

**INTERNATIONALISING THAI HIGHER EDUCATION:
EXAMINING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has
been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the implementation of the policy of internationalising higher education in Thailand during a period marked by global and national liberalisation and by transition and reform. The main research question is: to what extent has the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education been implemented? The thesis reviews two main bodies of literature to answer this question, examining them in the Thai context. First, studies of the internationalisation of higher education are reviewed in order to provide the background to current debates and to frame a set of ideal goals for the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand. Second, studies on the higher education system and the policy implementation process are used to investigate the Thai higher education system's policy implementation process.

The thesis centres on two main case studies reflecting the two primary functions of universities: teaching and research. The first study relates to the teaching of commercial and business administration courses in international programmes. The second study relates specifically to internationalised scientific research. The thesis argues that Thai higher education is in a dilemma: it must implement successful internationalisation and reform its structure and social values, particularly in order to accommodate new ideas driven by market forces. Yet, it is prevented because the bureaucratic structure and values of the 'state authority' and the public universities prevail, while the market pressurises each institution and individual to pursue their self-interests. As a result, qualitative internationalisation is difficult to put into practice.

The original contribution of this thesis is not only the empirical data gathered during intensive fieldwork, but also an attempt to analyse the internationalisation of Thai higher education by examining the country's higher education system and its policy implementation process. Previous studies on the internationalisation of higher education have mostly focused on the developed world, and those focusing on developing countries have not particularly considered the problems related to national higher education systems and policy implementation processes. This study not only considers the duties and functions of particular universities; it also places the internationalisation of the Thai higher education system in its macro-political and socio-economic context, and thus is able to explore and explain the fundamental problems affecting the policy implementation process.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Tables	viii
Figures	viii
Abbreviations	ix
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Research rationale	2
1.3 Research question	4
1.4 Analytical framework	5
1.5 Research methodology	7
1.5.1 Qualitative research design	7
1.5.2 Selection of case studies	10
1.5.3 Data collection	15
1.5.3.1 Documentary analysis	19
1.5.3.2 Interviews	20
1.5.3.3 Observation	23
1.5.4 Data analysis	25
1.6 The major studies	26
1.7 The chapters	29
Chapter 2 Implementing the Policy of Internationalising Higher Education	32
2.1 Introduction	32
2.2 Internationalisation of higher education	32
2.2.1 Nature and characteristics of internationalisation	33
2.2.2 Common threats to the internationalisation of higher education	35
2.2.3 Working definition of 'internationalisation'	37
2.2.4 Expected outcomes for internalisation of higher education	39
2.2.5 Rationales of internationalisation of higher education	40
2.2.6 Variables that affect the extent of the implementation of internationalisation	42
2.3 Higher education system	46
2.3.1 General characteristics of and the actors inside the higher education system	46
2.3.2 New trends in higher education systems	50
2.4 Higher education systems in developing countries	51
2.5 Policy implementation in developing countries	55
2.6 Conclusion	60
Chapter 3 Thai Higher Education in Transition	62
3.1 Introduction	62
3.2 'Triangle of coordination' of higher education in Thailand	63
3.3 Historical period	67
3.3.1 Interplay of related forces within the Thai higher education system	67
3.3.1.1 System of absolute monarchy in the Bangkok period	67
3.3.1.2 Politics of universities, 1932 to 1988	69

3.3.2 Bureaucratic structure and norms	72
3.3.3 Cultural values regarding 'internationalisation'	76
3.4 The contemporary period	79
3.4.1 Interplay of related forces within the Thai higher education system	79
3.4.1.1 Deregulation through the MUA	80
3.4.1.2 Marketisation of Thai higher education	82
3.4.1.3 Socio-economic and political changes	84
3.4.2 Inherited structure	89
3.4.2.1 Political reform	89
3.4.2.2 Education reform	91
3.4.2.3 Higher education reform	92
3.4.2.4 The Thaksin administration	95
3.4.3 Cultural values regarding 'internationalisation'	97
3.5 Conclusion	102
Chapter 4 Rationale of Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Thai context	104
4.1 Introduction	104
4.2 Macro-political and socio-economic changes	105
4.2.1 The national level	105
4.2.2 The institutional level	108
4.2.2.1 The academic rationale	109
4.2.2.2 The economic rationale	110
4.3 The Interplay of related forces within higher education	118
4.3.1 International Programme	119
4.3.2 Research	125
4.4 Bureaucratic structure and norms	128
4.4.1 International Programme	128
4.4.2 Research	130
4.5 Conclusion	135
Chapter 5 International Programmes in Thai Public Universities	138
5.1 Introduction	138
<i>Part I: Implementation process</i>	139
5.2 Role of the 'state authority'	139
5.3 Roles of public universities	145
5.3.1 Administration of the international programmes	146
5.3.2 Systems of selecting and employing lecturers	147
5.3.3 System of selecting students: Ramkhamhaeng	154
5.3.4 Environment created by the programmes: Chulalongkorn and Thammasat	156
5.4 Bureaucratic structure and norms of public universities	158
5.4.1 System of selecting and employing lecturers	159
5.4.2 System of selecting students: Chulalongkorn and Thammasat	162
5.4.3 Environment created by the programmes: Ramkhamhaeng	165
5.5 Cultural values associated with 'internationalisation'	167
5.5.1 Perceptions of university administrators and lecturers	167
5.5.2 Perceptions of students towards foreign lecturers	169
<i>Part II: Outcomes of the implementation of international programmes</i>	172

5.6 Students	173
5.7 Business sector	175
5.8 Conclusion	177
Chapter 6 International Programmes in Thai Private Universities	181
6.1 Introduction	181
<i>Part I: Implementation process</i>	181
6.2 Role of the 'state authority'	181
6.3 Roles of private universities	188
6.3.1 Administration of the international programmes	188
6.3.2 System of selecting and employing lecturers	190
6.3.3 Systems of selecting students	194
6.3.4 Environment created by the programmes	201
6.4 Cultural values associated with internationalisation	203
6.4.1 Perceptions of university administrators and lecturers towards foreign lecturers	203
6.4.2 Perceptions of students towards foreign lecturers and students	207
<i>Part II: Outcome of the Implementation of international programmes</i>	209
6.5 Students	210
6.6 Business sector	213
6.7 Conclusion	214
Chapter 7 Opportunities and Performance of University Lecturers Seeking to Conduct Research that Meet International Standards	218
7.1 Introduction	218
<i>Part I: Implementation process</i>	219
7.2 Role of the 'state authority'	219
7.2.1 Grants and funding	219
7.2.2 Role of the National Research Council (NRC)	221
7.2.3 Role of the Thailand Research Fund (TRF)	224
7.3 Bureaucratic structure and norms	230
7.3.1 Research culture	231
7.3.2 Academic promotion	233
7.3.3 Assessment system	238
7.3.4 Culture of personal ties	245
<i>Part II: Outcomes</i>	249
7.4 Conclusion	252
Chapter 8 Conclusion	255
8.1 Introduction	255
8.2 Research questions re-examined	255
8.2.1 Why was the policy of internationalising higher education adopted?	256
8.2.2 What factors affected the extent of implementation of the internationalisation of higher education?	260

8.2.3 What were the outcomes of the policy?	264
8.2.4 To what extent has the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education been implemented?	265
8.3 Originality of the thesis	267
8.4 Analytical contribution and issues for future research	269
8.5 Conclusion	277
Bibliography	279
Appendix A The name lists of interviewees	297
Appendix B Policy issues in support of internationalization of Thai higher education	304
Appendix C The Seventh National Higher Education Development Plan (1992-1996)	305
Appendix D The Eighth National Higher Education Development Plan (1997-2001)	306

Tables

Table 1	Data on papers published in international journals, from the SCI-expanded, and the SSCI-and the A&HCI-expanded for the period 1997-2001	12
Table 2	Number of Thai papers produced by Thai state universities, 1997-2001	13
Table 3	Sets of interviewees according to Clark's (1983) sets of higher education-related forces	16
Table 4	Focuses of queries	18
Table 5	Number of Thai and foreign lecturers in the international programmes	148
Table 6	Admission process of international programmes in Thai universities	154
Table 7	Business course core subjects in BBA international programmes of Chulalongkorn and Bangkok University	185
Table 8	Number of Thai and foreign lecturers in the international programmes (as of 2003)	190
Table 9	Number of full-time and part-time lecturers in international programmes in Thai private universities	192
Table 10	The admission process of international programmes in private universities under study	195
Table 11	Research budget as percentage of GDP	220
Table 12	National research budget in Thailand in 2003	220
Table 13	Comparison between position in university and other governmental sectors	235
Table 14	Comparison between academic status and governmental levels of salary	236
Table 15	Standards of working requirements for academics in Thai universities	239
Table 16	Number of research publications in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand per number of population (as of 2003)	250
Table 17	Number of publications in science discipline of universities in Thailand in comparison to foreign universities	251

Figures

Figure 1	Scope of the thesis	6
Figure 2	Research design	8
Figure 3	Triangle of coordination of higher education	48
Figure 4	Different national higher education system within the 'triangle of coordination' of higher education	49
Figure 5	The 'triangle of coordination' of higher education in Thailand	65
Figure 6	The 'triangle of coordination' of higher education in Thailand during the historical period (1900s-1970s)	67
Figure 7	The 'triangle of coordination' of higher education in Thailand during the 1970s to the present (as of 2005)	79
Figure 8	Growth trends of international programmes in Thai universities between 1960-2003	119
Figure 9	Administration of the BBA international programmes of the three selected universities	146
Figure 10	Modified 'triangle of coordination' modelling trends in higher education in Thailand	256
Figure 11	Revised model of the 'triangle of coordination'	273

Abbreviations

AU	Assumption University
A&HCI	Arts and Humanities Citation Index
BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
BC	British Council
BU	Bangkok University
BUIC	Bangkok University International College
CU	Chulalongkorn University
CUFST	Council of the University Faculty Senate of Thailand
HSRI	Health System Research Institute
IDP	International Development Programmes
IIS	Institute of International Studies
KBU	Kasembundit University
KU	Kasetsart University
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOSTE	Ministry of Science, Technology and Energy
MU	Mahidol University
MUA	Ministry of University Affairs
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIDA	National Institute of Development Administration
NRC	National Research Council
NRPU	National Research Policy Unit
NSCT	National Student Centre of Thailand
NSTDA	National Science and Technology Development Agency
OCSC	Office of Civil Service Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONEC	Office of the National Education Commission
ONESQA	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
RU	Ramkhamhaeng University
SCI	Science Citation Index
SSCI	Social Science Citation Index
SWU	Srinakharinwirot University
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TRF	Thailand Research Fund
TU	Thammasat University
TU-GET	Thammasat University Graduate English Test
UDP	University Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to explore how universities in Thailand have responded to the internationalisation of higher education policy. Two main case studies will be used, reflecting the primary functions of universities: a case study of 'international' teaching programmes, and a case study of research. The central emphasis of the thesis is on the factors affecting the implementation of internationalisation in higher education. To define these factors, the thesis explores the actions, perceptions, and interplay of related forces in Thai higher education: the 'state authority', the 'academic oligarchy' and the 'market' (see Clark, 1983) regarding the policy, by also examining the Thai political and socio-economic contexts which influence these related forces' behaviour.

When talking about the concept of internationalisation, a picture of nation-states with connected and interlinked territorial boundaries should be borne in mind. The increasing interdependence among nation-states is also a source of internationalisation (Ogata, 1992: 63). If one regards globalisation as a point of departure, in fact internationalisation predates it; however, internationalisation is becoming driven technologically and economically, with a wider range of countries and actors at play in the period of globalisation (Doern *et al.*, 1996: 3).

Internationalisation has a long history in the field of higher education, and goes beyond the immediate interests of universities, academics and students: as universities become instruments of state policy, so internationalisation becomes a project of nation-states themselves (Kerr, 1990: 6-7, 16). The task of internationalisation has become more complex, especially in the current period of fiercely competitive market forces bearing on higher education. Many universities have interpreted the policy as providing a source of income. As a result, the demands to integrate the internationalisation policy into higher education missions are being strongly supported, and the policy is no longer regarded as concerning the independent activities of individual scholars and departments. The current period demonstrates the enhanced role of the internationalisation concept, where the implementation process requires great commitment on the part of nation-states and higher education institutions. Although the internationalisation policy involves international

elements, the task of dealing with the policy is mainly embedded in a local process (Ogata, 1992: 63; Marginson, 1999: 19; Dandurand, 2000: 168).

Thailand has been sending students to the West since very early in the nation's development. Cooperation with foreign institutions began in the 1950s with the influx of Western aid. The internationalisation concept became increasingly fashionable from the mid-1980s onwards - being incorporated in the state's plan in 1990 - as a result of the economic boom inside the country and external economic pressures, yet it is difficult to find genuine examples of implementation of the concept.

This thesis argues that the current structure of the Thai higher education system has not been adequately prepared to respond to the process of internationalisation, which is underpinned by the forces of global and national liberalisation. An overemphasis on the economic development of the Thai state has damaged academic development at the institutional level. This is also because the political and social reform of the country is undergoing transition. Without effective instruments at state and institutional levels, the internationalisation of higher education policy remains merely rhetorical. In this thesis, the factors affecting the internationalisation process are identified. The discussions will also comprehend the wider Thai public policy context, mainly the role of the national elites and the state's and universities' bureaucratic systems and their functioning with regard to the current market forces. It is hoped that these discussions may serve as policy lessons to other public sectors in Thailand and beyond, as part of the contribution of the thesis.

1.2 Research rationale

My interest in the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand was stimulated when I was working as a state official in the Division of International Cooperation in the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA)¹ between 1999 and 2001. At that time, the global demands for the imposition of liberalisation and market forces were making themselves felt in the Thai higher education sphere. Examples were provided in a number of educational exhibitions mounted by several foreign countries including the USA, the UK, France, and Canada. Thailand also started to promote its higher education institutions abroad, as evidenced by the cooperation of the MUA with the Ministry of Commerce in joining the World Education Market in 2001, and in organising higher education exhibitions in China and Vietnam. These initiatives showed that the Thai state was moving towards a policy of

¹ The MUA became the Commission on Higher Education under the Ministry of Education on 1 July 2003.

internationalisation driven by the economic rationale. At the same time, the rigid rules and regulations of the Thai bureaucracy embedded within the MUA made me question how far the policy of 'internationalising' higher education has been successfully implemented. Later when I quitted the MUA and decided to further my studies, this question became one to which I wanted to find an answer.

Apart from that initial interest, the primary rationale for this thesis is to contribute to the study of the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand. This is a particularly worthwhile exercise, as the study of the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand is in its infancy, and the studies which have been undertaken thus far do not delve into the fundamental problems of the Thai higher education system (for further discussion see section 1.6).

Moreover, the context of the Thai political and socio-economic situation during the transitional period, coupled with the challenges of the internationalisation policy make this thesis important. By 1990, when the Thai state included its internationalisation policy in the first Higher Education Long-Range (15-year) plan, the internal political situation had started to change, notably because of the economic boom of the latter half of the 1980s. Moreover, the military regime was to fall from power in 1992. The territory of the bureaucracy, including the higher education sector, was beginning to be questioned, and at the same time increasingly complex demands were being made by various interest groups inside the political arena (see Hewison, 1997: 1). The new constitution, promulgated in 1997, followed by the National Education Act in 1999 paved the way for the changes in the Thai higher education sector, in which internationalisation was supposed to take root. Also, the challenges posed by the policy content rest first upon the original nature of the internationalisation policy, which requires a considerable change in the higher education system as it involves an external (international) dimension (Van der Wende, 1996: 32); secondly, the policy appears even more multifaceted when conceived as a new trend at both global and national levels driven by economic forces (Knight, 1999: 19). This complexity makes it intriguing as well as vital to ascertain how far the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education has been implemented.

By focusing on the Thai context in order to explain why a virtually identical policy, successfully implemented elsewhere, might fail in other contexts, the thesis contributes not only to the study of the internationalisation of higher education, but also to the study of Thai higher education and Thai politics.

Regarding Thai higher education, many studies have discussed its problems from various aspects. The issues include the centralised role of the state, the bureaucratic structure of public universities, the overemphasis on teaching and the lack of a research culture, and conflicts of interests and factions inside the academic institutions (see Varunee, 1990; Suchart, 1994; Charas, 1994). However, this study is among the first attempts to examine the Thai higher education system and its problems in a new context: during the country's period of reform and transition and in response to the forces of global liberalisation (see Surichai, 2002; Charas, 2002; Institute of Public Policy Studies (IPPS), 2003).

Since higher education cannot be seen as separate from its socio-economic and political environment, this thesis is also a reflexive study of the Thai political regime and its 'politics of implementation'. This is another aim of the thesis: to add generally to the literature on Thai politics in the reform period. Many studies of Thai politics in this transitional period have chosen to focus on macro-issues such as the government, society, democracy, the constitution, the electoral system, political parties, the media and civil society (see Hewison, 1997; Pasuk and Baker, 1998; McCargo, 2000; McCargo, 2002a; Somchai, 2002; Naruemon, 2002; Connors, 2003; McCargo and Ukrist, 2005). None of them has explored the higher education sector. Moreover, a combined study of the higher education system and the 'politics of implementation' will help us to understand the way Thai higher education is in response to the internationalisation policy.

1.3 Research question

The various reasons outlined above give rise to the thesis's main research question:

- To what extent has the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education been implemented?

In order to answer the main question, three subordinate questions are considered:

- Firstly, the study explores why the policy has been adopted. Whilst external demands have an influence on the adoption of a policy of internationalising higher education in various countries including Thailand, the thesis focuses upon the internal demands, and the rationales for employing the policy at national, institutional and individual levels. It is also interesting to explore the perceptions and interests of higher education actors with regard to the internationalisation of

higher education as well as to seek to understand the context in which those perceptions and interests originate. The reasons of 'why' are likely to affect the way the policy is carried out as well as its end-results.

- Secondly, the thesis explores 'what' factors have affected the extent of implementation. In order to answer this question, the analysis seeks to understand the policy implementation process by observing how actors in the Thai higher education system put into practice their aims - as identified through the question 'why?'. The context in which these actors are embedded, their roles, interests and perceptions are to be identified in order to understand clearly what made them behave as they did.
- The final section explores the outcomes of the policy, and tries to ascertain whether the policy has served those it was designed to benefit. However, the answer to this question should not be confused with the key research question. Outcomes are only part of the picture. However, the attempt to answer the main research question has to take into account the whole process of implementation and determine whether the international and intercultural dimensions are actually integrated into and enhance the quality of the Thai higher education system.

1.4 Analytical framework

To answer these research questions, I combine the study's discussions to include the ideal goals of the internationalisation of higher education, the domestic higher education system, and the policy implementation process. The two main bodies of relevant literature comprise studies of the internationalisation of higher education, and of policy implementation processes and higher education systems, particularly those of developing countries.

These two bodies of literature will be extensively discussed in detail in chapter two. This section gives a brief overview of the analytical framework used by this thesis. Figure 1 is constructed to define the scope of the thesis by merging the two bodies of literature into the analytical framework with the subordinate research questions, aiming to answer the main research question.

Main research question:

To what extent has the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education been implemented?

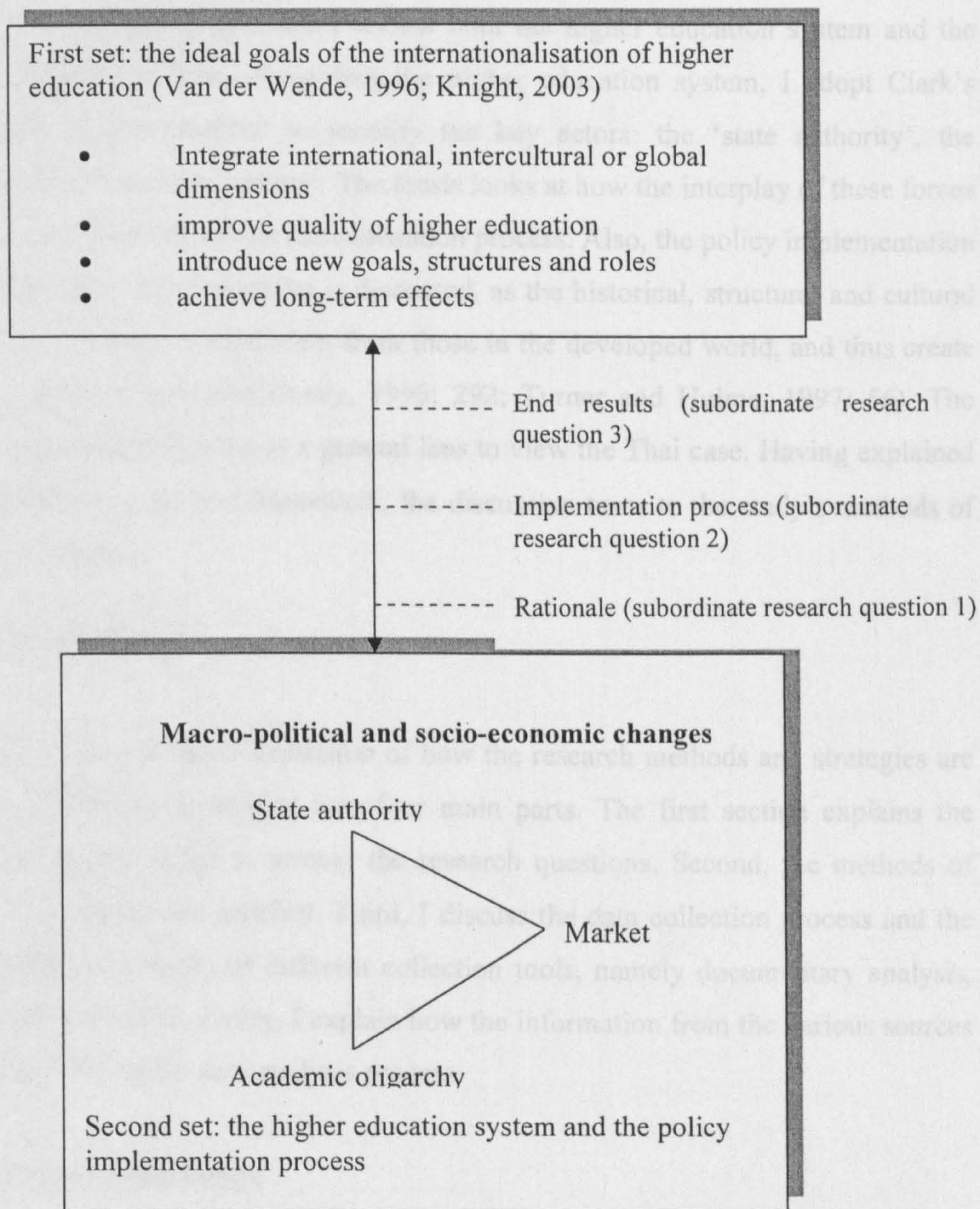


Figure 1: Scope of the thesis

Source: Author

Regarding the first body of literature, on the internationalisation of higher education, I adopt Knight's (2003) formulation of successful internationalisation: it should be able to 'integrate an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education', which should finally be able to improve higher education quality (first-order change), and bring in new goals, structures, and roles (second-

order change) as well as providing long-term effects (Van der Wende, 1996: 26-27; 8-9). A definition of successful internationalisation is useful for answering the main research question by determining the extent to which the internal processes of Thai higher education have been able to meet that definition.

Regarding the second set of theories, I review both the higher education system and the policy implementation process. Regarding the higher education system, I adopt Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' to identify the key actors: the 'state authority', the 'academic oligarchy', and the 'market'. The thesis looks at how the interplay of these forces contributes to the results of the internationalisation process. Also, the policy implementation processes within developing countries is discussed, as the historical, structural and cultural contexts of these countries are different from those in the developed world, and thus create a different set of problems (see Heady, 1996: 292; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 56). The review of these studies will serve as a general lens to view the Thai case. Having explained the study's analytical scope and framework, the discussion turns to the study's methods of gathering empirical data.

1.5 Research Methodology

This section provides a detailed discussion of how the research methods and strategies are designed. The discussion is divided into four main parts. The first section explains the research design used in order to answer the research questions. Second, the methods of selecting the case studies are justified. Third, I discuss the data collection process and the advantages and disadvantages of different collection tools, namely documentary analysis, interviews and observations. Lastly, I explain how the information from the various sources was crosschecked during the data analysis process.

1.5.1 Qualitative research design

Figure 2 presents the research design of the study. This section briefly explains this design before discussing the detail of each process. At the beginning of my research, I formulated the main research question: to what extent has the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education been implemented? Three subordinate questions on the rationale of the policy, the implementation process and its outcome were then devised (see Figure 2 and Table 4 below).

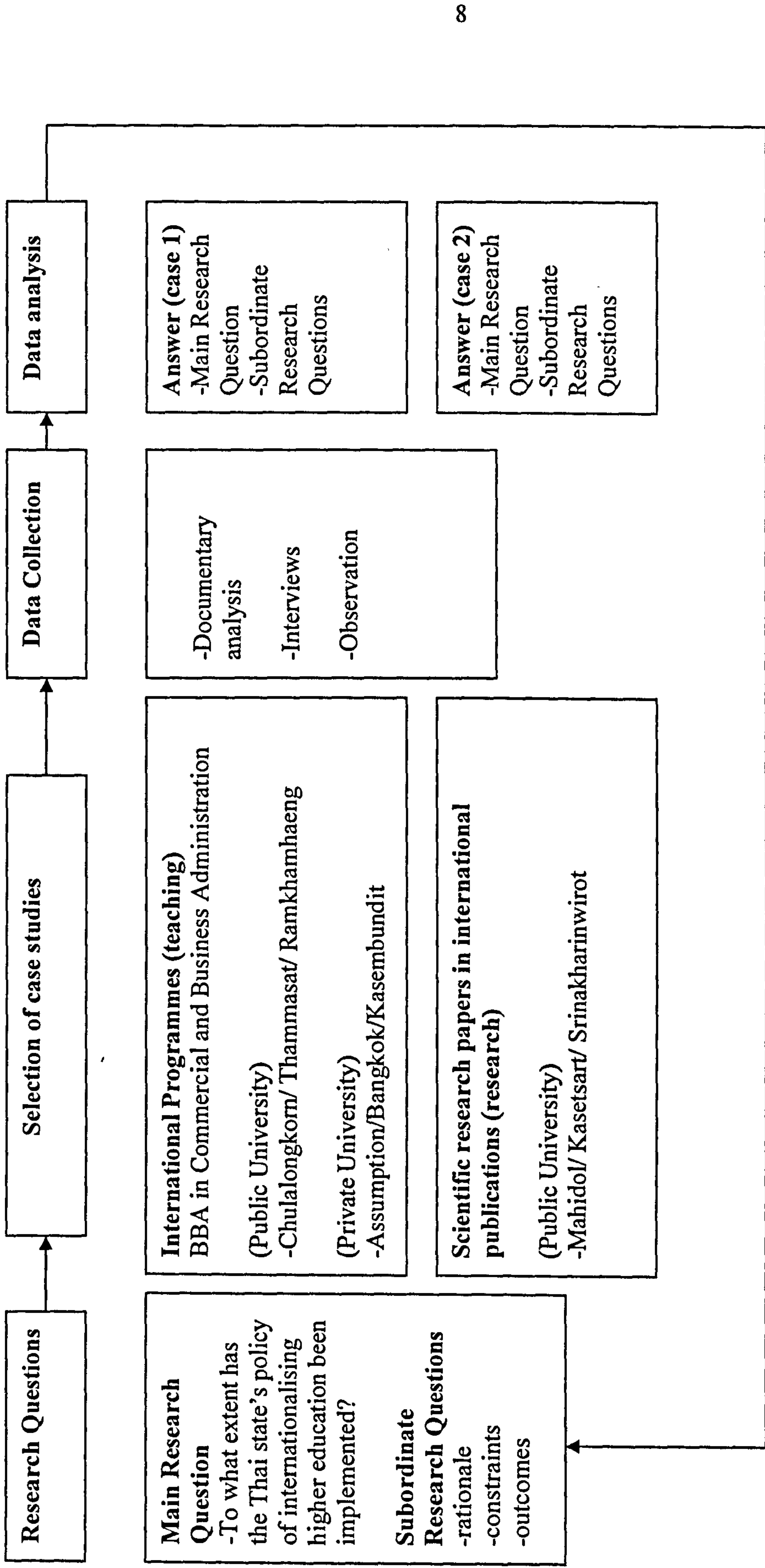


Figure 2: Research design
Source: Author

Referring to Figure 1, the analytical framework, the data that this thesis aims to gather is related to the second set of theories: on the Thai higher education system and the implementation process, while the ideal goals of internationalisation are used as a yardstick for the policy.

After setting up the research questions, the research processes comprised three courses of action: the selection of case studies, the data collection, and the data analysis. These processes were carried out in accordance with the research questions.

I first selected two case studies: on international teaching programmes (Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)) and on scientific research in order to present a comprehensive argument and an analysis of a very broad concept of the internationalisation of higher education. Under these two cases, nine universities were selected, comprising six public universities and three private universities.

Secondly, with respect to the data collection process, I employed a qualitative research design because the attitudes, actions and behaviours of different key actors are influential on policy results, and these are hard to quantify. The qualitative approach helps us understand the pluralistic nature of the policy processes, as it reflects 'the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies and organizations' (Punch, 1998: 149). This method can also explain the 'why' and the 'how', rather than just the 'what' (Harrison, 2001: 79). Generally, the qualitative research study is composed of three methods of collecting data: documents, interviews, and observations. In any piece of research, one or more methods can be used, depending on possibilities and appropriateness, which are decided on the basis of the research questions (Merriam and associates, 2002: 12). In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the information, four types of triangulation can be used: 'multiple investigators', 'multiple theories', 'multiple sources of data', and 'multiple methods to confirm emerging findings' (Denzin, 1970 quoted in Merriam and associates, 2002: 25). In this study, I employ the type of triangulation that uses 'multiple methods to confirm emerging findings'. I combine interviews, observations and documentary analysis wherever possible. These methods provide valid and reliable answers to the main research questions.

Thirdly, the data analysis process aims to answer the research questions on the basis of the information gained from the two separate case studies. The research questions pertaining to each case are answered in order to arrive at an understanding of the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand.

1.5.2 Selection of case studies

The cases to be studied need to be carefully selected in order to ensure 'external validity' and 'maximum variation' (see Seidman, 1991: 41; Merriam and associates, 2002: 28-29). In this regard, I employed the techniques of 'purposeful sampling' in which the selection criteria were set up as follows:

Concerning the research questions on the process of internationalisation of higher education, the first criterion is that the case studies must fall under the definition of the successful internationalisation of higher education provided by Knight (1997: 8) in relation to a university's mission and particularly to its teaching, research, and service functions. This thesis opts to study the first two functions since they are key practices in every university. Having the teaching and research missions in mind, the selected cases refer to processes or activities in which the international and intercultural dimensions are integrated.

As a result, the two chosen case studies are:

1. Teaching - International programmes in Thai universities – BBA in Commercial and Business Administration
2. Research - Opportunities of university lecturers to conduct scientific research that meets international standards

Teaching

For the first case, I selected the programmes in Commercial and Business Administration because these programmes accounted the highest numbers than any others offered by Thai universities. Moreover, the 91 international programmes of commercial and business administration are divided into 52, 30 and 9 Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degree programmes respectively.¹ This study therefore focuses on the Bachelor's degree programmes, which are by far the most numerous. Also, the selection covers both public and private universities because the international programmes were developed extensively in both university types.² One advantage of taking the highest number as the criterion is that it helps in understanding the dominant trend of internationalisation in a country, as well as

¹ Data gained from the handbook 'International programs in Thailand' (MUA, 2003a).

² Thailand had 24 public universities and 51 private universities (MUA, 2001a).

increasing the probability that the chosen site has a sufficient understanding of the idea of internationalisation.

Thus I looked at the 52 international programmes offering Bachelor's degrees in business administration organised by six public universities and 17 private universities nationwide. For practical reasons, all the selected universities are Bangkok-based. Limited time and money prevented visits to provincial universities. Among the public universities, four are situated in Bangkok: Chulalongkorn, Mahidol, Thammasat and Ramkhamhaeng. They can be divided into two groups: senior (long-established) with a strong faculty management³ (Chulalongkorn, Mahidol, and Thammasat) and a centralised management (Ramkhamhaeng). The private universities were divided into those that had been established in the 1970s (senior) and those newly established in the latter half of the 1980s (junior). After the division, I used 'snowball sampling' to select the sites to be explored. Consequently, three public and three private universities were chosen.

Among the public universities, Chulalongkorn and Thammasat were selected from the strong faculty management category while Ramkhamhaeng was chosen to represent centralised management. Of the private universities, Assumption and Bangkok were placed in the senior category, while Kasembundit was in the junior.⁴ In this case, the different types of public and private universities and the different character of each university provided a great variation to the data.

Research

Regarding the second case on research, the criteria on the adequate awareness regarding the papers published in the international journals; the great variation to the data, and the Bangkok-based universities were also considered. Thus I chose to study the sciences (excluding the social sciences) in Thai public universities. The following discussion concerns the rationale of this choice.

³ For a discussion of the nature of these selected universities see chapters 3 and 5.

⁴ BU and AU are in the senior group since they were established in 1970 and 1972 respectively. KBU is in the junior group since it was established in 1987.

Country	Number of papers published from the science citation index (SCI)-expanded	Number of papers published from the social science citation index (SSCI) and arts and humanities citation index (A&HCI)-expanded
USA	327,271	180,851
Japan	161,985	8,691
Singapore	16,527	1,638
Thailand	6,001	417
Malaysia	4,327	300

Table 1: Data on papers published in international journals, from the SCI-expanded, and the SSCI- and the A&HCI- expanded for the period 1997-2001
Source: ISI, Web of Knowledge⁵

First, scientific research is readily accepted internationally, as can be seen from the high number of papers published compared with other disciplines (see Table 1). In Thailand, the SCI-expanded database for the years 1997 to 2001 enumerates 6,001 papers published, about 14 times more than the SSCI-expanded and the A&HCI-expanded, which together reached 417. This disparity is also found in other countries.

Second, it was decided to focus on public universities because Thai public universities publish more research papers in international journals than private universities do. The observed differences are significant. For example, in the year 2001, 72.30 per cent of Thai publications of results in international journals were from public universities while private universities accounted for 8.35 per cent.⁶ Thai private universities rarely conduct research because they have workloads and commitments to teaching from which their main income is drawn (see Brunner, 1997: 233). The small number of papers produced by private universities reflects their inadequate experience of integrating an international dimension into their research, and thus they are not suitable to be selected for the study.

Thus, I selected the universities which are situated in the top-ten ranking of universities publishing papers in international journals for the period 1997-2001 (see Table 2).

⁵ <http://portalt.wok.mimas.ac.uk/portal.cgi?DestApp=WOS&Func=Frame>, accessed on 1 June 2002.

⁶ Technical Information Access Centre (TIAC) in <http://www.tiac.or.th/biblio/bib-metrics.htm>, accessed on 1 June 2002.

University	Number of Thai papers published in international journals in the period 1997-2001
*Bangkok-based	
Mahidol*	1,643
Chulalongkorn*	1,013
Chiang Mai	469
Prince of Songkla	340
Khon Kaen	312
Kasetsart*	293
Thammasat*	95
Srinakharinwirot*	74
Suranaree University of Technology	63
Silpakorn*	37

Table 2: Number of Thai papers produced by Thai state universities, 1997-2001

Source: ISI Web of Knowledge⁷

Of these ten universities, six are Bangkok-based: Mahidol, Chulalongkorn, Kasetsart, Thammasat, Srinakharinwirot, and Silpakorn. I divided the universities into three main groups - or 'nonoverlapping strata' according to the system of 'stratified sampling' which I used to choose the universities - based on the number of papers published as a classification variable. Mahidol and Chulalongkorn were in the first group, Kasetsart and Thammasat were in the second group, and Srinakharinwirot and Silpakorn were in the third group. I selected an independent sample from each stratum (see Jaeger, 1984: 66): Group 1, Mahidol; Group 2, Kasetsart; Group 3, Srinakharinwirot. The great difference in the number of papers published by these universities - from 1,643 at Mahidol, to 293 at Kasetsart, down to 74 at Srinakharinwirot - provides me with a wide range of different factors to discuss in my thesis.

These ten universities are all in the senior category (long-established state universities) except the Suranaree University of Technology (SUT), which was established with an autonomous status in 1992 (MUA, 1992a: 198). The reason the different natures of the universities was not used as a criterion, as in the case of the teaching programmes, is fairly obvious. The universities where research is the most intensively internationalised are these senior public universities.

⁷ <http://portalt.wok.mimas.ac.uk/portal.cgi?DestApp=WOS&Func=Frame>, accessed on 1 June 2002.

Limitations of the selection of cases studies and universities

Although the case studies and universities' selection process was in line with the major objective of the thesis, the selection process had the limitation that the selected cases and universities did not comprehensively represent the issue in question by focusing on one subject and one mission. There are no links between the science and social science areas, or between the two main missions of universities: teaching and research.

Regarding the matter of the sciences and social sciences, it might be argued that the study's selection of cases ignores important areas: for example, the international programmes in science and research in the field of social science were not studied. We have noted that the highest number was taken as a criterion; moreover, the selection of the first case is reasonable because in Thailand the international programmes in science do not represent the current trends in 'internationalisation', because most of the programmes were established in the 1960s (see Tong-In *et al.*, 1995: 29), while the programmes in commerce and business emerged in the latter half of the 1980s, and are therefore representative of the trends involving market forces.

In contrast, if we consider research papers published in the international journals, work in science represents an attempt to infuse international dimensions into research. For a paper to be published in an international journal, a certain quality is required that universities have to aspire to reach. This effort is what interests the thesis. Moreover, covering the two fields enables the study's analysis of the internationalisation of higher education to be generalised at the macro-level, which is one of the contributions of the thesis.

Regarding the universities' functions, the combination of nine different universities and two cases lacks the dimension of interlinkage: the study of teaching does not lead to an understanding of a university's research functions, while the study of research does not necessarily cast light on its teaching functions. Although one might argue that teaching and research are inseparable functions, the thesis's main objective is to discuss the current trends of internationalisation in Thai higher education generally, not in a particular university. A detailed analysis of the linkages of both functions in one selected university is beyond the scope of the thesis. Given the study's main objective, the selection of these nine universities is reasonable.

Another limitation is that all the selected universities are Bangkok-based. This was decided for practical reasons as previously noted. It might be argued that the neglect of provincial universities compromises the generalisability of this thesis; however, I suggest that this neglect makes little difference.

Regarding the first case, Bangkok is the most important centre for universities offering international programmes. For example, the BBA international programmes in Bangkok account for 34 out of the total of 52. Also, many of the international programmes in provincial areas hire lecturers from universities in Bangkok to teach.⁸ Regarding the second case, there is no marked difference between the number of published papers produced in Bangkok and in provincial universities. According to Table 2, the top ten contributors comprise six Bangkok-based universities, and four provincial universities. These provincial universities are Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, Prince of Songkla, and Suranaree University of Technology. Like the six universities in Bangkok, the first three provincial universities are senior (long-established) state universities.⁹ Since the top ten are all senior public universities (except Suranaree University of Technology), the factors affecting their research processes may be assumed to be similar. Nevertheless, it would be interesting and useful to study newly established universities, like Suranaree University of Technology, because they tend to be more flexible and receptive to change (see Utumporn *et al.*, 1999: 112). Such studies would add to our knowledge and understanding of the internationalisation process, especially as its development starts to ripen over the next five or ten years.

1.5.3 Data collection

Regarding the second process on the data collection, the research was conducted using primary data collection tools, namely, documentary analysis, observations, and interviews. Before explaining the merits and disadvantages of each tool, the first question is related to whom and what are interviewed and observed and from which the documentary data is drawn. In this regard, Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' was taken in to identify the related actors in the Thai higher education sphere. By examining the key actors: the state authority, the academic oligarchy, and the market, and their interplay, the research questions' answers are sought.

⁸ Personal interview, Porpan, Director, BBA, CU, 26 May 2003; Patricia, Assistant Dean, BBA, AU, 19 May, 2003; Naree, Chief, West section, Division of International Cooperation, MUA, 21 November 2002.

⁹ Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, and Prince of Songkla Universities were established in 1964, 1965, and 1968 respectively.

Higher education related forces	Sets of interviewees
State authority	Policy makers and educational officials at governmental level
Academic Oligarchy	Institutional administrators, officers, lecturers, and researchers of selected universities
Market	Students and businesspersons

Table 3: Sets of interviewees according to Clark's (1983) sets of higher education related forces

Source: Author

Table 3 gives an idea of the sets of interviewees in relation to the Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination'. The 'state authority' covers mainly the bureaucrats in the MUA and some other national research bureaus; the academic oligarchy is represented by university lecturers and administrators; and students and businesspersons represent the market. The key actors were chosen by network sampling; in other words, using the strategy of asking each participant or group of members to refer the researcher to other participants (Merriam, 1998). However, the major key actors such as policy-makers, administrators and some officials who were directly involved in the matter were obvious choices for the interviews. One of the advantages of interviewing members of an elite, which this thesis benefited from, is that they are able to 'establish networks, or provide access to other individuals through contact with a particular interviewee'; in other words, the 'snowball effect' (Richards, 1996: 200). These key actors were also of great help with respect to the observations and documentary analysis.

Since this thesis explores two case studies: teaching and research, two main sets of data were developed. For example, interviewees were chosen from different sets: a teaching programme set and a research set. However, exceptions were made in the case of the interviews with the MUA bureaucrats, since they can comment on both issues. Although the sets of interviewees are different, the principles underpinning each sampling are similar, as it is important that "The sampling plan and sampling parameters (settings, actors, events, processes) should line up with the purposes and the research questions of the study" (Punch, 1998: 194). In this study, the key principle is that these samplings should represent the voices of the forces within the Thai higher education system.

After deciding who was to be interviewed, what was to be observed, and where the data would be drawn from, the data collection process began. It should be noted here that the fieldwork in Thailand lasted ten months (September 2002 to June 2003). The process began

with an exploration and review of the existing relevant documents in order to broaden my knowledge of the field, and this process was associated with that of making contacts with key actors in Thai higher education in order to obtain advice, support and access. The first interview session involved policy-makers and officials engaged in the internationalisation of higher education. Data from the session provided a rich supply of information, which led to modifications of the subsequent process. The next stage was to conduct interviews with the institutional administrators, officials, lecturers and researchers, and with the stakeholders, including focus-group interviews with students; and observations were conducted on a case-by-case basis. The findings of each stage were analysed as an on-going process, since the questions were developed as the researcher's understanding of the study context was enhanced.

Table 4 shows the focuses of queries drawn from the subordinate questions of the thesis, the focuses of queries identified by Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination', and the major sources of data gained from the three data collection tools.

Subordinate Question 1	Focuses of queries	Major sources of data
Why was the internationalisation policy adopted?	Government policies on internationalisation (state authority)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government documents, statistical records, conference proceedings • Interviews with MUA administrators
	Institutional policies on internationalisation (academic oligarchy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional documents, statistical records, reports of meetings • Interviews with institutional administrators • Interviews with lecturers and researchers
	Expectations from students and businesspersons (market)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Focus-group interviews with students • Interviews with businesspersons
	Macro-political and socio-economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books, journals, magazines, newspapers
Subordinate Question 2	Focuses of queries	Major sources of data
What are the factors that affect the extent of implementation?	Constraints/ conditions of implementation process at governmental level and relationships with other forces (state authority)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical records and government documents • Interviews with MUA administrators and other related government officials
	Constraints/ conditions of implementation process at institutional level and relationships with other forces (academic oligarchy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional documents, brochures, records of number of personnel, statistical indicators of staff development, records of published papers, international conferences, research funding, and number of articles in international journals, Journal Citation Index • Journals, magazines, newspapers related to current situation of Thai research • Observations • Interviews with institutional administrators and officials/ lecturers and researchers both Thai and foreign
	Constraints/ conditions of implementation process at society and market levels and relationships with other forces (market)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus-group interviews with students • Interviews with businesspersons
	Macro-political and socio-economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books, journals, magazines, newspapers
Subordinate Question 3	Focuses of queries	Major sources of data
What are the outcomes of the policy?	Case 1 Satisfactions of students and business sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with students and businesspersons • Observations
	Case 2 Number of research publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical records, government documents. Internet website • Journals, magazines, newspapers

Table 4: Focuses of queries

Source: Author

1.5.3.1 Documentary Analysis

The documentary data served as the complementary element to the other data collected during the research. It helped the researcher gain ‘insights and clues into the phenomenon’ by making the best use of the existing resources (Merriam and associates, 2002: 13). The information used in this thesis came from both primary and secondary sources. Table 4 shows that the primary sources included government and institutional documents, seminar and conference proceedings, statistical records and reports of government and institutions. These documents incorporate government and institutional policies and plans regarding internationalisation, the historical process of higher education development at both national and institutional levels, numbers of personnel, numbers of articles in international journals, and numbers of international programmes. In addition, certain statistical data that was not included in the institutional documents was provided by the administrator of each programme.

The secondary sources include related articles in the media, formal studies and research on related topics, books, magazines, and journal articles, which were available from libraries in Thailand and the Internet. These sources provided valuable information on not only the issues surrounding internationalisation, but also the macro-political and socio-economic environment of the country. However, I am aware of the problem of credibility associated with the content of data that has already been interpreted by other persons, and it has been suggested that this interpretation constitutes a secondary analysis, but the same information can be considered primary if the researcher takes account of the political stance of the author (Fielding and Gilbert, 2000: 4-5). Also, I realised that even the data from primary sources needed to be critically used; its reliability was in question. For example, I obtained a great number of brochures, leaflets, and reports about international programmes from the participating universities; however, I had to bear in mind that these documents were produced for the purpose of advertising their programmes to the public, and so they tended to present a highly biased picture. Nevertheless, these documents helped me to recognise the trend of the relationship between the Thai higher education system and the market. Even so, it is not advisable to draw conclusions about the results of internationalisation on the basis of one type of data; documentary data alone does not help in clarifying the actual constraints and in-house realities taking place during the process of implementation.

1.5.3.2 Interviews

The interviews were used to serve as supplementary sources of data. The merit of the interview is that it permits insights into others' perceptions and experiences (Punch, 1998: 174-5; Seidman, 1991: 1). It is also a way to gain data about contemporary subjects that have not been extensively studied and for which there is little literature (Stedward, 1997: 151). In this research, the interviews were based on different sets of interviewees, as shown in Table 3.

In accordance with this design, I conducted interviews with 137 people.¹⁰ Generally, the interview sessions with policy-makers, administrators of universities, officials, lecturers, and stakeholders lasted from one to two hours, while the sessions with students normally lasted from thirty to forty-five minutes. All interviews were tape-recorded after obtaining permission from the interviewees.

Some of the interviewees might not have been included in the purposeful sample. However, these people were directly involved in the Thai higher education arena, and they could give general information on the 'atmosphere' of the process. It has been claimed that 'Elite interviewers have to assume that potential respondents differ in how much they can contribute to the study and that each respondent has something unique to offer' (Mannheim and Rich, 1995: 164). Therefore, the views of interviewees from universities other than those selected for the study were considered complementary and are used to make general points in the thesis.¹¹

There are three types of interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (see Harrison, 2001: 91). In this thesis, both semi-structured and unstructured interviews were used. The unstructured interview is appropriate for experts like policy makers, education officials, lecturers and staff at the implementation level, since it gives the interviewee more opportunities to answer with a flexibility and variety of response, which are likely to reveal insights and in-depth details that might otherwise be missed. A list of questions or a so-called 'aide-memoire' (Seale, 1998: 206) was also prepared in order to direct the conversation to the specific issue in question. Since there were a variety of interviewees ranging from policy makers to staff at the implementation level, the lists of questions were designed differently in order to benefit from the different expertise of each group. The lists of questions, however, were mainly used to help the interview to remain focus. I allowed

¹⁰ The name lists are shown in the Appendix A.

¹¹ These individuals were met by chance and their opinions emerged during conversation.

those who had first-hand experience of the field to talk freely. I found that a balance between listening and questioning helped to clarify the issues; this accords with what has been noted about the 'give and take' nature of qualitative research (Dyer and Choksi, 2002: 342).

The semi-structured interview was used with the students since the guided questions allowed a comparison of the information with the opinions of students in other universities. It also allowed the students to give a fresh commentary and significant insights and to talk about their experiences of the specific issue in question. The students' opinions were important since they are the direct receivers of the process. Moreover, focus-group interviews were used, as they help to 'stimulate people in making explicit their views, perceptions, motives and reasons' (Punch, 1998: 177). The number of students in the group interviews ranged from two to six; I acted as a moderator while the students interacted and discussed. Individual interviews were also conducted with those who could spare the time. A combination of individual and group interviews was useful as one was used to validate the other (Williams, 2003: 67).

Critical and reflexive process of interview

The interview process did not always run smoothly. Three difficulties emerged from the study's framework, which was used to design the form of the interviews. First, the interviews involved many high-ranking officials and bureaucrats in the Thai government sector and the participating universities. Second, the interviews aimed to discover the factors affecting the change to, or the implementation of, 'internationalisation'. Third, they took place in the Thai setting, and naturally Thai cultural influences affected the interview process.

Regarding the first issue, difficulties might emerge because these administrators in the 'state authority' and the universities were familiar with the process and problems of research, and were also accustomed to being interviewed. Thus, these 'elites' could have an agenda in mind and it might be difficult to get them to speak freely about their own weaknesses or on controversial issues (see Harrison, 2001: 99). In my experience, however, most of these Thai elite interviewees were remarkably critical, open and willing to give inside information; this is in contrast to what Harrison (2001) noted about the pitfalls of interviewing members of elites. A tape-recorder was used in every interview session; most of these elite officials spoke with confidence and seemed to have no objection to being recorded. However, there were some instances where they felt that what they said might

affect their relationships with other organisations, and so they asked me to make sure that their anonymity was protected. Some of the interviewees were candid partly because they knew me, since I used to work in the MUA and had known them as administrators in the MUA. On this point, as the interviewer, I ensured that objectivity was maintained and did not allow the relationship to affect the interview data in 'response effect' terms (see Borg, 1981; Harrison, 2001: 96). Moreover, many interviewees whom I was meeting for the first time also remained open and willing to talk about their routines, roles and opinions without reluctance. This reflected the approachable nature of Thai bureaucrats and university administrators and their willingness to express opinions. They were a useful source of inside information, and in terms of both quality and quantity the interviews are one of the main strengths of this thesis.

At the same time, some interviewees were inhibited, avoided commenting on sensitive issues, and were very protective of their own weaknesses. The reluctance of these interviewees may be attributed to the pressure of market forces. For example, there was an obvious competitiveness among different universities regarding their international programmes. When I visited a university, interviewees were often interested in the names of the programmes and universities I had visited and some asked what kind of information I had gained. In answering them, I was always careful to maintain confidentiality, since some interviewees had talked about the weak points of their own programmes and had given inside information, on the understanding that it was to remain confidential. Sometimes, these elite personnel, using their privileged position, asked me to be aware that the thesis might show foreigners the defects of the country, which could 'harm the country's image'.

To resolve these issues, I employed a check-and-balance system using data from documents and observations during the data analysis. Moreover, I made sure that I treated ethical considerations and the issue of anonymity with appropriate seriousness, since many matters discussed in the thesis were sensitive and could affect the universities' business as well as the reputations of individual lecturers. On the other hand, the reactions of these interviewees reflected the prevailing atmosphere of competitiveness, the importance of self-image and the Thai people's fear of 'losing face', all of which were significant for the study's analysis of the internationalisation of Thai higher education. Although certain data was kept confidential, the elite interviewees' behaviour was used as raw data in the thesis.

Second, in accordance with the study's main research question, the interviews aimed to ascertain why the policy was not being implemented. The interviewees, naturally enough, tended to blame others, not themselves. This has been termed acting from 'ulterior reasons';

the interviewees seek to portray themselves in a positive light (Harrison, 2001: 95). For example, some MUA bureaucrats attributed the problems of implementation of internationalisation to the failings of the universities, while refusing to admit that the MUA's bureaucratic nature might have been a factor. Moreover, lecturers and university administrators often insisted that any failure was the fault of others; some also boasted of the successes of their own university. To overcome these problems, observations and documents as well as the opinions of students and related actors were used to counteract the possibility of biased data.

Lastly, a further difficulty stemmed from the power relations between the interviewees and the researcher, which were related to the Thai cultural phenomenon of being *dek* and *phu yai* (juniors and seniors).¹² If they are *dek*, Thais are not supposed to challenge *phu yai*, since this is usually considered rude and ill mannered. This norm made it difficult for me to raise directly challenging questions with the interviewees, who were mostly *phu yai*. In this case, I opted to use a soft voice when asking particularly sensitive questions. I made it clear that I really needed to understand the issue, but in doing so I indicated my respect for the interviewee. It would have been counter-productive to use a strong voice that might have been interpreted as challenging or criticising the interviewee, because it would have harmed the relationship, and consequently had a negative effect on the interview data.

1.5.3.3 Observation

The last major tool used in the data collection process was observation. Its benefit is that it involves the researcher in a natural field setting and permits a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998).

Regarding the first case, I employed 'participant observation' since teaching and learning in the class setting is a short process, allowing the researcher to observe how students and lecturers behave and interact in the classroom. I attended seven international programme classes in the selected universities. Inside the classroom, I acted as 'observer-as-participant', which means that the researcher's activities are acknowledged to the group, but the role is that of an information gatherer rather than a participant (Merriam, 1998). The advantage of observation is that it can be used to crosscheck the data gained from documents and interviews. In order to ensure data validity, I made sure that details of the classes, such as class size, time span, teaching style of and materials used by lecturers, and

¹² For a discussion of the culture of *dek* and *phu yai* in Thailand, see McCargo, 2000: 53.

responses of students were noted down. After the observations, I interviewed the students and lecturers to discover their feelings and experiences, or 'subjective understanding', which observation cannot provide (Schutz, 1967, quoted in Seidman, 1991: 5). In Thailand, the relationships between students and lecturers are fully observable within the classroom settings. Moreover, according to the interviews with some students and lecturers, outside meetings between them rarely occur.¹³ Thus, the classroom is the best place for observation.

Besides participant observation, I began to use casual observations as soon as I entered a participating university. This informal observation not only provided the answers to certain questions, but also confirmed certain points of information drawn from other sources. For example, the buildings and the notice boards used for the programmes prompted me to ask relevant questions during the interviews; also, when an interview with a programme director was held in his office while other staff carried on working as usual, and he complained about the limited number of officers and the staff's lack of competence in English, I was motivated to test his views by observation. Another interesting informal observation happened during the fieldwork: when I commuted by the skytrain in Bangkok, I noticed a number of advertisements for the 'international' and 'special' programmes both inside the skytrain and on the large billboard near the road. Moreover, flyers were distributed on the footpath. Such use of publicity exemplifies the current need of Thai higher education to advertise its services.

Critical and reflexive process of observation

The difficulties of observation were particularly apparent in three main areas. First, it is impracticable to conduct participant observation in the area of research, since the process of conducting research to be published in international journals is difficult to observe. This accords with Harrison's (2001: 81) remark that a weakness of the observation method is that it may be difficult or impossible to gain access to the phenomenon.

Second, in both teaching and research, I was unable to observe the meetings of bureaucrats, university administrators and some committees at all levels, due to their inaccessibility. These meetings are difficult to attend because they are open only to authorised persons and 'outsiders' are not welcomed. It would have been interesting, however, to observe their discussions and the nature of the meetings, such as the decision-making of the university

¹³ Focus-group interview, Sirathai, Thapida, Chongphoei, student, BBA, TU, 24 April 2003; personal interview, Michael, lecturer, BBA, BUIC, BU, 24 January 2003; Margaret, lecturer, BBA, KBU, 29 January 2003; Piboon, Director, IIS, RU, 19 February, 2003; Porpan interview.

committee on the matter of the provision of research grants to lecturers, or the process of devising the curriculum.

Third, I was unable to observe classes in two public universities, Thammasat and Chulalongkorn, because I was unable to visit during term. Although I had carefully planned my schedule, it needed to be flexible in order to accommodate the interviewees' commitments. Thus some difficulties arose when certain interviewees were simply not available for interview; I could not proceed from the first to the ninth university in the order I had planned. Due to the limited time of ten months set aside for the fieldwork, I chose to prioritise the interviews because obviously my initial contact with the executives would only provide me with their permission to observe in the classrooms. However, prioritising the interviews affected other subcases, and I was unable to observe certain classes. To resolve the above points, interviews with lecturers in Thammasat and Chulalongkorn were used instead, since they were well able to convey the class atmosphere. Moreover, this interview data was crosschecked with that provided by students, and with documentary evidence.

1.5.4 Data analysis

After completing the fieldwork, the process of data analysis began. The advantage of having various sources of information was that the final findings were linked together in order to crosscheck and triangulate, in an attempt to avoid bias and data invalidity. During the data reduction process, all information from the document reviews, observations, and interviews was summarised, grouped and conceptualised. The data needed to be reduced without significant loss and care was taken to examine it in its context (Punch, 1998). Each individual case was analysed separately, and cross-case analysis was then carried out. The aim was to understand why each university had produced such results and what were the causes of success or failure. Eventually, general explanations were derived from each case in order to answer the main research question and the evidence was interpreted in accordance with the analytical framework of the study.

The research fieldwork provides inside information on the thesis's subject matter. A range of data was obtained from the in-depth interviews with a very large number of interviewees from various sectors, and from the observations, both of which provided information that could not be obtained from printed documents; this information has contributed to the thesis's originality. I developed my skills and learned a great deal throughout the processes, having to find solutions to many unpredicted difficulties, while

receiving much unexpected support. My experiences have been described above, and it is hoped that they may serve not only as an explanation of how the thesis was produced, but also as a useful guide for those who choose to conduct research in similar areas in the future.

1.6 The major studies

The literature on the internationalisation of higher education was first developed by scholars in the disciplines of sociology, psychology and anthropology, where internationalisation was narrowly interpreted in a framework of student/staff mobility. Later, in the 1990s, in the work of educational scientists, the internationalisation concept was widely interpreted in terms of institutional strategies, covering more various activities and having an international dimension (Van der Wende, 1997: 22-23). Of the several studies on the process of internationalisation conducted by educational scientists, most deal with programmes of activities having an international dimension (see Knight and De Wit, 1997; Kawaguchi and Lander, 1997; Umakoshi, 1997; Kitamura, 1997). For them, the implementation process of the internationalisation of higher education concerns how these exchange programmes, international studies programmes and language courses were run in general terms (see Kawaguchi and Lander, 1997; Umakoshi, 1997). The discussion has not involved the interplay of various actors in a higher education system, nor has it analysed the specific problems in governance and administration terms. Thus it was argued that a gap existed between mainstream higher education and internationalisation research, termed 'conceptual disconnection' (Van der Wende, 1997: 21). Recently, when the concept of internationalisation had grown important in higher education studies, these two domains became linked. The studies of Van der Wende (1996) and Källemark and Van der Wende (1997a) were among the first attempts to combine these two issues.

There are also many studies that have examined the implementation of the internationalisation of higher education in various countries and contexts. Many problems of the implementation process were identified more fundamentally when scholars examined the issues using theories of organisation (see Davies, 1995; Bartell, 2003), and of higher education systems (see Van der Wende, 1996; Källemark and Van der Wende, 1997a). However, these scholars applied frameworks appropriate to their context. Some ignored the internal culture of institutions, focusing instead on functional structure while some focused on institutional context, with less emphasis on the role of the state (for further discussion see section 2.2.6).

Moreover, the above studies have mainly been conducted in Western countries, where the problems of implementation are different from those in developing countries (see Powell, 1999: 10). Knight and De Wit's (1997) study which examined the internationalisation processes of developed and developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region did not adequately investigate the weakness of structures of the higher education systems of the countries in question. Also, the OECD's (2004) 'Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges' which covers the internationalisation of higher education systems on a global scale, including those of several developing countries, has different focus to this thesis since it discusses general trends, issues and challenges and provides key statistics aiming to evaluate the provision of cross-border post-secondary education as well as to discover opportunities to further promote the international education of OECD countries. It does not seek to understand an individual country's problems.

In Thailand, the study of the internationalisation of higher education is in its infancy. There are very few English-language publications on the subject (see Apichai, 1987; Amornvich and Wichit, 1997). Generally, the existing literature on the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand can be divided into two types: academic and policy papers. Regarding the first type, the paper by Apichai (1987), 'Internationalism of Higher Education in Thailand: A Case of Innovative Destruction', is the only one among all these to connect the issue of the internationalisation of higher education with the degree of democracy, the centralised administration process and the exploitation of the elites, considering these as the fundamental problems of the policy process in Thailand. He interpreted the internationalisation of higher education during the period of the 1960s to the 1980s in Thailand as constituting a process of 'cultural imperialism'. He argued that the Western package would only benefit the urban populations, excluding regional and local needs. When Apichai examined the negative impacts of the internationalisation of higher education, he took little notice of the problems of implementation facing the state.

Another study consists of a particular chapter written by Amornvich and Wichit (1997: 161-170) as a contribution to Knight's book (1997) on the internationalisation of higher education in the Asia-Pacific countries. This was the first time the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand was interpreted as an integrated process. The study did not limit itself to international activities, but discussed the general background, current status, and strategies. However, its limitation is that it did not explore the fundamental problems of the domestic process of internationalisation.

The other academic study, 'Trends of international graduate programmes in higher education institutions under the jurisdiction of the MUA in the next decade' (Wilawan, 1999), focused on concepts, objectives, key elements, management, administration and quality of graduates. However, this study tended to focus on the future, rather than analyse the present impediments, in clear contrast to this thesis's approach.

Regarding the second type: policy papers, one of the studies is a research survey on the internationalisation of Thai higher education (Tong-In *et al.*, 1995), financially supported by the MUA. Its aims were to study the status of the internationalisation of Thai higher education after the first five-year period following its introduction into the long-range higher education plan in 1990, and to analyse the problems it confronted. The discussion of the findings seems rather narrow and biased; for example, a section analysing the drivers of the increased number of international programmes and the significance of the internationalisation of higher education in Thai universities interpreted them as a result of the introduction of the concept in the long-range and the seventh plans of higher education development (Tong-In *et al.*, 1995: 30). It reflected the favoured role of the state and its chief limitation is that it did not take the broader socio-economic context into account.

Another study on the upgrading of Thai higher education towards fuller internationalisation (Naris, 1997) offered broad suggestions on how this upgrading would take place. The suggestions mostly originated in the concepts and experiences the researcher gained from abroad and were not based on theoretical discussion. Interestingly, the above two studies of the 'policy papers' type revealed that Thai educationalists and state officials analysed the issue from the top-down perspective, formulating and evaluating policy in their own contexts and interests. This approach has been categorised as 'analysis for policy' rather than 'analysis of policy' (Gordon, Lewis and Young, 1977: 26).

Thus, the above five works did not approach the topic in the same way as this thesis does, and they do not provide any analytical answers to the questions posed by the fundamental problems of the internationalisation of higher education as a domestic process. In contrast, this thesis is multidisciplinary and its original contribution is that it is the first 'analysis of policy' that combines the study of higher education systems and implementation processes to analyse the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand.

1.7 The chapters

The rest of the thesis is structured as follows:

The second chapter provides an overview of the theories underpinning the thesis. With a view to answering the research questions, the chapter firstly provides a general background to the studies of the internationalisation of higher education, and a theoretical background to the studies of higher education systems and policy implementation, particularly in developing countries. The discussions aim to provide a broad understanding of the issues before the micro-level analysis is undertaken.

The third chapter examines the Thai higher education context and cultural values regarding 'internationalisation'. In this chapter, I attempt to locate the Thai higher education system within Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination'. The development of the Thai higher education system is divided into the historical and contemporary periods. The transition from the first period to the second saw the locus of authority move away from the state towards the universities and recently towards the market. In Thailand, the changes occurring in the contemporary period have not effected the improvement of higher education structure and values; they have only reflected a widening of the political space to include interest groups. These limitations suggest that domestic structural reform is difficult to achieve; the period has witnessed the development of an unstable political environment which has affected the country's higher education system. The specific characteristics of Thai higher education and the macro-political and socio-economic changes are discussed as a basis for understanding the implementation of the internationalisation of higher education.

The fourth chapter answers the first subordinate research question: why has the policy been adopted? Data is drawn from the case studies of the international teaching programmes and research. The chapter finds that the economic demands are imperative forces driving the 'state authority' and universities to pursue 'internationalisation'. The academic rationale exists at the individual level; however, it is not the major driver of policy adoption; the needs of institutions and individuals in gaining fee-income and enhancing their socio-economic status also play a role. Within the current socio-economic structure of the country, the multiple economic interests of different individuals seem to distort the move towards qualitative and fundamental integration.

The fifth chapter discusses the implementation process of the 'international' teaching programmes of the three selected public universities by finding the factors affecting the

extent of implementation; it also examines the outcomes of the programmes. The findings concern the current locations of the public universities within the higher education system. The ineffective role of the Thai state, the need of the universities to generate income, the intrinsic demands of bureaucrats seeking to retain their socio-economic status, and the values embedded in the concept of 'going international' have driven the programmes to compromise their quality. This can be observed in the process of selection and employment of lecturers, the student selection system, the classroom setting, and the environment created by the programmes. Regarding the outcomes of the selected programmes, the demands of students and the private sector are met by the English language proficiency courses and enhanced opportunities in the labour market; however, the fundamental integration of the international and intercultural dimensions into the programmes has hardly been achieved.

The sixth chapter looks at the 'international' teaching programmes of the three selected private universities. The discussion also involves the system of selection and employment of lecturers, student selection, classroom settings and administration. To a different degree from those applied to public universities, the rigorous rules of the state have largely hindered the way these private universities have developed; those rules, however cannot guarantee quality. Lacking prestigious status, the private universities are disadvantaged in respect of student quality and in other ways. However, they are also moving towards income-generation, which is limiting their concern with qualitative issues. The outcomes of the programmes regarding the satisfaction of students' demands and those of the private sector varied: some interviewees expressed their appreciation of the English skill provided by the programmes; others considered the English language tuition deficient. At this stage of their development, the long-term commitment of the programmes to integrating the international and intercultural dimensions is not assured.

The seventh chapter examines the second case study of the thesis: the opportunities for research. The problems of implementation are found to stem from the sharing of short-term interests by the power holders, notably the state bureaucrats and the technocrats, and the embedded bureaucratic structure and values of the selected public universities. The issues of the ineffective motivations and sanctions of the Thai state apparatus and the lack of a research culture within Thai society have their roots in these problems, which are interlinked and limit the development of high-quality research in the country. The low number of research papers in international publications partly demonstrates the programme's lack of success.

The last chapter concludes the thesis by answering the main research question, which concerns the degree to which the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education in Thailand is being implemented; the answers are drawn from the case studies. The key problem is that Thai higher education is in a dilemma, seeking to emulate the 'best of the West' while struggling to improve its own inherited structure. The findings indicate that the theories outlined in chapter two, the studies on the internationalisation of higher education, the interplay of 'state authority', 'academic oligarchy' and market, as well as the implementation of the policy in developing countries are important for understanding the fundamental problems of the Thai higher education policy process. This chapter also evaluates the contribution of the thesis in both analytical and empirical terms and makes suggestions for further studies.

Chapter Two

Implementing the Policy of Internationalising Higher Education

2.1 Introduction

In chapter one, I set out the research questions and constructed an analytical framework which was intended to be a useful aid in discovering the answers to the research questions. According to the framework, this chapter has two main tasks. The first is to review the set of studies on the general background of the internationalisation of higher education, and thus to present and examine the issues involved. The second task is to focus on higher education systems and policy implementation processes, aiming to understand the contexts in which policy is put into practice. The review of the literature on these key issues provides a lens through which the Thai case may be viewed.

In order to address these tasks, I divide the discussion into five main parts. The first part presents an overview of the internationalisation of higher education, considering its nature and characteristics, common threats, working definition, expected outcomes, and rationale, and the variables that affect the extent of its implementation. The second part discusses higher education systems, in general, focusing on their characteristics, the interplay of actors, the implementation process, and the general current market trends. The third part discusses the higher education systems of developing countries; this is followed by a section on policy implementation again, focusing on developing countries. The final part summarises this chapter's discussion, which will be used as a basis for the present study.

2.2 Internationalisation of higher education

This section starts with a discussion of the general studies on the internationalisation of higher education. The focus on the process of internationalisation is important, as we assume that policy content is directly connected to outcomes (see Jenkins, 1978: 209; Cleaves, 1980: 287). However, the discussion cannot ignore the policy context, which varies across both time and different national systems (Gornitzka, 1999: 17). This section situates its content in various contexts, and the conclusion of this section will define the gap the thesis aims to fill.

2.2.1 Nature and characteristics of internationalisation

Internationalisation not only concerns higher education, but also various policy sectors, and is also considered as a continuum that crosses several dimensions, such as the source of policy ideas, policy implementation, and policy actors (see Doern *et al.*, 1996: 4). Many scholars agree that the term 'internationalisation' includes both international and local elements, initiated from the relationships and interdependence between individual countries (Ogata, 1992: 63; Marginson, 1999: 19; De Wit, 1999). The fact that it involves both local and wider territories makes the term ambiguous and intrinsically contradictory. On the one hand, the term prioritises the role of nation-states as builders of international society; on the other hand, the notion of 'internationalisation' may challenge the continuation of nation-states (Hook and Weiner, 1992: 1). Indeed, internationalisation might increase the nation-state's prosperity and security, or it may increase the vulnerability of a state to economic and political forces beyond its control (Falk, 1992: 35).

In responding to these opportunities and risks, government can either accommodate or resist internationalisation, which affects a range of policy issues, depending on circumstances, domestic and international coalitions, and knowledge (Doern *et al.*, 1996: 4). For example, the telecommunications sector might be internationalised more rapidly than income security, as the reinforcing effects of technology and markets on the first is larger (Doern *et al.*, 1996: 4). In this case, although the domestic process is important, the global scale of technology and markets can undermine the role of the state to a great degree (Falk, 1992: 39).

At another level, when globalisation became a key concept in every society, some scholars attempted to link internationalisation with globalisation, while differentiating their functions (see Scott, 1998: 122; Van der Wende, 2001: 253; Altbach, 2002: 29). Difficulties arise, however, when the concept of internationalisation is linked to globalisation. Waters argues that 'top-down', 'universality', and 'a single world society' are overly abstract notions (Waters, 1995 quoted in Jones, 1998: 145). Moreover, critics reject the proposition that globalisation produces a 'bland homogenisation'; in reality multiple and diverse cultures are emerging under the influence of global trends (Hall, 1991 in Jones, 1998: 144). The term 'globalisation' carries with it a controversial debate about its political rhetoric, a discourse which is being used by the state to pursue economic integration and appeal to external economic constraints (Hay and Rosamond, 2002: 164).

In this connection, there are many debates on the risks of globalisation, particularly whether it will bring about a deconstruction of the national state and culture, since the concept is often linked with the market (Scott, 2000: 6; Altbach, 2002: 29). Thus, those who attempt to develop internationalisation in response only to 'globalisation' seem to ignore other missions of internationalisation and universities, such as serving cultural diversity and local requirements. Although the economic driving forces, the pressures of neo-liberalism, and globalisation issues have been discussed in a wider context, as being among the demands imposed on a worldwide scale, the role of national higher educational policy as a social policy should be considered as equally important (see Becher and Kogan, 1992: 187; Knight, 1997: 6; Ife, 1998: 43; Allen, 2004: 73). These two perspectives on economic and social demands normally create tensions if perceived as incompatible (Gornitzka and Maassen, 2000: 219).

This study is different from the work of those scholars whose interests lie in international relations and are concerned with the above debates, which centre upon imperative external forces or 'globalisation' and the capability of the state to defend its interests and manage its autonomy. This thesis concentrates on domestic policy, and thus prefers to examine the nature and relationships of various actors inside the country, rather than the debates outside its borders.¹ Nevertheless, the thesis recognises that both threats and opportunities are intrinsic to internationalisation. Being mainly interested in the domestic process, however, this thesis supports the argument which perceives 'internationalisation' as multicultural and recognises that different countries have addressed it on their own terms. In fact, globalisation is best seen as one factor shaping the processes of internationalisation, particularly in their contemporary form, and internationalisation can be seen as standing on its own without any linkage to globalisation (Doern *et al.*, 1996: 4). In this case, internationalisation does not ignore 'market forces and competition', but sees them as a part of 'cultural forces and cooperation' (see Ife, 1998: 43; Allen, 2004: 73). In this regard, globalisation has not been the main driving mechanism bringing internationalisation into effect; even without globalisation, internationalisation can still happen at the levels of nation-states, institutions, and individuals (Dandurand, 2000: 168).

For example, Hook and Weiner (1992: 1) note that the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines 'internationalize' as 'make international, esp. bring (territory etc.) under combined protection etc. of different nations'; and that 'the term, however, is seldom encountered, except in legal treaties'. This is representative of the views of the leaders of the

¹ See Doern *et al.*, 1996 for a discussion of the effects of internationalisation on domestic-policy processes.

industrialised states or the English-speaking countries in the West, who consider themselves active international actors (see Ehara, 1992: 272). Hook and Weiner (1992:1) further differentiated the term from Japanese *'kokusaika'* (internationalisation), which frequently appears in social discourse, indicating that the term is important to the Japanese. Hook and Weiner concluded that these different perceptions of the term depend on a country's 'position in the international system'. These views are important for an understanding of the way policy is pursued. Thus, the exploration of the concept is an appropriate means to examine the internal processes of a particular nation.

2.2.2 Common threats to the internationalisation of higher education

Studies on the internationalisation of higher education suggest that one of the common constraints found in both European and Asia-Pacific countries lies in the nature of the policy (see Källemark and Van der Wende, 1997a; De Wit and Knight, 1997: 180; Knight and De Wit, 1999: 205). A special characteristic of internationalisation lies in its particular external (international) dimension, which gives not only a multicultural aspect to the process, but also affects the way in which the process is to be managed (Van der Wende, 1996: 32). Due to its complex and multi-level nature, integrating the policy into the mission of the institution is essential, but requires extra efforts at the internal level (Knight and De Wit, 1999: 205). This results in an *ad hoc* and marginal process, or what has been termed a 'practical disconnection' between internationalisation and the national higher education system (Van der Wende, 1997: 21-24), or what De Wit and Knight (1997: 180) call the 'flavour of the month'.

Another common problem is related to the increased tensions created by economic threats which might divert the process of internationalisation. The market creates possibilities for educational providers to exploit the situation by creating short-term benefits and maximising revenues, but without taking academic values into account (Van Vught, 2002). Similarly, Knight (1999: 19) questioned whether the commercial drive could be integrated into a broader process approach to internationalisation or whether it would remain exclusive, and asked what kind of balance could be established between income-generating motives and academic quality. There are also cases where most developments towards internationalisation were 'opportunistic' and few institutions could manage to combine policy integration, committed leadership and systematic support (Van Dijk and Meijer, 1994 in McNay, 1995: 37).

Responding to globalisation trends, institutions perceive 'inherent goodness in internationalisation'. Most of the time, countries pursue the internationalisation process by possessing 'a well-developed sense of the need for internationalisation', while having no 'well-articulated set of rationales'. In other words, they know internationalisation is good; however, they do not know 'why' exactly they want to be internationalised (Knight and De Wit, 1999: 203). Furthermore, some institutions may present an 'academic rationale' for their drive to become world-class institutions and achieve international standards, while concealing an overriding commercial motivation (see Knight and De Wit, 1999: 204).

One study, which focused on the Asia-Pacific region, noted that the region's developing countries were subject to powerful economic threats. Having to follow a more rapid pace of development, and moving from colonial dominance to political independence and economic development create problems for some developing countries, who find it difficult to balance external forces with their own culture and needs (De Wit and Knight, 1997: 174). In a period when governments in developing countries need to reduce their higher education budgets, these threats tend to drive institutions to adopt a form of internationalisation which is designed to meet their need to generate income. The economic threats make it more difficult for these countries to pursue academic goals. De Wit explains:

Internationalisation of higher education in the Asia Pacific region is in transition from an aid-based, via a trade-based, to a process-based development, and from a national and centralized to a more autonomous institutional strategy. This will take time (De Wit, 1997: 31).

However, internationalisation should create not only income generation, but also knowledge, and social and cultural development, and thus be considered a win-win, not a win-lose situation for the involved parties (Yin Ching Leong, 1997: 118). The above study triggered the point on how the situation of developing country is different from developed world. The above debates link internationalisation with economic threats as well as with the specific nature of national policy, which merits careful attention. This thesis acknowledges the importance of the specific nature of national policy while recognising the strength of the relationship between internationalisation and economic ideologies. Although these economic threats are common, they remain external; therefore the internal policy-making process should not be neglected.

2.2.3 Working definition of 'internationalisation'

As it is becoming an increasingly complex and influential concept in the contemporary world, working definitions of 'the internationalisation of higher education' have been developed by many scholars (Knight, 1997; Van der Wende, 1997; Ellingboe, 1998; Schoorman, 2000; Altbach, 2002: 29). Having analysed a number of studies on the internationalisation of higher education, Knight (1999: 14-15) categorised them into four main approaches: 'activity', 'competency', 'ethos' and 'process', illustrating the different areas emphasised by different researchers, practitioners and higher education institutions.

Firstly, the 'activity' approach considers internationalisation as types of activities, which, it is argued, are prone to adopt distinct programmes and an uncoordinated approach to internationalisation. Secondly, the 'competency' approach looks at the development of new skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in students, faculty and staff, which is related to a particular approach towards the labour market and competition. Thirdly, the 'ethos' approach is concerned with creating a culture or climate on campus to promote and support international and intercultural initiatives, and relates only to organisational development theories. Finally, if internationalisation is considered to relate to the internal process of the institution, the most appropriate approach is the 'process' one, since it stresses internationalisation as an integral or infused part of the institutions, academic programmes, and their guiding policies and procedures, and addresses the sustainability of the international dimension (see Knight and De Wit, 1997: 6; Knight, 1999: 16; Knight, 2003). The working definition to be used in this thesis therefore falls into the 'process approach' category.

Knight refers to the internationalisation of higher education as,

the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the institution (Knight, 1997: 8).

This working definition represents one of the first attempts to integrate the internationalisation process so that it would be a central part of every function of higher education institutions; the definition does not perceive internationalisation as only 'a set of isolated activities'. Its other strong point is that it gives recognition not only to the international dimension of different countries, but also to the intercultural dimension of those from different cultural/ethnic groups (Knight, 1997: 8). However, this definition has certain limitations. Firstly, it can only be applied to the internationalisation process at the

institutional level. Moreover, internationalisation has been seen as an end in itself (Van der Wende, 1997: 19).

For these reasons, another meaning of internationalisation was developed. It was seen as

any systematic, sustained effort aimed at making higher education (more) responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economy, and labour markets (Van der Wende, 1997: 19).

The above definition, the author claims, fills the gap left by Knight's definition, as it better describes the role and efforts of government at the national level. Moreover, internationalisation is not only the aim, but also a main actor in developing higher education towards conformity with the international standards system and integration with the global environment. The study looks at the process that goes beyond national borders, involving relationships and the interactions of actors in the national higher education system which is affected by the international context (Van der Wende, 1997: 19-20, 32). Arguably, this definition overemphasises the link between internationalisation and globalisation. The internationalisation policy exists only to serve the external demands, while ignoring the inherent demands of nation-states and higher education institutions.

Coming back to Knight's description of the internationalisation of higher education (1997), we find that internationalisation is not perceived as an end, as Van der Wende (1997: 19) claimed above, but as a means to react with globalisation and at the same time respect the individuality of the nation (Knight, 1999: 14). For the purposes of this thesis, internationalisation is viewed as an essentially domestic matter. Owing to the changing environment of the higher education sector, a new definition has been proposed:

Internationalization at the national sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education (Knight, 2003).

This definition conceives internationalisation more generically in order to serve the growing numbers and variety of education providers and delivery methods. The concept of a 'global dimension' is added. The concept of integrating internationalisation into purpose, functions and delivery covers the major processes that each postsecondary education unit aims to achieve, and is not limited to teaching, research and service, which cover merely the functions of the institution. Thus, internationalisation is a task of the national sector, and not only of the institutions (Knight, 2003).

Nevertheless, the above definition has the limitation of being an uncompleted journey since there is no clear ‘finishing line’ to define success. The term ‘integration’ is rather vague and does not specify the ultimate aim of internationalisation; the following section will explain how this limitation might be overcome. Nevertheless, while recognising that this definition cannot provide a measure of successful implementation, the thesis employs Knight’s first and second definitions (1997, 2003) to study the internationalisation process of Thai higher education. The ‘process-focused’ definition allows the study to investigate the internal processes of the higher education sectors of a nation since internationalisation ‘respects the individuality of the nation’ and ‘national culture is key to internationalisation’ (Knight, 1997: 6). Furthermore, since the thesis focuses on universities and not on other postsecondary units, Knight’s first definition (1997) was used when choosing case studies,² in terms of identifying the functions of universities in teaching, research and services into which the international/intercultural dimension is integrated.

2.2.4 Expected outcomes for internationalisation of higher education

Regarding the matter of the in-house mission, internationalisation is viewed as ‘an organisational adaptation’ (Bartell, 2003: 43). Others see it as a ‘process of educational change’ or educational innovation (Van der Wende, 1996: 26). However, this process does not entail a complete transformation: Sugiyama (1992: 99) has argued that those who want to be internationalised do not have to abandon their national or cultural identity, and that a person should be able to live ‘equipped with attitudes, knowledge and skills that relate not only to his own nation or culture, but also to the world at large’.

Consequently, educational change can be classified into first-order and second-order changes. The first means ‘those that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of what is currently done’, while second-order change seeks to alter the fundamental ways in which organisations are put together, including new goals, structures and roles (Van der Wende, 1996: 26). Accordingly, internationalisation can bring about both first-order and second-order changes. Examples of second-order changes include preparing students to join the international labour market, establishing special units to facilitate international cooperation and exchange, becoming partners in international alliances and having performance assessed in accordance with international comparative perspectives (Van der Wende, 1996: 26-27).

² See research methodology section 1.5.

However, to make either first-order or second-order changes effectively depends on the nature of higher education in each country. By relating internationalisation to first-order and second-order changes, answers will be sought to the main research question concerning the extent to which the policy of internationalising higher education in Thailand is being implemented.

Accordingly, the criteria used to assess the implementation of the internationalisation policy need to be carefully selected during the evaluation process. First, one should be aware of the possibility of 'premature assessment' (Lane, 1987: 545). Second, in considering the first- and second-order changes, one should also be aware of whether the new ideas will always ensure quality, especially as internationalisation has become a fashionable issue (see Knight and De Wit, 1999: 203). Methodologically, a clearly defined discussion of first- and second-order changes can be difficult, because new ideas can be established without contributing to the improvement of quality. I am aware of these difficulties and that data analysis must be conducted with care. The criterion this thesis uses (whether first- or second-order changes occur) is the most useful for the purposes of this study. In order to define 'success' we will focus on both orders of change, which assumes firstly the improvement of existing education and the bringing of new ideas to systems, institutions and individuals (Van der Wende, 1996: 26). In addition, the changes are supposed to bring about not only short-term, but also long-term effects (Van der Wende, 1996: 8-9). On the point of 'premature assessment', this thesis examines the policy only up until 2005, and does not attempt to predict future trends.

2.2.5 Rationales of internationalisation of higher education

The answer to 'why' the internationalisation of higher education has been adopted will further elucidate policy implementation and policy outcomes. Due to the nature of internationalisation, the reasons for adopting the policy are related to both external and internal forces. The external forces, such as the demands for market liberalisation and social openness, and the impact of interdependence, are inescapable and play a part in explaining why a country should change (Ogata, 1992: 64). However, there is room for those at national level to either resist or support such growing interference from outside (Ogata, 1992: 63; Doern *et al.*, 1996: 4). Obviously, the nation-states with different 'substantive settings' will have diverse perceptions and interests regarding internationalisation, which will lead to different reasons for adopting the policy (Falk, 1992: 37). This is related to the discussion above on the way different countries have perceived the term differently (see Hook and Weiner, 1992: 1).

Regarding the internationalisation of higher education, Knight and De Wit (1997: 174) grouped the primary rationales into four main types: academic, cultural, economic and political. These rationales are applied at both national and institutional levels, and they do not have to be bounded within distinct categories; there can be integration and blurring and the balance can be changed according to internal conditions at certain times (Van der Wende, 1997: 35; Knight, 1999: 17).

Historically, at the national level, the academic and social/cultural rationales played a significant role in the European medieval period and in Arab universities, while the political rationale became dominant during the rise of the United States as a result of Cold War politics (De Wit, 2002). The economic rationale came to the fore at the end of the Cold War and has remained influential ever since (Scott, 1998; De Wit, 2002). As Van der Wende (2001: 250) notes, there has been a shift from the cooperation to the competition paradigm. The establishment of offshore and branch campuses abroad, the marketing for overseas students, the preparation of students to join the global labour force, and the enhancing of economic, scientific and technological competitiveness are some of the examples of internationalisation underpinned by the economic rationale (De Wit and Knight, 1997: 174; Van Damme, 2001: 420; Altbach, 2002: 29). Currently, many countries, notably the USA, Australia, the UK, and Canada, are clearly adopting an economic agenda, where higher education is regarded as an export product (Van der Wende, 1997: 28; Elliott, 1998). Currently, the academic and social/cultural rationales play a secondary role, being dominant at the institutional and individual levels but not at the national level (De Wit and Knight, 1997: 174).

In addition to Knight and De Wit's (1997) four main rationales, McNay (1995: 36) noted three main drivers pushing institutions to 'go international': extrinsic/market-driven, intrinsic/staff-driven, and curriculum/customer-driven forces. The first is related to the desire for fee income, or to fit externally funded schemes or projects organised by government or intergovernmental agencies; the second is related to ideological commitment, personal satisfaction, self-development, or even 'a hint of sleaze', and to 'academic tourism'; and the third refers to cultural enrichment, community linkages, and support for new skills and competencies in languages or in international subjects. These driving forces are linked, while any of the three may be a main driver for a particular project, or an institution may have all three as main drivers in its range of activities (McNay, 1995: 38).

In some higher education institutions in the Netherlands, internationalisation seems to be of marginal importance, since the size and infrastructure of these institutions prevent them from implementing an intensive process of internationalisation (Van Dijk, 1995: 22). In this sense, universities do not need to go international if it does not suit their institutional profile. Choosing which international activity to join depends on the 'fit' with institutional policy (McNay, 1995: 35-36). Bartell (2003: 51, 66) considers that internationalisation may be viewed as occurring on a continuum, at one end limited and essentially symbolic and at the other conceptualised as a synergistic, transformative process incorporating the curriculum and the research programmes and influencing the roles of all actors. Bartell recommends that the university should select the point on the internationalisation continuum that is consistent with its environment, and set a target objective.

With this in mind, the thesis will explore the Thai context by basing its analysis on the rationales discussed above in order to observe their operation at the national, institutional, and individual levels of Thai higher education. Additional findings will also be yielded by taking into account the national context as well as the interests and values of the actors. Since the *why* question can explain only part of the process, the next section focuses on *what* factors have affected the extent of the implementation of internationalisation.

2.2.6 Variables that affect the extent of the implementation of internationalisation

This section discusses variables that affect the extent of the implementation of internationalisation in various contexts. The factors affecting the extent of the internationalisation process are numerous, depending on the nature of the theories used, the countries to be observed, and whether national or institutional levels are studied. This part explores the existing studies on the internationalisation of higher education in various contexts, mainly how they view the problems of implementation, and to what extent the analytical lens they use affects the findings. This is also to suggest that the existing studies on internationalisation do not approach the subject in the same way as this thesis does. The following studies are chosen because they focus on the constraints on, or factors contributing to, the success of the policy implementation process, which is the main interest of this thesis.

Firstly, the study 'National policies for the internationalisation of higher education in Europe' identifies the major problem of the 'practical disconnection' of internationalisation from the general higher education activities. The problem consists of the weak cooperation between the actors involved in the internationalisation policy and others in mainstream

higher education policy, and concerns such issues as funding and quality assurance (Kälvemark and Van der Wende, 1997b: 262). The suggested solution is to improve the communication systems among different actors and to increase the involvement of executive officers in the institutions. The aim is to demarginalise the role of internationalisation in the work, strategies and policies of the institution (Kälvemark and Van der Wende, 1997b: 262-270). This study seems to conceive policy in terms of a top-down approach, ignoring what happens at the bottom-up level, although this is supposed to be important for the nature of higher education institutions, where multi-autonomous actors exist (see Clark, 1984: 9; Premfors, 1984: 41). The study neglects the values and behaviour of individuals at 'street level' and the patterns of power and influence between individuals and between different institutions, perhaps because it focuses on the links between supra-national and national levels rather than on the purely domestic process.

Secondly, the study of Van der Wende (1996: 42-43), 'Internationalising the curriculum in Dutch higher education: an international perspective' draws attention to three sets of variables leading to a successful internationalisation of the curriculum. These are external factors (the facilitative policy at supranational and national government levels, the solid international cooperation contacts with partner institutions, and market forces), internal factors (issues of supportive policy, strategies, management and committed staffs with international knowledge, the availability of extra budgets and resources and infrastructure), and characteristics of innovation (international dimension, the complexity or degree of interculturality of the curriculum) (Van der Wende, 1996: 186). The study combines both top-down and bottom-up approaches through a framework of cooperation of different forces including supra-national government, national government, institutions, partner institutions and the market. However, the study is exclusively focused on successful initiatives rather than obstacles. Such a prescriptive analysis cannot apply in every context, especially in developing countries where the implementation process is directly related to political conflicts (see Grindle, 1980: 15; Unger, 1998: 24; Dayley, 1997: 357).

A study on the survey research on the business schools of UK universities noted the constraints of the internationalisation process on the relationships between the top management and the implementers. It found that congruence between senior managers and activists hardly ever occurred. This would only happen when there was a consensus where staff at all levels would accept a proposal for a variety of reasons in order to gain some advantage, obtain a reciprocal favour, or gain access to supplementary funding. Moreover, the conflicts between the two sides often led to failure. A success would occur if there was congruence, and commitment from both sides towards consensus while mere consent would

bring 'constrained development and compromised quality' (McNay, 1995: 38). McNay's study takes account of individuals' bargaining relationships, noting that a policy in its final form is determined by such negotiations. However, it was conducted in the context of the developed world, where conditions are different from those obtaining in Thailand.

The study by Van Dijk (1995: 20) looked at the internationalisation of higher education in the Netherlands, and found that the interactions between central, faculty and departmental levels were important factors in the internationalisation process. The three main dimensions were policy, support and implementation, which could range from marginal to priority, one-sided to interactive, and *ad hoc* to systematic respectively. Given these divisions, the institutions could be categorised into eight cells. The aim of the study was to locate institutions in the 'internationalisation cube', which is his model of development. The analysis focuses on the correlation between inputs and outputs. For example, the institutions with more investments in money and personnel, more internal support for internationalization activities and good communications achieved a higher output (Van Dijk, 1995: 19-24). Van Dijk's study takes a different approach to that of the thesis because the thesis is interested in a dynamic and complex implementation process and is not an exploratory study of organisation design.

Fifthly, adopting an organisational approach, Davies (1995: 3) identified problems through conflicts between external demands in 'entrepreneurial modes of behaviour at a corporate level' and in the 'traditional collegial and bureaucratic culture of institutions', which are an area of tension for the policy process. The factors that affect the development of international strategies are composed of internal and external elements. The internal elements include university mission, traditions, and self-image; assessment of strengths and weaknesses in programmes, personnel, and finance; and organisational leadership structure, while the external elements include the external perceptions of image and identity; assessment of the competitive situation; and evaluation of trends and opportunities in the international market place (Davies, 1995: 5). Davies's study focuses on the values of institutions and their potential conflicts with external demands, and thus explores the disruptions that may occur within bottom-heavy higher education systems (see Clark, 1984: 9; Baldrige, 1989). Another study which uses the organisational culture approach is Bartell's (2003) 'Internationalization of universities: A university culture-based framework'. The organisational culture typology is used to understand the process of internationalisation at university level. The study found that three factors were essential to the internationalisation process: the external environment, the internal culture of

universities, and the universities' functional structure and strategies for internationalisation (Bartell, 2003: 54, 56-57).

The above two studies have the merits of taking account of the interplay between a university's internal culture and structure and its external environment, and of looking beyond the functional structure. However, their interest is limited to the contexts of two developed countries, the UK and Canada, and they focus only on the institutional context. The active role of the 'state authority' and the problems of developing countries are not discussed.

Additionally, there is a study of the internationalisation process in nine countries in the Asia-Pacific region that discusses the constraints on implementation (Knight and De Wit, 1997). Although it is the only study among those discussing internationalisation and its implementation process to be concerned with developing countries, its explanations are not easily transferred to the Thai context; it does not throw sufficient light on the implementation process to be of use to the thesis. The study identifies two main strategies: 'programme' and 'organisational' strategies, which aim at integrating an international dimension into both academic activities and organisational functions respectively. The findings show that in these countries, except Australia and New Zealand, the type of internationalisation associated with the 'programme strategies' was of a marginal character and had a one-way North-South dimension. The organisational strategies are divided into 'formal and informal aspects'. Regarding the formal aspects, there appears to be a lack of any comprehensive initiatives, clear policies, organisational infrastructure, and organisational strategies in terms of operations and support services, except again in Australia and New Zealand, where the need to embrace internationalisation is clearly articulated (De Wit 1997: 29). The problems of implementation stem from the top-down approach, which holds that clear goals and adequate infrastructures will yield successful results.

However, the findings on the 'informal aspects' add significantly to the restricted explanation above, as they concern patterns of power and influence, personal views of organisational and individual competencies, and patterns and groupings of interpersonal relations and communication systems. These elements form the culture of an institution and thus influence the process of internationalisation (Knight, 1997: 14-16). Using this framework, the study describes and analyses the realities of the implementation process in several developing countries situated in the Asia-Pacific region. However, it does not explore deeply the factors shaping the institutions and the individuals' personal values and

responses, and so the 'informal aspects' are not fully investigated. This is because the study covers a number of countries, and so cannot explore the fundamental constraints on the internationalisation process of any individual country in detail.

The above studies on the internationalisation of higher education identify several factors contributing to the implementation process. Most of the studies, however, were conducted in Western countries. The factors affecting the extent of implementation were found to be the functional structure and internal culture of institutions, the external environment, and the relationships among different forces both within and outside the institution. All of them, however, assume that the higher education and political structure of the country is strongly established and that all that needs to be done is to integrate the international dimension into the established structure. The structure itself is not analysed. As mentioned earlier in the research rationale, the thesis aims to fill this gap by analysing the structure of the Thai higher education system.

2.3 Higher education system

Since this study focuses on one of the dimensions of higher education policy, it is important to understand the special characteristics and conditions of the higher education sector in order to capture the context in which the policy has been processed. This aim is supported by Van der Wende (1996) and Källemark and Van der Wende (1997a), who recommend that the study of internationalisation policy and of national higher education systems should be linked.

2.3.1 General characteristics of and the actors inside the higher education system

In general, higher education is characterised by the activities of a number of autonomous actors and by the diffusion of authority. It is also typified by the 'bottom-heavy' structure of systems where decisions stem from individual researchers or lecturers owing to the particular character of academic work (Clark, 1984: 9; Premfors, 1984: 41; Bartell, 2003: 52). Its primary source of authority is professional expertise. Higher education is further described by reference to the low potency of collective action, a strong diffusion of power in the decision-making processes in higher education organisations, the weak role of the institutional leadership, the high degree of structural differentiation, and the low degree of functional dependence (Gornitzka, 1999: 12). These characteristics in combination are termed a 'loosely coupled system' (Weick 1976: 1-18) or 'organised anarchies' (Cohen and March, 1986 in Bartell, 2003: 53). Often, such characteristics make change difficult since

the system has no feedback and control mechanism, while the advantage is the probability of innovation (Beyer *et al.*, 1983: 237).

Regarding the higher education policy implementation process, several scholars have attempted to explain why a higher education policy fails or succeeds. These policy implementation studies have identified three main approaches: the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach, and the policy/action continuum (Younis and Davidson, 1990: 3-14).³ These models are designed to interpret the same event in different ways; however, which model helps us best understand the situation depends on context and time.

Regarding the definition of problems within the higher education policy implementation process, one of the first studies to relate higher education to policy implementation is the work of Cerych and Sabatier (1986). They defined the problems of higher education reform in Europe during the 1960s with respect to the top-down model, finding that success or failure depended on factors such as the degree of system change, the internal clarity and consistency of goals, and the adequacy of financial resources. However, they concluded that higher education is marked by 'a most complex implementation process in a context of ambiguous and often conflicting goals and a multitude of autonomous actors' and that the top-down approach seems the least appropriate framework to capture such complexities (Cerych and Sabatier, 1986: 285). This accords with Clark's (1983: 228) contention that in the higher education sector, it is impossible to ignore the bottom level, even in a nation with the strictest controls, because higher education is a system where professors are involved in daily judgments at operational levels, their strengths being their specialisation and expertise.

However, in order to bring into the analysis the multiple autonomous actors within the system, Clark (1984: 9) suggested that the political model was the most satisfactory, as it captures the complexity and multiplicity of divergent interests that are salient features of higher education. Using this political model to describe university governance, Baldrige (1989: 57-64) examined change, conflict, competition and the divergent values of different interest groups, the nature of power, the influence of both internal and external groups, and goal-setting activities. If a policy is to be successfully implemented, the negotiation process of different interest groups must be taken into account.

³ For extensive discussions on the top-down and bottom-up approaches and the policy/action continuum (political model), see Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; Hood, 1986; Gunn, 1978; Lipsky, 1980; Barrett and Fudge, 1981; Ham and Hill, 1993.

In observing these complex relationships, the classic model, the so-called 'triangle of coordination', developed by Clark (1983: 143) is often used to explain the interplay of various forces (see Figure 3). In this case the forces are the 'state authority', the 'academic oligarchy', and the 'market', and there is a 'tight to loose linkage' between them, depending on the national system. It is made clear that, by using this model, each national system can be placed inside the triangle according to its domestic environment (Clark, 1983:142-145). To identify the key actors and to analyse their interplay, this thesis intends to employ the 'triangle of coordination' as a core model in its study of the Thai higher education system.

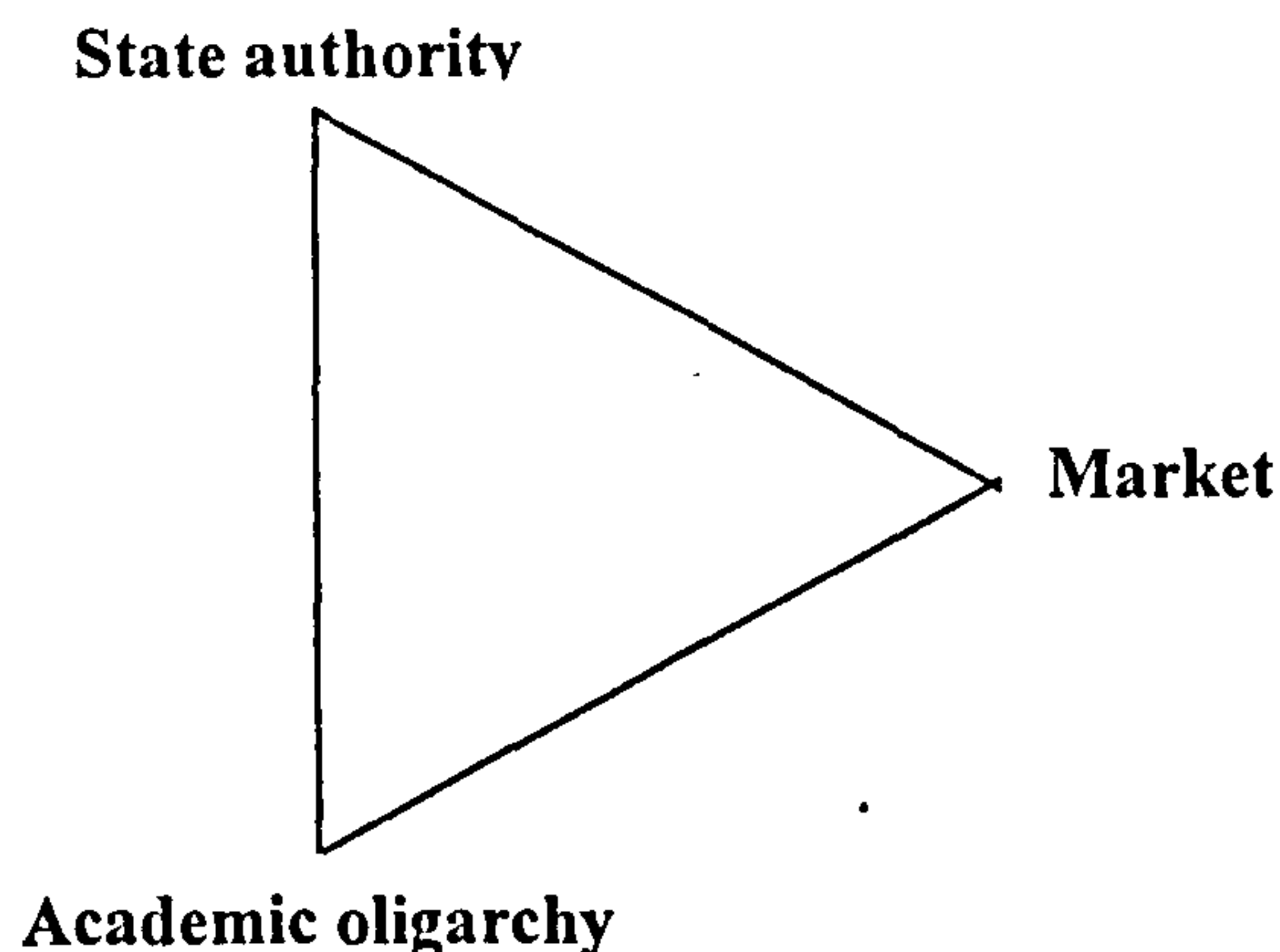


Figure 3: triangle of coordination of higher education
Source: Clark, 1979, 1983

According to Clark (1979), the 'state authority' has two components: bureaucratic authority and political authority, each of which is coordinated in specific ways. Bureaucratic coordination refers to the role of the administrative agencies, such as national departments of education. Political coordination is seen in 'the form of regular influence of political officials, external interest groups and internal groups' (Clark, 1979: 230). Secondly, the 'academic oligarchy' is composed of prestigious and powerful professors, in other words, 'academic barons' who are 'influential within and outside their disciplines and institutions' (Clark, 1979: 228). Thirdly, the 'market' is an informal form of institution where the concept of exchange connotes a means to link people together. In higher education, the market comprises 'consumer markets' (students' choice), 'labor markets' (faculty and administrative employment), and 'institutional markets' (public and private universities' reputations) (Clark, 1983: 161-171).

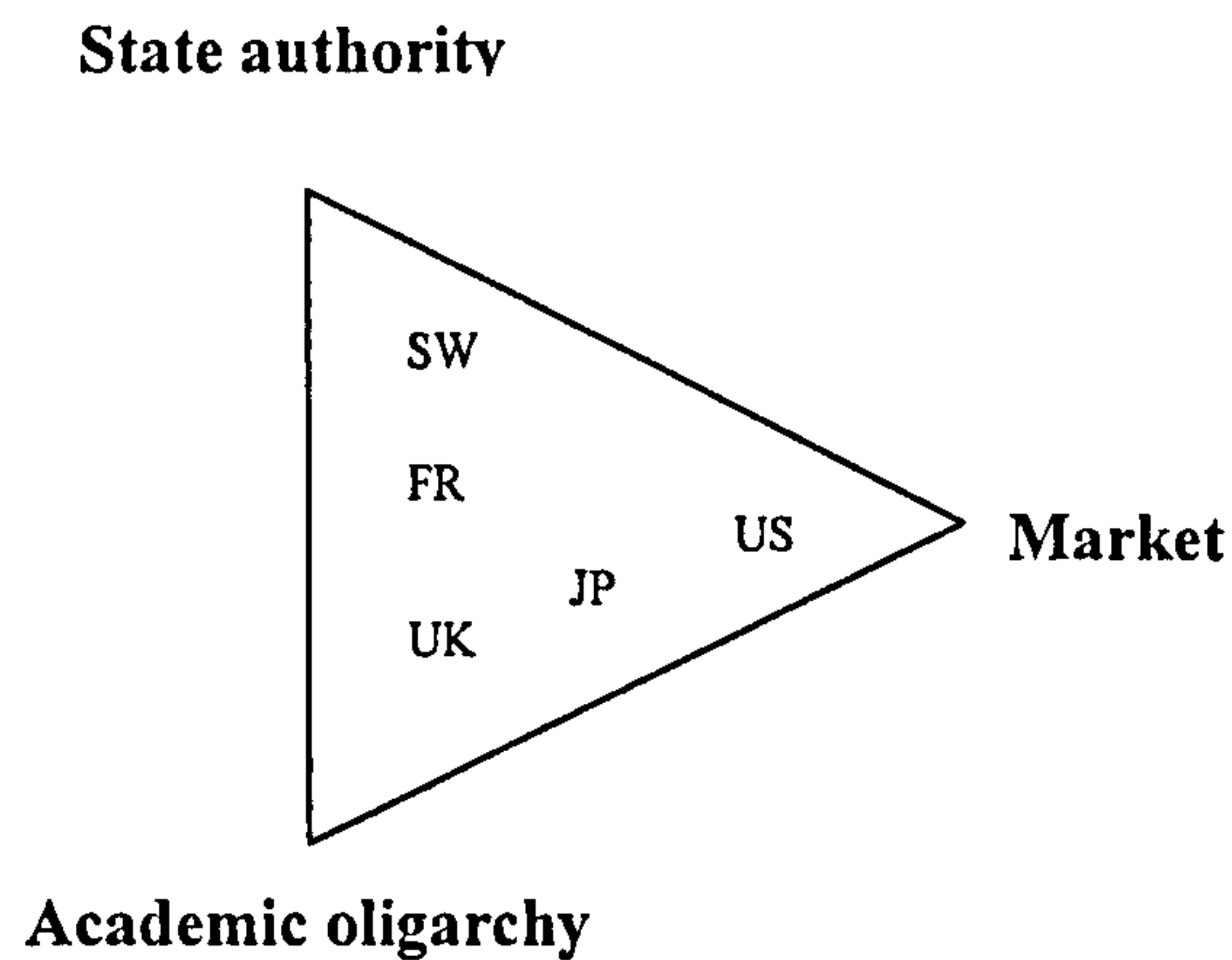


Figure 4: Different national higher education systems within the 'triangle of coordination' of higher education

Source: Clark, 1979: 237

In different countries, each force plays its role in different degrees. In Figure 4, we see that five countries are located at certain points that represent combinations of the three elements. Thus, Sweden was considered to have the most inclusive and tightest state, as it left little to market interaction while the state officials and allied corporatist interests groups played a greater role than the power and privileges of professors (Clark, 1979: 236). In France, the central bureaucracy played a greater part than in the USA but less than in Sweden; while the influence of academic oligarchs was stronger and more complex than in Sweden; and the influences of the bureaucracy and the oligarchs confronted each other, leaving the central administration of universities in a weak state. The USA was closest to the market extreme; academic oligarchs ruled the British higher education system; and Japan, while retaining a degree of state control, had a system that was mainly ruled by academic oligarchs interacting with the market (Clark, 1979: 237-8). These locations have changed, however, and this will be discussed in due course.

The different positions pertaining to these countries are useful in explaining how the key actors varied in their involvement in the higher education area and how the interplay of all these forces influenced higher education policy. In chapter three, I will locate Thailand within this triangle. Currently, there is a growing problem facing higher education systems: the pressures exerted by the power of market forces. The next section discusses this constraint on the higher education system.

2.3.2 New trends in higher education systems

The unique traditional structure of each country's higher education system as noted by Clark (1979, 1983) tends to be dissolved or shifted according to global forces (Dill, 1997a: 163). Higher education in many countries faces similar problems: an increase in competition and the involvement of the market (Salter and Tapper, 1994 in Kirby-Harris, 2003: 357; Dill, 1997a: 164; Gornitzka, 2000: 221).

These problems originated from government's recognition of the need for 'value for money' and efficiency (see Dill, 1997b: 172). In addition, the reasons governments need to privatise higher education are rooted in a broader process of economic globalisation, including the rising cost of mass higher education, the close tie of the higher education sector with the national economy, the strong public demand that makes higher education a political issue, the demand for greater efficiencies in the public sector and the cutting of government expenditures, together with the vital role of knowledge integrated with manufacturing industries (Meek, 2000: 26). In this sense, market competition is claimed to be a better solution than reliance on state control mechanisms and professional norms (Neave and Van Vught, 1994b: 315; Dill, 1997b: 172).

In addition, the role of the state has changed: its role as a resource provider has led to increased centralisation. Traditionally, the state allowed autonomy through block grant funding, but in the contemporary period, changes in funding patterns have put additional constraints on institutional autonomy (Slaughter *et al.*, 1997). Government is also concerned with accountability and evaluation. Cost efficiency, performance evaluation and benchmarking are utilised by the state to increase competition and ensure efficiency (Meek, 2000: 25).

Besides the changing role of the state, universities also have to adapt to the new trends. While they used to rely on government budgets, now their main sources of income are from research councils and third-party support. These explain the fierce competition among universities to secure research budgets as well as attract customers (Clark, 1997: 292). Indeed, the pressure for higher education reform is universal and different countries are employing different mechanisms internally; but these are directed towards the same objective: the establishment of a competitive market.

To face the new challenges, many universities and states are in a process of change. According to Clark (1997: 295), universities need to become more self-regulated by being

proactive, developing mechanisms to draw funding from different sources. Also, the department and school should be able to be self-steering. It is important that there is a reconciliation of the new managerial values and traditional academic values. Dill (1997b: 173) noted three generic public policies, designed to influence higher education markets. The first consists of a framework of rules governing the basic conditions, such as the establishment of property rights, and academic tenure; the second is carried out through market structure and involves such matters as tuition fees, vouchers, privatisation and quasi-markets; and the third relates to the conduct of the market and covers issues such as price regulation, quantity regulation and indirect and direct information provision. Different countries make different use of these methods to ensure efficient market behaviour. However, these measures are still experimental and the question remains which model provides true efficiency.

To its critics, a solution that relies on market mechanisms remains doubtful. The new idea of putting the university into the market raises the question of the reliability of the market and the autonomy of universities and professionals (see Shaw, 1990: 269-278; Ordorika, 2003: 385). Firstly, there is a vigorous debate on whether the market will undermine the social and cultural relevance of the universities (Thurow, 1996 in Dill, 1997b: 183; Meek, 2000: 29). Another issue is the quality of education provision when universities become competitive in the market. Arguably, market competition makes quality hard to control. Some accuse the universities of consistently failing their customers, who provide their revenue (*Economist*, 24 February 2005). The concept of a quality control mechanism applied by a central government agency, as in the UK, is still in doubt due to its ambiguity concerning the quality of academic output, costly monitoring, and the wasteful activity of bureaucratic reporting (Dill, 1997b: 181).

The above discussion outlines the broad situation in the developed world. The problems of the developed world suggest that its higher education structures are well established; the question is how to adjust that strong structure and culture to new ideas. The next section discusses the higher education systems and policy implementation processes in developing countries.

2.4 Higher education systems in developing countries

Marketisation can occur in developing countries as well as in the developed world (Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 1). However, this trend creates different degrees of threat. Generally, the implementation of higher education policy in developing countries has been

described by a number of scholars (Neave and Van Vught, 1994; Altbach, 1982: 10-12; Gornitzka, 1999) as typically featuring strict state controls. The problems stem from the tight relationship between the 'state authority' and the 'academic oligarchy'. Moreover, when the market becomes involved, these actors are still incapable of adopting the new ideas and trends introduced by the West. The following pages discuss these points in detail.

Although most developing countries obtained the basic model of their higher education system from the West during the colonial period, it was not fully adopted due to their different social structures and cultures (Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 12). For example, in India and Ghana, the 'state-supervising' model imposed by the British was applied: the power of the national government was limited, and the autonomy of the higher education institutions, regarding the selection of students and appointment of staff was respected. However, later on in Ghana the state authorities played a very influential role in the dynamics of the higher education system (Mwiria, 1992 in Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 13); and in India, the new education policy, introduced in 1986, did not much reduce the government's control of higher education institutions (Nanjundappa, 1989; Rao, 1991 in Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 13). In Thailand, the French state-control model, which had been applied, was changed to one whose features were a powerful national government, a centralised administrative system, civil service employment and a standardisation of diplomas and degrees (Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 12), and it has been argued that the government bureaucracy has had a negative influence on the operation of Thai higher education institutions (International Institute for Educational Planning, 1992: 11-12 in Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 13). For various political and economic reasons, universities in most developing countries had only limited autonomy, which produced not only a modest academic tradition, but also restricted innovation (Altbach, 1982: 10-12; Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 13).

Another characteristic of higher education in developing countries is its prominent role as the most important intellectual institution, with a widespread impact on culture, politics and ideology; its function is not merely to train elites and provide the basis for a technological society. Societies with a small 'knowledge elite' require academics to contribute not only through the written word, but also through advising and participating in various sectors, such as the government and industry (Altbach, 1982: 2-3; Kirby-Harris, 2003: 361).

Thus higher education systems in developing countries emerged and developed differently from those in the developed world. In the case of Thailand, the succinct description of the change from the French model is correct, but since then the country has undergone a

sequence of historical changes, and higher education policy is now conceived and implemented in a different way.

In the current period, the top-down model cannot always adequately explain the situation in developing countries, especially as market forces become more influential and the political system becomes more open (Levy, 1994: 242). Levy (1994: 259-261), who studied the situation of universities in Mexico, found two key problems: the imbalance between the universities' autonomy and the absence of systematic supervision by the state to guarantee quality, and the universities' lack of a corporate management culture. Levy further noted that the state retained control of finance, appointments, and academic programmes through interwoven ties with university personnel, but this type of authority did not contribute to the efficiency of the system. In addition, Ordorika (2003: 382) described the limits of university autonomy in Mexico: the resolution of internal conflicts through personal linkages between the state and the universities' bureaucrats harmed the universities' autonomy on many occasions.

In the same way, Silva (1996: 71), discussed the higher education systems of Latin American countries, basing the analysis on Clark's 'triangle of coordination'. Silva identified a number of problems: political coordination allowed 'a process of accommodation taking place outside formal democratic procedures'; bureaucratic coordination was unable to supervise the universities' compliance with the standards set by legislation or to monitor the use of funds given to universities; and there was a lack of professional coordination, in the sense that the corporate culture was resisted by academics, who were public employees. She also identified five types of markets: student, academic, resources, reputation and labour. Generally, market competition in these countries had only recently been initiated; for example, although a feature of the academic market was 'non-removability' due to the public employee system recently differential payments, for example, to reward those pursuing a career in research; and other incentive payment schemes had been put in place. In the labour market, the massive increase in the numbers of graduates and the uncertain prestige of universities started to lower the market value of degrees while market pressure made many institutions emphasis business-related studies (Silva: 1996: 72).

Brunner (1997: 234-235) found that Chilean higher education was accommodating to the market. However, the professors' bureaucratic status made them resistant to change and they were unwilling to accept the 'non-stable funding system'. Moreover, the detailed and legalistic administrative approach of the evaluation system made it difficult for the public

universities to compete within the market. Brunner also noted, concerning the differences between state and private universities, that the state had only recently given the private universities 'full legitimacy' – due to the original model instituted by the military government – and granted them accreditation. All their funding came from tuition, which made it difficult to conduct research or achieve higher standards. The private universities, especially the newer institutions, were therefore entirely dependent on commercial interests. They often suffered from 'low-quality provision', which meant, for example, that they could employ few full-time lecturers and were unable to select students on the basis of academic achievement. In contrast, the public universities, because of their substantial research capacity and through the establishment of a large number of loans and scholarships, were able to obtain complementary public funding, despite their limited success (Brunner, 1997: 230, 232-233).

The problems of private universities in Chile are similar to those Levy (1994: 245) found in Mexico, where these universities were constrained by special legislation, and had to be authorised by the state. Moreover, they did not receive state subsidies and derived the bulk of their revenue from tuition. However, compared to the publicly funded universities, they suffered from fewer bureaucratic or political problems and their graduates held more of the top economic and in technocratic-political posts central to the new development model (Levy, 1994: 249). Levy's findings illustrate both the control exerted by the 'state authority' and the flexibility of private universities, which gave them an important advantage over the public institutions.

Examining education and higher education reforms in Central Europe, Hendrichová (1998: 76) noted that these developing countries had no systematic plan and reform had often been based on the isolated ideas of politicians and researchers, and had not been the result of a long-term systematic policy. Moreover, the changes were also being implemented at a much faster pace than in the West.

In Romania, higher education faced the problems of a dominant of centralised authority, a powerful bureaucracy, excessive control, lack of capacity to compete, and resistance to change by the key decision-makers of the institutions. The state universities were also unable to adapt to meet pressing social needs and many sought to become monopolies. Moreover, different social strata had unequal access to higher education and there was a deficit of academic scientific research activity (Neacsu, 1998: 207). Doan Hue Dung (2004: 143-152) studied the problems confronting of educational and higher education reform in Vietnam, where centralism is the key constraint. The spread of favoritism, and corruption,

and the stagnation of the national education system undermined all initiatives for change. She noted that the main problem was the conflict between those pressing for the adoption of the market-driven ideas, practices and values and those intent on preserving and enforcing central power.

In Thailand, Surichai (2002: 7-17) studied the case of Chulalongkorn University and found that the main constraint on moving towards reform was the university's structural inefficiencies stemming from the bureaucratised system. He noted, however, that market-led education could lead to 'education and research businesses' where only the strong would reap the benefits, and that market and liberalisation forces had created a fragmentation of interests within the university. Another study discussed the 'identity crisis' of the Thai higher education system, pointing out that it was adopting the profit-seeking behaviour of the competitive society by exploiting its degree-granting authority and expanding its 'business' of providing 'status' or 'positional goods and services', which cannot provide the quality of education for the competitive society needs, or serve the country's disadvantaged communities (IPPS, 2003: II-3).

These studies of the higher education systems in developing countries provide an overview of the main problems stemming from those systems' structural weaknesses. Although there are superficial formal similarities between the systems of the developed and developing worlds, the domestic factors vary widely. For this reason studies of higher education systems are needed that take account of the fundamental historical factors as well as the salient structural features in the precise context of each nation. Chapter three will therefore discuss the Thai higher education context in detail, bearing this need in mind.

Having discussed the higher education systems in some developing countries, I analyse in the next section the policy implementation process in those countries. The aim is twofold: first, to explain the process of internationalisation itself; second, to complement the discussion of the higher education systems in developing countries.

2.5 Policy implementation in developing countries

The study of the policy implementation process is particularly well suited to conditions in developing countries because their formal channels of influence at the 'input stage' are not well developed due to the inaccessibility of the policymaking process. The demands of individual and collective power, the declaration of interests and much political activity mainly occur – unlike in the West – at the 'output stage' of the implementation process; this

is what has been called the 'politics of implementation' (Grindle, 1980: 15; Unger, 1998: 24; Dayley, 1997: 357).

As in the case of higher education systems, studies on the policy implementation process in developing countries note that fundamental problems stem from the inadequacy of the domestic political structure and social values. Powell (1999: 10) argues that factors used to explain the policy implementation process in the developed world, in accordance with the top-down, bottom-up and evolutionary⁴ approaches practised there, cannot be fitly used without understanding the institutional structures and policies shaped by different historical circumstances. In the developed world we find both socio-economic and political stability, while in developing countries infrastructures tend to be problematic. An explanation can be found in different natures of their development: Western countries experienced a gradual transformation of society, or 'modernisation from within', while developing countries have undergone sudden changes initiated by outsiders or insiders, or 'modernisation from without' (Heady, 1996: 292).

In this sense, the internal problems of developing countries are different in nature to those found in the developed world. The developing world's problems will be considered in the following pages. Because of these difficulties, policies are rarely fully implemented, and the objectives of those which are implemented are often rather different from the original aims. This accords with the study by Riggs (1964 in Heady, 1996: 321), which describes the phenomenon of 'formalism'; that is, a widespread inconsistency between form and reality, or a large gap between expectations and actualities.

Discussing the policy implementation process, Grindle (1980: 11) identified the policy content and context as important factors to explain why a policy might fail in one country, but be successful in another. According to Grindle, the content of the policy consists of 'interests affected', 'type of benefits', 'extent of change envisioned', 'site of decision making', 'program implementers', and 'resources committed'. The context of the policy consists of the 'power, interests, and strategies of the actors involved', 'institutions and regime characteristics' and the actors' 'compliance and responsiveness'. Both content and context help to frame an understanding of the policy of internationalising higher education in Thailand that sheds light on the interplay and bargaining of the actors within the Thai higher education system.

⁴ Powell (1999: 10) means a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation; in other words, a process of negotiation and interaction among implementers.

In his analysis of political power, Cleaves (1980: 283-286) suggested three models of the mobilisation of political resources or the state-society relations within developing countries, naming them open, closed, and intermediate systems. Briefly, in the open system, the fragmentation of interests of various implementers such as autonomous associations, political organisations and governmental agencies is a problem that can lead to the failure of the policy. In the closed system, failure occurs when a policy enforced by national elites does not correlate with the needs and wishes of the affected population. In the intermediate system, failure is often caused by an imbalance between the mobilised elites and the unmobilised population, and policy becomes a tool for the elites, and is used in clientelist manner to distribute rewards in the political system; it is symbolic and not designed for implementation. In each of these three systems, the ability of individuals to make their voices heard is different.

In the distribution of political power within the negotiation process between different power holders in developing countries, the role of the bureaucracy is key and cannot be ignored. This is also important for higher education systems because several public universities in developing countries, including Thailand, hold to this system. In developing countries, the concept of bureaucracy means government by officials rather than government by the people; the appointed officials became a form of ruling class (Smith, 2003: 159). An important feature of the connection between the bureaucracy and the state is that 'The power of the bureaucracy *within* the state enables the state to maintain a degree of autonomy from any class in civil society even after independence from the imperial power' (Smith, 2003: 132).

On the one hand, this connection and this power are rooted in the vital role of the public sector, which plays a highly influential role and has long been involved in every aspect of the basic needs of the individuals' life, ranging from housing, and health to education (Grindle, 1980: 17). In the words of a Thai scholar: 'All Thais have always depended on bureaucrats in every activity of their life; we could say 'from womb to tomb' (Prasit, 2002: 1). On the other hand, the centrality and embedded values of the bureaucracy, which have evolved either from the colonial heritage or the country's own history of autocratic or authoritarian government, constrain much of the policy implementation, and are characteristic of what has been called the 'overdeveloped' bureaucracy in relation to other political institutions (Smith, 2003: 132; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 82).

Kamrava (1999: 24) observes that political leaders use policy as an instrument to influence the direction of the national culture, controlling its receptivity to other values and

propagating its value both abroad and at home. Migdal (1994: 17) also maintains that the state has an influential impact on society, creating the national political culture through education and socialisation. The outcomes of the policy are very much in the hands of the state's elites.

Recently, interest groups have started to play a role in developing countries especially as a result of economic and political liberalisation (Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66). Their coming into the political system, however, does not always lead to confrontation with the state; on the contrary, mutual empowerment of both sides can occur, or the state elites may ally with selected social groups in order to act against other groups (Kohli and Shue, 1994: 321-322). These relationships are based on personal ties because the formal channels of influence are poorly developed (Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66). In this case, the 'policy circle' is often determined by the elites (Grindle, 1980: 16; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 73).

The important role and excessive power of the state bureaucracies often turn the implementation process into a distribution of benefits where those who wish to obtain a service have to pass through negotiation processes that may involve factions, patron-client linkages, ethnic ties and personal coalitions (Grindle, 1980: 18). Given such structures and values, the public sector is unlikely to be responsive to public needs. Such unresponsiveness produces a deficiency of the information necessary to evaluate a programme's achievements and of the support crucial to its success (Grindle, 1980: 13). As a result, the weak and the poor are losers (Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66).

Robison and Hadiz (2004: 29-30), studying the politics of oligarchy in Indonesia, observe that there can be no modern rational state where the state is perceived as separate from and above society and holding substantive autonomy. According to them, the state can be divided into three dimensions: first, the structural dimension, where the state is forced to impose general economic growth and political order on the vested interests. The second dimension is the role of the state as the 'state for itself', where the state officials and power holders tend to preserve their interests and resist change. The third dimension is the relationship of the state with capitalism, resulting in politico-business oligarchies. This picture emphasises the conflict of functions within the state arena; thus it is unlikely that state officials will formulate and implement a policy directed towards one single goal.

Heady (1996: 317-321) suggested five common administrative patterns in developing countries, namely (a) an elitist bureaucracy coupled with imitation of patterns derived from the West (b) an administration deficient in skilled and well-trained manpower with

management capacities and technical competence (c) a bureaucracy tending to be process-oriented rather than product-oriented, holding deeply rooted values from the traditional past, clinging to status rather than driving to reach policy goals, and depending on personal ties and corruption (d) a widespread discrepancy between form and reality (e) a bureaucracy enjoying generous measure of operational autonomy, and able to move into 'a partial power vacuum' as competing groups are few.

Regarding a currently growing power of market forces, institutions in developing countries do not always follow rationality and collective arrangements to facilitate economic efficiency, but instead function as apparatuses for the allocation and consolidation of power. Because of this, not only is a reform predicated on the notion that the state is an efficient unit likely to fail, but institutions that emerge to threaten those of the elites are also resisted or controlled (Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 25-27). In developing countries, when market forces begin to dominate all social interactions, this type of system promotes the narrow interests of elites over the public interest, and encourages self-interested struggles for resources and market opportunities. These conflicts are intensified because the foundation of the functional structure of both state and society is immaturely developed and insecure (see Christensen, 1993: 19; Hewison, 1997: 7-8; Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 25).

As a result, many attempts at reform fail. A study on health sector reform in developing countries (Berman and Bossert, 2000: 13) noted that the reform required preconditions which tend to be difficult to achieve in 'lower income countries'. The factors include opportunity for political change, sound leadership, stability in government, and strong capacities in human skills, information and organisation. Problems are created by the lack of qualified human resources and of institutional commitment and stability, and by the rigidities of the conservative bureaucratic culture in the organisations, which prevent adaptation to new conditions (Berman and Bossert, 2000: 13). For example, in Poland, despite more than seven years of debates on the structure of a proposed national health insurance system, when the programme was finally launched there was a lack of skilled and trained personnel to manage funds and to staff the central monitoring and regulatory bodies. In Colombia, the lack of trained personnel and the appointment of five different Ministers of Health in the first six years after the reform legislation made implementation difficult (Bossert *et al.*, 1998, 2000 in Berman and Bossert, 2000: 8).

A study conducted in Bangalore found that progress towards reform of the public sector on the issue of water supply to the poor was slow and strewn with obstacles. The underlying problems partly resulted from initially unintentional or external drivers of change, and were

related to the undeveloped structure and culture, and to the government's irresponsibility, procrastination and inconsistency (Connors, 2005: 201). In the process of public sector reform in Fiji, the major factors were found to be the lack of consensus among concerned stakeholders, political interference, patronage distribution, mismanagement, the prevalence of age-old bureaucratic practices, and political uncertainties in a period of regime changes (Sarker and Pathak, 2003: 75).

The above examples show the types of problem facing the policy implementation process in developing countries today. These include the 'overdeveloped' and inefficient bureaucracy and its influence on people's social values, and the self-interested struggles among elites both in the higher education system and the policy implementation process. They shed light on the most pressing problems obstructing the higher education policy implementation process in Thailand.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has performed two main tasks: it has discussed the literature on the internationalisation of higher education, and the higher education systems and policy implementation in a number of developing countries. This combination offers a macro-picture that will be useful in the microanalysis of how the Thai state's internationalisation policy has been pursued inside the country's higher education system. Regarding the first task, the overview of the concept, the working definition, the expected outcomes, the rationales of and the variables that affect the extent of the implementation of internationalisation have provided a solid background to the further analysis of the Thai case. Currently, the internationalisation of higher education is driven by the economic rationale and the complex nature of the policy often results in marginalisation and *ad hoc* solutions, which hinder the implementation of the policy. The various studies reviewed show that different countries and institutions were faced with different sets of problems. However, the study of the implementation of internationalisation in relation to the higher education systems in developing countries is in its infancy. This thesis constructed a framework and formulated a set of ideal goals for the policy by adopting the working definition proposed by Knight (1997; 2003), which concerns the integration of international/intercultural dimension into a domestic higher education system. Also, the integration process is expected to produce first-order (quality) and second-order (new ideas, structure and goals) changes and to create long-term effects (see Van der Wende, 1996: 8-9; 26).

The second set of theories, on higher education systems and policy implementation, helps in understanding the domestic process of how the interplay of related forces: the 'state authority', the 'academic oligarchy', and the 'market', affect the policy implementation process. In developing countries, market forces threatened the higher education policy implementation process more than has been the case in the West due to those countries' inadequate structures and bureaucratic norms. Their higher education systems suffered from the inefficient administration of the state and the public universities' failure to adopt a corporate management structure. Moreover, the bureaucracy's tenacious hold on power and the culture of favouritism and personal ties between different interest groups and government agencies made implementation difficult. The state also used policy as an instrument to influence the people's cultural values and hence their actions. An understanding of the broad context of developing countries' higher education systems and policy implementation processes is important for the present study's analysis and argument. The next chapter explores the Thai higher education system and the macro-political and socio-economic changes that have affected its development.

Chapter Three

Thai Higher Education in Transition

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to explore the development of Thai higher education in both the relatively recent historical and the contemporary periods, which saw the promotion of the internationalisation policy. This chapter serves as a background for further discussion on the implementation process of the internationalisation of higher education policy in Thailand. The main argument of the chapter focuses on the interplay of state authority, the academic oligarchy and the market, and their interests, values and entrenched bureaucratic structure. In discussing the interplay of the related forces, we find that the problems of Thai higher education stem from the historical context within which the bureaucratic norms were shaped, as much as from the current political context, where the effective structure has not been improved. This has resulted in the fragmentation of different groups of power holders. These structural and cultural values are interwoven and constitute the main obstacles to the development of Thai higher education.

The chapter is divided into four main parts. The first part attempts to link the Thai higher education system with Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination'. The second part considers the historical period of Thai higher education, which is further divided into three subsections: first, I locate the key forces within Thai higher education in the early political and socio-economic context; second, the bureaucratic structure and norms of the 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' are discussed, followed by a discussion of the cultural values of Thais regarding 'internationalisation' which was influenced by the national elite. The third part examines the contemporary period, in which the location of authority shifted as a result of changes in the country's wider context. The contemporary period has witnessed the continuing influence of the inherited bureaucratic structure and norms of the institutions, which have restrained the development of higher education. The period has also witnessed the rising fragmentation from other interest groups outside the bureaucracy. The end of this section contributes to a discussion on the cultural values of Thais regarding 'internationalisation', which is again driven by the elite interests. The final section of the chapter summarises the interactions of the related forces, structures, and values embedded within Thai higher education. This historical and contemporary context will be used as the main basis of discussion in the following chapters.

3.2 'Triangle of coordination' of higher education in Thailand

To best understand the nature and characteristics of Thai higher education, it is important to put the system into a national framework. Broader political and economic changes have affected the way Thai higher education functions, which in turn has helped to shape the Thai state and society.

First, this section discusses two theoretical approaches underpinning the broader political and economic changes in Thailand (see Hewison, 1997: 6). It is important to point out the approach used by this thesis before examining specifically the Thai higher education context. From academic studies of the Thai political system, Hewison (1997: 6) identified two theoretical approaches, which marked a progression from the idea of 'bureaucratic polity': the first was the neo-pluralist and institutionalist approach; and the second was political economy approaches. The following quotations describe what he meant by these terms. Hewison (1997: 7) gave an idea of what is meant by neo-pluralist:

In essence, the approach is that bureaucracy and business have developed a new relationship – no longer is business dominated by bureaucracy; rather the former is privileged [...]. The outcome from this is that analysts must examine the organised interests and their relationship to the state and policy-making not that far from early pluralists models, but modified by a more critical approach to power.

By institutionalist, Hewison (1997: 7) noted:

Institutionalist analysts produce similar observations but from a different theoretical position, with one of their central questions being, in the words of Haggard and Kaufman (1994: 6) 'How can economic decision making become less discretionary and more institutionalized?' [...] Christensen (1993: 1), writing on Thailand, moves the theoretical focus beyond business groups, observing that since the decline of the bureaucratic polity, the political system has developed 'channels of influence' for a range of interest groups. He refers to urban bankers, industrialists, organised business, provincial elites and the rural majority as interest groups. [...] these are 'single-issue interest groups lobbying for their own particular benefit'. This approach essentially reduces politics to a 'distributive game', where some interest groups gain support or subsidies at the expense of the majority.

By political economy approaches, Hewison (1997: 9) stated:

The view that extra-bureaucratic influences have become increasingly significant also informs recent political economy approaches. However, their initial emphasis tends to be on societal or class influences on the state rather

than on the identification of interest groups. [...] political economists argue that class relations are significant in determining the nature of domination – the distribution and use of power – in contemporary society. The nature of domination is seen to be structured by these relations and by the relationship between elements in economy, society and state. [...] Thus, some of the important questions and issues which political economists address include the nature of domination, the growth of political opposition, the character of the state and regime and the development of civil society.

Based on this classification, this thesis falls into the first group, since its empirical focus concerned the relationships between different elite groups and state organisations in relation to the market.

In addition to the definitions given above by Hewison (1997), neo-pluralist and institutionalist scholars find solution to problems in the effective market and a reform of state institutional and regulatory frameworks. It is noticeable that the neo-pluralists and institutionalists are interested in formal structures and formal levels of political activity. To them, the ‘informal political opposition and the development of civil society’ is considered problematic (Hewison, 1997: 9). The expansion of civil society is not seen as sufficient for further evolution of the political system: first, according to neo-pluralists, it needs to be developed within ‘appropriate political frameworks’, and second, according to institutionalists, civil societal forces are often seen as sectional, issue-based and fragmented (Hewison, 1997: 8-9). By locating the thesis into the neo-pluralist and institutionalist approach as defined by Hewison (1997), Clark’s (1983) model is highly applicable to this thesis because the ‘triangle of coordination’ inclines to [mainly elite] interest groups or those groups with issue-based interests, to formal structures and to the market (see Clark, 1979: 236; 1983: 171-172).

The following paragraphs refer to Clark’s (1983) ‘triangle of coordination’ within which I attempt to locate the Thai higher education system. The location of authority has, however, altered in relation to the historical context over time (see figure 5). The additional framework of political and socio-economic context does not attempt to add anything new to the Clark’s model since he also took the different contexts of different countries into account. The framework serves only to reinforce the aim of this chapter in discussing the Thai macro-political and socio-economic context in parallel with the higher education system, accepting that the relationships, structures and norms of the higher education institutions are being changed and influenced by this macro-situation over time. As Watson (1991: 571) states: ‘It is the relationship between the political system and higher education

that makes Thailand such a fascinating case study'. This section briefly explains the related actors inside the system, who are the focus of this thesis.

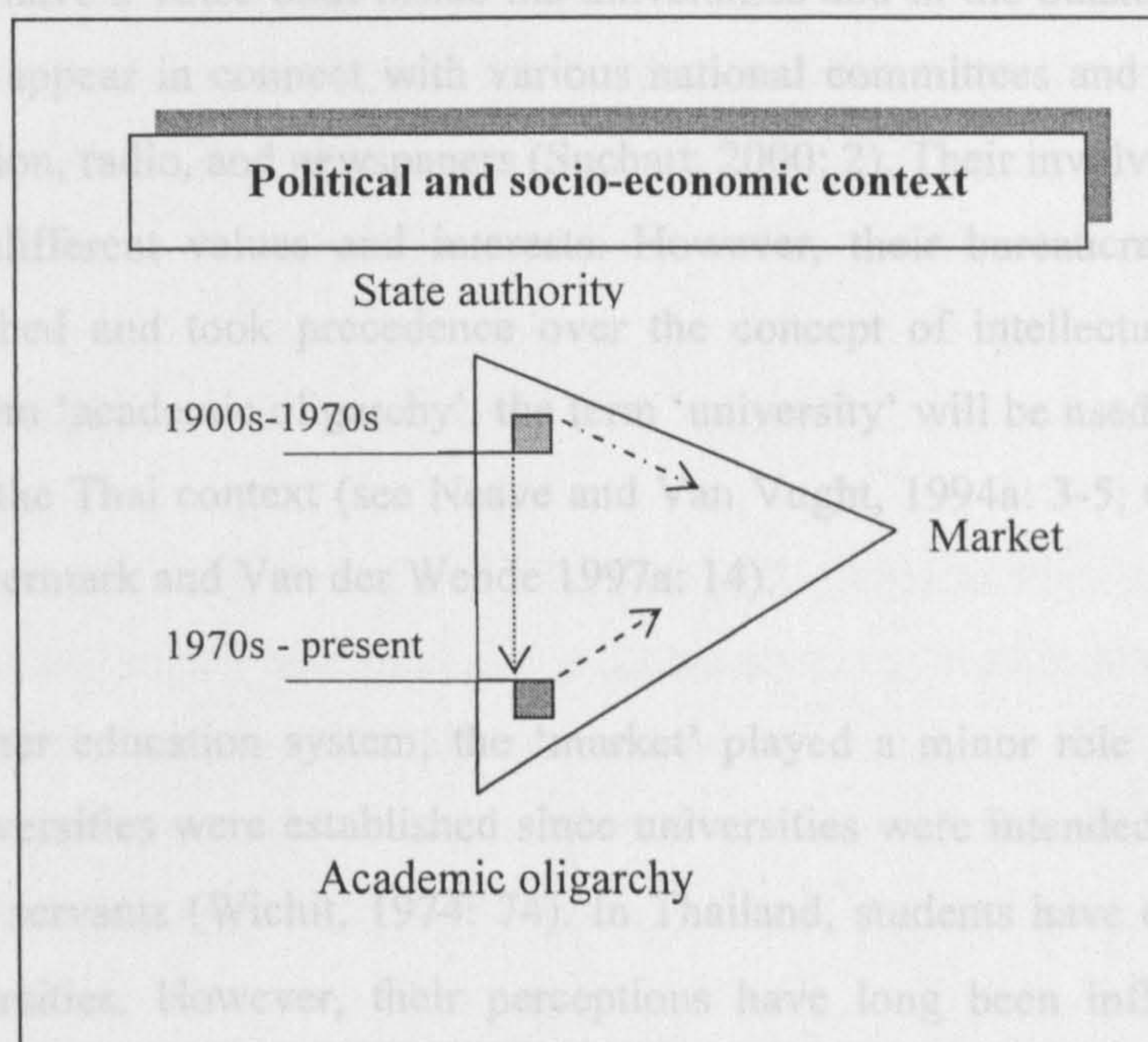


Figure 5: The 'triangle of coordination' of higher education in Thailand
Source: Author, adapted from Clark (1983: 143)

By 'state authority', this thesis mainly means the Thai state in general and the MUA¹ and some related research-funding agencies for the case study under research in particular. Since 1972, the MUA has been the only national central unit, overseeing the administration of higher education. The bureaucracy played the most important role from the period of absolute monarchy until that of the authoritarian military regimes. Interest groups have been influential only since the 1970s (Chai-Anan, 1989: 313-314). Despite the emergence of these groups, the bureaucracy still plays an influential role in the Thai political system, especially in daily administration (see Jak, 2002; Smith, 2003: 159).

Secondly, 'academic oligarchy'² refers to both public and private universities. When discussing academics in Thailand, it should be borne in mind that those working in public universities are civil servants.³ In this case, there is a blurred line between 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy'. Interestingly, academics have possessed prestige in Thai society

¹ The MUA was the name of the organisation during the researcher's fieldwork in Thailand (September 2002-June 2003). The MUA became the Commission on Higher Education under the Ministry of Education on 1 July 2003.

² The term 'Academic Oligarchs' generally refers to a powerful body of professors and 'academic barons' (see Clark, 1983: 142). In this thesis, this term should be understood in a more general sense because although the power of 'academic barons' exists, it is not easily isolated from the bureaucracy as a whole. In this thesis, the discussion of the 'academic oligarchy' corner refers to academics in general.

³ The new policy promulgated in 1999 gave new lecturers university employee status; however, the majority of Thai lecturers in public universities remain civil servants.

for a considerable period of time, not only because of their bureaucratic status, but also because of their specialised knowledge (see Altbach, 1982: 2-3). Because of their expertise, these academics have a voice both inside the universities and in the outside arena, as their names regularly appear in connect with various national committees and media networks including television, radio, and newspapers (Suchart, 2000: 2). Their involvement in various sectors creates different values and interests. However, their bureaucratic values were strongly entrenched and took precedence over the concept of intellectual development. Instead of the term 'academic oligarchy', the term 'university' will be used interchangeably when exploring the Thai context (see Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 3-5; Goedegebuure *et al.*, 1994 in Kälvermark and Van der Wende 1997a: 14).

In the Thai higher education system, the 'market' played a minor role during the early 1900s when universities were established since universities were intended to be a training ground for civil servants (Wichit, 1974: 74). In Thailand, students have certain degree of choice in universities. However, their perceptions have long been influenced by state control. Faculty and administrative tenure has been secure, especially in public universities marked by lifelong civil servant employment. The reputation and prestige of public universities, especially the senior state ones, is higher than that of their private counterparts, thus the competition for places in public universities is higher. This situation of the market in Thailand needs to be understood as a basis for further discussion. Due to the growing power of global forces and internal economic demands by the late 1980s, the market gradually came to influence Thai higher education. In this thesis, I look at internationalisation of teaching and research areas affected by the market. Following the global situation (see section 2.3.2), Thai government encouraged universities to generate their income. Thus, opening teaching programmes to serve economic demands and securing research budgets from external sources are currently dominant for Thai universities. This picture represents the increasing role of the market corner of Clark's (1983) triangle of coordination in the internationalisation policy of higher education in Thailand. The study's focus on markets is not intended to endorse the narrow view that concerns itself solely with the needs of the economy (see Becher and Kogan, 1992: 186-187), but it is undeniable that market forces are currently imperative. The thesis, however, will bear in mind that Thai higher education policy is aimed at satisfying public demands for improvement in quality not to serve only particular groups of elites.

As figure 5 shows, the characteristics of Thai higher education changed over time; these changes are indicated by the movement of the arrowed squares within the triangle from 'state authority' to universities, and towards the 'market'. The following sections discuss

the evolution of Thai higher education in parallel with the Thai state and society from the later nineteenth century until the contemporary period. The interplay of related forces within the Thai higher education system in parallel with the political and socio-economic changes is explained. However, in Thailand, the dominant bureaucratic power of both 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' have constrained the development process as well as blurred the boundaries of the authorities at each corner. This problem will also be discussed.

3.3 Historical period

This section is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the interplay of related forces within the Thai higher education system in the early period of its establishment under the absolute monarchy in the early 1900s through military rule in the 1988. The second part discusses the Thai bureaucratic structure and norms. The third part discusses the role of state elites on the 'internationalisation' concept.

3.3.1 Interplay of related forces within the Thai higher education system

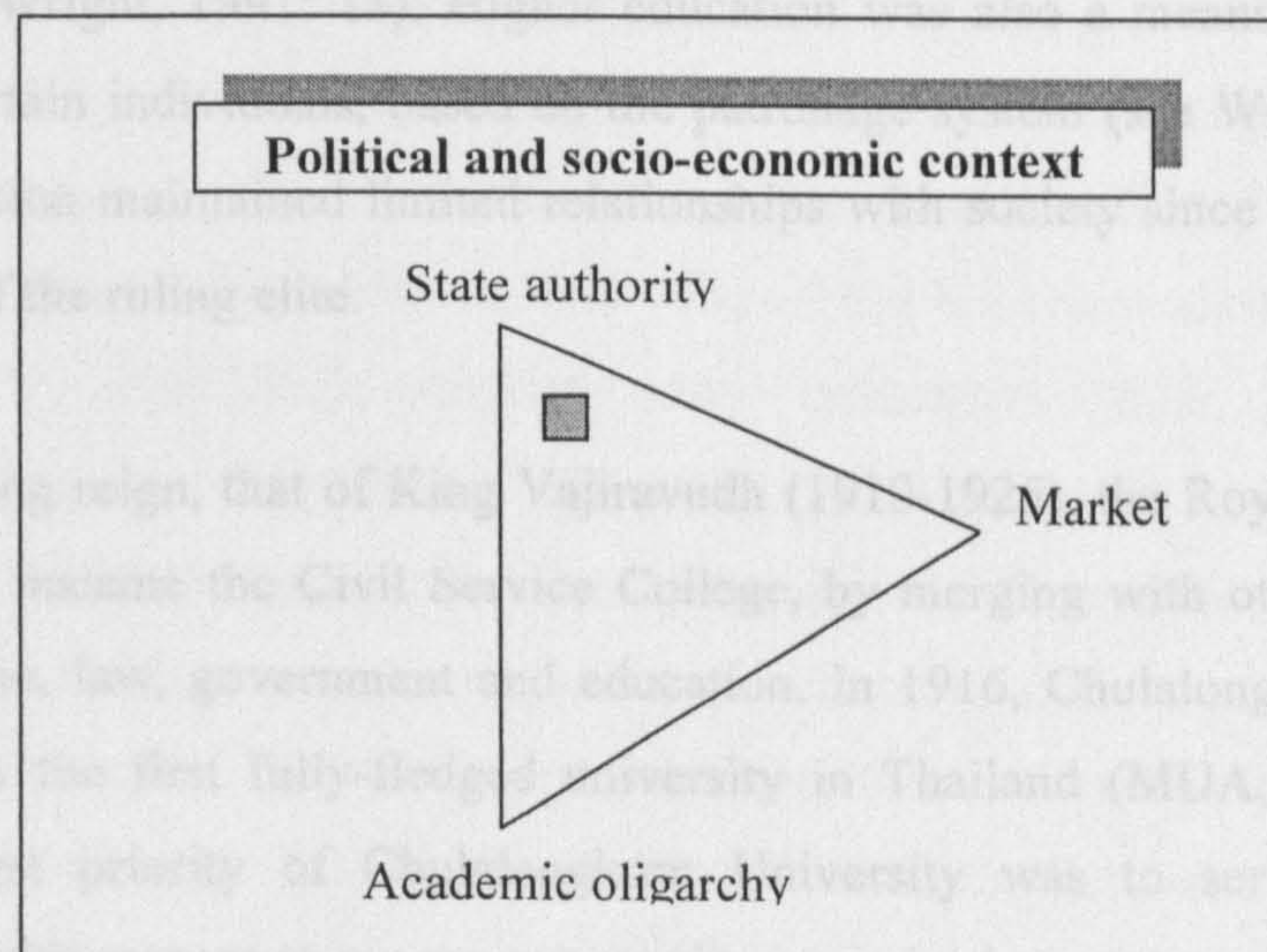


Figure 6: The 'triangle of coordination' of higher education in Thailand during the historical period (1900s – 1970s)

Source: Author, adapted from Clark (1983: 143)

3.3.1.1 System of absolute monarchy in the Bangkok period

Thai higher education was first established under the system of absolute monarchy, during the reign of King Chulalongkorn⁴ (1868-1910) in the Bangkok period. It was entirely controlled by the state, and so is situated in the 'state authority' corner (see figure 6).

⁴ King Chulalongkorn is the fifth king in the Bangkok period who started the country's first administrative reform.

Higher education was established as a means of serving the country's socio-economic and political development, which took shape as a result of the national 'modernisation' plan, as much as a means of serving the state authority. This is because the ruling elite's aim in formulating the 'modernisation' plan was to centralise their power (see Wyatt, 1969: 379; Thak, 1979: xvi; Wright, 1991: 17). The process involved the introduction of a cabinet government with twelve ministries (Wyatt, 1969: 379).⁵ The concept of bureaucracy was also introduced as a form of rule by government officials, as opposed to the people (Smith, 2003: 159). In this period, the bureaucracy in Thailand was reserved for the royal elite.

In order to fill these positions, since there was a lack of qualified graduates to administer the rapid development of the country, the Royal Pages School was founded in 1902 as part of the Ministry of Education, marking the beginning of the Thai higher education system (Wyatt, 1969: 201). Graduates of this school were trained specifically to become '*kharatchakarn*', a Thai term for those in the service of the king. During that period, the bureaucrat's work was considered the most prestigious occupation, which was reserved for members of the royal family and the elites who had obtained degrees from abroad or from state institutions (Wright, 1991: 18). Higher education was also a means to enhance the social status of certain individuals, based on the patronage system (see Wright, 1991: 18). Thai higher education maintained limited relationships with society since the bureaucracy was the preserve of the ruling elite.

During the following reign, that of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925), the Royal Pages School was upgraded and became the Civil Service College, by merging with other professional schools of medicine, law, government and education. In 1916, Chulalongkorn University was established as the first fully-fledged university in Thailand (MUA, 1992a: 18-25). Inevitably, the first priority of Chulalongkorn University was to serve the nation's immediate needs with respect to manpower requirements in the service of the King. Like other administrative concepts, the idea of higher education in that period was imported from Western countries; however, transplantation in another context altered the concept. In Thailand, the French model was adopted, but it was mainly interpreted by the ruling elite with a view to maintaining its authority by putting the institutions under strict state control (Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 12; Varunee, 1990: 5). Thus, the first university in Thailand was from the beginning placed under the control of the ruling elite, becoming one of the state apparatuses under the Ministry of Education (MUA, 1992a: 18). Consequently, as the state-control system remained dominant, it left the 'academic oligarchy' corner

⁵ For further discussion of modernisation during Chulalongkorn's reign, see Wyatt, 1969: 379; Wright, 1991: 17.

undeveloped. In other words, because the Thai higher education system was run by the ruling elite to specifically train civil servants, the development of an intellectual base inside the universities remained marginalised. Also, this complete state control created strong bureaucratic norms inside Thai public universities, which later affected the way they conducted administration and responded to change. This will be examined in the following discussion and the empirical chapters.

3.3.1.2 Politics of universities, 1932 to 1988

The second phase of Thai higher education covers the period of authoritarian military rule that followed after the absolute rule of the monarchs. This period again saw the strict state-control of the Thai higher education system, despite an attempt in the early part of the period to liberate the universities. The universities were also used as means to serve the political agendas of different forces, that is, the civilian and military ruling elites, and the students. The direct intervention of the state's elites in the universities made it difficult for the academics to protect their intellectual space. The situation is discussed in detail below.

In 1932 the political situation changed: a coup was successfully carried out by influential civilians, mainly led by the head of the People's Party, Pridi Banomyong, a Law graduate from France, in alliance with the army. This group of elites framed Thailand's first constitution, placing the King under the law. One of the important aims of the People's Party concerned "the right of the people to access education" (MUA, 1992a: 33). Pridi founded *Thammasat lae Karn Mueng University*⁶ (University of Moral and Political Sciences) in 1934 (later renamed Thammasat University in 1952) and allowed people from all walks of life who had completed secondary school or had gained the equivalent academic qualifications, to acquire tertiary education. The university was free from the state's control, in contrast to Chulalongkorn University, which was part of the Ministry of Education, retaining its prestigious value of higher education for the nation's elites (see MUA, 1992a: 33).

The creation of Thammasat University for the first time established the idea of a university council, made up of senior chair holders. This idea was imported from France and was later adopted by other universities (Patom, 1989; Varunee, 1990). However, this idea was not particularly effective, firstly, because of the embedded bureaucratic nature of Thai universities; secondly, Thammasat University, which was the pioneer of this idea, retained its autonomous system only for 16 years of the 'Pridi era', as he was eventually exiled as a

⁶ Thammasat University originated from the amalgamation of the Law School of the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Law and Political Science of Chulalongkorn University (Akagi, 1977: 41).

consequence of political conflicts (Akagi, 1977: 42). The early years of Thammasat's administration saw an attempt by the civilian forces to liberate the university from the control of the military state. Unfortunately the attempt failed: in 1952 the new Phibun government once again placed Thammasat University under state control, the word 'Political' was excised from its name which was now the shortened "Thammasat University" (University of Moral Science) and so it has remained until today (Prizzia, 1985: 38). This intervention was an attempt by the government to demonstrate its desire to eliminate all traces of Pridi's influence. As a consequence, the potential to develop liberal education and the concept of professional development unrestrained by the bureaucracy was distorted by the military government. The bureaucracy remained embedded inside Thai higher education institutions while the influence of the 'state authority' remained dominant.

Following the Phibun regime, the dictatorial regime of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat also demonstrated the state's power over the higher education sector. Sarit's government realised that the student movement had been instrumental in the removal of Phibun's regime in 1957. Thus, when he came to power, his suppression of university student activism was carried out according to two distinct plans. The first was announced in 1959 when he arranged for every university to be administered by the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC), directly responsible to the Prime Minister's Office, which made it easier for the government to monitor students. The second mechanism of the government was to install military politicians as presidents of the universities. For example, Field Marshal Thanom became the president of Thammasat University from 1950 to 1953, Field Marshal Praphas became the president of Chulalongkorn University from 1951 to 1959, and Marshal Prasert was appointed president of Chiangmai University (MUA, 1992a: 162-163). These measures secured the authoritarian military government's control over higher education.

This strict state-control system was later undermined. In fact, throughout the period of the 1950s to the 1970s, the opposition forces: students, members of the middle class, rural society, and labour unions continued to grow in strength. These mounting political pressures led to the uprisings of 1973 and 1976 (Wright, 1991: 195-199; MUA, 1992a: 165). The period witnessed the apogee of the strength of the student movements in the Thai political system and triggered another turning point in the country's political life (Unger, 1998: 65). The power of these anti-authoritarian movements in the 1970s reflected the active role of higher education in the country's political process. For the first time the universities were able to challenge the state authority. The National Student Centre of Thailand (NSCT) was established in 1969, and was to play an influential role in supporting

the student movement in later years (Prizzia, 1985: 37, 47). While the establishment of the university as a training ground for civil servants in the first period had produced passive students, in the 1970s the situation gradually changed. The flourishing of the student movements in the 1970s was partly due to the broadening access to university education, which created new social values, encouraging Thai students to actively resist the state's authoritarian rule (Girling, 1981; Wyatt, 1982: 296; Somsakdi, 1987). By 1972, Thailand had ten public universities: six in Bangkok, three in the provinces, and one Open University in Bangkok (Prizzia, 1985: 39).

However, 'students' power' faded away when the military-civilian government took office after the massacre of 1976. A number of activist students had escaped to the jungle, joining the communist insurgents. However, due to a variety of factors in addition to government suppression, including internal divisions, lack of prior training, and an eventual offer of amnesty, they became weak (Morell and Chai-Anan, 1981). The government's strategy to control universities was partly embodied in the regulations stipulating the wearing of uniforms by university students, which were drawn up during this period (MUA, 1992a: 187-188). Government policies made clear that challenging the dominant power was not to be tolerated. Higher education once more came under state control. However, Anderson (1998: 173) discussed the rise of 'new bourgeois strata' emerging by the 1960s, which included tertiary students. He suggested that although right-wing repression continued, the voice of this 'new bourgeois strata' did not disappear but remained of secondary importance.

Besides its difficult relationship with the universities, the Thai state initiated relationships with the market, beginning in the 1950s, when the state favoured pro-market policies and opted for the adoption of a wealth-producing (market) economic framework (Unger, 1998: 3). At that time, the Thai state promoted a market agenda owing to a number of conjunctural factors, including recognition 'structural power of capital', the influence of the US and of international financial institutions, and the low levels of social capital (Unger, 1998: 3, 170). Girling (1996: 13-18, 95) and Chai-Anan (2001: 85) have also noted that the Thai state prioritised the business sector over political development which later led to an imbalance in social development. However, the relationship between the Thai state and the market was problematic because of state's inability to regulate efficiently. In the early period the Thai state had left the business sector to Chinese businessmen, while they provided clientelist relations in what has been termed 'Thai-style liberalism' or 'laissez-faire by accident', which allowed the private sector to perform in economic terms while the state provided no credible commitments (Unger, 1998: 170). The low level of social capital

was noted as one of the problems, which allowed state officials to pursue their own interests and have a limited involvement in public policies (Unger, 1998: 175). This macro-economic framework is a useful basis for understanding the relationships between 'state authority' and 'market' in Thai higher education. In this case, the inefficiency of Thai 'state authority' was illustrated. Despite the state's support of the business sector, Thai higher education was not particularly well coordinated with the labour market or the economy generally.

The development of higher education during the period of the 1930s to the 1980s revealed the dominant role of the state authority. Rival ideas and actions, such as the creation of Thammasat University or the student movement, were suppressed by the military state. Despite the active role of the state in supporting the market and business sector, the bureaucratic mindset remained embedded, providing no basis for a viable public policy. The next section describes how the bureaucratic structure and norms shaped the direction of Thai higher education.

3.3.2 Bureaucratic structure and norms

As a result of the top-down state-control system, certain legacies were created within the Thai higher education system. Mainly, this model limited the development of the intellectual role 'academic oligarchy' was supposed to play inside the higher education system. The reason for this is partly embedded within the dominant forces of the bureaucratic elites in the country's ruling system. The two interrelated norms of Thai public universities, which were shaped during this period, were the idea that these universities were to be 'training schools for civil servants' and the dominance of 'bureaucratic' values.

The concept of 'bureaucracy' in Thailand, as in many developing countries, remained powerful in the country's political system for a long period of time. This 'bureaucracy' is in contrast to the concept of a neutral administrative instrument, since it is able to exercise power (Smith, 2003: 172). Even with unrest and continuous shifts of government between the military and civilians since 1932, the Thai bureaucracy was considered more powerful and entrenched than other, less developed social forces; Riggs (1966) called this system 'bureaucratic polity'. However, there was a debate on the concept of 'bureaucratic polity'; critics argued that it undermined the political activism of resistant groups, such as university students, farmers, workers and monks, who played a part in Thai political life throughout this period (Prizzia, 1985: 26, 37; Hewison, 1996: 75-80; Hewison, 1997: 5-14; Connors, 2001: 44-45).

Despite the efforts of oppositional forces, Thailand was in the hands of the dominant cliques of the military-bureaucratic power base (Prizzia, 1985: 2). However, in developing countries, the political power of the bureaucracy has no connection with 'administrative competence'; it seems that the more power they possess, the less efficient is the state administration (Smith, 1996: 230). The Thai bureaucratic forces depended upon factions in the military, and the bureaucracy went hand in hand with capitalist groups under a patron-client system which had no regard for a functioning rule of law and administrative system (Connors, 2001: 43; Chai-Anan, 2001: 62). Such long-established interests of the bureaucratic power reflected not only the norms of the Thai state, but also the inherited stable power established within Thai public universities. Therefore, these public universities gained benefits from this dominant bureaucratic force in various senses, such as prestige, relative power and stability (see Smith, 2003: 159-164). Pasuk (1999: 9) notes that the 'in-built conservatism' the Thai bureaucrats to preserve their positions and restrain change.

Thus, when discussing bureaucratic norms in Thailand, one should consider not only the bureaucracy's fondness for red tape, but also determination to maintain its prestige and stable tenure. This includes its resistance to change and its reliance on patron-client relationships. These bargaining processes regardless of rules made an impact on various sectors inside Thailand and have remained in operation up until the current period (see Christensen, 1992b; Hewison, 1997: 6).

In the higher education sector, the limited development of the intellectual base resulting from the dominance of the bureaucratic structure can be seen, for example, in the position of lecturers within the public universities. During the first 40 years of the establishment of public universities in Thailand, the full-time university lecturer system was not strongly established. All universities used the '*ajan phiset*' (part-time lecturer system). Civil servants from various ministries were employed to teach in universities on the side (Rangsan, 2001: 309-310). The number of part-time lecturers was higher than the full-time (Varunee, 1990: 259). These civil servants considered the job as a source of additional income and a way of enhancing their social status. The weaknesses of this system were that the 'part-time lecturers' were unable to produce new knowledge or keep up advances in educational theory and practice. They could only use what they had already learnt. Furthermore, the universities were not prepared to build structures that would accommodate and motivate lecturers to create new knowledge (Rangsan, 2001: 309-310; Varunee, 1990: 259). The lack of full-time lecturers during this first 40 years of Thai public universities showed that the priority of the Thai state was that higher education institutions should be 'training schools' rather than institutions designed to produce new knowledge. Only after the Second World

War was the full-time lecturer system introduced into Thai universities, as a result of external and internal demands, and was only completely recognised by the state in 1967 (Rangsan, 2001: 311). However, the full-time lecturers were considered to have civil servant status, and the idea that universities were part of the bureaucracy certainly shaped the norms of individuals, leading them to prioritise prestige and stability rather than to develop an identity as academics.

Another example of these deep bureaucratic roots can be found if we pay attention to the names of certain senior public universities in Thailand. The discussion has to date back to the Phibun administration's 'Era of Nation Building', when three more universities were established in 1942 and 1943 to accommodate the country's manpower demands in medicine, agriculture, and the fine arts; the universities were named Mahidol, Kasetsart, and Silpakorn respectively. The first two universities were administered by the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture respectively, while the last came under the Ministry of Education, like Chulalongkorn and Thammasat (Prizzia, 1985: 38). The character of Thai universities was criticised in 1954 by Sir Charles Dawin, the representative of UNESCO, for using the names of certain disciplines, such as in the cases of Kasetsart University (University of Agriculture) and Silpakorn University (University of Fine Arts), which demonstrated that they were merely 'preservice training schools' or only discipline-specific training centres. Also, the universities in Thailand at that time were not comprehensive universities as commonly understood, since the subjects offered were limited. Darwin even proposed that five existing universities should be merged under the name 'University of Bangkok', with different campuses (Varunee, 1990: 88-92). However, this suggestion was not adopted and these universities have retained their original names, despite enlargement to include other disciplines and recognition as comprehensive universities. Arguably, such symbols reflect both norms and values of 'training schools' as well as the universities' deep bureaucratic roots, which proved resistant to change.

The style of administration of these long-established state universities is worthy of note. In the senior state universities, such as Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, or Kasetsart Universities, the initiation of Faculties from the early period caused them to set off with the bottom-heavy management. For example, Chulalongkorn started with four main faculties before having a full-status of a comprehensive university. Also, Thammasat originated from the law school that was already established at Chulalongkorn. The other case is Kasetsart,

whose name was adopted from the Faculty of Agriculture, which had been created in the first period.⁷

In these cases, the Faculties were established before the university itself. Bottom-heavy management describes the specific system within the universities where the interests varied from one Faculty to another. The presidents have limited authority. In the long-established Thai public universities, deans are of enormous importance, and the president often has little control over what goes on within individual Faculties. The opposite applies in a case of newly established universities. These universities are led by presidents who have much scope and ability to select the deans, while the deans' authority is restricted. In this case, the old-established universities face more difficulties than their newer counterparts in terms of working towards change due to their strong bottom-heavy character (Utumporn *et al.*, 1999: 112).

Another point to be made concerns factions within the Faculty. This shows how bureaucratic values dominated within the university sphere thus reducing professionalism (see Clark, 1979: 228). In Thai universities, the most powerful figure does not need to be the most experienced or qualified professor. The ladder to gain authority is different.⁸ Although there is structural division in terms of the Faculty and department, the actual grouping is created by factions regardless of rules or academic guidelines. One Thai lecturer also commented:

The chair system in Western universities, where we see that they have professors, readers, lecturers, post doctoral students and PhD students working in the same discipline, is not very effective in Thailand. We cannot adopt the whole system. What we took is only a system of status like professor, associate professor, but we hardly work towards the western discipline. One of the reasons is that we don't have a strong academic and research culture here, compared to Western universities.⁹

The interviews confirmed how bureaucratic values undermined academic ones. The personal relationships and factions that characterised the 'bureaucratic polity' were mimicked within the Thai higher education sphere. This understanding of the bureaucratic nature of Thai serves as a basis for a more complete reading of the empirical chapters.

⁷ Personal interview, Thammasak, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, KU, 20 May 2003.

⁸ Personal interview, Sutruedee, Associate Dean of Graduate School, Faculty of Agriculture, KU, 14 March 2003.

⁹ Thammasak interview.

3.3.3 Cultural values regarding 'internationalisation'

Besides the bureaucratic norms and structures of Thai public universities, the other related norm concerns Thai cultural values regarding the concept of 'internationalisation'. If internationalisation means a country's being in contact with other countries, Thailand initiated the process of internationalisation, that is, contact with the West, in the early period of absolute monarchy. The expansion of the British and French imperial powers into Southeast Asian countries, and the foreign trade and influx of foreigners into Thailand began in the nineteenth century. Accordingly, King Chulalongkorn started to develop an internal administrative system, whose model was imported from the West, in order to accommodate the West. However, the adopted model was also advantageous to the royal elite in the central region in particular, since the centralised administration model was imposed (see Wyatt, 1969: 379; Wright, 1991: 17). The period witnessed the royal reliance on European advisers, technology, capital and weaponry (Anderson, 1998: 162). The rationale was mainly political: the reasons the ruling elite adopted internationalisation were firstly because of Western imperialism; secondly, the concept was used superficially to advance the interests of the elites. The underpinning rationale for the ruling elites was to use the concept as an impetus to strengthen their power in order to preserve their territorial claims in the face of Western imperial expansion. Thus, in Thailand, 'internationalisation' was equal to 'Westernisation' in the interests of the national elites (see Barme, 1993: 23; Durrenberger, 1996: 10).

In the following period, Western ideas were continuously adopted as part of the state's agenda in the creation of a Thai identity. The state sought to retain its centralised role by encouraging the Thai people to share a sense of belonging. '...We had to understand the West and to change our 'outward' identity in order to preserve our inner strength to cope with the West' (Sulak, 1991: 43). The change affected dress, architecture, other external signs of identity, and education (Sulak, 1991: 43). However, the elites rejected the fundamental notion of running the country with a constitution and parliamentary rule (Barme, 1993: 23). This 'false consciousness', as Reynolds (1991: 29) puts it, altered the social norms of the Thais, causing them to be less critical of Western concepts; but this change of attitude was superficial and was directed by the state institutions (see Reynolds, 1991; Sulak, 1991; Barme, 1993; Wyatt, 1982: 255). In the field of education, foreign degrees were highly valued within the civil service. Of the 2,200 'special-grade' officers,¹⁰ 93 per cent were college graduates, of whom one third had a degree from a Western

¹⁰ Formerly the civil servants in Thailand were divided into five grades. Special grade is the highest level. Changed in 1975, the special-grade is equivalent to C7 and above (Likhit, 1978: 9).

university (Girling, 1981: 150; see also Likhit, 1978: 108, 124). In the higher education sector, however, the institutions were not well developed because the state's policy was to send students abroad. Higher education within Thailand was perceived as underdeveloped and therefore it received limited state support; it was thought that much higher educational standards prevailed abroad (Varunee, 1990: 252; Likhit, 1978: 120).

Contacting with the West was resumed in the period of authoritarian military rule, from the 1950s to the 1970s, when Thailand's development was largely influenced by American power. As a consequence of the international political situation during the period of the Cold War, US agencies brought aid programmes to the 'Third World', including Thailand. Since 1960, Thailand relied heavily on foreign loans and absorbed about \$227 million. The World Bank was the major external lending agency, providing \$154 million for educational projects (*World Bank*, 1989: 1).

In the higher education field, Thai values became further westernised through a process of expansion (Wyatt, 1982: 285). Thai universities took the opportunity to build human resources, expand the curriculums and improve facilities to a certain extent. Examples included the case of Kasetsart University, a recipient of very substantial 'first-phase' external assistance from USAID from 1952 onwards. Also, Mahidol University's Faculty of Science was selected by the UDP to be developed; six life science departments were established after 1963 (Coleman and Court, 1993: 164 –166, 178-179). A large sum of money was contributed to these projects; for instance, UD/EFD spent about 11 million US dollars on Mahidol. This project was the most substantial in its overall global program (Coleman and Court, 1993: 167). The number of PhD graduates of the Mahidol's Faculty of Science returning from the US after completing their Fulbright scholarships constituted a 'critical mass' in the Thai scientific community (Coleman and Court, 1993: 163-174). In this period, the concept of internationalisation used as a means to accelerate national development, and the country became the passive recipient of funding through international agencies. This led Thailand to experience 'a sudden intensive foreign presence', which had a strong cultural and political impact (Watson, 1982: 287).

In addition, the Cold War situation emphasised the underlying political agenda. The contact with the US benefited Sarit's government because the US strategy at that time was to fortify military and bureaucratic power against Marxism (Chai-Anan, 2001: 61). The state's elites agenda of looking to the West benefited both their political and their economic interests (Unger, 1998: 61-63). However, the benefits accrue to only the ruling elites, since the development implemented did not fit local needs. The growth in infrastructure, road

building and education without changes to the structure of society was termed 'modernisation without development' (Jacobs, 1971; Thak, 1979: 224). The period of American influence emphasised the significance of Western values and the reliance of the Thai state elites on technology and material advancement imported from the West (Sulak, 1991: 51).

There was critical reaction to US support, and the first national economic development plan (1961-1965), which was created during Sarit's government, was seen by many as 'part and parcel of the execution of American policy' (Thak, 1979: 255). The expansion of universities to other provinces was part of this plan; its focus was on the distributional impact of growth, regional development, the lessening of rural-urban income differentials, and equal access to job opportunities and social services (*World Bank*, 1989: xi). Consequently, Chiangmai, Khonkaen, and Prince Songkhla Universities were founded in 1964, 1964 and 1967 respectively (Prizzia, 1985: 39). Those special of the aims outlined by the World Bank argued that the rural expansion was mainly based on security considerations: the government was aware of the threat of communism in the countryside, and therefore expanded its authority to cover those regional areas in all aspects including education (Thak, 1979: 234). Due to a lack of adequate research conducted by the state, the early period of university establishment faced the problem of 'centre-periphery' relationships: qualified teachers were not willing to serve in isolated rural areas, and the number of enrolled students was limited (Watson, 1991: 566; Arai, 1977: 38). This illustrates the dominant force of Thai elites and how the 'internationalisation' concept was exploited.

Another point to be made about the 'internationalisation' concept is that this concept was not always advantageous for Thai elites, the exposure to the concept also led to their identities being threatening since taking in this concept means a call for radical change. As a result, Thais perceived 'internationalisation' in an ambiguous light, with a mixture of aspiration and anxiety. Their aspiration was to emulate the best of the West. However, there were times that anxiety came to fore, such as during the absolute monarchy when Thai students sent to France came back to subvert the monarchy and end absolutism. Also, during the American and Japanese influence in the 1970s, nationalistic sentiments were stirred by radical students, many of them are those who had gone to study in Europe and the United States in the latter 1960s (Anderson, 1998: 167). They staged protests against Japanese economic dominance in the country and American foreign policy in Vietnam (Anderson, 1998: 168; Prizzia, 1985: 41-42, 50). These scenes showed the other side of 'internationalisation', which threatened elite power.

These historical factors did much to shape cultural attitudes of the Thais towards the West. When examining the concept of 'internationalisation', we should note Thai discourse on internationalisation: a dual issue of the superficiality of the use of the concept which enabled the elites to interpret the term to suit their own agendas, and uncertainty on whether the concept would bring radical change.

3.4 The contemporary period

This section is divided into three main parts. The first part discusses the interplay of related forces within the Thai higher education system. This period witnesses the deregulation of the 'academic oligarchy' and the rise of market forces. The second part argues that the bureaucratic norm and structure is still embedded in public universities. The third part discusses the role of elites who seek to exploit the 'internationalisation' concept for their own purposes.

3.4.1 Interplay of related forces within the Thai higher education system

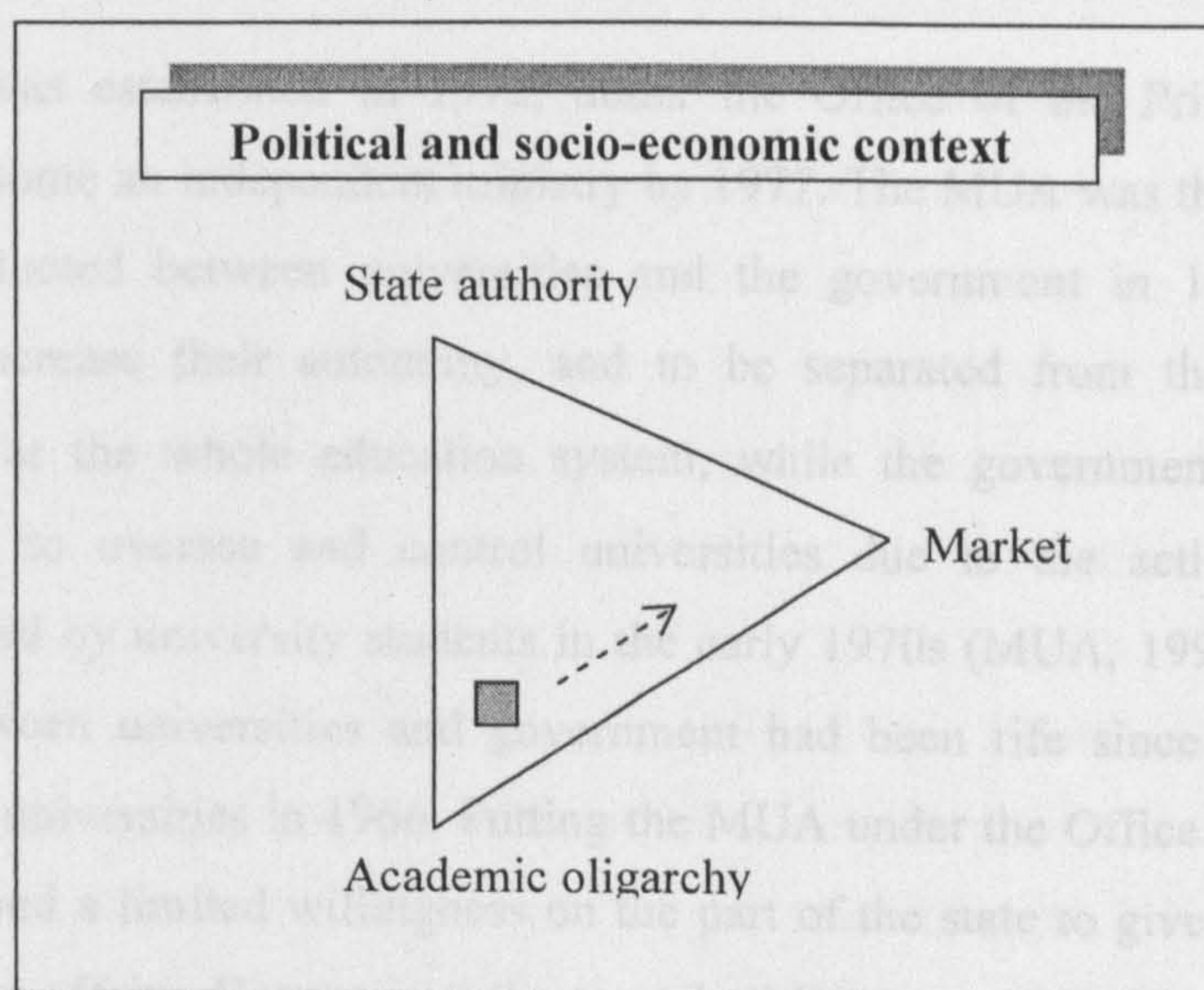


Figure 7: The 'triangle of coordination' of higher education in Thailand during the 1970s to the present (as of 2005)

Source: Author, adapted from Clark (1983: 143)

Following the period of state control system in the 1970s, complaints were increasingly heard in the universities, and the state authorities started to accede to these demands. The changes, however, were very limited because the public universities were still part of the bureaucracy. What happened showed only the functioning of bargaining relationships between Thai bureaucrats from different organisational units.

This section discusses three important occasions when the state authorities started to deregulate and reduce their control of the universities as a result of internal forces within higher education, as well as those of the external environment. Firstly, the MUA, as established in 1972, represented an initial compromise of the state regarding Thai public universities. Also, the following discussion of the MUA's role is a basis for further analysis, since the MUA was the key state apparatus in overseeing the routine administration of national higher education. Secondly, the dominant trend of marketisation in Thai higher education is shown. Thirdly, broader political and socio-economic context played a key role in shaping a new model of the interplay of the key related actors. The following subsections will consider various factors, such as the budget deficit in the early 1980s, the economic boom, and the changes of government in the latter half of the 1980s; these factors affected the gradual move away from the 'state authority' towards 'academic oligarchy', and 'the market' (see figure 7). The illustration in figure 7 is relevant to the empirical portion of the thesis.

3.4.1.1 Deregulation through the MUA

The MUA was established in 1972, under the Office of the Prime Minister and had gradually become an independent ministry by 1977. The MUA was the fruit of a bargaining process conducted between universities and the government in 1971. The universities wanted to increase their autonomy, and to be separated from the ONEC, which was responsible for the whole education system, while the government wanted to set up a 'buffer' unit to oversee and control universities due to the action of the opposition movements led by university students in the early 1970s (MUA, 1992a: 172-173). In fact, tensions between universities and government had been rife since the demands for the autonomy of universities in 1966. Putting the MUA under the Office of the Prime Minister in 1972 showed a limited willingness on the part of the state to give universities authority over their own affairs. However, at the time the MUA was established, the selection of the Minister and the Permanent Secretary demonstrated that both sides were prepared to compromise by selecting two professors who had the experience of both government and university administration (MUA, 1992a: 176).

The MUA acted as a review, funding, and coordinating body, responsible for broad policies, university regulations, setting curriculum standards, overseeing university personnel and administration, approving accreditation and curriculum development, and acting as a link between the universities and the government (Watson, 1991: 573). Through the MUA, the government gradually reduced its role, giving more authority to university' councils, on

several issues, such as personnel administration and submitting budgets directly to the Ministry of Finance. The issue of deregulation through the MUA is, however, debateable, as Charas (1996: 277) noted that the creation of MUA added further to the control of universities by government. Another recognised that public universities gained the highest freedom from being as autonomous as the bureaucratic framework would allow; however, Thai public universities still relied on the state's budget and had to conform to the state's national plan (Varunee, 1990: 228). On the latter point, from the 1960s onwards Thai higher education was developed in line with the nation's development plans, which emphasised economic needs (Watson, 1991: 564). This reflects the limited 'academic' role of universities on several points. Not until 1992 was the autonomy of curriculum approval by university councils announced (MUA, 1992a: 195).

Also, the MUA adopted a strict attitude towards private universities. The MUA was generally reluctant to allow the establishment of private universities. Whilst it decided to allow private institutions in 1941, it was not until 1969 that the Private College Act was passed. The main reason given was the need to maintain political security (Varunee, 1990: 251). In 1979, the Private University Act was announced; the Act was notable for its stringent rules and regulations. From 1969 to 1971, these institutions were only allowed to provide a three-year curriculum as a maximum, rather than a four-year programme (MUA, 1992a: 96-97).

The MUA mainly focused on the pre-auditing of procedural matters, starting with the establishment of private universities, the designing of programmes' details about the number of personnel, the teacher - student ratio, the number of books in the library, and the standard of buildings and facilities (see MUA, 2003b: 32-36). Arguably, these may be considered 'counter-productive' to the efficiency of the institutions (Goedegebuure *et al.*, 1994: 8-9). In 1992, there were changes regarding 34 issues, indicating a move towards increasing flexibility (MUA, 1992a: 202). However, the MUA's rigid attitude towards private universities persisted despite the need of the government to rely on private universities and the demands of the students to gain the degrees from the higher education sector. The government relied heavily on private universities. By 1987, there were 25 private universities and over 60,000 students while there were 115,982 students in conventional state universities (Watson, 1991: 567).

Currently, the private universities share the burden of higher education to the tune of about 25,000-30,000 million baht per year (Matichon, 5 June 2003), while the state's budget for higher education is also about 30,000 million baht. In 2001, the number of students in state

universities reached 292,951,¹¹ while private universities catered for 223, 810 students (MUA, 2001a: 5, 34). The similarities of these figures confirm the important role private universities now play in Thai higher education. However, the MUA's treatment of public and private universities is different. The difference is attributable to the entrenched bureaucratic nature of MUA.

The above discussion has illustrated how MUA and the public and private universities have fluctuated during this transitional period, from complete 'top-down' control by the state to more authorities of universities. These relationships will be later explored in the discussion of the empirical cases.

3.4.1.2 Marketisation of Thai higher education

This section discusses emerging market forces in the contemporary period of Thai higher education. These will pave a way to an understanding of how the market impacts on the 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy'. One of the key forces shown in the Clark's (1983) triangle of coordination is the market. As discussed earlier in chapter 2, the market played the most influential role in the US higher education system while other countries retained a degree of 'state authority' control or inclined to the influence of 'academic oligarchs' (see section 2.3.1). However, in the current period, marketisation appears as new trend in higher education systems across the globe.

Referring to the historical period of the Thai higher education system, the 'market' played a minor role during the early 1900s since universities were intended to be a training ground for civil servants (Wichit, 1974: 74). Due to the embedded bureaucratic structure of Thai state and universities, the efficient operation and functioning of the Thai higher education system within the market seems to be far from assured. Despite the slow development of the higher education structure, the dominant trend of the market has entered the Thai higher education sphere, as in many countries around the world. How soon and effective it will be depends on each country's response and reaction. A discussion of the market dimension of the Thai higher education follows.

Due to the growing power of global forces and internal economic demands by the late 1980s, the market gradually came to influence Thai higher education. By market, I mean two main issues which have been on the rise. The first relates to the external demands or socio-economic changes of the country from the late 1980s, when business sectors

¹¹ This does not include the numbers of students in the two open universities.

developed their demands and increased reliance on universities; this was associated with the political situation where there was a considerable diminution of bureaucratic power.¹² Universities were required to produce competent graduates to work in various sectors, such as exports, industry and manufacture (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 6), and to produce knowledge-based research (Chai-Anan, 1994: 49-50). This also affected the students' demands to enter universities, as illustrated in the doubling of enrolments in higher education – from 364,000 in 1987 to 659,000 in 1994 (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 147). In this regard, the market required not only qualitative change in the higher education system but also a quantitative one.

The second effect is the internal demand of the Thai state to adjust and reform the internal administration of public universities and to give more flexibility to private universities. In the same way as other higher education systems around the world where the market-based ethos has become imperative (as discussed in section 2.3.2), Thai universities have to face an increased competition and the involvement of the market. The Thai government had realised that it could not share the burden of mass higher education, especially for the period 1982-1988 when the government faced a budget deficit, and it had to tighten capital and current expenditures of the state apparatuses (Rangsan 2001: 313). During the sixth plan (1987-1991), the government started to deregulate public universities' outside funding by stating that declarations of the budget need not be made to the Ministry of Finance. The government also promoted the establishment of private universities and allowed public universities to open 'self-supporting' programmes which charge full fees (see Rangsan, 2001: 313; section 4.3.1). This government's decision and strategy triggered public universities to generate their own income and seek outside funding. The public universities were also required to become autonomous or be privatised. The internal administration has to be changed in due course: from bureaucracy to businesslike management. The government has had to adjust its position to becoming 'resources provider', in other words, to guarantee quality by adopting 'state supervision' instead of 'state control' (see Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 12; Slaughter *et al.*, 1997).

These two market forces - emerging from the external and internal demands - are obviously in contrast to the nature of the Thai higher education system which has long been embedded in the bureaucracy. The market demands have dissolved the old path of Thai bureaucracy: universities are not anymore a 'training ground for civil servants'; the 'state-control' model has to be shifted to a 'state-supervision' model; business sectors have enhanced their power

¹² See extensive discussion on socio-economic and political factors which affect the Thai higher education in section 3.4.1.3.

over the state through market mechanism (see Anek, 1992: 15); and the status of academics has to be changed from being bureaucrat to being that of employee. However, the market has variable effects on universities, ranging from senior public universities - like Chulalongkorn and Thammasat - to private universities - like Assumption and Kasembundit. On the one hand, the senior public universities have been fairly resistant to changes (see chapter 5 and chapter 7); on the other hand, private universities have been more prone to be affected by the market and thus adjusting their internal administration to respond to market forces (see chapter 6).

In this thesis, I look at the internationalisation of teaching and research areas, which is affected by market forces. The pressures for Thai universities to change and accommodate the demands of the market have led to internationalisation becoming one of the means to serve the country's economic development (see section 4.2.1). Thus, opening teaching programmes – international programmes - to serve business sectors' demands (including English language proficiency as well as an international dimension of knowledge by graduates), and to generate income inside departments and universities is currently dominant for Thai universities. The result of cutting government expenditure and the introduction of the independent research funding agencies is that universities are required to produce quality research and secure research budgets from external sources. This reflects the necessities of universities to enter into fierce competition to attract customers and to achieve research budgets.

The above discussion points out the two market pressures upon the Thai higher education system: first, the market growth provides an external context which impacts on universities; second, the market-based trends in higher education provide impact to the internal administration and organisation of Thai universities. It is interesting to see how the state authority and the universities respond to these market influences. Specifically, the role of the market in relation to the internationalisation of teaching and research will be later explored in the chapter 4, 'Rationale of internationalisation of higher education in the Thai context'.

3.4.1.3 Socio-economic and political changes

This section investigates the macro-socio-economic and political changes which affected the relationships of related forces within the arena of Thai higher education. Both economic and political changes in this contemporary period have moved Thai state and society into another stage of development. Thai higher education institutions were certainly affected.

Several factors contributing to the Thai state's deregulation of the universities and to the increasing role of the market are drawn from this macro-picture.

Socio-economic factors

The economic boom in the latter half of the 1980s encouraged the Thai state to promote the business sector further, as was done in the period of growth in the 1960s. By this time, the Thai economy had experienced growth in exports, manufacturing and the income of the urban population. From 1985 to 1990, the flow of foreign investment grew ten fold, and the economy relied increasingly on foreign investments (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 6). Most Thai people saw 'globalisation' providing economic opportunities, and the idea of 'being new, world-class, fantastic' had become widely popular in Bangkok city by the end of the 1980s (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 160).

Just before the economic boom, however, in 1982, the Thai government faced a budget deficit and announced a policy designed to tighten both capital and current expenditures of the state apparatuses for the period 1982-1988 (Rangsan, 2001: 313). The annual growth of the number of government servants dropped abruptly from ten to two percent (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 146). This stagnant period affected public universities, halting expansion and attempts to improve academic quality. The recruitment of full-time lecturers had to stop while those who remained had to suffer from the low salary rate which had not been adjusted to accommodate the inflation rate (Rangsan, 2001: 313).

As a result, the government started to deregulate public universities' outside funding, by stating that declarations of the budget need not be made to the Ministry of Finance, and by promoting the establishment of private universities (Rangsan, 2001: 313). This deregulation was part of the government's strategy to push public universities to seek outside funding rather than rely on the state budget. Subsequently, the increasing reliance of public universities on students' tuition fees showed that the relationship between universities and the market had started and could not be ignored. The external economic boom and the internal economic problems of the Thai state coincided, leading the state to grant universities increased authority. The contrast of the situations within and outside the sphere of the Thai bureaucracy brought about an increasing reliance on external resources and reduced the role of the bureaucracy.

In responding to the nation's economic growth, Thai higher education institutions were required to produce graduates to meet the nation's demands (Watson, 1991: 561). Although

in the early 1980s, universities were still producing graduates to serve the bureaucracy, human resource planners were complaining about the overproduction of graduates and the problems of unemployment. Suddenly, however, from 1986 onwards, demand in the industrial and manufacturing sectors grew rapidly due to the companies' need for a great number of white-collar workers (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128). The period of economic boom brought about a growth of the Thai middle class.¹³ For them, higher education became an important mechanism to improve their socio-economic status. Higher education was no longer the preserve of the elites. The total enrolled in higher education, excluding open universities almost doubled from 364,000 to 659,000 in the period of 1987 to 1994 (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 147). Higher education is considered as an instrument to gain better employment and to improve social mobility. Many jobs required that the workers should have a minimum of university degree (Sukanya, 2001: 468). By this time, the universities were considered as merely providing advantages in the labour market, and it has been argued that students became interested in business and ceased to adopt a radical role and no longer understand the underlying problems of society as they had in the 1970s (Seksan in Sirikul, 2002a: 3).

On the one hand, Thai universities benefited from the government policy of using education as a means to economic development. The public universities directed themselves towards the market. The period saw the establishment of new universities, while existing universities were given funding to increase students intake, and the number of faculties, courses and staff. Several scholarships were created to send students overseas and the number of campuses was also expanded (Corbitt, 1998). By 1992, there was an increase of about thirty to fifty percent in the number universities over the 1980 figures; there were now 21 state universities and 29 private universities respectively (MUA, 1992a: 255; Charas, 1994: 19).

On the other hand, because of the attraction of the business sector, graduates preferred to work for companies rather than take a low-paid job in the bureaucratic sector whose power had been substantially reduced. Being part of the bureaucracy, the public universities suffered a lack of capable lecturers while the existing lecturers tended to be drawn to business activities outside the universities, such as speculating in land or playing the stock

¹³ This new force in Thailand emerged as a result of economic and education development during the modern manufacturing boom in the 1960s. This included varied groups of people, such as civil servants, academics, salaried employees of the majority of modern businesses, small businesspersons and shopkeepers, and independent professionals (Girling, 1981: 175; 1996: 41-43; Wyatt, 1982). Ockey (1999: 245) divided the Thai middle class into two types: the consumer middle class (well off) and the occupational (status) middle class. Income and education distinguish these two groups from each other.

market. The growth of the business sector was accelerated by the demand for information technology and research specialists, drawing university lecturers to work in radio, television and business consultancies on the side (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128, 145-148; Rangsan, 2001: 294, 313; Varunee, 1990: 260).

Thus, the rapid growth of Thai higher education presented a picture of contrasts between quantitative expansion and the content and quality of higher education, as there was a lack of laboratories and technical equipment. Thus overseas education remained the preferred solution of Thai governments (Watson, 1991: 575; Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 145-148). Moreover, lecturers have to rely on the market because they need to maintain their socio-economic status within the changing external situation (see Rangsan, 2001: 313). In the historical period, the benefits Thai bureaucrats gained from the system included prestige, stable tenure, limited oppositional forces and exemption from assessment. The disadvantages lay in the low salary structure, which was offset by the prestige they enjoyed in the early period, when there were no better options. When the external situation changed, low salary became the issue for the state's civil servants (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 329; McCargo, 2002b: 8).

In these circumstances, the dominant power of the bureaucracy in the early period was gradually undermined. During this time the market played a key role in Thai higher education (see figure 7). This period saw disparities of growth between the bureaucratic sphere and the market. Thus, the universities expanded their programmes not only to serve the market's demands, but also to generate their own income after the stagnant period of budget deficits. The bureaucrats also have to gain theirs from market opportunities. However, the blurred relationship between the market and the universities' authority remains since the latter has not engaged with truly competitive capitalism; Thai public universities are still part of the bureaucracy.

Political factors

In 1988, Thailand elected a civilian Prime Minister, Chatchai Choonhavan for the first time since 1976 (Hewison, 1997: 1). This allowed the parliament to become a more influential institution in the public policy process, illustrating a distinction between 'bureaucratic' and 'electoral' politics (Chai-Anan, 2001: 85). Unfortunately, the parliamentary regime and the elected prime minister and politicians did not uphold democratic ideals (Surin and McCargo, 1997: 132-148). Also, this period saw the invasion of 'electoral politics' into the bureaucratic arena. The right of civil servants to occupy ministerial posts was abolished; the

authority of ministers was extended: they were empowered to appoint and promote personnel at the top levels of the bureaucracy (Pasuk, 1999: 8). The period witnessed a considerable diminution of bureaucratic power (see Anek, 1992: 13-15; Chai-Anan, 1995; 1997).

Unquestionably, bureaucratic authority, which had remained stable and had rarely been challenged by oppositional forces in the previous period, started to become obsolete. In the context of the industrialisation, the major factors contributive to the development of national policy had to rely on the knowledge-intensive capacities and the effective administration of politicians and civil servants, not on policies allocated through patronage and in a top-down manner (Christensen and Ammar, 1993).

However, the rise of the countervailing forces represented by politicians and businessmen did not promote effective change; instead, it prompted the bureaucrats to seek interests outside their sphere. The relationships between different interest groups, and their bargaining process, however, resulted in cooptation and widespread corruption; so much so that this issue was a cause of the military coup of February 1991. The underlying reason, however, was the decreasing power of 'bureaucratic politics' (Robison *et al.*, 1993: 27) as well as the parliamentary dictatorship (Surin and McCargo, 1997: 132-148). The prevalence of nepotism, patronage and corruption represents the continuation of the country's political culture since the beginning of the constitutional monarchy. It is true that there was a wider forum for different interest groups, but this change did not amount to the opening of political space.

The coup was challenged shortly after the February 1991 coup by an alliance of progressive in a form of seminars, meetings and rallies across the country, known as the Campaign for Popular Democracy (CPD). The 19 November 1991 witnessed a protest against the draft constitution and a demonstration which was considered as 'the largest political demonstration to be held in Thailand since 1976' (McCargo, 1997: 241). Despite the protest movement, the new constitution was passed by the legislative assembly in December 1991, followed by the March 1992 general election (McCargo, 1997: 242; Callahan, 2000: vii).

Later, in May 1992, mass movements to overthrow the unelected Prime Minister Suchinda, who had appointed many corrupted politicians to the Cabinet, occurred in the streets; a large number of demonstrators were shot dead by the military in the 'Black May event'. The voice of the people called for an end to military government and for the improvement of the political system. In 1991-1992, Thailand was governed by Anand Panyarachun's interim

administration. From 1992 to 1996, Thailand was ruled by four Prime Ministers: Suchinda Krapayoon in 1992; Chuan Leekpai in 1992, Banharn Silpa-archa in 1995, and Chavalit Yongchaiyudh in 1996, and accusations of corruption and 'money politics' were widespread (Hewison, 1997: 2; Unger, 1998: 70-71; Callahan, 2000: vii). By this time, the market mechanisms had opened the political space to all walks of life and transformed Thailand into a more pluralistic society (see Surin and McCargo, 1997: 147; Pasuk and Baker, 1997: 21-41). However, the country carried an imbalance between rapid economic growth and the slow development of the political structure. This created opportunities for the state's elites to promote their interests both within and outside the political sphere, regardless of the rule of law. In 1994, the process of drafting the new constitution started, aiming to reform this structure.

3.4.2 Inherited structure

Many developing countries have faced difficulties in the reform process from inefficient bureaucracies to political instability (see Sarker and Pathak, 2003: 75; Berman and Bosserts, 2000: 13; Connors, 2005: 201). These difficulties have also applied in Thailand. Considering the broader political and economic changes, including those in higher education, this section discusses whether the attempt to reform the inherited structure and values which had long restrained the country's development was successful. It will be argued below that reform could not fundamentally improve these conditions; it merely represented a bargaining process involving the fragmented interests of various groups, while the bureaucratic forces remained resistant to a change. This implies Thai 'state authority' and the attempt by the 'academic oligarchy' to secure their voice within the political system. This process is illustrated in the political and educational reforms, including those of higher education, which have been continued by the current Thaksin administration.

3.4.2.1 Political reform

For a long period, the Thai bureaucratic structure and political processes reflected the state's inability to pursue effective policies. One of the points at issue was the failure of its educational policies in the mid-1990s, when there was a scarcity of skilled labour and a rapid turnover of workers (Unger, 1998: 176). Given all these accumulated problems, it was undeniable that the political and bureaucratic structures need reform. A key figure in the reform initiative was Dr. Prawase Wasi, an activist and intellectual, who initiated a campaign using the strategy of 'social empowerment'. The main objectives of the

constitution were to improve the quality of politicians, uproot corruption and vote-buying, decentralise the government, and enhance the rule of law (Pasuk and Baker, 2000: 116). Besides these major aims, among the 336 articles there are a number of proposed changes that would affect the original structures of the Thai political system at both parliamentary and governmental levels.¹⁴ The start of political reform was assumed to pave the way for the restructuring of other important areas of society (Prawase, 2002: 26).

Thai society at that time was marked by competition between the interests of different forces, clearly observed in the constitutional drafting process. This has been described as a 'constitutional polity', stemming from liberal, progressive, and conservative groups (McCargo, 2002b: 3). The main problem of the political reform was that the interests of the elites and of state power were not conducive to good policy, and the agendas they had in mind were different in both ideological and practical terms. The constitutional drafting process was also considered to be a 'distributive game' played among a range of different key actors. The conservative groups were among the first to unite against the new constitution, since it threatened to reduce their power (Connors, 2002: 42).

Despite opposition from the conservative group, the reform agenda triggered public interests, such as those of progressive groups of intellectuals, technocrats, business associations, the urban middle class, NGOs, and the press. These groups progressively overcame difficulties, and the constitution came into effect in September 1997. This successful outcome was partly due to the effects of the 1997 economic recession (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 323; Connors, 2002), but was also made possible by the strategy of the reformers themselves in using 'the politics of consensus-building', despite these disparate groups' various understandings of 'political reform' (McCargo, 2002b: 3).

Although the constitution is termed 'The People's Constitution', it was mainly the outcome of an elite-led process conducted by politicians, bureaucrats, technocrats and intellectuals, and business groups, and so was unlikely to change the fundamental structure of Thai politics and economics (Somchai, 2002: 135). Moreover, the role of NGOs sometimes retarded the long-term development of the political process. Ideological considerations divide NGOs into different groups: some are influenced by foreign donors' agendas, while others are interested in 'big-picture policy formation', paying less attention to genuine local needs (Connors, 2002: 48). Moreover, the emergence of the urban middle-class groups as a result of the economic boom did little to promote democracy since they were mainly

¹⁴ For further discussion of the 1997 constitution, see McCargo, 2002b: 10-11.

concerned to benefit from capitalism (Girling, 1996: 44-45; Nidhi, in Girling, 1996: 56). In the Thai situation, where the pure concepts of politics and economics have been insufficiently developed, the rise of the middle class represented conflicting tendencies, class categories and different interests, while the expanding business sector maintained institutional ties with the government and bureaucracy (Unger, 1998; Chai-Anan, 2001: 62).

These debates coincided with what has been called the 'low levels of sociability and social capital' or the 'weakness of demands', which allowed state officials to 'pursue self-interests with minimal reference to the needs of their nominal clients in society' (Unger, 1998: 17). These weak social forces enabled the Thai state to abuse its power. In line with this argument, the picture that emerges of the Thai state is that of a poorly developed institutional structure inside both the state and non-state forces, permitting individuals to search for personal gains on each policy (see Christensen, 1993: 1; Christensen and Ammar, 1993: 19).

3.4.2.2 Education reform

Another example of politicised reform can be seen in the process of education reform, which was one of the social reform projects following the new constitution (Prawase, 2002: 26). Section 81 of the 1997 Constitution stipulates that the state shall provide a national education law. Section 43 provides for free universal education for a minimum of twelve years. Also included is the issue of decentralisation of administration and the promotion of the private sector in education provision (ONEC, 1999: (i)). Subsequently, the process of drafting the education bill took place, led by eminent figures in the field including those from the economic, social and legal sectors. Despite a number of attempted blockages by bureaucrats and conservative groups, the National Education Act was promulgated in August 1999 during Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai's government. The following explains how the process of reform faced difficulties in bringing about fundamental change. The two main problems lay in the embedded norms and values of those people within the institutions who were reluctant to accept change, and in the weak functioning of the structure of checks and balances.

The drafting process was not very different from that of the constitution in that technocrats, politicians and bureaucrats led the process. Although it was claimed by the ONEC that each process involved public hearings, including all stakeholders both in Bangkok and in the provinces, the final decision mainly depended on those bureaucrats and MPs who had full control over the conclusion (see ONEC, 1999: (ii-iii); see also Vuthipong, 1999). Arguably,

the public hearing process as executed by the government was a cosmetic measure to hide the true agenda. The government was able to control the whole process by setting the topic of discussion, inviting carefully selected speakers, and finally writing the report (Vuthipong, 1999: 2). In this respect, the elites, who had more opportunities, sought ways to gain benefit from the process.

The 1999 Education Bill consisted of nine chapters (see ONEC, 1999). According to the Bill, the three major tasks of education reform are learning reform, reform of the educational administrative structure and the implementation of legal measures (ONEC, 1999: 35). Vuthipong (1999: 2-8) argued that internal structural reform should be a matter of the Ministry of Education (MOE), and need not to be explained in detail. This view obviated the need to notify how curriculum development and the provision of educational multimedia information technology, for example, should be carried out. Vuthipong also argued that the Educational Bill was confused, lacked direction and represented a mix of interests of different groups, mainly bureaucrats and politicians. He further outlined six weaknesses of the Bill: the unwillingness of the state to decentralise authority to private and public sectors, the retention of excessive bureaucratic power and administration, little connection between basic and higher education and ignorance of higher educational issues; the state's infringement of the rights of people and private institutions; the unevenness of the Bill, and the lack of a long-term vision of how education was to solve the nation's crisis (Vuthipong, 1999: 2-8). These problems illustrated the defects of the Educational Bill, which stemmed from the state's desire to ensure continued central control, and from the fragmented interests of different forces. Indeed, it is still hard to make headway towards substantial reform when fundamental political, societal and structural changes have not occurred, and individuals still struggle for their own interests. Higher education policy is not exempt from these rules of the game.

3.4.2.3 Higher education reform

Regarding the issue of higher education reform, sections 36 and 71 of the 1999 Education Bill stated that all public universities should become autonomous within three years after the Bill's date of promulgation. Thus, the deadline was assumed to be August 2002 (ONEC, 1999). There are resistance on the part of individual lecturers who are reluctant to withdraw from the bureaucratic system. The failure of the universities to meet the set deadline for becoming autonomous in 2002 bore witness to the embedded bureaucratic norms of most lecturers in Thai public universities. The issue of autonomous universities was included in the Bill, but the review shows that 70 to 80 per cent of lecturers disagreed with the idea of

autonomous universities (*Manager Daily*, 27 January 2002). Although the deadline for autonomy was set for 2002, in 2005, only one public university is leaving the bureaucracy.¹⁵

In recent years, different groups have continued to debate this issue. A lecturer stated:

There are both pro-and anti-privatisation groups. The first group is composed of university administrators who know how to deal with its advantages, but individual lecturers are not ready and they are concerned most about the welfare system, promotion, the prestige of serving royalty and their own positions. At the same time, the progressive group questions the role of the students' union and participation. Nobody can give us satisfactory answers. We can't get a complete picture of where reform might lead us.¹⁶

The interview reveals the existence of different demands inside a particular university, made by three main groups: the right, the left and those who guard their bureaucrat's privileges. This accords with what has been argued about the confusions among staff in Thai public universities. While there are those who remain optimistic with the privatisation, many carry doubts about the continuity of financial support from the government, the fairness of the evaluation process, and the security to the 'theoretical courses' which would have low number of enrolments (Sukanya, 2001: 475). One of the key debates, which centres on the unwillingness of most lecturers to move out of the bureaucratic system, concerns the change of status. Being in the public service with life-long tenure, lecturers fear a loss of their benefits which include stability, prestige and power (see Pasuk and Baker, 1999: 9).

At present, Thai public universities allow a parallel system between new lecturers hired on employees' contracts and those with civil servants' status (see MUA, 1992a: 200). This dual system attests first to the deeply rooted bureaucratic mentality of individuals; second, to show the fragmented voices within the universities. The resistance of the academic bureaucrats needs to be first understood in its historical context, in which the bureaucratic norms have long been entrenched. In addition, the current context is such that the state itself has found difficulties in reforming its role. At the moment, there is no clear direction to privatisation and that different groups have different opinions. The plan only meets the superficial requirements of 'liberalisation'. A MUA staff member commented, 'I'm hoping

¹⁵ Thailand has 24 public universities. Four have had autonomous status since their establishment. Only one, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT), giving up its bureaucratic status; thus the remaining 19 are still part of the bureaucracy (as of 2004).

¹⁶ Personal interview, Naruemon, lecturer, Faculty of Political Science, CU, 20 March 2004.

I'm not too optimistic, but it will take us more than ten years to complete this higher education reform'.¹⁷

On the matter of resources and funding, the 1999 Educational Bill provides that Thai universities will receive block grant funding instead of itemised and strictly budgeted state control, while the state will provide a system for auditing, following-up and evaluation of the utilisation of educational budgetary allocations (ONEC, 1999: 27). Since the 1980s, however, Thai public universities have been partly deregulated on funding issues, being informed that they do not have to declare the extra revenue to the government. Therefore, the Bill's encouragement of universities to rely on other sources of income and the freedom it provides to utilise the allocations and educational resources are not altogether new; the universities' reluctance to embrace change has more to do with the evaluation of financial aspects and also of the quality of academic activities.

Disagreement amongst university lecturers led to the petition of the Council of the University Faculty Senate of Thailand (CUFST) to the Senate Speaker and to the King. The petition mainly requested the Senate to review and defer the 1998 Cabinet resolution that all public universities should become autonomous by 2002 (*The Nation*, 11 April, 2002). Indeed, the lecturers' petition to the King emphasised their deep attachment to their *kharatchakan* status (servants of the King) and bore witness to the cultural norms prevalent within Thai public universities. The failure of that part of the bill that was intended to ensure the independence of universities in 2002 is evidence of the inability of these bureaucrats to see beyond their narrowly defined self-interests, that is, the preservation of their prestige, the maintenance of stability and the avoidance of assessment (see Chai-Anan, 1989: 337; Wright, 1991; Pasuk, 1999: 9).

If we compare the universities' acceptance of the degree of change necessary to accommodate the growing market during the late 1980s with the need to embrace reform we find that a clear picture emerges of the choices confronting Thai bureaucrats. They responded by seeking economic rewards outside the bureaucratic sphere, while maintaining long-established interests within it. It seems that under current conditions the acceptance of market forces is unlikely to lead these universities to agree to fundamental changes in their internal structure and culture. The process of reform to improve that structure and culture is now under way. The objectives of the early period of reform have not yet been achieved (see McCargo, 2002b: 3; Connors, 2002: 42).

¹⁷ Personal interview, anonymous, MUA's official.

At the moment of writing, Thai public universities are situated between enjoying bureaucratic status and benefiting from the market. The MUA, as a state authority, was an ineffective overseer of the quality control process due to its bureaucratic character.¹⁸ On the one hand, university lecturers are attached to the bureaucratic values of prestige and security; on the other hand, they are motivated by purely economic interests. Torn between these incompatible benefits, it is difficult for them to contemplate fundamental change. Referring to figure 5, the movement of Thai universities towards the market started in the late 1980s, and it is now not possible to return, because of both national and global political pressures for liberalisation and reducing size of public sector. However, the major constraint in this transitional period is grounded in the bureaucracy's ineffective structure and embedded norms. The dynamic relationships among state authority, universities, and market will be discussed in the following chapters, which will attempt to explain how these relationships affect the process of internationalisation.

3.4.2.4 The Thaksin administration

Another example of the difficulties of making fundamental improvements in the political and social structure is to be found in the period of the Thaksin government. Thaksin's government provoked contentious debates on the subject of education reform. After becoming Prime Minister in February 2001, Thaksin appointed Kasem Watthanachai, a former bureaucrat and university president, as Minister of Education. However, in June of that year, Kasem announced his resignation. It was claimed that his resignation decision was prompted by his frustration over conflicts of interests and the resistances to major reform on the part of those bureaucrats and politicians, specifically on the issues of decentralisation of curricula and budgetary authority, for whom reform signified a loss of control over resources (Montesano, 2002: 93). To quiet public criticism, Prime Minister Thaksin took on the position of Education Minister himself. However, three months later, he appointed the third Education Minister, Suvit Khunkitti, to take over from him (*Bangkok Post*, 15 April 2001).

Interestingly, the Chuan and Thaksin governments had different ideas of how to implement educational reform. Chuan's government gave particular importance to technocrats, as can be seen in the composition of the committee inside the Education Reform Office and the establishment of independent bodies to monitor the bureaucracy (see ONEC, 1999: 31-32),

¹⁸Personal interview, Porntip, Director, Bureau of Higher Education Standards, MUA, 7 November 2002.

raising much discontent among civil servants.¹⁹ To a different degree, and in accordance with his 'managing society' and 'remaking politics' agenda, Thaksin's government attempted to delegitimise all non-formal politics including the interference to the media and to restrict political space (McCargo and Ukrist, 2005: 188). He also diminished the remaining power of bureaucrats and undermined the foundations of local leaders' influence, taking the power to make policy away from the bureaucrats and replacing it with a powerful executive and a centralised party supported by business firms (Pasuk and Baker, 2004: 229; McCargo and Ukrist, 2005: 209-238). Under Thaksin's government, the roles of both independent bodies and technocrats were undermined (Pasuk and Baker, 2004: 231).

While Suvit Khunkitti was Minister of Education, Thaksin's government was accused of 'playing politics' with education reform by appointing a minister who was opposed to the reform process and exploiting education issues to create an electoral power base (*Bangkok Post*, 3 March 2002). There was a notable conflict of ideas between the Chuan and Thaksin governments over the establishment of an independent organisation, the Council of Professional Teachers and Educational Personnel. According to the 1999 Educational Bill, the Council would have the power and duty to set professional standards, to issue and withdraw licences and to oversee the maintenance of the professional standards and ethics of teachers nationwide. In hindsight, it is clear that the threat of mandatory assessment provoked the unease of teachers, who feared for their secure positions. What Thaksin's government decided on the issue was to incline towards a recognition of the teachers' concerns, rather than taking account of the principles of the reform. Council committee should include 12 teachers and be chaired by the Minister of Education, ignoring the proposed composition of another 16 educationists from various universities, as previously proposed in the Bill. Furthermore, it was decided that the existing council of teachers with bureaucratic status and with similar functions should be kept and that it should supervise the new Council of Professional Teachers (Sirikul, 2002b). The stance of the Thaksin government on this issue was designed to gain the support of teachers, who are a major source of popular backing in regional areas. However, the principles of the reform and the idea of independent bodies proposed by the previous government were abandoned. This conflict of ideologies reflected the struggle for political power between the technocrats' forces and Thaksin's 'big business' forces.

As of 2004, in Thaksin's government, the Ministry of Education had undergone a fourth and a fifth change of leadership with the appointments of Pongpol Adireksan and Adisai

¹⁹ Personal interview, anonymous, MUA's official.

Potaramik. The appointment of five ministers within a period of three years (2001 - mid-2004) is unusual, and partly reflects the difficulties the government faced in carrying out reform in a way that would satisfy the different demands of various interest groups. It is an indication of the degree of these difficulties that both Suvit and Pongpol were effectively removed from office in no-confidence debates by the opposition parties, specifically by the Democrat Party and its spokesman Wichit Srisa-an, a prominent technocrat in the Thai educational sphere and the former Secretary-General of the Education Reform Office. He had quit his assigned position in the Reform Office to become one of the Democrat Party's candidates in the 2001 election. These events re-emphasised the struggles for political power within the education sector between the technocrats' forces and the new government.

The Thaksin administration seems to have failed to fundamentally change the country's political and bureaucratic structures. His policy of 'stimulating growth' in economic terms, and his restriction of the social reactions to that policy, has not brought about the essential changes (Pasuk and Baker, 2004: 227). Thaksin's government further centralised role government functions, attempted to destabilise the country's institutions and oppositional forces, and neglected the rule of law. Although the creation of checking and balancing institutions in Thailand is in its infancy and remains politicised, the arrival of the Thaksin government worsened the situation by closing off the space for these rising forces (Pasuk and Baker, 2004: 231). This type of political action treads a well-worn path and offers an unpromising future for the foundations on which higher education policy rests.

3.4.3 Cultural values regarding 'internationalisation'

As previously discussed, Thais have adopted 'westernisation' only superficially as a result of the influence of the state's elites (see Wyatt, 1982: 255; Reynolds, 1991; Sulak, 1991; Barne, 1993). This section attempts to point out a similar situation in the contemporary period of elites exploiting 'internationalisation' to suit their own interests by interpreting it only superficially. The middle class would be included in this grouping. Thai perceptions of globalisation led them to aspire to 'internationalisation' as a means to further a prosperous Thai economy (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 160). However, the 1997 economic crisis triggered national anxiety, a loss of identity, and insecurities. This section discusses how this approach of Thais towards 'internationalisation' has not led to a fundamental change.

Localisation as an 'alternative discourse'

One example of Thais in perceiving 'internationalisation' superficially is shown when the concept of 'localisation' comes into play. The contemporary period can be divided into two parts: Thailand's economic boom, fueled by foreign investment and export-oriented growth, and a more recent period of the rise of localist discourse. The shifting of the policy from one to the other, however, reflects only the interests of the elites. Both 'internationalisation' and 'localisation' concepts were politicised. Sugiyama (1992: 99) suggested that to be 'internationalised' does not mean abandoning national identity. In the Thai context, however, 'internationalisation' remains heavily contested debate, as the rise of the discourse on 'localisation' suggests.

The economic crisis in 1997 marked the time when the Thai state moved the policy agenda away from the internationalisation discourse. From being a 'catchword' during economic boom period, internationalisation became less popular. The King's concept of 'sufficiency economy' and the return to Thai local wisdom became widely accepted. The Chuan government's adoption of neo-liberalism concept and IMF solutions to the crisis provoked a tide of anti-government sentiment (Hewison, 2002: 147).

Regarding higher education, from the strong emphasis on the promotion of internationalisation and international programmes in the seventh higher education development plan (1992-1996); the eighth higher education development plan (1997-2001) emphasised both regionalisation and internationalisation. However, the degree of internationalisation was scaled-down after the 1997 economic crisis. The ninth higher education development plan (2002-2006) clearly demonstrated a focus of the state's agenda on local wisdom. Although the state required Thai universities to be competitive and reaching international standards, they should also adhere to Thai 'local wisdom' and moral values. Inspired by the King's idea of 'sufficiency economy', the plan demonstrated an attempt of the state to mix the 'market' concept with local values, as stated in the plan, 'rely on Thai wisdom and apply foreign technology equally to be able to be self-reliant in the long-term' (MUA, 2002a: 16). This accords with what Witte (2000: 242) noted about a dilemma between two diverging directions for Thai society: 'seeking a balance of autonomy and dependency, of idealism and pragmatic, and of economic competitiveness and cultural self-reliance'.

To its critics, the idea of localism, being used as a 'national development strategy' and 'a political discourse' to respond with industrialisation development, is seen as 'a middle class

intellectual exercise' (Hewison, 2002: 160). The concept did not emerge from grassroots interests. That some favoured internationalisation and some localisation illustrated the diversity of interests of the government, businesspersons, and middle class, including intellectuals and NGOs (see Hewison, 1993: 171; Pasuk and Baker, 1997: 30-41).

The notion of 'localisation' was chosen by the state only to mask its failures in moving country towards international standards, resulting in the 1997 economic downturn (see Pasuk and Baker, 2000: 241). According to Connors (2003: 8), the playing with the words, 'people's participation' and 'local wisdom' by the Thai government, especially as articulated in the eighth and ninth national economic plans, is the 'interface that brings together domestic reformers and international capital, an interface that strengthens the liberal impulse in Thailand'. The policy is largely rhetorical, however, used only as a legitimating tool by the government.

In terms of research in science and technology, localisation also became *de rigueur*. Examples included the changed aims and attitudes of the Thailand Research Fund (TRF).²⁰ Regional and local problems would receive increased attention in order to serve the needs of the community. A TRF regional office was established in 1998.²¹ Pirasak (2002: 25) called it 'the mutation' of science and technology research with social science, resulting in less disciplinary rigor for the former. He further argued that the fundamental problem lay in a lack of critical mass of researchers in science and technology to strengthen the country's research community. In fact, the TRF adopted localism due to the dominance of the localist discourse at the time, as well as the domestic pressures resulting from widened political space (see Surin and McCargo, 1997: 147; Pasuk and Baker, 1997: 21-41). Research for 'internationalisation' did not disappear altogether, but localism triggered conflict and compromise among different middle class groups (see Hewison, 1993: 171; Pasuk and Baker, 1997: 30-41).

In fact, the change towards internationalisation or localisation would not have any problems if Thais understand the terms fundamentally. However, there is a tendency that the terms are used in opposition. A professor commented:

Whatever research is, if it is up to scratch, it is called internationalised. Thai researcher needs to aim high, not rationalise the idea of localism by making

²⁰ See more discussion about TRF in chapter 4 and 7.

²¹ TRF, <http://www.trf.or.th/en/admin.asp>, accessed on 26 June 2005.

the excuse that we do research to use inside the country to make it localised, and thus there is no need to make it internationalised.²²

From this quotation, the distinction of 'internationalisation' and 'localisation' is apparent. The interview suggests that using 'localisation' as an excuse for the research not to be 'internationalised' would end up changing nothing in qualitative terms. Such perception reflects the superficial views of academics towards both concepts, which illustrates the rhetorical nature of the debate.

Another example of the marginalisation of 'internationalisation' and 'localisation' was shown when an administrator set up a romantic picture of her institution by peculiarly blending the two concepts of internationalisation with 'Thai culture and uniqueness'. In this case, internationalisation was marginalised when attached with a sense of nationalism. Her concept of internationalisation was illustrated by the following comment:

Our aim is to be the most important educational centre in the world, like people around the world know Oxford, Cambridge and Imperial College, so they have to know our university too.²³

This extract clearly illustrates the aspiration to 'catch up with the West'. However, nationalist sentiment also surfaced:

Internationalisation refers to international standards in every dimension not only curriculum, but also infrastructure, buildings, facilities, university personnel, human resource development, and cultural preservation. The latter needs to be underlined. Preserving culture is like maintaining the country's sovereignty. We need to bring Thainess and international dimension together. We have never allowed *farang*²⁴ to be dominant here. We will keep doing what we are doing here in Thai ways. Internationalisation does not mean we have to copy *farang*, but we have to be able to compete with international countries while preserving nation's sovereignty. The duty of Thai Higher education is to preserve Thai culture and uniqueness, not only following an international world.²⁵

There are some conflicts expressed in the above interview; the internationalisation concept was firstly represented as following 'international' standards and gradually linked with the notion of 'Thainess'. The term *farang* was used in a pejorative sense, and suddenly the internationalisation concept of Thailand was portrayed as being hostile to *farang*. This reflected the linking of anti-*farang* and nationalist sentiment. Accordingly, preserving

²² Personal interview, Montri, Professor, Faculty of Science, MU and President, Kenan Institute Asia, 13 May 2003.

²³ Anonymous interview (RU).

²⁴ '*farang*' is used by Thai people to refer to Caucasians.

²⁵ Anonymous interview (RU).

the country's sovereignty means maintaining Thai culture. However, the overemphasis on Thai culture and 'Thainess' represented the limited understanding of 'internationalisation', in which learning about other cultures is equally important (Sugiyama, 1992: 99). The sense of 'Thainess' as expressed by this administrator re-emphasises what being argued about the concept of national identity of the Thais, that it is internalised at a fairly abstract level (Unger, 1998: 37). Connors (2003: 11) argued that the nature of 'Thainess' involves the state's political strategy to protect their interests, despite the rhetoric of localisation. Falk (1992: 35) mentioned that internationalisation carries both threats and opportunities to a state and that to promote or prevent prosperity is up to state's reactions. In the case of Thailand, elites seem to exploit with threats and take advantage of opportunities attached to the internationalisation discourse, while ignoring the necessity to change the structure internally.

Moreover, since the interviewee is the administrator of an open university in Thailand, the way the university was compared with elite universities like Oxford, illustrated a deep confusion about university's mission. In this regard, what internationalisation means to the interviewee is only the obsession with image-building to compete with foreign countries, regardless of the fundamental mission of the university. This is in contrast to the argument that the universities could set low targets within the continuum or not 'go international' if the agenda is not suited to their missions (McNay, 1995: 37; Van Dijk, 1995: 22; Bartell, 2003: 51, 66). This is one of the examples of Thais moving towards 'internationalisation' without a fundamental recognition of their own mission.

For Thais, this 'localism' discourse reflects nationalism, which emerged due to the economic crisis of 1997 when the national identity was called into question (Hewison, 2002: 147). There is nothing inherently flawed about 'localisation' if it is put into practice in a sensible, coherent fashion. Instead, in Thailand, the way the state's elites play with 'internationalisation' and 'localisation' according to the changing context represented the strategy of the middle class to seek self-interest in both political and economic terms (see Hewison, 1993: 171; Connors, 2003). Moreover, if 'internationalisation' entails learning about other cultures and understanding the local identities deeply, 'localisation' or nationalism would not be necessarily contested notions.

At present, as a result of a globalised world, the ambition to 'catch up with the West' continues. In educational terms, the foreign-educated, Ph.D. - trained lecturers set a new

‘gold standard’ for Thai aspirations of internationalised academic achievement.²⁶ The Thaksin government acknowledges the continuing need to send students to study abroad, as ‘international’ is considered attractive to many Thai students.²⁷ However, when Thais talk about ‘internationalisation’, they appreciate as well as fear that the concept would threaten the embedded culture, internal structure, and identity, especially those of elites.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the Thai higher education system by focusing on the interplay between state authority, the universities and the market, and their interests and embedded norms. The changes happening within Thai higher education are best explained by taking the macro-political and socio-economic changes into account. Throughout both the historical and contemporary periods, the interplay of different forces was dynamic and changed in response to the situation. This broad analysis helps to explain why Thai higher education policy was implemented in a particular way at a certain period, and serves as a macro-framework which can be used to understand the significance of a micro-study of a specific case situated within the system.

As we have seen in the discussion of Thai higher education in the historical and contemporary periods, both periods witnessed important changes in the locations of the interplay of the key related forces. The historical period saw the imposition of a ‘top-down’ model, when the state authority took complete control of the universities. The structure of Thai public universities as part of the bureaucracy created the institutional values regarding prestige, stability, and resistance to change, and these undermined intellectual development. This weakness is the result of the long-established interests of the Thai bureaucratic forces, and the patron-client relationships in which the state’s elites controlled and centralised their power, allowing no other forces to check and balance. The state elite’s interests in connection with the concept of ‘internationalisation’ are also worthy of note in that they interpreted the idea superficially in order to serve their own interests.

The contemporary period saw a gradual increase of autonomy, as can be seen in the process of deregulation through the MUA and the combining factors in both political and economic terms. As a result, the relationship between the universities and the market was reinforced while the role of the state authority decreased, at least in rhetorical terms. In practice, these

²⁶ Interviews with several administrators in both public and private universities, see list of names in Appendix A.

²⁷ Interviews with several Thai students, see list of names in Appendix A.

locations within the 'triangle of coordination' have blurred boundaries. The bureaucratic nature of the 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' spheres has restrained the development of Thai higher education to a significant degree. The period also saw a widening of the political space: other interest groups, such as businessmen, technocrats, politicians, the middle class and NGOs were able to call the Thai state to account. However, the weakness of the political structure and increasing economic growth led these groups pursue their own agendas. The 1997 reform process was essentially an attempt by various social groups to demand an improvement of the structural inefficiencies of the Thai state. However, the agendas, concerning political, educational and higher educational reforms became politicised, with the result that the bargaining process was compromised and was therefore not able to fundamentally reform the structure. Moreover, the deep bureaucratic roots within the public universities continued to constrain the process of change, especially on the issue of making the public universities 'autonomous', and subject to assessment by other forces. In this regard, the shift from the historical to the contemporary period has not fundamentally affected the way institutions acted in accordance with their norms and values. The inherited weaknesses have persisted. As for the 'internationalisation', state officials as well as new emerging groups used it as a tool to pursue economic interests. At the same time, they were reluctant to accept fundamental changes and feared not being 'up to international standard' and loss of national identity. This was demonstrated through their localist inclinations post-1997 economic crisis.

As a result of macro-political and socio-economic changes, the locations of the authoritative forces within the 'triangle of coordination' have shifted from state authority towards university autonomy and the market. However, the poorly developed formal structures at the parliamentary and bureaucratic levels have not changed, nor have the embedded bureaucratic norms within the Thai 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy'. In their present location, therefore, the universities enjoy bureaucratic prestige, while seeking to realise their interests within the market sphere. This explanation summarises the current condition of the Thai higher education context in which the internationalisation process is embedded. The next chapter utilises this framework as a basis for the discussion of the implementation process of the internationalisation of higher education policy in Thailand.

Chapter Four

Rationale of Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Thai context

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to answer the question of why Thai higher education adopted internationalisation. Since the internal situation of a country plays a role in shaping the nation's decisions (Ogata, 1992: 64; Doern *et al.*, 1996: 4), and since the 'substantive setting' and 'position in the international system' affect the way a country adopts internationalisation (see Falk, 1992: 37; Hook and Weiner, 1992: 1), this chapter explores the specific reasons in the Thai case.

As in many other countries, imperative economic demands constitute the main factor driving the Thai state to adopt internationalisation (see Källemark and Van der Wende, 1997a: 28; Elliott, 1998). Moreover, the political and socio-economic changes experienced by the country and the location of the Thai higher education system within Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' have had an effect on the way institutions and individuals have chosen to perform with respect to internationalisation. This chapter illustrates the reactions of Thai higher education actors to internationalisation, by looking at two specific case studies on 'international' teaching programmes and on research. Within the country's 'substantive setting', two main factors are found which drove Thailand towards 'internationalisation': the macro-socio-economic and political driving forces and the institutions' need to generate fee-income within the market sphere. In Thailand, the economic rationale drove the elites to pursue self-interest, and in this chapter we examine the interests of bureaucrats, technocrats, businessmen, and upper- and middle-class students, and explain the reasons for the neglect of the quality dimension of 'internationalisation'. The way the policy has been adopted and interpreted has served the quantitative demands of the market rather than 'qualitative internationalisation'.

In this chapter, the discussion comprises four main parts. The first part discusses the reasons for the adoption of internationalisation at both national and institutional levels, stemming from the country's macro-political and socio-economic contexts. The second part explores how the rationale has been influenced by the interplay of related forces within higher education. The third part discusses the intrinsic reasons for the behaviour of institutions and

individuals who still hold on to the embedded bureaucratic structure and norms. The final part summarises and attempts to understand the reasons the nation, institutions and individuals have adopted the internationalisation of higher education by examining them in the Thai context.

4.2 Macro-political and socio-economic changes

A country's socio-economic context influences the perceptions and choices of policy-making elites at both national and institutional levels (see Grindle and Thomas, 1991). In this section, I argue that the national environment, in which economic forces play an important role, is one of the key factors influencing the Thai state authority and the universities to adopt internationalisation. Other rationales, such as the academic, operate at the institutional level; however, these are less important.

4.2.1 The national level

In the current period, the internationalisation of higher education has been underpinned by the economic rationale in both the global and domestic contexts. The end of the Cold War witnessed the growing dominance of the economic agenda as a result of the changing interests of the US (De Wit, 2002; Van der Wende, 2001: 250). In many other countries around the world, the economic rationale became the underlying principle of the internationalisation of higher education (see Knight and De Wit, 1997: 174; Scott, 1998; Källemark and Van der Wende, 1997a: 28; Elliott, 1998). This section explains how the Thai state also moved towards internationalisation because of these economic demands.

During the period of the Cold War and US assistance, the Thai state's elites' adoption of internationalisation was due to international political forces as well as a need to fortify the military-state elites' political and economic interests. At the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the economic boom in the latter half of the 1980s, the rationale of 'internationalisation' shifted towards the economic in order to serve a wider group of people, mainly businessmen and the growing middle class. At that time, Thailand was increasing its commitment to foreign trade and reliance on foreign investments as a result of the development of the manufacturing and export sectors. This situation forced the Thai state to prioritise the drive towards internationalisation (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 180). In Thai society, a number of cultural influences were imported from the West, including music, entertainment complexes and lifestyles. Urban Thais were attracted by anything that could be called 'international' during the economic boom and 'internationalisation' was

seen as a means of enhancing people's socio-economic status (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 180). In accordance with the intrinsic economic interests of the concept, the internationalisation policy promoted and became a means for the country to improve its economic status and compete with other countries.¹ From the latter half of the 1980s onwards, 'internationalisation' was considered to be a 'new catchword' and was seen as 'a term guiding the future development of Thai higher education' as well as to 'help Thailand realize her dreams of becoming a leading industrialized country in the region' (Amornvich and Wichit, 1997: 164).

There are two key factors which drove the Thai higher education policy-makers to incorporate the concept of internationalisation into the Higher Education National Development Plans. The first is related to external forces: the internationalisation strategy is a result of 'push strategies' on the part of international development organisations.² The second is internal forces, which emerged from growing demands of business sectors due to the economic situation within the country.³ The following describes the background and provides the analytical data to support the argument.

In 1990 the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education first appeared in the higher education long-term (15-year) plan (1990-2004) (see Appendix B). The issue became further developed in the seventh (1992-1996) and the eighth (1997-2001) higher education national development plans (see Appendix C, D). The MUA also held a national seminar on 'internationalisation of Thai higher education' in 1991. Representatives from international organisations and from public and private universities nationwide joined the seminar (MUA, 1991: preface). This seminar was considered 'the first of its kind' and a follow-up to the long-term plan to make Thai universities aware of the current and future trends of higher education and to jointly formulate an appropriate action plan (MUA, 1991: preface). The key role of this seminar was to help shape the way in which the Thai state developed its response to internationalisation.

The formulation process for Thailand's first higher education long-term plan where the internationalisation policy first appeared, and the first national seminar on 'internationalisation of Thai higher education' were encouraged by international agencies.

¹ Personal interview, Pichate, Director, Macro Analysis Branch, Bureau of Policy and Planning, MUA, 27 February 2003.

² Personal interviews, Porntip, Director, Bureau of Higher Education Standards, MUA, 7 November 2002; Sumate, Senior Adviser and Specialist for Policy and Planning, MUA, 13 December 2002.

³ Personal interviews, Porntip; Pichate, Director, Macro Analysis Branch, Bureau of Policy and Planning, 27 February 2003.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funds for eight million baht for the running of the workshop, and the World Bank, the Japanese government, the Thailand-United States Educational Foundation, the IDP of Australia and the British Council provided experts and technical assistance to aid the formulation process for the plan as well as to help at the seminar (MUA, 1990: 2; MUA, 1991: acknowledgement). The encouragement of these international development organisations reflected the important role which external forces play in the development of Thai HE policy. This kind of support is representative of global trends in higher education development, which include strong economic motivations (see Knight and De Wit, 1997: 174; Scott, 1998; Kälve mark and Van der Wende 1997a: 28).

However, it needs to be understood that the trends created by the international development agencies represent part of a picture. The internal economic situation, which was already established at the time in Thailand, served as another key factor for the Thai state to formulate an internationalisation policy. The demands from elements of the private sector such as the Computer Industry Association, the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Thai Industries, and the Banking Association of Thailand pressure universities to reform their curricula, strengthen graduates' skills in the area of IT and other 'learning skills', and focus on the international dimension and future trends (Amornvich and Wichit, 1997: 164-165). These demands created a climate in which the proposals from the conference would be more likely to be accepted.

One can see from all the higher educational plans from 1990 onwards and the seminar held by the MUA that there is a real need to internationalise, a result of the changing global and national situation. The discourse of 'global challenges' has become prevalent in Thai bureaucracy; the MUA's long-term plan is peppered with such terms as 'global awareness', 'economic competitiveness', 'international-level competence' and 'specific skills' (see Appendix B). As Amornvich and Wichit (1997: 164) state: 'A number of milestone activities during this period characterise this internationalisation movement and sent a clear message across the entire system regarding this new priority for higher education'. The global economic trends clearly corresponded with the country's domestic economic boom.

Similarly, the objective of the national seminar was to discuss how internationalisation would be able to help Thailand to catch up with a changing global situation, as the Minister of University Affairs' inaugural address made clear:

As for higher education, it is perceived as the essential key to develop high-level manpower who will be able to introduce modern technologies in order to keep abreast of and adapt to this changing world. [...] It is therefore gratifying to learn that the issue on 'Internationalization' has been brought into focus in the hope that the provision of our higher education will be preparing our graduates to have wider vision with global perspectives (Yingpan, 28 January 1991, cited in MUA, 1991: 47).

The internationalisation envisaged in the seventh and the eighth higher education national development plans also reflected the importance of higher education as a means to implement economic development and suggested that internationalisation would help to upgrade academic standards to meet international-level competence (see Appendix C, D). Thus, the Thai state chose to support the liberalisation of the market and offered no resistance to internationalisation (see Ogata, 1992: 63; Doern *et al.*, 1996: 4).

The above outline indicates that the economic situation was a key factor driving the Thai state to pursue internationalisation. When the Thai economy started to boom and the political space grew beyond the bureaucratic forces, the interplay of the Thai state and the market was reinforced (see Anek, 1992: 13-15; Chai-Anan, 1995, 1997). It was clear that the state was encouraging the internationalisation of higher education to serve economic and business demands, indicating that it was pursuing economic rather than political and social development (Girling, 1996: 18; Chai-Anan, 2001: 85), and that it perceived higher education as contributing to the nation's economic development (see Varunee, 1990: 261). This development shows one of the state's roles was to impose the general interests of economic growth and political order over vested interests (see Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 29-30). The question arises, how did these contexts affect Thai universities?

4.2.2 The institutional level

Thai universities and individual lecturers have various functions: to serve the state and society, and to pursue their academic missions (see Suchart, 2000: 2). The reasons that influence their policy choices are thus various and mixed. However, at present they are being overwhelmed by economic demands. The role of Thai universities is primarily economic: their chief function is to serve the country's economic development, but they also have to maintain their own academic missions. The following section discusses the two main interlinked rationales: academic and economic, by examining the two case studies on the international programmes and on research.

4.2.2.1 The academic rationale

De Wit and Knight (1997: 174) found that the academic rationale played a secondary role to the economic one as well as having an influence only at institutional and individual levels. In Thailand, the same situation obtains. This study's findings show that although individuals retain their intrinsic academic needs: to teach in international programmes or to conduct research, these academic motivations cannot make a great impact in the current socio-economic context, which forces them to seek to ensure their survival. Some lecturers who teach in international programmes described their situation:

I used to work in a business company, but after I obtained my Master's degree, I wanted to share my new knowledge with the institution from which I graduated. I think that to be a lecturer is another way of improving oneself.⁴

I love to teach here in the international programmes. I love being a lecturer since in this job I compete with myself, unlike in private companies, where we have to compete with others. Meeting with students keeps me active all the time. I can learn from students, since sometimes they come up with questions, especially foreign students, and when I can't answer, I have to search for extra knowledge to explain the point to them.⁵

These interviews reveal individual academic needs and the personal satisfactions to be gained from teaching (see McNay, 1995: 36). These, however, are not the only reasons universities establish 'international programmes'.⁶ In the same way, in the area of research, academics engage in research because of their intrinsic interests, which are vital for the development of research in any country. The following extracts illustrate the interests of Thai academics within the universities:

I think research is part of our mission as university's lecturers. If an institution only provides teaching, it doesn't deserve to be called a university. If universities have graduate degree programmes, research should be a must. (...) I sometimes think that it would be hard to research the topic we're interested in if the funding agencies didn't support us. But we can certainly adapt and adjust our work from a small project to a point where we can find a big sum of money to fund the work we aspire to do.⁷

⁴ Personal interview, Medhee, lecturer, BBA, AU, 3 June 2003.

⁵ Personal interview, Pennapar, lecturer, BUIC, BU, 21 March 2003.

⁶ The argument mainly refers to the BBA international programmes in six selected universities where economic development played an important role. It could also include the international programmes established from the latter half of the 1980s onwards, because the dominance of the economic rationale started at that time. Some international programmes may have been developed for purely academic reasons, but it is beyond the scope of the thesis to consider all 520 international programmes.

⁷ Personal interview, Thiti, lecturer, Faculty of Science, CU, 23 March 2003.

I'm lucky that after getting a PhD abroad, I came back to my department and found a couple of my seniors who are interested in the same topic and we cooperated and managed to get funding from outside.⁸

The above comments illustrate the personal satisfaction, self-development and ideological commitment Thai academics find in research (see McNay, 1995: 36). While these are important, however, they cannot be the only factors in a research programme's success. The interviews also touch upon other factors such as research funding agencies and colleagues. These contextual factors perform as parallel factors permitting individuals to maintain their academic interests. In such cases, the academic rationale remains but is less important in explaining the adoption of 'internationalisation'.

4.2.2.2 The economic rationale

International Programmes

One of the reasons universities initiated 'international programmes',⁹ especially those established during and after the latter half of the 1980s, needs to be understood within the context of economic demands, which should also be seen as demands for a wider space allowing the political-economic voices of the Thai middle class to be heard (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128; Girling, 1996: 44-45; Nidhi in Girling, 1996: 56). Since the Thai private sector required graduates to have a vision of both international affairs and future developments, the curricula of Thai universities needed improvement (Amornvich and Wichit, 1997: 164-165). In response to these trends, the number of international programmes grew rapidly (from 14 in 1984 to 520 in 2004; see figure 8), showing that the economic boom played a key role. The growing dominance of the economic rationale is in accordance with McNay's (1995: 38) 'curriculum/ customer' driving forces, through which 'new skills and competencies in languages and international subjects' are established.

In Thailand, the first Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) 'international' programme¹⁰ was instituted in 1972 by Assumption University before the economic boom. Its rationale was thus related to the original mission of the university as part of the founding principles of the Assumption Business Administration College.¹¹ However, the programmes

⁸ Personal interview, Narumon, lecturer, Faculty of Science, MU, 14 May 2003.

⁹ For further discussion on the definition of an 'international programme' in the Thai context see chapter 5, section 5.1/ One of the key characteristics of these programmes in Thailand is that English is used as a medium of instruction.

¹⁰ I will use BBA to refer to the Bachelor of Business Administration 'international' programme throughout the thesis. This is a common usage in Thailand.

¹¹ Personal interview, Chavalit, Vice President for Administrative Affairs, AU, 25 April 2003.

which were developed in the latter half of the 1980s have been very much driven by economic imperatives, as was acknowledged in the recent prospectus, which emphasised the need for academic programmes to respond to ‘globalisation’ and the ‘increased demand for multi-lingual communication’.¹² A Bangkok University administrator noted that the ‘BBA English programme’ created in 1984 was a response to the survey on the market’s demand for graduates with English language proficiency.¹³ In 1990, following a faculty survey on stakeholders’ requirements, Thammasat University developed its programme to build up new skills for students, including social skills and effective communication skills in English.¹⁴

In these programmes, the economic drive towards internationalisation, the advancement of technology, globalisation, and the expansion of Thai businesses’ global reach were explicitly used as discourses to identify the reasons for building up international programmes in the fields of commerce and business administration.¹⁵ The growth of the international programmes in business administration was clearly linked to the nation’s macro-economic growth. One of the common rationales used worldwide with respect to business administration field makes reference to the embedded influence of capitalism (see Van der Wende, 1996: 156). Findings in Australia, Denmark, France and the Netherlands report the highest distribution of internationalised curricula in economic and business disciplines in those countries (Van der Wende, 1996: 155). Regarding Thailand, the high number of commercial and business administration programmes, which reached 96 out of 520 in 2003, indicate the importance of the country’s socio-economic environment (MUA, 2003a).

However, in the Thai context, the extra demand for such programmes is based upon a growing need for graduates competent in the English language, not only in their own discipline. Owing to the growing foreign investment in the country during and after the economic boom, this language proficiency became one of the country’s practical needs. The interviews suggest that the Thai private sector insisted that graduates should be equipped

¹² Prospectus, AU, Thailand.

¹³ Personal interview, Mathana, Vice President for Academic Affairs, BU, 4 February 2003.

¹⁴ Personal interview, Kulapatra, Director, BBA International Programme, TU, 17 April 2003.

¹⁵ Pamphlet, ‘BBA International Program, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, TU, Internationalization and value creation, 2003:5; Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, CU (<http://www.acc.chula.ac.th/eng/History.asp>, accessed on 3 February 2003); brochure ‘BBA (English Program), The Institute of International Studies (IIS), RU; Curriculum of Bachelor of Business Administration (Management) English program, 1994, Faculty of Business Administration, KBU, p.3; Bangkok University International College Bulletin 2002-2003, International Higher Education for a Global Student, p.19.

with proficiency in English.¹⁶ The establishment of international programmes, especially in business administration, serves this purpose. Before this type of programme was instituted, the private sector targeted graduates who had majored in the Faculty of Arts of Chulalongkorn or the Faculty of Liberal Arts of Thammasat. However, these graduates tend to lack basic business knowledge and skills in using business English;¹⁷ in contrast, the BBA international programmes are designed to provide well-trained potential employees. Therefore, the BBA students tend to get a job more easily than other graduates due to their English proficiency and self-confidence.¹⁸ One of the main reasons that Assumption graduates are accepted nationwide is their English proficiency.¹⁹ It should be noted, however, that Assumption has been the only university in Thailand to offer all programmes in English since it was first established in 1972. Thus, the salary rate of Assumption graduates matches the rates earned by graduates of other famous public universities, subject to good academic attainment.²⁰

Thus English language proficiency is a passport to success in the labour market. A common idea among Thai students who had enrolled in the BBA is that it will be able to give them the opportunity to better their English proficiency. Two such students explained their choice:

I chose the international programme because I want to improve my English language. Nowadays English is very important; every company is looking for employees who have good English, and I want to work in the export sector.²¹

Nowadays, we have to use English in everyday life. Studying here is good because I don't have to go private to take an English course. I plan to further my studies abroad. I think here is a good place to prepare myself.²²

The economic boom and the growth of the business sector led to the establishment of international programmes; a related factor was the intrinsic need for personnel with English language proficiency.

¹⁶ Personal interview, Vera, Managing Partner, Verasu Limited Partnership, 9 June 2003; Chanpim, Vice President and Assistant Manager, International Branch Administration Department, Bangkok. Bank Public Company Limited, 23 June 2003; Khwanta, HR Manager, Legal and Tax Consultants Ltd., Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 11 June 2003; Saipin, Director of Social Affairs and Protocol, The Peninsular Bangkok, 28 June 2003; Wanrouy, Vice President, anonymous company, 10 May 2003.

¹⁷ Chanpim, Saipin interviews.

¹⁸ Khwanta interview.

¹⁹ Wanrouy interview.

²⁰ Chanpim, Khwanta interviews.

²¹ Focus group interview, Wannasiri, student, BBA, IIS, RU, 11 March 2003.

²² Focus group interview, Suparath, student, BBA, BU, 24 January 2003.

The objectives of some institutions are clear; Thammasat, for example, did not create its programme to improve only the students' English language; it was designed to prepare them to compete in the international business world.²³ Nevertheless many Thais regard the international programmes as providing opportunities for them to improve their English. Wilawan (1999: 25) has pointed out the differences between 'international programmes' in Thailand and in Western countries: the former focus on English language tuition and the latter emphasises the content of the curriculum. Thai students generally cannot distinguish an 'international programme' from an 'English-language programme', and they do not expect much more than having English as the language of instruction and sometimes being taught by foreign lecturers. They do not consider criteria such as adequate internationalised curriculum content or sufficient numbers of foreign students before they apply. Their decision to enrol on an 'international programme' seems to be based on the prospect of developing their English language and, later, of applying for well-paid jobs.²⁴

In addition, the weakness of Thai graduates' English skills and their need to improve their ability by means of international programmes represents a general failure of the Thai education system to provide effective English language tuition. The failure has been illustrated in the 1999 national quality assessment of education, at upper secondary level, which examines the achievement of Grade 12 students on the average score by subject: the lowest average score was 23 per cent in English writing (ONEC, 2001: 51). The problem seems to be that the improvement of English language takes place at the expense of the international programme which aims to add international content to the curriculum. It has been noted that a programme taught in a foreign language is not automatically perceived as being internationalised (Van der Wende, 1996: 18; see also Schoorman, 2000). Moreover, if students have an inadequate competence in English language, they will have problems in learning the content.²⁵

Another factor motivating Thai students to enrol in international programmes is their desire to enhance their social status. The number of urban middle-class Thais grew during the economic boom, and these students have sought to associate themselves with the 'international' concept and 'international' activities, using these as a ladder to improve their status (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 180). This behaviour reflects the same norms as those evident in the early period, when royal elites and civil servants were sent to obtain a

²³ Kulapatra interview (TU).

²⁴ Focus group interview, Pornying, Suparath, students, BBA, BU, 24 January 2003; personal interview, Boonsiri, student, MBA, IIS, RU, 27 January 2003; Patcharin, student, MBA, IIS, RU, 24 February 2003.

²⁵ Kulapatra, Pennapar interviews (TU, BU).

Western education abroad (see Likhit, 1978: 120; Varunee, 1990: 252). The following interview demonstrates this point:

At first I had no idea about the 'inter' programme, but my parents wanted me to study in the 'inter' programme. First, I'll be able to improve my English language. Second, since I can't pass the entrance examination, the 'inter' programme can compensate on that point; it's better than going into a Thai programme in a private university. At least, they can tell their friends that I'm studying in the 'inter' programme.²⁶

The interview shows firstly that both the student and her parents expect the international programme to improve her English. Second, they expect that the international programme will not only help in opening better job opportunities, but will also act to cosmetically enhance the students' social status. Given that these students have to pay high tuition fees,²⁷ these perceptions reveal the obsession of upper- and middle-class Thais with being 'international' as well as their linkage with capitalism (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 180; Girling, 1996: 44-45; Nidhi in Girling, 1996: 56).

Another student expressed a similar opinion, reflecting how the concept of an 'international programme' can become trivialised,

Students in the Thai programme look at us and think we're 'hi-so';²⁸ showy, flirty and western-minded. The difference might be that we have more self-confidence; I mean we're influenced by western culture a lot. Some girls here think it's OK to sit on a man's lap, but when some did, students from the Thai programme all turned to stare at us, surprised and turned back to gossip. I'm not saying that we're all like that; only a few behave in such a way. I think when we entered this programme, people around us formed our attitude and behaviour. We've been changed and we don't care. I think people's perceptions affect us a lot.²⁹

The interview first shows that other students perceive this group as coming from rich families. Second, it reflects the superficial attitudes of Thai students regarding the changes brought about by 'Western culture'. What tends to interest them in 'being international' is the externals of behaviour and appearance; they also tend to accept 'Western ideas' uncritically (see Sulak, 1991: 51; Barme, 1993: 23). Third, their behaviour is influenced by the perceptions of society, which also has a superficial understanding of the meaning of

²⁶ Focus group interview, Wanwalai, student, BBA, IIS, RU, 12 March 2003.

²⁷ Generally, the tuition fees for the full-fee programmes are about five times higher than those for normal Thai programmes: for example, the tuition fees (including extra charges for sports/library/student activities etc.) for the BBA (international programme) and the BBA (Thai programme) of Thammasat are approximately 100,000 baht and 18,570 baht per year respectively.

²⁸ 'Hi-so' is short for 'high society'; it is the slang term used to refer to rich or upper-class Thais.

²⁹ Personal interview, Petcharat, graduate, BBA, TU, 24 April 2003.

'international' in the Thai context. In Thailand, such superficial perceptions have to be understood by reference to the interests and values of the elites bounded by the current socio-economic context. This argument is in accord with the OECD's study that 'a foreign English-language education can provide status and positional advantages and perhaps superior quality' to students in East and Southeast Asian countries (OECD, 2004: 146).

Since the demands of both the business sector and students emphasise the programmes' more superficial aspects, such as to improve English language competence and enhance social status, it is not surprising that universities would tend to develop their 'international programmes' within the bounds of that context.³⁰ Since the BBA programmes have been created to serve mainly Thai students, and since Thai students account for between about 85 and 98 per cent of the total, there is an emphasis on improving the students' English language.³¹ The situation in Thailand is different from that in other countries such as France or the Netherlands, where from the beginning the programmes used English as the language of instruction, but with the aim of attracting foreign students. In Thailand, the English is used to attract mainly Thai students.³²

Thai students may be divided into two categories: besides the category discussed above, there are students with international experience such as those who had graduated from high schools abroad or international schools in Thailand where English is used as the main language. For example, in 2002, Thammasat's BBA programme was attended by students in the following proportions: 66 per cent were Thai students from Thai high schools; 17 per cent were from international schools in Thailand, and the remaining 17 per cent were from foreign schools.³³ The demands of Thai students with an international school background, and those of foreign students, would obviously be different from those of Thai students with a local background, since only the last group would prioritise improving their English language skills and enhancing their 'social status'. As for the other two groups, if they want to stay in Thailand, these programmes are the only ones in which they can enrol.

In Thailand, however, due to the dominant numbers of Thai students, the requirements regarding English language and social status have become a key aspect of the programmes,

³⁰ Personal interview, Senee, Vice President for Planning and Development, KBU, 29 January 2003; Pornpip interview (MUA).

³¹ Data from the six selected universities.

³² The Thai case is different from, for example, the Dutch case, where international programmes are 'forced' by the 'principle of reciprocity in exchange programmes' and where one of the rationales of the curricula is that it should serve incoming foreign students (Van der Wende, 1996: 109). In the Dutch case, the number of foreign students in the selected internationalised curricula studied by Van der Wende (1996: 117) accounted for 80 per cent of the total and came mainly from the USA, Canada and European countries.

³³ BBA, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, TU, pamphlet, 2002.

diminishing the universities' need to develop curricula to meet the various demands of different types of students. The following section on international programmes (see section 4.3.1) regarding the universities' need to seek fee income will discuss this point in detail.

Research

The influence of the political and socio-economic changes of the last two decades on the Thai state and institutions can be seen in the country's research direction. The political space, which had grown beyond the bureaucratic forces by the latter half of the 1980s, shifted the research path from 'applied research' serving the local and national problems embedded since Sarit's military government to a discourse emphasising the quality, competitiveness and international standards of research.³⁴ For example, the Eighth Higher Education Development Plan (1996-2000) put research under the section on quality and excellence (MUA, 1997: 18-30). The rationale underpinning this change lay not only in economic but also in political factors inside the country.

Chapter three described the reduction in bureaucratic forces at the end of the 1980s, together with the rising forces of the business sector, the technocratic elite and the interest groups (Anek, 1992: 13-15; Chai-Anan, 1995, 1997; Surin and McCargo, 1997: 147; Pasuk and Baker, 1997: 21-41); this also affected research. A key change was the initiative taken by independent research funding agencies, which did not have bureaucratic status, during Anand Panyarachun's government from 1991 to 1992. At that time, three research funding agencies were created: the Thailand Research Fund (TRF), the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), and the Health System Research Institute (HSRI).³⁵

A lecturer noted the changing trends in the Thai research situation:

Young lecturers who graduated abroad now attempt to conduct research. It looks OK now in comparison with the past, when lecturers had difficulties in getting funded; the environment didn't allow that to happen. Nowadays, due to mass demands, it's the trend that everyone is interested in. The young generation has an easier path to follow. We have a start of ten to twenty metres out of the hundred while the previous lecturers had to start from scratch.³⁶

³⁴ Personal interview, Sumate, Senior Advisor and Specialist for Policy and Planning, MUA, 13 December 2002.

³⁵ In this thesis, I discuss the TRF since it is the agency that supports basic research and is very involved with academics in universities: 95 per cent of TRF researchers are lecturers in universities (personal interview, Vichai, Programme Director, Academic Research Division, TRF, 3 December, 2002).

³⁶ Thiti interview.

The interview suggests that the overall picture of research in the current period has been improved. The increasing importance of research development is therefore related to imperative political and socio-economic demands; the interviewee spoke of 'the trend' and 'mass demands'. Chai-Anan (1994: 49-50) explains that the establishment of these research agencies was a fruit of the decrease of military and civil servants' power and the increased influence of business and technocrats after the 'Black May' events of 1992. He further notes that this event was an important turning point in Thai history, when it was realised that the 'vicious cycle' between 'knowledge' and 'elites' power' had to stop. Before the change, the relationship between 'knowledge' and 'power' served the narrow objectives of academics and bureaucrats, who exchanged personal reciprocity. After the power of the military and bureaucratic system has been reduced and economic growth had begun to increase, academics started to rely on businessmen while businessmen needed to make knowledge-based decisions.

With the emergence of the TRF, the basic research conducted by universities became important. The TRF is considered to be the 'first wave' in the attempt to raise Thai research to international standards. The government provided the initial seed money, 10,000 million baht, from which the TRF gained the interest around 1,000 million baht per year, to support research grants.³⁷ One of the TRF's requirements in giving money to support basic research depends on the condition that lecturers need to publish a paper in an international journal which is seen as an indicator of the successful completion of the project.³⁸ Thus on the one hand, the criteria became more transparent, moving away from the strict bureaucratic process of a bureaucratic unit like the National Research Council (NRC).³⁹ On the other hand, such a criterion reflects the dominance of the scientific disciplines where publishing in international journals is used as an indicator. A university administrator noted:

At first, the TRF used the same criteria for both science and social science: the candidates should have published papers and the research results should be published. As a result, those in social science rarely get research grants from the TRF. I think it's not appropriate to use the same criteria to cover both disciplines since the nature of these subjects is different. We in social science only started to get grants at a later date. I can understand that it's difficult to change the TRF's mind because the TRF also has to follow the agenda of the state, which now has an interest in commercial research.⁴⁰

³⁷ Personal interview, Kamchad, Director, Royal Golden Jubilee PhD. Programme, TRF, 3 December 2002.

³⁸ TRF, <http://www/trf.or.th/fund>, accessed on 27 July 2005.

³⁹ For further discussion of the NRC see chapter 7.

⁴⁰ Personal interview, Sermsak, Vice President, Planning and International Affairs, 4 June 2003.

The interview shows the influence of the economic driver on the state's agenda as well as the way the TRF granted funds for research. The figures show that since 1993, the academic research division of the TRF has granted 1,031 awards, 944 of which have been in the biological and medical sciences, the physical sciences and engineering; the remaining 87 have been granted to the social sciences and the humanities.⁴¹ While the sciences are favoured by the state's agenda of pursuing national economic interests, the sciences tend to consider themselves more 'cutting edge' than other disciplines, aiming to force the humanities and social sciences to achieve similar standards. The practices of the TRF have to be understood in a particular context: the TRF was driven by Mahidol medical academics, most notably the key figure Prawase Wasi, who represented the voice of the technocrats, appearing after the events of May 1992, and who continually made their voices heard in the debates on the 1997 constitution (see McCargo, 2002b: 7, 12). In the 1990s, the voices of those technocrats who led the research agenda came to prevail. In this regard, the political and economic situation of the country introduced the new ideas and drove the internationalisation towards the fulfillment of the economic agenda. Chapter seven will discuss this internationally-driven research implementation process in detail.

4.3 The Interplay of related forces within higher education

As in many other countries, higher education in Thailand has moved towards a reliance on market forces and a situation where the state has reduced the budget and urged universities to rely on the market (see Salter and Tapper, 1994 in Kirby-Harris, 2003: 357; Dill, 1997a: 163; Gornitzka, 2000: 201). In line with this global trend, the internationalisation of higher education has been regarded as a means of generating income for the nation and its institutions (De Wit, 1997: 31; Yin Ching Leong, 1997: 118; Van Damme, 2001: 420-1; Altbach, 2002: 29). This strategy has also been adopted in Thailand. Although the internationalisation of Thai higher education is not marketable on a global scale, unlike the cases of the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, and the Netherlands, where higher education is an export product (see Kälvermark and Van der Wende, 1997a: 28; Elliott, 1998), Thai universities are able to generate income through the concept of 'internationalisation' mainly from Thai students. This section discusses the interplay of universities, state authority, and market forces, which affects the way internationalisation is perceived and pursued.

⁴¹ Data provided by the Academic Research Division, TRF, 3 December 2002.

4.3.1 International Programme

Another important reason for establishing 'international programmes' can be found in the universities' objective of generating fee income.

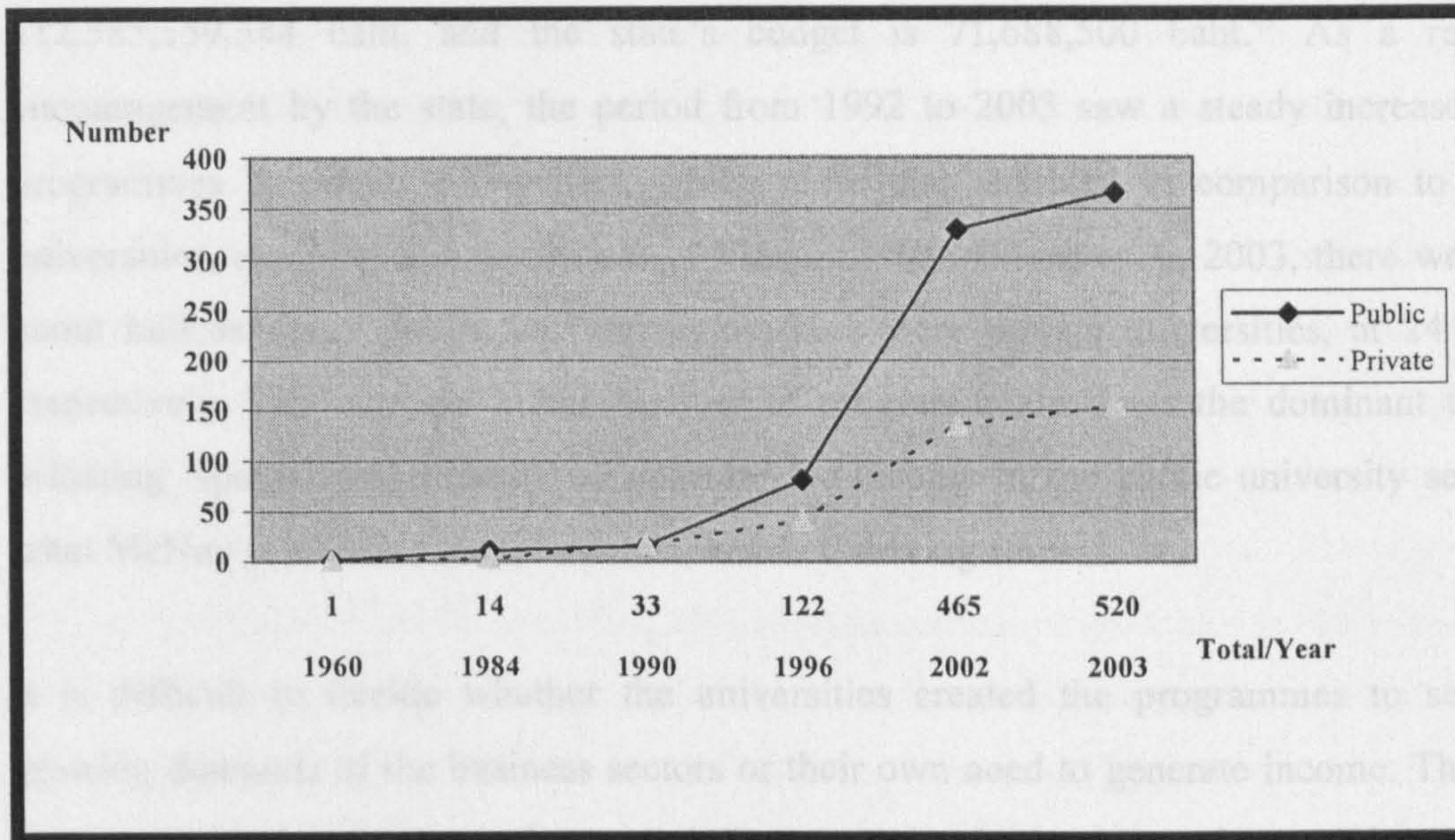


Figure 8: Growth trends of international programmes in Thai universities between 1960 and 2003

Source: Tong-In *et al.*, 1995: 28-32; MUA, 2003a

Figure 8 shows the significant increase in the programmes begun since the early 1990s and especially after 1995. There are two main explanations for this phenomenon. First, the increase is a result of the political and socio-economic changes of the latter half of the 1980s, as previously outlined. Second, an explanation can be found in the internal processes within the higher education system. Market forces started to play a significant role in the early 1990s, and the Thai state gave public universities the authority to approve their own programmes in 1992 (MUA, 1995: 1-2). The state also deregulated the extra funding that public universities gained during the sixth plan (1987-1991) (MUA, 1992a: 197), and opened opportunities for universities to develop 'full fee' programmes.⁴²

A 'full fee' programme is one where a university can charge students a full tuition fee because these programmes are not subsidised by the state.⁴³ Moreover, this extra money does not need to be declared to the Ministry of Finance, since it is regarded as the

⁴² 'Full fee' programmes is used interchangeably with 'special' and 'self-supporting' programme.

⁴³ Generally, the tuition fees for the full-fee programmes are about five times higher than those for normal Thai programmes: for example, the tuition fees (including extra charges for sports/library/ student activities etc.) for the BBA (international programme) and the BBA (Thai programme) at Thammasat are approximately 100,000 baht and 18,570 baht per year respectively (BBA (international programme), Thammasat, 2003a and Office of the Registrar, Thammasat, <http://regofc.tu.ac.th>, accessed on 7 September 2003b).

university's revenue. The 'international programme' is categorised under this type.⁴⁴ The budget figures from Chulalongkorn's Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy shows the extent to which an important public university relies on fee income. The Faculty has its own annual revenue of 115,729,314.26 baht, of which students' fees account for 112,585,559.344 baht, and the state's budget is 71,688,500 baht.⁴⁵ As a result of encouragement by the state, the period from 1992 to 2003 saw a steady increase of the programmes in public universities, which more than doubled in comparison to private universities, reaching 366 as against 154 respectively. However, in 2003, there were only about half as many public universities as there were private universities, at 24 and 54 respectively. The increase in the number of programmes reflects the dominant trend of initiating 'special programmes' to generate fee income in the public university sector, or what McNay (1995: 36) terms 'extrinsic/market' driving forces.

It is difficult to decide whether the universities created the programmes to serve the growing demands of the business sectors or their own need to generate income. These two driving forces, however, run in parallel. For example, the Institute of International Studies (IIS) at Ramkhamhaeng was created in 1999, when students nationwide were demanding the opportunity to take higher degrees were increasing, especially after the 1997 economic crisis. A programme administrator observed that the aim of the programme was to serve those students who could not afford to further their studies by helping them to pursue their studies within Thailand on courses employing foreign lecturers and thus helping them to save expenses, especially after 1997.⁴⁶ It is clear that universities were eager to serve their potential customers. Likewise, a Chulalongkorn administrator noted that the chief benefit of the BBA international programmes was that they were much cheaper than studying abroad.⁴⁷ An Assumption administrator remarked that the economic crisis increased rather than diminished the number of applicants.⁴⁸ Also, a Bangkok University administrator noted that the programmes were created to serve the demands of Thai students, as the marketing major was chosen to be the first to be developed as an international programme due to the large number of students waiting to further their studies in that discipline.⁴⁹ Thus the programmes were designed to serve Thai students during the economic crisis and to serve the growing demand for business studies, and this shows that the universities were

⁴⁴ Pichate interview (MUA).

⁴⁵ CU, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, Annual Report (1 October 2002 – 30 September 2003) <http://web.acc.chula.ac.th/>, accessed on 2 August 2005.

⁴⁶ Personal interview. Piboon, Director, IIS, RU, 19 February 2003.

⁴⁷ Personal interview, Tharee, Associate Professor, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, CU, 28 May 2003.

⁴⁸ Personal interview, Vinai, Dean, Graduate School of Business, AU, 15 May 2003.

⁴⁹ Mathana interview (BU).

committed to satisfying their customers and generating revenue. Moreover, the 'international programmes' were regarded as a means of consolidate Thai appreciation of western education (see Varunee, 1990: 252).

Thai universities, however, while attempting to generate fee income tended to ignore the fundamental characteristics of the 'international programme', as is shown by their indiscriminately naming their programmes 'English programmes' and 'international programmes'. This was partly due to the MUA's inefficiency and partly due to the universities' intrinsic need to develop programmes that would meet the requirements of the Thai business sector and of students regarding both the improvement of English language skills and 'going international'.

In theory, the difference between English and international programmes is that in the former the focus is on teaching in English while the latter focuses on curriculum content (see Van der Wende, 1996: 18). It has been noted that in the latter case 'The introduction of literature that is only different from the usual material in terms of its language would therefore not qualify' (Van der Wende, 1996: 21; see also Schoorman, 2000). In practice, the striking point about the 'international programmes' in Thai universities is that even programmes lacking any international dimension can be included. In some cases Thai universities programmes taught in English 'English programmes',⁵⁰ and at the same time refer to them elsewhere as 'international programmes'.⁵¹

On the one hand, the term 'international' is fashionable and can attract customers; a similar situation is found in Japan, where private universities attract prospective students by establishing 'international' universities, faculties, departments and graduate schools (Umakoshi, 1997: 263-264; Horie, 2002: 72). This similarity testifies to common values and priorities that Thais and Japanese bring to the concept of 'internationalisation' (see Hook and Weiner, 1992: 1). On the other hand, Thailand is different from Japan in that Thailand gives particular importance to English language teaching linking it to the concept of 'international' studies, while in Japan programmes taught in English are not popular, as is evidenced by the fact that there are only 47 such programmes in the whole country (Horie, 2002: 70-71; see also Ogata, 1997: 74; Kawaguchi and Lander, 1997; Umakoshi, 1997). Moreover, the Japanese do not call such programmes 'international', but term them as

⁵⁰ From a brochure 'BBA (English Program), IIS, RU; Curriculum of BBA (Management) English program, Faculty of Business Administration, KBU (1994: 3).

⁵¹ From a MUA booklet on international programmes (2004); IIS, <http://www/iis.ru.ac.th> (accessed on 28 June 2005); BBA, KBU, <http://www.kbu.ac.th/Faculty/Business/BusinessFrame.htm> (accessed on 28 June 2005).

'programs taught in English' (Horie, 2002: 70-71), whilst Thais accept and make use of blurred boundaries between these two types of programmes, since universities can benefit from using these two phrases interchangeably.

Thus in Thailand, there are universities which recognise the differences between 'international' and 'English' and there are also those which use these two terms interchangeably. A Bangkok University administrator explained that the BBA programme was originally established as an 'English programme' because the curriculum content was the same as the 'normal Thai programme'; later, however, when the curriculum was changed to accommodate foreign students, the name was also changed to the 'international programme'.⁵² A Thammasat administrator noted that an 'international programme' means a programme that includes international subjects, which makes it different from the 'normal Thai programme'.⁵³ However, the programmes initiated by Bangkok University and Thammasat came about because of the demand of the business sector for graduates with English language skills.⁵⁴ The blurred boundaries were evident from the first.

Some universities did not modify the existing curricula, but only translated them into English language, as the following extracts illustrate:

There is the case of one private university that translated the Thai curriculum into English without adding an international dimension, and the English translation was full of errors. It was obvious that the translator was not an expert on the curriculum.⁵⁵

Our curriculum is influenced by western countries anyway; the curriculum, which is taught in Thai, uses western theories and textbooks, and so teaching curriculum in English can also represent 'internationalisation', because it's the same western concept, only the language of instruction is different, so we don't need to bother whether the curriculum content is 'internationalised' or not.⁵⁶

For these interviewees, teaching an 'international programme' means using the existing Thai curriculum and simply changing only the language from Thai to English. The first extract clearly shows that the university adopted an 'international programme' although to do so was beyond its capacities. The second extract reveals that internationalisation was seen as merely making use of western theories and textbooks; the university was not willing

⁵² Mathana interview (BU).

⁵³ Kulapatra interview (TU).

⁵⁴ Kulapatra, Mathana interviews (TU, BU).

⁵⁵ Focus group interview, Sumantana, Education Officer, Bureau of Private Higher Education, MUA, 30 April 2003.

⁵⁶ Piboon interview (RU).

to adjust the curriculum, thus reflecting the taken-for-granted norms prevalent among Thais regarding the concept of 'being internationalised', and demonstrating that Thais are often uncritical of western ideas (see Sulak, 1991: 51; Barne, 1993: 23).

Moreover, the unwillingness to alter the material reflects the university's prioritisation of English language as a key aspect of its international programme. Indeed, the state's prioritisation of the English language as a precondition of the programmes can be explained by the country's inferior 'position in the international system' and its consequent desire to embrace the world's official academic and business language (see Hook and Weiner, 1992: 1; Ehara, 1992: 272). However, the institution's calling programmes taught in English 'international', without considering their ability to integrate a truly international dimension into the curriculum and their teaching and learning methods reflects their pursuit of self-interest within the market sphere (see IPPS, 2003: II-3).

Interestingly, while the project of internationalisation implemented by developed countries like the UK or the US was designed to aggressively extract fee income from foreign students (Kälvemark and Van der Wende, 1997a: 28; Elliott, 1998), in Thailand the aim was to draw fee income mainly from upper- and middle-class Thai students by charging high tuition fees. This picture reveals not only the programmes' a lack of an international dimension, but also the mentality of the Thai state, which allows the two systems, 'normal' and 'special', to run in parallel. Obviously, better opportunities are provided for those who are able to pay the 'full fee'; for example, the opportunity to improve their English language skills, or to enter the labour market with certain advantages. Ironically, the fact that international programmes are considered 'special' reflects the exclusive role of education: to serve particular elites in the middle and upper classes (see Surichai, 2002: 7-17). This argument correlates with what has been stated earlier about the need of students to enhance their social status by means of the programmes. This inequality of access to higher education has widened the gap between the rich and the poor, giving more opportunities to the rich, when already 90 percent of university students are from upper- and middle-class families (*Matichon*, 28 January 2003).

The state's exclusive emphasis on economic growth has greatly narrowed the opportunities available to the poor (see Suchart, 2000: 19; Smith, 2003: 133; Grindle, 1980: 16; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66). In this regard, it is clear that the increasing number of 'international programmes' as part of the 'full fee' programmes established in the latter half of the 1980s was intended to serve the growing Thai urban middle class, whose interests were closely linked with capitalism (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128; Girling, 1996: 44-45; Nidhi in Girling, 1996: 56). The picture of universities gaining fee income while the urban middle-

class students gained privileges from higher education represents another aspect of the 'distributive game' played by the Thai elites (see Connors, 2002: 42; McCargo, 2002b: 3; Somchai, 2002: 135).

However, in the case of a junior private university like Kasembundit University, the motivation for establishing an international programme was to build up the institution's reputation and profile in order to attract a greater number of students. A Kasembundit administrator explained that its international programme was created to be an additional option for students and to allow the university to compete on equal terms with other universities.⁵⁷ Thus, the 'international programme' is considered an attractive package, and this prejudice serves to reinforce the notion that 'being international' is regarded as an opportunity within Thai society (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 160). The behaviour of Kasembundit is also intrinsically driven also by the need to gain fee income. Building a reputation, however, is important only to newly-established private universities, not to senior ones. For example, Assumption's reputation has long been firmly established, and the creation of its 'international programme' has been part of its mission since the early years of its existence.⁵⁸ Bangkok University's international programme was also developed in its early period. However, as private universities, these institutions need to generate fee income, while market forces have encouraged them to become more competitive.

A private university administrator described how the creation of 'international programmes' came to be regarded as a means to generate income:

Do you know why every university tries to open at least one 'international programme' on campus? I'd like to compare such programmes to products in a convenient store. If 'Food Land' has this product, 'Tops'⁵⁹ must have it too, just to show that they are reaching a certain standard and can both serve an equal group of customers. People think that if one hasn't provided international programmes, one has not yet reached the 'standard'. But if one can offer 'international programmes', it means one has reached a certain level of 'standards' and 'quality'; but it really shouldn't be like that.⁶⁰

The extract reflects the perceptions of Thai universities in establishing 'international programmes' to draw in customers and generate income. If these perceptions are correct, it means that the 'international' concept is saleable and attractive to Thais, as is the case in Japan (see Horie, 2002: 72). The interview also reveals the universities' superficial

⁵⁷ Senee interview (KBU).

⁵⁸ Sumantana, Chavalit interviews (MUA, AU).

⁵⁹ Food Land and Tops are the names of supermarkets.

⁶⁰ Senee interview (KBU).

perceptions regarding the concept of the ‘international programme’, since ‘standards’ and ‘quality’ are considered to have attained merely by having established an ‘international programme’; the quality of the implementation process is ignored. This situation reflects the dilemma of Thai universities: the drive to generate fee income leads them to neglect their own conditions and capacities.

Thus the 520 international programmes, ranging from those in new private universities to those in senior public universities partly suggest the institutions’ obsession with ‘going international’. The universities’ rush to embrace ‘internationalisation’ is in conflict with the underlying principle that the unprepared universities can follow a policy of not ‘going international’ or of limited implementation (McNay, 1995: 37; Bartell, 2003: 51; Van Dijk, 1995:22). The strategy of Thai universities tends to be ‘opportunistic’ rather than to involve long-term commitment (see Van Dijk and Meijer, 1994 in McNay, 1995: 37; Knight, 1999: 19). The current higher education structure drove Thai universities to set up international programmes in pursuit of fee income.

4.3.2 Research

According to the current location of the Thai higher education system within the Clark’s (1983) ‘triangle of coordination’, institutions and individuals have been encouraged to compete for the research grants provided by independent funding agencies such as the TRF. This is in accordance with global trends where funded research schemes are one of the major sources of university income, due to the reduced ‘mainline standardised support’ of the state (Clark, 1997: 292).

In this new environment, university academics commented on the reasons they were pursuing research in the context of the funded schemes:

Now we have so many types of scholarships: short-term and long-term. It depends on your capacities. Mahidol also provides a small budget – about 200,000-300,00 baht- to support the new researchers who don’t know how to apply for external funding. In my case, I didn’t ask for that amount of money since I have already got grants from outside. It’s a good motivation for us to conduct research.⁶¹

Now I’ve got two scholarships, one from an outside funding agency and the other from the university. I’m intending to ask for a TRF budget, but probably I’ll have to improve my profile for a while.⁶²

⁶¹ Narumon interview (MU).

⁶² Thiti interview.

These interviews suggest the result of Thai higher education institutions following global trends and moving towards the 'market corner'. The difficulties of lecturers in the past were embedded in the bureaucratic culture where the funded research scheme was not considered essential and the amount provided for each scholarship was limited. Now the independent research agencies are motivating these lecturers to conduct research.

However, these new funded research schemes serve the interests of only certain individuals, not those of the faculty or the university. University administrators frankly noted that the faculty preferred to establish 'full fee' programmes rather than obtain money from academics engaged in research. This is because universities get more money directly from tuition fees while research is considered an individual project and, moreover, universities have to provide the infrastructure for their researchers.⁶³ Another university administrator noted that academics often did not declare with whom they were conducting research or the amount of their grant, because they did not want to share the money with the university.⁶⁴ In the words of one of these administrators:

The new research funding agencies like the TRF have weakened the universities' research programmes to a great degree. These agencies have a lot more money than we do, so they've used the money to splash out on research: 'I have money, you have to do research for us and you'll have your profile improved and get top-up money.' In this case, the universities get nothing. These lecturers use the university's resources to conduct research while paying no attention to teaching and other duties. Their ethics are also badly affected. We used to get 100,000 baht, but with the TRF, the research grants rose to 2,000,000,⁶⁵ which is tempting. If they can get it, they'll go for it. I don't know where excellence lies; these researchers are torn between the TRF and all these funding agencies, and the university.⁶⁶

As a negative consequence, Thai lecturers tend to pursue self-interest and rely on research grants. These individual interests have to be understood in the context of the bureaucrats' status, which is being threatened by the current economic situation; this will be discussed in the next section (see section 4.4). Besides this aspect, the interview reflects the fierce contest between the new funded research schemes and the universities, which reveals a fragmentation of interests. This is one of the key problems affecting the process of policy implementation in the country (see Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66; Christensen, 1993: 19).

⁶³ Personal interview, Sornprach, Vice President, Planning and International Affairs, KU, 7 February 2003; Thammasak interviews (KU).

⁶⁴ Sermsak interview (SWU).

⁶⁵ The TRF offers 'Research Team Promotion Grants' of 2.5 million baht per year in science and technology, and 2 million baht per year in the humanities and social sciences. The project duration is three years (<http://www.trf.or.th/en/types.asp>, accessed on 26 June 2005).

⁶⁶ Sornprach interview (KU).

Regarding the role of the universities and the new trends in research, it is arguable that in contrast to the situation in developed countries, research in Thai universities is now in a transitional period. The universities' reliance on research money is not well established and the new funded research schemes have not been widely accepted by Thai universities.⁶⁷ A comparison with teaching programmes has to refer firstly to the macro-picture of Thailand as a country with a lack of research culture, and secondly to the embedded norms prevalent in Thai universities which were originally intended to be a training ground for civil servants (see Wichit, 1974: 74). As a result, Thai universities have found it easier in the current period to gain income from teaching rather than research. The difficulties of conducting research remain. A lecturer noted:

We need to understand that we are in a period of development and we haven't got a proper system in place for improving research. We can't expect first-class results. To do research important enough to be published internationally is not easy because of the strong competition. The oldest university in Thailand is only about a hundred years old, while universities in other countries have been accumulating their knowledge for much longer. OK; now research funding is being increased, like the money from the TRF, but it's not much. If everyone wants to conduct research, that money isn't sufficient to serve all the needs of every researcher and the high expectations of society, which wants more and more papers.⁶⁸

The interview expresses the opinion of a lecturer who has observed the negative side of the current situation. It also suggests that Thai universities are only beginning to adjust to the system and to get used to the new funded schemes and new expectations. It is true that the budget for academic research has expanded greatly, as the TRF's budget – about 1,000 million baht in 2001- is much higher than the NRC budget -23,727,358 baht in 2001- which used to support the university research (MUA, 2001a: 56). However, it is still inadequate, because the TRF's budget amounts to less than 50,000 baht per research academic.⁶⁹ This research was conducted during the current transitional period; the problems are various, ranging from the embedded norms and structure of Thai higher education to the fragmentation of individual interests.

⁶⁷ For example, the proportion of the budget for MU's Faculty of Science were: state budget 75%, external revenue 25% (Personal interview, Amaret, Dean, Faculty of Science, MU, 18 April 2003); KU received a state budget of 2,111.1 million baht; and its external revenue was 2,201.7 million baht. As for the extra revenue, the students' fees accounted for 510.6 million baht (23%), 119.8 million baht (5.5%) came from the 'special programmes', and only 53.9 million baht (2.4%) from research (KU, 2003: 12).

⁶⁸ Personal interview, Chak, Lecturer, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, KU, 12 June 2003

⁶⁹ The research grants provided by the TRF amount to about 1,000 million baht per year (TRF, 2001), while the number of Thai academic staff was at 20,700 in 2001 (MUA, 2001: 27)

4.4 Bureaucratic structure and norms

Another feature of the Thai case which is different from the situation found in developed countries (see Knight and De Wit, 1997: 174; Kälvemark and Van der Wende, 1997a: 28; McNay, 1995: 36) is the bureaucratic structure and norms of Thai public universities. This section explains the motivation of these academic bureaucrats in embracing 'internationalisation' mainly in pursuit of their own economic interests. These bureaucrats-lecturers play a role that accords with the notion of the 'state for itself', which means they tend to preserve their interests and remain resistant to change (Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 29-30). Two arguments are particularly important when examining the Thai academic bureaucracy. First, due to socio-economic changes, those lecturers who are also civil servants have been forced to pursue self-interest outside the bureaucracy because from the period of economic boom onwards, their power has been greatly undermined (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128; Rangsan, 2001: 294, 313). Second, due to the weakness of the functional structure, there is no system in place to control their pursuit of self-interest. It has been noted that bureaucrats in developing countries are situated in a 'partial power vacuum' where there are few competing groups (Heady, 1996: 317-321); moreover, the state's elites know how to ally with selected social groups (Kohli and Shue, 1994: 321-322). The following sections discuss the cases of the public universities, since they are embedded in the bureaucracy.

4.4.1 International Programmes

One of the intrinsic factors affecting the establishment of international programmes has been the extra financial incentive to participate in the programmes: the programmes pay an augmented salary. In Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, at the faculty level, there is a special regulation that applies to lecturers in these programmes, who are employed at a special rate. These lecturers get 2,000 baht per hour,⁷⁰ a large sum compared to the governmental monthly salary, which starts from 6,350, 7,780, and 9,300 baht per month for the BA, MA, and PhD. staffs respectively. The international programmes at these public universities subcontract lecturers from both within and outside the Faculty to teach additional hours in these programmes. The following interviews show that lecturers are motivated by this extra income.

⁷⁰ 2,000 baht is the minimum rate, some universities set up the rate up to 4,500 baht per hour. It has been revealed that lecturers who teach in special programmes can teach up to 50 hours per month and earn the wage at around 120,000 per month (*Thairath*, 10 march 2003).

Teaching in international programmes is not difficult, since I taught abroad for a long time. It all depends on my time. Another faculty, which was setting up a 'special programme', also invited me to teach. We can go anywhere; we can even teach in private universities. It depends; if you think that it's too much, you can decide not to go.⁷¹

In the BBA, I need to prepare myself more than teaching in the Thai programme because the nature of the class is different. It depends on my timetable; if I have time, I can teach. The difference is that when we teach in an international programme, we are paid per hour. We call it 'special department money'.⁷²

A programme director commented:

Nowadays, there are several 'special programmes', both international and Thai, in this university. If they are hired at the same rate, Thai lecturers prefer to teach in a Thai language programme rather than using English. They do not want to devote too much energy to speaking in English.⁷³

These interviews reveal the needs of individuals regarding the extra income available through the international programmes. It should be noted that the 'special programmes' include not only the 'international programmes', but also other programmes taught in Thai and in which are connected with Master's and Doctoral degrees. For example, Thammasat's Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy has 12 'full-fee' programmes while Chulalongkorn has four such programmes (see Figure 9). The clear difference between the salary rates of programmes having 'normal' and 'special' status influences individuals' decisions, although the first two interviewees did not say so explicitly. But the references to 'special department money' and additional teaching in various programmes give a clear picture of the current situation.

In these extracts, the degree of interest in and motivation to provide 'international' education remain low, as does the maintenance of quality, as can be seen from the indifferent attitude expressed towards the delivery of the curriculum. This is different from the Dutch case, where the motivations of lecturers regarding international programmes are based on academic values rather than economic motives (Van der Wende, 1996: 119).

In the case of Ramkhamhaeng, the administrators at management level have also received extra pay for activities, such as administration and meetings. One administrator considered this an incentive to upgrade and 'internationalise' the programmes; administrators charged

⁷¹ Tharee interview (CU).

⁷² Personal interview, Kaewta, Assistant Dean, Faculty of Commerce, TU, 17 April 2003.

⁷³ Personal interview, Porpan, Director, BBA international programme, CU, 26 May 2003.

with this task needed to be rewarded with salaries of an ‘international standard’.⁷⁴ According to Ramkhamhaeng’s regulations, the President of the University is appointed to the chair of the steering and advisory committee of every ‘full-fee’ programme in the university. In this capacity, the President earns 15,000 baht for 11 programmes at Bachelor’s level and the same amount for 11 programmes at Master’s level, or about 330,000 baht each month. In addition, his payment for being the Director of Doctoral level programme is another 20,000 baht per month. These do not include the special programmes established in provincial areas. Overall, the President earns around 722,000 baht⁷⁵ per month excluding his salary, and there are also extra expenses for meetings and travel (*Matichon*, 25 April 2003). The incentives associated with these types of programmes benefit the university administrators in many ways.

Thus the establishment of international programmes is driven by the economic interests of the Thai bureaucrats, and this explains how a shift to the market would damage the self-interest of these bureaucratic elites (Turner and Hulme, 1997:66; Christensen, 1993: 19; Hewison, 1997: 7-8; Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 25). Also, it is illustrative of how the bureaucratic structure erodes the ‘academic oligarchy’ in Clark’s (1983) ‘triangle of coordination’; the situation in Thailand exemplifies the ‘overdevelopment’ of the bureaucracy (Smith, 2003: 132).

4.4.2 Research

The two main factors motivating Thai lecturers to conduct research are the need to generate personal income, and the need to enhance academic status. In the same way as above, these two motivations reflect the embedded norms and interests of Thai lecturers within the current bureaucratic context. The following pages illustrate these arguments in detail.

Tawanrat (1989) categorised research in Thailand into five types according to research purpose:

- Research for developing teaching and learning/institutional research
- Research for academic promotion
- Research for the National Research Council (NRC) project
- Research for government and private sectors

⁷⁴ Personal interview, Rampai, Vice Rector for International Affairs, RU, 10 January 2003.

⁷⁵ This is equivalent to about £10,314 sterling per month (calculated at the exchange rate of 1 pound = 70 baht).

- Research for international organisations

Although for obvious reasons the above categories do not include the emerging independent research funding agencies like the TRF, they remain useful. As previously noted, the establishment of the TRF is not a panacea; it cannot serve the demands of all academics since the interests of the technocratic groups override all others. Moreover, Thai universities are currently attempting to adjust to the new system of producing ‘internationally-driven’ research in accordance with the requirements of the TRF. However, the move towards such funding agencies and thus towards the market, tends to be diffused and fragmented, as we have seen, and the process is still unable to guarantee quality. This background needs to be understood before the argument can be taken further. Thai academics are not always able to engage in internationally-driven research. The entrenched bureaucratic structure is one cause of this inaction.

Besides the projects funded by the new agencies, there are other types of research that Thai lecturers can rely on. It was found that Thai lecturers conducted more research of the second and fourth types. The second type of research is done to enhance their academic status, while the fourth type is done because the earnings are high, and other sectors are increasingly calling upon these academic services (Tawanrat, 1989). The first type has limited support and budgets for the third type are rigidly regulated, as it is controlled by the state bureaucracy; while the fifth type is limited to academics who are expert researchers and who are also competent in the English language (Tawanrat, 1989). Therefore, the high proportion of research of the second and fourth types reflects the intrinsic need of lecturers to enhance their socio-economic status, which has been an embedded norm of the Thai bureaucracy since the days of the absolute monarchy system towards (see Wright, 1991: 18; Chai-Anan, 1989: 337; Pasuk, 1999: 9).

According to some lecturers, the fourth type includes research that Thai universities conduct for the government sector, mainly in policy-related areas, which is sometimes descriptive and is intended to provide only a general database.⁷⁶ A professor called this fourth type of research ‘consultancy work’:

‘Consultancy work’ is what lecturers in Thai universities do to earn money. This kind of work is not ‘research for tomorrow’; it is only done in response to the demands of a particular unit. It doesn’t produce any new knowledge, but is conducted only to solve day-to-day problems. Sometimes it can’t solve

⁷⁶ Personal interview, Nipon, Professor, Faculty of Forestry, KU, 17 March 2003; Yuvardee, Dean, Faculty of Science, SWU, 13 June 2003.

any problems; for example, the government asked us to produce a general database that could be used to neutralise the threat of a demonstration. What they required us to do was not based on academic research method, we only observed and wrote something based on our experience. The consultancy work has dilemmas because it discourages lecturers from doing intensive research. Why? Because intensive research brings little gain while consulting work pays a lot more. For example, if I wrote twenty pages for a company, I'd earn about 100,000 baht. It's an easy way to get money without the need to declare, as we have to for the state budget. To be honest, I couldn't be what I am now, and my family couldn't survive, if I didn't have consultancy work to rely on.⁷⁷

The interview shows that lecturers have to rely on consultancy work in order to make a living. Second, it describes the state of research in the country. Indeed, the demands made by other state organisations on universities' expertise shows the weaknesses of the Thai state organisations' research culture. In developing countries, as a result of limited expertise, society relies on and makes demands on universities in various ways (see Altbach, 1982: 3; Kirby-Harris, 2003: 366); this leads to a diffusion of lecturers' interests within the university. Arguably, 'policy research for government' does not need to be done by universities if there are effective policy-makers and research units in the bureaucratic sector, but the general lack of expertise and research culture inside the state institutions makes it inevitable that the state will make use of the universities' expertise.

Another problem is that the research produced by universities for these agencies cannot contribute to academic knowledge, as, according to Tawanrat (1989), it serves only employers, not teaching and learning in the university, or society in general. A case in point is the above interview's reference to research that solves 'day-to-day problems' and in this case provides a 'general database to neutralise the threats of a demonstration'. The latter also reflects the mindset of Thai politicians, who use academic research to serve their political agenda. This practice blurs the division line between the academic and political territories (Chai-Anan, 1994: 49-50). Influenced by both external demands and their constraint lack of money, Thai lecturers view this type of research as a useful source of income.

The interview also refers to the weakness of the state's budgetary support for intensive. It reflects the perception of Thai lecturers, who distinguish between the research conducted out of economic necessity and research conducted out of for academic interest. The fourth type of research cannot contribute to academic knowledge because, firstly, the Thai state makes low and inefficient demands regarding research and, secondly, Thai lecturers do not

⁷⁷ Nipon interview (KU).

link or develop the work they do for other sectors.⁷⁸ A lecturer explained that Thai lecturers did not develop their analysis and publish it in international research papers; they were only concerned to serve their superiors and make a living since the state had little interests in supporting high-quality research.⁷⁹ Lecturers struggle to make a living in the country's changing socio-economic situation. A professor explained:

A professor's monthly salary is at best 60,000 baht.⁸⁰ I get no extra money for my administrative work and I have no 'status car' for this position because the Faculty is poor, so we can't set up that extra money. We have to rely on our own resources to find the extra money to survive. Also the salary is inadequate because whenever we go out, it's all about paying to entertain people. When you have a certain status, and qualify for a VIP card, you have to return others' favours since connections count for a lot in this society. How could I survive if I wasn't working as a consultant on the side?⁸¹

The interview first confirms how important consultancy work is supplementing an academic's salary; even a professor needs to depend on sectors outside the academic sphere (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128; Rangsan, 2001: 294, 313; Varunee, 1990: 260). The main problems are the low pay by government to lecturers, and the lecturers' need to maintain their socio-economic status. Moreover, the interviewee used the phrases 'status car' and 'a certain status', which revealed his bureaucratic mindset, because normally senior administrators in the Thai bureaucracy are provided with a car and sometimes a driver, which signify their privileged status. The fact that the interviewee claims he has to rely on outside resources to maintain this bureaucratic 'status' confirms that there is a perceived decline in the public-sector career (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 329). In Thai society, the reciprocal interests and connections are prioritised, and this creates a cycle of payment and repayment in both money and social status, both of which are sources of authority; and for this reason personal relationships are extremely important (see Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66; Heady, 1996: 317-321). The academic sphere is not exempt from these rules of the game.

Not surprisingly, the socio-economic environment of the country has affected the behaviour of Thai lecturers to a great extent. The following interview describes the different approaches adopted by Thai lecturers before and after the 1997 economic crisis:

During the economic boom in Thailand, a number of my colleagues started businesses outside the university, which were not related to academic issues. One opened a golf course while the other ran a restaurant. Some traded in

⁷⁸ Personal interview, Nongyao, lecturer, Faculty of Education, CMU, 4 February 2004.

⁷⁹ Sutruedee interview (KU).

⁸⁰ This salary is paid only to very senior bureaucrats.

⁸¹ Anonymous interview.

land while others played the stock market. It sounds funny, but after 3 pm the faculty was quiet because these lecturers had left to take care of their businesses. I doubted we could ever create a research community here. However, when the economy collapsed, these lecturers became more committed to their university job since it was the most reliable one. These lecturers can be divided into two groups: One applied for research budgets from funding agencies while the other started to teach in the special programmes, which were hiring lecturers at a special rate. Two camps were created: those who preferred to earn money by teaching and those who were paid to research.⁸²

The interview gives an insight into how Thai lecturers think and act. Being part of both the university and the market, Thai lecturers seek to consolidate their interests both inside and outside the academic sphere. Interestingly, both teaching and research are now considered sources of earnings, which tends to confirm the lecturers' personal drive to generate income. Whilst working outside the universities' sphere is possible and attractive for Thai lecturers, as they are part of the bureaucracy the university is considered a safe place, offering stable tenure, prestige and status (see Riggs, 1964; Heady, 1996: 317-321; Prasit, 2002: 1; Smith, 2003: 172). The situation of university in Chiang Mai, Thailand's second city, is similar to that in Bangkok.⁸³ This situation further illustrates the status of lecturers in Thai public universities, who currently enjoy being able to profit from both sectors. The bureaucratic structure plays an important role in supporting the choices of these individuals in different contexts. This is illustrative of the 'state for itself': the bureaucracy is not primarily dedicated to attaining policy goals (see Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 29-30). The bureaucrats' pursuit of self-interest implies a flaw in the functional structure, which does not hold them accountable for their actions (see Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66; Christensen, 1993: 19; Hewison, 1997: 7-8; Smith, 2003: 171).

In Thailand, besides the need to conduct research in order to augment their income, lecturers engage in research to gain academic status, since this increase their chances of enhancing their prestige and social status. Because lecturers in Thai public universities are part of the bureaucracy, doing the research is of little importance in the struggle to improve their status. A professor spoke of his drive to succeed:

If one wants a full professorship, spiritual strength and a strong mind are important. I've had a lot of support from my family that one of the highest aims of any lecturer is to obtain a professorship. It is in fact the highest point of our civil servants' life. It is not easy since the final approval is made by the King.⁸⁴

⁸² Nongyao interview.

⁸³ Chak, Nipon interviews (KU).

⁸⁴ Nipon interview (KU).

Perhaps the most interesting point made by this interviewee is that academic promotion is linked to the need to enhance one's social status, especially as the final endorsement comes from the King. A professor in Thailand, like other high-ranking civil servants, receives an honorary insignia of rank bestowed by the King, and this serves to reinforce lecturers' embedded bureaucratic values. Thus bureaucratic norms continue to play a crucial role in the contemporary period. Chapter seven will analyse in detail the process of implementation of research in Thai public universities.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the reasons why Thai higher education adopted the 'internationalisation' concept. It is undeniable that in Thailand, as in many other countries, the policy of internationalising higher education has been driven by the economic rationale (see Knight and De Wit, 1997: 174; Scott, 1998; De Wit, 2002), but the current 'substantive setting' of the country has also influenced the interpretation of the concept (see Falk, 1992: 37; Hook and Weiner, 1992: 1). This study's findings were obtained at a time when Thailand was located at a specific point within Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination', a point where although market forces were operative, the bureaucratic structure and norms persisted within both 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' (see Silva, 1996: 71; Levy, 1994: 242).

The internationalisation of higher education was adopted because of two main general factors: macro-political and socio-economic changes and the need of institutions to generate fee income within the market sphere. However, the Thai context also produced another cause: the dominant power of the elites and its use in the protection of their narrow interests.

First, apart from the external economic imperative demands which were the main driver of the state's adoption of internationalisation (see Källemark and Van der Wende, 1997a: 28; Elliott, 1998: 32), the changing political and socio-economic context of Thailand in the latter half of the 1980s drove both state and institutions to improve higher education in order to serve the growing demands of business. Internationalisation was regarded as a means of serving the national economic interest. The pressure on universities to serve both the growing business sector and students' rising demands was a major factor in the establishment of growing numbers of international programmes and in setting the internationally-driven research direction, led by the TRF and other funding agencies. The

academic rationale has played a limited role in the current period (see De Wit and Knight, 1997: 174).

Second, within the higher education system, the Thai state initiated the deregulation of public universities and urged them to rely on market resources, submitting themselves to the forces of global and national liberalisation (see Dill, 1997a: 163; Salter and Tapper, 1994 in Kirby-Harris, 2003: 357; Gornitzka, 2000: 221). This policy forced universities to generate fee-income from their international programmes which had 'full-fee' status, and they also became increasingly reliant on funded research schemes. The rising numbers of international programmes, to 520 in 2003, are evidence of the steady quantitative growth of Thai higher education. This growth occurred partly because of the need of universities to attract customers, and also because the 'international' programmes suited Thai social values. As for research, the new funded research schemes have recognised the interests of academics; however, the need to develop research has not yet been widely accepted by the universities, which have acknowledged the value of teaching programmes. The reason for this seems to be the country's and the universities' lack of a research culture.

At the moment, these two factors: the macro-politico-socio-economic changes and the drive within the higher education system play a crucial role in underpinning the state's internationalisation agenda. It is clear to see that the 'market' corner of Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' plays an influential role. Thai 'state authority' markets the higher education sector both in terms of international programmes and research funds. Examples of the market forces comprise the demands from business sectors for efficient graduates and the demands for the higher education sector to privatise and rely on its own efficiency to generate income as well as research funds. In this case, responses of both 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' to the market-powered system have been discussed.

Additionally, however, the political and social structural reform of Thailand, now under way, has driven the Thai elites to pursue their narrow interests by supporting the 'internationalisation' concept. This research has found that several elites have adopted this strategy, including state officials, technocrats, businessmen, students from the upper and middle classes, and individual academics as well as institutions.

First, the way the Thai state has interpreted internationalisation to serve economic demands reflects its policy of prioritising economic development over social development (see Girling, 1996: 13-18, 95; Chai-Anan, 2001: 85). Second, the students, who come mainly from the upper and middle classes because of the high fees took a short-term view of the

international programme, which they saw as providing increased competence in English, opportunities in the labour market, and enhanced social status. It is true that businesspersons emphasised that their enterprises needed graduates proficient in English, but the students viewed the international programmes superficially and were not particularly concerned with knowledge content which was not the case in other studies (see Van der Wende, 1996: 18; Schoorman, 2000). Third, in the case of research, the TRF represented the technocrats, and the way they set up the rules and regulations governing internationally driven research served only a small expert group and was not designed to improve the country's research effort.

Both public and private universities needed to generate fee-income; however, the difficulties universities found in differentiating between 'English' and 'international' programmes showed the extent of their pursuit of self-interest in the market context (IPPS, 2003: II-3). The other factor that drove Thai academics to participate in the international programmes was their need to gain additional income at the private rate from teaching extra hours in 'special programmes', or from holding administrative status. At present, because of the current demands of the Thai economic situation, these bureaucrats have to earn extra income to supplement their civil service salary (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128; McCargo, 2002b: 8). Moreover, academics use research to improve their socio-economic status. For example, it was found that they conducted research outside the academic sphere to serve their economic interests while remaining within that sphere to preserve the prestige and stability of their bureaucratic status (see Riggs, 1964; Heady, 1996: 317-321; Prasit, 2002: 1; Smith, 2003: 172). At the moment, in Thailand, although the political space has been opened to all citizens, the elites, whose interests tend to be short-term and narrowly driven, are especially privileged (see Anek, 1992: 13-15; Chai-Anan, 1995; 1997; Surin and McCargo, 1997: 147).

Within the current context of the domination of market forces, the elites' approach towards the state's 'internationalisation' policy seems to be superficial, opportunistic, and fragmented according to the individual's interests; the aim is mainly to serve personal needs. Owing to the influence of these structures and values, the way the Thai higher education actors, 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' has adopted internationalisation has tended to make the policy serve, not the public, but particular elite groups, including themselves (see IPPS, 2003: II-3). This behaviour will surely affect the implementation and outcomes of the process. The next chapter explores the implementation of 'international' teaching programmes by public universities in order to understand how institutions and individuals have come to act as they do.

Chapter Five

International Programmes in Thai Public Universities

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained how macro-political and socio-economic changes and the location of the Thai higher education system within the 'triangle of coordination' affected the way internationalisation was adopted. That model also influences the discussion in this chapter, whose main task is to explore two issues: the implementation process, and the outcomes of the 'international programmes' of Thai public universities. Regarding the first, the task is to discuss the factors that affected the teaching and learning process of the international programmes. The chapter explores further the interests, structures, and values embedded in the Thai higher education system and how they influenced the process. Regarding the outcomes of the programmes, the discussion notes the degree of satisfaction expressed by students and business people, since these are the main stakeholders in the programmes according to the original objectives of the Thai state and the universities.

The chapter sets out the discussion in two main parts: the implementation process and the outcomes. In the first part, the discussion is based on the location of Thai higher education within Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' together with an analysis of the current national socio-economic context. The two main factors that constrain the international programmes of Thai public universities at this period are the bureaucratic structure and norms of the Thai 'state authority' and public universities, and the self-interests of public universities and individuals who have to seek opportunities within the market. Having the location of Thai higher education within the 'triangle of coordination' in mind, I divide this discussion into four sections: the role of the state authority, the role of the public universities, the bureaucratic structure and norms of Thai public universities, and the cultural values associated with 'internationalisation'. In each section, I discuss the academic activities and administration of the international programmes, including the role of the MUA regarding curriculum issues, the system of selection of lecturers and students, the classroom settings, the administration, and the perceptions of the related actors, aiming to understand how the two key factors constrain these processes. The second part, on outcomes, discusses the satisfaction of students and the business sector with the programmes.

Part I: Implementation process

5.2 Role of the 'state authority'

In the current global and national context, the policy of internationalising higher education in Thailand as in many other countries is designed to improve the country's economic situation to meet global requirement (see Van der Wende, 1996; Dill, 1997a: 163-164; Knight and De Wit, 1997; 174; Scott, 1998; De Wit, 2002; Bartell, 2003). Despite the rapidity of its economic transformation, Thailand has been struggling to implement a programme of political and social structural reform, exemplifying the difficulties of developing countries, which have to address a different set of problems from those encountered in the developed world. In Thailand, the imbalance of economic and social development has made it difficult for the state to produce the high-quality results from the implementation of policy (Girling, 1996: 13-18, 95; Chai-Anan, 2001: 85).

This section develops the above argument by discussing how the MUA, as a representative of the 'state authority', has been unable to guarantee the quality of the international programmes. It particularly considers, firstly, the inertia of the bureaucracy when confronted with the need to adopt new forms of thinking as it tends to act the role of the 'state for itself', preserving its interests and resisting change (see Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 25-27) and, secondly, the bureaucracy's inefficiency in maintaining the quality of the programmes, which have grown in number during the period of increasing market influence (see Doan Hue Dung, 2004: 143; Levy, 1994: 259-261).

After the government of Prime Minister Anand Panyarachund took office in 1991, the country had begun to witness a widening of the political space beyond the bureaucracy. The issues of freedom, good governance, accountability and the efficiency of the public sector were introduced on the initiative of the rising technocratic and business forces (see Chai-Anan, 1994: 49-50). At that time, public universities were still bound by the MUA's rigid rules and regulations concerning the curriculum (MUA, 1995: 1-2; Tawanrat, 1989). In response to the new demands of government and society, on 26 June 1992, the MUA agreed to give the presidents and councils of public universities the right to set their own curricula, the aim being to allow the curricula to be more flexible, diverse and responsive to the needs of different communities (MUA, 1995:1-2). The underlying principles of this deregulation were based on external ideas drawn from capitalist ideology, as Thailand was moving towards universal marketisation (see Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 1), and on the need to satisfy internal economic and political demands. Thus the Thai state urged universities to

effectively respond to and promote the nation's economic growth and to depend increasingly on market resources (Rangsan, 2001: 313). In the face of this initiative the MUA, despite its concession, continued to cling to its bureaucratic privileges and was unwilling to change and accept any reduction in its authority (see Pasuk and Baker, 1999: 9). The MUA therefore imposed four conditions on the public universities:

- The proposed curriculum should already be part of the higher education development plan. If it is not, the university must consult with the MUA in order to adjust it according to the plan
- The proposed curriculum's structure and standards must be in accordance with the MUA's regulations
- The proposed curriculum's must be approved by the university council or institution council before taking effect
- The curriculum having been approved, the MUA must be informed within 30 days from the first day of approval. All documents related to the curriculum including all must be sent to the MUA in accordance with the MUA's regulations; the MUA will then process this document and forward it to the Office of Civil Service Commission (OCSC), which will consider and certify the qualifications of graduates from that curriculum accordingly (MUA, 1995: 2).

The first, second, and fourth conditions reflect an attempt by the bureaucratic sector, represented by the MUA and the OCSC, to maintain their authority. The first and second points reveal the MUA's adherence to top-down regulation, as the condition overstates the significance of the higher education plan and the MUA's rules. In the 1960s the government's insistence that Thai universities should develop their curricula, according to the state plan and the nation's economic growth distorted the country's academic development (Varunee, 1990: 261; Watson, 1991: 564), and in the 1990s, the same requirements were applied. This is an example of how the Thai 'academic oligarchy' was undermined.

Regarding the fourth condition, the MUA's requirement showed its obsession with preserving its power. In fact, the process of information transfer from the university to the MUA and the OCSC was only following the previous conservative line of control and could not by itself guarantee the quality of the curriculum. The process of degree approval had been used by the government, which relied on the OCSC as a central body charged with accrediting and appraising salaries in accordance with the degrees obtained by graduates. This was considered necessary because the highest aspiration for university students until the mid-1970s was public service employment (Watson, 1991: 562). By the late 1980s, the labour market had expanded beyond the public sector, and the business sector set the salary rate without consulting the OCSC. Therefore it was no longer necessary for universities to

send documents to the MUA and the OCSC for degree accreditation and salary appraisal.¹ This situation confirmed that the role of the bureaucratic forces within the Thai political sphere had been undermined (see Anek, 1992: 13-15; Chai-Anan, 1995; 1997). An MUA official argued that the object of the current process was not to reject the universities' curricula; the MUA functioned as the 'point of acknowledgement and coordination' between the universities and the OCSC.² Since, however, the remit of the OCSC and the MUA has never included the function of rating and checking the quality of curricula and universities, the determination of these bodies to retain their power reveals the reluctance of the 'state authority' to adjust to the new requirements and the persistence of the MUA's top-down policy and the continuing influence of the 'state-authority' within the higher education system (Levy, 1994: 259-261; Silva, 1996: 71; Neacsu, 1998: 207).

After giving a small measure of autonomy to the universities, the MUA was supposed to develop a mechanism to check and balance the quality of the programmes in accordance with the idea of public accountability, which had been part of the Anand government's platform and was further developed in the Education Bill in 1999 (ONEC, 1999: 27). However, the action taken by the MUA has been limited, firstly because the concept of accountability is new to the Thai bureaucracy, and secondly because the MUA still retains its top-down role. A MUA official pointed out that the MUA has two conflicting duties: promoting establishment of new programmes and protecting consumer rights.³ However, these two duties would not be necessarily be in conflict if they could be developed at the same pace. In Thailand, however, the former has been pursued far more than the latter, and this has created an imbalance between quantitative and qualitative development (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128).

The MUA was unable to implement the 'international programmes' according to plan. In 1999, the MUA divided the term 'international programme' into two main categories: the first was the 'international studies programme', which focused on the economics, culture and politics of different countries; the second was the 'international programme' (MUA, 1999a). The difference between these two types is that the first was limited to specific international subjects, mainly in the social science area, while theoretically the second covered all disciplines. The MUA defined the second category in some detail:

¹ Porntip interview (MUA).

² Porntip interview (MUA).

³ Focus group interview, Supat, Educational Officer, Private Higher Institution Establishment and Educational Promotion Branch, Bureau of Private Higher Education, MUA, 30 April 2003.

- curricula which are open to for both domestic and foreign students
- curricula with international content
- curricula in which lecturers have experience in the subject and excellent capability in the language for instruction
- curricula in which supporting facilities such as textbooks, and information technology should be up to date, allowing students to enjoy the maximum benefits
- curricula incorporating academic activities designed to promote the international dimension such as student and lecturer exchange programmes, cross-cultural activities and international cooperation with foreign institutions
- curricula which include academic cooperation with foreign institutions (MUA, 1999a).

Judging by this list, the 'international programme' is similar to the 'internationalised curricula' studied by Van der Wende (1996: 18), who examined the Dutch case and found that it concerned both the international content of the curricula and teaching methods.⁴ It also recalls the OECD's statement that one aim of an international programme is to serve both foreign and domestic students (Van der Wende, 1996: 45).⁵ Both definitions lay stress on the international dimension of the content: the 'content of the curriculum' is more important than the 'method of instruction'; a curriculum taught abroad, or by a foreign guest lecturer, or delivered in a foreign language, or whose students have attended some courses abroad are not automatically perceived as being internationalised (Van der Wende, 1996: 18). Moreover, the process of integration is emphasised, which accords with Knight's (1997: 8; 2003) definition, which this thesis adopts (see section 2.2.3). Accordingly, this thesis is interested in the second category of 'international programme' defined by the MUA because it reflects an attempt to integrate an international dimension into both curricula and teaching methods. The first category, the 'international studies programme', focuses on 'international' subjects, which are being increasingly studied; but the other processes do not have a specifically international dimension.

The 1999 MUA announcement also defined the term 'foreign language programme' as 'a programme using any foreign language as a medium of instruction'; and the term 'international programme' as 'a programme with a standard content where any language

⁴ Van der Wende (1996: 18) defines the term 'internationalising the curriculum' as "the process of curriculum development or curriculum change which is aimed at integrating an international dimension into the content of the curriculum, and, if relevant, also into the method of instruction".

⁵ The other broad definition of internationalised curricula was suggested by an international group of experts involved in the OECD project: "Curricula with an international orientation in content, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally/socially) in an international and multicultural context, and designed for domestic students and/or foreign students" (in Van der Wende, 1996: 45).

can be used as a medium of instruction, and allowing foreign students to be enrolled in the programmes' (MUA, 1999a). For the latter programme, English is the only language used as the language of instruction. However, these conceptions of the 'foreign language' and 'international' programmes were made clear by the MUA only in 1999, seven years after the first declaration of support for 'international programmes' in the seventh Higher Education Development Plan. Thus the international programmes were initiated to meet the growing needs of the business sector while the attention to definitions came later. Even now, the MUA is incapable of implementing its plan. An official noted that the MUA was acting as a 'point of acknowledgement' for universities; but universities could define their programmes as either 'foreign language' – meaning in practice 'English' – or 'international', and the MUA would accept the university's definition.⁶

As a consequence, the MUA (2003a)'s reference book, 'International Programs in Thailand', giving the numbers and descriptions of international programmes in Thailand and distributed both inside and outside the country, is illustrative of the MUA's inefficiency. An MUA official admitted:

Regarding the 520 international programmes that the MUA can survey now, I'd rather define them only as programmes taught in English, because we've never looked into them more deeply than that. We've never examined their content or end product, never assessed whether these programmes are truly international. In fact, the assessment should be done extensively and intensively, but we don't have the capacity to do that because it would take a lot of time and energy.⁷

This interview confirmed firstly that the MUA is mainly interested in the quantitative increase in international programmes, compiling only the number of programmes while failing to assess the quality of the programmes.⁸ Another key problem is the MUA's lack of expertise and manpower, a problem often found in the public sectors of developing countries (see Heady, 1996: 317-321; Bossert *et al.*, 1998, 2000 in Berman and Bossert, 2000: 8). The interview also shows that the MUA is incapable of creating a mechanism that might respond effectively to the growing dominance of the market and that understaffing is a factor of its resistance to change. The official's excuses should not be accepted uncritically, however since the MUA's lack of 'capacity' may be used as an excuse for

⁶ Personal interview, Naree, Chief, West section, Division of International Cooperation, MUA, 21 November 2002.

⁷ Personal interview, Ekapong, Chief East section, Division of International Cooperation, MUA, 20 November 2002.

⁸ A public organisation being established in 2000, so called an Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) responsible for development of criteria and methods of external evaluation, according to the 1999 National Education Act. However, it was not included under the study due to its early establishment. According to the act, MUA is responsible for internal quality assurance together with the institutions themselves (ONEC, 1999: 20).

inaction (see Unger, 1998: 175; Christensen, 1993: 1; Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 6; Pasuk and Baker, 1999: 9). Thus, the MUA's 1999 announcement distinguishing between 'foreign language programmes' and 'international programmes' is an example of what Cleaves (1980: 284-285) noted that the policy was symbols not designs for implementation.

Another MUA official commented on this situation:

The success of both internationalisation and the international programmes that we can see now is a result of the MUA's 'laissez-faire' policy. It's true that we don't treat them seriously, and don't take strategic action, but what we can do is to provide support and give universities a certain flexibility in curriculum terms. For example, if a university has a curriculum that is used in its Thai programmes and wants to change it to English, it can do it right away without waiting for approval. More than that, we allow the university council to approve it; the curriculum doesn't need to accord with the plan as long as the demands are clear; and when the university council has approved it, that programme can be taught and the university can inform the MUA later.⁹

The MUA's official argues that, given the current circumstances, the best way to support the international programmes is to give the universities flexibility in accordance with the 1992 deregulation process. He also considers that the 'success' of the policy is due to the 'laissez-faire' approach of the state. However, the lack of an established form of 'product control' carries a risk in qualitative terms, as the MUA has provided universities with a loophole: they can transform their Thai programmes into 'international' ones without creating new curricula.

This dubious practice is common in all the selected public universities.¹⁰ Although a Thammasat lecturer noted that one difference between Thai and international programmes is that the latter offer more subjects prefixed with 'international', such as international finance and international marketing, while in Thai programmes these subjects are studied in elective courses,¹¹ it cannot be denied that both Thai and international programmes share the same groups of subjects. Also, since in Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, the teachers in both the Thai and the international programmes are mainly Thai lecturers from the Faculty,¹² the differences between the two programmes are clearly minimal. This aspect of the implementation process correlates with what has been argued concerning the rationale of marginalisation: that the 'international programmes' were intended to serve mainly Thai

⁹ Sumate interview (MUA).

¹⁰ Kulapatra, Kaewta, Porpan, Piboon interviews (TU, CU, RU).

¹¹ Kulapatra interview (TU).

¹² Kulapatra, Kaewta interviews (TU); Faculty (with a capital F) refers to the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy of CU and TU.

students. This approach is very different from those found in the studies of scholars who specifically focus on internationalised curricula; these studies argue that to change only the language of instruction is unacceptable and that a curriculum that merely includes a few 'international' subjects can be marginalised (Van der Wende, 1996: 21; Schoorman, 2000). A university administrator commented:

If we want to start a new curriculum, it's quite difficult since it needs the MUA's approval and that takes time, but the MUA has opened a gap for universities who already have a Thai curriculum. If we teach that curriculum in English, it can start right away, and then we just send the information to the MUA for acknowledgement. We can save a lot of time this way.¹³

Thus, this loophole provided by the MUA and seized on by the universities is used to serve the growing need of the market for 'international programmes'. The collusion between the Thai state and the universities implemented results only in 'constrained development and compromised quality' (McNay, 1995: 38). The Thai state's notion of 'laissez-faire' accords with the argument that the Thai state has been engaging in 'laissez-faire by accident' or 'Thai-style liberalism', which prevents the state from offering credible commitments to the public (Unger, 1998: 175). On the one hand, the MUA seems firmly attached to its top-down written rules; on the other, a loophole is opened to accommodate the country's growing economic demands. This compromise on the part of the Thai 'state authority' affects the quality of the 'international' programmes offered by the public universities.

5.3 Roles of public universities

The following section discusses the relationship between the public universities and the market, mainly focusing on how these universities have developed programmes designed to meet the demands of businesses and students, and to address the need to generate fee-income. In Thailand, as in both developed and developing countries, universities have to maximise their revenues and the dimension of quality owing to the pressure of market forces started to be questioned (see Van Dijk and Meijer, 1994 in McNay, 1995: 37; Knight, 1999: 19). However, this neglect of quality should be understood in context: Thailand is a developing country whose structure is undergoing a transformation (see Heady, 1996: 290; De Wit, 1997: 31). The following discussion concentrates on a few key factors of the international programmes: the system of selection of lecturers and students, the classroom settings, the environment created by the programmes, and the actors'

¹³ Piboon interview (RU).

perceptions of 'internationalisation'. The next section describes the administration of the three selected programmes as a basis for the further discussion of these factors.

5.3.1 Administration of the international programmes

The thesis examines the BBA international programmes offered by the public universities of Thammasat, Chulalongkorn and Ramkhamhaeng.¹⁴ These universities have different views of what an international programme should be.

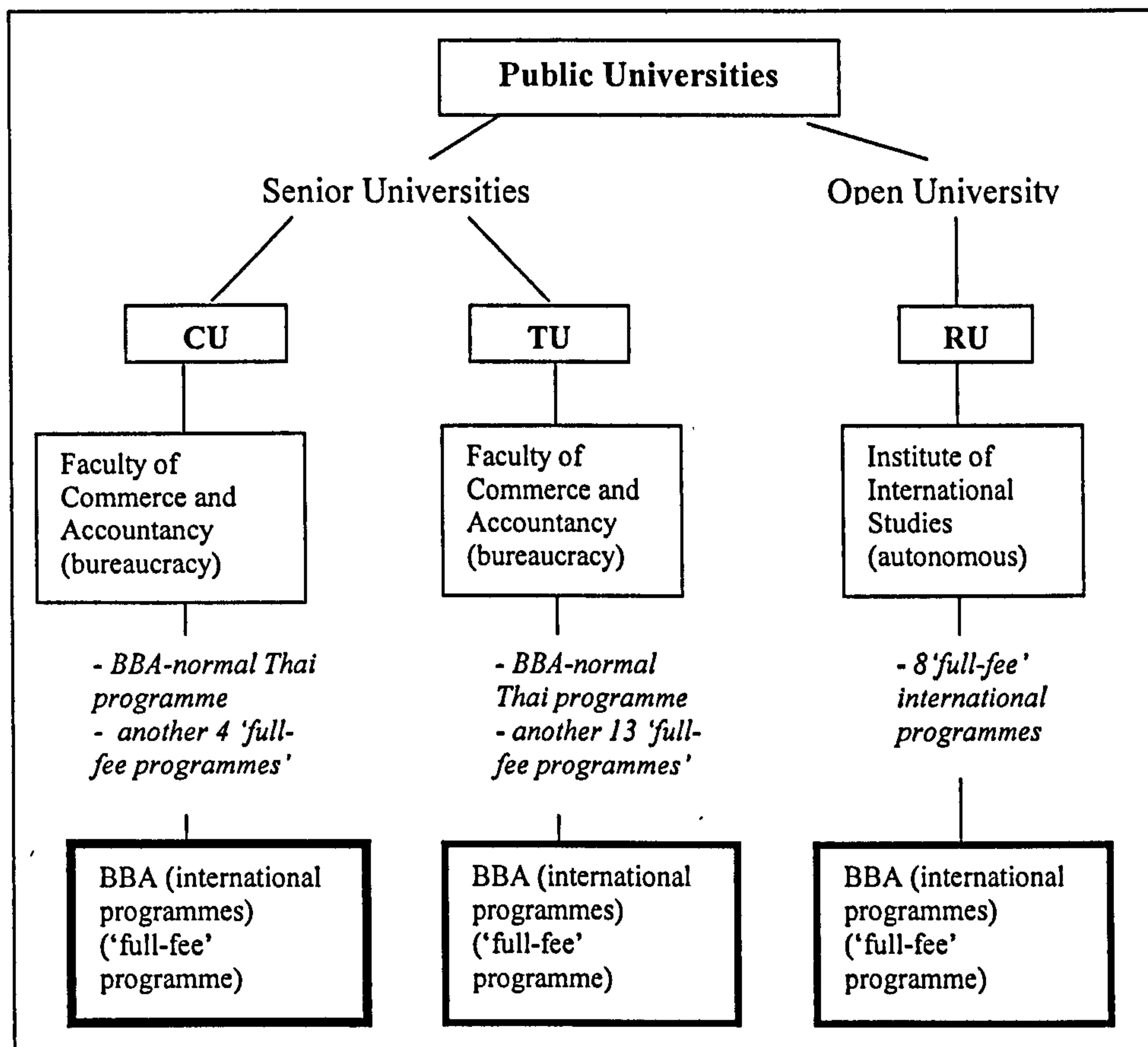


Figure 9: Administration of the BBA international programmes of the three selected universities

Source: Thammasat, Chulalongkorn and Ramkhamhaeng Universities

In Thammasat and Chulalongkorn, which are the two most senior public universities in Thailand, the BBA international programmes come under their Faculties of Commerce and Accountancy, created in both universities in 1938 (see figure 9). The programmes were established in 1990 and 1996 respectively. The Faculties were chosen to administer the programmes because of the strong Faculty culture in Thai senior public universities (see Utumporn *et al.*, 1999: 112). Administrators in both Chulalongkorn and Thammasat gave,

¹⁴ For the rationales of the selection of the universities see section 1.5.

as a key reason for this decision, the Faculty's tradition, history, prestige, and strong basis of academic knowledge and expertise.¹⁵ This attitude is rooted in the particular nature of long-established Thai universities (see section 3.3.2).

In contrast, Ramkhamhaeng initiated its international programmes under the auspices of a separate institute, the 'Institute of International studies' (IIS). This institute, established in 1999, began by offering an MBA international programme and developed its BBA international programme in 2001. The institute also runs international programmes in other disciplines, such as mass communication technology and English language (see figure 9). Ramkhamhaeng's administrative structure is different from those of Thammasat and Chulalongkorn firstly because the 'older universities' closed admission system is organised differently from the open administration of Ramkhamhaeng, whose main mission is that of an Open University serving the mass public's demands.¹⁶ Secondly, the reason Ramkhamhaeng can place a variety of disciplines under the control of a central institute is that the President and the central administration have more authority than the faculties. Ramkhamhaeng's President is openly elected by the university's employees irrespective of their position, and the students. Thus, the centralised authority is legitimated (see Utumporn *et al.*, 1999: 102).

Although these programmes have different styles of administration at the micro-level, the three institutions are all public universities whose activities are constrained by the current location of the Thai higher education system within the 'triangle of coordination'. Because of their relationship with the market, they have been compelled to make their international programmes 'full-fee' programmes. These programmes became especially important to both the Faculty and the university since they helped to generate income when Thai public universities moved from a heavy reliance on the state budget to market dependence on resources. However, as there is no adequate mechanism to guarantee the quality of the product, it is easy for universities to seek short-term gains from the process of implementation.

5.3.2 Systems of selecting and employing lecturers

There are differences between the system of selecting lecturers in Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, and that in Ramkhamhaeng, which accord with the way the programmes are administered and the nature of the universities. In Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, the

¹⁵ Porpan, Kulapatra interviews (CU, TU).

¹⁶ Piboon interview (RU).

selection system is administered by the Faculty and Faculty lecturers are mainly used; this practice reflects the blurred boundaries of the programme and the embedded bureaucratic structure, which will be discussed later (see section 5.4). In contrast, Ramkhamhaeng's IIS has used a greater number of foreign lecturers (see Table 5).

International Programme Institution/university	Number of Thai lecturers (per academic year)	Number of foreign lecturers (per academic year)	Ratio (Thai: foreign lecturers)
BBA, Thammasat	85	30	17:6
BBA, Chulalongkorn	51 (37 from the Faculty + 14 from other faculties)	12	17:4
BBA (MBA, DBA) (IIS) Ramkhamhaeng	24	40	3:5

Table 5: Number of Thai and foreign lecturers in the international programmes
Source: Thammasat, Chulalongkorn and Ramkhamhaeng Universities

Ramkhamhaeng's IIS is able to take on more foreign lecturers than Thais because the programmes are run by the institute not the faculties, and this allows the programmes to be flexible in hiring lecturers. The policy of the IIS is to use lecturers from Western developed countries whose mother tongue is English to teach most of the major subjects. This policy distinguishes the IIS's programmes from those of other universities.¹⁷ The IIS's use of foreign lecturers is clearly driven by market forces. A programme administrator explained:

We use *farang* lecturers because although we were offering the same programme as Chula and Thammasat, they use mostly of the Thai lecturers, so we wanted to create an image for our programme, and *farang* lecturers could increase the popularity of our programme. If we had used Thai lecturers like the others, there would have been no reason for students to come to us.¹⁸

The interview makes it clear that Ramkhamhaeng employed western lecturers as an important part of its marketing strategy to attract Thai students. Firstly, this reconfirms that universities are driven by the need to generate fee-income as a result of current national and global economic pressures. Second, and for the same reason, it is important to employ western lecturers whose mother tongue is English. This also reflects the perceptions of Thai students and Thai society generally regarding international programmes: their main functions are seen as firstly, to improve the students' English language and secondly,

¹⁷ Piboon interview (RU).

¹⁸ Piboon interview (RU).

to introduce the culture of the West. This confirms what has been previously noted about the cultural norms of Thais regarding the concept of westernisation (see Sulak, 1991: 43). Moreover, since Ramkhamhaeng still lacks the prestige and reputation of Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, progressive marketing strategies are required.

However, to hire lecturers from the preferred developed countries is costly,¹⁹ Ramkhamhaeng cannot afford to employ them for a whole semester. Therefore, the programmes are organised around a system of 'block courses' where every subject is allocated a strict timetable. Instead of learning seven different subjects per semester as in other programmes,²⁰ students take two subjects per month; each subject is taught for two days, six hours per day. Exams are taken at the end of each month. Under this system, the institute is able to save costs by employing lecturers only for a one-month period after which they fly back home.²¹ The administrator further mentioned that some lecturers hired for the BBA programme also teach in the MBA and Ph.D programmes, mainly to save on the costs of accommodation and airfares.²² This arrangement means that the lecturers have to teach both weekdays and weekends because the MBA and DBA courses are taught on Saturdays and Sundays for six hours each day. The practice of employing western lecturers to teach several courses over an intensive working period of one month shows that Ramkhamhaeng's methods are based on the calculation of economic interest.

As they also need to generate fee income, Thammasat and Chulalongkorn do not give their foreign lecturers full-time status. Most are hired for a semester on a contract basis,²³ which shows that these universities have chosen to adopt a flexible recruitment process. Chulalongkorn's website contains recruitment information and the university also recruits in other ways. A Chulalongkorn lecturer explained:

Now foreign lecturers came from the means of personal contact and e-mails, sometimes the Director met them in conferences and invited them over. I think everyone wants to come because we pay good rate.²⁴ We didn't make any connection with particular university because if we do we are committed to receive anyone they send.²⁵

¹⁹ The IIS at RU spends about 3,000 – 6,000 US dollars (varied according to contract) per lecturer per 8 Working days including air ticket and accommodation.

²⁰ BBA of CU and TU have a normal timetable where students learn 5-7 subjects per semester.

²¹ Piboon interview (RU).

²² Piboon interview (RU).

²³ The BBA at TU employs two full-time foreign lecturers (out of 30) (Kulapatra interview); Porpan interview (CU).

²⁴ The BBA at CU pays foreign lecturers about 500,000 baht per semester (about £7,000 sterling calculated at the exchange rate of £1 = 70 baht) with other supplementary costs, such as accommodation and air ticket.

²⁵ Tharee interview (CU).

The interview shows that the programme organisers did not feel obliged to hire only those foreign lecturers who were willing to devote their time and energy to teaching the programmes. This accords with the comments of students that the quality and commitment of the invited foreign lecturers fluctuated.²⁶ Indeed, invitations issued at conferences, personal contacts and e-mails do not constitute a formal selection system. Van der Wende (1996: 137) has noted that 'joint curriculum development' requires 'a flexibly structured approach' and that the delivery of a curriculum can be both complicated and useful in the sense that teachers' and students' capabilities need to coincide. Therefore, clear planning and flexibility are needed and intensive consultation during the delivery of the curriculum is vital. This 'joint curriculum development' is considered a fundamental quality of international programmes.

However, in Chulalongkorn, the administrators were unwilling to engage with the complications of connections with foreign universities because they would be obliged to use any lecturers sent to them. This they saw themselves as passive recipients, failing to recognise the need for frank consultations between equal partners. The above interview is evidence of false perceptions and excuses for not committing to formal academic cooperation. In fact, the main reason they did not require foreign lecturers was because they believed that the programme needed to employ Thai lecturers from the Faculty. Thus, the Faculty's embedded bureaucratic attitudes limited the programmes' flexibility. This point will be discussed later in this chapter (see section 5.4).

The difficulties of finding foreign lecturers are widespread and the underlying problems are related to the universities' degree of commitment. For example, Ramkhamhaeng administrator commented on the problems of employing committed foreign lecturers:

Some people ask why we don't make an agreement with a foreign university; in fact we'd like to co-operate with a well-known foreign university, because of the prestige and because it would make it easy for us to find foreign lecturers. But in practice, there are a lot of problems. If we use their name we have to give them money. For example, if we earn 100 baht, we get ten baht and have to give them 90 baht, even though we do 90 per cent of the work and they do 10 per cent. If we can't find students to enroll in the programme, we have to pay them anyway. We are also required to hire their lecturers. It's better the way things are since we have flexibility.²⁷

²⁶ Focus group interview, Waritta, Nantaphong, Lacsanawadee, Nitima, Pitchaya, Student, BBA, CU, 10 May 2003.

²⁷ Piboon interview (RU).

The interview shows that the university needs to generate income and to be flexible, hiring foreign lecturers on an individual basis, not through a joint programme with other universities. First, the complications stem from disagreements about sharing benefits rather than the process of delivery of the curriculum (see Van der Wende, 1996: 137). Second, the administrator stressed the need to advertise and market the programmes by using the name of a well-known foreign university, for prestige, in order to enhance the university's image. Thus the decision whether or not to engage in drawing up a joint curriculum is not based on the fundamental issue of quality, but on the need to increase market share (see Turner and Hulme, 1997: 67; Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 25-27).

The lack of a proper selection and employment system makes it difficult to find committed foreign lecturers. The problems of quality control were admitted by Chulalongkorn administrator:

We'd like to have full-time foreign lecturers with us because now it's difficult to control quality if they come and go, but we'll need to pay high salaries and find the right motivation to attract those foreign lecturers to stay with us for the long term. The longer they stay with the programme, the better they understand the nature of the students and the university. What we're having to do now is not only difficult for the management, but it also affects quality.²⁸

A Ramkhamhaeng administrator spoke about the problem of fake applications:

It's very difficult to filter the application forms of foreign lecturers. There are many applicants, but sometimes they're working in business companies and fake their applications claiming that they are professors. Many *farang* makes a living this way. There was one who was a good teacher, but he had come from a training company; he had a good technique, but when I directly asked whether he had a doctoral degree, he couldn't answer, so I knew that he'd lied. We don't want low-quality *farang*. It's good that we don't need to worry too much about them since they're on a short contract. If they're not good and the students complain a lot about them, I just let them go, and I won't hire them again.²⁹

These two interviews show that calculations of the programmes' economic contribution prevented the establishment of an effective procedure to select high-quality and committed foreign lecturers. Since applicants were attracted by the short-term benefits, rather than by the academic benefits, there were many faked applications and lecturers with a low level of commitment. A strong commitment to academic excellence is rare among foreign lecturers because they are not hired for essentially academic reasons or through exchange

²⁸ Porpan interview (CU).

²⁹ Piboon interview (RU).

programmes, nor are they given the full-time status that would make them feel part of the university. This marginalised selection and employment process makes it difficult for programmes to ensure the quality of their foreign lecturers (see Van der Wende, 1996: 139).

During the observations and interviews with two foreign lecturers who were teaching in Ramkhamhaeng, it emerged that one had another part-time job teaching English in another public university, while the other was teaching full-time in a private university.³⁰ This reflects the university's weak commitment to the lecturers' employment system. It also casts light on the national macro-picture: the labour market for foreign lecturers is limited, and they are compelled to circulate from one university to another (see Suwicha and Rojana, 2004). Looking deeper, we discover that the Thai education system relies heavily on foreigners or western education, as illustrated by more demands than supply. The reliance on western education is a value which have long been established within Thai society (see Likhit, 1978: 120; Varunee, 1990: 252).

Many students also complained that several of the foreign lecturers who came to teach in programmes lacked the commitment, or rather, that the system prevented their commitment:

We studied with two or three *farang* lecturers in our first two years. In my last two years, I studied with only one *farang* lecturer. Here most of lecturers are Thais. *Farang* lecturers are not full-time, they come and go and I did not see them again.³¹

We used to have one *farang* lecturer. He was quite good, in both accent and teaching style, but then he had to go to teach in Japan, and so what he did was rushed; he had to try to finish the course within two months. It was tough for us.³²

Indeed, the foreign lecturers' short-term involvement with the programmes makes it difficult for students to obtain teaching of adequate quality from these temporary staff. The university's lack of commitment to a proper selection system results a lack of commitment on the part of lecturers.

Moreover, in Ramkhamhaeng, foreign lecturers are hired to teach in a 'block course' system, and so the quality of teaching and learning is undermined. The class I observed ran for six hours a day and was composed of 22 Thai students with a British lecturer. There were no foreign students, and so no discussions or exchanges of ideas on case studies of

³⁰ Personal interview, Peter, lecturer, BBA Business Law, IIS, RU, 25 February 2003; observation and short conversation with Thierry d'Argoeuves.

³¹ Petcharat interview (TU).

³² Focus group interview, Nanthapong (CU).

different countries took place. The learning style was a one-way flow from lecturer to student, and when the lecturer tried to ask easy questions, there was little response from the students and their answers showed that they had misunderstood the question. Moreover, about ten of the 22 students paid no attention to the lecture; all the time students were walking in and out of the lecture room and some who had walked out sat outside engaging in loud conversation. Many times, they even disrupted the class, creating disturbances and laughing loudly. The lecturer made no attempt to control this rowdy behaviour, and by the time the class finished, only ten students were left.³³

The participant observation session revealed two main problems. The first is related to the students' English abilities, which are strongly correlated with the selection system of selecting students; this will be discussed shortly (see section 5.3.3). The second problem is related to the programme's 'block course' system. In the interviews held after the class, students pointed out the weaknesses of the class, which runs for six hours a day:

The way I'm being taught here makes me feel like I'm in high school, studying to a strict timetable. I don't feel like an adult or that I'm leading a university life. We have to study from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., so I don't have much free time to enjoy myself. I don't know; sometimes when I go back home after six hours of class, I feel like my brain has worked so hard; I don't have the energy to do anything related to my studies.³⁴

Sometimes it's even worse: when lecturers that the programme hired can only stay for two weeks, not a month, we have to come at weekends and take their classes. Some lecturers make an effort to give us four chapters a day; my friends in other universities study a chapter a week. This is so different.³⁵

These interviews and the participant observation coincided, illustrating how the university's programmes overriding concern with economic benefits distorted behaviour within the classroom setting and that a six-hour class focused on one subject per day had the effect of limiting independent thinking. Not only did students find it difficult to concentrate on the lessons, the lecturer also found it difficult if not impossible to encourage the students and run the class effectively. These systems of employing lecturers suggest profit-seeking behaviour of the universities which does not guarantee quality education (IPPS, 2003: II-3).

³³ Participant observation, Business Law, BBA, IIS, RU, 25 February 2003 13.00-16.00 hours.

³⁴ Focus group interview, Narunart, BBA student, IIS, RU, 25 February 2003.

³⁵ Focus group interview, Wannasiri (RU).

5.3.3 System of selecting students: Ramkhamhaeng

The student selection system is also important to the quality of the international programmes, since it affects the students' learning process (see Van der Wende, 1996: 137).

International Programme Institution/ university	Admission process (type 1)	Admission process (type 2)	Admission process (type 3)	Applications VS Acceptances
BBA, TU	- Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy's direct entrance examination - National university entrance examination held by MUA - Interview examination	- BBA written examination - Interview examination	- SAT total scores of 1,100 or above - Combination of SAT 580 or above and TOEFL 550 or above - Combination of SAT 580 or above and IELTS scores of 6.0 - Combination of SAT 580 or above and TU-GET score of 500 or above - Interview examination	14:1
BBA, CU	National University Entrance examination held by MUA - Interview examination	-	- TOEFL or CU (English test)-550 or above - SAT 1100 or above	6:1
BBA IIS, RU	-	-	TOEFL 500 or above or those who graduated from high school in English Speaking countries, or from an accepted international high school are exempted	2:1

Table 6: Admission process of international programmes in Thai universities

Source: Universities' Brochures

Table 6 shows that Thammasat has the lowest ratio (14:1) of applications to acceptances, followed by Chulalongkorn (6:1) and Ramkhamhaeng (2:1). In Thammasat and Chulalongkorn, students can enter the programmes on the basis of entrance examination scores, or TOEFL and SAT tests scores. In Thammasat, the BBA direct entrance examination is also held. In Ramkhamhaeng, the only requirement is a TOEFL score of 500 or above, with certain exemptions. The different criteria of these three universities are

explained by prestige and reputation of the senior universities of Thammasat and Chulalongkorn.

Accordingly, Thammasat receives about 1,400 applications each year; 200 students are selected for interview and 100 students are accepted in the final round. Of these 70 students enter through the second and third admission processes; 30 are directly recruited through the first process. The last group's English score in the national entrance examination is high - about 85-90 per cent - and they have shown themselves to be eager to study in the international programme.³⁶ Chulalongkorn has about 600 applications each year; 300 students are selected for interview and 100 students are accepted in the final round.³⁷

Ramkhamhaeng has the lowest criteria and the highest ratio of applications to acceptances, compared with Thammasat and Chulalongkorn. The programme administrator noted that the number of applications for the BBA programme was not large, and in order to be able to hire foreign lecturers, the programme had had to lower the criteria in order to get an adequate number of students. In any case, the TOEFL score is flexible and students can take the Institute's English examination if they have no TOEFL score records. The institute also holds an interview examination if necessary.³⁸ Another administrator commented that if Thai students can understand the interview questions, they already know how to study, and writing skills could be developed later.³⁹ On this point, however, several Ramkhamhaeng students noted that the questions were in conversational English, which is different from the requirements of the programmes regarding academic reading and writing skills.⁴⁰ These concessions are the 'flexibilities' the Institute put in order to enrol more students.

In Ramkhamhaeng, the type of students that choosing to apply in the programme is different from those applying to Chulalongkorn and Thammasat. Many had failed the national entrance examination.⁴¹ Since Ramkhamhaeng is Thailand's Open University, its name does not bring to mind privilege and reputation, unlike Thammasat and Chulalongkorn, so the programme administrator had to motivate and attract potential customers by hiring foreign lecturers. Despite such efforts, Ramkhamhaeng is still unable to attract the cream of Thai students. As a result, the capacities of Ramkhamhaeng's students are different from those of students at the other two universities.

³⁶ Kaewta interview (TU).

³⁷ Tharee interview (CU).

³⁸ Piboon interview (RU).

³⁹ Rampai interview (RU).

⁴⁰ Personal interview Suganya, Chanpen, Wipapan, MBA students, IIS, RU,

⁴¹ Anonymous, students, RU, 24, 25 February 2003.

In Ramkhamhaeng, many students have difficulties in studying business subjects in English. As we have noted, observation of the class revealed that students were reluctant or unable to express opinions or answer questions put by the lecturer. The result was a one-way flow of knowledge from teacher to students. A foreign lecturer commented:

The way I'm teaching is that in every class I give them a handout that summarises the content of the textbook. They can't read the book and understand it by themselves, so I have to read it and explain it to them.⁴²

However, if students cannot read the textbook by themselves, the extent to which they can understand the explanations of a foreign lecturer remains far from certain. Many times, when the lecturer asked a question, most students did not answer and those who did had clearly misunderstood the question.⁴³ The observation confirmed that at Ramkhamhaeng the English language was an obstacle. This accords with what a student noted:

I'd never thought my English was good enough, never thought I'd be able to come here. But now I am here, it's very difficult to study in English. Sometimes, I even wanted to quit and go to a private university, but my parents want me to study in the 'inter' programme so that I can improve my English and that will be good for my future.⁴⁴

This student was finding it difficult to become competent in English and therefore to understand the content of the curriculum and to participate in the classroom interactions. During the interviews, students disclosed that more than half of the class had failed the monthly examination because they lacked proficiency in English, motivation, and general academic competence. Many students had moved to other universities.⁴⁵ The inadequate selection system creates tensions between the need to enhance quality and the need to generate income. The lack of quality is an example of how 'first-order' change (improved quality of higher education) does not occur, despite the appearance of 'second-order' change (new goals, structures, and roles) (see Van der Wende, 1996: 26-27). In Ramkhamhaeng, the latter change tends to be merely rhetorical.

5.3.4 Environment created by the programmes: Chulalongkorn and Thammasat

Regarding the environment created by the programmes, one has to admit that it is difficult for Thai universities to create a genuine international environment such as can be found in

⁴² Peter interview.

⁴³ Participant observation, Business Law, BBA, IIS, RU, 25 February 2003, 13.00-16.00 hours.

⁴⁴ Anonymous interview (RU).

⁴⁵ Focus group interview, Wanwalai, Narunart, Chanakchone; Personal interviews, Chingchai, Student, BBA, IIS, RU, 13 March 2003.

certain universities in the UK and the USA, where multicultural diversity exists and which are the most prestigious in the eyes of students worldwide (see OECD, 2004). Several students who had studied abroad noted the complete difference between the environments of the 'international' programmes in Thailand and those found abroad; they mostly mentioned that in Thailand the majority of lecturers and students, and the language used outside the classroom, are Thai.⁴⁶ However, it is interesting to ascertain to what extent the international programmes attempt to provide students with an 'international' environment and 'international' services.⁴⁷

One of the clearest observations, which confirmed the importance of market forces, concerned the changing policy of universities towards the establishment of an international office created to support international programmes and having an independent status free from the control of the bureaucracy. In Ramkhamhaeng, the IIS administration has its own office and staff separate from the Thai programmes. In the same way, Chulalongkorn and Thammasat established an independent international office run by each university's Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy. This is representative of 'second-order change', where a new structure is adopted (see Van der Wende, 1996: 26-27). However, such a change remains in the realms of rhetoric since it does not guarantee quality.

Administrators at both Chulalongkorn and Thammasat remarked on the need to have a separate office to take care of the programmes' day-to-day operation for the benefit of students who were entitled to a higher level of services since they were paying the full fee. Moreover, the management of the programmes with foreign students and especially students who could not understand Thai required staff that were competent in English. In this regard, the Faculty office, which had bureaucratic status, could not help.⁴⁸ Accordingly, Thammasat's BBA international programme hired six staff on a contract basis while their evaluation, salaries and welfare were tendered to the private sector.⁴⁹ Chulalongkorn took on five staff whose salary ranged from 8,000 to 10,000 baht per month, a little higher than the governmental rate.⁵⁰ The universities' main aim was to recruit qualified and committed staff. The setting up of international offices and the fixing of a higher salary rate for staff

⁴⁶ Focus group interviews, Sirathai, Thapida, Piyasak, Chongphoei, BBA, TU students, 24 April 2003; Waritta, Nanthapong, Lacsanawadee, Nitima and Pitchaya (CU).

⁴⁷ The BBA programmes of CU and TU provided exchange programmes for students to study overseas, based on academic cooperation, and ranging from one semester to one year; these offered a change of environment and created opportunities for students to broaden their international perspectives (see Van der Wende, 1996: 120). However, this thesis is interested in the domestic environment, as the effects of overseas education are hard to assess.

⁴⁸ Porpan, Kulapatra interviews (CU, TU).

⁴⁹ Kulapatra interview (TU).

⁵⁰ Porpan interview (CU).

reflect a new attitude among public universities, which confirms that the existing administrative units with bureaucratic status cannot perform the multifunctional tasks created by the internationalisation of today's world (see De Wit, 1997: 31; Yin Ching Leong, 1997: 118). On the one hand, the programmes have been moderately successful in serving both the students' demands and the requirements of the market. On the other, however, substandard bureaucratic staff are used to serve students in 'normal programmes'. The picture is one of an unequal distribution of resources: the universities have created two separate systems. This reinforces the argument that the special programmes in Thailand were created to serve the interests of upper- and middle-class students (see Surichai, 2002: 7-17). Thus, the universities' staffing policy shows that there is a clear relationship between the international programmes and the market. However, the move towards the market only benefits the students from upper- and middle- class whose main concerns are to benefit from Capitalism (Girling, 1996: 44-45; Nidhi in Girling, 1996: 56).

5.4 Bureaucratic structure and norms of public universities

Any discussion of the problems of implementation in developing countries cannot neglect to take into account embedded bureaucratic power, which is less evident in the developed world (see Powell, 1999: 19; Heady, 1996: 317-321). In Thailand, what makes the 'academic oligarchy' different from its counterpart in the West (Clark, 1984: 11-16; Bartell, 2003: 53) is that public universities still retain their bureaucratic structure and norms (Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 12).

Accordingly, there are additional factors that should be borne in mind when studying Thai public universities. Firstly, these public universities are forced by Thai state to rely on market and provide 'international' programmes to serve business sectors while other incentives to produce genuine quality programmes are not given (Varunee, 1990: 261; Watson, 1991: 564). Secondly, these universities have a greater market advantage compared with private universities, mainly because of their prestige and state subsidies. Thirdly, the Thai bureaucratic system has long been known for its inefficiency and long-established interests. (see Smith, 1996: 230; 2003: 172; Chai-Anan, 2001: 62). Also, the state's bureaucratic forces have been undermined in the current socio-economic context; for example, the salaries of civil servants are low in comparison to those in the business sector (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 329; McCargo, 2002b: 8). The following discusses these in detail.

5.4.1 System of selecting and employing lecturers

Generally speaking, a blurred boundary exists between the bureaucratic structure of faculty and university, and the management of the 'self-supporting' programme. Although universities define a 'self-supporting' programme as one that is not subsidised by the state,⁵¹ but the lecturers who are civil servants, and the buildings and classrooms are owned by the state.⁵² On this point, a Ramkhamhaeng administrator noted:

We have better opportunities than private universities in that we don't need to use investment funds, we use the existing buildings. If we had to invest in buildings to the tune of, say, 200 to 300 million baht, we wouldn't be able to manage. If we didn't get subsidies from the state, we would hardly have been able to set up our programme so quickly.⁵³

The interview shows that state subsidies enable the 'self-supporting programmes' of Thai public universities. The inclination to state shows the greater advantage of public over private (see Brunner, 1997: 230).

Since in Chulalongkorn and Thammasat the BBA programmes are embedded within the Faculty, the lecturers are mainly drawn from the Faculty, which runs several 'special' or 'self-supporting' programmes. For example, in Thammasat, the Faculty administers 13 special programmes;⁵⁴ in Chulalongkorn, the Faculty has established 4 special programmes⁵⁵ (see figure 9). Each unit administered under the Faculty sub-contracts the full-time Faculty lecturers to teach in these programmes. Generally, the rate of payment is 2,000 baht per hour.⁵⁶ This is evidence that the international programmes were created partly to improve the Thai lecturers' economic status. In 2003, the BBA programmes of Thammasat, Chulalongkorn and Ramkhamhaeng paid this special rate to Thai lecturers 85, 51 and 24 lecturers respectively.⁵⁷ Thus the programmes made an impact on a large number of these civil servant-lecturers.

⁵¹ Kulapatra interview (TU).

⁵² Porntip interview (MUA).

⁵³ Piboon interview (RU).

⁵⁴ TU, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy (2003b) <http://www.bus.tu.ac.th/study/programs.htm>, accessed on 2 August 2005.

⁵⁵ CU, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, Annual Report, 2002-2003 <http://www.acc.chula.ac.th>, accessed on 2 August 2005.

⁵⁶ About £30 sterling (calculated at the exchange rate of £1 = 70 baht).

⁵⁷ Data provided by the programmes.

Apart from the fact that it is in the programmes' interests to supporting their lecturers, the programmes cannot hire full-time lecturers due to the Faculty's rigid rules. A Thammasat administrator explained:

The money is administered by the Faculty, and so the Faculty decides on the matter of hiring lecturers, and since the Faculty is part of the state's bureaucratic apparatus, the government regulations don't allow us to increase the number of civil servants until certain lecturers are retired.⁵⁸

A Chulalongkorn administrator commented:

There is the notion that it is inappropriate for our programme to have its own full-time lecturers; according to the regulations, lecturers should be under the department only and so the BBA programme has the duty to contact and invite those lecturers to teach in the programme. [...] With such rigid rules, it's difficult to have full-time foreign lecturers because they have to be under the department, where nobody will take care of them. Also, because they're under the department, they can't teach because the department administers only the Thai programmes.⁵⁹

These two interviews show the porous nature of the boundary between the bureaucratic structure of the Faculty and an 'autonomous' unit like an international programme. The rules of the first overcome the flexibilities of the latter in creating the structure that controls full-time lecturers. In return, Thai lecturers gain income from the extra teaching hours. This is the bargain struck between the state and market forces in Thailand, resulting in 'politico-business' oligarchies (Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 29-30).

The fact that the programmes in Chulalongkorn and Thammasat do not have permanent teaching staff creates difficulties in terms of management. In the case of Chulalongkorn, where 34 Thai lecturers are from departments of the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, while the other 17 are from other faculties, the process of employing lecturers from departments inside the same Faculty and other Faculties is inflexible. Because lecturers are employed to teach in the modules of their departments, the modules of the international programmes have to be rescheduled so as not to interfere with the lecturers' primary obligations.⁶⁰ In the same way, the Thammasat administrator explained:

Our lecturers work full time in the Thai programmes, so we have to wait for them to decide whether or not to teach in our programme; it seems we have no control over this. However, it usually works out fine: our timetable is

⁵⁸ Kaewta interview (TU).

⁵⁹ Porpan interview (CU).

⁶⁰ Porpan interview (CU).

different from the Thai programmes so the lecturers can somehow manage their schedule.⁶¹

The interview reveals that tensions regarding quality arise when lecturers are not employed full-time in the international programmes.

In the programmes of Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, one issue emphasised by the administrators and lecturers centred on the tensions between maintaining the institution's prestige and reputation and the emerging demands of the market. The administrators noted that the programmes could not significantly increase the intake because of concerns that the quality would decline.⁶² Despite these anxieties, the programmes have started to recruit more students: in Thammasat, the intake has increased from 70 to 100 per year,⁶³ and in Chulalongkorn it rose from 60 to 100. The increased numbers of students contrast with the stagnant number of lecturers, which was a result of the Thai government's policy of cutting the public sector budget after the 1997 economic crisis. The reduction of expenditure on the public sector led to reductions in staff development budgets, scholarships and grants, and this created tensions over quality (Pornchulee, 2002).⁶⁴ A Thammasat lecturer noted:

Now we have a fixed number of lecturers. The Faculty has 110 lecturers while the number of students, 4-year undergraduates, is 2,400. The Faculty can't increase the number of lecturers since this would go against government policy. A lecturer is supposed to teach 4 subjects a year, but now this has to increase to 5 to 6 subjects because of the students' increased demands. This also includes research projects and administration duties. When we don't have time, students face difficulties because it's hard to distribute and manage our time to prepare for teaching.⁶⁵

This accords with a university administrator's remarks:

What concerns me about the international programmes is that they don't have any lecturers of their own; now lecturers from the Thai programmes are hired to teach extra hours in the international programmes. Lecturers have to teach for a whole year without a break. My question is how effective can they be as advisors for students since they don't even have the time to improve the teaching documents? People aren't robots or supermen. I think the university needs to reconsider and give the international programmes their own full-time lecturers.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Kulapatra interview (TU).

⁶² Kaewta, Kulapatra, Porpan, Tharee interviews (TU, CU).

⁶³ Kulapatra interview (TU).

⁶⁴ After 1997, the budget of 1,500 million baht allotted to sending students abroad to serve the manpower needs of public universities shrank, and approximately 700 new scholarships were cancelled. An early retirement programme was introduced. In 2000, the overall budget for public institutions was cut by 30-40 per cent (Pornchulee, 2002).

⁶⁵ Kaewta interview (TU).

⁶⁶ Personal interview, Chirapan, Vice Rector for International Affairs, TU, 13 January 2003.

The interviews confirm that the Faculty's ever-growing need to generate income is at odds with its embedded bureaucratic structure. Universities are unwilling to press for an increase in the number of lecturers for two reasons: first, the universities rely on the bureaucracy; second, the existing lecturers of the Faculty gain financially. Thus the quality of the programmes suffers. Because the Thai and the international programmes have different schedules, lecturers involved in both have to teach 12 months of the year, with no proper break.⁶⁷ This overloading has the effect of denying fresh knowledge to students.

These lecturers can gain benefits from the system because quality assessment is not strongly established. In these universities, the 'product-control' system is only in its early stages (see Brunner, 1997: 234-235; Levy, 1994: 259-261). Lecturers noted that the quality assessment initiated by the university's central administration had not reached the international programmes. In Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, assessment is conducted at faculty level and is applied to the 'special programmes' while the IIS is considered to be newly established and not yet ready to be assessed.⁶⁸ A Thammasat administrator noted that the central administration has little control over the faculties due to the nature of Thammasat: it is senior university in which great authority is embedded within the faculty.⁶⁹ Lecturers do not take the assessment requirement seriously and they noted that there is no limitation of working hours and that they can teach as many extra hours as they wish.⁷⁰

Van der Wende (1996: 139) noted that the ultimate aim of international programmes is to develop the quality of lecturers. In Thailand there is only an *ad hoc* teaching and learning process since these civil servant-lecturers are mainly concerned to increase their income. This, in addition to the weak assessment system and the imbalance between quantity and quality in Thai higher education over the period of economic growth, has brought about a situation in which changes whether first-order or second-order cannot occur.

5.4.2 System of selecting students: Chulalongkorn and Thammasat

In Thammasat and Chulalongkorn, the high number of applications can be attributed to the age of the programmes. Thammasat's BBA programme, established in 1990, was the pioneer among public universities, followed by that of Chulalongkorn in 1996, and by Ramkhamhaeng in 2001. Second, the lustre of the senior universities' names helped to

⁶⁷ The Thai programme's terms are June-October and November-March; those of the international programmes are August-December, January-May, and June-July.

⁶⁸ Kaewta, Chirapan, Porpan, Piboon interviews (TU, CU, RU).

⁶⁹ Chirapan interview (TU)

⁷⁰ anonymous interviews.

increase their programmes' reputation; it should be remembered that Chulalongkorn is the oldest public university in Thailand. Their privileged position allows Thammasat and Chulalongkorn to demand higher standards of their students. This is confirmed by the following interview:

My parents wanted me to enter either Chula or Thammasat, since these two universities are the best known. I know that Thammasat's BBA programme was established first and has a good reputation. But when it comes to the institution-between Thammasat and Chula-my parents asked me to choose Chula instead.⁷¹

This perception of privileged status is widespread, not only among students, but also among lecturers inside the universities. Both Thammasat and Chulalongkorn lecturers remarked on their universities' prestige:

Everyone wants to be a Thammasat lecturer, so we have a better chance of finding really capable lecturers. Because of our prestige, many lecturers would like to come and teach here.⁷²

With our reputation, many students want to come here. We don't have to do much marketing. (...) To be a Chula lecturer, it is not easy since our knowledge must have the right content and focus on quality.⁷³

Moreover, the Ramkhamhaeng programme administrator was aware of the prestige and responsibility of being a public university, "We are public universities with honour and prestige; we have not made it our business to extort money from students."⁷⁴

The above interviews suggest the embedded norms of the selected public universities. However, Chulalongkorn and Thammasat have greater prestige than Ramkhamhaeng because they are the most senior public universities while Ramkhamhaeng is Thailand's Open University. Therefore, the first two have the advantage of being able to select first-rate lecturers and students. However, as the last interviewee observed, what they have in common is the perception that as public universities they have superior status in terms of reputation, prestige and honour. In Thailand, the ranking of universities is not firmly established;⁷⁵ therefore, these lecturers' perceptions about their excellence are crude and

⁷¹ Focus group interview, Waritta (CU).

⁷² Kaewta interview (TU).

⁷³ Tharee interview (CU).

⁷⁴ Piboon interview (RU).

⁷⁵ Porntip interview; Personal interview, Chantavit, Assistant Permanent Secretary for University Affairs, MUA, 13 November 2003.

might not be justified. The lack of a reliable ranking system might permit a country's senior public universities to enjoy an unearned status (see Brunner, 1997: 234-235).

Moreover, although the last extract seeks to fix boundaries between the honour and prestige of the bureaucracy and the university's business interests, in today's world, it is difficult for universities not to be driven by market imperatives and to bow to global economic trends (see Salter and Tapper 1994 in Kirby-Harris, 2003: 357; Dill, 1997a: 163). Although the Chulalongkorn lecturer emphasised the drive for quality, her reference to marketing shows that the boundary between the academy and business are not secure, and reflect dilemma facing the Thai 'academic oligarchy': hold on to the old bureaucratic values or to embrace the new spirit of reform (see Brunner, 1997: 234; Levy, 1994: 259; Silva, 1996: 71; Neacsu, 1998: 207).

Because of their reputation, Chulalongkorn and Thammasat have more opportunities than private universities to recruit first-rate students. Thus, students in Thammasat and Chulalongkorn have adequate English skills, which enable them to contribute to the class.⁷⁶ A focus-group interview was conducted with five Thammasat students: a foreign student, two Thais who had graduated from schools abroad and preferred to communicate in English, and two Thai students who had graduated from Thai schools. The interviews were carried out in English for 40 minutes. The two Thais students who had graduated from Thai schools had fluent English, found no difficulty in expressing their opinions at length and coped well with the questions, and their interactions with their foreign and Thai friends in the group were equally confident. There was no communication gap.⁷⁷

Nevertheless these two students admitted that they had found it difficult at first to speak and give their opinions, as they had to adjust from classes taught in Thai to those taught in English; but in terms of academic competition they had found it easy to perform well in the examination and to adapt to the environment.⁷⁸ Chulalongkorn students also talked about the 'high competency' among their fellows, as they are the cream of Thai high schools.⁷⁹ Thus Chulalongkorn and Thammasat students show a high level of confidence and ability to adjust themselves to the environment. Chulalongkorn's programme provided the students' the assessment means: 25 per cent obtained a 3.5 grade point average and above, 50 per cent obtained between 3.0 and 3.4, and the remaining 25 per cent obtained between 2.5 and

⁷⁶ Unfortunately participant observation inside the classroom could not be carried out, and so an interview and observation of the interview are used instead.

⁷⁷ Focus group interview, Sirathai, Thapida, Piyasak, Chongphoei, and Koh Lian King (TU).

⁷⁸ Focus group interview, Sirathai, Thapida (TU).

⁷⁹ Focus group interview, Nanthapong, Lacsanawadee (CU).

2.9.⁸⁰ Moreover, 99 per cent of freshmen graduated;⁸¹ in Thammasat the figure was 95 per cent.⁸²

These results show: firstly that these students have no difficulties in learning because they are the cream of Thai high schools; secondly, however, the contrast between the universities' reputations recalls a Thai saying: Chulalongkorn and Thammasat are '*khao yak, jop ngai*' (difficult to enter, easy to graduate) whereas Ramkhamhaeng, an Open University, is '*khao ngai, jop yak*' (easy to enter, difficult to graduate).⁸³ A Chulalongkorn administrator also expressed his concern on the matter of 'grade inflation', noting that about half of the students in the BBA programme gain a first- or second-class honours degree.⁸⁴ This success rate can be explained by the process of 'spoon-feeding' of these two universities, different from the requirement of Ramkhamhaeng in the open system on independent learning, as some lecturers and students remarked.⁸⁵ Also, to keep their prestige, it is difficult for these universities to fail students. The issue of giving generous grades is also happened in Vietnamese schools as these schools are under pressures to produce 'high-achieving students' (Doan Hue Dung, 2004: 146). Thus an important factor motivating the cream of high school graduates to apply to Thammasat and Chulalongkorn is the prestige and reputation of the universities and their 'special programmes'. However, it would be wrong to assume that these programmes incorporate integrated international and intercultural dimensions (see Knight, 1997: 8; 2003).

5.4.3 Environment created by the programmes: Ramkhamhaeng

Although these public universities have attempted to create services designed to serve their customers' demands, they retain a bureaucratic structure, which greatly distorts the implementation of the state's 'internationalisation' policy. This section discusses how the bureaucratic structure influences delivery.

In Ramkhamhaeng, the bureaucratic structure is fused with the 'autonomous' organisation of the programmes. In this case, the office hired 16 staff, who were given the status of government officials and received government salaries.⁸⁶ This was done because the

⁸⁰ In Thailand, the assessment means are in grade point average from 0-4; where the lowest is 0, the highest is 4.

⁸¹ Data provided by each university (as of 2003).

⁸² Data provided by each university (as of 2003).

⁸³ Pichate interview (MUA).

⁸⁴ Porpan interview (CU).

⁸⁵ Tharee, Nanthapong, Lacsanawadee, Chongphoei, Koh Lian King interviews (CU, TU).

⁸⁶ Piboon interview.

programme administrators wanted to make savings on the budget. However, the executive officers were paid salaries conforming to international standards, as we have seen most notably in the case of the President, who was earning a large additional income by virtue of his position as the chairman of each 'special' programme. Given the limited budget provided for the programmes, the academic staff's desire to augment their incomes is bound to impact negatively on the quality of the services provided to the students. Another interesting point concerns the relative efficiency of staffs in the bureaucratic and autonomous systems. Whilst the BBA programmes of Thammasat and Chulalongkorn have 380 and 355 students and the IIS has 450, the number of administrative staff at 6, 5 and 16 respectively suggests that Ramkhamhaeng's administrative staff are relatively inefficient (see Riggs, 1964; Smith, 1996: 230; 2003: 172).

Because the office staff at Ramkhamhaeng were paid at the government rate the office had not been able to recruit staff who were competent in English and so most of the announcements on the notice board were in Thai, such as those concerning on the use of printers, the general rules of the Institute and job opportunities.⁸⁷ This shortcoming was taken for granted, since the office staff were not expected to be competent in English. This accords with the programme administrator's remark on the staff's inadequate English.⁸⁸ During the observation, I asked one of the office staff how the foreign students were managing to read the announcements in Thai. She answered that there were not many foreign students,⁸⁹ some announcements were not important to them and in any case they could ask the office directly. She also mentioned that even the Thai students paid little attention to the noticeboard; most of the time they got information by asking not reading.⁹⁰ This created a vicious circle: the staff had little interest in the staff developing and improving the noticeboard, and the Thai students were not consulting it but getting information from other sources. However, the fault seemed to lie with the staff rather than the students. Some of the Ramkhamhaeng students complained about the degree of motivation of the office staff, which affected the delivery of the service. Five students shared the opinion that the staff had enjoyed their bureaucratic status for so long, they were not willing to work hard.⁹¹ This reflects the deficiency of the bureaucracy's ability to respond to the demands of the market. The attachment to prestige and stable tenure entrenches resistance to change (see Pasuk and Baker, 1999: 9; Chai-Anan, 2001: 62). The

⁸⁷ Observation, IIS, RU, 25 February 2003.

⁸⁸ Piboon interview (RU).

⁸⁹ There were 438 Thai and 12 foreign students at the IIS, RU (data provided by the programme).

⁹⁰ Observation and interview of staff member, anonymous, IIS, RU, 25 February 2003.

⁹¹ Focus group interview, Wanwalai, Narunart, Chanokchone; personal interviews, Suganya and Saowanee, MBA students, IIS, RU, 24 February 2003.

above discussion suggests that the structure of the Thai higher education system, while undergoing transformation, obstructs the implementation of corporate management culture (see Levy, 1994: 259-261).

5.5 Cultural values associated with 'internationalisation'

This section discusses the perceptions of lecturers and students at the three universities under study regarding internationalisation: specifically, whether the Thai concept is comparable the western concept. At present, the main aim is to achieve competitiveness within the global economic context (see Witte, 2000: 223). However, when internationalisation requires radical changes, Thailand remains reluctant to take effective action.

5.5.1 Perceptions of university administrators and lecturers

On the matter of the employment of foreign lecturers, the admiration for the culture of the West is clearly evident. Ramkhamhaeng's policy is to hire lecturers from Western countries where English is the mother tongue.⁹² This policy emphasises the programmes' prioritisation of the English language at the expense of other international and intercultural dimensions. A programme administrator remarked on the preference for the West:

The good thing about our programme is that we have a diversity of lecturers. Here we have lecturers from all around the world. If you go to study in the UK, the lecturers are mainly local, but we have lecturers from the USA, Australia, the UK, Austria, Spain and France, which helps students to have different attitudes and ideas. Thus, we have received many things that are international. We don't take Indian, Burmese, or Philippine lecturers because we prefer those from the developed world. Sometimes those from Spain and France might have different accents, but it is important that students should experience a variety of accents and learn about those differences.⁹³

Clearly, the interviewee's conception of 'international' is that it is synonymous with the West. Lecturers from Asian countries are not even considered; this is not surprising, since generally Thais tend to believe that 'West is best' (see Sulak, 1991: 43). Although the interviewee uses the word 'diversity', his perceptions are framed by embedded norms. This prejudice accords with a Chulalongkorn administrator's strong preference for western lecturers, 'We don't want *'jin* or *khaek*' [Chinese or Muslims] in our programme; we prefer

⁹² Piboon interview (RU).

⁹³ Piboon interview (RU).

'*farang*' professors.'⁹⁴ These perceptions suggest that Thais still tend to identify 'internationalisation' with the western, as they had in the past (see Sulak, 1991: 51). At present, Thai elites aspire to compete with other capitalist economies in the context of the global market (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 145-148).

However, the Thai preference for the culture of the West remains superficial (Wyatt, 1982: 255; Reynolds, 1991; Barme, 1993). A Chulalongkorn lecturer revealed what the exchange of knowledge between Thai and foreign lecturers means in practice:

We talk with each other and sometimes they come to lecture for us, but the point is most of our Thai lecturers have graduated overseas. We have a lot of Thai lecturers with a good accent and good knowledge here. Some of our Thai lecturers are far smarter than the *farang*. (...) When *farang* lecturers give us a talk on their expertise, we participate, but in fact we already have a lot of speakers to come and talk; we're always having that kind of talk because everyone wants to come and give a talk here.⁹⁵

The interview first shows that the lecturer's dominant value is the prestige of being a Chulalongkorn lecturer; the interviewee is unwilling to exchange knowledge with foreigners. This contradicts the fundamental concept of 'internationalisation' (see Sugiyama, 1992: 99). On this point, a programme administrator explained that it was related to the '*sak si*' (feeling of dignity) of Thai lecturers and the economic interests of foreign lecturers. The programme used to encourage both groups to collaborate in team teaching but it was not successful, because the foreign lecturers thought that if they shared classes with Thai lecturers their pay would be reduced. On the other hand, Thai lecturers believe that it is unnecessary to collaborate with foreigners because they can run the class on their own.⁹⁶

In fact, the process of exchanging knowledge does not mean that Thais would play an inferior role to foreigners; instead the exchange would enhance the quality of the curriculum. As Van der Wende (1996: 139) noted, one benefit of the cooperation of foreign and domestic staff is that creates opportunities to learn about other education systems, concepts and values. Van der Wende further observed that staff performance and development constitute the area in which the qualitative effects of internationalising the curriculum are most strongly emphasised. Also, Sugiyama (1992: 99) noted that it is possible for a country to gain knowledge and skills from the wider world without abandoning its national identity.

⁹⁴ Anonymous interview, lecturer, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, CU.

⁹⁵ Anonymous interview.

⁹⁶ Porpan interview (CU).

In the Thai case, this balance is not achieved. Two factors contribute to this problematic situation: first, the embedded bureaucratic values hinder change; second, the academic motivations of foreign lecturers are not being supported by the selection and employment system discussed earlier. The Thai elite lecturers were intent on preserving and pursuing their own interests, thus impeding the adoption of fundamental change (see Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 25-27). A Ramkhamhaeng lecturer explained the problems attending cooperation:

It's very difficult to bring in Thai lecturers to sit in the class and learn from the *farang* lecturers, I used to try it at the beginning but it ended up creating problems. First of all, the Thai students were distracted: they kept asking the Thai lecturer to explain what the *farang* lecturer had been saying and the Thai lecturer had to translate for them, which upset the *farang* lecturer. Also, the *farang* lecturer got the wrong idea that the Thai lecturer was going to replace him or her, and thought that was why they were attending the class.⁹⁷

First, this extract illustrates the perception, common among Thais, that 'West is best', since the Thai lecturers were supposed to observe and learn from the foreigners. The difficulties created by this practice are unnecessary and avoidable; the observation and learning process could be conducted so as to benefit both lecturers. Cooperation between equals is the best practice (Van der Wende, 1996: 139), but problems and tensions arise because Thais tend to be uncritical of western concepts (see Reynolds, 1991; Sulak, 1991; Barme, 1993; Wyatt, 1982: 255). Second, the interview reflects the limitations of an 'international' classroom setting where students only feel comfortable when they are using the Thai language. This lack of confidence in their ability stems from the weakness of the students selection system. These examples show that the 'international programmes' have failed to incorporate genuinely 'international/ intercultural' dimension (see Knight, 1997: 8; 2003). The problem is related to the personal interests of the bureaucrat-lecturers and to the weaknesses of both the structure of and the social values embedded in the Thai higher education system. The findings suggest the dilemma Thai higher education is now facing at the current economic demands between wanting to emulate the best of the West while facing difficulties to change fundamentally (see Witte, 2002: 242; Hewison, 2002: 160).

5.5.2 Perceptions of students towards foreign lecturers

The Thai students' partiality towards western lecturers is clearly demonstrated by the interviews. They tended to make judgements based on embedded superficial perceptions

⁹⁷ Piboon interview (RU).

and were concerned with such matters as acquiring a 'correct English accent'. One Ramkhamhaeng student explained his preference:

What is 'inter' here is that I can learn with lecturers whose mother tongue is English who come from Europe. I think we are lucky that we don't have to study with Indian or Burmese lecturers like some other universities. This is one of the reasons I chose to study here in Ramkhamhaeng.⁹⁸

This interview reveals the student's lack of differentiation between the UK and other European countries; moreover, he clearly identifies 'international' with 'western'. This confusion accords with the programme administrator's remark, noted above, that French and Spanish lecturers are acceptable although their mother tongue is not English. Other students commented:

I prefer to study with *farang* lecturers. Thai lecturers may have got a PhD abroad, but their pronunciation is poor: they speak English with a Thai accent. The feeling and intonation are wrong, and when listening to them I want to go to sleep. They might be smart and clever, but they just can't perform well.⁹⁹

I prefer *farang* lecturers. Thai lecturers can't speak English fluently. We used to have Bangladeshi and Indian lecturers; their English was very difficult to understand. I didn't expect Chula to bring in those kinds of lecturers.¹⁰⁰

The interviews show that these students were more concerned that their lecturers should be fluent speakers of English than that they should have a deep knowledge of their subject. They emphasised the importance of correct accent and intonation. This is not surprising, as their main objective in studying the international programme was to improve their English language. Their attitude is in accord with the majority of Thais' limited understanding and narrow view of the meaning of 'international' (see Sulak, 1991: 51).

In contrast, a Malaysian student noted:

I don't mind whether the lecturers are foreign or Thai, as long as the knowledge they give me is adequate. Most of the lecturers here are Thais anyway. We have a variety of Thai lecturers, ranging from the boring and not very interesting to those of quite a high standard. Most of them are approachable, even if the lecture is boring; we can clarify issues with them after class.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Focus group interview, Narunart (RU).

⁹⁹ Petcharat interview (TU).

¹⁰⁰ Focus group interview, Nanthapong (CU).

¹⁰¹ Focus group interview, Koh Lian King, Student, BBA, TU, 24 April 2003.

The interview reflects the perceptions of a foreign student who has no personal preference for either western or Thai lecturers. His chief concern is the knowledge they impart, and their accessibility. In his emphasis on the latter point he is different from his Thai counterparts, who are far more concerned with a lecturer's performance in the classroom. Several Thai students noted that they rarely consulted lecturers unless the matter was an important one such as the examinations.¹⁰² Generally, Thai students prefer to be passive recipients, rarely revealing a spirit of independence and inquiry (see Watson, 1991: 576). One student made it clear that she expected to be treated sympathetically and be given the benefit of the doubt:

Although I prefer to learn with *farang* lecturers, I want my exam to be marked by Thai lecturers, because we are not good at writing. If we write English in a Thai style, Thai lecturers understand what we're trying to say. We hope they'll be sympathetic. I think that the Thai lecturers will give us marks if they understand what we mean to say. *Farang* lecturers want us to be analytical, and we get lower marks from them.¹⁰³

The interview suggests that the interests of students regarding a fuller and deeper understanding of 'being international' are being marginalised. Although students are keen to acquire a 'correct English accent' from foreign lecturers and appreciate a teaching style that allows them more freedom, when it comes to their own performance, Thai students tend to cling to the old academic culture and are unwilling to accept fundamental changes. These difficulties are a product of the current socio-economic environment, which compels students to concentrate on getting good marks and thus securing an advantage in the labour market (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128; Seksan in Sirikul, 2002a: 3).

Moreover, the mutual benefits that could be derived from the presence of foreign students are not optimised. A Thammasat student noted:

We don't have many exchange students. It depends on each group, but this year the exchange students are concentrating on travelling; they study for only three days a week and go to the island for four days. We don't meet much and we're not that close. They have their groups and we have ours. It's down to us whether we want to make friends with them. Sometimes they come to ask us questions about Thailand and then we'll share. We are givers more than takers, because students in the Faculty have international backgrounds; we all know what America and Europe are like. But they don't know about Thailand.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Focus group interview, Petcharat, Nitima, Narunart (TU, RU).

¹⁰³ Petcharat interview (TU).

¹⁰⁴ Focus group interview, Sirathai (TU).

The interview accords with the Chulalongkorn students' comments about their limited socialisation with exchange students, and the exchange students' lack of motivation to pursue their academic studies and to exchange knowledge with the Thai students.¹⁰⁵ This is what has been termed 'a loss of effect'; the benefits are not optimised (Van der Wende, 1996: 131). The main factors of this problem are, first, the small number of foreign students,¹⁰⁶ which is attributable to the original aim of the 'international programmes': to serve mainly Thai students. Second, the short time the foreign students spend in the programme - only one or two semesters - is bound to limit their impact on the institution. Moreover, they are not encouraged to devote themselves to their academic studies, since it is recognised that they will not stay long and that they see Thailand above all as a pleasant setting for their social activities. Third, Thai students are not interested in exchanging knowledge with these students, as they are motivated by the need to gain the best possible results and thus improve their career prospects (see Sukanya, 2001: 468). It is regrettable but true that the exchange programmes provided by the universities are of limited usefulness to the students they are supposed to benefit.

Thus the superficial interpretation of 'internationalisation' continues to persist. The needs of the middle class Thais, which are shaped by the current socio-economic context, are to enhance their socio-economic status and to profit in various ways from a 'western' education (see Likhit, 1978: 120; Varunee, 1990: 252; Girling, 1996: 44-45). However, the determination of those bureaucrat-lecturers to cling to the fundamental but obsolescent values and structures embedded within the Thai state and Thai society has made 'qualitative internationalisation' impossible.

Part II: Outcomes of the implementation of international programmes

One of the key reasons the international programmes were established was to serve the growing demands of the business sector and of students during the period of the country's rapid economic growth and the increasing domination of global capitalism (see Amornvich and Wichit, 1997: 164-165), as we have noted in chapter four. In this section, the discussion is divided into two main parts: the views of students on what they had gained from the international programmes, and the opinions of businesspeople on the quality of students. However, concentrating on the business sector creates the limitation that the international programmes would be seen as only serving economic interests, whereas the 'integration

¹⁰⁵ Focus group interview, Waritta, Nanthapong, Lacsanawadee (CU).

¹⁰⁶ The number of Thai and foreign students in 2003 were: BBA, TU: 353: 27/ BBA, CU: 350: 5/ IIS, RU: 450:12. This discussion refers to the first two universities because RU's exchange programmes were not fully established.

process' incorporates cultural development and academic cooperation (see Ife, 1998: 43; Knight, 1999: 14; Allen, 2004: 73). Therefore, the concluding chapter of the thesis will discuss the range of outcomes of the 'internationalisation' of Thai higher education, considering especially the first- and second-order changes and whether those changes are likely to lead to short- or long-term effects (see Van der Wende, 1996: 8-9, 25-32), and will thus attempt to answer the main research question articulated in chapter one. This section discusses two specific issues.

5.6 Students

The interviews conducted with students in these three public universities revealed their views on what they had and had not gained from the programmes. The gains were expressed in terms of two opportunities: the opportunity to improve their English language skills and opportunity to enhance their career prospects in the labour market.

Generally, Thai students, who were in the great majority in the programmes, agreed that the international programmes offered an important advantage which they presumed that they would not have gained from a 'normal programme': they increased their English language skills and thus their confidence in using English.¹⁰⁷ Some students also mentioned their exposure to the teaching style of foreign lecturers and the learning culture of foreign students or those Thais who had had international experience.¹⁰⁸ These remarks, however, varied from institution to institution. For example, Ramkhamhaeng students noted that they had gained from the teaching style of foreign lecturers, because the Institute employed a comparatively large number of such lecturers, while Thammasat students emphasised the gains derived from learning with foreign students and Thai students with international experience, because a third of the students on the programme were Thais who had attended international high schools. Nevertheless, this gain was not stressed by every Thai student, but all the students mentioned English skills. It is worth noting that the Thai students perceived competence in English language to be an end, while the study of the Dutch case found that students regarded it as a precondition (Van der Wende, 1996: 125).

Interestingly, the foreign and Thai students with an international background did not mention English skills.¹⁰⁹ Instead, they emphasised the increased opportunities in the labour market, as they were looking forward to applying for jobs in Thailand. According to them,

¹⁰⁷ Interviews with 27 Thai students (selected public universities).

¹⁰⁸ Focus group interview, Sirathai, Narunart, Wannasiri (TU, RU).

¹⁰⁹ Focus group interview, Koh Lian King, Chongphoei, Piyasak (TU).

Thammasat was the best place for ambitious students seeking opportunities in the labour market. However, the Malaysian student noted the differences between the programme's teaching style and the approach of the German university where he had studied. He complained that the Thai lecturers tended to 'spoon-feed' the students, who had little opportunity to research outside class or for self-study. He considered the education provided by the programme unworthy of a university; in his view it was no more than high-school level.¹¹⁰ His criticism draws attention to the inertia preventing Thai lecturers escaping from the 'Thai teaching culture' and adopting 'international and intercultural' practices.

While all the students with experience of only Thai education emphasised English skills, those from Thammasat and Chulalongkorn agreed that the programmes would improve their chances in the labour market.¹¹¹ As of 2003, graduates from the programmes of these two universities obtained good jobs in various key government sectors, and in the private sector, while others are furthering their studies and have gained scholarships.¹¹²

In Ramkhamhaeng, however, several students were not confident of their job prospects, since the programme was in its early stages and had not yet sent graduates into the labour market. Some took a positive attitude while others doubted their abilities.¹¹³ Indeed, some students had limited capabilities but had been granted entry to the programme. The more positive students believed that the international programme would give them an advantage over some other graduates when applying for jobs or would enable them to adapt to the teaching process abroad because of English skills.

Generally speaking, the Thai students' degree of satisfaction with the programmes appeared to depend on their initial expectations; these mainly concerned the improvement of their English language, the prospects for their career and the enhancement of their social status. Regarding these requirements, most of the Thai students, especially those at Thammasat and Chulalongkorn, thought the programmes were meeting their demands. The students at the senior universities considered the programmes to be beneficial to their careers because of the business sector's demand for English language skills; moreover the reputations of Chulalongkorn and Thammasat are highly respected in Thai society.

¹¹⁰ Focus group interview, Koh Lian King (TU).

¹¹¹ Interviews with 27 Thai students (selected public universities).

¹¹² BBA, TU brochure, pp. 24-25; Tharee interview (CU).

¹¹³ Focus group interview, Narunart, Chanokchone, Wannasiri; personal interviews, Wanwalai, Chingchai (RU).

5.7 Business sector

This section discusses private sector's degree of satisfaction with graduates, mainly from the three public universities under study. The businesspeople being interviewed have also generalised their opinions towards graduates from the three universities who are from the normal Thai programme. This is because the BBA international programmes have not so far made much impact in the labour market. Although Assumption has offered programmes in English since its establishment in 1972, Thammasat developed its BBA international programmes only in 1990 and Chulalongkorn in 1996, and in 2003 the number of graduates had only reached 500 and 150 respectively.¹¹⁴ As for Ramkhamhaeng's BBA programme, as of 2003, there were no graduates, so it must be excluded from the discussion.

Among public universities, graduates of Chulalongkorn and Thammasat are given priority in a private company's recruitment process.¹¹⁵ Most of the successful applicants to Pricewaterhouse Coopers, one of the 'Big Four'¹¹⁶ in Thailand have been from Chulalongkorn, Thammasat and Assumption. These graduates are sought after because of their standard of knowledge, their vision, their ability to apply themselves and learn quickly and their English language skills. However, acceptance is on the conditions that their examination results are satisfactory and that they pass the organisation's test.¹¹⁷ To a certain extent, students from Chulalongkorn and Thammasat are considered particularly well qualified by many companies because of the embedded values of Thai society and the privileged status of these universities, which can cream of the top students through the central entrance examination.¹¹⁸ Companies still permit the 'brand names' of universities to exert a strong influence on their recruitment processes (see *The Nation*, 17 November 2003).

However, one employer mentioned that she tended to recruit Ramkhamhaeng students, whom she had found to be responsible, patient and diligent. Her condition was that they should have completed their studies within the designated four years.¹¹⁹ These students did not include graduates of the BBA programme for the reason given above. This employer further noted that graduates from Chulalongkorn and Thammasat tended to apply for jobs as

¹¹⁴ Brochure, International Programme, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, CU and TU, 2003.

¹¹⁵ Chanpim, Khwanta interviews.

¹¹⁶ The term 'Big Four' refers to auditing and consulting multinational firms in Thailand. They are Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Ernst and Young, Deloitte & Touche Tohmatsu, and Andersen, which are considered the 'employers of choice' by students majoring in business administration.

¹¹⁷ Khwanta, Chanpim interviews.

¹¹⁸ Chanpim interview.

¹¹⁹ Wanrouy interview.

if they were 'window-shopping' and thought them 'dandified'. These students were seeking convenience, enjoyment, and a prestigious job with high socio-economic status, and so were unwilling to make a long-term commitment. They were able to adopt this attitude because their 'high profile' allowed them to have many options; also, many were looking to further their studies abroad.¹²⁰ This picture illustrates first the effects of the 'spoon-feeding' practiced at Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, which contrasts with Ramkhamhaeng's encouragement of independent learning; second it indicates that Thammasat and Chulalongkorn students are privileged with greater opportunities, and are particularly concerned to enhance their socio-economic status (see Girling, 1996: 44-45; Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 147).

Although most of the businesspeople interviewed chose graduates from the prestigious universities, they pointed out the weak points of Thai graduates in general, including those from the 'top universities'. Some of them complained about the quality of these students: they could not apply their knowledge to their work, their analytical skills were limited, and many were immature and unprepared to face the challenging and demanding tasks found in the workplace.¹²¹ These strictures reflect the deficiencies of Thai higher education at the macro-level.

The employers had a fairly positive opinion of the international programmes since they were designed to meet the requirements of the private sector.¹²² They urged that more programmes of this type should be established, while not guaranteeing that they would automatically accept graduates from these programmes since they would have to consider each graduate's competence.¹²³ The Pricewaterhouse Coopers' employer who had taken on graduates of the international programmes of both Chulalongkorn and Thammasat were satisfied with the performance of these recruits, who were proficient in English and self-confident.¹²⁴ However, it needs to be borne in mind that this opinion was expressed by an 'employer of choice', which was able to select from the cream of Thai students.

The advantages held by Thammasat and Chulalongkorn are that they were pioneers of the international programmes in this field that they are able to rigorously select only the best applicants. However, it should be remembered that a high proportion of students – as many as 34 percent in the Thammasat programme – had already had some experience of western

¹²⁰ Wanrouy interview.

¹²¹ Vera, Wanrouy, Chanpim, Saipin interviews.

¹²² Khwanta, Chanpim, Wanrouy, Vera, Saipin interviews.

¹²³ Chanpim, Khwanta, Wanrouy, Vera, Saipin interviews.

¹²⁴ Khwanta interview.

education, and the rest were the cream of various Thai high schools. The private sector's general satisfaction with the programmes is not surprising, given that the policy aims to serve the country's economic development. However, the businesspeople interviewed had their own criteria in selecting graduates: only the highly qualified and most capable were normally chosen. Therefore, the growth of the number of international programme cannot in itself guarantee that all students will be qualified to prosper in the labour market.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to ascertain what factors have affected the implementation of the Thai state's internationalisation policy; in other words, what has constrained the 'integration of the international and intercultural dimensions' into the teaching and learning process of Thai public universities, and has examined the outcomes of the international programmes in those universities. The findings show that the programmes faced problems similar to those found in many countries around the world: economic tensions have constrained development, bringing only short-term benefits and the nature of the 'internationalisation' has created the 'practical disconnection' between internationalisation and the national higher education system (see Van Dijk and Meijer, 1994 in McNay, 1995: 37; Knight and De Wit, 1999: 203; Van Vught, 2002). However, I further argue that Thailand's problems are more serious than those of the developed world and are caused by the structure and norms of the Thai higher education system.

The chapter discussed the cases of three public universities, whose diverse natures have been expressed in the different styles of management of their international programmes. Chulalongkorn and Thammasat shared several common features, including the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy's administration of the programme and their embedded prestige and reputation in Thai society. In Ramkhamhaeng, the Open University, the programmes are administered by a separate institute, the IIS, which applied lower criteria in admitting students. At the macro-level, however, these three universities shared similar characteristics, as they are part of the Thai public higher education system.

On the basis of the location of the Thai higher education system in Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination', the chapter discussed the interplay of state authority, public universities and the market, the bureaucratic nature of Thai public universities and the cultural values associated with 'internationalisation'. The two key factors restraining the implementation process were found.

First, the bureaucratic structure and values of the Thai 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' constrain the development of the international programmes, which is driven by the economic rationale. Examining the MUA's announcement, we see that the rules and regulations express the bureaucracy's determination to hold on to redundant authority and retain process-control (see Levy, 1994: 259; Berman and Bossert, 2000: 13; Doan Hue Dung, 2004: 143-152). In practice, such top-down prescriptions cannot guarantee quality. The universities found ways to escape from such rigid rules in order to serve their own interests, such as translating the curriculum from the existing Thai programme into English and 'rebranding' it as 'international'. The MUA was able only to drive the programmes to achieve quantitative rather than qualitative results. The underlying problem appeared to be the prestige and long-established interests of the Thai bureaucracy (see Riggs, 1964; Smith, 1996: 230; Pasuk, 1999: 9; Prasit, 2002: 1).

The inefficiency of the bureaucracy also affected the functioning of the selected public universities. Observing the 'international programmes', the relationship between the market and the bureaucracy became apparent, as the bureaucracy was clearly obstructing the move towards the market. For example, in both Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, the Faculty's regulations and prestige had a detrimental effect on the international programmes. The use of full-time Faculty lecturers to teach in the international programmes hindered the programmes' independence and flexibility since the lecturers' primary duty was to the Faculty. In Ramkhamhaeng, the employment of civil servants as staff in the administration office compromised to some degree the IIS's autonomy and affected the quality of service since the staff were not only underskilled, they also had little intrinsic motivation to provide good service, being protected by the lifetime employment guarantee of the bureaucratic structure (see Levy, 1994: 265; Heady, 1996: 317-321; Brunner, 1997: 234).

Regarding the second factor, the pursuit of the self-interest, this was clearly seen in the behaviour of the public universities and individual bureaucrats regarding the international programmes. This behaviour is driven by market forces. The Thai state's policy of deregulation has compelled universities to seek financial support from other sources, and especially from fee income. For example, Ramkhamhaeng's main strategy for attracting customers has been to hire foreign lecturers, mainly westerners, to teach in the programmes. However, employing these lecturers is expensive, and the IIS has had to compromise on quality by setting up the 'block course' system and overloading both lecturers and students with excessive hours in class. Also, in all three universities, the special salary rate payment is an attractive bonus for lecturers and administrators who are normally paid the civil service rate; however, the overloading of lecturers' schedules harms the quality of teaching

in both the 'normal Thai' and the 'special international' programmes. These universities' relationship with the market is also in the independent status of their international offices, indicating that the bureaucracy is not equipped to respond to current market demands. However, the more these universities engage with the market, the wider grows the gap between rich and poor. These programmes have been developed according to superficial criteria exclusively for rich students (see Surichai, 2002: 7-17; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66).

Regarding the cultural values associated with 'internationalisation', both administrators and students were pleased to have western lecturers join the programmes, for reasons which included their embedded perceptions and prejudices and a desire on the students' part to improve their English accent. However, their appreciation of western cultural values remained superficial: the lecturers resisted change and clung on to their bureaucratic status, and the students' first priority was to do well in the examinations and thus improve their opportunities in the labour market. Thus 'internationalisation' was embraced when it was perceived as a factor of economic prosperity but denied when it appeared to threaten status and identity. These attitudes are unlikely to lead them to benefit from 'qualitative internationalisation'. These two factors, bureaucratic inefficiency and pursuit of self-interests, need to be emphasised when examining the implementation of international programmes in Thai public universities within the country's current socio-economic and political context.

At the output stage, the programmes' degree of success is constrained by the framework of the country's political structure and social values. Although the Thai students interviewed were generally satisfied with the improvement in their English skills and believed that the programmes would help to enhance their opportunities in the labour market, and although the private sector interviewees were satisfied with both the graduates' English skills and self-confidence, these findings should not be interpreted to indicate that the Thai higher education system has developed a deep understanding of the concept of the 'international programme' or has succeeded in instituting first- and second-order changes. To put it bluntly, perceptions of status play a large part in success; graduates of Chulalongkorn and Thammasat do well because of the prestige of their institutions. The international programmes are viewed instrumentally, and the conflict of interests, between the desire to preserve the privileges and the need to enhance economic status, compromises the quality of the programmes. The merely quantitative growth of the programmes is not guaranteed to ensure students' success in the labour market, since increased numbers of graduates mean

increased competition¹²⁵, and in a buyer's market companies will select only the cream. The next chapter examines the international programmes of Thai private universities.

¹²⁵ In 2002, as estimated by the National Economic and Social Development Board, the unemployed population will amount to 5 per cent of the national workforce of 33 million people. As many as 1.7 million people, including some 500,000 new graduates, are expected to be jobless. This means that only some 200,000 of about 700,000 new graduates will be able to find jobs (ONEC, 2001: 5).

Chapter Six

International programmes in Thai private universities

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the international programmes of Thai public universities. This chapter focuses on private universities and again examines the implementation process and its outcomes. To address the first issue, I discuss the constraining factors which have affected the implementation of private universities' international programmes. The factors are connected with the interests and values of the universities situated within Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination'. Unlike the public universities, Thai private universities do not share the same bureaucratic structure and norms. However, being part of the Thai higher education system, they are also influenced by the environment and structure which affect the way their international programmes are implemented. Regarding the second issue, the chapter describes the students' and business sectors' degrees of satisfaction with the programmes.

This chapter sets out the discussion into two main parts: the implementation process and the outcomes. The first part addresses two main themes: the interplay of related forces within higher education, and the cultural values associated with 'internationalisation'. Under these two themes, the implementation of the international programmes' activities is discussed in terms of the process of curriculum approval, the structure of teaching and learning, the environment created by the programmes, and the perceptions of the related actors. Within these processes, two key constraints are identified: the inefficiency of the bureaucracy, and the short-term interests of private universities and their relation to market opportunities. The second part discusses the extent of the students' and business sectors' satisfaction with the programmes.

Part I: Implementation process

6.2 Role of the 'state authority'

Since the promulgation of the Private College Act in 1969, Thai private universities have been encouraged by the state to enrol increasing numbers of students into the higher education system. The private universities' contribution to the Thai higher education system

has been vital in the context of economic expansion and the growing demand for graduates. However, the imbalance between the country's inadequate social and political structure and its rapid economic growth made it difficult for the Thai 'state authority' to maintain the quality of higher education. This section considers three important issues: the top-down role adopted by the MUA towards private universities and its reluctance to accept change; the inefficiency of the MUA's redundant rules, which cannot guarantee the quality of the programmes; and the embedded prestige of public universities, which is greater than that of private universities. The following pages discuss these points in detail.

Firstly, the MUA's rules and regulations governing private universities exemplify its bureaucratic approach, which is often regarded as an example of strict 'process control'. This method is considered 'counter-productive' to the institutions' efficiency (Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 7-9; Van der Wende, 1996: 41-42; Goedegebuure *et al.*, 1993: 8-9). Currently, Thai private universities are under more rigorous control than the public universities. Regarding the issue of curriculum approval, the MUA does not allow private universities to approve their own curricula, despite its deregulation of public universities in 1992. This reflects the embedded higher prestige of public universities. As in other developing countries, Thai private universities are given limited government support and are strictly regulated (see Ransom *et al.*, 1993: 10; Brunner, 1997: 234; Levy, 1994: 245).¹

The process of curriculum approval particularly demonstrates the MUA's top-down approach. Private universities wishing to set up a new programme need to send the curriculum details to the MUA, which serves as a secretariat. At this first stage, the MUA examines a number of details, such as the ratio of lecturers to students, the qualifications of lecturers, and the admission criteria, before passing the proposal on to the Disciplines Committee. If the curriculum cannot pass the first process, MUA will ask the university to correct and resubmit it. If it is able to pass the first process, the secretariat conveys it to the Disciplines Committee. After the documents have been approved, the committee visits the private university to meet with programme's administrators, generally to check on two major issues: the university's readiness to establish the programme, and the standard of the curriculum, such as the relevance of the core and compulsory courses of the major areas to

¹ In 1983, the MUA provided the money to support private universities for the first time at 500,000 baht and increased each year until 2000 reaching at 3.5 million baht (MUA, 2001b: 2). This budget is considered very small, comparing with a state university; for example, Chulalongkorn gained the state's annual budget at about 3,000 million baht (MUA, 2001a: 36).

the committee's requirements. After the visit, the committee has to report its decision to, and ask for final approval from, the Private Higher Education Committee.²

This procedure is conducted not only to establish the programme, but also for accreditation, and for evaluation every five years. To be more precise, once the programme has been approved and opened, the second stage is accreditation, which takes place before the first batch of students graduate. The private universities also have to submit the relevant documents to the MUA not less than two years in advance for that purpose. Finally the programme is evaluated every five years.³ These procedures are routine and over-bureaucratised, reflecting the persistence of the bureaucratic forces in the Thai political system, especially in the daily tasks of administration (see Jak, 2002). They also show the continuing strength of those forces' prestige and stability (see Chai-Anan, 1989: 337; Wright, 1991; Pasuk, 1999: 9). Moreover, they reveal the bias the Thai state shows in its treatment of public and private universities (see Ransom *et al.*, 1993: 10; Brunner, 1997: 234; Levy, 1994: 245).

An MUA official expressed his opinions of the current arrangements:

Many people say that the MUA needs to take on more staff, so we will be able to handle this greater workload. I myself disagree and don't think it's the solution. Don't forget that this large amount of work is due to our great power, and with great power come great responsibilities. To reduce these responsibilities, we have to decentralise in order to lessen power.⁴

The interview shows that majority opinion within the bureaucracy wishes to reduce the workloads of state officials, while retaining the MUA's centralised power structure. Nevertheless, there is a way the private universities can escape the MUA's rigorous control, as the following extract from an interview with a private university's administrator shows:

As for the curriculum, what the MUA asks us to change is sometimes a minute detail, like we have to add or correct the words 'and', 'or', 'with', or 'that' to accord with the MUA's requirements. Anyway, we correct them to satisfy their routine procedure as long as we don't need to change our internal practice. And when the committee come to check on quality, the way they do it is routine, asking the same questions, like how many books are in the library. They even don't go to see the library since they saw it before when they checked us on another curriculum; the committee have

² Focus group interview, Sumantana (MUA).

³ Sumantana interview.

⁴ Supat interview (MUA).

been here often. When they suggest that we improve something, we only do what we really have to, since they're not here every day.⁵

The interview bears witness to both the overdeveloped bureaucratic power of the MUA and its limited efficiency (see Smith, 2003: 159-167). Regarding the quality of international programmes, the MUA appears unable or unwilling to differentiate between 'English programmes' and 'international programmes'. Some MUA officials who deal with the 'international programmes' approval procedures mentioned that if universities send curricula which use English as the language of instruction, but identify that the programme is 'international', the MUA has no objection.⁶ A private university administrator further commented, "International programmes in Thailand nowadays are like *Spaghetti pad-kee-mao* (Spaghetti fried with chillies and Thai herbs); on the surface they look 'international', but in fact most of the ingredients are Thai."⁷ These examples confirm that the MUA's 1999 announcement, discussed in chapter five declaring that the international programmes are distinguished by their improved content, is mere rhetorical. The number of international programmes in private universities currently stands at 154; however, given the MUA's embedded bureaucratic role and 'process control', these programmes' quality cannot be guaranteed.

Another issue is related to the great prestige of the senior public universities, which has its roots in the embedded bureaucratic power within the Thai 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy'. This state control limits the private universities' ability to innovate and to devise new curricula. Varunee (1990: 261) has noted that Thai universities have to develop curricula in response to state planning and that the national economic interest has distorted academic development: Thai universities have long acted as training schools for employees rather than as academies for scholars. This picture confirms the limited role of the 'academic oligarchy' in the Thai higher education system. Due to the state's bias, the private universities have to follow the practice of public universities; this creates a situation where they are constantly being labelled second-rate in Thai society (see Ransom *et al.*, 1993: 10; Brunner, 1997: 234).

One channel through which academic bureaucrats are able to play an influential role in the private universities is the Disciplines Committee,⁸ which has the authority to approve the

⁵ Anonymous, a private university's administrator.

⁶ Vandee, Sumantana, Supat interviews (MUA).

⁷ Senee interview (KBU).

⁸ The Disciplines Committee works on behalf of the Committee of Private Higher Education. The Private Higher Education Committee is appointed by the Council of Ministers, and is composed of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of University Affairs, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, the

private universities' curricula. Accordingly, the lecturers from public universities within the committee tend to exhibit the bureaucratic mindset and to promote the MUA's rigid rules. During the process of curriculum approval, they pressure private universities to adopt the same 'standards' as are supposed to obtain in public universities, often leading to the duplication of prerequisites, course elements, and the content of the curricula in both private and public universities.⁹ For example, a Bangkok University International College (BUIC) administrator mentioned that the composition of the College's curricula was suggested by committee members who were also lecturers from three public universities: Chulalongkorn, Thammasat and the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA). Their suggestions were adopted and the curricula were approved by the committee without dissent.¹⁰

Institutions' name/ List of business core courses subjects	Chulalongkorn (57 credits/145 credits)	Bangkok University (51credits /129 credits)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Business Finance -Business Law -Business Statistics -Financial Accounting -Human Resources Management -Introduction to Information Technology and Information systems -Management Accounting -Production/Operations Management -Taxation Law -Principles of Marketing -Economics I -Economics II -Principles of International Business Management -Management and Organisation -Quantitative Business Analysis -Business concepts and Ethics -Business Economics -Business Strategy -Intermediate Accounting I -International Business Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Business Finance -Business Law -Business Statistics -Financial Accounting -Human Resources Management -Introduction to Information systems -Managerial Accounting -Production/Operation Management -Taxation -Marketing -Introduction to Economics -Management -Strategic Management -Organizational Behaviour -Quantitative techniques for Decision Making -Business English -Introduction to Business Computing

Table 7: Business course core subjects in BBA international programmes of Chulalongkorn and Bangkok University

Source: BBA international programme prospectuses, Chulalongkorn and Bangkok University

Secretary-general of the Civil Service Commission, and the Secretary-general of the National Education Commission, and not less than seven but not more than twelve other persons appointed by the Council of Ministers under the first paragraph shall be qualified persons from the private sector.

⁹ Sumantana interview (MUA).

¹⁰ Siriwan interview (BU).

The table shows that the core subjects offered by Chulalongkorn and Bangkok are very similar. These similarities can be found in the BBA courses of international programmes of the six universities under study. Moreover, the details of the core subjects are also comparable.¹¹ Although these subjects are likely to be found in any business course worldwide, in Thailand, the almost identical duplication can be attributed in large measure to the public universities' imposition of an unduly bureaucratized process on private universities. The private universities bow to this pressure, since they gain legitimacy by reproducing the curricula of the public universities. This accords with the comments of a Chulalongkorn administrator:

The curricula of public and private universities in Thailand are the same, and Chula lecturers are running around to teach in those private universities. The reason private universities choose to copy from us is because they're forced to do so by the MUA's rigid rules. When the MUA checks their curriculum, if they say that Chula already uses this curriculum, the MUA will pass it easily. I think this attitude needs to be changed. Why don't they allow private universities to go ahead of us? There's no reason to make them just follow us.¹²

The attitude expressed here, however, contrasts with the opinion of an MUA official, which reflects the bureaucratic mindset:

Many times we reject the curriculum or ask them to reconsider it because they haven't included the compulsory subjects we insist on. Sometimes it's because they don't have qualified lecturers to teach those subjects. We can't accept that. Private universities often set up curricula according to the potentiality of the lecturers they have, while not considering what students are supposed to learn.¹³

The official's use of the phrase 'what students are supposed to learn' reflects the MUA's top-down approach. The MUA is concerned to uphold 'standards', which are those prescribed by the state's plan and offered by the public universities. The MUA's unwillingness to approve what private universities are able to do 'according to the potentiality of the lecturers they have' threatens quality, as private universities are forced to serve curriculum credibility at the expense of their internal expertise and readiness. To resolve this dilemma, private universities hire academic bureaucrats from public universities to teach those subjects for which they have no qualified lecturers.¹⁴ This situation confirms what has been noted concerning the 'symbiotic relationship' between private and public

¹¹ Prospectuses of the BBA international programmes, CU and BU.

¹² Porpan interview (CU)

¹³ Sumantana interview (MUA).

¹⁴ Supakit, Siriwan interviews (KBU, BU).

higher education in developing countries where the private institutions often borrows faculty staff from the public universities (see Verspoor, 1993: 62).

Thus the prestige of public universities is not only manifested in the curriculum approval process; academic bureaucrats are also hired to teach part-time in private universities. The 1979 Private University Act permitted the government to create a loophole allowing academic bureaucrats from public universities and state officials to work in private universities as long as their wages were fixed according to criteria laid down by the Council of Ministers (MUA, 1979: 9; MUA, 2003b). It is clear that the Thai 'state authority' regards these bureaucrats' extra work in private universities as legitimate. Moreover, these lecturers are able to teach in private universities only because the curricula are virtually identical to those in public universities. The private universities hire lecturers from public universities to work part-time for two main reasons: first, they are unwilling to invest scarce resources in hiring full-time lecturers; second, there is no alternative, as they have to obey the MUA's rigid requirements.¹⁵ These reciprocal interests reflect the blurred boundaries between the business and bureaucratic sectors, and the deals which Thai state has been brokering since the 1950s (see Unger, 1998; Anek, 1992: 13-15; Connors, 2002: 42).

However, such arrangements cannot but lead to a deterioration in the quality of the teaching and learning process, because students in both public and private universities will have to accept part-time lecturers who do not have time to devote themselves to their main function within their own universities. At the macro level, one of the problems in Thai higher education is the shortages and increased workloads of faculty members, which have arisen in response to the growing demands of tertiary education (see Pornchulee, 2002). When the Thai state forces private universities to establish curricula which correspond with state planning and market demands, and encourages academic bureaucrats to teach compulsory subjects, the result may be a quantitative increase, but quality is likely to suffer (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 147).

Within the current context of economic growth and social demands on tertiary education, we see three main constraints on the quality teaching and learning process of Thai higher education: the MUA's top-down approach to private universities, the MUA's inability to guarantee quality, and the sharing of interests between the bureaucracy and the business sector. Besides the dominance of the MUA, market forces also play an influential role

¹⁵ Mattana interview (BU).

within Thai higher education. The next section discusses the responses of Thai private universities to these market pressures.

6.3 Roles of private universities

Thai private universities are constrained by both the MUA's top-down approach and by market pressures. In these institutions, as in others, market pressures lead to the pursuit of short-term benefits and to a need to maximise revenue (see Van Dijk and Meijer, 1994 in McNay, 1995: 37; Knight and De Wit, 1999: 203). However, these consequences, and the neglect of quality in the internationalisation of higher education have to be understood in a particular context: that of developing countries undergoing a transition from 'an aid-based, via a trade-based, to a process-based development' (De Wit, 1997: 31). The following discussion will take this context into account. The first section describes the administration of the three selected programmes as a basis for further discussion. This is followed by an examination of specific issues: the system of selecting lecturers and students, the classroom setting, the managerial environment, and the related actors' perceptions of 'internationalisation'.

6.3.1 Administration of the international programmes

This thesis examines the BBA international programmes of three private universities: Assumption, Bangkok, and Kasembundit.¹⁶ Private universities in Thailand can be divided into two main groups: the senior universities, established in the early 1970s and the junior, established since the latter half of the 1980s. The senior group enjoy greater social recognition and are better able to offer a fairly high standard of education. While Bangkok and Assumption University are the two leading private universities, founded in 1970 and 1972¹⁷ respectively, Kasembundit is considered to be a relatively new and still developing private university; it was established in 1987 (MUA, 1992a: 93-94). Their different natures are reflected in the characteristics of their international programmes.

Assumption was the first private university to offer a BBA programme in English. This was established in its first year (1972); Bangkok University in 1984 and Kasembundit in 1994.

¹⁶ For the rationales of the selection of the universities see section 1.5.

¹⁷ Assumption's handbook gives its year of establishment as 1969; this was the year the university was founded, but the MUA's criterion is the year a university's legal status is established.

The sizes of the BBA programmes in these three selected universities are different: in 2003 the numbers of students were 9,807, 229 and 113 respectively.¹⁸

Additionally, the administration of the international programmes varies from university to university. Assumption is the only one to offer all its programmes in English, one of which is the BBA. At Bangkok University, the International College was set up to accommodate four international programmes managed separately from the Thai programmes. Kasembundit separated its BBA international programme from the Faculty of Business Administration in 2002. According to the universities, these separations made administration easier because of the different natures of the Thai and the international programmes.¹⁹ These arrangements show that private universities' internal management is more flexible than that of the long-established public universities such as Chulalongkorn and Thammasat (see Levy, 1994: 249).

Like many private universities in developing countries, Thai private universities generate the bulk of their income from tuition fees (see Ransom *et al.*, 1993: 10; Brunner, 1997: 234; Levy, 1994: 249). For example, Bangkok University earned 91.36 per cent of its 2001 budget from student fees: 72.73 per cent from registration fees, 16.50 per cent from educational maintenance fees, and the remaining 2.13 per cent from charging fees.²⁰ Assumption and Kasembundit's main income is also derived from students' registration fees.²¹ Both universities relationship with the market has long been clear. Recently, however, the forces of global and national liberalisation have provoked increasingly fierce competition due to the rapid increase in the number of private universities and of the 'special' programmes of public universities.²² This section therefore looks at the ways the three private universities under study run their international programmes in relation to market forces and to the demands of state and society.

¹⁸ Assumption offers nine majors under the Faculty of Business Administration and another four majors under the Faculty of Risk Management and Industrial Services. The BBA programme of Bangkok University has only one major, in marketing, administered under the BUIC, which also provides three BA programmes in Business English, Communication Arts, and Hotel and Tourism Management. Kasembundit provides three majors in Marketing, Management and Business Computing under the BBA international programme.

¹⁹ Mattana, Senee interviews (BU, KBU).

²⁰ Bangkok University, annual report, 2001: 157.

²¹ Assumption, quality handbook, 2002: 170; Senee interview (KBU).

²² Sumantana interview (MUA).

6.3.2 Systems of selecting and employing lecturers

The quality of lecturers is central to the international programmes (see Van der Wende, 1996: 104). This section discusses the ways in which the private universities select and employ lecturers in order to ensure – or try to ensure - adequate quality and commitment to the programmes. It should first be noted that the two senior universities' selection and employment systems are more firmly established than Kasembundit's, which is inadequate. However, Kasembundit, to a greater degree than the senior universities, has been affected by the current socio-economic context: first, the growing demands of students for higher education degrees and second, the pressure on private universities to calculate their interests solely in terms of profit and loss and to depend entirely on students' tuition fees (see Brunner, 1997: 230).

International programme/ university	Number of Thai lecturers	Number of foreign lecturers	Ratio Thai: Foreign lecturers
BBA, Assumption	283	169	2:1 (approximate)
BBA, Bangkok	7	4	2:1 (approximate)
BBA, Kasembundit	6	2	3:1

Table 8: Number of Thai and foreign lecturers in the international programmes (as of 2003)

Source: provided by each university

Regarding the issue of employing foreign lecturers in the international programmes, private universities have greater flexibilities than Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, since they have independent management and so they are able to hire foreign lecturers on a full-time and long-term basis (see Levy, 1994: 249). In Assumption, foreign lecturers are also permitted to hold administrative posts; this arrangement is not an option for Thai public universities due to their embedded bureaucratic structure and rules. The participation of foreign lecturers in the administration of the programmes encourages the integration of the international and intercultural dimensions to a great degree.²³

²³ Personal interview, Patricia, Assistant Dean, BBA Programme, AU, 19 May 2003.

Table 8 shows that Assumption's BBA course employs a remarkably large number of lecturers, both Thai and foreign. This is because from its inception the university was established as the first 'international' university, using English as the language of instruction. At Bangkok University, the employment of full-time foreign lecturers is also well established. In 2003, four foreign lecturers were working full-time in the programme, having signed a two-year contract, and said that they were happy with the welfare services and facilities provided by the university. The observation and interviews revealed that these lecturers had their own office in the College and felt part of the university.²⁴ It appears that the two senior universities had succeeded in establishing satisfactory employment systems.

As for Kasembundit, in 2002 the university recruited a foreign lecturer from Bermuda; she was the first full-time foreign lecturer who could not speak Thai.²⁵ This foreign lecturer, who was on a one-year contract with the university, complained about her work permit, which had not been properly issued. She used to teach in a language centre and the work permit had not been transferred from the centre to the university. This administrative failing led to a lack of proper medical insurance and other benefits. All she had in welfare provision was a two-week holiday with an 8,000-baht airfare,²⁶ and the university categorised the holiday fortnight as unpaid leave. The deficient provision of facilities and welfare services for foreign lecturers suggests that Kasembundit's strategic attempt to 'go international' was flawed. This weakness was exacerbated by the university's concentration on financial interests. A Kasembundit's programme administrator commented:

When the university invests money, it obviously needs to look at its profit margin and prioritise the financial issue. Sometimes we think that our students would get out of the programme, and we could teach them better, if we had a lot of *farang* lecturers. But the fact is foreign lecturers with high qualifications are rare and demand a high salary. We can only get '*farang khi nok*'.²⁷ (...) But usually students learn better from Thai lecturers, because they can explain the content in more detail. A *Farang* teacher has a better accent, but our students can't understand very much English anyway, so we have to decide on the balance of advantage.²⁸

Firstly, the interviewee seems to contradict himself, veering between appreciation and disparagement of western lecturers, or rather the inferior '*farang khi nok*', who were the

²⁴ Observation, BUIC, BU, 24 January 2003; Personal interviews, Michael, Gary, lecturers, BU, 24 January 2003, 21 March 2003.

²⁵ The other foreign lecturer was an Indian-Thai who could speak Thai fluently.

²⁶ About £ 115 sterling (calculated at £ 1 = 70 baht).

²⁷ *farang khi nok* is a slang phrase, originally denoting 'a species of guava which is very small and not delicious' and now used to mean an unqualified Westerner (*fa rang* can mean either guava or Westerner).

²⁸ Personal interview, Prajna, Assistant Director for Administrative Affairs, BBA programme, KBU, 14 January 2003.

best the university could afford to employ. Such lecturers were not as useful to the students as Thai lecturers. Secondly, while highly qualified foreign lecturers would doubtless enhance the quality of the programme, employing them would be too costly. Thirdly, the students' standard of English was in any case too low for them to benefit from foreign lecturers who could speak only English. This point relates to a weakness of the university's student selection system which will be discussed shortly. The picture that emerges is one of inadequacy: essentially the problem is that Kasembundit's need to make money takes precedence over the need to offer a high-quality programme. This weakness should be understood in the context of the Thai higher education system, where quantitative issues are given priority over qualitative ones (see Pasuk, 1998: 147). The demands for 'international' programmes have led Kasembundit to set up inadequate programme for the sole purpose of generating fee income.

Name of institutions offered BBA (international programme)	Number of full-time lecturers	Number of part-time lecturers	Ratio full-time: part-time
Assumption	452	67	7:1 (approximate)
Bangkok	Confidential ²⁹	Confidential	-
Kasembundit	8	12	2:3

Table 9: Number of full-time and part-time lecturers in international programmes in Thai private universities

Source: provided by each university

We have noted that private universities have to rely on part-time lecturers: firstly because they are forced by the MUA and academic bureaucrats to institute programmes for which they sometimes have limited expertise, and secondly because these universities do not want to spend scarce resources on hiring full-time lecturers (see Brunner, 1997: 232-233). The disparity between the proportions of part-time and full-time lecturers figures at Assumption has assiduously created a high reputation in Thai society over a long period of time, while Kasembundit is a relatively newly established university, which emerged as a result of the economic boom. The reliance of the latter on part-time lecturers is therefore significant.

Assumption has little need to rely on part-time lecturers because of its strong reputation, especially in the field of business studies. The university employs part-time lecturers

²⁹ I was asked not to reveal this numerical data.

experts from the private sector who are hired to give students the benefit of their experience and specialised knowledge.³⁰ There are seven full-time lecturers to one expert part-time lecturer, showing that Assumption has adequately established an effective system of employing full-time lecturers; the part-time lecturers are employed to present additional knowledge.

Although Assumption does not face problems of internal inadequacy, the growing demand for higher education degrees, and current market forces nevertheless tend to undermine the quality of the full-time staff. In theory, the university provides full-time staff for the programmes; in practice these lecturers are overloaded with teaching duties. Therefore, their full-time status does not necessarily guarantee that they will spend the time necessary to develop the quality of the programme. An Assumption lecturer noted that lecturers who can teach more than 12 hours a week will get 'top-up money', and lecturers are also able to get extra teaching at other universities: for example, she herself had a commitment to teach in a provincial university every weekend.³¹ During the observation in Ramkhamhaeng, I noted that a foreign lecturer from Assumption was teaching part-time in the IIS.³² A Bangkok University lecturer noted that she had no time to do research because her main duties were to teach and to deal with routine administrative tasks.³³ On this point, it has to be understood that Thai private universities have a limited research culture. Their main function is teaching because bulk of their income comes from students' tuition fees which are a direct and constant benefit, while the benefits of research only become apparent in the long term³⁴ (see Brunner, 1997: 230).

Therefore, in the private universities, individuals have to pursue self-interest by gaining extra income from teaching extra hours, even if this means neglecting research. This behaviour is dictated by the macro-socio-economic environment, and specifically by the demand for degrees, and by their need to maintain or enhance their socio-economic status. The case is similar to that of public universities, whose academics also need to earn extra income from various sectors (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128; Rangsan, 2001: 294, 313; Varunee, 1990: 260).

In Kasembundit, the number of part-time lecturers is higher than that of full-time lecturers (see Table 9). This clearly shows that the university does not have the human resources to

³⁰ Chavalit interview (AU).

³¹ Anonymous interview, AU lecturer.

³² Observation, IIS, RU, 23 February 2003.

³³ Pennapar interview (BU).

³⁴ Patricia interview (AU).

offer the programme. An administrator remarked that even the heads of department were hired part-time, which created difficulties for students because these lecturers were working full-time in other places, such as private companies, and teaching in other institutions.³⁵ This practice was clearly in conflict with the MUA's regulations, which require a head of the department to work full-time. This point confirms the inefficiency of the MUA's rigid rules, which cannot always monitor what a private university implements. Moreover, the employment of a head of department on a part-time basis demonstrates the university's lack of commitment to the quality of its programmes.

Regarding the availability of part-time lecturers, a programme administrator noted the difficulties that often arose:

The problems of contacting part-time lecturers make me unhappy. It's very difficult and I'm constantly busy looking for them, phoning and asking them to teach on this or that day. Most part-time lecturers here are recommended by senior staff; we don't formally advertise in the newspaper. I'm sorry for the students because when there are too many part-time lecturers, students have no one to hold on to. Sometimes they cancel classes and the students have to hang around aimlessly.³⁶

The interview indicates that the employment system is disorganised. An informal process is used; part-time lecturers tend to be those who have connections with the senior staff. Being part-time, the lecturers cannot devote themselves to the interests of the students and thus the quality of the teaching and learning process is harmed.

6.3.3 Systems of selecting students

Generally, Thai private universities serve those students who cannot pass the national entrance examination, and thus cannot enter the public universities. One interviewee described the students as mostly second-rate³⁷ (see Brunner, 1997: 232-233). This issue, however, should be viewed in a wider context. First, economic growth has given rise to an increased demand for university places (see Pornchulee, 2002). Second, in Thai society, the prestige of the public universities is high, and so few students with excellent academic qualifications apply to private universities. Third, the private universities' income is largely dependent on students' tuition fees. These interlinked factors have led private universities to compromise on the quality of students.

³⁵ Personal interviews, Piyaphan, Assistant Executive Director, BBA, KBU, 29 January 2003; Prajna, Assistant Director for Administrative Affairs, BBA, KBU.

³⁶ Piyaphan interview (KBU).

³⁷ Senee interview (KBU).

Name of institutions offered BBA (international programme)	Admission process 1	Admission process 2	Admission process 3	Applications: Acceptances
Assumption	Transfer from other accredited institutions	An entrance examination administrated by AU.	TOEFL, IELTS (no predetermined minimum passing score) Only if TOEFL is 500 and IELTS is 4.5, students will be exempted from English Intensive courses ³⁸	Confidential
Bangkok University	Transfer from other accredited institutions	Written examination	SAT scores of at least 1,000/ TOEFL 500	Confidential
Kasembundit	Transfer from other accredited institutions	An entrance examination administrated by KBU	-	90%

Table 10: The admission process of international programmes in private universities under study

Source: Assumption, Bangkok, Kasembundit Universities

Table 10 shows that the differences between the selection systems of the three selected universities are not significant. Moreover, although certain requirements are set, in practice, the passing scores for Assumption's English and Maths tests are not predetermined. In the case of Bangkok University, some students admitted that they did not have to take the university examination, since there is another admission process: students can show their MUA's entrance examination score to the administration, and if the score is high enough, they will be called for interview and finally accepted into the programme.³⁹

Assumption and Bangkok University kept the proportion of applications to acceptances confidential but judging by the interviews with students, it seems that it is easy to be admitted to the university; although their entrance examination scores were not high, their applications were successful.⁴⁰ An Assumption administrator admitted that the university did not make it difficult for students to enter; it provided opportunities and students, having begun the course, would be able to judge for themselves whether they could keep up with

³⁸ For foreign students who have not graduated from an English-speaking high school.

³⁹ Personal interview, Darin, Jirada, students, BBA, BUIC, 26, 27 January 2003.

⁴⁰ Focus group interview, Bundit, Jarunee, Sompatsorn, students, BBA, BUIC, 24 January 2003.

the studies.⁴¹ In Kasembundit, the international programme had a particularly low threshold: the information noted that 90 per cent of applicants are accepted. An administrator disclosed that even someone who cannot spell the word 'April' is allowed to enter the programme, with the hope that a small class size will help them to improve.⁴² It is clear that private universities find it difficult to ensure that every successful applicant has achieved a certain standard (Brunner, 1997: 232-233).

Generally, in international programmes in developed countries, applicants are required to have a fairly high level of competence in English (see Van der Wende, 1996: 139). In Thailand the situation is different: Thais tend to regard an 'international programme' as primarily a means of improving their English. Thus the universities' financial imperatives and the students' inadequacy combine to distort the ostensible function and purpose of international programmes. In the Netherlands, if universities are not ready or the international activities do not suit their profile, they do not need to 'go international' (see Van Dijk, 1995: 22). In Thailand, however, 'going international' is a tempting prospect (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 160).

The inadequacy of the students' English is widespread in all three universities. For this reason, English courses which aim to train and prepare students in parallel with the BBA international programmes have been set up. A Kasembundit programme administrator noted, "We give them opportunities; sometimes they can't pass our exam, but we let them in anyway and we provide extra English classes".⁴³ However, the curriculum of the English course is not helpful and confirms the low criteria of the university's selection system. Observing in the English class, I discovered that what was being taught was only general English of a level that one would find in a Thai school. Officially, as the handbook puts it,

This course is a continuation of English I, but with more practice in listening, speaking, reading and writing and more uses of advanced grammatical structures. (...) The students will have to study longer paragraphs and be taught how to understand complicated sentences.⁴⁴

In reality, inside the classroom, the lecturer had to teach the students to count and say the numbers before conducting a game and role-play, and the example of English conversation that students were taught was as follows:

⁴¹ Patricia interview (AU).

⁴² Senee interview (KBU).

⁴³ Prajna interview (KBU).

⁴⁴ KBU students' handbook, 2002: J-22.

Conversation 1

Brian: Hey, Ken. How are you?

Ken: Oh, I'm not so good, actually.

Brian: Why? What's the matter?

Ken: Well, I have a headache and a backache.

Brian: Maybe you have the flu.

Ken: No I think I just miss Japan, I feel a little homesick.

Brian: That's too bad. But I think I can help. Let's have a lunch at that new Japanese restaurant

Ken: That's a great idea. Thanks, Brian. I feel better already

Moreover, the teaching style of lecturer was to ask students to read out and repeat the above conversation after the lecturer.⁴⁵ Thus the students were not being taught academic English, and were therefore ill prepared to cope with their courses in business studies.

In Assumption, candidates who have passed the university's entrance examination are required to take a 60-hour course in intensive course in English before starting the term unless their scores are exempted,⁴⁶ and those with maths scores below standard need to take another 60-hour course in Mathematics. Bangkok University imposes similar conditions.⁴⁷ In both universities, however, students agreed that even a 60-hour course could not appreciably improve the levels of competence in English and Maths, especially for those whose grasp of the subjects was weak.⁴⁸ Since these intensive courses required new students to pay substantial sums, an Assumption graduate complained, "It's just another way for the university to charge students more".⁴⁹ In Bangkok University, not every student has to take the English language intensive course, which is provided for those who are particularly weak.⁵⁰ The main problem is the initial level of a student's competence: a Bangkok University lecturer confessed that the current admission process and the English preparation course could not guarantee that a weak student would be able to learn the compulsory subjects in English.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Participant observation, EN102E, Enhanced English Skills, 13.30-16.00, 4 February 2003.

⁴⁶ AU students pay 6,600 baht for the intensive English course and the same sum for the Mathematics course.

⁴⁷ BU students pay 8,500 baht for the intensive English course and 5,000 baht for the intensive Mathematics course.

⁴⁸ Focus group interviews, Nopparon, Sunisa, students, BBA, AU, 18 May 2003; Bundit, Jarunee, Sompatsorn (BU).

⁴⁹ Personal interview, anonymous, an AU graduate, 8 June 2003.

⁵⁰ Focus group interview, Bundit, Jarunee, Sompatsorn (BU).

⁵¹ Pennapar interview (BU)

The above examples support the argument that the 'international programmes' in these universities were created to meet the demands of business for graduates competent in English, and to serve the universities' drive to income generation. The substance of the business subjects has thus been marginalised, and the situation generally demonstrates that the 'first- and second-order changes' have not occurred within the internationalisation of teaching and learning in Thai universities. It is therefore hard to predict the long-term effects of the programme (see Van der Wende, 1996: 8-9).

As a negative consequence of the selection system's low criteria, the learning process has deteriorated. In Kasembundit, a foreign lecturer commented:

I'd say this isn't an international programme, it's a Thai programme. In class the Thai lecturers translate the English material into Thai, so the students don't have to try hard to listen to the English since they can wait for the translation. There was a case when one British student got bored with a class and his mark dropped from the highest to the lowest because he stopped attending. His thinking was far more advanced than the Thais'. In the programme, he couldn't speak English the way he needed. He would put a question to the Thai lecturer and the lecturer couldn't understand the question.⁵²

The interview reflects the limitations of both the Thai students and the lecturer in communicating in English within the classroom that English material was always translated into Thai indicates that the language was an insurmountable obstacle for the Thai students. The university appears to have prioritised financial benefits over the quality of its programmes.

The interview also accords with what was observed in the 'Principles of Marketing' class at Kasembundit, where the translation from English into Thai took place even when foreign students were participating. There were two Chinese students in that class, who were a small minority; there were twenty Thai students. By translating for the majority, the lecturer undermined the role of these foreign students and took them for granted.⁵³ It constituted 'a loss of effect' regarding the participation of foreign students (see Van der Wende, 1996: 131). This point reflects the limitations of the 'integration of the international and intercultural dimensions' into the teaching and learning process, as these foreign students have to accept methods and approaches suited to the Thai majority. It also implies that Thais are uninterested in enquiring deeply into other cultures (see Knight, 1997: 8; 2003;

⁵² Personal interview, Margaret, lecturer, BBA, KBU, 29 January 2003.

⁵³ Participant observation, Principles of Marketing, BBA programme, KBU, 6 February 2003, 13.00-14.30 hours.

Sugiyama, 1992: 99). In theory, Thai students need to be competent in English for a class to run smoothly; that this cannot be done in practice bears witness to the weakness of the student admission process. Arguably, the looser the admission process is, the more unfair it is to students, since they have to waste their time and money on trial and error, especially those who find they cannot continue and have to drop out and move to Thai programmes or other universities.⁵⁴ Currently, in the BBA programme of Kasembundit, the dropout rate is high, at 65-70 per cent.⁵⁵

Another example which shows the Thai students' limited English was observed in a class in Bangkok University when the lecturer allowed students to ask questions at the end of the class, two foreign students raised their hands and asked questions about the subject. No Thai student asked a question; however, when the class finished, some Thai students approached the lecturer and asked about the lesson in Thai. A lecturer further noted that many students do not understand the lessons clearly due to their limited English, and since they dare not show their ignorance in the class, they come to clarify the points after class.⁵⁶

The Thai students' deficient English coupled with their need to get a degree and improve their chances in the labour market can present a business opportunity. This was observed on the Assumption campus. Around the campus, there are two types of thriving business: the private tutorial schools (the so-called 'cram schools') and the selling of translations of textbooks from English into Thai. The task of these tutorial schools is to train students to be successful in the examinations. The tutors are mainly Assumption graduates and the classes are taught in Thai.⁵⁷ These businesses flourish in Assumption because the university has offered all its curricula in English since 1972, unlike the other two universities where the international programmes are a small fraction of the curricula. During my period of observation, I received a number of flyers from different schools, which are located just outside the periphery of the Hua Mark campus. The schools' marketing and advertising campaigns are extensive. Two of the flyers contained the following examples:

⁵⁴ Focus group interviews, Patrapol, Watcharin, students, BBA international programme, KBU, 6 February 2003; Bundit, Jarunee, Sompatsorn (BU).

⁵⁵ Prajna interview (KBU).

⁵⁶ Pennapar interview (BU).

⁵⁷ Personal interview, 3 anonymous, private tutors and Assumption graduates, 8 June 2003; participant observation, AU, 8 June 2003.

100% guarantee of passing, Introduction to Business, Statistics, and International Trade. If you do not pass, we will be happy to refund your money.

We can make the most difficult subject, Introduction to Economics, the easiest subject you can imagine. We summarise all the concepts and calculation techniques for you completely and very concisely. We focus on small group study, making sure that you can understand the subject and will be able to pass the exams.

These businesses had become famous around the campus, and were still growing. The tutors of one school explained that their customers ranged from first- to fourth-year students.⁵⁸ The tutors were busy and were working full-time. One mentioned that the stars of the 'top-hit' subjects normally taught seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., taking only ten days' break at examination time.⁵⁹ Although these private tutorial schools are expensive, Assumption students do not mind paying as long as they pass the examination.⁶⁰ The rapid growth of these businesses reflects two main characteristics of Assumption students: their difficulties with the English language, and their perception that higher education is a purely instrumental process. The latter should be seen in the context of the country's socio-economic demands and the Thai state's prioritisation of capitalist development over social development (see Girling, 1996: 13-18, 95). These market requirements and the flaws of the social structure serve to shape Thai students' motivations, which are to use higher education to obtain a good degree and a lucrative job (Sukanya, 2001: 468). The processes of gaining knowledge or engaging in independent learning are not considered important (see Watson, 1991: 576).

In this case, the factors that affect the implementation of international programmes involve not only the need of private universities to generate fee income, but also the interests of Thai students from the upper and middle classes within the current socio-economic structure. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning in the international programmes remains poor.

⁵⁸ Personal interview, anonymous, private tutor, at the Excellent Centre, 8 June 2003.

⁵⁹ Personal interview, anonymous, private tutor at the Excellent Centre, 8 June 2003.

⁶⁰ Assumption charged 1,600 baht per credit for general educational courses (about 4,800 baht per one subject per semester) while the tutorial school charged about 1,000 baht per subject. The period of study of a 1,000 baht course is 3 hours per week for one semester (about 50 students per class) (personal interview, anonymous, private tutor, 8 June 2003).

6.3.4 Environment created by the programmes

We have noted that alone among Thai universities, both public and private, Assumption's teaching, learning and administration has been conducted in English since its establishment. The university accommodates the highest number of foreign students among Thai universities (MUA, 2003c). Every noticeboard, sign and official document is written in English.⁶¹ Six office staff have been hired at the private rate to make sure the programme runs smoothly. They must have good English as the environment requires them to know the language.⁶²

In Bangkok University, there has been an attempt to install two-language policy: English is used on every sign together with its Thai equivalent, to allow Thai students to learn and to facilitate the activities of foreign students and staff as well as visitors to the campus.⁶³ Five staff were hired and to solve the problems associated with the use of English, the College hired a foreign worker specifically to facilitate communications and answer e-mails. Owing to the administrative flexibility of a private university and its ability to respond actively to the market, the office is able to provide an environment that is considered to be 'international'. The noticeboard and all signs are in English, providing an environment in which foreign students can feel part of the College. Foreign students and lecturers expressed their appreciation for the services they were given, such as help with visas and accommodation.⁶⁴ The picture of Assumption and Bangkok University reflects a higher degree of internal flexibility in comparison with the public universities under study, where there is a blurred boundary between private arrangements and the bureaucracy (see Levy, 1994: 249).

In these private universities, the privileges of students in the international and normal programmes are not distinguished like those in public universities, because students in both international and Thai programmes pay the same tuition fees and obtain similar services, which are run with private-sector efficiency.⁶⁵ The concern with the services for international programmes has produced 'second-order change', where new structures and ideas are established; however, these services were instituted to serve the growing demands of the market, and the question remains how far these services have helped to improve the

⁶¹ Observation, AU, 8 June 2003.

⁶² Short conversation, anonymous, a member of staff in the BBA programme office, AU, 8 June 2003.

⁶³ Mattana interview (BU).

⁶⁴ Focus group interview, Michael, Thomas, Robin, students, BUIC, 13 February 2003.

⁶⁵ Siriwan, Chavalit, Senee interviews (BU, AU, KBU).

quality of the education offered by the programmes (first-order change) (see Van der Wende, 1996: 26). The section on outcomes and the conclusion will answer to this question.

In Kasembundit, the junior university among the three under study, the management of the international programme is in its early stages. An administrator observed that the programme had been established as 'another option for students',⁶⁶ which implies that it is not given much importance. The BBA programme caters for a small minority: 113 students out of about 10,000 students (as of 2003).⁶⁷ Two office staff were hired to take care of the programme. During my observation, I noted that most of the announcements on the noticeboard were in Thai.⁶⁸ A foreign lecturer complained about the environment of the university, especially the BBA international programme:

It's hard to feel part of the university; I'd never know what's going on here, if I didn't ask. And the atmosphere in this office is totally Thai, the officers can't speak English and until recently the noticeboards were all in Thai, I complained and they have just started to put things in English. One of the key elements of an international programme is that both Thai and foreign students should feel as comfortable as when they're with their families when they're in the university environment, but the BBA doesn't try to do that. Foreign students should have the opportunity to celebrate their own culture, but there aren't any cultural activities here. The international environment is missing. What they do here is to teach foreign students to understand Thai culture; people might need to learn Thai but their own culture shouldn't be ignored.⁶⁹

A foreign student also noted:

It's my weak point not to be able to speak Thai. The environment here is so Thai, and if I know the language I'll be able to acclimatise myself to the situation.⁷⁰

The interviews clearly indicate that the university lacked the diversity of a truly international and intercultural environment. The participation of the foreign students and lecturers was marginalised, while Thai students also had little contact with any cultures apart from Thai.⁷¹ Moreover, in the university, foreign lecturers were badly served: a foreign lecturer complained about problems with her work permit. Thus Kasembundit's strategy of hiring foreign lecturers was flawed in its execution; moreover the capacities of the international office were inadequate. The international programme provided by this

⁶⁶ Senee interview (KBU).

⁶⁷ From Kasembundit pamphlet, Objective section.

⁶⁸ Observation, KBU, 29 January 2003.

⁶⁹ Margaret interview.

⁷⁰ Focus group interview, Kazi Mohammed Rashed Mowla, student, BBA, KBU, 4 February 2003.

⁷¹ Focus group interview, Penpak, Ploypailin, students, BBA, KBU, 4 February 2003.

university achieved neither first-order nor second-order changes (see Van der Wende, 1996: 26).

6.4 Cultural values associated with internationalisation

This section examines the perceptions and reactions of institutions and individuals regarding 'internationalisation'. The findings suggest that the superficial interpretation of 'internationalisation' continues to persist (see Sulak, 1991: 51). The needs of Thais, which are shaped by the current socio-economic context, are to enhance their socio-economic status and to profit in various ways from the 'best of the West'. However, the universities and individuals still find difficulties to change their fundamental values and structure embedded within.

6.4.1 Perceptions of university administrators and lecturers towards foreign lecturers

Generally, administrators in private universities take the same view of western culture as do those in public universities. However, in Assumption and Kasembundit, the foreign lecturers are mostly Asian,⁷² therefore the views of this issue tend to be different. An Assumption lecturer commented:

Thai people have the wrong attitude about this, when they say 'international', they expect that lecturers will be American, English, and Australian. In fact, that's not right: 'international' means diversity, variety and different nationalities coming together, but the thing is they need to teach with the focus on quality and in accurate English. It doesn't matter if the accent is different from Standard English. This is normal because, after all, Thai people in different parts of the country has different accent.⁷³

The interview confirms that in general Thais tend to identify 'international' with 'western' (see Sulak, 1991: 51). However, there are differences of opinion over the reasons Asian lecturers are hired. Some Assumption students argued that Asian lecturers were hired not because universities had a profound understanding of the intercultural dimension, but because it is much cheaper to hire lecturers from India and Burma than to employ *farang*.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, despite the great expense involved, Assumption is inclining to Western concepts – in its buildings and environment. The buildings and the general atmosphere on

⁷² AU and KBU students' interviews; observations in both universities, 18 May 2003 and 29 January 2003.

⁷³ Chavalit interview (AU).

⁷⁴ Focus group interview, Watcharan, Nopparon, Sunisa (AU).

campus give the feeling of being in Western surroundings. At the new campus in Bangna, the placing of the buildings is influenced by the Western architectural concept of the 'university in the park'. The centrepiece of the campus is the 'Cathedral of Learning', which has a 38-storey tower and the complex consists of a meeting/exhibition centre, a hotel, dormitories, a chapel, a museum, and three academic halls.⁷⁵ In one student's words:

The brothers⁷⁶ were absolutely set on creating an international environment, especially with the buildings; ABAC⁷⁷ has been awarded a place in the top five most beautiful and biggest universities in Asia. The brothers believed that a beautiful, luxurious and high-class campus would create more motivation to learn. In Bangna campus, you can see all these towering buildings with every kind of magnificent architecture copied from everywhere around the world. There's the Arc de Triomphe from the Champs Elysées in Paris, the lake from Oxford University, the bridge with the golden heads of angels like the Versace logo, and a Thai pavilion, you name it.⁷⁸

An Assumption administrator noted that the biggest portion of the university's budget has been invested in the construction of buildings in Bangna Campus.⁷⁹ It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the huge investment in these buildings and infrastructure reflect a superficial view of education and a perception of 'internationalisation' as amounting to no more than an imported ideology and obsession with image-building (see Sulak, 1991: 51).⁸⁰ Thais adopt and imitate the 'Western culture' because they are anxious lest they should fail to compete with their rivals in the global marketplace, while at the same time the country's internal 'values and fundamental structure remain undeveloped. They are now facing contradictions and conflicts between aspiration and reality. At Assumption, hiring foreign lecturers is considered wasteful and the university has opted to use Asian lecturers,⁸¹ while spending enormous sums on 'Westernising' the buildings and environment. It is clear that, first, the university gives priority to its fixed assets; second, 'internationalisation' is identified with external appearances. In neither case do first-or second-order changes occur. The long-term effects are not predictable (see Van der Wende, 1996: 8-9, 26-27).

⁷⁵ Observation, AU, 18 May 2003; AU Undergraduate Bulletin (2003-2004).

⁷⁶ Students call the administrators and lecturers 'brother', as they are Christian monks.

⁷⁷ Thais still call Assumption by its former name, ABAC.

⁷⁸ Focus group interview, Watcharan interview (AU).

⁷⁹ Chavalit interview (AU).

⁸⁰ 'Western style' environments are not only seen in private universities; a new public university, Mahasarakam University (MSU) has 'Cambridge-style' canals. I am grateful for Duncan McCargo's observations and comments on this point.

⁸¹ Vinai interview.

An MUA administrator gave an insight into the current context of Thai higher education and society:

The fundamental problem is that we haven't provided education according to the educational philosophy of building human resources. As we can see, investment will go on fixed assets rather than human resources. The educational administrators of our country act more like businessmen, weighing profit and loss and ignoring the quality of education. Also, students and parents choose a university by finding out which university provides an attractive environment and beautiful buildings; they don't consider how many PhD lecturers are teaching in that university. Hence, the provider needs to conform to the customers' needs. Thai students need an instant academic degree and a luxurious environment just to show their neighbours that they are studying at a university for the privileged. This is a big problem in our society and needs to be solved as a whole.⁸²

Social norms certainly influence the methods universities adopt to further their interests. However, such norms have to be understood in the socio-economic context of the Thai state and society, where each individual pursues short-term interests within the constraints of global capitalism: the universities seek to generate fee income, and parents and students seek to enhance their socio-economic status (Sukanya, 2001: 468).

We have already noted that a Kasembundit BBA programme administrator said that his students would benefit if the university could afford to employ a highly qualified *farang* lecturer, and went on to express his contempt for the existing *farang* lecturers calling them '*farang ki nok*'.⁸³ However, a lecturer from Bermuda who was employed in the programme was used to present an advertisement for the university designed to show that Kasembundit was an 'international' institution.⁸⁴ Her Caucasian appearance was used to enhance the programme's image, despite the reservations about the poor quality of its foreign lecturers. The advertisement was intended to appeal to the prejudices of most Thais reflects the remaining values of Thais towards 'internationalisation', meaning Westernisation, and to further the institution's economic interests.

Bangkok University employs lecturers from the UK and the USA since its programmes require native speakers.⁸⁵ This confirms that the teaching of 'correct' English is an important issue for international programmes in Thailand. The use of these lecturers in this university shows that language can take precedence over content. A Thai lecturer explained:

⁸² Supat interview (MUA).

⁸³ Prajna interview (KBU).

⁸⁴ Fieldwork notes, TV's advertisement about KBU, 5 February 2003.

⁸⁵ Siriwan interview (BU).

We have one foreign lecturer who graduated in Communication Arts, but since he is a *farang* lecturer, we asked him to teach Business English, and now we don't have a foreign lecturer Communication Arts. We tried to recruit more lecturers in Communication Arts, but nobody applied.⁸⁶

The interview shows that the university was not concerned with the particular qualifications of foreign lecturers, but would use them as it saw fit. In this case priority was given to Business English, and the lecturer's area of expertise was ignored. Generally speaking, in Thailand, merely to be *farang* constitutes a significant contribution to the programmes, but the appreciation tends to be limited to the lecturer's usefulness as a teacher of English, whether directly or indirectly. This attitude is symptomatic of the Thais' uncritical, superficial and instrumental view of 'Western culture' (Sulak, 1991; 1991: 43; Barme, 1993: 23). Thus a more discerning and richer conception of internationalisation becomes marginalised. The underlying problem is that the Thai elites' priority is to benefit from the economy and technology of the West rather than attempting to improve the country's internal structure (see Reynolds, 1991; Wyatt, 1982: 285).

Although these private universities employ substantial numbers of full-time foreign lecturers in their international programmes, and seem in this respect better than the senior public universities, the mere presence of these lecturers does not facilitate the exchange of knowledge. Van der Wende (1996: 139) noted that the cooperation of foreign and domestic academic staff should enhance staff performance, and that this is a key issue for international programmes. However, this is difficult to achieve in the Thai case, where individuals are driven by their own personal interests and values. In Bangkok University, there are two separate offices for Thai and foreign lecturers. A Thai lecturer remarked that she had never consulted or engaged in academic discussions with foreign lecturers: first, because of her overloaded work schedule; second, because she felt more comfortable talking with her Thai colleagues.⁸⁷ Lecturers from Assumption admitted that it was difficult to become involved in 'joint curriculum development' or for Thai and foreign lecturer to exchange academic knowledge because both were overworked and Thai lecturers were driven by financial rather than academic considerations. Moreover, the university did not generally encourage such cooperation.⁸⁸ In Kasembundit, a foreign lecturer noted that it was difficult to exchange knowledge because the economic, not academic, interests took precedence and in any case many lecturers were part-time.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Pennapar interview (BU).

⁸⁷ Pennapar interview (BU).

⁸⁸ Methi, Patricia interviews (AU).

⁸⁹ Margaret interview (KBU).

These examples show that the international programmes have failed to integrate international and intercultural dimensions and to bring about significant change (see Knight, 1997: 8; 2003). The adoption of Western ideas and structures has been largely a matter of rhetoric. The underlying problem is related to the personal interests of individuals, which have little to do with qualitative internationalisation. This lack of interests in academic issues on the part of lecturers is bound to affect students' interests and performance.

6.4.2 Perceptions of students towards foreign lecturers and students

Thai students certainly tend to prefer Western lecturers. In Assumption where the foreign lecturers are mainly Asian, students were often dissatisfied:

We have a lot of Indian and Burmese lecturers here. Their teaching is generally fine; it depends on the individual. The problem is that their English is so difficult to understand. It's not Standard English, and I think this contradicts ABAC's claim that it is the best international university or whatever.⁹⁰

Bangkok University students also spoke about their foreign lecturers, who are from British and American:

We have lecturers from the UK and the USA, this helps us a lot in improving our listening skills since we can learn the correct English accent. I think we are luckier than ABAC students because they have to study with non-native speakers.⁹¹

The above interviews illustrate first that the students consider 'correct' English to be a key issue. For them, international programmes should be equipped with native speakers. This accords with their primary motivation for enrolling in the programmes: to improve their English skills. Secondly, the interviews reveal the embedded value that 'West is best' (see Sulak, 1991: 43). The students do not appear to be interested in learning about other international and intercultural dimensions (see Sugiyama, 1992: 99).

As currently constituted, the international programmes are unlikely to change these conditions. Two important factors that affect the students' learning process are the universities' and lecturers' failure to bring about fundamental change and the impact of social values on higher education. The following discussion considers these in some detail.

⁹⁰ Focus group interview, Nopparon, Sunisa, Watcharin (AU).

⁹¹ Focus group interview, Bandit, Jarunee, Sompatsorn interviews (BU).

Firstly, it has been observed that it is important to support integration and interaction in the context of the learning process in order to optimise the presence of foreign students (see Van der Wende, 1996: 131). In the Thai case, several examples show that these supportive strategies are lacking. We have seen that at Kasembundit the classroom dynamics discouraged the participation of the foreign students, as the lecturer spoke Thai in the class.

Also, the role of students inside the classroom is important. Embedded values and interests within the current macro-socio-economic environment shape reactions and behaviour and distort the learning process. For example, an Assumption lecturer pointed out that the participation of foreign students had never encouraged the Thai students to talk and share opinions in the class; quite the reverse: they think that they can keep quiet, because others are willing to do all the talking. However, if teachers give extra marks for participation, Thai students will participate fully.⁹² The character of Thai students was revealed by Knee, (1999: 31-35) who experienced teaching English at Assumption University as having non-verbal responses from students in classrooms and an approach to the assignments which lacked 'academic honesty and originality', leading to difficulties in advancing writing and thinking skills. There was no eagerness to learn at a real level. To him, Thai students are familiar with 'a surface approach to learning' centred on memorisation and thus are described as 'too superficial and imitative'. This indicates that students tend to learn only for the sake of good examination results and extra marks. On this point, foreign lecturers generally held the opinion that foreign students tended to perform better than Thais, partly because they were familiar with the language used, partly because they were better motivated to learn. The Thai students would rarely consult them either in or after class, unless it was on an issue related to the examination.⁹³ This shows 'a loss of effect' where the benefits to be derived from both foreign students and foreign lecturers are not optimised (see Van der Wende, 1996: 131).

In Assumption, the international programmes' failure to integrate international and intercultural dimensions into the learning process is clear, judging by the numbers of students patronising the private tutorial schools and the thriving businesses offering Thai translations of textbooks in English. In contrast, foreign students are independent, studying in the library and consulting lecturers.⁹⁴ Moreover, although Thai students declared their preference for Western lecturers, their main concern was to do well in the examinations:

⁹² Patricia interview (AU).

⁹³ Michael, Gary, interviews (AU).

⁹⁴ Focus group interview, Watcharin, Ling Liu, Bo Feng, XiaoHei Pan, students, AU, 16 June 2003 (AU).

Students will scramble to learn with new lecturers, who tend to give better marks than lecturers who've been at ABAC for a long time. We also look for lecturers who provide good and understandable teaching. There are some lecturers who are really bad at teaching, but we have to take that section; we have no choice, it's a prerequisite if we want to move on to the next subject. The point is, we have to take extra classes in private tutorial schools in order to pass the exams.⁹⁵

The interview reveals that Thai students in the Assumption programme are totally reliant on their lecturers, and if these fail to provide adequate teaching, they turn to the cram schools. They are concerned only with passing the examinations and have no interest in the learning process. They do not study independently in the library or consult the lecturers outside class; instead they rely on expensive private lessons. The growing needs of the business sector create values which emphasise quantity or form is emphasised at the expense of quality and substance (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 147; Seksan in Sirikul, 2002a: 3).

Nevertheless, the presence of foreign students helped some Thai students to recognise and compare the different cultural styles of the learning process.⁹⁶ At the three selected universities, the growing numbers of foreign students who had chosen to further their studies in Thailand and intended to stay for the longer term rather than as exchange students for one semester started to make an impact on the international programmes. Similar benefits were noted by Van der Wende (1996: 131) in her comments on the benign influence of foreign students. However, whether the universities and the Thai higher education system recognise the contribution of these students and see them as an asset to the international programmes is another matter. At the moment, superficial conceptions of 'internationalisation' and 'international programmes' appear to be entrenched. The programmes were created primarily to serve the short-term interests of the Thai elites, and 'qualitative internationalisation' has been neglected (see Itoh, 1998: 11).

Part II: Outcome of the implementation of international programmes

This section discusses the outcomes of the international programmes of these three private universities by focusing on the degrees of satisfaction expressed by students and the business sector, as they are the key stakeholders in the international BBA programmes according to the original rationale of the programmes.

⁹⁵ Focus group interview, Nopparon (BU).

⁹⁶ Focus group interview, Watcharin, Bandit, Jarunee, Sompatsorn (AU, BU).

6.5 Students

In their interviews, the Thai students at all three universities stated that what they had gained from the programmes was what they had sought: the development of their English skills. They believed that these skills would improve their chances of getting a good job and of meeting the labour market's demands. The Bangkok University's students felt that their English had been improved significantly because they had to read the textbook and listen lecture in English everyday.⁹⁷ Some Bangkok students believed that they had benefited from the teaching style of the foreign lecturers while some Assumption students said that they had gained from learning with foreign students.⁹⁸ However, this point was not emphasised, whereas every Thai student stressed English skills and opportunities in the labour market. A Bangkok University's administrator remarked that competence in English and the confidence in expressing opinions – both of which could be acquired in the international programme - would give students an advantage in the labour market.⁹⁹ Some Assumption students also referred to the advantage their university's reputation would give them in the labour market and expressed confidence in their English language skills since they had been exposed to the language far more than they would have been in a Thai programme.¹⁰⁰ However, it should be borne in mind that different people have different ideas of the meaning of 'competence'.

The Kasembundit students also believed that their competence in English had developed as they progressed through the programme. They also considered that a BBA degree would give them more opportunities in the labour market. However, some students complained that the English learned in the programme was inadequate and noted that the competition had become intense because of the large number of BBA graduates; therefore, they thought, the English skills of Kasembundit students would have to be improved if they wished to get a good job.¹⁰¹

Although the students were satisfied with what they had gained from the programme, some said that they would like to take a Master's degree, perhaps in a Western country, since it would enhance their opportunities in the job market. One said, "I think it will be good to have done both Master's degree, and an 'inter' programme".¹⁰² 'Good' was not used here to

⁹⁷ Interviews with 22 Thai students in selected private universities see list of names in Appendix.

⁹⁸ Darin, Nipat, Watcharin interviews (BU, AU).

⁹⁹ Mattana interview (BU).

¹⁰⁰ Focus group interview, Sunisa, Watcharan (AU).

¹⁰¹ Focus group interview, Patrapol, Watcharin (KBU).

¹⁰² Focus group interview, Penpak (KBU).

refer to intellectual enrichment or intercultural understanding but to the enhancing of socio-economic status, which was to be achieved through the higher degree and the international programme. Although the market pressures on Thai students seem to have led them to ignore the quality of the programme as long as it helped them secure a good job, it should not be thought that this phenomenon is found only in developing countries; it exists also in the West where students face similar pressures (see Knight and De Wit, 1999: 203). However, the situation in the Thai higher education system is more serious since its internal structure tends to work against any movement towards fundamental change.

The interviews showed that the Thai students were satisfied with the programmes, since they had improved their English skills and their opportunities in the job market. Most of them accepted and had few complaints; they enjoyed being in the programmes, which were designed to meet their demands. Some were worried about the competition in the marketplace and specifically by the increasing number of graduates with BBA degrees, while others felt that they needed to enhance their status by taking a Master's degree. Dissatisfactions mainly focused on the deficiencies of services, such as poor Internet facilities, old buildings, the uncooperative attitude of librarians, the lack of a common room for students in the programmes and so forth.¹⁰³

However, the foreign students expressed different satisfactions and dissatisfactions than the Thai students did, evidently because they had different expectations of the programmes. For example, in Bangkok University, they were generally satisfied with the provision of services. The foreign students acknowledged that they were treated well and were helped by the College office in such matters as visas and useful advice regarding their problems. They were not satisfied with the academic knowledge provided by the programmes, however. They complained that the course contents were very much easier than what they had been studying in their own countries. As a result, they wanted to move on to universities in other countries for the third and fourth years in order to get the knowledge that would enable them to work in the wider world.¹⁰⁴ One commented:

I think the College here is not yet up to international standards; it needs a lot of improvement. It's just like a Thai school: if you only want to get a certificate or credits, it's OK; but it's not a centre of learning. If you really want to learn something, I recommend going somewhere else. It can be OK for the first two years, but after that, if you actually want to learn something,

¹⁰³ Interviews with 22 Thai students in private universities; see lists of names in Appendix.

¹⁰⁴ Personal interview, Sujitra, student, BA, BUIC, BU, 24 January 2003; focus group interview, Michael, Thomas, Robin (BU).

you have to go somewhere else. I'm pretty sure I'll go on to other places for my later years.¹⁰⁵

These criticisms accord with those expressed by an Indian-Thai student with experience of an international school:

Thai students say, study just enough to get your degree. But people like me want to gain knowledge; I need to get some ideas to get out into the world of work. I want something in the omelette. Honestly, I want the teaching and learning here to be better.¹⁰⁶

In comparison with the Thai students, the foreign students had higher expectations of the programmes in academic terms. They expected to gain knowledge and were ready to criticise if the service did not meet their standards. Some foreign students at Assumption noted a low quality of teaching and learning inside the classroom particularly on a lack of academic discussions and interactions with Thai students, and they do not perceive studying in Assumption as an end, but intending to further their studies in Western Universities.¹⁰⁷ A foreign student at Kasembundit noted that while the programme's subject matter easy to learn, the environment was overwhelmingly Thai, as were most of the students in the programme. He felt isolated and believed that he would have to learn Thai if he wanted to be part of the university.¹⁰⁸

The dissatisfactions of the foreign students indicate that the teaching and learning process and the classroom environment of these universities lack an international/intercultural dimension. Because of this, the universities' policy attracting foreign students through low living costs and well-developed administrative services cannot serve their needs. If the programmes are to achieve this goal, they must begin to provide substantial knowledge.

The students' complaints show that a gap exists between their expectations and what the universities provide. In the case of the Thai students the gap is not so wide. Overall, these results confirm that the international programmes in the three selected private universities were created to serve the Thai students' desire to enhance their status and improve their English language skills. At present, the programmes are unable to meet the more demanding criteria of their foreign students.

¹⁰⁵ Michael interview (BU).

¹⁰⁶ Sujitra interview (BU).

¹⁰⁷ Ling Liu, Bo Feng, XiaoHei Pan interviews (AU).

¹⁰⁸ Focus group interview, Kazi Mohamed Rashed Mowla (KBU).

6.6 Business sector

This section discusses the degree of satisfaction expressed by businesspeople within the Thai private sector regarding the graduates of the international programmes of the three private universities. However, the opinions also concern general cases since while some companies employed graduates of the universities, they did not employ graduates of the BBA international programmes.

Graduates of Assumptions's three international programmes seem to have made the greatest impact on the private sector. This is not surprising, since the university has been offering its programmes in English since its first establishment in 1972. Accordingly, its graduates have a good employment profile in various local and international private sector companies.¹⁰⁹

According to the Bangkok University administrator, about 75 per cent of the Bangkok programme's graduates find a job.¹¹⁰ According to the Kasembundit programme administrator, 98 per cent of Kasembundit graduates found a job of some kind; however, it should be noted that these jobs were not always related to their field of study and the university did not know whether they were underemployed.¹¹¹ The high percentage therefore should not be interpreted as a sign of success. At the macro-level, the Thai labour market is now facing problems of underemployment. This is partly because most institutions require graduates with a minimum of bachelor degree (see Sukanya, 2001: 468). A businessman noted that the minimum qualification required for staff in his company was a Bachelor's degree; however, he admitted that many of his employees were underemployed. They were not required to use their analytical skills, since they were working as waiters or cashiers.¹¹²

Generally, the businesspeople interviewed were most satisfied with the Assumption graduates. One of the main reasons that these graduates are sought after by companies nationwide is their proficiency in English.¹¹³ Moreover, they can command salaries matching those of graduates of famous public universities such as Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, on condition that they have obtained outstanding examination results and pass the organisation's test.¹¹⁴ According to the businesspeople interviewed, the strength of

¹⁰⁹ AU quality handbook, 2002: 163

¹¹⁰ Mattana interview (BU).

¹¹¹ Supakit interview (KBU).

¹¹² Vera interview.

¹¹³ Wanrouy, Saipin interviews.

¹¹⁴ Chanpim, Khwanta interviews.

Assumption graduates is clearly related to their English capabilities.¹¹⁵ This success is attributable to the university's long-established practice of offering its programmes in English.

However, one employee noted that while Assumption graduates had confidence they tended to be unreliable. Being from middle-class and well-to-do families, they lacked patience and regarded job-seeking as a form of 'window-shopping'; they tended not to stay in the organisation for long.¹¹⁶ As for the Bangkok's graduates, the interviewees were not impressed by their qualities. They had never employed graduates of the international programmes, but they were dissatisfied with the abilities of graduates of Bangkok's Thai programmes, complaining that they tended to be incapable of strategic thinking and had weak English language skills, and were generally inferior to Assumption graduates.¹¹⁷ The employers were unable to comment on Kasembundit's graduates since they had never recruited any, and the university's profile was relatively low that they had rarely considered employing its graduates.¹¹⁸

The interviews indicated that the employers' chief criterion in recruiting graduates of the international programmes was that the graduates should have good English skills. Today's market place requires graduates equipped with those skills, and in this respect Assumption graduates continue to be the best qualified. However, of the private universities' international programmes continue to neglect quality in areas other than English language and to focus on short-term results, the private sector is likely to become dissatisfied with graduates who lack the capacity for strategic thinking, and underemployment will increase. Indeed, the merely quantitative growth of Thai higher education cannot guarantee that all students will be qualified to succeed in the labour market.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has had two objectives: first, to find the factors which affected the process of the 'integration of the international and intercultural dimensions' into the teaching and learning processes of three Thai private universities; second, to discuss the outcomes of the international programmes. The findings suggested that Thai private universities, like those

¹¹⁵ Chanpim, Khwanta, Wanrouy, Saipin interviews.

¹¹⁶ Wanrouy interview.

¹¹⁷ This argument is opinion-based and thus has some limitations. There are no official studies which look at the quality of graduates from each university. This issue needs to be further studied in a more systematic way.

¹¹⁸ Chanpim, Khwanta, Wanrouy, Saipin interviews.

in many other countries, were being constrained to tailor their conceptions of internationalisation to meet the demands of the market, and that the nature of the internationalisation made it difficult to integrate the international and intercultural dimensions into their programmes (see Van Dijk and Meiher, 1994 in McNay, 1995: 37; Van Vught, 2002; Knight and De Wit, 1999: 203). However, taking the 'substantive setting' of Thailand into account, the problems are different from those in the developed world since they are rooted in the immaturity of the country's higher education system.

Three private universities were selected to be studied, namely Assumption, Bangkok and Kasembundit. The first two are old-established universities while the latter is in the junior category. The readiness and maturity of the first two is significant; this is especially true of Assumption, which has offered its programmes in English since its foundation. The different natures of these universities are reflected in the different structures and outcomes of their international programmes. However, at the macro level, these universities faced similar difficulties, as all three are part of the Thai higher education system. Using Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination', I discussed the interplay of state authority, private universities, and the market, and examined the cultural values associated with 'internationalisation'. Given their location in the model, two factors influencing the behaviour of the universities were found to be the MUA's top-down rules and inefficient bureaucracy, and the institutions' and individuals' pursuit of self-interests within the market.

First, the relationship between the MUA and the universities was based on the bureaucracy's imposition of strict rules on the universities. Some of the rules, however, were evaded by the universities without the MUA's knowledge. The MUA's inefficiency can be partly explained by its adherence to these rigid rules, which made it resistant to change. Nevertheless, the rules compelled private universities to follow the traditional lines set by the public universities, effectively giving the public universities authority over the private universities and enhancing their prestige. For example, the committees and academic bureaucrats of public universities were given authority over the conduct of certain affairs in private universities. However, in the current national socio-economic context, the growing demand for higher education has made the MUA's rigid top-down approach obsolete. Moreover, the enforced collaboration between academic bureaucrats and private universities, such as borrowing faculty staff from the former to teach in the latter, has served to undermine the quality of the programmes.

Secondly, institutional dependence on the market had clearly become embedded in the private universities since the bulk of their revenue came from fee income. The operation of market forces has led to an excessive concentration of benefits in the hands of the Thai elites. In the private universities, the employment of part-time lecturers, the admission of students with inadequate English proficiency and the flawed delivery of services distorted the quality of the international programmes. The lecturers' overloaded teaching schedules were also a factor. As for the Thai students, they were focused on getting a degree that would improve their opportunities in the labour market. This overriding aim led them to ignore the potentialities of the exchange of knowledge within the classroom and rely – at Assumption – to instead on the cram schools. However, these short-term concerns of institutions and individuals have to be understood in the context of the macro-socio-economic conditions of the country, where economic interests take precedence over social and political structural reform (see Girling, 1996: 13-18).

Moreover, regarding the concept of 'internationalisation', this was often interpreted to mean the hiring of Western lecturers and the constitution of 'Western-style' buildings. These perceptions were superficial, and did little to change the attitudes and behaviour of either Thai lecturers or students. For example, there was virtually no exchange of knowledge between Thai and foreign lecturers and students. The central problem seems to be the desire of individuals to enhance their socio-economic status rather than change their attitudes and welcome and act upon truly international and intercultural concepts. These short-term interests distorted the quality of the international programmes, and no first- and second-order changes occurred.

Thus two main factors, the state authority's inefficiency and the elites' pursuit of self-interest, are interwoven and must be considered when discussing the implementation of international programmes in private universities in the country's present socio-economic and political contexts.

The outcomes suggest that the success of the international programmes in these three private universities is limited by the current structure and social values of Thai higher education. While some limited degree of satisfaction was expressed regarding English language skills and services, the academic quality of the programmes left much to be desired. Even in Assumption, whose programmes are supposed to incorporate international and intercultural dimensions, the quality of the teaching and learning process could have

been improved. In Kasembundit, the junior university among the three, there was a lack of any strategy to increase the quality of the programmes in both academic and services terms.

Overall, most Thai students were satisfied with their improved English skills and better opportunities in the labour market while others appeared anxious about their future careers. As for the foreign students, who tended to have higher expectations of the programmes, they were dissatisfied with the quality of teaching and learning inside the classroom. The private sector employers were generally satisfied with the Assumption graduates, but tended to be critical of the graduates of other universities. The fact that their satisfaction was based on the graduates' good academic record and ability to pass their organisation's test shows that they would be unlikely to recruit students who were concerned only with passing the BBA. Even more negatively side, there is a strong possibility that the growing number of BBA international programmes will produce underemployed or insufficiently qualified graduates. Thus the current benefits of the international programmes may not last, and there is no sign that the programmes will improve significantly in quality unless reforms are undertaken. The next chapter discusses the internationalisation of research in Thailand.

Chapter Seven

Opportunities and Performance of University Lecturers Seeking to Conduct Research that Meets International Standards

7.1 Introduction

The two previous chapters described and analysed the difficulties Thai public and private universities faced in integrating the international/intercultural dimension into the teaching and learning process. This chapter discusses internationalisation in relation to the practice of research. In doing so, it explores how far Thai higher education is able to integrate the international/intercultural dimension into research, by focusing on the opportunities and performance of university lecturers wishing to conduct research that meets international quality standards and is published in international journals. This chapter has two main tasks. The first is to explore the factors that affect the implementation process, by analysing the interests, structure, and values entrenched within the Thai higher education system. Also examined is the interplay of related forces as situated in Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination'; that is, the interplay of the state funding agencies, the national ministry, the universities and the market. Moreover, the rooted bureaucratic structure and norms within the public universities are investigated. The second is to talk about outcomes of the research, the number of Thai research papers published in international journals is discussed as a criterion that may be used to evaluate the current success of research in Thailand.

This chapter divides the discussion into two main parts: the implementation process and the outcomes. In the first part, the discussion involves two key themes: the role of the 'state authority' in relation to other forces within the higher education system and the bureaucratic structure and norms of the 'academic oligarchy'. Under the first theme, the grants and funding management of the Thai state and the roles of different research funding agencies are explored. The relationships of these state agencies with the universities, the market and the macro-socio-political context are also discussed. The interplay of these different state agencies bears witness to their pursuit of self-interest. Under the second theme, four main practices and processes, comprising the research culture, academic promotion, the assessment system, and the culture of personal ties are discussed, as they are vital to lecturers' attempt to conduct high-quality research. An analysis of these processes reveals that one of the major constraints on the implementation of research is the

bureaucratic structure and norms embedded within the selected public universities. The second part considers the outcomes of the implementation process by comparing the number of research papers produced by Thai universities with the production of other countries both within Asia and globally.

Part I: Implementation process

7.2 Role of the ‘state authority’

Due to the pressures of the current global and national context, the Thai state’s attempts to internationalise academic research have been decisively influenced by economic interests and market opportunities, as discussed in chapter four. The establishment of the Thailand Research Fund (TRF) in 1992 marked a starting point that encouraged Thai academics to improve their work in order to meet international standards. The emergence of the autonomous research funding agency in Thailand accorded with a global trend whereby the government research budget was reduced and the research council became a key supporter of university research while encouraging universities to engage in fierce competition (see Clark, 1997: 292). The Thai state expected the international research would be a means to promote academic excellence and allow the country to compete internationally. Despite such aspirations, the embedded bureaucracy and the fragmented interests of the national elites have constrained the policy implementation process (see Heady, 1996: 317-321; Smith, 2003: 132; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66).

To illustrate the above arguments, this section first considers the Thai state’s management of grants and funding of research. Second, the key research funding agencies, the National Research Council (NRC) and the TRF, are examined. This will help us understand the role of the Thai ‘state authority’ in the research policy implementation process.

7.2.1 Grants and funding

Despite the Thai state’s policy of support for the development of research, its provision of research grants has not been generous. Table 11 shows the research budgets of various countries: Thailand comes bottom of the list. The very small budget dedicated to research reflects the low priority given to the activity.

Countries	Research budget as percentage of GDP
US	2.5
UK	1.9
Singapore	1.5
India	0.8
China	0.6
Malaysia	0.2
Thailand	0.1

Table 11: Research budget as percentage of GDP

Source: MUA, 2002b

Additionally, this limited amount of money is spread among the various national agencies charged with overseeing research. Table 12 shows that the national research budget is divided among Thailand's four main research funding agencies. The NRC has bureaucratic status and the other three are independent status bodies, which emerged in the early 1990s.

Four main research funding agencies	National research budget (million baht)
National Research Council (NRC)	487.3
Thailand Research Fund (TRF)	1,000
National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA)	1,700.9
Health System Research Institute (HSRI)	110

Table 12: National research budget in Thailand in 2003

Source: Budget Bureau, Office of the Prime Minister¹

Besides being distributed among these four main agencies, a portion of the national research budget is also divided among various ministries and other bodies which have their own small research units; and universities are included in this group. Each year, these ministries and institutions are allocated approximately another 6.3 million baht from the national research budget (Pirasak, 2002: 33). This proliferation of supervising bodies diminishes the effectiveness of the management system because it leads to the duplication of research projects, and it has been argued that this scattered management system cannot answer the real needs of the country (Araya, 2002: 13). Thai educational administrators affirmed that the spreading of the budget prevents the emergence of focal points, diffusing government support too thinly. The research budget is not only small, it is too dispersed to make a substantial impact.²

¹ <http://www.mua.go.th/~bpp/budget/doc/B47.pdf>, accessed on 31 May 2004.

² Pichate, Sumate, Nipon interviews (MUA, KU).

It is possible to make two observations from the above information. First, the small national budget makes it unlikely that Thai academics will produce much, if any, new knowledge. Second, budget is divided between the bureaucrats and the technocrats. The ministries and the NRC represent the interests of the bureaucracy, while the technocracy is represented by the new independent research funding agencies, the TRF, the NSTDA and the HSRI. Between them, the bureaucrats and technocrats control the research sphere. This situation is the result of the widening of the political space in Thailand after the 'Black May' event in 1992 (see Surin and McCargo, 1997: 147; Pasuk and Baker, 1997: 21-41). The sharing of grants and funding between bureaucrats and technocrats accords with the policy implementation process found in many developing countries, which is often associated with the sharing of interests among elites (Smith, 2003: 133; Grindle, 1980: 16; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 73). The key question that arises here is, to what extent do these agencies effectively manage the budget and promote the successful development of Thailand's research programme. The following sections discuss the effectiveness of the bureaucracy and the technocracy by looking at the NRC and TRF.

7.2.2 Role of the National Research Council (NRC)

In its early years, the NRC came under various ministries. Each change bore witness to a change in the government's state of mind and to a shift of authority. In fact, the creation of the NRC was first proposed in 1934, but the idea was not approved by the Phibun military government. Later, in 1956, during the Phibun 'era of nation-building', the NRC (or the Bureau of National Research, as it was then known) was established under the Department of Science, whose Director-General became Secretary-General of the Council. In 1959, during the national development period of Field Marshal Sarit, the NRC's administration came under the Office of the Prime Minister, with the intention that it was to be the centre of national research. In 1964, a new act was promulgated that increased the duties of the agency, and in 1972 the name was changed from the Bureau of National Research to the National Research Council. In 1979, the NRC was placed under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Energy (MOSTE),³ which reflected the growing importance of research in science and technology discipline. In 2000, the NRC was upgraded to departmental status directly under the Prime Minister; it was no longer supervised by his Office. The idea was to have a central body that would propose research plans in both the physical and the social sciences and advise the government directly; it would be directly administered by the Prime Minister, who would be President of the Council (NRC, 2002: 1-2).

³ In 1992, the name was changed to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment.

During the nearly 50 years since its first establishment, the NRC's status has been adjusted five times. Throughout this half-century of change, however, the centralised state has controlled its activities. Moreover, several academics argued that the NRC's role changed in accordance with shifts in the power relationships of different elite groups, and these changes have had little effect on the development of research.⁴

Since the NRC was designed to be part of the bureaucracy, bureaucratic norms have remained embedded in the Council until the present day. The following discussion examines the part played by the bureaucracy in the NRC's implementation process.

Generally, the NRC rarely supports basic research in universities because its original purpose was inseparable from the notion of 'conducting research to solve the nation's problems', to quote Field Marshal Sarit's speech in 1959 (NRC, 2002: 31-35); it was not intended to supporting academic research that would meet international standards. The emphasis on solving the nation's problems suggests that this notion was a cause of the limited development of the Thai 'academic oligarchy', because the universities were called on to build research for the sake of national rather than intellectual development. This is a picture found also within higher education in other developing countries where the society has a small 'knowledge elite', causing the nation to rely excessively on academics (see Altbach, 1982: 2-3; Kirby-Harris, 2003: 366). At the same time, it reflects the different nature of the Thai 'academic oligarchy', whose historical situation made its processes different from those described in the West as the 'collegial process' or 'bottom-heavy' management style (see Clark, 1984: 11-16; Bartell., 2003: 53).

While the conduct of research was expected by the Thai state to serve national and local sectors, purely academic research became less prioritised. For example, in 1993, the national budget was divided between 'applied research' and 'basic research',⁵ accounting for 71.89 and 28.11 per cent respectively (MUA, 2002b). In Thailand, the prioritisation of applied research had certain implications. An educational administrator pointed out that a fundamental problem of research development in Thailand was the ideological conflicts between government and universities. Usually, the Thai government supported university lecturers who conducted applied research and considered that basic research was conducted only for personal prestige or to gain promotion, and was of no use to the people. On the other hand, academics tended to argue that basic research was useful in the long term, and

⁴ Nipon, Sornprach, Yuvardee interviews (KU, SWU).

⁵ In the Thai case, 'applied research' means the research intended to serve users including the private sector, the public sector, the mass media and agriculturists; 'basic research' means research intended for publication (Wicharn, 1997: 53).

that it needed to be given the time, and of course an adequate budget, to achieve results.⁶ A professor expressed the view that a research proposal, which was not directly related to the people's daily life would never get the NRC's support. For example, a proposal to study the rate of leaf fall and connect it with the production of natural fertilizer was not accepted by the NRC because it was considered a minor topic that would have little impact on people's lives.⁷ Two Thai educational administrators commented that the main reason the NRC supported applied research was that the state's elite politicians and bureaucrats preferred to have concrete outcomes that the electorate could see the point of; successful results might be translated into votes.⁸

However, the ideological conflicts between government and universities regarding applied and basic research are not the whole story. This issue can be overemphasised, diverting attention from a more fundamental problem. It is doubtful to what extent development would be enhanced if the government gave more support to basic research. In fact, it is not only basic research that has not been improved; applied research has not significantly advanced, despite the strong support of the Thai state, as previously noted in chapter four by Thai academics.

In this regard, blaming ideological conflicts seems to be an excuse made by the government and universities, who wish to produce research that serves their own interests. This is confirmed by the point made in chapter four that the states' elites made use of the concepts of 'localisation' and 'internationalisation'. Both distinctions between basic and applied, internationalisation and localisation, appear to be the same claim, made only to preserve their self-interests (see Hewison, 2002: 160). In other words, to conduct high-quality research, whether basic or applied, internationalised or localised, is difficult for the Thai state, especially since the structure and values of research are not well developed.

Besides the issue of basic and applied research, the NRC was also blamed for its top-down and process-control styles of budget management.⁹ Like those of other government agencies, the NRC's budget is issued annually. A lecturer explained that to get the money the proposal had to be submitted to the NRC about two years in advance and the Budget Bureau would later decide whether or not to accept the proposal. Complaints have been voiced about its lengthy process and its inability to guarantee quality.¹⁰ Because of the

⁶ Sumate interview (MUA).

⁷ Nipon interview (KU).

⁸ Anonymous interviews.

⁹ Sornprach interview (KU).

¹⁰ Sornprach interview (KU).

NRC's strict process control, university academics tend to seek funding from consultancy work, as noted in chapter four. The criticisms of the NRC's administration supports what has been noted about obsolete practices and policies implemented through patronage and in a top-down fashion: these are no longer suited to an increasingly complex society (Christensen and Ammar, 1993).

7.2.3 Role of the Thailand Research Fund (TRF)

The TRF was established according to the new trends in the higher education system encouraging universities to rely on research funding agencies and to compete for grants (Clark, 1997: 292), and in the context of the country's political and socio-economic situation, in which the bureaucracy was being challenged by the business sector and the technocracy.

During 1991-1992, the Anand government introduced the concepts of the independent body, transparency, good governance and accreditation. The TRF was found in accordance with these concepts. Established in response to the 1992 Research Endowment Act, the TRF is a juristic body that is part of the government system, but is outside the government's administrative bureaucracy. This freedom, according to the TRF, allows great efficiency in research support.¹¹ A TRF administrator explained that the original objectives of the agency were to improve research to bring it up to international standards, and to avoid the rigid bureaucracy of the NRC.¹²

The TRF was founded by a group of academics, mainly science specialists, from Mahidol, the most prestigious university in Thailand in terms of having the highest numbers of published papers and professors. A Mahidol medical doctor, Prawase Wase, could be considered the founding father, while another Mahidol doctor, Wicharn Panij, became the first director of the TRF (Wicharn, 1997). These academics represented the technocracy, which became increasingly influential within the Thai political sphere during the period of Anand's government (see Chai-Anan, 1994: 49-50). This background is important to an understanding the chapter's later discussion of the criticisms made of the TRF's biased support of eminent researchers.

Although the NRC's top-down approach was considered outdated when the TRF was founded in 1992, the NRC was not abolished and continues to function in parallel with the

¹¹ TRF, <http://www.trf.or.th/en/>, accessed on 19 March 2004.

¹² Kamchad interview (TRF).

three independent research funding agencies, the TRF, the HSRI, and the NSTDA, established by the technocrats. Indeed, the co-existence of the NRC and the new independent bodies confirmed the existence of competing interests among bureaucrats and technocrats in the Thai political sphere (see Robison *et al.*, 1993: 27; Chai-Anan, 1994: 49-50; Pasuk and Baker, 1997: 41).

Since the TRF intended to avoid the overly bureaucratic style of the NRC, it was decided that the agency should be small but effective.¹³ Its aim was to bring excellence to basic research, in contrast to the NRC's idea that the purpose of research is to 'solve the nation's problems'. Thus the TRF is widely considered to be the first body in Thailand to couple research with the concept of internationalisation. Also, its attempt to pursue internationalisation and excellence is reflected in its preconditions for applicants, who must have had at least two articles published in international journals; moreover the results of any projects funded by the TRF are required to be published in international journals.¹⁴ These requirements are indicative of the introduction of the product-control process, which had been extensively applied in the West in accordance with a businesslike management style (see Goedegebuure *et al.*, 1994: 8-9; Neave and Van Vught, 1994b: 251). This is an example of how the market corner of Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' plays its role in the Thai higher education research system.

Considering that the TRF represents the 'new wave' of Thai research, which is strongly connected with the concept of internationalisation, two important questions arise here: first, when university lecturers are granted resources by the TRF to develop basic research, to what extent can they use such resources to conduct high-quality research; second, how far has the TRF's new style of management been put into practice?

Regarding the first question, the establishment of the TRF provoked different opinions inside the Thai academic sphere. These were sharply divided between those who gained and those who lost benefits. On the one hand, some lecturers believed that the TRF had improved the research situation and had brought about excellence to basic research.¹⁵ On the other hand, some lecturers who saw the TRF as engaging in 'academic politics', aiming to ensure that only high-profile lecturers and trained academics can do research.¹⁶ A particular case was cited: a research project headed by a lecturer and run by a group of NGOs was submitted to the TRF, which refused the proposal on the ground that research

¹³ Kamchad interview (TRF).

¹⁴ TRF, http://www.trf.or.th/news/Trf_EngOverview.doc, accessed on 13 may 2003.

¹⁵ Amaret, Narumon interviews (MU).

¹⁶ Anonymous interview.

should be done only by 'trained academics'.¹⁷ This episode issue demonstrated the existence of competing interests inside the Thai academic and political spheres. At that time, the range of Thai politics was represented by the fragmented voices of different groups, such as NGOs, the white-collar working class, and the peasants; the bureaucrats, technocrats and businessmen were not the only influential voices in the society (see Pasuk and Baker, 1997: 41; Hewison, 1993: 171). However, the TRF's decision on that research issue was evidence of the dominance of the technocrats. A number of lecturers opposed the requirements set up by the TRF. One commented:

The TRF set its requirements too high. If we can ask the TRF for money, we can also get it from overseas. We can't make adjustments to get the TRF money since we are so weak; we've had to do without the state's support for such a long time. It's a pity when the budget is there but the proposal isn't accepted. When the project calls for a big budget, the grant can only go to certain groups of people. Lots of lecturers had failed to get money from the TRF; they decided to stop trying. When things are too difficult, it reduces our motivation.¹⁸

Another academic took a similar view:

The TRF was created to support a particular group of lecturers who have an outstanding background; those who don't are certainly ignored. The question is, how can lecturers on the bottom rung of the ladder ever develop to achieve to that excellence.¹⁹

Importantly, the interviews show that the TRF's requirements confront Thai university lecturers with a great many difficulties and reduce their motivation. It is true that the interviews also reflect the inefficiency of Thai academic bureaucrats; however, their incompetence must be judged in the context of the malfunctioning of the embedded bureaucratic structure, which have long destroyed a number of 'trained academics' in Thai universities. Moreover, since the TRF was created by the 'knowledge elite' to serve the 'knowledge elite', other researchers, who have not developed 'to achieve excellence' are excluded. The current situation of Thai research bears witness to the reduced role of the bureaucrats and the rising power of the technocrats; however, it is a situation where the sharing and fragmentation of interests between bureaucrats and technocrats is clearly evident (see McCargo, 2002b: 3; Somchai, 2002: 135). This result is in contrast to those studies of the internationalisation of higher education which have perceived only a top-down process and a strong correlation between inputs and outputs (Van Dijk, 1995), or

¹⁷ Anonymous interview.

¹⁸ Sutruedee interview (KU).

¹⁹ Yuvardee interview (SWU).

which have emphasised the ‘formal aspect of organisational strategies’ (Knight, 1997: 14-16). In Thailand, the informal aspects of organizational strategies are worth investigating.

Moreover, the management of the TRF has not always been as effective and transparent as its original statement suggests, since it still cannot eliminate the culture of personal connections. The two following interviews best explain this point:

The government didn’t hand the research budget directly to the universities, but gave it to the TRF. To get funding we need to have good connections and a *phak phuak* (partisan-clique). Those without a *phak phuak* find it difficult to start research.²⁰

In Thailand, those who conduct research successfully will get a lot of praise. I wouldn’t say that they are truly excellent, but in Thailand there is a limited number of brilliant researchers, unlike in the West where the number of talented academics are much higher. (...) When these brilliant people reach that high position, they tend to help each other. They turn themselves into godfathers in the research community. People who don’t know them tend not to get the opportunity to access the resources they control. They’ve created a class system, high class and low class, within the research community.²¹

These interviews give an insight into the Thai research community; they suggest that the TRF operates through personal relationships. The budget is shared within a select group of ‘excellent’ and ‘brilliant’ academics, reflecting how the discourse of excellence and internationalisation helps certain elites to pursue their self-interests within the Thai research sphere. This corresponds with what was argued in chapter four: that the manipulation of the terms ‘internationalisation’ and ‘localisation’ is a strategy by which the middle class pursues its interests in both political and economic terms (see Hewison, 1993: 171; Connors, 2003). However, this biased approach is unlikely to bring about the successful reform of research (see Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66).

Another lecturer also criticised the culture of patronage and favouritism:

To a certain extent, the TRF cannot get away from the ‘culture of connections’ in the Thai way; we find this in group research, where a big name or a famous research scholar is appointed head and then chooses their colleagues. Although this concept is inherited from the idea of the professorial chair in the Western system, it’s ironic that connections still play a big part, because a head tends to choose their favourites. Obviously that can’t always guarantee quality and sometimes we see that someone has been appointed as a senior research scholar and the research community thinks, why him or her, and how?²²

²⁰ Thammasak interview (KU).

²¹ Anonymous interview.

²² Anonymous interview.

The interview talks about the TRF's research team promotion grants or its senior research scholar scheme. This type of grant is aimed at senior researchers who have ability and integrity and have produced excellent and well-known research. The aim is to develop teamwork in research and build a long-term intellectual base of new researchers in the country. According to the TRF's criteria, a number of candidates are selected from a list of eminent researchers, for example, professors in Thai universities, winners of 'outstanding scientist' or 'outstanding researcher' awards, excellent researchers in universities, selected senior researchers in universities or faculty members who have produced excellent and well-known academic work. They are invited to write full project proposals, which will be assessed by committees of qualified experts. The successful candidates are granted amounts not greater than 7.5 million baht for a period of three years and are given the authority to select their team, including researchers and students.²³

Because of the large sums involved in any substantial project, the selection process provokes interest and controversy within the Thai research community. Although the TRF is supposed to adhere to its principles of good governance and transparency, the selection process is centralised and administered by those who are considered to be qualified experts in the field. There is no participation from the research community as a whole. One lecturer claimed that in practice the selected senior researchers already have a team in mind and do not need to form a new one. It is therefore difficult for junior lecturers to come together and work as a group.²⁴ These examples imply that the technocrats' ideas limit the participation of junior staff, and that personal ties still play a part inside the research agency, which was ostensibly created to eliminate such practices. Thus, as we have noted, lecturers without the right personal relationships are neglected, and are not motivated to pursue research. The finding accords with those studies of policy implementation in developing countries which found that the process was marked by the sharing of interests among elites (see Grindle, 1980: 16; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 73; Smith, 2003: 133).

Thus the aspiration that the TRF would be able to improve the national situation of research remains mere rhetoric. The policy implementation process does not 'integrate the international/intercultural dimension into the research missions of the universities' (see Knight, 1997: 8). In other words, the new ideas (second-order change) are implemented only to serve the elites' demands in a particular socio-economic context while the improvement of quality (first-order change) hardly occurs (see Van der Wende, 1997: 26).

²³ TRF, <http://www.trf.or.th/en/types.asp>, accessed on 25 March 2003.

²⁴ Anonymous interview.

Although the original intention of the TRF has been politicised, the TRF did provide a promising starting point after a stagnant period of bureaucratic domination. The TRF has produced some impressive results; for example, in 2001, the agency oversaw the international publications of 417 papers, which accounted for more than one-fourth of the 1,528 produced in Thailand that year and published internationally (TRF, 2001: 9). However, this growth needs to be understood against the background of the TRF's powers of funding and of selecting prestigious researchers. Therefore, the political sphere is still the site of the elites' struggle for resources. In other words, the deficiencies of the policy implementation process suggest that the fundamental structures and bureaucratic culture of the Thai 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' have not yet been improved.

The Thai government recently announced an initiative concerning the agencies: because of the new political environment, a proposal was made to study the feasibility of a merging the TRF with the NRC. The aim was to adjust the organisations according to governmental policy and to allow the research funding agencies to cooperate and use the budget effectively (*Thairath*, 1 December, 2003). Moreover, the Cabinet approved the creation of a new body to oversee research in Thailand: the National Research Policy Unit (NRPU) under the supervision of the Deputy Prime Minister, which would formulate the country's research strategy. The government has also challenged the TRF in the area of financial support: it allocated an additional budget of 1.2 billion baht for research not through the TRF but directly to public universities; moreover, when the TRF applied for 1.6 billion baht its application was rejected and it received only 1 billion baht (*The Nation*, February, 25, 2003). The Thaksin government appears to regard the TRF as both sidelined and impotent, but its treatment of the TRF is consistent with the political manipulation it has employed in an attempt to undermine oppositional forces that came into being in the 1990s including technocrats, public intellectuals, and academics (see Pasuk and Baker, 2004: 171).

The research funding agencies in Thailand such as the NRC and the TRF, and recently the NRPU, were created to be a means of materialising the political aims of different groups of power holders, whose influence has fluctuated in different periods. Accordingly, the Thai state's policy of developing high-quality 'internationalised' research has not yet been put into practice. This is an example of the 'politics of implementation' at the 'output stage' in developing countries (see Grindle, 1980: 15; Unger, 1998: 24).

7.3 Bureaucratic structure and norms

The Thai state aspires to full involvement in the global economy and higher education reform is also in a process of transition. A key constraint, which has made individual lecturers in Thai public universities resist necessary change, is the bureaucratic system that still dominates the universities. As we have noted, from its earliest years, the Thai 'academic oligarchy' has been unable to fulfil its pure academic mission because of its bureaucratic status (see Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 12). Internationalisation in Thailand has been different from that in the West because of the embedded bureaucracy in the universities. This accords with the findings of several studies of higher education in developing countries, where university academics find it difficult to adjust to the corporate management style (see Levy, 1994: 259-261; Brunner, 1997: 234-235). As a result, a large gap exists between aspiration and reality within the system, which accords with what has been noted about the administrative patterns in developing countries: that there is a widespread discrepancy between form and reality (Heady, 1996: 320).

This section discusses the factors that have affected the implementation of the research policy in three selected universities: Mahidol, Kasetsart, and Srinakharinwirot. Of these universities, Mahidol is particularly well known as a centre of research, judging by the number of scientific papers published in international journals, which has been noted in the research methodology section (see Table 2). It was established in 1890 as the medical school attached to the first hospital in Thailand, and became Mahidol University in 1969. Kasetsart and Srinakharinwirot were established in 1943 and 1946 respectively as a university of agricultural science and a university of education science.²⁵ Gradually, these three universities were developed, becoming comprehensive public universities offering both physical and social sciences. In terms of research capability, the strength of Mahidol is due to its long experience and its secure foundation; it was supported by foreign donors like the UDP and Fulbright during the 1950s (see Coleman and Court, 1993: 167).

These long-established universities are part of the Thai bureaucracy and most of the staff are civil servants. In accordance with the study's objectives, I will not attempt to contrast and compare these three universities, but will use the findings from each to present a macro-picture of the state of Thai research in relation to the concept of internationalisation. The findings show that the embedded bureaucracy is a key constraint on the development of

²⁵ For the historical development of these universities see the prospectus of MU, 2001: 4; KU, in (<http://www.ku.ac.th>); SWU, in (<http://www.swu.ac.th/swu/history.html>).

research, especially in a context of strong market demands and an increasingly complex society.

The following discussion describes an ineffective bureaucratic structure that leads to a lack of research culture at the macro-level as well as within the Thai 'academic oligarchy'. Also, the bureaucratic structure and norms strongly discourage individuals from aspiring to engage in high-quality research. These points are considered in detail.

7.3.1 Research culture

Chapter three examined the historical development of Thai political institutions: the country was first ruled by an absolute monarchy, then by authoritarian bureaucratic regimes, and most recently, by a parliamentary system which has been marked by patron-client relationships and the development of reciprocal interests among elite groups. These systems have not been conducive to knowledge-based decision making. The study's findings regarding the relationship between research and internationalisation confirm this assertion. Although the Thai state has attempted to develop research to the point where it meets international standards, it has met with strong resistance, stemming from the lack of a research culture within the country's institutions. An academic commented:

Thailand has always used the culture of power to solve its problems; we have never used the knowledge culture in our society. But power can solve only short-term problems and so problems accumulate. If the power culture could be used to solve every problem, we wouldn't have all the arguments we have today about how to deal with traffic jams, floods, and so on. Instead of using knowledge, it's more a case of *khrai mu yao sao dai sao ao*.²⁶ In the promotion season, you see how far state officials have to go in the race to be promoted, and how much money they spend. Knowledge plays no part in it. In the past, we used to hear the old saying that people shouldn't know too much; if they're well informed they'll stop relying on their rulers. When I told one of our politicians that things had to change, all he could say was that 'It's easier said than done'. Of course, I've never seen any government that's been sincerely working for the good of the country. When they come to consult me about how to solve their problems, I tell them we need to address the core issues; but if the politician isn't concerned with the common interest it's difficult to move in the right direction. In our society, we tend to use tactics and authority to deal with issues. For example, when the government decides to build a dam, it hardly sets up a study to determine whether the project will be good or bad for people; who will benefit and who will suffer. The framework of knowledge has never played a part in any of the state's decision.²⁷

Another lecturer noted:

²⁶ A Thai saying, meaning roughly 'Go for what you want and forget about morality'.

²⁷ Nipon interview (KU).

The notion of research seems to be foreign to the nature of Thai people, especially when it requires high investment and will only yield long-term returns. Thais want something concrete and quick results, and they don't understand that good research needs a lot of time. [...] For example, rather than spend 10 million baht on essential research about a particular product, Thai businessmen will buy a Mercedes. That's the Thai way: they want something that can maintain face and status, and they won't invest in something that is unpredictable; they see it as a risk. Research is just not part of the Thai people's mindset and culture.²⁸

Regarding the culture of Thai people, an education administrator remarked:

It is interesting to relate research problems to Thai culture. [...] The education system is based on rote learning, which doesn't allow students to ask questions. If you haven't been trained to ask questions you can't be a good researcher.²⁹

The above interviews touch on four key areas in Thai society – the bureaucratic, political, business and educational sectors – all of which lack a research culture. The problems of the different sectors are interlinked. For example, the lack of a research culture in the schools affects the way individuals and institutions perform, while the lack of a research culture in the bureaucratic sector affects the attitudes and behaviour of the school teachers. The main problem is, however, the central role and the embedded values of the bureaucracy.

According to the above interviews, the elite groups: politicians, businessmen and bureaucrats do not prioritise or value the knowledge gained from research, since they believed they can attain their goals by means of their authority, the 'distributive game', and personal ties (see Chai-Anan, 2001: 62; Unger, 1998; McCargo, 2002b: 3). The first interview's comments on the lack of a knowledge-based decision-making culture accord with what has been remarked about the bureaucracy's 'form of rule' in developing countries: the bureaucracy uses its authority to achieve its ends and rarely makes decisions based on sound information (see Smith, 2003: 159). As a result, the creation of academic knowledge is considered unimportant, and priority tends to be given to short-term interests, particularly to maintaining or enhancing prestige and status. Thus the lack of research culture is a cause as well as a result of the elites' unrelenting drive to exercise power.

In higher education, the original function of the public universities - to serve national development – took precedence over the development of academic knowledge. Historically, Thai state universities were established as part of the bureaucratic system in order to train

²⁸ Chak interview (KU).

²⁹ Personal interview, Padoongchart, Director, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development, 23 January 2003.

graduates for the civil service (Patom, 1989: 23-24; Wyatt, 1969: 18). Later, in the period of economic growth, Thai higher education served the business sector (Varunee, 1990: 261). According to an educational administrator, because graduates were destined to work in the civil service, research took second place to teaching. This also affected the attitude of university lecturers, as their tasks were to disseminate, rather than create, knowledge.³⁰ Moreover, since they were civil servants, their potential to strengthen the 'academic oligarchy' was limited, as their thinking was constricted by the bureaucracy's structure and norms (see Altbach, 1982: 10-12; Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 13). The following discussion of the ways the selected institutions and individuals chose to perform should be read in the light of an understanding of these conditions.

7.3.2 Academic promotion

An important factor motivating Thai academics to conduct research is promotion. Generally, promotion depends on the publication of research papers in respected journals. However, the findings show that the promotion process in Thai state universities does not yet meet international standards since teaching and seniority are prioritised over the quality of work. The explanation lies in the history and nature of Thai public universities: firstly, they were established to disseminate rather than create knowledge; secondly, the Thai 'academic oligarchy' in these universities is part of the bureaucracy where seniority counts.

Since 1983, the MUA has allowed each public university council to approve assistant and associate professorships, while professorships must be approved by the MUA itself (Uthai, 1989).³¹ Regarding associate and assistant professorships, different universities use their own criteria;³² For example, the requirements for promotion in Kasetsart are as follows:

- Those who want to be promoted should have at least one full-time teaching class in the university
- For assistant professorships, two types of work should be submitted: course handouts, and academic works which can be selected from one of these options: research papers, books, translated works, academic papers, and other works apart from these such as films, artworks and mechanical products. These two works should be considered to be of 'good' quality by the committee
- For associate professorships, two types of work should be submitted: teaching notes with more complete details than are required for assistant professorships, and academic works which can be selected from one of these options: research

³⁰ Padoongchart interview.

³¹ In Thailand, the process of gaining academic status follows the US system, where grades are: lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, to professor.

³² Opas interview (MUA).

papers, textbooks, translated textbooks, and other works apart from these such as films, artworks and mechanical products (Kasetsart, 1992)

The above requirements reflect two issues. First, they show that Thai public universities prioritise teaching above research; second the criterion for quality is abstract and opens a loophole for the committee, who are allowed to decide, perhaps quite subjectively, what should be considered of 'good quality'. Thus the process is made vulnerable to the influence of personal ties, which will be discussed shortly (see section 7.3.4). According to Kasetsart's rules, teaching notes mean 'documents or materials that are used to teach in the university's curriculum, such as teaching plan, lecture plan, additional options, i.e., reading lists, chart, tape, slides; and that for associate professor should have more details about the content of the teaching' (Kasetsart, 1992: 19). That teaching notes are an important requirement confirms that teaching is the main path to academic status.

Regarding the criteria set by the MUA for approving professorships, there are the same problems: the prioritisation of teaching and the subjective criterion. The MUA's conditions for approving professorships are divided into two methods:

The first method is

- Propose at least one published textbook or course book that is used at university level. The textbook must be of 'very good'³³ quality, and
- a research work that has been published, again of 'very good' quality, not including research that is part of any graduation degree or diploma, or
- other academic work that is equivalent to the research work above

The second method is to

- Propose at least one published textbook or course book that is used at university level and being published. The textbook must be of 'excellent'³⁴ quality, or
- a research work that has been published, again of 'excellent' quality, not including research that is part of any graduation degree or diploma, or
- other academic work that is equivalent in quality to the research work above

³³ In Thai word, *di mak*.

³⁴ In Thai word, *di den*.

- The textbook and research work to be submitted should not be similar to the work submitted for the assistant professorship and associate professorship (MUA, 1999b: 12)

On these criteria, the options are opened for academics to conduct either teaching or research. On the one hand, a lecturer noted that teaching notes and textbooks are not appreciated and the committee prefers research which makes an original contribution to knowledge; on the other hand, another lecturer preferred to submit a textbook or teaching note because it is easier and more likely to be accepted, since it contains familiar material, while research work can be weak and is prone to criticism by the committee.³⁵ These views reflect two issues: first, academic research remains a choice, not a requirement in the promotion process; second, the criterion is flexible and can be interpreted according to the committee's opinions. Regarding the last point, in Thailand, problems can occur because personal ties and favoritism play a role in the process; a later section will discuss this (see section 7.3.4).

The reason higher criteria, and thus higher academic standards, were not established can be traced to the bureaucratisation of the Thai 'academic oligarchy'. Since public university lecturers were civil servants, the OCSC applied a system where the conditions of lecturers were directly compared to those of administrators in other areas of government administration. The Civil Servants Regulations Act in 1954 equated academic lecturers with civil servants (see Table 13).

Position in university	Position in other governmental sectors
Lecturer (Bachelor's level)	Staff
Lecturer (Master's level)	Chief of the section
Lecturer (doctoral level) or Assistant Professor	Chief of the division
Lecturer (superior level) or Associate Professor	Director of the division
Professor	Deputy-Director General/ Director-General

Table 13: Comparison between position in university and other governmental sectors
Source: Uthai, 1989

Personnel administration in Thai public universities during the first period, that is before 1964, was under the OCSC and the same rules were applied as in other government institutions; academic promotion was not given a special category. The OCSC's inclusion

³⁵ Anonymous interview.

of university personnel with other government sectors reflected its centralising policy, and limited the development of academic research. At that period, academic promotion was not complex and textbooks and research work were not required. Promotions depended on length of service and seniority (Uthai, 1989).

In 1964 a committee³⁶ was set up to oversee the universities' personnel administration, but the OCSC's rules still equated academic staff with those of other branches of government. It is true that the criteria governing academic promotion started to include such matters as research work and textbooks, but the comparison between academics in universities with bureaucrats in other government institutions continue to be applied.

The categories of government officials in Thailand range from C 1 to C 11. Promotion and salary largely depend on an official's years of service. This system also applies to academic bureaucrats. Table 14 shows the connection between academic status and level of salary.

Academic status	Levels of salary
Lecturer	C 3-7, 8
Assistant professor	C 6-8,9
Associate professor	C 7-9, 10
Professor	C 9-10, 11

Table 14: Comparison between academic status and governmental levels of salary
Source: MUA, 1999b: 3

The process of gaining academic promotion is driven by the bureaucratic system rather than the quality of a researcher's work. To move from one category to the next, which carries a higher salary, requires 2 to 3 years of work; for example, moving from C3 to C4 takes two years. As a rule, lecturers with a Bachelor's degree enter university with a salary level of C3. They need to work for nine years before they can ask for promotion to an assistant professorship. Lecturers with a PhD normally enter university at a salary level of C5; they need to work for two years before they can apply for an assistant professorship. Assistant professor need to work for at least three years before they are eligible to be promoted to associate professor, and an associate professor must work for a further two years before he or she can apply for a full professorship (MUA, 1999b: 9-11). When an academic has worked for the designated number of years, they will be permitted to submit their work to the committee, who will then assess its quality, and make their decision. However, as noted

³⁶ The committee was composed of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the President of the Committee of the Office of the National Education Commission, the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister's Office, President of university, the Director of the Budget Bureau, the Secretary-General of the Office of the Civil Service Commission, the Secretary-General of the Office of the National Education Commission.

above, promotion will take place only if the academic has been in the bureaucratic sector for the designated number of years, and is drawing the prescribed salary.³⁷ Thus, the strict rules of the bureaucracy or, to put it another way, quantitative factors take precedence over the quality of academic work.

The MUA later introduced special terms of exemption for those who did not want to follow the process in all its details and stages; for example, an assistant professor might wish to skip a stage and become a full professor. These candidates, however, have to meet particular demanding requirements, which cannot be processed at university level; the application must be specially approved by the MUA.³⁸ Although the rules become more flexible, they still reflect the remaining centralised role of the MUA, and it should be noted that the great majority of applications are processed through the normal system.³⁹

Commenting on this system, an academic noted that, in fact, the positions and requirements of the academics and the administration are incomparable because the former are concerned with the quality of academic work while the latter decides on the basis of quantitative and hierarchical criteria.⁴⁰ Several lecturers also stated that the system is very unlikely to produce high-quality research because the requirements are routine and personal connections are involved.⁴¹ In this connection, a lecturer explained that it is possible to improve one's academic status by simply submitting an article published in the faculty's journal or repackaging handouts and documents from the teaching notes.⁴² This, of course, does not guarantee a high standard, especially since university and faculty journals in Thailand have no external peer review system.⁴³ Moreover, teaching notes make no contribution to knowledge as previously discussed. These processes do nothing to improve the quality of research.

Thus the routine processes and current criteria used cannot motivate researchers or guarantee that work of high quality will be produced. This situation corresponds with what has been found in other developing countries' higher education systems that a flawed and strict bureaucratic rule cannot guarantee quality (see Levy, 1994: 259-261; Doan Hue Dung, 2004: 143-152). The interviews revealed that Thai academics are not motivated to produce

³⁷ Opas, Chantavit interviews (MUA).

³⁸ Opas interview (MUA).

³⁹ Opas interview (MUA).

⁴⁰ Montri interview (MU).

⁴¹ Chak, Narumon, Thiti interviews (KU, MU, CU).

⁴² Chak interview (KU).

⁴³ Personal interview, Kriangsak, Rice and Cereal Crops Research Programme Officer, TRF, 17 May 2003.

'internationalised' research because they are confined within the bureaucratic structure, which discourages both research and knowledge-based decision-making. This accords with what has been noted that bureaucracies in developing countries are 'a form of ruling class' concerned with the exercise of power (Smith, 2003: 159).

7.3.3 Assessment system

However, in the current period, demands are being made for changes to the bureaucratic culture. For example, the concepts of accountability and good governance were introduced by the Anand government and included in the 1999 National Education Act. Moreover, in 1999 the MUA announced the introduction of a system of assessing the workloads of assistant professors, associate professors and professors in Thai universities. Assessment covers the minimum hours of work and the number of academic research papers published per year (see Table 14). The rationale of the system is underpinned by global trends: governments are increasingly concerned with accountability and evaluation (see Meek, 2000: 25). The new assessment system is an example of how the 'market' forces played their role - trying to keep up with new trends and move universities to compete in the research market. If Thailand is to compete internationally, it is important that these concepts apply in the Thai research sphere.⁴⁴ The question arises, however: to what extent has this new assessment system been put into practice or been used to encourage academics to produce high-quality research?

⁴⁴ Porntip, Opas interviews (MUA).

Academic position	Standards of the working requirements	Transitional provisions
Assistant professorship	<p>-meet the minimum workload as university lecturers</p> <p>Either</p> <p>- 1 article from the research work per year published in academic journals* or conference proceedings at national level</p> <p>or</p> <p>- 2 academic journals* with comparable with above standards</p> <p><i>*academic journals need to have peer review system and be accepted widely by scholars in the field</i></p>	<p>-meet the minimum working hours as university lecturers</p> <p>Either</p> <p>- 1 academic article per year published in <u>any</u> academic journal</p> <p>or</p> <p>- any comparable work to the above standards</p>
Associate professorship	<p>-meet the minimum working load as university's lecturers</p> <p>Either</p> <p>- 2 articles from the research work per year published in academic journals*</p> <p>or</p> <p>-2 comparable works</p> <p><i>*academic journals need to have peer review system and be accepted widely by scholars in the field</i></p>	<p>-meet the minimum working hours as university lecturers</p> <p>Either</p> <p>- 1 article from the research work per year published in <u>any</u> academic journals</p> <p>or</p> <p>- 2 academic articles per year published in <u>any</u> academic journal</p>
Professorship	<p>-meet the minimum working load as university's lecturers</p> <p>Either</p> <p>- 1 article from the research work per year published in <u>international</u> academic journals*</p> <p>or</p> <p>-any comparable works to the above standards</p> <p><i>*academic journals need to have peer review system and be accepted widely by scholars in the field</i></p>	<p>- meet the minimum working hours as university lecturers</p> <p>Either</p> <p>- 2 articles from the research work per year published in <u>national</u> academic journals</p> <p>or</p> <p>- 3 academic articles per year published in <u>any</u> academic journals</p>

Table 15: Standards of working requirements for academics in Thai universities
Source: MUA, 1999c

Table 15 shows that university academics are required to meet two conditions: to work the minimum number of hours as university lecturers (30-35 hours per week) and to publish academic research. Before the new assessment system was put in place, there was no way of forcing lecturers to carry out both duties.⁴⁵ The MUA's new requirements introduced the principles of evaluation into the working practices of university lecturers.

On the matter of the publication of academic research, different academic positions have different requirements. For assistant and associate professors, two options are given: they can either produce academic papers or publish articles on their research work, while professors are required to have their research work published in international journals. Moreover, the academic journals in which the work will be published must be part of a peer review system and have a good reputation among scholars in that particular field. These conditions indicate that the MUA is attempting to enhance the quality of research. However, the 1999 announcement allowed unprepared lecturers to adjust to the new requirements through transitional provisions: these academics could publish articles in any type of journal; thus the articles could avoid submission to peer review.⁴⁶ The transitional provisions were to be effective for three years from 1999 (MUA, 1999c). That they were provided as an alternative, even for such a short period, implies that the MUA realised that its new requirements would be difficult for Thai academics to adjust to.

According to several lecturers, because the new requirements changed the academics' terms of service and were fairly demanding, they did create difficulties especially for academics who were embedded in the civil service, where they were not required to conduct research after taking their higher degree.⁴⁷ More importantly, the new assessment system criteria laid down a different route to enhanced academic status. As previously discussed, promotion had been based on years of teaching; the quality of research was neglected. In contrast, the new assessment system focused on quality; hence the insistence on submission to peer review. The new system has not only sharpened the conflict between the bureaucracy and the new global market forces, it has also made many Thai academics uneasy. A professor commented:

How can you expect quality research from Thai academics? It's true that applicants for a professorship have long been required to conduct research once again, perhaps for the first time since their PhDs. Below professorship level, the requirements used to be quite low; now the state and society

⁴⁵ Sutruedee interview (KU).

⁴⁶ Personal interview, Kancharat, personnel analyst, Bureau of Administrative Development, MUA, 20 March 2003.

⁴⁷ Chak, Sutruedee, Sermsak interviews (KU, SWU).

require us to be assessed and to publish research papers. It's been very difficult since research needs constant attention and long practice.⁴⁸

The interview reveals that before the new system came into force, academics bureaucrats did not have to conduct research or create new knowledge after taking their PhD. This situation accords with that obtaining in higher education system in other developing countries, where academics have found it difficult to adjust to the new requirements of the market (see Levy, 1994: 259; Brunner, 1997: 234), and to realise that research was now not a choice but a necessity. Interestingly, an educational administrator commented that there were many lecturers who had done no research of any kind since finishing their PhD; they were using old knowledge to teach their students.⁴⁹ Another administrator agreed:

Thai universities often lose PhD graduates to other tracks such as giving extra private lessons or doing administrative work. (...) Those who come back haven't had the chance to conduct research for about four years; obviously they've got stuck and it's getting hard for them to restart.⁵⁰

As we have noted, Thai students often go abroad to further their studies (see Varunee, 1990: 252). The fact that it is possible to stop doing research immediately after taking a PhD shows that 'internationalisation' is often perceived very superficially (see Sulak, 1991: 43). For many, the PhD thesis produced at a foreign institution is the best piece of 'quality' and 'internationalised' research in their career.⁵¹ This suggests that the integration of the international/intercultural dimension into the research process rarely occurs, and internal change does not occur (see Knight, 1997: 8).

There are only 310 professors in Thai public universities, accounting for only 1.5 per cent of the total number of full-time lecturers (MUA, 2001a: 27). This suggests that the ambitions of many competent academics are frustrated by the promotion system. Moreover, many of this small number of professors find it difficult to pursue a purely academic career. A Thai professor commented:

The problem is that those who have obtained professorships - we have about 300 of them in the whole country, which is not a lot - no longer have time to conduct research. Most of them become famous, appearing on TV, having their own radio programmes, becoming politicians or holding high administrative positions in the country's key sectors. How can you expect

⁴⁸ Sermsak interview (SWU).

⁴⁹ Padoongchart interview.

⁵⁰ Amaret interview (MU).

⁵¹ Sutruedee interview (KU).

these people to do research worthy of being published in an international journal? Some might be able to do it, but most of them can't.⁵²

The interview touches on two issues. First, the Thai state depends heavily on university academics because the country has a limited number of experts, as is the case in many other developing countries (Altbach, 1982: 3; Kirby-Harris, 2003: 366). Second, the lack of a research culture means that prestige and status are seen to lie in the upper levels of the administration or in the media, and are not to be gained by publishing papers in academic journals.

Thus the 1999 regulations are not having their desired effect, and currently (as of 2003) there are few signs of progress. In 1999, the MUA asked universities to

- list the journals that have peer review and are up to standard
- report the implementation results for each year (how many academics have met the criteria and how many have not), being paper published
- have the university committee set up minimum standards of lecturers' duties⁵³

The first report did not appear until 2002, and even then only five universities provided the MUA with complete information; data from the other 19 was not available. Moreover, different universities provided very different lists of research publications: some provided 1,000 names while others were more selective. An MUA official thought that the main problem was the uncooperative attitude of academics who felt that their practice was being critically assessed, their territory invaded and their position threatened.⁵⁴ This reaction can be justified to some extent, but it also bears witness to the entrenched attitudes of bureaucrat lecturers who wish to preserve their interests and are reluctant to accept change (see Pasuk, 1999: 9). Moreover, the MUA's requirement reflects the process-control or top-down approach of the 'state authority', which is not able to guarantee quality (see Levy, 1994: 259-261; Doan Hue Dung, 2004: 143). Also, the wider context needs to be taken into account. The interviews quoted suggest that the grants and funding arrangements, the elites' fragmented interests within the research sphere, the lack of a research culture, and the academic bureaucrats' need to pursue personal interests outside the research sphere all harm the purely academic interests of universities and their staff.

⁵² Anonymous interview.

⁵³ Kancharat interview (MUA).

⁵⁴ Kancharat interview (MUA).

According to some interviewees, the new assessment system has not been taken seriously. For example, a Mahidol lecturer explained that there had been informal discussions among lecturers in the department about the minimum working hours and whether it might be possible to divide duties so that those who liked teaching could teach and those who wanted to do research can do research would not have to teach.⁵⁵ This suggests that academics were devoting time and energy to finding ways to avoid the MUA's requirement when these conflicted with their own preferences, and accords with the observation of a Srinakharinwirot administrator: that those who preferred teach would focus exclusively on teaching, while those who wished to conduct research would do so at the expense of their teaching duties.⁵⁶ A Kasetsart lecturer disclosed how the assessment system was regarded by his colleagues:

About the new requirement forcing lecturers to publish papers, it's not a serious issue since the decision is made at the departmental level. We don't assess each other too harshly here. OK, some might not be able to meet the requirement, but nobody dares to fail or fire anyone because the feelings of sympathy and solidarity are so strong.⁵⁷

The interviews suggest that the assessment system has not been solidly established within the selected public universities. One of the fundamental problems is that these lecturers are civil servants, and so firing them is difficult. Moreover informal negotiations and shared aims play a central role within the academic bureaucrats' bargaining process, and the universities' overdeveloped bureaucracy has impeded the institution of effective assessment or self-regulation (see Smith, 2003: 132). An appropriate sanctions mechanism would help to remove the restrictions on the development of research.

In addition to their teaching and research missions, lecturers are required to perform the administrative tasks. Interestingly, administrative duties have been prioritised and have come to be considered as the lecturers' key function. According to several interviewees, those who take on the role of administrators normally gain the promotion more easily than those who devote themselves to research or teaching.⁵⁸ Some lecturers went on to explain that administration is regarded as a public function while the research is seen as an individual pursuit and that the devotion to administration can be the decisive factor in a promotion.⁵⁹ A lecturer comments:

⁵⁵ Narumon interview (MU).

⁵⁶ Sermsak interview (SWU).

⁵⁷ Sutruedee interview (KU).

⁵⁸ Sermsak, Piniti interviews (SWU).

⁵⁹ Anonymous interviews.

Those who do research outside, and hardly see the head of department have no chance of promotion while those who work closely with the head have a good chance of getting a raise in salary.⁶⁰

The emphasis on administration stems from the fact that public universities have long been a part of the bureaucracy. The interview suggests that financial considerations take priority over research and even over the teaching in the department. Moreover, personal relationships with the senior administrators seem to be a key factor in promotion process.

While administration brings financial rewards and research confers status, teaching is often seen as the 'poor relation'. A Kasetsart lecturer remarked:

Teaching brings income, especially in the special programme while the department gets nothing from lecturers doing research. The department has to sacrifice teaching loads even though it still has to pay the electricity and water bills, while those who do research get the top positions. When they become famous they look down on those who do the teaching.⁶¹

The interview first suggests that the importance of the fee income in derive from the special programmes focuses the attention of the department and individual lecturers on teaching. This accords with what was previously argued: that the international programmes were set up for financial rather than academic reasons. Second, research is considered to benefit the individual while teaching is able to bring income to the department. Third, it implies that the market for university-based research has developed more slowly than that for teaching. This may be explained by the lack of a research culture and the greater degree of importance Thai universities originally gave to teaching. At the moment, research cannot yet be a source of income for state universities, the bulk of whose income comes from students' fees and the state budget. The imbalance between teaching and research indicates that Thai higher education has pursued quantitative aims while ignoring the fundamental issue of quality (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128).

Currently, the power of the 'academic oligarchy' is relatively weak. Despite the universities' aspiration to 'go international', fundamental improvement in quality (first-order change) remains difficult. The new ideas and structures, such as the assessment system introduced by the state (second-order change) are still at an early stage of development and have achieved little of substance.

⁶⁰ Anonymous interview.

⁶¹ Chak interview (KU).

7.3.4 Culture of personal ties

Another factor that constrains the quality of research, and that is clearly seen in the public universities, is personal relationships. We have noted that the TRF's management is marked by a culture of personal ties and shared interests among its groups of 'trained academics'. This culture is also prevalent within the universities. As in many developing countries, the advantages conferred by personal ties and clientelism are often seen during the negotiation process (see Heady, 1996: 317-321; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66; Doan Hue Dung, 2004: 143-152).

This problematic phenomenon constrained the realisation of the Thai state's aspiration to reach international standards in research. This aim is proving very difficult to achieve because the fundamental values and structures do not provide opportunities for qualitative change. For example, the constraints on the management of the research budget are not only due to the limited funds, which must be spread among different units, as previously described; the undue influence of personal relationships also undermines the drive for quality and the internationalisation of research.

The decision-making and evaluation processes connected with research projects are often based on the loose structure, but intense culture, of personal relations. Several lecturers complained about the research agencies' unfair treatment of those without connections.⁶²

A university administrator explained:

Some people applying for government funding - from the NRC for example - will submit a very easy proposal, but if they know the decision maker, they'll get the money. Sometimes if the experts on the committee don't like the person, the proposal won't be approved. Since there's not much money anyway, we can only do applied research; we can't focus on excellence. If we ask for a hundred but get only ten, how can we do research that is truly excellent? About the approval process: some people on the committee have no experience of internationalization; they just don't know what it means. Sometimes, when I look at the names, I know that these people have never published any papers in international journals, so it's difficult for them to evaluate the project from a broad perspective. This sort of mechanism creates problems.⁶³

The interview outlines the problems occurring inside the research budget management system. First, the selection criteria are not based on standards of quality, but on personal connections. Second, the government budget is so small that it prevents competent

⁶² Yuvardee, Sornprach interviews (SWU, KU).

⁶³ Sornprach interview (KU).

individuals from carrying out 'excellent' research. Third, some members of the committee have no experience of publishing papers in international journals. These problems are interlinked. Obviously, the limited budget makes it difficult to produce high-quality research; however, the situation is exacerbated when personal relationships are used as the criterion. The dominance of personal criteria prevents the development of an appropriate structure, and important elements of the process, such as expert opinion and the international criterion, are neglected. This accords with the view of another administrator: "In Thailand, concrete criteria have not been established and even if they were, the people on the committee would rarely use them".⁶⁴ The influence of personal ties within the bargaining process reflects the Thai state's embedded culture of patronage, in which structural features are not strongly established (see Christensen, 1992a; Unger, 1998: 24).

Personal ties can also distort the funding system:

If you know that a professor is going to retire very soon, how can you disappoint him by failing his proposal? I have to deal with my professors, my seniors, my juniors: we all graduated from this university, so how can I make disparaging comments? Sometimes when we read the project we knew it wasn't going to be fruitful, but we approved it anyway. Somehow, morality counted more, and we decided that a project needing only a small sum of money wasn't going to slow our growth.⁶⁵

The interviewee admits that friendship and seniority take precedence over rules. The administrator claimed that the unreasonable decision to support a dubious project with a small grant would not harm the development of research. This may be true if only one such project is funded; if many small projects are approved, it is likely that development will be hindered. Moreover, the idea of rigorous assessment, which must include direct criticisms, is unfamiliar in the civil service since bureaucrats have long enjoyed an 'overdeveloped' status in comparison with other political institutions (see Smith, 2003: 132). The finding supports Coleman and Court's (1993: 188-189) comment that the flaws of the Thai academic community can be found particularly in its patron-client relationships, its lack of rigorous peer review, and the reluctance of its members to critique of their own work.

While the above interviews show how personal relationships play a role in the approval of certain favoured individuals' research proposals, the following interview shows that the

⁶⁴ Nipon interview (KU).

⁶⁵ Anonymous interview.

lack of such relationships can lead others to fail. This is mainly related to the politics within the negotiation process, as a committee member noted:

Whether or not a project gets the money depends on 'word racing' [an attempt to influence/lobby] to get the committee's support. For example, a new project was proposed to study a particular type of plant and since we all know who the *jao pho* [godfather] is – he has a monopoly on this species - there was a feeling towards that proposal of 'Who are you and how come you don't know this is the *jao pho*'s area of interest. The people who opposed it hadn't even read it, but they said that it duplicated another person's work and anyway there were so many other kinds of plants to study. They know how to come up with the reasons and control the outcome.⁶⁶

A professor agreed that this kind of situation was not unusual:

In Thailand, the committee looks at the name of the project manager and if they recognise the name, the project will pass. [...] If the applicant is a new lecturer who has no support, the project is often failed, but if a well-connected lecturer phones the committee, the project will be approved in the end.⁶⁷

These interviews provide inside knowledge, revealing that projects were approved on the basis of personal ties and that the power of elite individuals within the research sphere played a key role in the bargaining process. One also provides evidence of deception: an applicant was told that his project would duplicate work already done. To put it bluntly, this was a lie told to protect the 'godfather' of a particular area of research. This violated the principle of fair competition, which was sacrificed out of deference to a powerful individual. Besides the harm done to this applicant's confidence and motivation, such practices are likely to damage the quality of research.

Regarding the issue of academic promotion, the previous section discussed the excessive influence of the bureaucratic structure on the 'academic oligarchy'. Another constraint is related to the cultural values associated with the personal ties within the negotiation process between universities, lecturers and the committee. A lecturer commented:

If the university upgrades the requirements of its academic promotion system, there'll be a lot of complaints that those who have already been promoted won't be affected by the higher requirements. Nobody wants trouble, so nobody will dare to raise the standards. It'll end up being the same old system of helping each other the Thai way. As far as the university is concerned, if promotion will help you to get a bigger salary to help out the family, just take it.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Sutruedee interview (KU).

⁶⁷ Anonymous interview.

⁶⁸ Chak interview (KU).

The interview suggests that setting high criteria for the promotion system is problematic. This accords with another lecturer's observation that if the bar is set too low, academics will rush to improve their status, but if the bar is too high, lecturers will be discouraged and will pursue other interests outside the university.⁶⁹ The 'system of helping each other the Thai way' is able to flourish because the weak mechanism of checks and balances encourages academics to pursue self-interest by cultivating personal ties and using the system unscrupulously (see Christensen, 1992a: 19; Unger, 1998: 24). This accords with the point made earlier: that the rules opened a loophole for those with connections.

Regarding promotion to professorships, the MUA's rules for selecting the committee are that it should be composed of scholars in the same discipline, but from different universities, and that they should have a higher academic status than the candidates. An MUA official disclosed that on several occasions candidates telephoned committee members in an attempt to influence their decision.⁷⁰ This reflects the persistent influence of patron-client and personal relationships on the policy process, and accords with a professor's observations:

In Thailand, it is difficult to do research alone and get the academic promotion without knowing anybody in the community. The committee will ask who this person is and at least needs to be aware of their credentials before forwarding the decision for the King to sign. The decision is more or less based on how good the connection is; the relationship with the committee counts for a lot.⁷¹

Another lecturer further noted that to gain professorship in Thailand is not easy because it is not only about having the quality piece of works, but it relates also having to know the 'right people' and sometimes it distorts the motivations of individuals who do not know this 'right people'.⁷² The interviews imply the needs of individuals to use connections within the academic sphere.

The points made above correspond with what has been discovered about the informal channels of influence which play a key role in decision-making processes in developing countries (see Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66). In Thailand, the importance of personal ties, the 'distributive game', and the fragmentation of interests are clearly evident within the political sphere (see McCargo, 2002b: 3; Somchai, 2002: 135; Unger, 1998: 24).

⁶⁹ Thiti interview.

⁷⁰ Personal interview, Chalermkwan, Personnel Analyst, Bureau of Administrative System Development, MUA, 24 March 2003.

⁷¹ Nipon interview (KU).

⁷² Anonymous interview.

This situation accords with Cleaves's (1980: 284-285) observations on the 'intermediate system' where policy becomes a tool of the elites and is used to support clientelism. The policy is symbolic rather than designed to be implemented.

Thus several weaknesses within the fundamental structure of Thai higher education hamper individuals' attempts to develop research to meet international standards. Although reforms have been introduced, individuals are struggling against the power and values of the bureaucracy. The attempts to introduce new structures (second-order change) are therefore politicised (see McCargo, 2002b: 3), as are the attempts to internationalise research.

Part II: Outcomes

The number of papers published in reputable international journals by a country or its institutions is widely considered to be a reliable criterion for judging research outcomes. The scientific community regards the knowledge it creates as public belonging to the realm, and publications are a means of communication with other scientists worldwide (see Hagstrom, 1965; Cotgrove and Box, 1970 in Shimbori, 1979: 149). However, debates have arisen within international scientific community, centred on the issues of ethnocentrism and the positioning of countries according to 'a steep hierarchy of prestige' (Cole and Cole, 1973 in Shimburi, 1979: 159; see also Altbach, 2002: 29-31). Scholars have critiqued the referee system and criteria evaluation, which are usually considered to be thoroughly international, and have raised doubts about their universal character (Shimburi, 1979: 165).

This thesis is aware of the possibility that bias might arise from an over-reliance on the number of papers published; however, this criterion is a reliable, though rough indicator of whether basic science research in Thailand is reaching international standards. However, it should be borne in mind that this cannot be the ultimate criterion of the success of Thai 'internationalised' research. In this thesis, 'success' refers to the country's ability to improve the higher education system and adopt necessary changes, as discussed in Knight's (1997) definition of the integration process. This also relates to Sugiyama's (1992: 99) notion that a country should be equipped with knowledge and skills comparable to those in the world at large, but should not abandon its national identity. Therefore, the number of papers published is not an adequate measure of the degree of success achieved by the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand.

Compared with other Asian states, Thailand was ranked out of 20 countries during the period 1995-2003: below Japan, China, India, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, and above

Malaysia, Pakistan and Indonesia.⁷³ Table 16 compares the number of papers published in international journals by institutions in Thailand and Malaysia.

Country	Number of papers (year 2003)	Population ⁷⁴	Ratio of papers to population
Singapore	5,475	4,190,000	1: 765
Malaysia	1,283	21,793,293	1: 16,986
Thailand	2,283	61,230,874	1: 26,820

Table 16: Number of research publications produced by Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand per number of population (as of 2003)

Source: ISI Web of Knowledge⁷⁵

Table 16 shows that although Thailand produced more papers than Malaysia its ratio of production was less impressive 1: 26, 820 against Malaysia 1: 16,986. The number of papers published by Singapore, ranked sixth, was far above Thailand's; and proportionately, Singapore produced about 22 times as many papers per head of population. In global terms, the number of Thai research papers in international journals is low: the IMD world competitiveness yearbook in 2002 ranked Thailand 42nd out of 49 in terms of science articles published (Pirasak, 2002: 64).

existence in medical science and natural science, which owes much to the strong foundation provided by international aid in its earliest years (see Coleman and Court, 1993: 167).

However, Mahidol is a public university, situated within the same context as the other selected universities, and thus is beset by the problems discussed in the previous sections. Moreover, if we compare Mahidol with the top universities in other countries, we find that in 2003, the National University of Singapore produced 2,930 papers, the University of Leeds 2,054 and Tokyo University 1,328, and the ratio of papers to academics is also better (see Table 17). Even Mahidol cannot match these foreign universities.

⁷³ The numbers are an approximate number, as the data refers to different years according to the information provided by the institutions and not particularly to the year 2003.

⁷⁴ The distinction is that no distinction is made between the physical sciences and the social sciences because the data used did not separate the two fields.

⁷⁵ The data include faculty members (2,055) and research staff (1,151) as of 31 August 2004.

⁷⁶ www.nationbynation.com/Singapore/population.html, accessed on 13 July 2005.

⁷⁷ www.nationbynation.com/Malaysia/population.html, accessed on 13 July 2005.

⁷⁸ www.nationbynation.com/Thailand/population.html, accessed on 31 May 2004.

⁷⁹ <http://portalt.wok.mimas.ac.uk/portal.cgi?DestApp=WOS&Func=Frame>, accessed on 31 May 2004.

Universities	Number of scientific papers (year 2003)	Number of academics ⁷⁶	Ratio of science papers to academics (approximate) ⁷⁷
National University of Singapore	2,930	3,206 ⁷⁸	1: 1
University of Leeds	2,054	3,700 ⁷⁹	1: 2
Tokyo University	1,328	4,123 ⁸⁰	1: 3
Mahidol	561	2,666 ⁸¹	1: 5
Kasetsart	123	1,850	1: 15
Srinakharinwirot	26	1,192	1: 46

Table 17: Number of scientific papers produced by universities in Thailand in comparison to foreign universities
Source: ISI Web of Knowledge⁸²

For the period 1997-2001, Mahidol was ranked first among Thai universities, producing 1,643 published papers (see Table 2). In 2003, of the three selected public universities, Mahidol produced the largest number of papers – 561 -followed by Kasetsart and Srinakharinwirot with 123 and 26 respectively. This order also applied to the ratio of papers to academics (see Table 17). Mahidol's position on both lists can be explained by its eminence in medical science and natural science, which owes much to the strong foundation provided by international aid in its earliest years (see Coleman and Court, 1993: 167).

However, Mahidol is a public university, situated within the same context as the other selected universities, and thus is beset by the problems discussed in the previous sections. Moreover, if we compare Mahidol with the top universities in other countries, we find that in 2003, the National University of Singapore produced 2,930 papers, the University of Leeds 2,054 and Tokyo University 1,328, and the ratio of papers to academics is also better (see Table 17). Even Mahidol cannot match these foreign universities.

⁷⁶ The numbers are an approximation, as the data refers to different years according to the information provided by the institutions and not particularly to the year 2003.

⁷⁷ The limitation is that no distinction is made between the physical sciences and the social sciences because the data used did not separate the two fields.

⁷⁸ 3,206 staffs include faculty members (2,055) and research staff (1,151) as of 31 August 2004 (<http://www.nus.edu.sg/corporate/about/factsfigures.htm> , accessed on 13 July 2005).

⁷⁹ The 3,700 staff comprise academic (1,363), academic related (1,381), and research (956) as of December 2003 (http://www.leeds.ac.uk/about/annual_report/statistics.htm, accessed on 13 July 2005).

⁸⁰ The 4,123 staff comprise professors (1,412), associate professors (1,263), lecturers (133), and instructors, research associates and assistants (1,315) as of the 2004 fiscal year, (http://www/u-tokyo.ac.jp/index/b02_03_e.htm), accessed on 13 July 2005.

⁸¹ The 2,666 are academic staff, not technical staff or administrative support staff (MUA, 2001: 28).

⁸² <http://portalt.wok.mimas.ac.uk/portal.cgi?DestApp=WOS&Func=Frame>, accessed on 31 May 2004.

On a positive note, however, the number of papers produced by Thai universities has been constantly increasing. From 1995 to 2003, the number grew three fold, from 709 to 2,283 articles per year,⁸³ which is a good sign of the improved quality of Thai research papers. However, while the number of research papers in international journals demonstrates the country's current status as a centre of research, it does not tell the whole story. The long-term development of research remains the task of the key actors: the Thai 'state authority' and the universities; it is they who must improve the system of checks and balances structural features, and to eliminate the deficient values that hamper the institutions and distort the bargaining process essential to effective policy implementation.

7.4 Conclusion

The chapter's examination of research in three selected Thai public universities has shown that the two main factors that constrain the implementation process are the sharing of interests among technocrats and bureaucrats within the state funding agencies, and the bureaucratic structure and norms of the selected public universities. These factors are associated with the current position of Thai higher education within Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination'.

First, the role of the state funding agencies and the management of grants and funding reflects the way research has been treated at different times within the country's changing socio-political context. The small budget for research, especially basic academic research, bears witness to the Thai state's lack of interest in this issue, while the scattered distribution of the budget is due to the struggle for influence between bureaucrats and technocrats. The actions of the NRC have been moulded by the inertia and rigidity of the bureaucratic structure and the agency has been unable to encourage the universities to develop their research capabilities. The TRF was established in 1992 in response to the pressures exerted by the market and global economic forces on higher education, and the growing influence of the technocrats in the Thai political sphere; however, the TRF is finding it difficult to impose the new concepts of accountability and transparency, as it is too weak to eliminate the culture of personal ties and the sharing of interests among the technocratic elite.

At the macro-level, the political situation affects the way these research funding agencies are run. The NRC and TRF were created to serve the particular interests of influential groups that were dominant at different periods. More recently, they have been affected by new

⁸³ ISI Web of Knowledge, in <http://portalt.wok.mimas.ac.uk/portal.cgi?DestApp=WOS&Func=Frame>, accessed on 31 May 2004.

forces and have had to adapt to the shifting situation. For example, the Thaksin government has sought to show its power by introducing yet another new research funding unit, NRPU, thus undermining the TRF. As a result, the Thai 'state authority' now plays a limited role in supporting the country's research effort, and the research sphere is fragmented by groups struggling to pursue their own short-term interests (see Smith, 2003: 133; Grindle, 1980: 16; Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 29-30).

Second, a key factor affecting the way individuals behave with regard to research issues is the bureaucratic structure and norms of the public universities. For example, the lack of a research culture in the country's institutions is mainly attributable to the country's history of authoritarian administrations, whether absolutist, bureaucratic or democratically elected. In Thailand, problems are 'resolved' through the exercise of power by the elites, and so the creation of new knowledge through research has been marginalised. Moreover, the origin of Thai public universities as training grounds for civil servants and business employees has worked against the creation of new knowledge. Examining the academic promotion system, we find that the process is distorted by the bureaucracy's obsession with prestige and status, and that teaching and administration are considered more important than research and the publication of papers. As a result, the new assessment system, introduced in response to global and national socio-economic forces, has faced a high degree of resistance, as it requires a substantial amendment of the academics' terms of service. The academics' inability to pursue internationalised research has to be understood by reference to two main factors: the bureaucracy's pursuit of its own interests, its resistance to change, and its clinging to its entrenched power; and the continuous demands of state and society that universities' prioritise teaching over research.

Owing to the bureaucratic structure embedded within the selected universities, another key problem besetting the policy implementation process in those institutions is the culture of personal ties and informal channels of influence (see Christensen, 1992a: 19; Unger, 1998: 24; Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66). These factors are found across the bargaining processes with respect to budget support, academic promotion, and the assessment system, and greatly undermine individuals' motivation to produce high-quality research.

Thus two key factors: the sharing of interests among the state elites, and the embedded bureaucratic structure and values of the Thai 'academic oligarchy', are interrelated and constrain the process of integrating the international/intercultural dimension and the drive for quality into the nation's research effort. The declared aspiration to compete internationally and the setting up of 'international' yardstick comparable to those found in

the Western world are mere rhetoric. The number of scientific papers published in international journals, which is low in comparison with global standards, proves the point. If Thailand is to become a respected producer of high-quality research, the weaknesses of the policy implementation process must be corrected by the Thai state.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter has two main tasks: first, to summarise the thesis's argument by re-examining the three subordinate research questions, which will provide an answer to the main research question: to what extent has the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education been implemented? The second task is to discuss the original contribution of the thesis. To complete these two main tasks, I divide the following discussion into three parts. The first re-examines and answers the research questions. In doing so, I also demonstrate how the theories reviewed in chapter two are useful for understanding the process of internationalising Thai higher education. The second part evaluates the contribution of the thesis in both analytical and empirical terms, and the final part draws conclusions from the findings.

8.2 Research questions re-examined

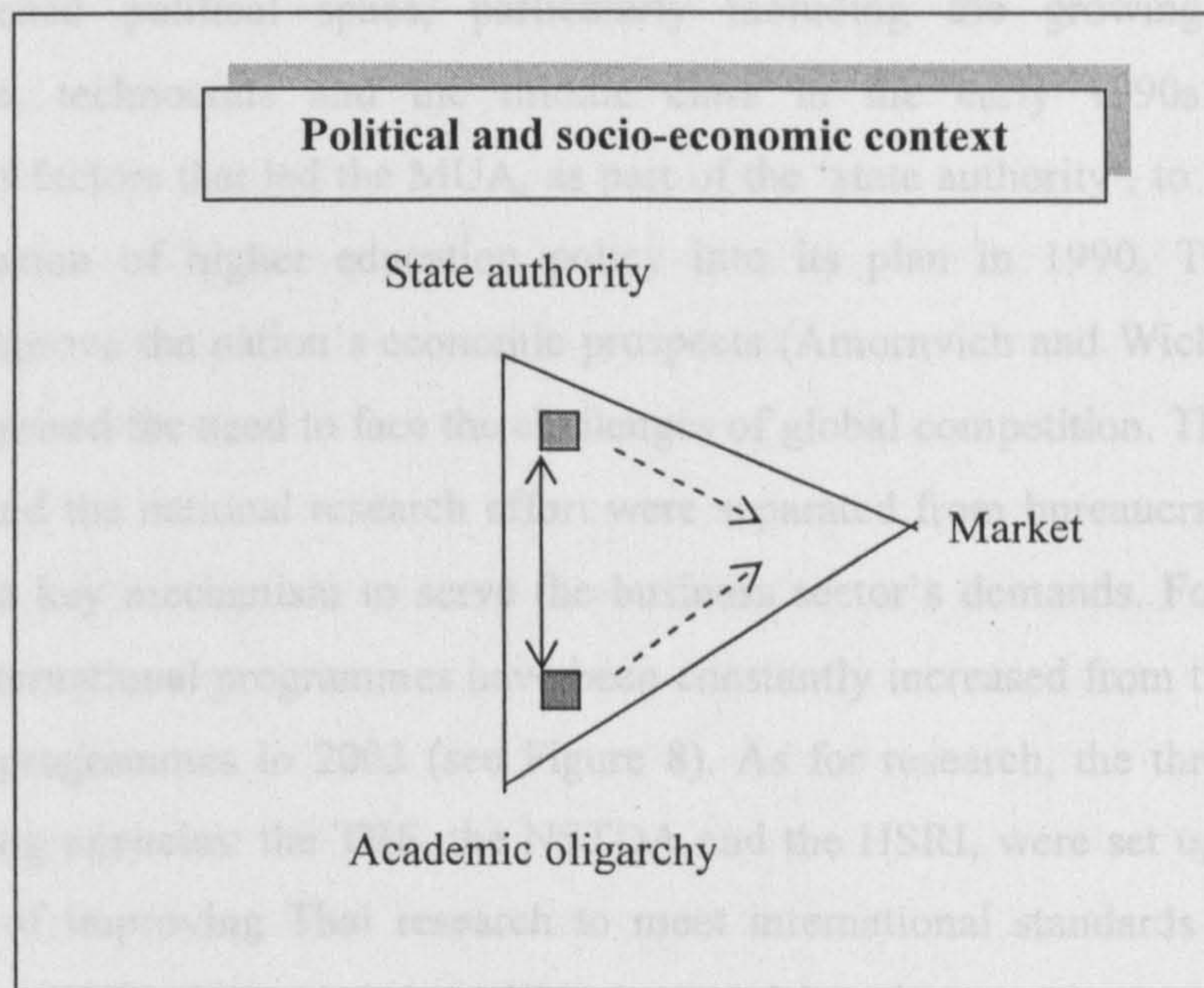
In chapter one, I introduced the analytical framework (see figure 1) indicating the scope of the thesis, and as an aid to answering the main research question. I also set up three subordinate questions on the rationales, the implementation process and the outcomes. The thesis defines a successful policy as one that is able to integrate the international/intercultural dimension into the teaching and research missions at the institutional level, and the purpose, functions, and delivery of postsecondary education at the national level (see Knight, 1997: 8; 2003) as well as improving higher education quality (first-order change), bringing in new goals, structures, and roles (second-order change), and producing long-term effects (see Van der Wende, 1996: 8-9, 26-27).

In chapter two, I reviewed both the higher education system and the policy implementation process since they represent the context and the process which the internationalisation policy has to undergo to realise its objectives. I used Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' to identify the key related actors: the 'state authority', the 'academic oligarchy', and the 'market'. The interplay of these forces within the policy implementation process, as well as their interests and values, which are embedded in the Thai political and socio-economic structures, help to explain what is decided regarding the policy, and why

and how. In order to discover the answer to the main research question, the three subordinate questions are answered as follows:

8.2.1 Why was the policy of internationalising higher education adopted?

The study's empirical findings indicate that the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand is driven by the economic rationale. This trend is also evident in many countries worldwide, having been initiated by the global and national forces of liberalisation that emerged after the Cold War (see Knight and De Wit, 1997: 174; Van der Wende, 2001: 250; Van Damme, 2001: 420-1). This thesis explores the embedded rationales within the Thai higher education system and agrees with Falk (1992: 37) and Hook and Weiner (1992: 1) that the 'substantive settings' or the 'position in the international system' of an individual country allows a diversity of perceptions and interests regarding internationalisation. Thailand also has its own interpretation and interests with respect to the policy.



- 1 ■ bureaucracy in 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy'
- 2 \longleftrightarrow sharing/conflicts of short-term benefits among institutions and individuals
- 3 -----> trends created by national and global forces of liberalisation

Figure 10: modified 'triangle of coordination' of higher education in Thailand
 Source: Author, adapted from Clark (1983: 143)

By locating Thai higher education within Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' and taking the current political and socio-economic changes within the country as a main concern, the answer to the question why Thai higher education has adopted the policy stems from the context where market forces play an influential role, the bureaucratic structure and norms are embedded within the 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy', and the negotiated interests of the related actors are at play within the Thai higher education sphere (see figure 10). Generally, the rationales of the internationalisation of higher education rest upon two main factors: macro-political and socio-economic changes and needs of universities to generate fee-income. Moreover, driven by the economic rationale and constrained within the Thai political sphere, internationalisation was interpreted to serve the narrow interests of various actors. The following explains this in detail.

First, as well as global market forces, macro-political and socio-economic changes inside the country drove the Thai state to adopt the internationalisation of higher education. The economic boom of the late 1980s, the undermined role of the military-bureaucratic forces and the widened political space, particularly including the growing influence of businesspeople, technocrats and the middle class in the early 1990s provided the combination of factors that led the MUA, as part of the 'state authority', to incorporate the internationalisation of higher education policy into its plan in 1990. The policy was designed to improve the nation's economic prospects (Amornvich and Wichit, 1997: 164). The plan recognised the need to face the challenges of global competition. The international programmes and the national research effort were separated from bureaucratic routine and were seen as a key mechanism to serve the business sector's demands. For example, the numbers of international programmes have been constantly increased from the early 1990s, reaching 520 programmes in 2003 (see Figure 8). As for research, the three autonomous research funding agencies: the TRF, the NSTDA and the HSRI, were set up in 1991-1992 with the aim of improving Thai research to meet international standards of quality and excellence. These initiatives were undeniably largely driven by a strong economic rationale. In other words, these are the places where the market corner of Clark's (1983) triangle of coordination plays an influential role. It presents the Thai government's need for, and attempt to, marketise the higher education sector both in terms of teaching programmes and research funds.

Second, at the institutional level, as in many other countries, the imperatives of liberalisation and of privatising the higher education sector forced Thai universities to rely on market resources (see Dill, 1997a: 163; Gornitzka, 2000: 221; Salter and Tapper, 1994 in Kirby-Harris, 2003: 357), and both public and private universities were compelled to

compete fiercely. By the late 1980s, Thai public universities had begun to rely on resources outside the state's budget, as the state deregulated the sources of the universities' revenue. Clearly, the international programmes have been used as a source of extra revenue because they are administered as a special category: full fees can be charged and the state does not require reports. On the research issue, the universities have begun to rely on new funding schemes, and many academics are seeking extra income from the emerging research funding agencies. These two trends: the demands of the business sector and the universities' need to generate income have been important drivers of internationalisation.

However, since the Thai socio-political structure, including higher education, has been undergoing transformation, as illustrated by the 1997 constitution and the 1999 National Education Act, it is proving difficult to ensure that attempts to improve the structure become firmly established. Regarding the process of implementing the internationalisation policy, the increasing dominance of economic interests is harming the effort to introduce 'qualitative internationalisation'. It was found that the interpretations and rationales of state officials, universities, the business sector, and students, especially those from upper- and middle-class backgrounds, regarding 'internationalisation' do not match Knight's (1997: 8; 2003) definition of the integration process. Particularly, there has been a failure to improve the quality of higher education or to introduce new goals, structures, and roles (first-order and second-order changes) that would have the long-term beneficial effects; instead personal and narrow interests have been pursued.

The fact that the Thai state interprets internationalisation as a means to serve the nation's economic interest supports what has been argued about the nature of the Thai state: that it prioritises capitalist over political development, which leads to an imbalance in social development (see Girling, 1996: 13-18, 95; Chai-Anan, 2001: 85). Regarding the business sector's demands, the learning of English language skills has emerged as a key area where improvement is needed. For that reason, the international programmes are considered to be of vital importance by the business sector. Employers also welcome improvements in the quality of research since they increasingly rely on knowledge-based decision making (Chai-Anan, 1994: 49-50).

To a great degree, however, the state elites' interests in controlling the direction of the policy to serve the needs of the business sector is influencing the ways universities and students are relating to the policy (Kamrava, 1999: 24; Migdal, 1994: 17). Upper- and middle-class students see the international programmes as a means of improving their English language skills, enhancing their status and improving their career opportunities. In

both the public and the private universities under study, the international programmes were intended first to serve the business sector, and second to generate fee-income. However, the programmes were designed to serve mainly Thai students and little attempt was made to differentiate 'English programmes' from 'international programmes'; the boundaries between the two were blurred. The programme's lack of an international/intercultural dimension is a result of the view that they are essentially 'education businesses'; the quality of the education they provide is less important than the revenue they bring (see Surichai, 2002: 7-17). This superficial perception reflects attitudes prevalent in Thai society that accord with individuals' pursuit of short-term interests, and it also implies that 'normal' Thai programmes are failing to improve their students' English language skills. The perception that international programmes are merely a means to improve English competence and gain status contrasts with the view prevalent in the developed world, where the focus is on knowledge content (Van der Wende, 1996: 18; Schoorman, 2000).

Regarding the development of research, we see that the emergence of the independent research funding agencies, for example the TRF, is related to the growing influence of the technocrats, notably the academics at Mahidol. Many of the new rules and regulations, while intended to encourage the pursuit of excellence, serve the interests of a small group of experts in the physical sciences, and have had a limited effect on the country's research effort. Another short-term interest is that of academic bureaucrats, for whom the international programmes are a valuable source of additional income. The Thai public universities are part of the bureaucratic structure and these academics consider their civil service salaries inadequate (Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128; McCargo, 2002: 8). Teaching extra hours, administering the international programmes, and conducting research for business companies or research funding are important means of improving their economic status.

In Thailand, within the context of current global and national economic forces, internationalisation is generally perceived as an opportunity to improve economic and social status; state officials, technocrats, businesspeople, and upper- and middle-class students use internationalisation instrumentally to serve their self-interests. These findings accord with those used as evidence in debates on the policy process of developing countries, and particularly on the issues of the 'distributive game', and 'zero-sum conflicts' among the state elites and social groups (see Kohli and Shue, 1994: 321; Smith, 2003: 133; Connors, 2002: 42; Somchai, 2002: 135). In this connection, De Wit (1997: 31) has remarked, on the internationalisation of higher education in developing countries, that it will take time for process of transition from an aid-based, via a trade-based, to a process-based system to be

completed. However, when individuals seek personal benefits from policy and take advantage of market opportunities, their expectations may be superficial, minimal and short-term.

8.2.2 What factors affected the extent of implementation of the internationalisation of higher education?

The findings of this thesis indicate that the current position of Thai higher education within the 'triangle of coordination' affects its performance with respect to the state's internationalisation policy. However, it should be realised that the analyses of the interplay of related forces, or the discussions of the top-down, bottom-up, and political models of the policy implementation process that have been conducted in the developed world (see Cerych and Sabatier, 1986: 285; Clark, 1984: 9) cannot give a fundamental understanding of the Thai situation, where account must be taken of the country's weak structure and of its cultural values, key factors which constrain the implementation process in developing countries (see Powell, 1999: 19).

If we take the context of Thai higher education into account, we find that two factors restrain the implementation of the internationalisation policy: the bureaucratic inefficiency of the Thai 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' and their sharing and conflicts of interests within the current socio-economic context (see figure 10). Higher education has become these related actors' arena of conflicts and consensus. Because of these factors, 'internationalisation' cannot at the moment serve the public interests.

The first factor that hampers the internationalisation of higher education is the bureaucratic structure and values, which persists within the Thai 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy'. Owing to this deficiency, the state is unable to utilise 'state supervision' to guarantee 'value for money' and ensure efficiency (see Dill 1997b: 172), while the public universities have found it difficult to adopt the new trends of higher education, which require them to be self-regulated and proactive, and to develop mechanisms to draw funding without abandoning academic values (see Clark, 1997: 295).

Regarding the MUA, which is part of the 'state authority', its key problems are twofold: first, its attachment to bureaucratic power makes it difficult for the Ministry to adapt to change; second, it seems incapable of ensuring the quality of both public and private universities during the current period of market competition (see Levy, 1994: 259-261; Silva, 1996: 70; Doan Hue Dung, 2004: 143-145). For example, several points in the 1992

curriculum endorsement announcement suggest that the MUA still prizes its bureaucratic authority, expressed in its top-down approach, as its statement emphasised the 'higher education plan' and the 'MUA regulations'. The MUA's overbureaucratized rules and actions are also evident in its relations with private universities. For example, curriculum approval has been organised using strict process-control, and the committee is composed of lecturers from public universities, confirming that their prestige is greater than that of private universities (see Levy, 1994: 245; Brunner, 1997: 230).

However, the growing demands of the business sector coupled with the universities' need to generate their income within the market, has made the MUA's top-down approach obsolete. The performance of the MUA shows that it has been incapable of practising 'state-supervision' role and thus of establishing qualitative internationalisation. For example, the MUA failed to differentiate between 'English programmes' and 'international programmes' and some universities were able to take advantage of this by simply translating the curriculum from Thai into English without altering the knowledge content in any way (see chapter 5). The private universities often failed to provide the quality of service demanded by the MUA's strict rules (see chapter 6). As for the development of research, the deeply flawed academic promotion system, which is damaged by the obsession with bureaucratic status, and the state's new assessment system, which has provoked much resistance, have failed to motivate competent individuals or to promote the internationalisation of research (see chapter 7).

The MUA has been unable to improve the quality of higher education as exemplified in the international programmes because its first priority has been the nation's short-term economic interests, while clinging to its 'overdeveloped' bureaucratic role and its long-established privileges: thus it is unlikely to change its approach (see Pasuk, 1999: 9; Smith, 2003: 132; Prasit, 2002: 1). The performance of the MUA suggests that the Thai 'state authority' is pursuing internationalisation to serve the nation's short-term economic interests in purely quantitative terms and is unable to formulate or implement policies designed to attain long-term goals (see Pasuk and Baker, 1998: 127-128).

In the six selected public universities, the inefficiency of the bureaucracy is evident with respect to a variety of issues, suggesting that how they have found it difficult to adopt a corporate management culture. In the case of the international programmes, the fact that the three selected public universities were unwilling to dispense with their bureaucratic outlook and adopt a new approach undermined the implementation of the programmes, which are supposed to be self-supporting ventures and to be run in a businesslike management style.

For example, the Faculty's bureaucratic rules and regulations in Chulalongkorn and Thammasat limited the flexibility of the programmes and made it virtually impossible to employ full-time lecturers and set up independent rules and systems (see chapter 5). As for research, the bureaucratic structure made it difficult for the academic bureaucrats to accept the need for change. The introduction of the MUA's quality assessment system failed to persuade many academics that research is not a choice but a necessity. Moreover, the culture of personal ties and favouritism was rife within the bureaucratic structure. Project approval was based on reputation and status, seniority, and personal connections rather than on the quality of the work (see Grindle, 1980: Turner and Hulme, 1997: 66).

The study found that the inefficiency of the bureaucracy within the MUA and the public universities affected performance; it also found that the public universities and their academic bureaucrats were beginning to look for opportunities within the market place. In Thailand, these interests tend to be fragmented (see McCargo, 2002: 3; Somchai, 2002: 142); however, it is clear that as a result of the Thai state's adoption of the economic liberalisation, the need to serve the growing demands of the business sector, and the weakened power of the bureaucrats, the universities were moving towards the market. For example, Ramkhamhaeng, conscious of its inferiority to Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, used the employment of Western lecturers as a marketing tactic to attract customers for its BBA international programme. However, judging by the study's observations and interviews with students, these universities' engagement with the market cannot guarantee the establishment of 'qualitative internationalisation'.

Moreover, the employment of academics bureaucrats in the international programmes provides a substantial bonus to their incomes. In the case of research, lecturers have many opportunities to profit from work outside the universities, such as doing consultancy work. However, these additional activities cannot improve academic quality, as the lecturers are only pursuing short-term interests and diluting the attention they are giving to their already overloaded work schedules. The same situation applies in private universities, which rely on fee income. While market pressures force them to calculate their interests on the basis of potential profits, the quality of educational delivery tends to suffer: we have noted that lecturers were given tasks for which they were not qualified and that many were part-time, and that students studying in the international programmes lacked the necessary English language skills. These deficiencies should be understood in context: there is a lack of state support, rigid regulations undermine these universities' capacity to innovate and Thai society continues to value degrees from public universities more highly.

Thus current market conditions compel universities, both public and private, as well as academic bureaucrats to engage in a self-interested struggle for resources. The quality of education is neglected and universities pursue their short-term interests, becoming 'education businesses' (see Surichai, 2002: 7-17; IPPS, 2003: II-3). The situation is exacerbated by the inefficiency of the bureaucracy.

Another major problem constraining the internationalisation of higher education is connected with the social values held by many Thais, who equate internationalisation with Westernisation and conceive it in superficial terms (see Sulak, 1991: 43). These attitudes should be judged in the context of relatively recent history, when the Thai state elites adopted the Western model when it suited their interests, and rejected it when it threatened their identity. As a result of the dominance of global capitalism, Thais hold 'Western culture' in high regard; they perceive it as a means to improve the socio-economic status of both institutions and individuals. The study has shown that university authorities, lecturers and students have a superficial view of internationalisation, expressed in their preference for Western lecturers and Western-style buildings. This attitude and the low priority given to research are to be understood against the background of the state's pursuit of national economic liberalisation at a time when the country's socio-political structure lacks stability.

As discussed in chapter three, the political space in Thailand was widened and the bureaucrats were not the only power controlling the policy-making process (see Anek, 1992: 13-15; Surin and McCargo, 1997: 147). The openness towards the market and the widened political space allowed other interest groups to influence this process. In the area of research, the TRF was established through the growing power of the technocracy, which emerged during the early 1990s, a period that saw a reduction of the influence of military-bureaucratic power. The TRF's emphasis on 'excellence', however, partly serves the interests of scientific experts and particularly those of the TRF itself. The Thaksin government initiated a feasibility study – still ongoing – to look into the possibility of a merger between the TRF and the NRC and the creation of a new body to oversee Thailand's research effort, to be known as the NRPU. This initiative is symptomatic of the attempt by the new political elite to undermine the power of the technocrats (see Pasuk and Baker, 2004: 171).

The above discussion indicates that the weak structure of, and the social values within, the Thai higher education system are the key constraints on the internationalising Thai higher education.

8.2.3 What were the outcomes of the policy?

The state's declared aim of the internationalisation policy is to serve the country's economic interest (see Amornvich and Wichit, 1997: 164). By looking at the outcomes of the policy, this section tries to ascertain whether the policy has served the national economic interest.

Regarding the international BBA programmes, the interviews with students and businesspeople revealed a mixed picture of success and inadequacy. It was found that students from Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, and Assumption were the most successful in securing good positions in the labour market. The employers interviewed expressed their satisfaction with students from these three universities, particularly in terms of their English skills and self-confidence. In some other universities, notably Ramkhamhaeng, Bangkok and Kasembundit, many students were insecure about their career prospects mainly because they felt they lacked the required English skills and were concerned about the increasing competition caused by the proliferation of international programmes.

Generally, however, the interviews revealed that the Thai students thought that the 'international' programmes were superior to the Thai 'normal' programmes in the sense that they helped the students to improve their English and thus enhance their opportunities in the labour market. In contrast, all the foreign students interviewed were very dissatisfied with the quality of teaching and learning provided by the programmes.

The satisfaction expressed by businesspeople and Thai students with regard to the 'international' programmes should not be as indicating that the programmes were truly international or that their benefits had been optimised. The foreign students' dissatisfaction suggests that the institutions had failed to integrate the international/ intercultural dimension into the curriculum and the teaching process. Moreover, the Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, and Assumption students' success in the labour market was due in great part to the prestige of these institutions, and is unlikely to be duplicated by students in international programmes in other universities. Also, since the Thai students did not have high expectations of the programmes, seeing them as a means of improving their English skills and enhancing their status, their superficial demands were fairly easily met.

Regarding the quality of graduates, it was evident that the companies recruited the cream of the Thai BBA graduates were mainly multinational firms, which had the status of 'employers of choice'. This suggests that the 'success' of the BBA international programmes is limited within small groups of elites, namely the most prestigious

universities, the brightest graduates, and multinational firms. At present, the BBA 'international' programmes are growing in number but not in quality, and mere numerical growth cannot ensure that graduates will find suitable employment and may even work against their interests, nor can it improve the quality of the graduates themselves.

As for scientific research, the number of papers published in reputable international journals is significant, and in this respect Thai universities are not doing as well as those in many other countries, being ranked 42nd out of 49 countries according to the 2002 IMD report (Pirasak, 2002: 64). Regarding the individual Thai institutions, Mahidol, whose reputation as a science university has always been very high, produced the largest number of papers. Kasetsart and Srinakharinwirot have produced few scientific papers compared to Mahidol and some foreign universities selected for comparison (see chapter 7). Thus, if we take this situation as a guide to the general condition of research in the country, we find that internationalisation is not yet well established.

Generally, the policy's degree of success, as indicated by its outcomes, has been limited by the constraints of the country's political structure and social values. The aim of the Thai state, that the internationalisation policy should be a means of improving the national economy, has not yet been realised. An examination of the outcomes suggests that increasing reliance on market forces has only served the interests of a particular group of elites, and thus has led to an imbalance between quantitative and qualitative development.

8.2.4 To what extent has the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education been implemented?

Having reviewed the answers to the three subordinate research questions, the main research question can now be discussed. If we compare the Thai achievement with the ideal goals of a successful internationalisation policy, we find that a gap exists between the aspiration and what has actually been implemented.

Many studies of the internationalisation of higher education, mainly conducted in Western countries, have found that a reliance on market forces has brought economic benefits without improving quality, that *ad hoc* decisions are often made and that marginalisation of policy measures occurs (see Van Dijk and Meijer, 1994 in McNay, 1995: 37; Knight, 1999: 19; Van der Wende, 1996: 32). The seeking of short-term benefits and marginalisation are also found in Thailand; however, the roots of the problems are different. We have to understand that the developed countries' political structure and socio-economic context is

well established; Thailand, as a developing country, carries a different set of problems due to its different structure and culture. This accords with the view, expressed by a number of scholars, that the higher education system in developing countries was established in a different context and time (see Altbach, 1982: 2-3; Neave and Van Vught, 1994a: 12).

According to the study's findings, and noting the current location of Thai higher education in Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination', it appears that both the 'state authority' and the 'academic oligarchy' found it difficult to implement the policy of internationalising higher education: first, to integrate the international/intercultural dimension, second, to embrace necessary to change; and third, to plan for the long term. The interests and values of the different actors led them to view 'internationalisation' in superficial terms; their pursuit of their own short-term interests was incompatible with an acceptance of fundamental change. These motives and attitudes affected the implementation process and, together with the embedded interests of the 'state for itself' - where the inefficient bureaucratic structure and norms restricts the effectiveness of the Thai 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy', ensured that the policy remained mere rhetoric.

In the case of the international programmes, it cannot be said that they have brought about 'first- and second-order changes'. Although these programmes, unlike the normal Thai programme, offered 'new goals, structures and roles', such as using English as a medium, bringing in foreign lecturers and students, preparing students for the international labour market, and creating special independent units like the international offices, the introduction of these new ideas and structures was essentially driven by market forces, and had nothing to do with the integration process. For example, the majority of students and lecturers in all the selected programmes, apart from the large number of foreign lecturers in Ramkhamhaeng, were Thais. Moreover, the programmes suffered from a number of deficiencies: the short-term employment of foreign lecturers and their consequent lack of commitment, the reliance on the part-time lecturer system; the Thai lecturers' excessive workload, the lowering of the standards of the student admission process - with the exception of Chulalongkorn and Thammasat, and the development of the 'international' curriculum from existing Thai programmes by changing only the language. These flaws were part of a compromise the students had to accept (see McNay, 1995: 36).

The same difficulties were found in the research case, where the 'new goals, structures and roles', such as the introduction of independent research funding agencies, like the TRF, and the new assessment system introduced by the MUA were not successfully implemented. The culture of personal ties was evident within the budget management process of the TRF

and the universities. Regarding the new assessment system, the MUA had not been able to put the new assessment rules into practice; and the universities, hampered by the embedded bureaucratic structure and norms, did not take such new issues into serious account. The findings suggest that the evaluation and assessment processes introduced into the Thai bureaucracy by the Anand government in 1991-1992 and again in the 1999 National Education Bill have not been truly implemented (see Vuthipong, 1999: 2; McCargo, 2002: 3). The above examples suggest that the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand has not been successfully put into practice. Pasuk and Baker (1998: 330) have suggested Thailand's solution:

Beyond boom and beyond bust, the challenge is not to get back on the old path of economic growth, but to create the political framework, concept of public services, development strategies and social values which allow many more people to participate, contribute and benefit.

The Thai state announced its internationalisation policy before having created the instruments to implement it. Thus only a quantitative development took place, and only an elite minority benefited; the policy had little impact on the wider public. At the moment, most of those pursuing their own short-term interests through internationalisation tend to be satisfied. For example, the Thai state benefits being seen to put innovative policy into its plan, and the public and private universities are able to generate income and enhance their reputations by introducing the internationalisation policy. Privileged Thai students from the upper and middle classes obtain a degree that will enhance their career opportunities. Technocrats gain increased support for their research projects and their quest for excellence. However, the findings indicate that integration has not taken place and the quality has not been enhanced. Thus the internationalisation policy is compromised and there are as yet no signs of long-term benefits.

8.3 Originality of the thesis

The originality of this thesis lies in both its analytical and its empirical contribution. Analytically, the thesis combines the studies of higher education systems and policy implementation processes in developing countries in order to understand the conditions of the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand. From this perspective, the study of the internationalisation of higher education gain a new method, which has never been suggested before, of understanding the problems within the higher education policy implementation processes found in developing countries. The many studies of the internationalisation of higher education reviewed in chapter two were mainly conducted in

Western developed world, and the approaches they use suit the Western context, where the problems of implementation are different from those in developing countries (see Powell, 1999: 10). The study of the internationalisation of higher education conducted in the Asia-Pacific region and covering several developing countries (Knight and De Wit, 1997) takes a different approach: first, it does not combine internationalisation with the higher education system; second, it does not analyse the structural weaknesses of each country's higher education system.

This section revisits the approaches that I used in this thesis. First, I agreed with Källemark and Van der Wende (1997a), and Van der Wende (1996) that the use of Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' helps to merge the 'internationalisation' previously considered as a marginalised process, into the mainstream higher education system. Clark's (1983) model also helps to identify the actors involved in the policy implementation process.

Secondly, this study is concerned with a higher education policy implementation process, and Clark (1984: 9) identified the 'political' or 'bargaining' model as the most useful for understanding the interplay of a multiplicity of actors. However, I added that the bargaining model would be inadequate if it failed to take account of the context; that is, the developing country. For the purposes of this study, two differences between developed and developing countries are identified: first, most developing countries have a strong state elite or other social groups who share reciprocal interests; second, the inefficient bureaucracy is still embedded in the 'state authority' and the 'academic oligarchy' forces (see Levy, 1994: 259; Silva, 1996: 70). To overcome this limitation, I reviewed the higher education systems and policy implementation processes in developing countries, noting that the structure of institutions within the socio-economic and political contexts of these developing countries are not strongly developed (see Powell, 1999: 10).

Applying Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' model to an analysis of the higher education systems and the policy implementation processes in developing countries is an original method that has never been used in previous studies on the internationalisation of higher education. I find that this framework provides a clear lens through which we can understand how Thailand has attempted to internationalise its higher education system and what the domestic factors that have constrained the implementation process are.

This thesis is also original in empirical terms. The research methods used: interviewing 137 people, observing seven classrooms, and carrying out extensive documentary analysis have yielded an unprecedentedly detailed picture of the fundamental problems faced by Thai

higher education in responding the policy of internationalisation within the current national and global contexts. Until now, in Thailand, no similar study on the topic of the internationalisation of higher education has been conducted. In broader terms, the findings of the thesis may serve to provide internationalisation of higher education policy lessons to other developing countries that share Thailand's internal weaknesses and severe external threats. Specifically, this thesis describes and analyses the fundamental problems faced by Thai higher education in dealing with the internationalisation process. In doing so it fulfils its stated purpose.

This study on the implementation of the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand ended in 2005, when Thai higher education was still in a period of transitional that shows no sign of ending. At the time of writing, the issue of the privatisation of Thai public universities remains controversial; the issue of learning reform has prompted debates about its inefficiency and its being neglected in favour of administration and management reform; and the Thaksin government is continuing to introduce new educational schemes such as the one-district one-scholarship, mainly to gain political popularity. Due to these powerful internal threats, the future of the internationalisation of higher education in Thailand is uncertain. If the macro-political changes continue to serve only the state elites' interests, the internationalisation policy will continuously run the risk of marginalisation.

In the future, the threats posed by market forces are likely to press ever more intensely on the public sector; the findings of this thesis suggest that the public sector is not adequately prepared. It is necessary to understand the weaknesses of the Thai state in order to know what remedies should be implemented. Research can contribute to the first need; to implement the remedies is a task government must undertake.

8.4 Analytical contribution and issues for future research

This section has two main tasks: first, it offers as a critical and reflexive review of Clark's (1983) triangle of coordination used in this thesis; second, it suggests a revised model to elaborate Clark's model, serving as an alternative basis for future research.

Based on the analytical framework in chapter one (see Figure 1), Clark's triangle of coordination, situated within the macro-political and socio-economic context, is very helpful to understand the implementation process of internationalisation of higher education in Thailand. Clark's (1983) model not only helped to identify the three relevant forces, the state authority, the academic oligarchy, and the market, within the Thai higher education

system, but also fits with the thesis's discussion of how the current internationalisation trend in both the global and Thai context is very much involved with the market (De Wit, 2002; Van der Wende, 2001: 250; Amornvich and Wichit, 1997: 164). The following briefly explains the interplay of different forces within the triangle of coordination.

From the empirical data, the Thai state is seen to marketise the higher education sector both in terms of international programmes and research funds. This marketisation was categorised into two types. Firstly, it took the form of the demands of the business sector on Thai higher education to produce efficient graduates, as a result of economic growth from the late 1980s. Secondly, it reflected policies of deregulation, under which the state encouraged public universities to generate their own income, and thereby affected the internal operation of universities. Within this market dominant atmosphere, two key problems identified in this thesis were bureaucratic inefficiency and different actors' superficial interpretations of internationalisation. These demonstrate that the structure of the Thai higher education system is not yet ready to accommodate 'qualitative internationalisation'. Moreover, this thesis has shown that market-inclined higher education now serves only the short-term interests of the Thai elite. For example, BBA international programmes have been perceived as an exclusive form of education serving only students from the upper- and middle-classes; and the idea of excellence in research serves only a particular group of the 'knowledge elite'.

From the empirical evidence, there are different actors interacting within the Thai higher education' system regarding internationalisation policy. The five key actors – mainly representing elite groups - comprise state bureaucrats, academics from both public and private universities, technocrats, businesspeople, and upper- and middle-class students. The reason that internationalisation of higher education is so concerned with elite groups is justified by policy content: first, higher education is a sector which serves the Thai elite, since 90 per cent of university students are from upper and middle-class families (*Matichon*, 28 January 2003); second, the protagonists involved in the internationalisation policy are mainly elites who seek to gain short-term benefits from the internationalisation process.

In section 3.2, the two theoretical approaches to Thai political system: neo-pluralist and institutionalist and political economy, identified by Hewison (1997: 6), were shown. This thesis falls into the first group: the neo-pluralist and institutionalist approach. These scholars see the solution to problems as an effective market and a reform of state institutional and regulatory frameworks. They are interested in formal levels of political

activity, and less in the 'informal political opposition and the development of civil society' (Hewison, 1997: 9).

The above viewpoint is where neo-pluralists and institutionalists share similarities with the Clark's (1983) model and where this thesis is placed: both approaches incline to [mainly elite] interest groups, or those groups with issue-based interests, and to formal structures. They also emphasise the market. The following passages discuss Clark's (1983) model in general as well as on the points with which the neo-pluralists and institutionalists shared.

Regarding Clark's (1979: 236) model, 'state authority' has two components: 'bureaucratic' and 'political' coordination. The first means administrative agencies, such as national departments of education; and the second means 'the coordinating influence of regular political officials, external interest groups, and internal groups' (Clark, 1979: 226, 230). In this regard, 'state authority' refers to bureaucratic and governmental authorities, interest groups, and their cooptation. Within the 'political' coordination, the external interest groups, identified by Clark (1983: 171), are those organised groups with 'formal rights to influence governmental decisions'. They include economic organisations, organised producers' groups, big interests of capital and labour, and manufacturers' associations (Clark, 1983: 171-172). They were often considered non-adversarial groups as Clark put them in the same corner - state authority- with government; and in pure form, this corner was termed the 'corporatist system' (Clark, 1983: 171). These groups were also formal in nature since the group itself is organised as well as in its penetration of government (Clark, 1983: 172).

Regarding the 'political coordination', Clark (1979: 232) also noted that there had been an increase in representation and involvement within the ranks of higher education – the internal politics of campuses. The internal groups refer to groups inside universities – junior faculty members, students and non-academic personnel. The rise of these groups is considered as 'participation' phenomenon, aiming to weaken the traditional rule of senior professors (Clark, 1979: 232). Clark (1979: 232), however, noted that it was still unclear how far the 'new participation' of this group would develop since it was in an early stage and would vary from one country to another. Clark (1979: 232) assumed that this 'new participation' would be a 'minor item', and recognised these new groups as elites, and a self-interested elite at that:

There is a tendency for the rules of participation to become complicated, as various groups attempt to expand and protect their own rights and reduce

the residual powers of others, turning the situation into a game for elites (Clark, 1979: 232).

From the above examples, both of the external interest groups and internal groups, defined by Clark (1979, 1983) and placed in the 'state authority', represent elite groups with particular self-interest in orientation. Also, they followed a formal line of association and cooptation with the government.

The above point of Clark (1979: 232) concerning different interest groups – as part of the 'state authority' - provided a framework for the Thai case on internationalisation of higher education. In the context of this thesis, the interest groups cover both external interest groups and internal groups - as termed by Clark (1979: 230): business sectors, technocrats, and upper and middle-class students. From the empirical evidence, the requirements of these groups started to have influence over state practices since the economic boom of the late 1980s (see Anek, 1992: 15): Thai higher education institutions must produce curricula and improve research capacities to serve business sectors; technocrats initiated their political authorities in 1991-1992 and had access to various emerging independent research funding agencies; the numbers of universities had to be increased to serve higher demands of students. Apart from these groups' influential roles, state bureaucrats and academic bureaucrats hold on to their embedded bureaucratic nature. This thesis's finding accords with that of many scholars – neo-pluralists and institutionalists analysts - who found public, private sectors and upper- and middle- class interest groups in Thailand are generally self-interested and choose to be co-opted by the state, which often diminishes opportunities for the poor (see Christensen, 1993: 19; Hewison, 1997: 7-8; Pisanu, 1998: 80-81).

For future research, Clark's model can be adapted to view other types of policies if it is to focus on interplay of actors: government and different organised groups in a formal form. By taking account of different actors, 'state authority' could comprise bureaucrats, politicians, external interest groups, and internal groups; 'academic oligarchy' means powerful professors or university academics in general – both lecturers and researchers [for other types of policies, this corner can mean other professionals or general insider group dominance], and the market.

In this thesis, I did not find any limitations by using the Clark's model to analyse internationalisation of higher education in Thailand, which is an elite driven policy process. However, the characteristics of the forces driving Thai higher education – the state authority, the academic oligarchy, and the market - are obviously different from those of other countries described by Clark (1983) (see Figure 4, section 2.3.1). In Thailand, the

'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' corners have been very much bureaucratic-driven and they shared blurred boundaries; interest groups and their formal channels of influence have not been adequately developed; and political structure of the country is now under a process of reform (see chapter 3). To apply Clark's model in the future research, an understanding of the broader historical and socio-economic context of a country is important, along the lines of my detailed discussion of Thai higher education in transition in chapter 3. It is also important to take account of the policy content, as different policies relate to different groups of actors (see Grindle, 1980: 11). Theoretically speaking, all the five key actors - identified in this thesis - fit into the 'state authority' and 'academic oligarchy' dimensions, and the 'market' represents the current trend of internationalisation. In other words, Clark's model is highly applicable to this thesis.

Revised model to elaborate the 'triangle of coordination'

However, Clark's model has some limitations if it is to be used in future research, since it focuses on [mainly elite] interest groups with particular interests and formal political level of activity. These groups do not represent themselves as oppositional groups to the state: they seek narrow interests on what the economy needs, and sharing benefits with the state within the market sphere (Becher and Kogan, 1992: 186-187; Pisanu, 1998).

Reflecting such limitation of the model, I wish to propose a revised model which incorporates the additional dimension of civil society (see Figure 11).

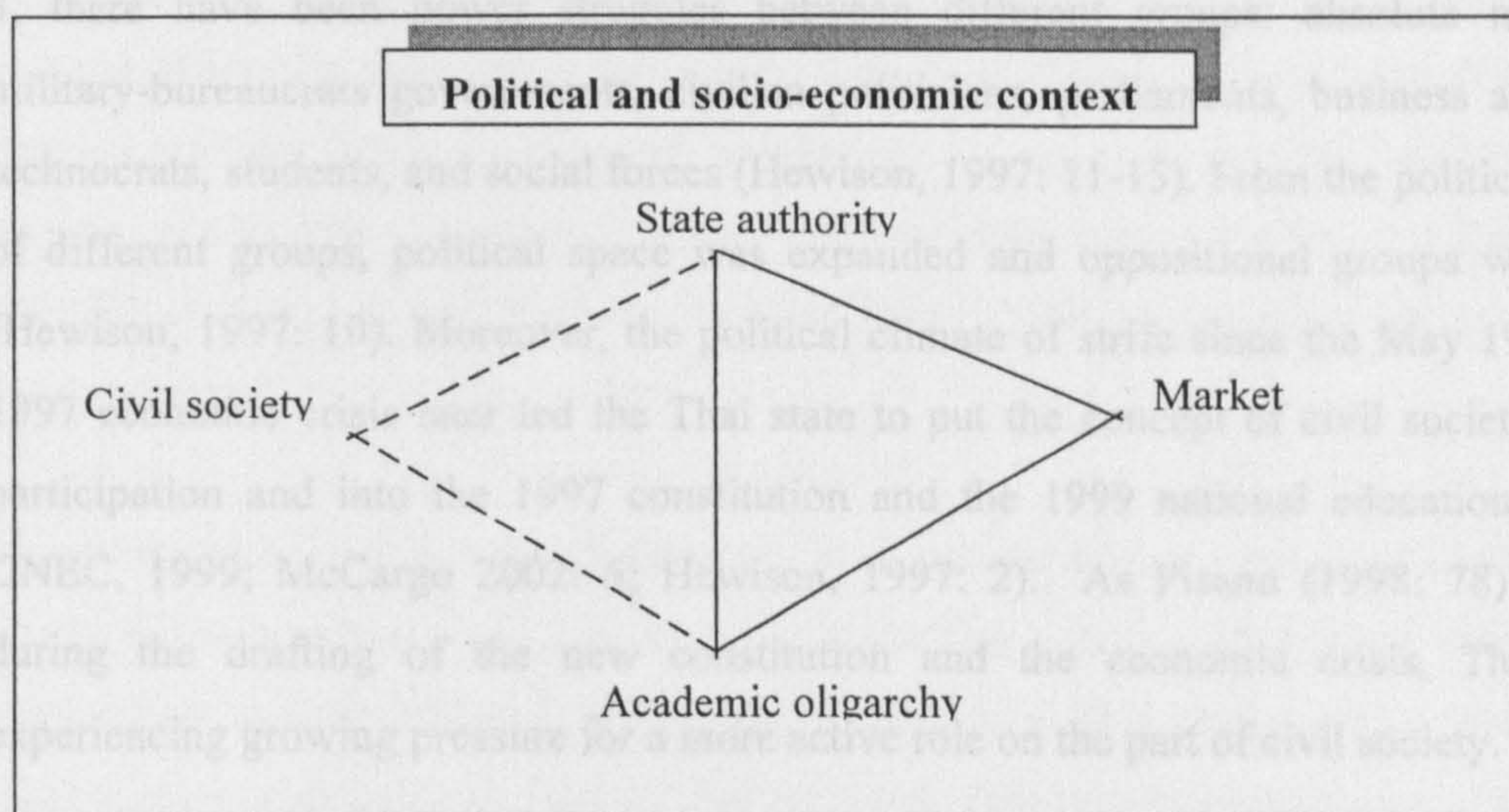


Figure 11: Revised model to elaborate the 'triangle of coordination'

Source: Author, adapted from Clark (1983).

By adding civil society into the triangle, I emphasise civil societal forces as actors in policy processes. Different scholars have defined 'civil society' differently (see Hewison 1997: 3; Naruemon, 2002: 183). However, in general, everyone seems to agree on what has been noted: 'autonomous sphere of political space in which 'political forces representing constellations of interests in society have contested state power'' (Bernhard, 1993: 307 in Hewison, 1997: 10). To be more precise, in this thesis's context, I share the meaning of 'civil society' with Pisanu's (1998) 'ideal concept of civil society', as Pisanu (1998: 81) noted:

In the current discussion of the civil society and the belief in its possible consequence in better governance in the case of Thailand in particular, the civil society could be interpreted in a slightly different way. [...], the state failure in the form of corruption and co-optation among the state, private and perhaps influential, upper middle class interest groups to achieve personal gains have been strongly felt and fearful in Thailand. In order to balance these forces, the current ideal concept of civil society is referred to a stronger social sector in the sense of individual's stronger public and civic consciousness; awareness of and concern in community, local and national public issues; as well as readiness and commitment to participate in politics such as forming and joining grassroots groups within communities.

In Thailand, the concept of civil society has emerged since the early 1990s due to the political climate of strife (Surin and McCargo, 1997: 147). In fact, it was argued that the influence of civil societal forces had long been found in Thailand, albeit in a limited form, as Hewison (1997: 11) noted about the 'ebb and flow of political space'. Referring to the historical, socio-economic and political context which was extensively discussed in chapter 3, there have been power struggles between different groups: absolute monarchists, military-bureaucrats governments, civilian politicians, parliaments, business associations, technocrats, students, and social forces (Hewison, 1997: 11-15). From the political struggles of different groups, political space was expanded and oppositional groups were created (Hewison, 1997: 10). Moreover, the political climate of strife since the May 1992 and the 1997 economic crisis later led the Thai state to put the concept of civil society and local participation and into the 1997 constitution and the 1999 national educational bill (see ONEC, 1999; McCargo 2002: 5; Hewison, 1997: 2). As Pisanu (1998: 78) has noted, during the drafting of the new constitution and the economic crisis, Thailand was experiencing growing pressure for a more active role on the part of civil society.

Although the political space was expanded as a result of the macro-socio-economic changes, it does not mean that the interest groups or development of civil society are effective. According to the neo-pluralist and institutionalist analysts, as mentioned above,

the civil society is problematic and issue-based, and they do not prioritise an expansion of civil society as a solution to problems (see Hewison, 1997: 6). However, the other school of thought - political economists - is interested in the expansion of civil society and political opposition. To them, to solve policy problems, 'political activity' is no less important than the 'fixing' of institutions stressed by the neo-pluralists and institutionalists. A difference between the first and the second approach lies in an emphasis on society. While the first - neo-pluralists and institutionalists - emphasise formal institutions and organised interest groups, the second - the political economists - highlights a wider perspective on 'extended political space for a range of groups and classes' and civil society. Consequently, scholars from this approach emphasise people's organisations, grassroots organisations, and opportunities of the poor and local people. They often talk about local forces and their concept of civil society means not only to elite – urban and middle class people – but also including local forces (Hewison, 1997: 9-11). In this case, one of the elements of civil society is the local dimension.

From this perspective, in Thailand, according to Pisanu (1998: 81), interest groups can be divided into at least two main types: influential upper middle class interest groups and ideal concepts of civil society. The first represents the 'upper middle class' or 'traditional' interest groups which play an influential role to achieve personal gains while the latter is more related to a stronger social sector in the sense of individual's stronger public and civic consciousness, awareness of and concern in community (Pisanu, 1998: 81).

To the revised model, by adding 'civil society', I incline to the latter meaning, which creates a difference with what Clark (1979: 226, 230) termed 'external interest groups' and 'internal groups', since he focused on the elite interest groups who collaborate with governments to seek economic interests from the market (see Becher and Kogan, 1992: 186-187), and that is why they are included in the 'political coordination' as part of the 'state authority'.

In contrast with Clark's model, I separated civil societal forces – the ideal concept of civil society - into a new corner. My intention is to draw attention to them as distinct forces, which affect and are affected by the other three forces. This section of the thesis reflects acknowledgements by a number of other scholars of the increasing importance of the 'local dimension' of Thai politics and society since early 1990s (see Hewison, 1993; Missingham, 1997; Pisanu, 1998; Prudhisan and Maneerat, 1997; Hirsch, 2002; Arghiros, 2002; Naruemon, 2002; Jak, 2002). Obviously, to them, the local dimension is part of the civil society. These scholars have focused their studies on Thai environmental policy sectors,

local education, and local government reforms – issues which are directly linked to grassroots organisations, and societal and local forces, and where the emphasis on civil society is useful.

For example, according to Prudhisan and Maneerat (1997: 195), who studied environmental issues in Thailand, key actors dynamically involved with the issues are the non-governmental development organisations (NGDO), grassroots organisations and rural people. This is because for the poor, environmentalism is 'a defence of their livelihoods'. They also clearly state the importance of local forces:

The dynamics of provincial political mobilisation testify to the fact that the development of civil society is not confined to the business and middle classes, often identified as the harbingers of democracy. [...] Will the emphasis on parliament and political parties be enough, or will attention need to be given to structures and processes of policy-making which allow real participation? (Prudhisan and Maneerat, 1997: 195).

In the same way, Missingham (1997: 155, 162) examined two village schools in the Northeast of Thailand and found interplay between local villagers and local teachers who are considered bureaucratic officials. Problems were carried by limited democratic local decision-making and that he suggested reducing the predomination of top-down developmentalism. From these policy contents and contexts, it is clear that civil society - including local forces - is vital in policy processes.

The revised model adds another dimension to the Clark's (1983) model to particularly fit with the 'ideal concept of civil society', according to emerging interests of various scholars on a 'local dimension' of the Thai political system. For future research, the addition of the civil society dimension could be very useful, and could be applied in various types of public policies. It will be interesting to discuss to what extent perceptions, actions, roles, and interests of these civil societal actors would contribute to successful policy implementation, and to what extent the state opens channels for them to play their role. These, however, shall be understood within different macro-political and socio-economic contexts.

The advantages of the revised model described above should not be seen as undercutting the discussion of the thesis. It is recognised here that there are at least two approaches to understanding Thai political issues (see Hewison, 1997: 6). While this thesis falls into Hewison's neo-pluralist/institutionalist category, for future research a revised model incorporating the civil society dimension would allow elements of the political economy approach to be incorporated into similar policy studies. Thus, a decision on whether to use

the original Clark model (1983) or the revised model depends on which analytical approach is applied. This depends on whether future researchers want to emphasise the forces of [mainly elite] interest groups captured within the 'state authority', or the civil society dimension incorporated into the revised model. My revised model serves as an alternative approach for future research. The extent to which the civil society dimension is important is a matter for empirical investigation, and will vary from policy sector to policy sector.

8.5 Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis has been to answer the question, to what extent has the Thai state's policy of internationalising higher education been implemented? The thesis has used Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' and an analysis of policy implementation in developing countries to conduct empirical studies of the BBA international programmes and scientific research in Thai higher education, and the findings suggest that the integration of an international/intercultural dimension into the selected universities' teaching and research missions has not taken place, the quality of higher education has not appreciably improved, and no long-term beneficial effects are likely to occur. The key constraint is the dilemma the Thai state faces between responding to an 'internationalisation' which appears in the form of market liberalisation and carrying out domestic reform. The domestic weaknesses comprise the inefficiency of the state's and universities' bureaucracy and the problems posed by various interest groups acting within the current political space, whose superficial view of internationalisation gives impetus to their pursuit of self-interest.

The empirical findings in both selected cases indicate that the economic rationale plays an influential role in the Thai state authority's response to internationalisation in the context of both global and national pressures of liberalisation. In the current conditions of intense market competition, the drive to implement internationalisation has been exploited by several elite groups, namely state officials, technocrats, businesspeople and students from the upper and middle classes, who interpret 'internationalisation' to serve only their own narrow interests. In the process of implementation, the inefficiency of the bureaucracy embedded within the 'state authority' and the 'academic oligarchy' can only produce empty rhetoric or quantitative internationalisation. The bureaucracy's top-down approach is now redundant and cannot guarantee the efficiency of the higher education institutions. These factors combine to prevent the development of qualitative internationalisation. An analysis of the outcomes suggests that the elite groups gain benefits by exploiting the potentialities of 'internationalisation' to different degrees through the workings of the 'distributive game'. However, these selfish strategies cannot provide long-term benefits to the public.

This thesis is original in both analytical and empirical terms. The devices used: Clark's (1983) 'triangle of coordination' and an analysis of the higher education systems and policy implementation processes in developing countries, provide not only a clear lens through which we can understand the internal problems of Thai higher education, but also constitute an original method of studying the 'internationalisation of higher education' more generally. In empirical terms, the research methods, namely the interviews, observations and documentary analysis, have been used to gather important data on the fundamental problems of the Thai higher education system as it responds to the implementation of 'internationalisation' within the current global and national contexts. It is hoped that the discussions in this thesis may serve as policy lessons to other public sectors which are now threatened by market forces in both Thailand and beyond; this would be an important contribution of the thesis.

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Appendix A

The name list of interviewees¹

I. State Authority

1.1 Ministry of University Affairs

Porntip Kanjananiyot	Director, Bureau of Higher Education Standards	7 Nov 2002/ 8 Jan 2003
Aporn Kanvong	Director, Division of International Cooperation	12 Nov 2002
Chantavit Sujatanond	Assistant Permanent Secretary	13 Nov 2002
Ekapong Lauhatiansind	Chief, East Section, Division of International Cooperation	20 Nov 2002
Naree Mitsamphandee	Chief, West Section, Division of International Cooperation	21 Nov 2002
Opas Khiewwichai	Director, Bureau of Administrative System Development	27 Nov 2002
Sumate Yamnoon	Senior Advisor and Specialist for Policy and Planning	13 Dec 2002
Voradej Chandarasorn	Permanent Secretary for University Affairs	23 Dec 2002
Wilawan Jaruariyanon	International Cooperation Officer	23 Jan 2003
Lakhana Dockiew	International Cooperation Officer	23 Jan 2003
Nuanwan Tohtong	International Cooperation Officer	23 Jan 2003
Sudaporn Damnoen	International Cooperation Officer	23 Jan 2003
Vandee Ketanitinan	Director, Private Higher Institution Establishment and Educational Promotion Branch, Bureau of Private Higher Education	28 Jan 2003
Pichate Urairong	Director, Macro Analysis Branch, Bureau of Policy and Planning	27 Feb 2003
Kancharat Maneeprawat	Personnel Analyst 5, Bureau of Administrative System Development	20 Mar 2003
Chalermkwun Roumtorkit	Personnel Analyst 5, Bureau of Administrative System Development	24 Mar 2003
Sumantana Chantaroagwong	Educational Officer, Private Higher Institution Establishment and Educational Promotion Branch	30 Apr 2003
Supat Boongsong	Educational Officer, Private Higher Institution Establishment and Educational Promotion Branch	30 Apr 2003
Julaluck Goysiripong	Educational Officer, Private Higher Institution Establishment and Educational Promotion Branch, Bureau of Private Higher Education	30 Apr 2003
Uraivan Vutiket	International Cooperation Officer	17 Jun 2003
Chadarat Singhadechakul	Chief, Development Section, Division of International Cooperation	23 Jun 2003

¹ Divided according to Clark's (1983) sets of higher education-related forces, see table 3 Chapter 1.

1.2 Thailand Research Fund

Kamchad Mongkolgul	Director, Royal Golden Jubilee Ph.D. Program	3 Dec 2002
Vichai Boonsaeng	Program Director, Academic Research Division	3 Dec 2002
Kriangsak Suwantaradon	Rice and Cereal Crops Research Program Office	17 May 2003

II. Academic Oligarchy

Case 1: BBA International programme

2.1 Public universities

(a) Chulalongkorn University

Prapanpong Vejjajiva	Deputy Director for Development and Planning, SASIN Graduate Institute of Business Administration	3 Apr 2003
Porpan Vachajitpan	Director, BBA (International Program), Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy	26 May 2003
Tharee Hiranrusme	Associate Professor, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy	28 May 2003

(b) Thammasat University

Chirapan Boonyakiert	Vice Rector for International Affairs	13 Jan 2003
Kulapatra Sirodom	Director, BBA Program, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy; Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and International Affairs	17 Apr 2003
Kaewta Rohitratana	Assistant Dean, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy	17 Apr 2003

(c) Ramkhamhaeng University

Rampai Sirimanakul	Vice Rector for International Affairs	10 Jan 2003
Piboon Puriveth	Director, Institute of International Studies (IIS)	19 Feb 2003
Peter Emerton	Lecturer, BBA- Business Law, IIS	25 Feb 2003
Judy Ramage	Professor and Department Chair, IIS	11 Mar 2003

2.2 Private universities

(d) Assumption University

Chavalit Meennuch	Vice President for Administrative Affairs	25 Apr 2003
Vinai Viriyavidhayavong	Dean, Graduate School of Business	15 May 2003
Patricia Arttachariya	Assistant Dean, BBA Programme, School of Management	19 May 2003
Medhee Jarumaneerog	Lecturer, BBA programme	3 Jun 2003

(e) Bangkok University

Siriwan Ratanakarn	Director, Bangkok University International College (BUIC)	18 Jan 2003/ 24 Jan 2003
Michael E. Pfahl	Lecturer, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	24 Jan 2003
Mathana Santiwat	Vice President for Academic Affairs	4 Feb 2003
Tipchan Wongchanta	Director, International Affairs Office	13 Feb 2003
Pennapar Kanthawongs	Lecturer, BA in Communication Arts, and Student Activity Advisor, BUIC	21 Mar 2003
Gary Labouseur	Lecturer, BA in Business English, BUIC	21 Mar 2003

(f) Kasembundit University

Prajna Bhumianand	Assistant Director for Administrative Affairs, BBA (International Programme)	14 Jan 2003
Senee Suwandee	Vice President for Planning and Development	29 Jan 2003
Margaret Ward	Lecturer, BBA (International Programme)	29 Jan 2003
Piyaphan Mansornplang	Assistant Executive Director, BBA (International Programme)	29 Jan 2003
Supakit Panchavinin	Management Department Chairperson, BBA (International Programme)	18 Feb 2003

2.3 Research**(g) Mahidol University**

Amaret Bhumiratana	Dean, Faculty of Science	18 Apr 2003
Srisin Khusmith	Vice President for Research	2 May 2003
Montri Chulavatnatol	Professor, Faculty of Science; President, KENAN Institute Asia	13 May 2003
Narumon Emarat	Lecturer, Department of Physics, Faculty of Science	14 May 2003
Bhinyo Panijpan	Lecturer, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science; Director of Institute for Innovation and Development of Learning Process	14 May 2003
Bhintip Ruenwongsa	Lecturer, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science; Deputy Director of Institute for Innovation and Development of Learning Process	14 May 2003
Chirasiri Kasemsin	Lecturer, Faculty of Science	31 Mar 2004

(h) Kasetsart University

Sornprach Thanisawanyangkura	Vice President, Planning and International Affairs	7 Feb 2003
Sutruedee Prathuangwong	Associate Dean of Graduate School, and faculty, Department of Plant Pathology, Faculty of Agriculture	14 Mar 2003
Nipon Tangtham	Professor, Faculty of Forestry	17 Mar 2003
Pongsri Jittanoonta	Deputy Director, Institute of Food Research and	17 Mar 2003

	Product Development	
Napavarn Noparatnaraporn	Vice-President for Research and Intellectual Property; Director of Public-Private Technology Development Transfer Center (PPTC)	18 Mar 2003
Thammasak Sommartya	Dean, Faculty of Agriculture	20 May 2003
Chak Sangma	Lecturer, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science	12 Jun 2003

(i) Srinakarinwirot University

Sermsak Wisalaporn	Vice President for Research Affairs	4 Jun 2003
Piniti Ratananukul	Vice President for Finance and Personnel; Faculty, Faculty of Science	13 Jun 2003
Yuvadee Nakapadungrat	Dean, Faculty of Science	13 Jun 2003

III. Market

3.1 Students

Public Universities

(a) Chulalongkorn University

Waritta Yamprasert	Student, 4th Year, BBA (International Programme)	10 May 2003
Nanthapong Ouapitiphongsa	Student, 4th Year, BBA (International Programme)	10 May 2003
Lacsanawadee Chaisiri	Student, 4th Year, BBA (International Programme)	10 May 2003
Nitima Sae-ngow	Student, 4th Year, BBA (International Programme)	10 May 2003
Pitchaya Kettiyaowamarn	Student, 4th Year, BBA (International Programme)	10 May 2003
Nisara Chaitantipong	Student, 3rd year, BBA (International Programme)	28 May 2003

(b) Thammasat University

Sirathai Palakawong Na Ayudhya	Student, 4th Year, BBA in Finance	24 Apr 2003
Thapida Phunthikaphadr	Student, 4th Year, BBA in Finance	24 Apr 2003
Piyasak Ukitnokon	Student, 4th Year, BBA in Finance	24 Apr 2003
Chongphoei Yangthaworntrakoon	Student, 4th Year, BBA in Finance	24 Apr 2003
Koh Lian King	Student, 3rd Year, BBA in Finance	24 Apr 2003
Petcharat Yingchatchaval	Graduate, BBA in Finance/ Marketing	24 Apr 2003

(c) Ramkhamhaeng University

Boonsiri Kengkriangkrai	Student, MBA, IIS	27 Jan 2003
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Niyada Tangraksa	Student, MBA, IIS	27 Jan 2003
Patcharin Meaksuwan	Student, MBA, IIS	24 Feb 2003
Suganya Rittiboonchai	Student, MBA, IIS	24 Feb 2003
Saowanee Chompuming	Student, MBA, IIS	24 Feb 2003
Suprida Benjachoenwong	Student, MBA, IIS	24 Feb 2003
Thaworn Jirapong	Student, MBA, IIS	24 Feb 2003
Chanpen Opassakornrawong	Student, MBA, IIS	25 Feb 2003
Wipapan Waleesajakarn	Student, MBA, IIS	25 Feb 2003
Thitipat Sumilang	Student, MBA, IIS	25 Feb 2003
Surin Towises	Student, MBA, IIS	28 Feb 2003
Narunart Narkprecha	Student, 2nd Year, BBA, IIS	11 Mar 2003
Wannasiri Pangwattanakul	Student, 2nd Year, BBA, IIS	11 Mar 2003
Chanokchone Suebyart	Student, 2nd Year, BBA, IIS	11 Mar 2003
Wanwalai Chaichana	Student, 2nd Year, BBA, IIS	12 Mar 2003
Chingchai Techathada	Student, 2nd Year, BBA, IIS	13 Mar 2003

Private Universities

(d) Assumption University

Jantima Kovithanupong	Graduate, MBA	28 Mar 2003
Nopparon Ngamsuriyarote	Student, 3rd year, BBA	18 May 2003
Sunisa Wattano	Student, 4th year, BBA	18 May 2003
Watcharan Naisena	Student, 4th year, BA in Business English	18 May 2003
Ling Liu	Students, BBA	16 Jun 2003
Bo Feng	Students, BBA	16 Jun 2003
XiaoHui Pan	Student, BBA	16 Jun 2003

(e) Bangkok University

Pornyng Hirunyanitiwatna	Student, 3rd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	24 Jan 2003
Suparath Mathong	Student, 3rd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	24 Jan 2003
Pakorn Earmvorakul	Student, 3rd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	24 Jan 2003
Asa Chaokrajang	Student, 3rd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	24 Jan 2003
Sujitra Miley	Student, 2nd Year, BA in Hotel and Tourism Management, BUIC	24 Jan 2003
Jarunee Manokhatipaisarn	Student, 2nd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	24 Jan 2003
Bundit Jarukulvanich	Student, 2nd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	24 Jan 2003
Sompatsorn Wongthirawuth	Student, 2nd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	24 Jan 2003

Natcharee Prasupsalpornkul	Student, 2nd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	26 Jan 2003
Darin Chonchuenchob	Student, 2nd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	26 Jan 2003
Jatuporn Nathsingh	Student, 2nd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	27 Jan 2003
Nipat Vorasowharid	Student, 2nd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	27 Jan 2003
Jirada Monthathipkul	Student, 2nd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	27 Jan 2003
Michael Orczech	Student, 1st Year, BA in Communication Arts, BUIC	13 Feb 2003
Thomas Svensson	Student, 1st Year, BA in Communication Arts, BUIC	13 Feb 2003
Robin Orourke	Student, 2nd Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	13 Feb 2003
Chanathip Attajarusit	Student, 2nd Year, BA in Hotel and Tourism Management, BUIC	13 Feb 2003
Napapon Ekoranwong	Student, First Year, BBA in Marketing, BUIC	21 Mar 2003

(f) Kasembundit University

Kazi Mohamed Rashed Mowla	Student, 1st Year, BBA	4 Feb 2003
Wang Lu	Student, 2nd Year, BBA	4 Feb 2003
Wang Ting	Student, 2nd Year, BBA	4 Feb 2003
Penpak Sathing	Student, 1st Year, BBA	4 Feb 2003
Ploypailin Kaewsawai	Student, 1st Year, BBA	4 Feb 2003
Patrapol Ruenkamon	Student, 2nd Year, BBA	6 Feb 2003
Watcharin Chairak	Student, 2nd Year, BBA	6 Feb 2003

3.2 Business people

Wanrouy Krikwongtrakool	Vice President, Anonymous company	10 May 2003
Vera Sutesopon	Managing Partner, Verasu Limited Partnership	9 Jun 2003
Khwanta Keeravisaskij	HR Manager, Legal & Tax Consultants Ltd., PricewaterhouseCoopers, Thailand	11 Jun 2003
Chanpim Kosadat	Vice President and Assistant Manager, International Branch Administration Department, Bangkok Bank Public Company Limited	23 Jun 2003
Saipin Lauharanu	Director, Social Affairs and Protocol, The Peninsula Bangkok	28 Jun 2003

IV. Others

Kasem Watanachai	Privy Councillor	9 Jan 2003
Padoongchart Suwanawongse	Director, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development	23 Jan 2003
Patcharavipa Chaijuckam	Graduate student, Faculty of Science, Chulalongkorn University	14 Mar 2003

Thiti Bovornratanaraks	Lecturer, Faculty of Science, Chulalongkorn University	23 Mar 2003
3 Anonymous	Private tutors, Assumption Graduates	8 Jun 2003
Nongyao Nawarat	Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Chiang Mai University	4 Feb 2004
Naruemon Thabchumpon	Lecturer, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University	20 Mar 2004

Appendix B

Policy issues in support of internationalization of Thai higher education

Source: MUA (1991) 'Annex F The long-range plan of higher education in Thailand (1990-2004)' in *The National Seminar Report on Internationalization of Thai higher education* (Extract, pp. 51-52) (Bangkok: Ministry of University Affairs)

Principle: Internationalization of Thai higher education should aim at increasing global awareness in all of the university functions. Internationalization should facilitate the increasing roles of the country in the world community, to enhance Thailand's economic competitiveness, and to maintain national image and dignity as the country expands its relationship with other countries.

University function and policy issues

Teaching

1. Enhancing international-level competence of university graduates through emphasising specific skills, e.g., language, computer, management, etc.
2. Increasing the number of international programs and joint degree programs between Thai and foreign institutions
3. Increasing academic exchange with foreign institutions, e.g., faculty and student exchange programs, scholarship programs for foreign students, development of academic consortium, etc.

Research

4. Strengthening research capabilities of Thai institutions through cooperations with foreign institutions, e.g., joint research activities, exchange of researchers, etc.
5. Expanding the knowledge of other countries through the development of area and country study programs in Thai institutions
6. Promoting the knowledge of Thailand in other countries through the development of Thai study programs in foreign institutions

Service

7. Strengthening service activities through collaborations with foreign institutions, e.g., establishment of regional or international training centers, etc.
8. Improving information linkages between Thai and foreign institutions

Cultural enrichment

9. Increasing awareness of faculty and students with respect to countries of different social and cultural backgrounds, e.g., establishment of institutes of arts and culture of respective countries, etc.
10. Supporting Thai study and Thai cultural centers in foreign institutions (MUA, 1991: 50).

Appendix C

Extract from: MUA (1992) 'Opening statement of the seventh national higher educational development plan' in *the Seventh National Higher Education Development Plan (1992-1996)* (Bangkok: Ministry of University Affairs) cited in Amornvich and Wichit (1997: 165)

Thailand will promote economic, technical and cultural cooperation with countries at both bilateral and multilateral level. Thailand will also increase her role in assisting and supporting development in neighbouring countries and thus strengthen the relationship and understanding within the region (cited in Amornvich and Wichit, 1997: 165).

Extract From: MUA (1992) 'The seventh national higher educational development plan concerning internationalisation' in *the Seventh National Higher Education Development Plan (1992-1996)* (Bangkok: Ministry of University Affairs) cited in (Tong-In, 1995: 1-2) (author's translation)

Strategies for provision of higher education

- Supporting area-studies programmes in order to increase the level of understanding about individual countries and international communities which have economic and political influence, such as neighbouring countries, Indochina, ASEAN, Asia-Pacific, the European Union, and Eastern European countries.
- Supporting Thai studies programmes.
- Supporting international programmes in Thailand - creating opportunities for foreigners to enrol.
- Supporting collaboration with foreign institutions, including joint research and training programmes and academics' and students' exchange programmes.
- Promoting international roles of higher education institutions by sending representatives abroad to negotiate about academic collaboration, provision of scholarships to further studies and training abroad, as well as supporting academics to become international experts.
- Giving higher educational personnel the skills which enable them to work in international organisations.

Appendix D

Extract from: MUA (1996: 25-28) 'The eighth national higher educational development plan (1997-2001) concerning internationalisation' in *the Eighth National Higher Education Development Plan (1997-2001)* (Bangkok: Netikul) (author's translation)

5. Internationalisation and Regionalisation

Objective 5.1 Upgrading Thai higher education to meet international standards

Strategy 1: improving national human resources: equipping university staff with the knowledge and technology to be able to compete in the global community

Strategy 2: improving the quality of higher education within universities to equal that of foreign countries

Strategy 3: developing a basic educational structure, especially in information technology and foreign languages, to accommodate internationalisation

Objective 5.2 Inspiring present university staff and students to pursue long-term visions which further their abilities to compete in the world community

Strategy 1: providing teaching and learning programmes to serve internationalisation

Strategy 2: promoting cooperation and learning networks for academics to keep up to date with academic advances

Strategy 3: making students and personnel aware of the cultural values which they hold, and making an effort to preserve those values, while keeping an open mind with regard to foreign cultures in order to have appropriate relationships with other countries

Strategy 4: supporting universities' administration systems to allow them to work to an international standard

Objective 5.3 Making Thailand the leading country in terms of academic excellence in Southeast Asia.

Strategy 1: further developing the body of academic knowledge specific to Thailand which is seen as one of the country's strengths

Strategy 2: supporting universities' areas of interest to enable them to achieve excellence and become world leaders in those areas

Strategy 3: Supporting innovative education and developing new bodies of knowledge to solve the world's social problems