systems in Lao, Cambodian, and Myanmar higher education are at the beginning stage' (Gov. G). Likewise, an executive of the OHEC explained that CLM countries such as Laos had not become partners in the AIMS mobility programme because no international programme was taught in Lao universities. The executive asserted that the Thai government had worked with the Lao government to develop human resources and quality in higher education (Gov. E).

Together with enhancing intra-regionalism, it is noticeable that enhancing the ASEAN's external relations is another important intention of Thailand to support region building. Hence, many activities have involved the ASEAN's external partnerships for distribution of resources and assistance.

Strengthening the ASEAN's external relations

A further role played by Thailand in the ASEAN is to promote closer relations and cooperation with the ASEAN Dialogue Partners, including regional and international organisations, as a means to connect the ASEAN to the global arena. The intention was mentioned by the Thai Prime Minister under his ASEAN chairmanship at the Opening Ceremony of the 14th and the 15th ASEAN Summit meetings in 2009 as follows:

Close partnership with those outside the region is crucial. For in our interdependent and globalised world, no man is an island, no region or country can stand alone. We are all interconnected, part of the global whole. Left to ourselves, we are all vulnerable. (Vejjajiva, 2009a, para. 15)

This ASEAN Connectivity is only the first step. It needs to be linked with a larger East Asian connectivity where ASEAN will be connected to the rest of the Asia Pacific region, bringing about progress and prosperity to all. (Vejjajiva, Abhisit, 2009b, para. 24)

In his speech, the Thai Prime Minister emphasised the necessity of expanding ASEAN connectivity with external partners in order to reinforce ASEAN competitiveness and prosperity. Following the announcement, Thailand proposed organising an ASEAN+3 Senior Officials Ad Hoc Working Group Meeting on Education with a panel of senior educational administrators from the ten ASEAN member countries and Japan, Korea, and China, to discuss the establishment of an ASEAN+3 Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOMED+3) (ASEAN, 2009d). In addition, in 2014, as a member of the five Mekong countries, Thailand extended its endeavour to reduce the development gap in the ASEAN by undertaking a project on sustainable development of the Lancang-Mekong sub-region, which is a sub-regional cooperation between China, Myanmar, Lao, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam (ASEAN, 2014). With the closer collaboration, it is hoped that the Mekong countries will gain benefits from cross-border activities.

Harmonising higher education system

In the ASEAN Charter, increasing closer regional academic cooperation is considered vital for enhancing the ASEAN people's capacity. Besides promoting student mobility in higher education, the Thai government has been playing a leading role in developing and enhancing the ASEAN QA systems promoted by the AUN and SEAMEO RIHED. The AUN Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) initiative was acknowledged by the first Chairman of the AUN Board of Trustees (AUN-BOT), Professor Dr. Vanchai Sirichana with the intention to enhance the higher education standards of universities in the ASEAN and to reduce the gaps in the quality in higher education institutions (ASEAN University Network [AUN], 2004). Since then, the Thai government, represented by OHEC and AUN member universities in Thailand, has

maintained a role in sharing and developing the QA system. For example, in 2011, the OHEC organised the AUN-QA international seminar and the Chief Quality Officers (CQOs) meeting in Bangkok. The former aimed to promote the AUN-QA evolution and to share its implementation with non-AUN member universities in the ASEAN while the later was the CQOs' panel discussion on the future QA guidelines for programme level and AUN-QA assessment (AUN, 2012).

Similarly, SEAMEO RIHED, with the financial support from the OHEC, conducted research on the topic of 'Southeast Asian Quality Assurance Models' by distributing a survey questionnaire to the chosen QA experts in each country in order to assemble the current information about national QA policies and practices including financial support, forms of legislation, and agency governance (SEAMEO RIHED, 2011). The findings of the research were published and referred to as data sources in developing the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework in Higher Education in subsequent years.

In short, underlining the position of Thailand to enhance ASEAN integration by cultivating people's ASEAN awareness, reducing economic differences among the ASEAN sub-regional countries, expanding the ASEAN's global relationship, and harmonising higher education system, the Thai policymakers position Thailand as playing a leading role in enhancing ASEAN integration.

7.2 Becoming the ASEAN Community: Challenges and Opportunities

The Thai higher education policy practices have been currently implemented under the Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012–2016), which is in the second phase of the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (2008–2022). In the past 10 years, the discourses of regionalisation and globalisation have been discussed as important external factors of Thai higher education development. According to the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan, globalisation referred to a future scenario impacting Thai society and higher education in terms of future employability and recruitment. Thailand's commitments to the GATS and the AC declaration is reinforced for border mobility of people, trades, and services. Therefore, Thai higher education needs to be enhanced in terms of its quality to cope with the increasing international cooperation and competitiveness in the future (OHEC, 2008).

For instance, a respondent who was a former senior executive in the OHEC described the situation:

One of the functions of education is to produce graduates for the labour market. AC will promote greater labour mobility and facilitate flow of labour in the region. Thai people are willing to work more in foreign countries besides Thailand.... Graduates will represent their university. They are the institutional ambassadors. If graduates are not able to show their sufficient potential, the university will be questioned... about the quality. In reality, the Thai higher education has faced this problem. Some programmes or even some universities are neglected by employers because they have doubts about the quality. (Gov. B)

In the account above, the policymaker was of the opinion that workforce mobility will increase with the integration of the ASEAN as a single market. This will change the ways of looking for a job. Working overseas will possibly be more favoured than it is today. Graduates who have the ability to communicate in foreign languages, not only in English but also in neighbouring countries' languages like Bahasa Malaysia, Laos, and Burmese will be in high demand. He suggested that Thai universities have to enhance the quality of graduates to satisfy the labour market regionally and internationally. Another administrator predicted the trends of the labour market in the ASEAN:

Looking at the Thai context, I think there will be more mobility of students and workers within the region. Recently, many people in other ASEAN countries have moved to Thailand for employment whereas a smaller amount of Thai people are interesting in working in other ASEAN countries. During 2015-2016, labour movement will be increasing. Therefore, Thai universities need to evaluate themselves as to how well they can produce graduates to cope with this mobility. (Gov. D)

In the statement, the policy-maker compared the proportion of inbound ASEAN students and workers with outbound Thai graduates in order to point out to the unbalanced movement of the workforce in Thailand. The labour market in Thailand has become highly demanding; there is much competition in recruitment for future graduates. The interviewee implied that it was very important for the universities to look at the situation and work on strategies to prepare employable graduates for the highly competitive society.

Interestingly, another executive had a similar view on workforce mobility. The interviewee emphasised that human resources mobility is a significant matter that follows the AC project. The policymaker explained as follows:

When talking about the AC, it obviously reveals the movement of professionals. The ASEAN has agreed on the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Mutual Recognition Agreements on seven services regarding the ASEAN Economic Community pillar. I think people from the Member States are capable to enter to Thailand for working, especially, the Filipinos who have good communication skills in English. Recently, they have been living and working in healthcare services and the hospitality industry in our countries.
(Gov. E)

In the statement, the executive clarified that the labour market in Thailand would become a destination of high demand for work in the region. It is assumed that this impact will lead to high competition for jobs among Thai graduates. Moreover, English skills are considered an essential job qualification in the AC phase; Thai students need to be aware of this and improve.

Additionally, when the informants were asked about how the Thai society will be transformed after the region becomes the AC, the policymakers believed that the AC will enable Thailand and the Southeast Asia region to become competitive in the global economy.

The integration of the ten ASEAN country members can have power to be able to negotiate with other regions and other countries will look towards ASEAN so we can attract investment from overseas. In economic cooperation, the regions will expand cooperation from one to the other nine countries resulting in bigger markets. Thailand will turn into multicultural society. If we cooperate with each other, the region will be able to be competitive in the global market. However, among the region, instead of competition, we need to enhance economic cooperation. (Gov. C)

According to this extract, the participant confirmed the perceived benefits of the AC in furthering economic cooperation between the ASEAN member countries which can enable the ASEAN to become powerful at the global scale. Moreover, the changes in Thailand had been mentioned in terms of it becoming a multicultural society where people mobility will increase. As a result, it should be concerned about the impact of high competition in employment.

Therefore, to manage the opportunities and challenges, the Thai government focused on internationalisation in higher education to strengthen Thai higher education. The next section investigates current policy practices in Thai higher education and their rationales from Thai government executives' perspectives.

7.3 Thai Higher Education Policies and Practices

At the national level, the Thai government, under the responsibility of the OHEC, MOE, attempted to formulate policies and to carry out, for some decades, strategies to support Thai higher education institutions (HEIs) to become more competitive in the regional and global economies as stated in the inauguration of the First 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (1990–2004). The phenomena of global competition and interconnection with other countries have become significant factors affecting Thai HEIs. These pressures were viewed as external to Thai society and Thai higher education (Ministry of University Affairs [MUA], 1990). Since then, in the period of the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (2008–2022), a variety of policy strategies and initiatives have been developed in response to the context of global, national, regional, and local demands (OHEC, 2008). This section explores the ways in which the Thai government has recognised the effects of ASEAN integration on higher education. It is apparent that Thai policymakers have developed internationalising strategies towards regionalisation and globalisation for strengthening the regional integration. The strategies and programmes are categorised as follows:

7.3.1 Mobility programmes

The Thai government, OHEC, has launched several mobility programmes for staff and students in order to drive the movement of academics within and outside the Southeast Asia regions. These programmes provide students and staff with an opportunity to either study a short or long course or conduct research at overseas universities. However, some of the mobility programmes have been discontinued due to budget cuts. The details of the programmes are summarised in the Table 7.1

Table 7.1: Mobility programmes launched by OHEC

Programme Title/ Year of initiation	Type of mobility	Activity/duration	Destination	Credit transfer practice
Staff and Student Exchange Programme between Thailand and Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Countries (2000-2012) (discontinued)	Two-way student and staff exchange (Undergraduate/graduate students)	- Take courses (one semester) - Carry out research or academic activities for 1-4 months	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, Yunnan and Guangxi (China)	Mutual Agreement
University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) (1999-2015) (discontinued)	- Undergraduate/graduate students -Staff	Take courses for at least 6 units (one semester)	Every country except EU and GMS countries	UCTS
Thai-ASEAN Student Exchange Programme (2012-2014) (discontinued)	Undergraduate/graduate students	- Take courses for at least 6 units (one semester) - Carry out research (one month)	ASEAN countries	Mutual Agreement
ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) (2010-present)	Two-way undergraduate student exchange	Take courses for at least 9 units (one semester)	Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam	Mutual Agreement
ASEM-Duo Fellowship Programme (DUO-Thailand) (2006-present)	Two-way student exchange (undergraduate/graduate Thai- EU students)	- Take courses for at less 6 units - Carry out research (one semester)	EU countries	ECTS
ASEAN European Academic University Network (ASEA-UNINET) Staff Exchange (1986-present)	Staff	Carry out research (research visit) (one month)	Austria	-
Franco-Thai Cooperation Programme in Higher Education and Research (1999-present)	Two-way researcher visits	- Carry out research (research visit)	France	-

Regarding the student mobility programmes presented in Table 7.1, it is evident that the Thai government intends to promote the usage of regional credit transfer systems among Thai higher institutions, which facilitates students to take credits back to their home universities. For instance, the credit transfer system called University Credit Transfer System (UCTS) for

UMAP programmes has been utilised in the UMAP programme since 1999. In the UMAP application process, student applicants are required to get approval for transferring credits from home and host universities by having the agreement signed on the UMAP Standard Application form and Study Plan using UCTS (for UMAP). In fact, although the use of the UCTS is not compulsory, if the credit accumulation system between the two institutions is similar, credit transfer usage enables Thai universities to become accredited by foreign universities. This echoes Llego's (2014) findings from interviews with Thai administrators on how to develop internationalisation standards in Thai higher education. The Thai administrators stated that the implementation of credit transfers for comparable courses between a Thai university and an international partner university through exchange programmes ensured the validity of Thai education internationally. It implies that this strategy is a stepping stone to the process of academic harmonisation in the region.

In this regard, from the interviewees' perspectives on mobility programmes, one of the OHEC executives mentioned that is definitely strengthening higher education cooperation in the region:

All student mobility programmes launched by the OHEC underline the practice of credit transfer scheme because it contributes to accreditation between the two institutions... of the equal standard between comparable courses which the students are taking at the home and host universities. The agreement has to be approved by the deans of each faculty or department for credit earning. This process indicates some degree of mutual recognition of academic quality between participating universities and it will finally facilitate higher education harmonisation in the future. (Gov. E)

The OHEC executive's statement affirms that the Thai government has recognised the importance of credit transfer schemes as a means to harmonise different higher education systems in the region. Although the regulation of using a particular credit transfer system has not yet become the national agenda, several regional schemes such as ECTS, ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS), and UCTS have been promoted in Thai universities through national conferences and workshops organised by the OHEC. Experts on credit transfer schemes from Thai universities as well as from regional organisations such as the UMAP, ASEAN, and EU were invited to the conferences to explain their implementation and set up a

workshop for Thai university staff. It should be noted that the ACTS, which is developed by the AUN, is not applied to these programmes.

Moreover, student and staff mobility programmes are considered as tools for promoting ASEAN integration and intensify social cohesion. Most policymakers recognise the mutual benefits of a student mobility programme: such schemes can enhance students' foreign language skills and stimulate multicultural understanding. Sending students for a short visit or to study in the ASEAN Member States was repeatedly mentioned as a fundamental strategy when the participants were asked questions about how the universities planned to support the integration project, namely AC. For instance, Gov. A directly refers to a student mobility programme as 'Ya Kaew', which the policymaker defined as a basic herbal remedy for every illness without in-depth investigation.

...what we see is advantage more than disadvantage, without the need to analyse the strategic planning on researching as I had mentioned earlier... is to send Thai students to study in the ASEAN countries. Everyone has agreed to support student mobility programmes. I think it is like a 'Ya Kaew', a medicine for all diseases. We do not know what to do, so take it first. But it is not the best strategy. To me, at least, students can learn a foreign language and gain cross cultural understanding. Of course, it is beneficial. (Gov. A)

Although the policymaker did not regard the student mobility programme as the best strategy, he agreed that the programme can increase cross-cultural understanding of Thai students as well as help them gain some foreign language skills.

One of the aims of the government exchange programme is to attract overseas students to Thai universities. This has become an essential strategy to increase intercultural awareness among Thai students. The number of foreign students as well as overseas-experienced students can promote internationalisation in classrooms and institutions while Thai students who never go to study abroad can share intercultural views and international experience from them 'at home' or on the home campus (Beelen & Jones, 2015). This is another benefit of supporting exchange programmes, as agreed by the senior government administrators. However, many participants were concerned about how to develop internationalisation in Thai higher education in order to prepare Thai academics for the AC and attract more inbound students. Thus, international benchmarking and quality have been emphasised.

7.3.2 International benchmarking and quality development

The enhancement of university quality has become a crucial policy and practice in Thai higher education. According to the Second National Education Act B.E. 2545 (2002), all Thai educational institutions are required to implement internal QA as indicated in Chapter 6 Section 47: ‘There shall be a system of educational quality assurance to ensure improvement of educational quality and standards at all levels. Such a system shall be comprised of both internal and external quality assurance’ (Office of the National Education Commission [ONEC], 2003, p. 24). Thus, in 2003, the ministerial announcement regarding the ‘System, Regulations, and Methods for Internal Quality Assurance’ was made and later amended in 2010. National quality assessment has become a necessary instrument to assure Thai higher education standards to both national and international audiences. One of the OHEC executives mentioned the following:

In the past, the development of internationalisation in Thai higher education mainly focused on English language, computer studies and technology. But in the age of globalisation and regionalisation, the government has encouraged the universities to expand their academic cooperation with foreign universities. Therefore, the issues of internal and external quality assurance, qualification framework and credit transfer are necessitated, not only for national standards but for international standards... for the universities to advance. (Gov. C)

From this extract, it can be seen that this policymaker saw that QA, qualification framework, and credit transfer system can facilitate international academic cooperation between Thai universities and overseas universities and increase the mobility of students since the systems will improve and guarantee the quality of the institutions. According to Ten et al. (2014), collaborative programmes with best-practice foreign universities can improve internationalising practices implementing in Asian universities in terms of institutional reputation, international curriculum development, and build up international capacities of students and staff. These are reciprocal benefits of quality and internationalisation development in higher education.

Furthermore, most policymakers in the interviews agreed that the practices of regional QA or educational standards accredited by international organisations will ensure the world-class reputation of Thai universities. These international benchmarks enable Thai higher education

to become competitive in regional and global contexts. A former OHEC senior executive stated:

Besides promoting international cooperative education, some institutions attempt to improve their quality by using regional criteria such as ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance (AUN-QA), Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). I think this tactic is a better step than collecting lots of inactive MOUs because the international standards are an assured guard for their university (Gov. A).

Based on this opinion, the administrator perceived that it is time that Thai universities take further action for developing their international quality in order to respond to globalisation as he referred to it as an assured guard to protect their university from global challenges. It implies that being accredited by international organisation can increase a university's or programme's international competitiveness.

Based on the analysis of the responses of government executives, the themes of QA and accreditation emerged and they were referred to as a mechanism to facilitate regional harmonisation in higher education and to enhance regional and global competitiveness in Thai higher education as well. The words indicating harmonisation were 'equal standard of coursework', 'link higher education system', 'confident of the institutional quality', and 'facilitate student mobility'. Further, the policymakers also mentioned QA in relation to a sense of competitiveness such as 'promote better internationalisation', 'the utilisation of AUN-QA ensures the quality beyond national level', 'education hub', 'university's global reputation', 'attract more overseas students', and 'certify employability skills of graduates for working in regional and global economy'. The findings confirm those of Sae-Lao (2013) who points out that the rationales behind QA implementation respond to global challenges in three ways, namely global competitiveness, global communication, and global cooperation, while with regard to ASEAN integration, QA aims to promote regional harmonisation in higher education.

Hence, the Thai government, in collaboration with the AUN, has developed and promoted the regional QA system or AUN-QA through training workshops and seminars. However, the implementation of the AUN-QA is not compulsory but complementary to the national QA. Moreover, the OHEC has encouraged universities to apply for international accreditation of

engineering programmes known as ABET. To introduce and support the usage of ABET accreditation among Thai universities, mock visits and training workshops by Thai professors who work in engineering departments in US universities have been organised by the OHEC.

7.3.3 Regional connectivity and networking

Apart from student mobility programmes, the Thai government has initiated other programmes that aim to establish academic networks in the Southeast Asian region. These projects include the development of a National Citation Index (NCI) and an ASEAN Citation Index (ACI), Lower Mekong Initiative, and a Retreat Meeting between government executives of higher education departments from Thailand (OHEC) and other ASEAN countries. From the interviews, policymakers highlighted these activities as mechanisms to strengthen regional harmonisation. As one OHEC administrator stated:

The endeavour to invent ACI, by linking together the national journal citation index database created by each ASEAN member countries, leads to academic harmonisation in the ASEAN and its selective procedure will finally establish mutual quality of academic journals published in the region. The Thai Citation Index (TCI) database has been developed since 2002 (Gov. D). Working together through the project of ACI creates research networking among universities in the ASEAN and increases international visibility of academic papers conducted in ASEAN countries (Gov. E).

In addition, during 2012-2016, Thailand and CLMV countries, with financial support from the US, launched cooperative projects called the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) in six areas, namely education, health, environment, agriculture, energy, and connectivity. The OHEC, Thailand, undertook the English Support Project: Professional Communication Skills for Leaders under the education pillar. This project aimed to develop English communication skills of senior government officials from the five countries. The training course focused on how to use English effectively for presentations at international conferences and meetings. The total number of participants was 1,767 between 2012 and 2015 (OHEC, 2016). According to another OHEC administrator, the LMI project aims to strengthen the integration of the ASEAN by bridging the gap between the new ASEAN members and the founding countries. This indicates that Thailand intends to play a leading role in the ASEAN, especially in the northern areas.

Another project that illustrates the Thai government's efforts to create a closer connection among ASEAN member countries is known as 'Retreat Meeting' between government executives of the higher education departments from Thailand (OHEC) and one ASEAN country. The two countries will take turns to host retreat meetings. The meeting aims to establish acquaintances between the two parties and is a platform for higher education executives to exchange their experiences and opinions on higher education policy and management in their country and provides opportunities for further cooperative projects to support higher education harmonisation in the region. Although this strategy is a bilateral commitment, it generates networking among policymakers from the ASEAN countries. This initiative has been organised continually since its commencement in 2009.

7.3.4 Producing graduates with employability skills

The focus on preparing graduates to cope with global challenges and benefits has become the core consideration in Thai higher education policies. In the Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012-2016), improving the quality of learners is one of the highlighted strategic plans. In 2009, the Thai Qualification Framework for Higher Education (TQF) was announced as a benchmarking system to assure high learning outcomes of graduates at all levels in tertiary education. The minimum standards of learning outcomes include the areas of morality and ethics; knowledge; intellectual skills; interpersonal skills and responsibility; and skills in quantitative analysis, communication, and technology usage, which are expected to be applied to all programmes taught in the institutions. The principle of TQF is to ensure that the teaching and learning approaches in each curriculum conform to these desirable outcomes and are able to systematically assess the rationales and procedures of course management in each degree/programme/subject. This assessable scheme aims to produce a compatible degree between universities within the nation and world.

When asked about the mechanisms that can increase the accreditation of Thai universities among foreign universities, most of the government representatives referred to the implementation of TQF as an essential mechanism to shape national curricula as compatible with, and acknowledged by, overseas universities. One OHEC senior executive stated:

Now everyone is searching for a tool to improve higher education quality. The Thai government has utilised TQF in order to create a national standard for each discipline taught in Thai universities. Hence, if a foreign university

accepts that programme in one university, the same curriculum would be recognised as well (Gov. F).

The core benefit of TQF is that it can produce graduates with employable competences and skills, which enable them to work domestically and internationally. The Thai government has implemented the TQF with the aim of ensuring that the quality of Thai graduates matches employers' expectations. In responding to ASEAN challenges and opportunities, the governmental executives mentioned that this framework can facilitate universities to construct enriched curricula and become accredited by other universities in the ASEAN. For instance, an executive of policy and planning commented:

OHEC has tried to assist Thai universities to improve the quality of curriculum, especially teaching and learning approaches, which enable qualified graduates to work in Thailand and in other ASEAN countries. Moreover, the outcomes of enhancing qualification increases the accreditation of Thai higher education in the global platform. For example, we have launched a project with the EU called 'tuning standard programme' where we compare a degree and a field which we think are compatible with a university in Europe, such as certified fields in tourism and computer sciences. This cooperation will reinforce internationalisation in Thai higher education. (Gov. D)

From the excerpt above, it is evident that Thai higher education policy and practice have been influenced by the Western model, in particular, when the administrators refer to the Bologna process and credit transfer schemes like UCTS as the best practices for harmonisation. Undeniably, the concept of policy implementation in the ASEAN and Thailand have duplicated the EU's concept.

Another interviewee indicated that the universities will finally realise the benefit of TQF in assisting them to cope with the highly competitive labour market. The OHEC administrator stated:

When becoming an ASEAN Community, the graduates need to be ready for high competitiveness in the labour market. Thus, the universities have to improve the ways to teach their learners to enrich knowledge, skills and competences. OHEC has introduced TQF to identify a minimum of five

learning outcomes for graduates by starting with seven professions, according to the MRA agreement, such as curricula in tourism and nursing. Many universities have already implemented TQF in these academic fields. (Gov. E)

More importantly, the universities are required to produce further strategies to train lecturers to be able to teach and manage a course effectively in order to produce skilful graduates who will be accepted by the employers within the country and overseas. A former OHEC senior administrator emphasised:

Nowadays, the expectation of new graduates' capacities is different from the past. Thai universities need to discern the desirable learning outcomes of future graduates; otherwise, they will be in trouble. Most universities know that the learners need to have critical thinking, cognitive and lifelong learning skills, but most importantly, they do not know how to produce that kind of output (Gov. A).

From the interviews, it appears that internationalising policies and practices in Thailand have developed with the main purposes of improving Thai student's capacity to live and work in regional and global economies and improving international quality and standards of the curricula. The implementation of with-credit mobility programmes, regional QA, and national qualification framework of curricula are viewed as international strategies to facilitate and broaden academic cooperation with ASEAN universities.

7.4 Key Actors and Constraints in Policy Implementation

The analysis in this section focuses on exploring the role of the Thai government, OHEC, in implementing these policy practices and revealing significant impediments to progress. In the Thai higher education context, the main function of OHEC is to formulate policies and recommendations for higher education institutions which includes the implementation of student and professional development plans, national standards and evaluations, resource allocation frameworks, academic management, and international cooperation and strategies. After approval by the Minister of Education, the Higher Education Development Plan (five-year phase) has been publicised to Thai higher education institutions as a policy framework

and recommendation for further development of the policies and practices at the institutional level. Therefore, according to the government executives' interviews, key actors who drive the policy implementation are the Thai government, university leaders, and students and academic staff, who need to work together and be aware of the challenges or opportunities of the AC.

The national government is the first driving actor involving the Minister of Education and his cabinet, and the OHEC officers who formulate national policy and manage budget allocation.

A former OHEC senior executive suggested the following:

I divide the government into two levels. The superior actor is the (minister) cabinet who should have a precise policy vision on higher education because universities are the key mechanisms to drive the nation's economy... like 'economic arms'... and ASEAN focuses on economics. The secondary actor is the OHEC commissioners who have a direct role of formulating the policy, corresponding to the cabinet's vision. Therefore, the cabinet must realise that universities can foster the ASEAN economy. Moreover, the Ministry of Education cannot work alone, so it is the OHEC's responsibility to facilitate university connection with other Ministries. When the policy direction is well defined and supported by sufficient resources, the policy implementation will be accelerated at the university level. (Gov. A)

According to his viewpoint, the higher education agenda is less accentuated in the national policy which influences budget allocation and policy implementation at the institutional level. Moreover, the stability of Thai politics and government was mentioned by other interviewees as the effect of policy implementation. The regional organisation's executive commented:

The limitation of the Thai government is abrupt discontinuation of policy implementation. When the government is replaced by a new party, the existing policy is suspended and another new policy is substituted. Many years ago, I was appointed to a committee for drafting a Plan for ASEAN Community Preparation for Thailand with the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education but the plan was discarded because of the budget cuts and government resignation. (Gov. G)

As stated, to achieve a policy vision, adequate state funding is essential to sustain the policy practices. In the context of Thai higher education, budget allocation is the responsibility of the Bureau of the Budget, under the Prime Minister's Office, which directly designates the annual budget to Thai public universities. Therefore, the OHEC's authority to distribute funding to the universities is limited. This concern was mentioned by several policymakers. For instance, one OHEC administrator mentioned:

The function of the OHEC is to frame criteria and guidelines for budget allocation for higher education institutions, which corresponds to the National Economic and Social Development Plan, the Higher Education Development Plan, and the present government strategic plan (4 years), and to propose plans to the Bureau of the Budget for budget granting. Thus, the state budget will be allocated to each university according to individual proposals approved by the Bureau of the Budget while the OHEC provides partial funding resources to the universities based on the launch of development projects. (Gov. D)

The restraint of budget granting is thought to diminish the progress of the implementation in line with the OHEC's strategies and planning. Although Thai universities have the authority to manage institutional budgeting in relation to their policies, they still need financial resources in order to run the projects initiated by the OHEC. Without funding, the OHEC projects can hardly be operated in the institutions as the executive of the Bureau of International Strategy Cooperation emphasised:

Our department has launched the Strategies of Thai Higher Education for The Preparation towards the ASEAN Community in 2015 but we are unable to distribute a grant to the universities to carry out these recommended projects. The Bureau has faced difficulties from the budget cut since the Bureau of the Budget has been appointed to determine budget allocation directly to the universities such as the budget for a strategic planning, namely Preparation for ASEAN Community launched by the current government. (Gov. E)

Therefore, without funding, several policy practices formulated by the Bureau of International Strategy Cooperation have been recommended as a framework that universities could adopt in different ways based on their mission and capacity. Besides the programmes listed in section 6.3, individual universities have been encouraged to initiate the policy

practices at the institutional level depending on their university resources and strategic planning. This process involves the participation of university leaders, students, and staff.

From the policymakers' perspectives, most universities endeavour to undertake institutional policies in relation to the phenomena of the AC. The key actor who dominates the policy practices is the university president. A former OHEC senior executive mentioned:

The university president and senior administrators need to have a clear vision on internationalisation development and the realise benefits and impacts of the ASEAN Community on the university. Moreover, a sufficient budget should be provided to launch activities while supporting staff members, especially the International Affairs Office must play an active role in disseminating information such as exchange mobility programmes distributed by the OHEC and encourage students and lecturers to engage in the activities (Gov. B).

The statement implies that in Thai universities, leadership performance and university governance has influenced policy decision making. Therefore, the policy recommendations delivered by the government can be achieved in different ways at the university level. Similarly, the executive director of the regional organisation agreed with this:

The president and university council are key people who drive the policy actions. They have to work coherently with good governance and accountability. They need to become part of a transformative leadership which means they must be ready to change for the better and to learn new things in order to advance their university performance. (Gov. G)

Apart from budget allocation, leadership mind-set, and national policy, student and staff capabilities influence policy implementation. The policymakers pointed out several obstacles facing Thai academics including low-English proficiency, less engagement in ASEAN exchange programme of Thai students, inferior international programmes and curricula, and inadequate international expertise of staff. Therefore, the Thai government and universities should take these difficulties into consideration and find an effective solution.

Besides, there are other internal factors that shape the ways in which universities implement the policy practices. According to the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education, Thai higher education institutions are classified into four types, based on the

institutional mission and performance: Community college, Four-year university, specialised university, and research university. Moreover, other university contexts such as human resources and location have influenced the policy activities towards the AC in some ways. The next chapter will examine how Thai universities have responded to the strategies on ASEAN integration in various ways.

Conclusion

In sum, the chapter demonstrates the ways in which Thai policymakers have developed higher education policies and practices in relation to the ASEAN integration project. Based on their statements and declarations, the Thai government has positioned Thailand to take leadership roles in strengthening the ASEAN integration. These roles focused on cultivating a sense of ASEAN, connecting ASEAN sub-regional countries, enhancing its external partner countries, and harmonising the higher education systems. In connection with these roles, higher education policies and practices have developed such as student and staff mobility programmes, the implementation of a credit transfer scheme, the development of quality assurance and accreditation and seminars and training workshops. In addition, several difficulties of policy implementation were indicated.

CHAPTER 8

Thai University Administrators: Imagining and Making ASEAN

Introduction

The definition of regional integration is explained by Van Langenhove (2011) as a process of region-building. It is referred to as the process of consolidation of isolated states by increasing interconnections between neighboring countries. Besides the regional organisation and the national government, universities as local actors also play a pivotal role in developing cross-border cooperation through academic activities which support the process of strengthening the regional integration. This idea leads to the discussion in this chapter which aims to explore a variety of international strategies implemented in Thai universities in response to the regional and global context. Therefore, the focus in this chapter will be on how the universities play a role in the regional dimension. It is argued that the distinct implementation of international strategies in the universities demonstrates further responses to enhance the regional integration. The analysis will cross compare the data from two main groups of universities. The first group is categorised as the first tier universities or old elite universities, which have a good academic reputation with more funding resources while the other group is classified as the second tier universities or new universities in which the majority of the student population is more diverse and with limited funding resources.

In order to develop the argument, the chapter is divided into two parts. The first section provides the analysis of some understanding of the ASEAN Community projects from the perspective of the university senior administrators. The second section explains the way in which the Thai universities have produced various policies and practices which respond to initiatives around internationalisation and regional integration.

To facilitate the analysis of university policy, it is necessary to scrutinise how the institutional administrators conceptualise the context of the ASEAN Community which influences the institutional action. To explain higher education's responses to globalisation, Marginson (2011a) posited a model of 'Shaping of the global dimension by nations and institutions', to present the relationship of the three actions which shape the global dimension. The three actions include, firstly, the 'acts of imagination' of the global dimension by university

administrators; secondly, ‘acts of production’ resulting from globalisation and thirdly, ‘acts of regulation’ to support global activity (p.41). In the same line of thought, two aspects of imagination and production are applied to analyse how university strategies have been initiated in responding to the regional dimension as discussed in Chapter 3 section 3.2.

8.1 Imagination of ASEAN Community

In order to study university action in the regional space, it is important to begin with scrutinising the executives’ perspectives on understandings of the ASEAN Community (AC) project. Their perspectives of the integration, referred to as acts of imagination of the AC, have influenced the institutional strategies. Corresponding with Marginson’s (2011a) study of ‘acts of imagination’ of the global dimension, the ideas of an imagined regional community and its influences on higher education projects are discussed by Robertson, Dale, Olds, & Dang (2016) who argue that the higher education initiatives are socially constructed and shaped by norms and values of a region. These higher education regional projects can be developed by institutions to institutions among several countries. Thus, exploring how Thai university administrators have perceived the AC enables me to understand outputs and rationales behind their institutional initiatives. Based on the interview data, it is evident that the milieu of ASEAN community constitutes four scenarios which are the proliferation of (1) people mobility, (2) regional academic cooperation and networks, (3) high competition in the labour market, and (4) brain drain of Thai professionals.

8.1.1 People mobility

From the interview data, it is noticeable that the issue of people mobility appears to be described as the main consequences of the ASEAN regional integration based on the result of the agreement of ASEAN Economic Cooperation (AEC), which aims at creating a single market, the region will allow free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour, and freer flow of capital. Most interviewees saw that the ASEAN Community project will promote the movement of people in the region, especially, labour mobility as well as students and staff in higher education. For labour mobility, the result of the AEC agreement such as Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) will reinforce the mobility of skilled labour in ASEAN because MRAs constitute common recognition of educational and professional qualifications and experiences among the ASEAN countries (Chai, 2013). For instance, when asked about the impact of the emergence of the ASEAN Community (AC), increasing labour mobility was primary emphasised by most interviewees as a consequence following the

economic integration. An interviewee from a top university in central Thailand stated a positive view of the regional integration project in strengthening economic growth and facilitating people mobility within the region. He explained that

Economically, the AC project reinforces economic growth in the region. Due to the increasing of people mobility, international investment will be spread across the region. For instance, a firm from Thailand can open a branch in Vietnam and Laos which enables us to exchange new technologies and learn from each other. It will create regional networking and build good relationship between the countries. (P.12, Uni.H)

From his viewpoint, cross border activities such as international investments tend to be expanded across ASEAN as a result of the regional agreement. Moreover, he pointed out that the creation of a single market is a mechanism to drive people and labour mobility within the region. As the result, individual countries in ASEAN will become interdependent especially in the economic dimension.

Similarly, a vice-president's view in the first tier institution in the north emphasised that if ASEAN becomes integrated, especially in economic cooperation, the region will shift influential power at the global level. He said,

Based on the objective of the AC project, it aims at strengthening cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and security aspects within the region. For example, in the pillar of the ASEAN Economic Community, if we become a single market, our region will have a bigger capacity for trade negotiation with other countries. Beyond this, ASEAN needs to eliminate trade restrictions such as customs and tariffs while managing the linkage of logistics between the East-West corridors to support the economic cooperation within the region. (P.1, Uni.A)

This implies that their visions of the ASEAN integration focus on the idea of economic integration which corresponds with Van Langenhove (2011), who differentiates types of regional integration into three dimensions: the economic single space, the provision of public goods, and the actorness and sovereignty. He explains that the form of the Common Market is the further process of economic integration, 'where the free movement of goods and factors of production are added to the free trade' (p. 102). Thus with the intention to create a single ASEAN market, goods, services, investment and people are facilitated to move freely

between Thailand and the other member countries which enhances economic growth in the region.

From these two excerpts, I found that the university leaders' views of the AC are dominated by neoliberal ideology in which the region's economic growth depends on free market competition driven by the flow of knowledge, investments, labour and services (Yeates, 2001; Koh, 2007). According to the first statement, the interviewee mentioning that 'a firm from Thailand can open a branch in Vietnam and Laos' illustrates transnational activities which will intensify economic interdependence and cooperation within the region. In this regard, higher education sector has become one of the commodities or services involved in the process of regionalisation.

Similarly, the vice president from the elite university in the north also addressed benefits of the regional integration on economic cooperation. He viewed that since trade barriers are reduced, it will stimulate international trade and investments within the region.

When we become a community, the market will be broadened with less trade barriers. This will stimulate trade exchange. Our country might gain or lose benefits from the integration depending on the country's competitiveness. Moreover, it facilitates labour mobility. (P2, Uni.A)

Additionally, from the statement, the respondent indicated that when the regional market has become more open, the movement of labour in the region would be increased and accessible. In fact, within Southeast Asia countries, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei with the more developed economies, differentiated by human development indexes and incomes, are the main labour recipients whereas the sending countries are Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam (Hugo, 2016). Therefore, it is considered that the flows of inbound and outbound labour from and to neighbouring countries will increase in Thailand. This assumption articulates the issue of unequal status of countries or universities transformed by regionalisation and globalisation. Altbach (2004) underlines that industrialised and powerful countries tend to earn more advantages from globalisation than developing countries since the industrialised countries with prosperity and potential resources can attract inbound talents and skilled labour to the countries.

With regard to higher education, the interviewees in the different universities had similar views on trends in students and staff mobility, which will shift due to further regional integration. I found that the university administrators viewed that the regional integration

project could stimulate a greater number of students and staff mobility across the region and expected Thailand to become a study destination for ASEAN students. According to the UNESCO statistic of international flows of mobile students in 2011, the trend of student mobility within ASEAN is smaller compared to the flow of students from ASEAN countries to English speaking countries such as the US, UK, and Australia. Malaysia and Thailand are the popular host countries out of the top five destinations for outbound mobile students from the ASEAN countries. Malaysia has become the top five destinations for students from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand while Thailand is the second most popular destination of the top five destinations for students from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar.

Table 8.1: UNESCO statistic of international flows of mobile students in 2011

Country or territory	Top five destinations (host countries) for outbound mobile students (the number of students from given country studying in the host countries is shown in brackets)
Brunei Darussalam	United Kingdom (2,046), Australia (675), Malaysia (310) ⁻¹ , New Zealand (74), United States (65)
Cambodia	Thailand (944) , France (636), Viet Nam (482), Australia (467), United States (334)
Indonesia	Australia (9,702), Malaysia (8,955) ⁻¹ , United States (6,809), Japan (2,176), Germany (1,359)
Lao PDR	Viet Nam (1,936), Thailand (1,311) , Japan (268), Australia (170), France (112)
Malaysia	Australia (18,312), United Kingdom (12,175), United States (6,606), Russian Federation (2,671) ⁻² , Indonesia (2,516) ⁻¹
Myanmar	Russian Federation (1,627) ⁻² , Thailand (1,310) , Japan (1,115), United States (781), Australia (655)
Philippines	United States (3,535), Australia (2,098), United Kingdom (1,738), Japan (635), New Zealand (426)
Singapore	Australia (9,767), United Kingdom (4,370), United States (4,234), Malaysia (840) ⁻¹ , Canada (384) ⁻¹
Thailand	United States (8,079), United Kingdom (5,760), Australia (3,694), Japan (2,476), Malaysia (1,316) ⁻¹
Viet Nam	United States (14,603), Australia (10,591), France (6,194), Japan (3,672), United Kingdom (3,192)

Tertiary Education: International flows of (degree-seeking) mobile students by country of origin, 2011. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2014)

From the university administrators' perception, Thailand is positioned as a chosen destination for tertiary education for students from neighbouring countries. More inbound foreign students from neighbouring countries will increase in the AC period. For instance, the university in the south referred to other southern ASEAN countries. Vice President for Planning and Finance from a top university said,

It should be understood that we are the 'ASEAN Gate'. Students and staff from Malaysian and Indonesian universities have joined many academic activities with us, especially staff activities such as research collaboration and seminars. (P.3, Uni.B)

In the statement, more international students and foreign lecturers are encouraged to come to study in and expand academic cooperation with the university since Thailand is seen to be geographically at the centre of ASEAN. He described Thailand as the ‘ASEAN Gate’ in which students and staff from neighbouring countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia will enter Thailand and engage in more academic cooperation.

Similarly, the president of the second tier university located in the northeast expected more incoming international students from the ASEAN countries which are close to the northeastern border such as Myanmar, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Since the globe has become worldwide, the movement of people across the world is more possible. Thus, the ‘inputs’ for university are not only Thai students but include international students from Burma, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Providing a full scholarship will be a proactive strategy to encourage them to study with us. (P.5, Uni.E)

From the statement, the president also mentioned that due to the expansion of students and staff mobility from one country to another, the vision of university will be changed from only serving domestic students to targeting international students. Therefore, Thai universities need to enhance their quality and reputation to become a regional education hub. Likewise, the governments of many Asian countries such as Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and China are endeavouring to form education hubs to respond to the pressure of globalisation by increasing universities’ world-class reputations and promoting transnational education (Mok & Yu, 2011; Nge, 2012). Apart from increasing people mobility in the region, the AC project was considered to foster academic cooperation and build networks among universities in ASEAN countries, which I will now go on to explore in the next section.

8.1.2 Regional academic cooperation and networks

To bolster the ASEAN Social Cultural Community and strengthen the ASEAN Economic Community, tertiary education is regarded as an important mechanism. Thus, in 2009, ASEAN has endeavoured to harmonise higher education systems in the region by promoting student mobility, credit transfers, quality assurance and research clusters among universities in ASEAN (Sirat et al., 2014). It is argued that there is significant reinforcement in academic cooperation and networking through these regional integration projects. The interview data show that several interviewees understand that the process of regional

integration provides an opportunity for Thai universities to promote academic cooperation across ASEAN countries.

For instance, the vice president from a top university in Bangkok directly clarified the institutional three-year plan for promoting the ASEAN integration through academic cooperation. He stated,

We have got the government's funding for implementing the ASEAN projects. The funding is allocated for supporting student and staff exchange programme. The university provides a grant for both outbound Thai students as well as inbound exchange students from the ASEAN countries. The activities include taking a course or conducting a research. To promote staff exchange, we have launched visiting scholar programme to encourage research cooperation among other universities in ASEAN.
(P.12, Uni.H)

According to the account, it implies that the Thai government has endeavoured to promote the regional cooperation by putting it on the National Agenda in the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) as stating that "Support should also be provided to enhance technical capacity and networks among Thai academic institutes in order to create close collaboration with other countries in this region" (P. xx). Creating regional connectivity for social and economic stability is one of the key development strategies to strengthen domestic development partners at the community level. Moreover, to support the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, the Strategy for Human Development towards a Sustainable Lifelong Learning Society clearly highlights the aim of promoting the creation of international and regional networks in culture, especially in the ASEAN community. Stimulating the flow of information on culture, wisdom, and social values among the countries in ASEAN is determined as a developing guideline in preparing the Thai society for the ASEAN Community. Thus, it is assumed that Thai universities receive supports from the government to carry out regional academic cooperation projects among other ASEAN universities.

Moreover, the vice president for the second tier university agreed that the regional integration project allowed the university to expand academic networks with other universities in the region and through the cooperation, the university gained benefits in term of catalysing university development. She explained,

I think the AC project provides an effective channel to build academic network among ASEAN universities. It is a way to promote our university through establishing a joint degree or having lecturer exchange programme with overseas universities. This allows us to learn different knowledge of curriculum management from professionals in other countries. (P.4, Uni.E)

This opinion of the second tier university demonstrates the benefits of cross border collaborative programmes which can improve the quality of the Thai university by learning the best practice from a foreign university (Ng & Nyland, 2018). Likewise, the president of the same university exposes the optimistic impact of the regional integration on higher education. He understood that in the context of education, the university will earn benefits from collaborating, rather than competing, with each other as outlined in the following statement,

Unlike economic and political pillars, education is in the social and culture pillar in which there is no borderline of linkage. I think the AC catalyses academic cooperation among ASEAN universities. Most universities in ASEAN seem to have the same vision to enhance quality of life for people in their country and to have better education. It tends to be positive effects to the region but I am not talking about the impact of labour mobility. (P.6, Uni. E)

However, at the end of the statement, the president raised the issue of competition in the labour market as a challenge for Thailand due to the free movement of labour in the region. Besides the benefits of the regional integration, the challenges are reflected in the following discussion.

8.1.3 High competition in labour market

Thailand has become a popular working destination for workers from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and the Philippines. In 2004, 1.6 million workers migrated to Thailand from East Asia (Chai, 2006). In addition, with reference to the creation of a single ASEAN market, the growth of foreign workers in Thailand will be increased. This concern was addressed by the university administrators as challenging for new Thai graduates. High competition in the labour market, especially, from Southeast Asia neighbouring countries will become a concerned issue. Therefore, it is necessary for Thai universities to strengthen employability skills for students to be able to work in a multicultural environment.

From the interview, the vice-president from the second tier university stated negative impacts of high competition in the ASEAN single labour market if Thai students are lacking professional competency in English. The vice-president explained,

There will be many problems if our graduates have low ability to communicate in English because the labour market in most fields will be fulfilled by people from other ASEAN countries. For example, nursing position is highly popular for Filipinos who are quite good at English and similar to us, they have sense of good hospitality. I think this is something to be worried about. It could impact on other careers as well. (P.6, Uni.E)

This account exemplifies the concern of the weakness of Thai students in English skills. The informant commented on characteristics of ASEAN people and our closed culture which enable us to live and work together well. However, in addition to technical skills, it is important for Thai students to gain soft skills which include skills of communication, teamwork, and work ethics in order to work in multicultural contexts (Paryono, 2011). Thus, in terms of recruitment, this could be a drawback if Thai workers lack distinctive employability skills while graduates (or workers) from other countries have these skills. Evidently, the problem of poor performance in English language amongst Thai students and staff has been discussed by several scholars (Kamolpun, 2015; Laoriandee, 2014; Llego, 2014; McBride, 2012). The requirement of English language proficiency has become a significant aspect involving in the process of regionalisation due to the fact that English language has been regarded as a main lingua franca of ASEAN citizens (ASEAN, 2012a). With regard to labour mobility in the region, qualified English language skills are essential for job requirements (Laoriandee, 2014; Nilphan, 2005). Moreover, from my work experiences, I found that most student exchange programmes require high scores in English proficiency tests in the application process. Having low proficiency in English limits opportunities for Thai students to participate in the regional projects.

Another vice-president from the top university also addressed an impact of the economic integration project on Thai higher education in term of competition. From his point of view, the role of higher education is identified to produce highly skilled graduates for working in the regional or global economy as follows.

To know that the ASEAN will integrate at the end of this year is not enough. It is the responsibility of Thai universities to produce qualified graduates to work

in this bigger economy. It is a big challenge faced by the higher education institutions to produce highly competitive graduates. Within the wider ASEAN economies, the more benefits we will earn, the higher competition we will face. (P.1, Uni.A)

From this view, there are two predicted outcomes of the integration project, opportunities and threats which will impact on the role of universities. Besides the threat, the vice president pointed out the benefits of a single market which will facilitate opportunities for potential graduates to work overseas. Therefore, the universities are required to take further action to produce graduates to meet the requirements of international employment and the skills demanded.

In the previous excerpt, to produce highly competitive or skilled graduates who can work internationally was considered as a crucial mission of Thai universities influenced by the regional vision of free flow of labour markets. This expectation leads to the question of how the universities can verify academic qualifications of graduates and quality of higher education institutions internationally. Taking this issue into account, the practices of quality assurance and accreditation are developed by the Thai government and universities. The implementation of a quality assurance policy aims to improve the international standards of Thai higher education which facilitates the nation's engagement in regional or global economies rather than cultivating the regional identity (Madden, 2012).

As a result, addressed by the university administrators, it is evident that the high competition in the labour market is understood as a critical dimension of the free movement of labour in ASEAN. This assumption has been an external factor that dominates more recent strategic planning of the universities.

8.1.4 Brain Drain

The concern of brain drain is another observable issue which is raised by some university administrators. It implies that the AC project was criticised in term of the feasibility of brain drain. The participants acknowledged flow out of skilled labour would occur in Thailand if the working system and compensation in the country does not meet their demand. For instance, the Vice President from the newest university claimed that

One problem of free labour mobility in the region we need to think about is the flow out of skilled labour such as a doctor. The nation has invested on them but

they may want to work in other countries after graduating. The government needs a concrete measure to retain them. (P.8, Uni.G)

In the same way, the vice president from a research university addressed a concern of brain drain of talented students and professional scholars as a difficult situation of Thai universities in the era of the ASEAN Community. He said,

We urgently need to develop the university in every dimension to manage the flow in of international students for example enhancing student and staff's English language skills and developing international programme; otherwise, we may lose incoming foreign students and also our domestic students and lecturers who want to acquire international education. (P2, Uni. A)

Based on the two accounts above, the topic of brain drain has been understood as a situation for concern in Thailand. In the Thai higher education sector, brain drain probably occurs because of the absence of world-class universities or centres of excellence as well as insufficient support from government or university leaders such as facilities for international students and staff and international hiring rates. These international features can attract talents or elite academics and overseas students to Thai universities. One example was, in Singapore, the government attempted to develop internationalisation in higher education in order to be globally competitive (Nge, 2012). Thus, it can be one of the rationales behind the strategic planning of Thai universities.

In sum, the responses of the administrators at the institutional level tend to be similar with the concerns of the negative and positive consequences perceived to have emerged from the regional integration project. The attempts to imagine the ASEAN region building highlights the increase of mobility of people across the region, the expansion of academic cooperation and network as well as the effect of high labour competition within ASEAN, and the risk of brain drain of skilled people in Thailand. According to these understandings of the regional dimension, the next section explores the production of university actions, which are constituted through the administrators' imaginaries of the ASEAN economy.

8.2 University Activities and Its Rationales

In the previous section, based on the university administrators' understanding of the ASEAN regional dimension, there is a tendency to grow interconnection among the ASEAN member countries which will foster mobility of people, promote more regional academic cooperation,

create high competition in labour market, and increase the flow out of talented students and professionals from Thailand. Therefore, the universities, as a mechanism to produce human resources, need to develop strategies in responding to these impacts. In this section, the acts of production or university activities are explored. It is argued that internationalisation strategies developed differently at the university level were influenced by university leaders' imaginary of AC, which demonstrates some level of regionalism.

Although the university executives have similar perceptions of the consequences of the regional integration project, the implementation of the programme in each university appears to be in different models according to its goal, location, staff and students' competency, university reputation and resources. According to Knight (2008), internationalisation may differ from one institution to another and there are many factors that might influence institutional-level rationales including 'mission, student population, faculty profile, geographic location, funding resources, availability of resources, degree of institutional autonomy, and orientation to local, national, and international interests' (p. 28). These factors evidently differentiate the two main groups of the universities participating in this research which are called the first tier university and the second tier university. With these dissimilar contexts, their scope of strategies and expected outcomes are diverse across the institutions. In the following part, the regional strategies, from the institutional administrators' viewpoints, are compared and analysed.

8.2.1 Student and staff international skills development

The interview data show that three main objectives of competency development for student and staff, in response to the regional integration, are to enhance usage of English and languages of ASEAN neighbouring countries, to increase awareness of ASEAN, and to foster ability to work in an international environment. Therefore, to achieve the desired objectives, selective activities have been launched in Thai universities in particular through student mobility programmes and researcher and staff mobility programmes. All of these will be discussed below.

To develop ASEAN understanding

In response to the expansion of people and knowledge mobility, it is evident that student and staff mobility programme are referred to as a popular international strategy to prepare Thai

students to maintain a global and regional competitiveness. Most respondents believed that sending students and staff to study or train abroad will result in increasing awareness and understanding of other cultures, which could decrease conflicts among neighbouring countries. This is similar to Knight's (2008) claim, that "one of the leading rationales at the institutional level for internationalisation is to prepare graduates to be internationally knowledgeable and interculturally skilled, able to live and work in more culturally diverse communities both at home and abroad" (p.14). All of the universities, therefore, recognise the importance of initiating student and staff mobility programme as a tool to enhance students and staff's intercultural experiences.

For student development, a short course programme has been carried out in most Thai universities. The main purpose of the programme is to encourage Thai students to learn about and live in different cultures of other Southeast Asia countries. However, it is found that there are some slightly different expected outcomes of the activities and a number of participants between the two groups of universities.

In the second tier university, a short course programme mainly focuses on boosting students' interests to learn about other ASEAN countries. An example of the 'ASEAN Learning Project' is described by the vice president from the second tier university in the south as follows,

...Another innovative practice besides setting up seminars on the ASEAN topic is a short visiting programme in the ASEAN countries including the Plus Three partners. We provide students a partial fund to visit the country as a backpacker. Students need to form a group of six people and prepare a proposal of the destination to visit. They have to do research on the country's history, culture like do's and don'ts, and other necessary information for tourism and present to the selection committee, plus preparing Thai (local) culture to show foreigners. Last year, we supported sixty students to the countries such as Burma, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. When they return to Thailand, they need to share their experience to other students in the universities. (P.5, Uni. E)

From the description, it is clear that, with the intention of launching, the activity enables students to explore and learn more about ASEAN countries. The respondent mentioned that the programme is informal and did not expect any academic result from the visits; otherwise, the students would not be eager to participate in the programme. The core purpose of the

activities was to boost students' real experiences in travelling to other countries and learn about their culture.

In addition, a similar short course activity established in another second tier university located in the Northeast focuses on culture exchange and learning. As the president demonstrated,

Another action plan is to have students participate in an exchange programme with our partner universities in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The programme is a one month visit which aims to enhance students' understanding of other cultures. Equally, foreign students from those universities come to visit our campus in the same way. (P.7, Uni. F)

Similarly, without mentioning any academic outcome, the purpose of a short visit programme means to stimulate intercultural experience of students in the ASEAN countries rather than taking a regular class. The president said it was important to build up ASEAN identity among students at the first step.

Drawing attention to student learning outcomes, the presidents of the second-tier universities perceived that the short-term exchange programme can increase the students' understanding of culture and society in other countries. Statham (2015) refers to this outcome as cultural competence. In his study of the implementation of a student mobility programme and its outcomes, cultural competence involves student attainment of interpersonal awareness, understanding of global issues, and knowledge of different cultures. These fulfilments can decrease stereotyping and ethnocentric attitudes of the mobile students, which are important components to foster ASEAN awareness.

On the other hand, some short course programme in the first tier universities have a focus on not only experiencing foreign cultures but also expecting credit transfer from courses undertaken at another university. Examples of short course and mobility programme addressed by the vice president for Policies and Strategic Planning from the first tier university in the North are explained below,

Since 2013, the university has allocated a budget for student exchange programme. Many students have participated in the programme since it can be a part of their course requirement. Approximately, there are about 400-500 students joining the exchange programme. If combined with short course participants, the total number could reach a thousand. However, a small

number of students can transfer credits such as under AUN credit transfer scheme because it is required many factors and details. We are recently attempting to work on credit transfer system with our partner universities. (P.2, Uni.A)

From the account, it indicates the divergent scope of the participants in the programme from the second tier group. The number of students participating in short course programme in this elite university is a lot more than in the second tier university. Moreover, the aim of transferring credits is explicitly emphasised by the managers from the elite university while it is not mentioned by the second tier universities.

Another elite university located in the capital of Thailand has also launched a similar project. The vice president in the Policy and Planning department described,

We have the three-year ASEAN Development Plan partially supported by the government funding. The first project is to support academic exchange programme for students, staff and researchers. I think it generates sustainable outcomes. The exchange students from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos came to study in the university while our students went to their countries. The international students exchange their knowledge and culture with our students. Moreover, our university has been working with AUN universities on credit transfer systems. Now, I would say not a hundred percent of students can transfer credit back from host universities. (P.10, Uni.B)

It is clear that the university expects intensive outcomes from the mobility programme. The students are expected to enrol in a formal course in the host university and take credits back to the home university. In contrast, cross border activities carried out in the second tier universities merely focus on informal visits without academic results.

Considering the varied purposes of student mobility programme established in the two groups of universities, it implies that the factors of each institution determine the scope of activities. For instance, since the elite universities have become a member of ASEAN University Network, it facilitates access to join the AUN exchange programme and expect credit transfer results. Although the informants mentioned that a mobility programme with credit transfer was not applicable for all exchange programmes, the university has encouraged the students to do it. With this intention, it implies that the first tier universities considered the importance of credit transfer systems through student mobility programmes to support academic regional

cooperation. This strategy imitates a model of regional higher education initiatives in Europe and Latin America when the launch of student mobility programmes and an agreement of credit transfer scheme have been promoted to create a common education areas known as European Higher Education Area and MERCOSUR's education space (Gomes, Robertson, & Dale, 2012; Robertson, 2006a, 2010; Robertson and Keeling 2008).

Furthermore, another dominant factor which differentiates the number of student participants between the two groups is funding support for the programme. The second tier universities have limited budgets for funding the students compared to the budgets distributed in the first tier universities based on the unequal number of participants.

Consequently, it is apparent that student mobility programme are recently launched in the Thai universities as a strategy to basically encourage students to experience the real ASEAN community and eventually develop student international skills such as using English language and be able to work in diverse cultural environments. This corresponds with the purpose of ASEAN in utilizing higher education in developing human resources and creating an ASEAN identity in the region.

To enhance professional development of academics

Apart from student development programme, there are mobility activities initiated at the university level to enhance scholars and staff's capability in working in a multicultural environment. The activities are conducted in forms of research collaboration, exchange visiting professors, and training courses. In line with student programme, the types of activities and their purposes are shaped differently between the two groups of the universities.

When asking about strategies to strengthen staff's expertise to sustain the regional cooperation and competition, the first tier university's directors mentioned a proactive plan for research collaboration with other universities in ASEAN. The data show that in the top university, regional cooperation in research has been recently conducted at the faculty level. For instance, the vice president for Policy and Planning from Uni. A, the elite university in the north, explained that

Next step, we support joint research programme with ASEAN countries.
Several programme are already proceeding. For example, the university has

given the Faculty of Law the two-year grant for doing a research on the Comparative Laws in ASEAN. Faculty of Mass Communication is proposing a project to study mass communication systems in ASEAN. Some projects may supplement the GMS studies. (P.2, Uni.A)

The account above highlights the strategic action, which involves a research mobility programme to conduct studies on ASEAN issues with partner universities in ASEAN. The activities have been implemented and initiated at faculty level. This collaborative activity facilitates information sharing which can generate innovative knowledge in ASEAN. This knowledge enrichment shows that higher education plays a role in driving knowledge economies and enhancing the region's global competitiveness.

Added to research cooperation plans, most administrators remarked that working with visiting professors from overseas is another action which allows staff and students to work with foreign academic experts. For instance, the president from the new university in the northeast mentioned,

In terms of conducting research, our university has supported lecturers and graduate students to do joint research with two of the universities in Jawa, Indonesia. We exchange lecturers between the universities by giving a special lecture for the students. Moreover, University of Malaya has arranged an English training programme for our staff for a month. Recently, the university has been conducting research on the topic of "Learning Achievement and Quality in International Education Management in ASEAN countries" by using the same methodology with universities in Malaysia and Laos. (P.7, Uni.F.)

The statement illustrates recent exchange programme implemented between the universities in the ASEAN countries. Aiming to foster academic cooperation in the region, it is assumed, that the university tends to provide budgets to promote exchange activities and doing research on the topic which gives values to the region such as quality development in higher education.

In contrast, the vice president in International Affairs from the second tier university in the south explained that staff mobility programme in his university focuses on arranging a language training course rather than research cooperation. He stated,

One of staff mobility activities is to fund thirty lecturers to take training courses including English and teaching techniques in 21st century at Oakland University of Technology, New Zealand. A plan for research collaboration is underdeveloped at this time although we have signed MOU with several universities in other countries such as Burma, Cambodia, Taiwan and New Zealand. We at least have academic collaboration with a university in Burma in organising a Burmese language training class with us. (P.6, Uni.E)

In light of this statement, it shows that staff mobility in University E. focuses on fostering academics' competencies that are necessary for teaching in an international context. This purpose is similar to the way another newest university of the second tier group draws attention to develop staff's skills by using a staff mobility programme. The vice-president in Policy and Planning expressed,

Every year, the university has supported both students and staff to study abroad but not in ASEAN countries. The destinations are Australia, New Zealand, and England. The intention is to improve their English communication and teaching skills for university's development and for themselves in embarking on doctoral education. (P.8, Uni.G)

Referring to the different forms of staff mobility programme described above, it shows that Thai universities have initiated international strategies regarding to faculty profile. While research universities aim to support research collaborations, second tier universities intend to firstly develop staff potential in English communication, and teaching techniques. Table 8.2 highlights diverse activities and their levels compared between the two groups of the universities.

Thus, the implication drawn from the variety of staff mobility programme is that Thai universities endeavour to stimulate researcher and staff to engage in academic collaboration with other ASEAN countries. However, to enhance professional competency and English language skills is a preliminary necessity to earn benefits from the academic cooperation. The advantages of Akdağ and Swanson's (2017) argument about rationales behind internationalisation which relates to the improvement of quality of higher education rather than assuming that quality is enhanced automatically by increasing numbers of international academic collaborations and exchange students.

Table 8.2: Comparing university initiatives in response to student and staff international skills development

Act of Imagination of ASEAN Community	Rationale	Act of Production and its Scope	
		first tier Universities	second tier Universities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People mobility: increasing labour mobility and international student and staff mobility - High competition in labour market 	<p>Student and staff international skills development includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English and other ASEAN languages - ASEAN awareness: sense of regional identity - Working and studying in multicultural environment 	<p>Student mobility programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enrolled short course programme: with credit transfer - Long-term exchange under AUN exchange programme - More funding support <p>Researcher and staff mobility programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASEAN research mobility programme - Research collaboration - Lecturer and researcher visits 	<p>Student mobility programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal short course programme: ASEAN Learning Project - Short visit programme - Less funding support <p>Researcher and staff mobility programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English training course - Curriculum development and teaching techniques - Lecturer visit

In sum, the primary action of the university directors in response to the regional integration pressure of people mobility is to develop student and staff international capacities in order to prepare their people in the AC period. Therefore, the variety of mobility programme have been launched for students and staff to improve their English skills, to gain knowledge of culture of the ASEAN neighbouring countries, and to foster their working abilities in a multicultural environment. The next part deals with the topic of how the universities use internationalisation to strengthen academic networking and cooperation in the ASEAN region.

8.2.2 Expansion of regional academic network and cooperation

In respect of the positive views of the regional integration, most respondents mentioned that it is a great opportunity for the universities in the ASEAN member countries to expand academic cooperation and network. The discussion in this part aims to identify how the universities take action differently in broadening academic networking in the region. Several strategies have been addressed as I discuss below, which include (1) offering scholarships for foreign students, and (2) increasing effective activities through bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Offering scholarships for foreign students

First, offering full or partial scholarships to foreign students is a well-known approach to increase the number of talented international students and scholars which, in turn, fosters academic competitiveness of the countries and establishes networking within the region. The interview with the president of the Uni. F which is the second tier university located in the northeast of Thailand mentioned that it is a traditional plan to annually provide full scholarships to neighbouring countries' students to study in the university. The president recounted,

Until now, our university has continually provided five to ten undergraduate and graduate scholarships for students from the three main countries in ASEAN which are Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam. Those students graduated from our universities and most of them have been working in high position in their home countries such as a vice mayor of Xekong province and a vice president of Champasak University. Other graduates originated from different parts of Laos including Saravane and Attapu province. These alumni assist us when we need connection with government services such as organising a meeting with the mayor of Champasak province. (P.7, Uni.F)

From the statement, it is evident that Uni. F has sustainable relationship with a neighbouring country such as Laos. Providing annual scholarships aims to attract students from the universities that are located close to the university and to open gates to further academic cooperation. As he stated that these scholarship students would facilitate the cooperation with the foreign universities, the strategy was considered as an instrument to cultivate an international relationship by using alumni connections.

In the other universities, the first tier in the south uses the same strategy to boost the number of international students from ASEAN countries. According to the data, the vice president explicitly stated the huge amount of institutional budgets allocated for foreign students. He demonstrated,

For educational budget, we distribute twenty million baht on scholarships for international students to study in undergraduate and graduate level in our university. It is a way to attract the international students to learn and stay with us and expand a network, especially for graduate students. If we are good enough for them, they will introduce the university to other students in

their home countries. The university will become more recognised. (P.3, Uni.B)

The statement illustrates the reason behind the strategy of awarding scholarships is to increase university reputation and profile through brilliant international scholars. When the ASEAN scholars graduate from the university, they would become institutional ambassadors and create networks in the future.

In the newest second tier university located in the north, although funding allocation for recruiting international students is a tiny amount compared to the elite university, the vice president of the university mentioned the benefit of joining the scholarship distribution project in order to increase foreign students. He stated,

There are a few international students in the university. To my understanding, there is no exchange student with other universities as well. However, the university has participated in the education aid for Cambodian student project initiated by ISA.R.ISA Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn to annually provide seven to eight full undergraduate scholarships to Cambodian students. The project enables the university to build a connection with several universities in Cambodia through these students (P.8, Uni.G)

Since Uni.G is a new university, there are fewer international students on campus as well as cooperation with foreign universities. Therefore, joining the scholar aid programme as a supporter is an important strategy to build academic connection with overseas universities.

From these university leaders' interviews, scholarship programme has been perceived as an influential implement to lure foreign students and scholars to study in Thailand. I consider that this strategy was developed in response to the regional imaginary of network and cooperation in higher education. Apart from the growing number of international students and academic cooperation, this practice may have resulted in accumulating the Thai universities' international reputation amongst ASEAN students.

Engaging in bilateral and multilateral agreements

Second, the further strategy to spread out networking of higher education in the region is to develop academic activities under bilateral or multilateral education agreements such as promoting student and staff exchange, developing joint curricula or programme, and conducting joint research projects.

When the vice president for International Affairs from another first tier university located in the north described ASEAN networking initiated in his university, he firstly mentioned academic cooperation with a group of the northern ASEAN countries.

Our university has many projects responding to ASEAN. For example, faculty of architecture has set up a student and staff exchange programme with Souphanouvong University in Laos. We are like brother and sister (*Ban Pi Muang Nong*). From Myanmar, University of Mandalay as well as University of Medicine 1 and 2, Yangon have sent medical staff for joining staff visiting and training programme organised by the Faculty of Medicine. And Faculty of Economics has opened a Master's degree programme in Yangon University. (P.1, Uni.A)

Notably, most of the programme mentioned in the preceding excerpt illustrate major academic cooperation with partner universities which are located in the northern ASEAN such as Laos and Myanmar. It is assumed that the Uni. A and these universities have a long and good relationship. The vice-president said that Souphanouvong University was like *Ban Pi Muang Nong* which means they are supporting each other as the same way brother and sister do.

Moreover, the vice president in Policy and Planning, from another old university in the south, described the strategy to enlarge academic cooperation as follows,

Faculty staff has increased connection by working with a consortium of professionals such as engineers and medical profession. They will organise a regional meeting. The strategy of building academic network is agreed with Malaysia and Indonesia's mission well. Our university is well known in the countries in South ASEAN. We also are a working group in IMT-GT and AUN. (P.3, Uni.B)

According to the excerpt, the vice president indicated that joining the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) programme and ASEAN University Network benefits the university in terms of promoting it and associating with other partner universities in ASEAN.

From the actions conducted in the two universities in the north and the south, it implies that the universities have long-time academic networking among the partnership universities in their own sub region.

Likewise, using active bilateral agreements to promote academic collaboration is a common strategy in the second tier university in the northeast. The president addressed,

Our university holds a training course for ASEAN teachers. Our partner universities came to participate in the event such as University of Santo Tomas, the Philippines; University of Brunei, Brunei Darussalam; University of Malaya, Malaysia; University of South East Asia, Cambodia; and University of Da Nang and Hue University, Vietnam. (P.7, Uni.F)

When asked about academic cooperation in ASEAN, the president notified the list of partner universities which have signed MOU with the universities and gave details of activities implementing under the agreements. The previous quote displays the example of activities and emphasises the importance of bilateral agreements in extending the cooperation.

In this regard, it assumes that providing scholarships to overseas students and implementing activities under bilateral and multilateral agreements are recognised to be the ways to broaden academic networking and cooperation in the region. The two groups of universities have used the same strategies but the scale of the activities is different. The data show that the elite universities have potential to establish more partners within the region than the second tier universities. The university reputation and supporting finances influence the expansion of academic cooperation with other universities in the region.

The following table presents institutional initiatives and their different scales compared between the two groups of the universities.

Table 8.3: Comparing university initiatives in respond to the expansion of regional academic network and cooperation

Act of Imagination of ASEAN Community	Rationale	Act of Production and its Scope	
		first tier Universities	second tier Universities
Regional academic cooperation and network	Expansion of regional academic network and cooperation through - Growth of International students - Activating Bilateral and multilateral agreements - Building Research consortium	Offering scholarship for foreign students - Undergraduate and graduate students in the region - Funding allocation of twenty million baht - 6 full undergraduate scholarships to Cambodian students annually	Offering scholarship for foreign students - Undergraduate and graduate students from partner universities in neighbouring countries - 5-10 scholarships annually - 7-8 full undergraduate scholarships to Cambodian students annually

Act of Imagination of ASEAN Community	Rationale	Act of Production and its Scope	
		first tier Universities	second tier Universities
		Engaging bilateral and multilateral agreements - Bilateral and multilateral agreements - Student and staff exchange - Developing joint curriculum or programme - Conducting research consortium - Staff visiting and training programme	Engaging bilateral and multilateral agreements - Bilateral agreement - Student and staff exchange - Training course for ASEAN teacher - Conducting joint research projects - Staff visiting

The data from Table 8.3 indicate that at institutional level, many Thai universities in this study have initiated international activities with the intention to strengthening the regional academic network by offering scholarships to attract international students and undertaking academic activities under bilateral and multilateral agreements. These initiatives reflect the process of new regionalism based on Hettne's (2005) explanation of sub-regions or micro-regions which describes a model of networks emerged in a particular part of national territories. Based on this research, I found that there is subnational higher education regionalisation driven by the Thai universities located in the north and the south of Thailand such as IMT-GT programme and academic cooperation with northern ASEAN countries such as Laos and Myanmar.

8.2.3 International quality enhancement

In the last section, I will discuss how the issues of international quality are mentioned by the university senior administrators as an important mechanism to strengthen international cooperation of the universities in the region. According to the interviews, the integration of the ASEAN community is understood to increase the economic growth in the region through the free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour, and freer flow of capital. In academia, it is expected to involve the increasing number of student and staff mobility as well as academic research cooperation within the region. Due to these challenging factors, most senior administrators addressed that Thai universities need to develop institutional quality to meet international standards in order to handle incoming regional cooperation and competition. The informants indicated that the improvement of the quality of university and international curricula are powerful tools to build up the university's reputation

internationally. It is found that the developing strategic approaches in enhancing international quality between the two groups of the participating universities are diverse.

Based on the institutional policy documents, internationalisation development is one of the main goals among the Thai universities to prepare the institutions for regional and global competition. Apart from gaining numbers of international students through student mobility programme, to ensure quality of course curricula at the international standard can strengthen the university reputation in order to attract more overseas students to enrol in the university. Therefore, to implement an international quality assurance framework such as the ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) framework is intended to increase the recognition of the institutional international programme among the ASEAN member universities. This implementation was brought up by the senior administrators of the elite universities. For instance, the vice president from the first tier university in the south stated that,

In the university committee meeting for quality assurance development, we have agreed to use the ASEAN quality assurance system to monitor our international programme. This is a substantial strategy to improve the quality of international education in align with enhancing student and staff competencies. (P.3, Uni.B)

Similar to the top university in the north, the AUN-QA has been undertaken as a tool to improve the institutional quality. It is believed that the QA system accredited by the ASEAN organisation determines international standards of programme managed in ASEAN universities which results in facilitating cross border education activities in the region. For instance, Van Damme (2001) indicates that the different higher education systems in each country and different structure of universities affect the advancement of student mobility and cooperation; therefore, to ensure transferable credits and comparable curricula between the university partners is necessary to intensify mobility. This is similar to the vice president who stated that

The AUN participating universities have approved to carry out the AUN-QA system in their own university in order to assist the movement of students in the region. In the next month, there will be a meeting on a credit transfer system in Hanoi which we will send our representatives from the offices of international college, registration office and educational quality development to engage in the meeting. (P.1, Uni.A)

According to the two accounts above, the implication is that the first tier universities have ambitious plans to promote compliance with regional quality assurance measures in the university with the intention to improve its international reputation and support the regional academic cooperation. In Europe, the improvement of QA is an essential mechanism under the Bologna Process agreement to enhance the creation of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Barrett, 2013; Robertson, 2006a, 2010; Robertson and Keeling 2008). Aligned with the vision of the ASEAN integration, the implementation of AUN-QA has become an important agenda to improve the university's quality beyond the national standard and facilitate harmonisation of ASEAN higher education through the transparency of quality assurance across universities in the region.

On the other hand, among the second tier universities, the senior managers also emphasised that internationalising universities was an important strategy to cope with the regional integration's pressures. However, the internationalisation of the institutions is in the beginning stage. Thus, its aim focuses on improving English skills of students and staff and ensuring quality of education based on the national quality assurance framework. One of the vice-presidents from the second tier university explained that

Currently, the university quality is based on the internal and external quality assurance systems monitored by the Office of the Higher Education Commission and the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment. (P.4, Uni.E)

The declaration of the significance of the national quality assurance is aligned with the intention of the Thai government, which has implemented the quality assurance instrument as a conduit for improving educational quality and fostering internationalisation in Thai higher education (Lavankura, 2013). Therefore, at the earlier stage of internationalisation development, the same executive continually pointed out that it is necessary to expand a connection with an outstanding foreign university to develop international collaborations such as a joint or double degree programme. She said,

In my opinion, collaborating with our foreign university partners such as undertaking student and staff exchange programme and developing a joint degree programme can raise the university's reputation. We can learn how to develop an international curriculum from the partners. (P.4, Uni.E)

This strategy is similar to another newer university in the north where the university council has supported internationalising advancement through activities under mutual agreement with foreign outstanding universities. The vice president mentioned

In order to develop international programme, the university council supports that the university should establish academic cooperation by signing MOU with well-known university overseas and initiating activities under the agreement such as visiting lecturer and professor programme. These activities will help us to conduct a joint or develop a curriculum. (P.8 Uni.G)

The contributions of the internationalisation from both universities demonstrate the rationales behind internationalising at institutional level. According to Knight (2008), universities engage in international relations in order to boost institutional quality to international standard. In addition, developing a collaborative programme with renowned foreign universities allows Asian universities to learn best practice from their partner universities such as curriculum design and pedagogy (Tan et al., 2014; Ng and Nyland, 2017). Through international collaboration, the university executives can benefit from the academic excellence of overseas universities.

From the previous section on student and staff development, improving English communication proficiency has become a mechanism for preparing the Thai universities for the regional cooperation. This developing strategy is agreed by all executive participants as an essential solution for strengthening internationalisation in their universities. For instance, one of the presidents from the second tier university mentioned that to improve English communication skills of students and academic staff is an underpinning requirement for internationalisation enhancement in the institution.

In the future, we plan to open international programme which consist of students from different nationalities and foreign teachers. Some international courses may teach in other foreign language rather than English. However, most international programme will be taught in English. Thus, at the moment, we encourage our teaching staff to have bilingual lectures in Thai and English for some disciplines. Next month, we support a group of our lecturers to have training courses for effective pedagogy: using English as a medium of

teaching and active learning and teaching methods at St. Mary's University in the UK. (P.6, Uni. E)

From the statement, it confirms that English has become a main medium of international instruction. Not only students but also lecturers need to be prepared for English-taught programme. This international trend is supported by the study of Luijten-Lub et al. (2005) which indicates English as the main lingua franca and a significant factor to drive internationalisation in universities. The courses taught in a universal language like English attract more foreign students. Therefore, as suggested by Thupa-Ang (2015), to enhance the quality of higher education in Thailand, professional development for university staff is needed to improve their skills of pedagogy, foreign languages, ICT usage and conducting quality research. This suggestion endorses that improving English communication skills for teaching staff is a necessary strategy to accelerate.

Moreover, another suggestion on the strategy of internationalisation development mentioned by the administrative from both groups of the participating universities is the intention of transforming the university to a *green campus*. For instance, the vice president of the elite university in the north stated that,

Creating a green campus is another mission we attempt to achieve in order to prepare for the international trend. In the past, the facilities for international students are absent so this year there is a budget to improve the campus facilities such as international dormitories for foreign students and lecturers. (P2, Uni.A)

Similarly, the vice-president from the second tier university from the northeast said that,

To advance internationalisation in university, I think the university should begin with developing internationalisation in teaching and learning as well as operating academic services such as English training courses for local communities. Moreover, we plan to create the university to a green campus starting by establishing the International Education Institute. (P.11, Uni. F)

Although the two universities are different in the level of internationalisation development, the trend of establishing an international environment or a green campus is deemed to be another strategy to improve the international quality of the universities. To clarify, according to the interview data, the university leaders defines a green campus to institutional quality

including standards of facilities provided for students and staff, accommodation, academic services, libraries, transportation, laboratories, campus signage etc. These facilities are considered to be developed to meet the needs of domestic and international students and academics.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I firstly discuss how the Thai university senior administrators understood the phenomenon of the ASEAN Community project. The data determines several scenarios from their perceptions which include the intensification of people mobility, regional academic cooperation and network, high competition in labour market, and risk of the brain drain of professional. The following section presents various policies and practices and their rationales implemented in the Thai universities which respond to the provision of the regional integration as the acts of university production or activities. According to the discussion, it allows me to understand that recently the Thai universities have enhanced internationalisation strategies in different forms according to the institutional historical, geographical, resource and financial contexts. It is shown that internationalising higher education has become an important means to strengthen the integration of the Southeast Asia region as well as to enhance the quality of Thai universities and academics for the regional cooperation and competitiveness but also with significant differences between universities.

Chapter 9

Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from chapter 5-7 and draws conclusions to the main purpose of this thesis which aims to explore the roles of Thai higher education sector in response to the regional integration projects in Southeast Asia from the viewpoints of the Thai senior administrators who are involved in policy-making process at both national and institutional levels. The findings are firstly laid out according to the three Sub-Research Questions (SRQ) which are:

1. How have ASEAN initiated higher education projects served as a mechanism to enhance the regional integration in general?
2. How have the national higher education policies and practices in Thailand currently been developed in relation to the ASEAN regional integration?
3. Do Thai universities develop internationalising practices in response to regionalisation and globalisation and what might be the differences?

Finally, the thesis findings will contribute to better understanding of the role of the higher education sector, in the case of Thailand, as a state and non-state actors, playing a part in strengthening the regional integration and draws the conclusion to the main research question which is “*How have national and institutional policies on higher education in Thailand been shaped by the ASEAN integration project in the period of the recent Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012-2016)?*”

The final parts of the chapter reflect on the research methods conducted in the study as well as personal development. The chapter concludes with further recommendations for future research.

9.1 Discussion of Findings

9.1.1 SRQ 1: How have ASEAN initiated higher education projects served as a mechanism to enhance the regional integration in general?

Based on the rationale behind this thesis, it is argued that the higher education sector has been viewed as an important instrument involved in the process of region building. Focused on the regional level, the analysis of the evolutionary of ASEAN regionalism, tracing back to its history, demonstrates that higher education was engaged in the process of strengthening the regional solidity, peace and prosperity since the period of the formation of ASEAN. Higher education was utilised as an instrument to gain understanding of a sense of becoming ASEAN by generating common values and norms of ASEAN and acquiring different cultures in ASEAN countries with the aim of protection from prevailing communism and resolution of internal wars among the Southeast Asia countries. To achieve this purpose, ASEAN agreed to increase the cooperation between educational institutions in the Member countries, distribute ASEAN studies and curricula in schools, expand an academic network among scholars, and undertake a study on comparative education system in the region. ASEAN in the establishment period focused mainly on the political concerns with respect to the ASEAN nation's sovereignty, thus the higher education initiatives were framed in order to disseminate knowledge of the Southeast region and generate an idea of a regional identity and higher education sector was regarded as a channel to communicate the awareness across the region. academic network

Comparing to ASEAN in the periods of old regionalism, ASEAN in new regionalism has moved towards global economy and engaged in neoliberal ideology. ASEAN has welcomed new member countries and transformed to a more rule-based organisation with the constitution of the ASEN Charter and a strong vision to strengthen the regional economy to deal with international economic competitiveness from other regional blocs and intergovernmental organisations. In accordance with the new direction, the project of creating an ASEAN Community is committed to intensify regional cooperation in three dimensions including political security, economic, and socio-culture and a range of regional higher education initiatives has been employed to achieve the goals. From the findings, it presents that key actors at regional scale who are involved in the process of region building, apart from the ASEAN nation states, include SEMEO RIHED, AUN, and with the support from

partner countries such as Japan, China and Korea, and international organisations such as UNESCO and EU.

The analysis reveals that regional higher education projects have been undertaken to enhance the regional integration in different ways with the intention of enhancing ASEAN human resource capacity, promoting better understanding of different cultures, improving educational and professional standards, and fostering ASEAN economy towards regional and global competitiveness. These are rationales driving the ambition to create a higher education common area in ASEAN. To support this mission, SEMEO RIHED has stimulated the development of harmonisation of higher education in Southeast Asia, a lesson learned from the Bologna process in Europe. Several studies, seminars, and workshops were conducted to form mutual framework for regional quality assurance, a regional credit transfer system, and a regional qualifications reference as a guideline for the ASEAN member countries to voluntarily implement. Moreover, the ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) programme has been successfully launched with the increasing number of participants of countries within ASEAN and East Asia although the programme is limited to leading universities. On the other hand, AUN has promoted academic cooperation among AUN member universities in line with the visions of ASEAN. Under the collaborative agreement of 30 member universities, AUN has implemented a variety of regional higher education activities including AUN Student Exchange Programme; Study and Visit; ASEAN and ASEAN +3 Youth Cultural Forum; AUN and ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers Contest; and ASEAN Student Leaders' Forum as well as regional schemes such as ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS), ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA), ASEAN Studies curriculum for undergraduate course. Therefore, it is evident that in the period of building the ASEAN Community, the higher education sector has engaged in the process of integration especially in terms of establishing interconnected society and human resource development among ASEAN countries.

9.1.2 SRQ 2: How have the national higher education policies and practices in Thailand currently been developed in relation to the ASEAN regional integration?

In order to respond to the SRQ 2, the analysis from Chapter 6 is employed comprising the roles of Thai government in ASEAN and the existing implementation of Thai higher education policies and practices including the rationales, actors, and obstacles from the

policy-makers' perspectives. The findings demonstrate that Thai higher education policies and practices, focusing on internationalisation, have been developed with the main purpose to enhance human resource capacity to live and work in the regional and global economies while improving international quality and standards of curricular is considered as a way to foster regional academic cooperation and with ASEAN universities.

As one of the founding members of ASEAN, the Thai government has maintained the role in supporting ASEAN through higher education initiatives, especially when Thailand took a role of the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2008-2009 and Dr. Surin Pitsuwan was appointed as a Secretary-General of ASEAN from 1 Jan 2008 to 31 Dec 2012. During this period, there were a number of significant initiatives proposed by Thailand to enrich internal cohesion and expand external relations of ASEAN which have framed the current policies and practices. Under the former role, the government has cultivated a sense of 'we feel ASEAN' in Thai society through broadcasting media and supported ASEAN student exchange programme and projects on harmonisation of higher education system launched by SEMEO RIHED, AUN, and Thai universities. Moreover, to intensify internal cohesion among ASEAN member countries, the Thai government has taken a role in connecting vulnerable ASEAN sub-regional counties by provided educational assistance and resources. To play the latter role in strengthening ASEAN's external relations, the government has focused on linking ASEAN with East Asia countries including Japan, Korea, and China in order to reinforce ASEAN competitiveness and prosperity. This idea leads to closer cooperation in higher education with the ASEAN+3 countries. These roles of Thailand in supporting ASEAN have influenced the implementation of higher education policies and practices in several ways.

Correspondingly, the policy-makers addressed several higher education policy practices in relation to ASEAN regionalism which can divided into four themes. Firstly, the implementation of student and staff mobility programme were mentioned as a significant cross-border activity to cultivate international experiences of students and staff where they can learn to understand a different culture or a foreign language and exchange knowledge among other academia in ASEAN countries. Moreover, the policy-makers viewed a mobility programme as a means to facilitate further regional higher education cooperation and as a platform to employ the practice of a credit transfer system. It implies that the Thai government has encouraged the use of a regional credit transfer scheme including UCTS, ECTS, and alternatively under a mutual agreement between the two universities. This idea is consistent to the second theme on the international standard and quality development policy

in term of academic accreditation. The improvement of educational standards and quality in Thai higher education was perceived to be an important policy to ensure the quality of the institutions and the implementation of international or regional quality assurance and standard schemes can increase Thai university reputation and accreditation worldwide which protect the university from the regional and global challenges. Thirdly, the Thai government has focused on taking the role to bridge the gap in ASEAN by providing academic assistance and training workshops to CLMV countries, as well as, extending the bilateral government relationship between executives of higher education sector from ASEAN countries and Thailand through retreat meeting projects. In term of research, the initiative of ASEAN Citation Index database has been emphasised to be promoted with the aim to generate a regional research network in ASEAN. The fourth policy mentioned by the government senior representatives involved the policy strategies to produce graduates with employability skills including five areas: Morality and Ethics; Knowledge; Intellectual Skills; Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility; and Skills in Quantitative Analysis, Communication, and Technology Usage. These qualified skills are expected as the learning outcomes of graduates according to the Thai Qualification Framework for Higher Education (TQF) which was announced to be implemented as a benchmarking system in Thai universities in 2009.

According to the mention of regional policies and practices, the finding confirms that the policy-makers perceived the consequences of the ASEAN Community vision as opportunities and challenges; therefore, the development of higher education in Thailand is necessary to enhance students' capacity to live and work in the regional and global economies. They described ASEAN Community as a multicultural society where mobility of workers across the region will be increased and can create high competition of employability. Thus, the higher education policies such as enhancing student international competencies and university quality are considered to prepare graduates to meet regional and global demands. In terms of opportunities, ASEAN Community is viewed as the platform to boost the national and regional economies to be competitive in the global economy. These concerns are rationales behind the higher education policy development.

Additionally, the Thai government officers pointed out the key actors and factors that have impacted on the policy implementation which are the Thai Minister and cabinets, university leaders, and student and academic staff. Three major constraints are mentioned in terms of suspension of the policies due to unstable politics in Thai government, reducing budget

expenditure of the government, and inactive participation of university leaders, staff and students in promoting internationalisation at the institutional level.

9.1.3 SRQ 3: Do Thai universities develop internationalising practices in response to regionalisation and globalisation and what might be the differences?

According to the finding of Chapter 8, it is found that Thai universities have endeavoured to implement internationalising policies and practices at the university level as the university executives considered them as an instrument to enhance the regional integration as well as improving the university competitiveness in both regional and global scales. However, based on the analysis of case studies of six universities, it is shown that the first tier universities or old elite universities and the second tier universities or new universities have enhanced internationalisation strategies in different forms according to the institutional historical, geographical, human resource and financial contexts.

In addition, it is apparent that the ways the university senior administrators imagined and perceived the consequences of the ASEAN Community are similar between the two groups of universities which reveal four scenarios including the increasing number of people mobility, the growth of regional academic cooperation and networks, the high competition in the labour market, and the brain drain and brain gain of professionals and talented students. In responding to these circumstances, the university leaders have produced the policy strategies under the same rationales but in diverse ways and different expected outcomes based on the institutional context. The rationales and activities and scopes are presented in the Table 8.2 and Table 8.3. For example, under the rationale of *Student and staff international skills development*, it is found that the first-tier universities had implemented the internationalising strategies through long-term exchange student mobility programme with more funding support and credit transfer outcome whereas the second-tier universities had implemented informal short course programme with less funding and for visiting purpose. The major issues of internationalisation development stated by the university presidents and administrators encompassed enhancing English and professional skills development, gaining ASEAN understanding, attracting more foreign students under scholarship funding, engaging in bilateral and multilateral agreement activities, and improving international quality of the university. A range of these strategies confirm that the Thai universities have developed internationalisation towards the ASEAN integration.

9.2 Summary of Research Findings

Based on the analysis from Chapter 5-7, It is evident that the project of the ASEAN integration, namely the ASEAN Community, has influenced the Thai higher education policies and practices at the national and institutional levels in several ways during the recent Eleventh Higher Education Development Plan (2012-2016). The results present that the government policy-makers and the leaders of the Thai universities are aware of benefits and threats from the regional integration and most of them agreed that higher education can play an important role in strengthening the region, especially in the economic and social dimensions. From their point of views, the higher education sector promotes the regional integration in several ways. In term of increasing the social cohesion within ASEAN, higher education initiatives such as student exchange programmes, teaching and research collaboration, and academic networking with other universities in the region contribute a sense of the regional identity and increase ASEAN awareness and understanding. These international strategies aim to improve human capacity of student and staff such as English language and international skills, which prepare them to encounter or work in multicultural environment. Regarding the economic integration, higher education retains a role in developing both national and regional economies. The international quality of teaching and research is considered to be improved in order to produce qualified graduates with global skills, which will facilitate the flow of labour and knowledge within the region. The initiatives such as harmonisation of higher education, credit transfer systems and regional quality assurance have been involved in promoting a single market and establishing a higher education area in the Southeast Asia region.

These perspectives have dominated the policy to launch higher education strategies and programmes to support the ASEAN integration such as offering a partial scholarship for Thai-ASEAN Student Exchange Programme, participating in the AIMS project, providing academic assistance and training workshops to CLMV countries and establishing national quality assessment. At the university level, the findings show that internationalising strategies are similar in term of the models of activities but the scopes of the implementation are different depending on the institutional context, which include a capacity of human resource, a location, a budget, and a vision of the university. For instance, according to the location, the university is located in the south of Thailand highlights the academic cooperation with the sub-regional group of the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) whereas

the universities in the east and the north of the country focus on networking with the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries.

In sum, the Thai higher education has become an actor to enhance the ASEAN integration through a range of international initiatives. It is evident that these initiatives are in the on-going process to interconnect the countries in the region. The level of regionness as a regional community has not been reached but there is an increasing level of a transnationalised relationship of a civil society, higher education sector, playing a role.

9.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The strengths of this study are the access to research participants and my ability to conduct interviews with them in person. I found that most university senior administrators were willing to share their opinions and discuss the research topic. As a government official working in OHEC, I was able to easily get access to all prospective participants who worked in senior positions from the Thai government bureaus and universities. Moreover, although I needed to travel to the North, South, and Northeast of Thailand, I discovered that the journeys were meaningful to visit and have face-to-face interviews with the university leaders. The visits allowed me to survey several universities located outside Bangkok, the central of Thailand, where their institutional contexts and facilities were different from universities in Bangkok. With face-to-face interviews, I have learned that this data collection method allowed me to collect rich information from interviewees and address additional questions if concerned. On the other hand, the limitations of this study are related to fewer research participants from ASEAN organisations because the main office of ASEAN Secretariat is located in Jakarta Indonesia. Its offshore location eliminates the possibility to reach these participants. Moreover, due to time limitation, this study excluded the investigation of policy practices at micro level, which could explore different ideas from faculty members at departments as well as students in the universities.

9.4 Reflective Summary: Professional and Personal Development

Having been undertaking this research for four years, I have gained professional and personal development in several aspects. The most obvious thing is that I have improved my understanding of concepts of regionalisation, globalisation and internationalisation and their impacts on higher education. Throughout the review of different theories and debates, I found

this process contributed to my increasing knowledge of the research subjects. For instance, the theory of regionness and New Regionalism Theory enabled me to interpret ASEAN and its characteristics insightfully. In the past, I defined ASEAN as a regional organisation integrating ten Southeast Asian countries for political, economic, and social purposes without recognising its scope of influence and relationship with internationalisation and globalisation. Although I recognised the significant discourse of the ASEAN Community (AC) in the Thai higher education agenda, especially in relation to internationalisation practices, I was unable to identify rationales behind the initiatives and expose the role of higher education in response to the regional integration. Having gained the knowledge, I discovered that ASEAN was not a core actor who drove the regional integration but the government of member countries as well as universities also engaged in the process. For example, at national level, I found that the Thai government had pursued the provision of the AC by developing internationalisation in higher education in alignment with the ASEAN agenda. On the other hand, I discovered the Thai government was concerned with the challenges of growing competition within the region as well as the opportunities towards globalisation when becoming the AC. Accordingly, Thai policymakers' key purposes of internationalisation in higher education were to increase the international quality and reputation of Thai universities, to enhance Thai staff and students' international skills and to build harmonisation of higher education in the region. However, I found that the implementation of internationalisation in some second tier universities was far removed from these government missions.

Based on the data of the interviews from university leaders, I discovered that the perceptions of the formation of the AC among the administrators were similar, including the growth of people mobility, academic cooperation and networks, high competition in labour market, and brain drain of talents. These imaginary phenomena influenced the university policies and practices; nevertheless, the individual context of universities also shaped the implementation of internationalisation. This evidence contributed to my understanding of important dimensions of higher education policies and practices adopted from Marginson's glonacal framework (Figure 3.3). For instance, I learned about other initiatives implemented in other Thai universities apart from AUN member universities and what surprised me was that most initiatives among the universities were similar but there was a huge gap in the scope of activities between the first and second tier universities. Moreover, I recognised that the internationalising activities mentioned by the university administrators were implemented with the aims to generate a sense of ASEAN and intercultural awareness, develop quality of

international programmes and universities, and enhance international skills of students and staff. Surprisingly, the schemes on the development of higher education harmonisation in Southeast Asia in terms of credit transfer and compatible degrees, were not successfully undertaken, especially in the second-tier universities. This implementation was highlighted among the first tier universities.

In addition, I discovered that the internationalisation practices in Thai higher education mentioned in this study seemed to be influenced by the Western ideology although Thailand was never colonised (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Perhaps, English is regarded as the lingua franca in ASEAN. According to the study, I found that English practice has been incorporated in the internationalising strategies in Thai higher education such as international programmes taught in English, English skills as a global competence of Thai students and staff, and collaborative degree programmes with partner universities from native English speaking countries. Regarding the survey of the number of collaborative degree programmes offered by Thai universities between 2015-2016, forty-nine percent were delivered by Western partner universities while only six percent were by ASEAN partner universities (OHEC, 2015). The dominance of the West can limit the focus of ASEAN-oriented content and ASEAN identity in internationalisation in Thai higher education. With the expertise and experience that I have gained from conducting this study, I found myself becoming more confident to provide some policy recommendations which are discussed in the following section.

9.5 Recommendations

Based on my interest to conduct the research, I have gained an understanding of the rationales behind the policies and practices, at regional, national, and institutional levels, in response to the ASEAN integration project. The knowledge will be useful for me as a Thai government official who has worked in the bureau of international strategic planning of higher education as it enables me to provide more information to support further higher education policy recommendations and change my professional practices at the Office of Higher Education Commission. Instead of following routine internationalising activities, I can recognise the reasons for their implementation and recommend suitable initiatives for Thai universities.

For instance, the Thai government should formulate a concrete and enduring policy to enhance internationalisation in Thai higher education. To achieve it, the government should

find suitable initiatives for different types of universities since current practices have been privileged for elite universities. The findings show that most university leaders were interested in participating in the regional higher education projects. Furthermore, it is very necessary that the Thai government and universities should look further to develop internationalisation of the curriculum and improve comprehensive internationalising strategies other than implementing mobility programmes. It is essential to consider outcomes of the international curriculum contributing to ASEAN values. To facilitate these comprehensive practices, government agencies, university leaders, and academics need to engage in the process and require training with continuing support and commitment from the universities.

Further recommendations for the Thai government policy-makers are that they should continue launching sub-regional activities such as students and staff programme and research or teaching collaboration to intensify the integration among IMT-GT and GMS countries. However, the internationalisation initiatives should be suitable to each type of universities in order to facilitate their academic cooperation with their foreign partner universities. Following this plan, the integration of the two networks should be generated. With regard to the issue of international quality development, I consider that Thai universities, especially the second tier universities, still need to firstly improve the English language proficiencies of students and staff since this is a basic component of enhancing quality of internationalisation in higher education. For the first tier universities, the engagement of academics and support from the university and government are essential for the achievement. Establishing collaborative programmes with famous foreign universities is recommended to contribute to the improvement of international standards, perhaps one from the ASEAN countries. Furthermore, the government should work with the universities and regional organisation to undertake research projects in relevant to ASEAN issues which have value for the region as a whole.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Questions

Title: Thai higher education policies and practices towards the ASEAN integration project

นโยบายการอุดมศึกษาและการปฏิบัติเพื่อรองรับการรวมตัวเป็นประชาคมอาเซียน

A. Interview questions for government executives

คำถามชุดที่ 1: บทสัมภาษณ์สำหรับผู้บริหารระดับสูงของสำนักงานคณะกรรมการการอุดมศึกษา

ประวัติการทำงานและหน้าที่ความรับผิดชอบ (Background and current responsibilities)

Previous Job

1. จากประสบการณ์การทำงานที่ผ่านมา ท่านเคยดำรงตำแหน่งที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการอุดมศึกษามาเป็นระยะเวลาที่ปี
(How long have you worked in higher education sector?)
2. ก่อนดำรงตำแหน่งในปัจจุบัน ท่านเคยรับผิดชอบงานระดับผู้บริหารหรือการจัดการอุดมศึกษาด้านใดมาบ้าง
(What were your previous administrative roles before taking the current position?)
3. ท่านเคยมีประสบการณ์เป็นอาจารย์สอนในสถาบันอุดมศึกษาหรือไม่ หากมีประสบการณ์ มหาวิทยาลัยแห่งใดและสาขาวิชาอะไรที่ท่านสอน
(Have you ever taught in a university?) (if yes, what universities and courses have you taught?)

Current Job

4. ในตำแหน่งปัจจุบัน ท่านมีหน้าที่รับผิดชอบหลักด้านใดบ้าง
(Can you describe what key responsibilities you take in the current position?)
- และในตำแหน่งนี้ทำให้คุณมีส่วนร่วมอย่างไรในกระบวนการกำหนดนโยบาย
(How are these roles engaged in policy making process?)

มุมมองเกี่ยวกับการรวมตัวเป็นประชาคมอาเซียน (Perception of the integration of ASEAN)

5. ในความคิดเห็นของท่าน การรวมตัวเป็นประชาคมอาเซียนมีบทบาทต่อภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ได้อย่างไร
(What is your view of the role of ASEAN in the region?)
6. ประโยชน์อะไรบ้างที่ประเทศไทยอาจจะได้รับหลังจากการรวมตัวเป็นประชาคมอาเซียน
(What benefits might flow in Thailand after becoming the ASEAN Community?)
7. การอุดมศึกษาและสถาบันอุดมศึกษาจะได้รับประโยชน์อะไรบ้าง
(What benefits might go to a university?)
8. ความท้าทายอะไรบ้างที่ประเทศไทยอาจจะได้รับหลังจากการรวมตัวเป็นประชาคมอาเซียน
(What challenges might Thailand face during that time?)
9. การอุดมศึกษาและสถาบันอุดมศึกษาจะต้องเผชิญกับความท้าทายอะไรบ้าง
(What sorts of challenges might a university encounter?)

บทบาทของประเทศไทยในอาเซียน (Roles of Thailand in ASEAN)

10. What roles does Thailand take up as an ASEAN member country in supporting the regional integration?
ประเทศไทยในฐานะประเทศสมาชิกอาเซียน มีบทบาทอย่างไรในการสนับสนุนการรวมตัวของกลุ่มประเทศในภูมิภาค
11. บทบาทที่กล่าวมานั้น มีอิทธิพลอย่างไรต่อการกำหนดนโยบายการอุดมศึกษาและโครงการต่างๆ ในประเทศไทย
(What does this mean for how higher education policy and supporting programs are organized within Thailand?)
12. ท่านคิดว่าการอุดมศึกษามีบทบาทอย่างไรต่อการรวมกลุ่มประเทศในภูมิภาคอาเซียน
(What roles do you think Higher Education plays in the regional integration?)

- กรุณายกตัวอย่าง (Can you give examples?)

12.1 ท่านคิดว่าบทบาทเหล่านี้เปลี่ยนวิสัยทัศน์ของการอุดมศึกษาไทยอย่างไร

(How have these roles changed the vision of Thai higher education from the past?)

12.2 จากทัศนคติของท่านอะไรคือสิ่งสำคัญลำดับต้นในการพัฒนาการอุดมศึกษาไทยเพื่อส่งเสริมบทบาทของการรวมกลุ่มประเทศตามที่กล่าวมาในเบื้องต้น

(What key priorities do you think Thai higher education needs to be developed/has been developed in order to take up the roles?)

13. ท่านเคยมีประสบการณ์ในการเข้าร่วมประชุมผู้บริหารอาเซียนหรือที่จัดโดยอาเซียนหรือไม่ เช่น ASEAN Ministerial Meeting หรือ ASEAN's Senior Officials Meeting

(Have you participated in any meetings that were organized by ASEAN such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting or ASEAN's Senior Officials Meeting?)

- หากเคยเข้าร่วม กรุณายกตัวอย่าง (If yes, please give examples.)

- หากท่านไม่เคยเข้าร่วมประชุม ผู้แทนของหน่วยงานท่านในการเข้าร่วมประชุมผู้บริหารอาเซียนคือใคร ความรับผิดชอบอยู่ที่สำนักใด (If no, do you know who the representatives are? What department are responsible for?)

13.1 หากท่านต้องการเข้าถึงรายงานหรือรายละเอียดในการประชุม ท่านสามารถค้นหาได้จากแหล่งใด

(How can you access the reports or minutes of those ASEAN meetings?)

13.2 ประเทศไทยเคยนำเสนอโครงการด้านการอุดมศึกษาในที่ประชุมหรือไม่

(From your knowledge, has Thailand introduced any initiative programs related to higher education to the meeting?)

- หากเคยมีโครงการอะไรบ้าง และอะไรคือวัตถุประสงค์ของโครงการ (If yes, what are they and the rationale behind?)

นโยบายและยุทธศาสตร์ระดับกระทรวง (Policies and strategies at ministerial level)

14. ท่านสามารถอธิบายกระบวนการดำเนินงานโครงการต่างๆ ของประเทศไทยตามข้อตกลงในการประชุมอาเซียนได้หรือไม่

(Can you explain the process of how the programs agreed in the ASEAN meetings have been implemented in Thailand by the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC)?)

- กระทรวงศึกษาธิการหรือสำนักงานคณะกรรมการการอุดมศึกษา (สกอ.) ดำเนินการอย่างไรต่อข้อตกลง หรือนำมติในการประชุมมาปฏิบัติอย่างไร

(How has the government/OHEC taken any responses to the agreement?)

- กรุณายกตัวอย่าง (Can you give examples?)

15. กระทรวงศึกษาธิการหรือ สกอ. ได้ดำเนินกิจกรรมหรือมียุทธศาสตร์ใดบ้างเพื่อสนับสนุนสถาบันอุดมศึกษาให้มีบทบาทในอาเซียน (What strategies/activities have the Thai government initiated to support Thai universities to play a role in ASEAN?)

- กรุณายกตัวอย่าง (Can you give examples?)

15.1 รัฐบาลดำเนินการให้การสนับสนุนมหาวิทยาลัยอย่างไร

(How have the government supported universities?)

15.2 รัฐบาลมีวิธีการช่วยเหลือมหาวิทยาลัยแบบใดบ้าง

(What kinds of resources have the Thai government contributed to universities?)

16. จากประสบการณ์ของท่าน ท่านมีความเห็นอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับความร่วมมือของมหาวิทยาลัยไทยต่อการดำเนินกิจกรรมต่างๆ ตามที่กล่าวมา (From your experience, do you have any ideas how universities have taken actions to the programs?)

17. ประโยชน์ที่มหาวิทยาลัยจะได้รับจากการเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมตามยุทธศาสตร์คืออะไร และอะไรคือความท้าทายที่เกิดขึ้นในการเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมของมหาวิทยาลัย

(What have been the benefits and challenges to the universities in participation?)

B. Interview questions for university leaders

คำถามชุดที่ 2: บทสัมภาษณ์สำหรับผู้บริหารระดับสูงของมหาวิทยาลัยไทย

ประวัติการทำงานและหน้าที่ความรับผิดชอบ (Background and current responsibilities)

Previous Job

1. จากประสบการณ์การทำงานที่ผ่านมา ท่านเคยดำรงตำแหน่งที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการอุดมศึกษามาเป็นระยะเวลากี่ปี
(How long have you worked in higher education sector?)
2. ก่อนดำรงตำแหน่งปัจจุบันท่านเคยรับผิดชอบงานด้านใดบ้างที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการบริหารจัดการอุดมศึกษา
(What were your previous administrative roles before taking this position?)

Current Job

3. ท่านทำงานในมหาวิทยาลัยแห่งนี้มาเป็นระยะเวลาเท่าไร
(How long have you worked in this university?)
4. ปัจจุบันท่านมีหน้าที่ในการสอนด้วยหรือไม่ โปรดระบุชื่อสาขาวิชาที่สอน
(What courses have you taught in the university?)
5. ในตำแหน่งปัจจุบัน ท่านมีหน้าที่รับผิดชอบหลักด้านใดบ้าง
(Can you describe what key responsibilities you take in the current position?)
- และในตำแหน่งนี้ทำให้คุณมีส่วนร่วมอย่างไรในกระบวนการกำหนดนโยบาย
(How are these roles engaged in policy making process?)

มุมมองเกี่ยวกับการรวมตัวเป็นประชาคมอาเซียน (Perception of the integration of ASEAN)

6. ในความคิดเห็นของท่าน การรวมตัวเป็นประชาคมอาเซียนมีบทบาทต่อภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ได้อย่างไร
(What is your view of the role of ASEAN in the region?)
7. ประโยชน์อะไรบ้างที่ประเทศไทยอาจจะได้รับหลังจากการรวมตัวเป็นประชาคมอาเซียน
(What benefits might flow in Thailand after becoming the ASEAN Community?)
8. การอุดมศึกษาและสถาบันอุดมศึกษาจะได้รับประโยชน์อะไรบ้าง
(What benefits might go to a university?)
9. ความท้าทายอะไรบ้างที่ประเทศไทยอาจจะได้รับหลังจากการรวมตัวเป็นประชาคมอาเซียน
(What challenges might Thailand face during that time?)
10. การอุดมศึกษาและสถาบันอุดมศึกษาอาจจะต้องเผชิญกับความท้าทายอะไรบ้าง
(What sorts of challenges might a university encounter?)

บทบาทของประเทศไทยในอาเซียน (Roles of Thailand in ASEAN)

11. ประเทศไทยในฐานะประเทศสมาชิกอาเซียน มีบทบาทอย่างไรในการสนับสนุนการรวมตัวของกลุ่มประเทศในภูมิภาค
(What roles does Thailand take up as an ASEAN member country in supporting the regional integration?)
12. บทบาทที่กล่าวมานั้น มีอิทธิพลอย่างไรต่อการกำหนดนโยบายโครงการต่างๆ ของมหาวิทยาลัย
(What does this mean for how policy and programs are organized within the university?)
13. ท่านคิดว่าการอุดมศึกษามีบทบาทอย่างไรต่อการรวมกลุ่มประเทศในภูมิภาคอาเซียน
(What roles do you think Higher Education plays in the regional integration?)
- กรุณายกตัวอย่าง (Can you give examples?)
 - 13.1 ท่านคิดว่าบทบาทเหล่านี้เปลี่ยนวิสัยทัศน์ของนโยบายของมหาวิทยาลัยของท่านอย่างไร
(How have these roles changed the vision of the institutional policy from the past?)
 - 13.2 จากทัศนคติของท่าน อะไรคือสิ่งสำคัญลำดับต้นในการพัฒนามหาวิทยาลัยเพื่อส่งเสริมบทบาทของการรวมกลุ่มประเทศตามที่กล่าวมาในเบื้องต้น
(What key priorities do you think your university needs to be developed/has been developed in order to take up the roles?)

14. ท่านเคยมีประสบการณ์ในการเข้าร่วมประชุมผู้บริหารอาเซียนหรือที่จัดโดยอาเซียนหรือไม่ เช่น ASEAN's Senior Officials Meeting หรือ ด้านการศึกษา
(Have you participated in any meetings that were organized by ASEAN such as ASEAN's Senior Officials Meeting
- หากเคยเข้าร่วม กรุณายกตัวอย่าง (If yes, please give examples.)
- หากท่านไม่เคยเข้าร่วมประชุม ผู้แทนจากหน่วยงานท่านในการเข้าร่วมประชุมที่จัดโดยอาเซียนคือใคร ความรับผิดชอบอยู่ที่สำนักใด (If no, do you know who the representatives are? What department are responsible for?)
15. หากท่านต้องการเข้าถึงรายงานหรือรายละเอียดในการประชุม ท่านสามารถค้นหาได้จากแหล่งใด
(How can you access the reports or minutes of those ASEAN meetings?)
16. มหาวิทยาลัยของท่านติดตามหรือมีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมต่างๆ ที่ดำเนินการโดยอาเซียนหรือสนับสนุนโดยรัฐบาลไทยได้อย่างไร
(How do you follow or participate in the ASEAN activities launched by the association or the Thai government?)

Policy and strategy at institutional level

11. Can you describe what internationalization is in your university? Please give examples.
หากกล่าวถึงความเป็นนานาชาติในปัจจุบัน ท่านจะบรรยายความเป็นนานาชาติในมหาวิทยาลัยของท่านอย่างไรในระยะเวลา 8 ปีที่ผ่านมา กรุณา
ระบุตัวอย่าง

12. Do the university have signed MOU or academic cooperation with other foreign universities?

มหาวิทยาลัยของท่านได้มีการทำความตกลงร่วมมือทางวิชาการหรือความร่วมมือทางวิชาการกับมหาวิทยาลัยต่างประเทศบางหรือไม่

a. Most partner universities are located in what counties?

มหาวิทยาลัยต่างประเทศที่มีความร่วมมือกัน ส่วนใหญ่ตั้งอยู่ ณ ประเทศใด

b. Are there any cooperation with the ASEAN countries? What are those countries?

What kinds of the cooperation are?

และในกลุ่มประเทศอาเซียน มหาวิทยาลัยของท่านมีความร่วมมือทางวิชาการกับมหาวิทยาลัยในประเทศใดบ้าง และความร่วมมือดังกล่าวเป็น
ความร่วมมือในลักษณะใด

13. What strategies/activities have the university initiated to support students and staff to participate in internationalization?

มหาวิทยาลัยของท่านมียุทธศาสตร์และ/หรือดำเนินกิจกรรมใดบ้างที่สนับสนุนนักศึกษาและบุคลากรให้มีส่วนร่วมในการสร้างความเป็น
นานาชาติ

a. Can you give example? กรุณายกตัวอย่าง

b. How have the government support the university? What do the resources come from?

หน่วยงานรัฐบาลมีส่วนสนับสนุนมหาวิทยาลัยในด้านใดบ้าง แหล่งทุน/ทรัพยากรที่ใช้ในการเรียนการสอนต่างๆ ได้มาจากที่ใด

14. Do the university have policies to support students and staff mobility in the ASEAN countries?

มหาวิทยาลัยของท่านมีนโยบายอย่างไรเพื่อสนับสนุนการเคลื่อนย้ายนักศึกษาและบุคลากรในกลุ่มประเทศอาเซียน

a. Please give example of the programs. โปรดระบุตัวอย่างของโครงการ

b. What countries do most inbound students come from? What destinations are Thai students likely to go?

นักศึกษาต่างชาติที่เดินทางมาศึกษาในมหาวิทยาลัยของท่านส่วนใหญ่เป็นนักศึกษาจากประเทศใด และนักศึกษาไทยส่วนใหญ่นิยมเดินทางไป
แลกเปลี่ยนที่ประเทศใด

c. For students, how do they transfer credits? What is the credit transfer system that your institution has used?

สำหรับนักศึกษาที่เดินทางไปแลกเปลี่ยน ณ มหาวิทยาลัยต่างประเทศ นักศึกษาสามารถถ่ายโอนหน่วยกิตกลับมายังมหาวิทยาลัยได้อย่างไร
มหาวิทยาลัยใช้ระบบใดในการถ่ายโอนหน่วยกิต

15. Are there any international programs opened in the university? What are those courses?
Why are they selected to be taught in English?
Are there any foreign students enrolled in the programs?

มหาวิทยาลัยของท่านมีหลักสูตรนานาชาติเปิดสอนหรือไม่

หากมี เปิดสอนในหลักสูตรใดและทำไมถึงเลือกเปิดหลักสูตรดังกล่าวเป็นหลักสูตรนานาชาติ

มีนักศึกษาจากต่างชาติสนใจในการเข้าเรียนหลักสูตรดังกล่าวหรือไม่ จากประเทศใดบ้าง

APPENDIX B: Summary of Key Higher Education Events in Thailand and ASEAN

Table B.1. Summary of Key higher education events in Thailand and ASEAN

Year	Key HE Events Thailand	Key HE Events ASEAN
1971- Nation (Siam) building period and sovereignty : King Rama V	1917 <i>Chulalongkorn University</i> , the 1 st university in Thailand, under the supervision of University Affairs Department, Ministry of Education 1934 <i>Thammasat lae Karn Mueng University</i> (recently named Thammasat University) 1943 Silapakorn university, Kasetsart university, and Medicine (Mahidol) university 1959 <i>National Education Council's establishment</i> : formulating educational policies, determining university budget funding, establishing and terminating universities, and approving courses and curriculum	
1961- HE Developing Plan period	1961 <i>the 1st National Economic and Social Development Plan</i> : three regional universities: Chiang Mai in the north, Khon Kaen in the northeast, and Prince of Songkla in the south were established as part of the education decentralization programme ¹ 1972 <i>Bureau of State Universities</i> was established to administer universities affairs (1977 reorganized to <i>Ministry of University Affairs</i>) 1987 Initiation of the First 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand (from 1990 to 2004) 1989-1991 The Sixth Higher Educational Development Plan: greater government's encouragement in terms of <i>financial support for private tertiary institutions</i>	1965 The founding of <i>SEAMEO - Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation</i> 1967 The founding of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) according to Bangkok Declaration 1977 The First Meeting of the <i>ASEAN Ministers of Education</i> (approval of the establishment of an ASEAN Network of Development Education Centers) ⁹
1990- Innovative	1990 Suranaree University of Technology, <i>the 1st autonomous</i>	1992 <i>Agreement of ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)</i> currently in 12

<p>period for regional and global competitiveness</p>	<p><i>public university</i></p> <p>1992 <i>Thailand Research Fund (TRF)</i> established in response to the Research Endowment Act</p> <p>1995 the development of <i>UniNet Network</i> system (using information technology for educational expansion and information sharing)</p> <p>1999 <i>the National Education Act</i></p> <p>1999 the introduction of <i>Centers of Excellence projects</i> (Inter-university Academic Consortium including Centre for Innovation in Chemistry; Centre for Environmental Health, and Toxicology; Centre for Hazardous Waste Management; Centre for Petrochemicals and Advanced Materials; Centre for Energy Technology; Centre for Agricultural Biotechnology; Centre for Postharvest Technology Innovation)</p> <p>2000 the establishment of the <i>Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA)</i>, an external quality assessment agency according to the 1999 National Education Act ³</p> <p>2002 boosting <i>University Business Incubators project</i> (Cooperative education with industrial sectors)</p> <p>2003 Ministry of University Affairs became Office of the Higher Education Commission according to the Ministry of Education Regulatory Act (reform of Thai bureaucracy system) ⁴</p> <p>2003 Ministerial Regulations of <i>Internal Quality Assurance System announcement</i> ⁵</p> <p>2004 <i>Rajabhat University Act</i> (Upgrading status of all teacher's colleges in the regions to Rajabhat Universities)</p> <p>2007 <i>the second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand for 2008 to 2022</i></p> <p>2009 Announcement of Ministry of Education on <i>Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education</i>;</p>	<p>areas: Agro-based products, Fisheries, Rubber-based products, Textiles and Apparels, Automotives, Wood-based products, Electronics, e-ASEAN, Healthcare, Tourism, Air Travel, and Logistic ¹⁰</p> <p>1995 <i>ASEAN University Network (AUN)</i> currently comprising of 30 member universities from ASEAN countries (5 universities from Thailand) and responsible for enhancing HE cooperation within ASEAN members and dialogue partners ¹¹</p> <p>1995 <i>ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA)</i> on 7 services: Engineering Services (2005), Nursing Services (2006), Architectural Services (2007), Surveying Qualifications (2007), Medical Practitioners (2009), Dental Practitioners (2009), Accountancy Services (2009) ¹²</p> <p>1997 <i>ASEAN Foundation</i> (aim to help bring about shared prosperity and a sustainable future to all ASEAN countries) ¹³</p> <p>1998 <i>AUN-Quality Assurance</i> initiation ¹⁴</p> <p>2004 <i>AUN Inter Library Online (AUNILO)</i> ¹⁵</p> <p>2006 <i>the 1st ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED)</i>: held annually in conjunction with the meeting of the SEAMEO Council Conference</p> <p>2007 <i>ASEAN Student Exchange Programme (ASEP)</i></p> <p>2009 <i>Cha-Am Hua Hin Declaration on Strengthening</i></p>
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	<p>TQF:HEd⁶</p> <p>2009 <i>National Research Universities project</i> comprising of nine universities (research funding supported by the government)⁷</p> <p>2010 <i>Strategies on Preparation for ASEAN Community in 2015 on Thai higher education</i></p> <p>2012 <i>Thai-ASEAN Student Exchange Program</i> (funded by Thai government)</p>	<p><i>Cooperation on Education to Achieve An ASEAN Caring and Sharing Community</i></p> <p>2009 <i>ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011-2015)</i>: Promoting ASEAN awareness; Increasing access to quality primary and secondary education; Increasing the quality of education-performance standards, lifelong learning and professional development; Cross-border mobility and internationalization of education; and Support for other sectoral bodies with an interest in education</p> <p>2009 <i>AUN ASEAN Studies Academy</i>¹⁶</p> <p>2010 <i>ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS)</i>. ACTS applies to the 1 -2 semester student exchange programme among AUN members. The system has been designed in order to accommodate differences in use among AUN universities in grading conversion systems when students participate in the exchange programme¹⁷</p> <p>2010 <i>Signing Joint Statement on the Promotion of ASEAN Higher Education Research Clusters</i></p> <p>2011 The 4 priority areas to establish Research Clusters; Health & Medicine, Environment & Biodiversity, Agriculture & Food, and Social Sciences</p> <p>2011 <i>The annual meeting of the SEAMEO and ASEAN Secretariats</i> (serves as mechanism for collaboration on the activities of SEAMEO and ASEAN on education, science and culture in the Southeast Asia region)</p>
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¹ http://www.inter.mua.go.th/main2/page_detail.php?id=3

² http://www.onec.go.th/onec_main/page.php?mod=Category&categoryID=CAT0001410

³ <http://www.onesqa.or.th/en/home/index.php>

- ⁴ http://www.mua.go.th/know_ohed/images/history_mua.jpg
- ⁵ <http://www.onesqa.or.th/onesqa/th/file/APQN2010/3-1430-Chantawit.pdf>
- ⁶ <http://www.mua.go.th/users/tqf-hed/news/news8.php>
- ⁷ http://www.nru.go.th/main/page_pj_details.php?p=3
- ⁸ http://www.mua.go.th/users/bphe/cooperative/data/p1_p5.pdf
- ⁹ <http://www.asean.org/news/item/joint-communique-of-the-first-asean-education-ministers-meeting-manila-8-9-december-1977>
- ¹⁰ http://www.dtn.go.th/images/stories/Services_and_Investment/2_2_4_1.pdf
- ¹¹ <http://www.aunsec.org/ourhistory.php>
- ¹² <http://www.asean.org/communities/asean-socio-cultural-community/item/asean-framework-agreement-on-services-2>
- ¹³ <http://www.aseanfoundation.org/index2.php?main=about.htm>
- ¹⁴ <http://www.aunsec.org/qualityassurance.php>
- ¹⁵ <http://aunilo.org/about/>
- ¹⁶ <http://aom.avc-holding.com/ASA/>
- ¹⁷ <http://acts.ui.ac.id/>

APPENDIX C: List of Anonymous Names

Table C1: List of anonymous names

No.	Types of institutions	Name of university	Name of interviewee
<i>At Regional Level</i>			
1.	ASEAN organization	AUN	Gov. G
<i>At Ministerial Level</i>			
1.	Ministry of Education	OHEC	Gov. A; Gov. B; Gov. C; Gov. D; Gov. E; Gov. F
<i>At institutional Level</i>			
1.	First-tier university (Top ranking/ research universities)	Uni. A	P.1; P.2;
		Uni. B	P.3; P.10
		Uni H	P.12; P.13
2.	Second-tier university (New universities with minor internationalization)	Uni E	P.4; P.5; P.6
		Uni F	P.7; P.11; P.14
		Uni G	P.8; P.9
Total number of respondents			21

APPENDIX D: Consent Form



Consent Form for Participation in Research entitled "Policies and Practices for Higher Education Development in Thailand towards the ASEAN Integration"

I voluntarily agree to take part in a study being conducted by Miss Plaiphan Seupsook, a Ph.D. student, Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol. I have been given the information that the project aims at gaining a deeper understanding on how and to what extent the current higher education policies and practices at ministerial and institutional levels in Thailand have been developed and implemented in response to the regional integration project called the 'ASEAN community'.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project in order to make a decision about my participation. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to take part.

I understand that taking part in the project will include being interviewed and audio recorded. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour. I am assured that all data will be kept confidential subject to data protection practices. My name and institution will be replaced with pseudonyms in any writing or presentations related to this study. Any information which might potentially identify me will not be used in published material.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date