THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THAILAND:
INFLUENCES AND EFFECTS

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the way in which Thailand has changed access to and the provision of higher education since 1932. It offers a historically grounded analysis of higher education reforms in Thailand in relation to different forms of internal and external forces in higher education. The factors that influenced those changes and the effects of those changes were identified. In addition, it presented a critical analysis of how Western models of higher education have influenced the development of higher education in Thailand.

The historical approach was taken in this research. The data relevant to the social phenomenon of higher education in past until now were drawn from historical record and oral accounts. The notion of policy borrowing and concepts from Foucault's theory of social practice were employed to explain Thailand's higher education development.

An analysis of the changes and the drivers of those changes as well as the effects of those changes revealed how the past informed the present. It also provided an explanation for contemporary problems experienced within the higher education sector and suggested ways forward.

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ACRONYMS

AAU   Association of American Universities

ADB   Asian Development Bank

ASEAN   Association of South East Asian Nations

EQA   External Quality Assessment

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GE   General Education

IAU   International Association of Universities

IMF   International Monetary Fund

IQA   Internal Quality Assessment

JICA   Japan International Cooperation Agency

KPI   Key Performance Indicators

MOE   Ministry of Education

MUA   Ministry of University Affairs

NEDB   National Economic Development Board

NQF   National Qualification Framework

NSO   National Statistical Office

OEC   Office of Education Council

OED   Oxford English Dictionary

OHEC	Office of Higher Education Commission
ONEC	Office of the National Education Commission
ONESDB	Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board
ONESQA	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
QA	Quality Assurance
UDC	University Development Council
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Research Title

The Development of Higher Education in Thailand: Influences and Effects

1.2   Overview of the Research

A fundamental factor contributing to a nation's progress is the development of human resources (ONESDB, 2007). To enhance human resources, nations develop knowledge and skills within society, paying attention to the nation's specific needs. Developing relevant specific knowledge and skills means a more effective nation. Typically, such skills and knowledge are developed through the education system in which higher education is understood to represent the highest point of human resource development.

This historical research focuses on higher education within Thailand. Classified as a third world and developing country, Thailand has a key objectives is to improve its global status. Given that Thailand understands its higher education institutions to be fundamental to its national growth and international status (ONEC, 1999), .

policies relating to higher education (OHEC, 2010a) play a major role in the objective. This research investigates the ways in which Thailand has changed access to and the content of higher education provision over time. It identifies the factors that influenced those changes and seeks to identify the effects of those changes.

1.3   Rationale and Background

Thailand is often described as 'the hub of Southeast Asia', surrounded, as it is, by five other nations. It covers an area of 514,000 km² compared with New Zealand's 268,000 km². While 80 percent of its population of 69,000,000 live in small villages, where the focus is on agriculture, the nation is moving towards a mixed industrial, commercial and agricultural economy. Thailand is a conservative nation with a high birth rate and a youthful population. As a third world and developing country, Thailand has a highly stratified society and, within its educational space, maintains a strong commitment to the preservation of Thai identity and traditional values. The Peoples' Revolution of 1932, the aftermath of the Second World War, the Student Revolution of 1973, the economic crises of the late 1990s and the resulting rapid devaluation of the local currency, together with the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, have all played major roles in shaping higher education in Thailand as it is today.

Universally, higher education is perceived as the cornerstone to the construction of new knowledge for contemporary society. Although it enjoys a long history, higher

education in Thailand was established formally during the past century with the articulated intention of enhancing human resources for the nation's development (MUA, 1998). However, Thailand has bestowed other purposes upon higher education and these include the following: the development and preservation of the cultural heritage and traditions; the development of the rural hinterland; the preservation of the national environment; the strategic use of resources; the preparation of young people for new social and political responsibilities; and leadership in the development of social and economic policy (IAU, 1979). As the International Association of Universities (1979) clarified:

> There is broad agreement that universities in developing countries should try to produce manpower not only at the highest level but also at critical sub-degree levels necessary for development; that their research programmes should emphasize not so much the production of new knowledge as the application of existing knowledge to local problems, the substitution of local material in industrial processes and the resolution of other development-oriented local and national problems; and that they should emphasize their responsibilities to offer public service in terms of extension programmes in adult education, community health and delivery of health care, extension services in agriculture, liaison with Ministries of Education and Teacher Training Colleges, engineering and works services, public administration and constitution making and so on. No aspect of the life of the society is excluded.

During the past few decades the number of universities in Thailand has expanded exponentially. In the 1990s there were 20 public higher education institutions throughout Thailand. By 2014, there were 157 institutions—85 public universities, 72 private universities, and two 'open access' universities—all under the supervision of the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC, 2014). These institutions included multi-disciplinary universities, designated research universities, specialist institutions (for example, Buddhist universities, nursing colleges and military academies), and community colleges that offer short-term programmes and vocational training courses. In parallel with the increase in numbers of higher education institutions over the past decades, the number of enrolments in higher education institutions has significantly risen. Enrolments rose from 1.2 million in 2001 to 2.4 million a decade later (OHEC, 2014). The proportion of graduates compared with the total number of higher education studying ages (15-24 years) was a quarter (NSO, 2013). These statistics demonstrate that access to higher education has been significant and rapid.

The central purpose of the expansion was to give more school leavers access to higher education, with the expressed intention that these individuals would put their tertiary skills and knowledge to use in the development of the country (MOE, 2008). But not only has higher education grown, it has also become more democratic. From its beginnings as educational institutions servicing royalty and the aristocracy of society,

higher education has moved towards educational massification by providing a range of different tertiary models.

However, rapid educational expansion often generates unforeseen economic and social problems. Thongroj (2008) has argued that contemporary Thailand confronts many such problems, not the least of which is unemployment. In a context of global economic restructuring, Thailand, like many other nations, has experienced a decreasing state capacity to rise to the challenge of an increasing demand for higher paid jobs on a level commensurate with tertiary qualifications. In particular, many graduates from the humanities and social sciences are not able to find employment. Since the humanities and social sciences are not deemed imperative to the industrial development of the nation (Chiengkoon, 2009), most of these students are faced with unemployment on completion of their studies. In education, every year approximately 12,000 individuals graduate from education faculties across the higher education institutions in Thailand, whereas only 3,000-4,000 positions, at a level appropriate for the qualifications gained, are available for these graduates (NSO, 2008).

The serious problems affecting higher education in Thailand have arisen from both internal and external factors. According to Thongroj (2008) political instability is an important internal factor leading to unstable political policies. The frequent change-over of heads of government has led to short-duration national policies, since

new educational improvement and technology policies are frequently obstructed by changes of personnel. A few statistics drive this point home. In approximately 80 years, since the system of parliamentary democracy was instituted in 1932, there have been 12 rebellions, nine coup d'états, one revolution, 28 Prime Ministers, 60 different cabinets and 18 constitutions (NSO, 2014). These changes and events have contributed to the cancellation of many projects and strategies as well as to the confusion of educational administration and management. Further, in 2003, the original affiliation of the Office of the Education Council came under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, and in turn, internal changes within the Thai Ministry of Education saw the collapse of the Ministry of University Affairs and a status change to the Office of Higher Education Commission.

These events contributed to a lack of coordinated effort in higher education governance and marked a set-back for the improvement of higher education in Thailand (Thongroj, 2008). They also contributed to a qualitative decline in courses and programmes. Standards are uneven across universities and between faculties (Schiller & Liefner, 2007). Staff, particularly in the non-traditional universities, experience very heavy teaching loads and many do not have the time nor the qualifications to fulfil their teaching and research responsibilities at the level expected of them. As a result, the value of degrees and diplomas has taken a slide.

Lavankura (2013) has emphasised that it is not only internal factors that have contributed to higher education change. Globalisation has wielded a considerable influence on education in Thailand, not only in positive but also in negative terms (Dodds, 2008; Hutcheson, 2011; Pang, 2013). According to Chan (2013), many countries seeking to develop and strengthen their unique higher education systems, have adopted principles and imported methods and approaches that have currency within the global educational place. Weldon et al. (2011) point out the positives, arguing that globalisation leads to broadening knowledge, diverse perspectives, creative teaching and an active academic community. Moreover, it is believed, the prospect of globalisation provides the motivation for a government to offer an educational service at every level. The understanding is that higher education develops skills relating to key knowledge areas that are deemed relevant to the enhancement of the nation's prosperity, supports information technology usage in academic institutions, and enhances educational quality, allowing the nation to compete on the international stage (Pang, 2013).

However, in pointing out the negatives, Punpuing and Sunpuwan (2011) have provided evidence that Thailand tends to model its master plans and policies on those of developed countries, without due consideration for its own context. For example, during World War I (1914-1918) the United States played a role as consultant and from that time influenced education in Thailand. After World War II (1941-1945), Thailand was officially assisted by the United States in terms of

funding for scientific support (Punpuing & Sunpuwan, 2011). Because of its strong relationship with the United States, Thailand began to import many ideas and concepts, including those from education, relevant specifically to the United States context. For example, it adopted 'democracy' as its political concept and 'capitalism' as its economic framework.

The concept of capitalism has had an influence on the administration and management of higher education in Thailand. Higher educational institutions tend to seek external and/or international funding sources to meet their costs, rather than attempt to balance the books on the reduced government funding pool (Dodds, 2008; Kumari, 2012; Mishra, 2013; Pang, 2013; Weldon et al., 2011). Passing the entrance examination for higher education and studying for graduation has become highly competitive. Those who passed were able to study in a public university; those who failed were permitted to study only in private universities. These latter universities had been established to ease the financial burden of the government to meet its ambitious objective of providing higher education to all who aspired to it. Praphamontripong (2010) points out, however, that many of these universities produced programmes and offered curricula of varying quality. Praphamontripong (2010) also argues that many of the private universities have adopted a business approach and administer academic institutions as business corporations. In response to market demand, they have become more focused on generating income and profit from academic business than on academic quality. As a result, every year many

graduates in Thailand complete their studies irrespective of standard of work. While the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) has since 1999 provided oversight of all standards within higher education institutions, the problems associated with low quality have never been fully resolved (Thongroj, 2008).

For the Thai government, as for other newly industrialising countries, the "main concern is to link universities' research and teaching with the overall goal to close the technological gap" (Schiller & Liefner, 2007, p. 544) between developing and developed countries. For most Thai people, however, the key purpose of a university education is to train individuals for the workplace. Everyday people consider that a university education represents the key to self-advancement—an opportunnity "to secure a good white-collar job, and perhaps even a passport to a post-gradaute opportunity at an overseas university, and/or the chance to work and live abroad" (Welch, 2011, p. 3). Such an education provides the means to advance both professionally and materially.

Other problems currently confront higher education in Thailand. These have been identified by Thongroj (2008) as: (i) issues relating to educational aims which are unclear and ambiguous; (ii) inadequate funding; (iii) recruitment of insufficient numbers of qualified lecturers; (iv) insufficient numbers of science and technology graduates to respond to the needs of the country's economic development; and (v)

an administrative system that is ineffective for the 21st century. Many of these problems lie at a deeper level than budgetary and fiscal concerns. They relate to the culture, traditions and spiritual values of Thai society. Granted, since the first university was established in 1917, widespread changes relating, particularly, to access, purpose, and character of higher education have occurred to align more closely with practices operating within the international education context. However, more fundamental changes present a significant challenge to Thai's higher education institutions, presently aiming to both maintain its rich heritage as well as to secure a global presence and reputation.

1.4   The Western Influence on Thai Higher Education

The formation and development of the contemporary higher education system in Thailand owes a huge debt to western knowledge, models, and values. Western influences are readily apparent, not only in shaping the models of building design but also more fundamentally, in the ideologies that have underwritten the development of Thailand's higher education system (Altbach, 1989). As the only Southeast Asia country not colonised by the west, Thailand has experienced the effects of a range of foreign influences. The first of these influences on higher education was transported from Europe. Within these systems, higher education was restricted to the ruling elite, and the purpose of such education was to serve modern bureacracy. The French conception of the Grandes Écoles, or the elitist higher education insitution,

dominated the earlier days of nation building and modernisation, along with the establishment of the first university, Chulalongkorn, in 1916.

In later years, as a result of the relationships forged between Thailand and the United States, influences on the development of Thai higher education moved away from Europe towards models transported from the United States. American economic assistance after World War II ensured that the American model of higher education became the prototype for Thai higher education. The American model draws on three sources: the English collegiate model, the German research university model of the late nineteenth century, and the American concept of service to society (Altbach, 1998). The United States later secured its hold on the further development of the Thai higher education system by offering assistance at a number of levels.

1.5   Current Day Systems

The creation of each public university in Thailand is by special legislation. Each is deemed to be an extension of the government, of national and international prestige, as a driver of economic growth, and as crucial for the nation's future. All teaching and non-teaching staff are referred to as 'government officials' rather than 'public servants'. Academically and administratively, universities in Thailand are based on a system of faculties, in which each faculty is administered by a dean and in which teaching and course organisation revolve around a course credit system. However, relationships between personnel differ from Western practices since Thai cultural

protocols of respect and hierarchy largely dominate. Rites and rituals within universities reinforce the cultural protocols. As an example, Thai universities continue to practise the tradition of teacher homage. At the beginning of each academic year, every university conducts an elaborate ceremony, that might be interpreted as a student initiation rite, to honour teachers.

Further, undergraduate students are expected to wear uniforms and are required to attend classes regularly. The emphasis is on conformity rather than creativity. Most academic staff use lecturing as their principal means of instruction and students, for their part, remain silent and subservient. They are not encourged to volunteer answers, contribute to a discussion, or offer dissenting viewpoints. As Nakata (1975) has explained: "It is not the custom of Thai students to argue, to criticise, to analyse or even to express ideas, since they are not trained to have this kind of participatory experience" (p. 88). The commitment required of students in terms of contact hours outweighs that expected of students in western universities. Thai students often spend between 20 and 25 hours per week in class time. The high proportion of class contact hours, taken together with their formal relationship based on deference to academic staff, strongly influences students' attitudes, and their motivation for learning.

Public universities are generally more prestigious than private universities and the admission process to the former is rigorous. However, the process tends to be class-

based, privileging students whose parents are either professionals or business people, and who live in the Bangkok metropolitan area. It is these students who are able to afford the best tutorial schools to pass examinations for the best high schools, and later to pass the national entrance examination for the university. While these university students tend to be highly focused on the successful completion of their course and on graduation, they are often described as materialistic and self-centred individuals.

The university and its staff are under the direct authority of the government. Since they must comply with civil service regulations, bureaucratic red tape often creates delays in work. On the basis of the elevated position that the government has bestowed upon universities, the university is perceived of as an 'ivory tower' and within that 'tower', staff are granted high social standing and formal recognition. Many staff assume a demeanour that benefits their elevated position and a self-image as teachers under royal patronage. As a trade-off for their elevated positioning within society, promotions and salary increases for staff at public institutions are linked to the civil service scale and are much lower than those for staff in the private sector (Schilller & Liefner, 2007, p. 550). Such salary increases often depend more on length of service and on the relationship a staff member has developed with his or her line manager, rather than on evaluations of teaching and/or research. Since student growth has not been matched by a growth in staff numbers, working conditions are generally poor.

Thailand's rapid expansion and diversification of its higher education systems represent a democratic response to the issue of access to higher education. At the same time, however, these initiatives, underwritten by wider social and economic goals of the nation, and informed by obligations and an interest in participating successfully within the global space, have created an issue for sitting governments. Rapidly increasing enrolment numbers and growth in course offerings have intensified to the extent that the sector is stretched to capacity. In a context in which pressures for employment and job security post-graduation are mounting, the dilemma is whether to continue investing in higher education and democratic provision, employing an effective level of coordinated administration, or whether to take measures to avoid political instability. When history, culture and ideology are not aligned with politics, in all likelihood, tensions will arise. Those tensions and pressures, and the factors that have contributed to their emergence, lie at the core of this thesis.

I.6   Main Purpose of the Research

This research offers an historically grounded analysis of higher education reforms in Thailand in relation to different forms of internal and external forces in higher education. The purpose of this research is to investigate the development of higher education in Thailand from its beginnings until present day. Higher education in its early informal stage will serve as a context for the significant and wholesale changes to higher education in Thailand during the period following the major Revolution

of 1932. The thesis interrogates the mission of 'the People's Party' and the changes that the Party made to the political and governmental system from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy (Thamrongthanyawong, 2006). The thesis will then investigate the changes to higher education following World War II. Finally, that rich history will be the source of reflection and will be discussed from insiders' experiences and perceptions. To date there has been little research on the way in which higher education in Thailand has developed over time. Further, there has been demonstrably less research undertaken on the effects of that development on twenty-first century society in Thailand.

This purpose of this research is twofold:

1) To investigate the internal and external influences on the development of higher education in Thailand until the present time.

2) To investigate the experiences and perceptions of that development on individuals.

This research also intends to provide a critical analysis of how western models of higher education have influenced the establishment of formal higher education in Thailand over the past century. It is proposed that the study will lead to the greater understanding about higher education in Thailand, in general, and the influences that led to changes within higher education, in particular. An understanding of the changes and the drivers of those changes, as well as the effects of those changes, will

reveal how the past informs the present. It will also provide an explanation for contemporary problems experienced within the higher education sector and explore ways forward.

In addition, this research is intended to provide useful information for policymakers responsible for proposing new educational policies. It is also intended to offer new insights about the development of higher education in Thailand to academics, scholars, and higher education personnel staff. Knowledge about the development of higher education in Thailand, how such changes within Thai higher education occurred, and the internal and external factors that contributed to that development will be provided. Such knowledge allows the contemporary higher education environment to both learn about the whole picture of higher education in Thailand and to learn from that history as a way of contributing to contempoary problem solving and, thus, as a way of avoiding unintended mistakes in the future.

Further, this research is intended to be of interest to academics and others interested in the timeline of the changes or the overall history of higher education in Thailand. It offers an extension of other relevant research by providing depth to the factors known to impact on the development of higher education in Thailand. It provides the opportunity for more intensive study within each of the time periods identified in the research. It also offers opportunities for an investigation using the same periods

of exploration into the development of different levels of education. All opportunities have the potential to enrich the academic community.

Knowledge from this research is expected to be of interest not only to local Thai academics but also to academics from other nations. The research provides information of higher education in Thailand that may be used for comparison with information from other countries. International scholars will develop an understanding of the structure of Thai higher education and the context of its development. Such understanding is imperative for transnational co-operation in the future.

1.7 Defining Terms

Higher education is educational provision after post-secondary school education and does not need to take place at a university. The narrower term of 'university' is derived from Latin (universita). This means, closely, a 'community of teachers and scholars'.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word 'university' was defined more than nine hundred years ago as a gathering of teachers and students in an activity of higher learning. The timing and location of the first university established, however, are still under debate. UNESCO and the Guinness World Record (2018) maintain that the oldest existing and continually operating educational institution in the world

issuing educational degrees was the University of Karueein, founded in 859 BC in Fez, Morocco. However, claims have also been made that universities were first established in Italy and evolved from the notion of the Cathedral School of the clergy during the High Middle Ages (Haskins, 1898). Cox (2017) has noted as follows:

> …[t]he earliest universities to develop were in Italy. These were at Salerno in the course of the ninth century and Bologna in the eleventh century. Universities as we know them today started as scholastic guilds, and developed on an analogy with the tradesmen's guilds and the later guilds of aliens in foreign cities which sprang up in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in most of the great European cities.

Within Asia, India, and China universities were conceived of as extensive sources of knowledge. Higher education in that region was established many centuries ago but the education offered related to religion, belief, and philosophy and no degrees were conferred (Lloyd, 2004). One of the earliest universities in the world was formed around 700 BC and was based at Takshashila (Taxila), located in the Northwest region of Bharat, in India. Although it was a major centre of learning, it lacked, in the contemporary sense, official membership related to particular colleges. It also lacked lecture halls and residential quarters. Thus, some historians do not consider it as a university. A further example relates to higher education in China, set up in the third century BC during the 'State Warring period' (an era in ancient Chinese history in which the overriding goal was to create a Chinese Empire. It was also a

time of major bureaucratic and military reforms). Higher education was known during this period in China's history as the 'Ji Xia Academy' that centred around a collective of a large number of intellectuals and philosophers. The next stage of development for higher education in China was in the late second century BC when higher education was sponsored by the state and served the purpose of training citizens to run the important state civil service (Lloyd, 2004).

In contrast, the notion of university in the early days in Europe meant the teaching and learning of at least one of the following three subjects: law, medicine, or religion, considered as 'general study' (Cox, 2017). It was believed that law, medicine, and theology were important qualifications for top careers or, what might be named today, as professions. More recently, the university curriculum has aimed at developing general knowledge and general intellectual capacities, at the same time as it has offered a professional, vocational, or technical curriculum. In modern usage, the word has come to mean "an institution of higher education offering tuition in mainly non-vocational subjects and typically having the power to confer degrees" (OED, 2010).

1.8   Conceptual Framework

Four dimensions—space, time, content, and method—have set boundaries for the focus of this research. These are as follows:

Space: The particular context of study was higher education in Thailand. The specific focus is on the 157 institutions named as 'universities' which confer degrees and which are under the direction of the Office of Higher Education Commission.

Time: The study focused on changes from higher education's informal beginnings up to present day.

Content: The study investigated the social, economic, and political context of Thailand and the internal and external factors that contributed to change in higher education. It will also explore the recent effects of those changes.

Method: The study drew on primary and secondary data sources as well as personal testimony from educators.

1.9   Theoretical Framework: Policy Borrowing Using Foucauldian Concepts

As a means to investigate the internal and external forces that contributed to higher education reforms in Thailand, a theoretical framework that draws on the notion of transnational policy borrowing will be employed. The framework will be enhanced by the use of concepts drawn from the toolkit of Foucault's body of work. Policy borrowing between two world systems is not a new concept. For example, early British twentieth century education policy was adapted by British colonialists for the New Zealand context. In the contemporary environment, information and communication technologies and specific forms of global economic activity and

production "provide rich possibilities for explaining the nature, pattern, and direction of information flows between different national contexts and how these influence the scale and pace of education policy borrowing" (Halpin & Troyna, 1995, p. 307). In this thesis the framework of policy borrowing will be used to explain the ways in which policy makers in Thailand accept, resist, adapt, modify, and recontextualise higher educational policies from other nations.

1.9.1 Policy borrowing

Steiner-Khamsi (2004) has argued that borrowing takes place within a global landscape and within an 'imagined international community' in which discourses and policy packages move readily across the globe. A new global policy enjoys the status of a 'new imagined regime', which nations may borrow wholesale or selectively.

Policy borrowing is never politically neutral. With its roots in the colonisation of non-western nations, in which the cultural supremacy and symbolic power of western ideas and practices were taken for granted, the culture of borrowing today incentivises developing nations in the east to take up western models in order that they might present a more 'civilised' face to the world. Simultaneously, however, western ideals, along with an understanding of western nations as more 'modern' and more 'civilised', may also be perceived negatively. As Takayama and Apple (2008) have argued:

> Western colonial power possesses powerful symbolic appeal for non-western others, constituting the seemingly universal standard of human aesthetics, cultural values, and social progress to which non-western others are compelled to conform …Simultaneously, repulsive responses to western ideas and discourse are a common nationalist reaction in non-western nations. (p. 291)

The politics driving the introduction of a new local reform agenda for changed circumstances or the replacement of a locally contested policy is often linked to a need to be associated with a global policy. Thus, global policies animate change. According to Steiner-Khamsi (2004), three key purposes underlie policy borrowing: (i) a dramatised sense of the need for reform to address educational problems; (ii) legitimation of policy solutions; and (iii) the building of policy coalitions. Any form of borrowing is facilitated by the timing of the policy and the readiness of the social context. Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) have noted that policy borrowing is never wholesale but involves selective borrowing of goals, structure and content, policy instruments, policy programmes, institutions, ideologies, ideas, attitudes, and/or negative lessons. In the selection, various actors and interest groups, embracing a range of belief systems, values and principles, within both the borrowing and lending nations, compete and negotiate with each other to determine the process and product of policy borrowing (Steiner-Khhamsi, 2000).

Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) have argued for the concept of the *economics of policy borrowing* for understanding the spread of global reforms into developing countries. Aid-dependency between donor nations, organisations and developing countries often drives the economics of borrowing in the sense that developing countries are coerced into accepting the reforms or models as a stamp of approval in exchange for, or as a condition of, economic assistance (Samoff, 1999). The power of the nation or organisation creates an asymmetrical relationship between donor and receiver, placing tacit or explicit demands on the developing nation to borrow and implement the international models or reforms. Under the guise of a discourse that encourages local participation, empowerment, and ownership, donor organisations, such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have played an influential role in accelerating the rate of global reform or policy packages (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006). However, as Steiner-Khamsi (2010) has pointed out, this form of borrowing is short-lived since it is in existence only as long as the external funding is on offer.

1.9.2   *Employing concepts from Foucault*

Foucault's theory of social practice (see, for example, Foucault 1980, 1982, 2002) offers tools and an alternative language for looking at, interpreting, and explaining practices and processes in society in relation to higher education. Two main concepts from Foucault's work are used for the investigation in this research. They are, namely,

discourse and power/knowledge. Within those key concepts are the notions of surveillance and normalisation.

A discourse is a system of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, ways of action, beliefs, and practices or strategies in order to systematically constitute knowledge, meanings and significance as well as identity (Foucault, 2002). Fairclough (1992, 2001) has argued that discourses provide knowledge about what is prohibited in terms of speech, action, and thought. In effect, they provide frames of how to behave in the world. As Foucault (2002) explains, discourses are:

> …practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak…Discourses are not about objects; they do not identity objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention. (p. 49)

Danaher, Shirato, and Webb (2000) argue that discourses are bodies of spoken or written text intended to communicate specific information and knowledge. They are powerful and produce truth. They are able to transmit and produce power without the awareness of individuals and groups within the society. Discursive policy borrowing offers a unique vocabulary that might include terms such as 'quality assurance', 'efficiency', 'standards', 'benchmarks', 'accountability' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). The same phenomena would likely not exist in different historical periods; nor would they necessarily have similar meanings across cultures.

Power exists everywhere in different forms at different levels through different discourses for different purposes (Foucault, 1980). Foucault conceived power as not a "property, but a … strategy" (1975, p. 26), where power circulates so people are "always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power" (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). In Foucault's (1982) understanding, power is not related to the possession of a commodity but operates through discourses.

Knowledge cannot be produced free of power relations. As Foucault (1975) argues, "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (p. 27). Hence, power and knowledge are not only necessarily intertwined, they are also a productive force by constructing objects, organisations, stratifications, and a whole system of power relations.

Surveillance is an institutional practice that seeks to regulate the institution's population. The explicit and implicit methods used by surveillance leads to self-regulation of the population when those under surveillance come to conform the specific practices within the institution. Actions, interactions, and knowledges are under constant gaze of the institution. Surveillance not only politicises the work done within the institution, it also contributes to a sense-of-self of individuals within the institution. Institutions, then, perform a normalising function by setting standards through the coercive force of surveillance that is often disguised from members of

the institutions. All societies, including democracies, use surveillance as the principal mode of organisation. Surveillance affects the choices people make and tends to normalise their options. It normalises thinking, being and actions to such an extent that those within its grasp begin to 'watch themselves' in everyday life.

Figure I illustrates the theoretical framework and highlights the key concepts and method employed for data collection and the time span under investigation.
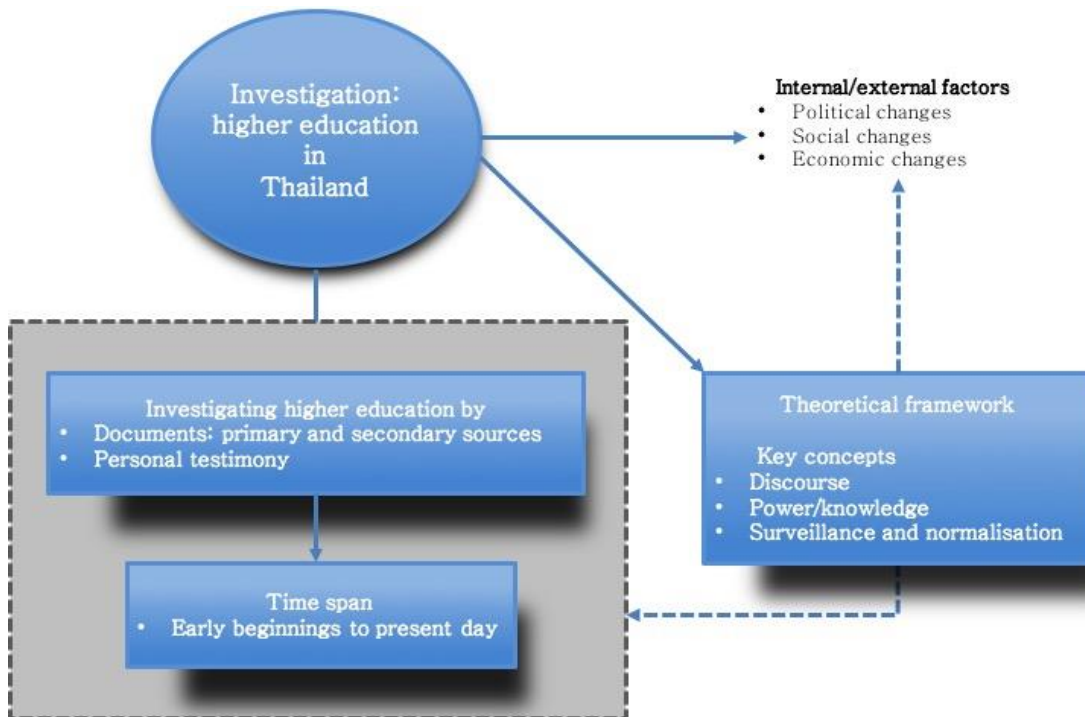
Figure I: Theoretical Framework

1.10   Overview of Chapters

This research is divided into seven chapters which consist of:

- Chapter 1: *Introduction*

  The rationale and the importance of this research are clarified in this chapter.

- Chapter 2: *Methodology*

  In Chapter 2 the methodology of this research will be outlined. The chapter will discuss the research design, the historical approach, the data collection, and the data analysis. It draws attention to the strengths as well as the limitations of interviewing. The chapter will also include a discussion on ethical issues and clarify the limitations of this research.

- Chapter 3: *Western Models and Higher Education in Thailand before and immediately after 1932*

  Chapter 3 will explore the influence of higher education from western countries on the establishment of and direction for Thai higher education. It sets a context for higher education that outlines the beginnings of higher education in Europe during the 19th to 20th centuries. It then explores the history of higher education in Thailand from its early beginning to its modernisation period (1889-1931) as well as the immediate period following the revolution period (1932-1949).

- Chapter 4: *Higher education in Thailand following World War II*

  This chapter will investigate the cultural, economic, and social phenomena in Thailand following the end of World War II that played a part in the development planning period from 1950 to the present. It investigates, in particular, the influences of the United States and the impetus of globalisation on the development of higher education institutions. A number of significant development and long range plans emerged following the intervention of the United States and this chapter investigates the impact of those plans on the mission and purpose of education beyond the compulsory sector. It also explores the impact of those plans on the social and economic framework of Thai society. Struggles relating to structural changes as well as the various types of administration will be explored.

- Chapter 5: *Issues in higher education in Thailand: The effects of changes*

  Chapter 5 offers a critical analysis of contemporary change within higher education in Thailand. It investigates the impact of that change on Thailand's social and economic fabric, as perceived and experienced by contemporary educators. The analysis will focus on four key dimensions that are presented as enduring and intertwined.

- Chapter 6: *Exploring possibilities for Thai universities in the future*

  In Chapter 6 current issues are presented as a reflection of the decisions made for Thailand's higher education system in the past. A discussion explores an

ideal higher education system in Thailand and discusses what Thailand might learn from the past to improve its higher education system.

- Chapter 7: *Conclusion to the research*

The final chapter of the thesis will provide reflections on the research and, from those reflections, a number of recommendations for policy will be offered. The chapter will also note the limitations of the research and will identify a few possible areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Methodology

The focus of the study is two-fold: (i) the influences that led to the development of higher education in Thailand and (ii) the effects of that development.

Four main objectives drive this research.

2.2 The Research Objectives

1. To study changes in higher education in Thailand from its early beginnings to the present.

2. To investigate the internal and external factors that influenced these changes.

3. To explore the effect of these changes on Thai society.

4. To identify possible implications for the future of higher education in Thailand

In order to find answers to these objectives, four specific questions have been formulated:

2.3 The Research Questions

The research seeks to answer four specific questions:

1. What changes to higher education in Thailand have occurred from its early beginnings to the present?

2. Why did these changes to higher education occur?

    a. What *internal* political, social, and economic events influenced these changes?

    b. What *external* political, social, and economic events influenced these changes?

3. How have these changes affected Thai society today?

4. What are the implications of these changes for higher education in the near future?

The philosophical scaffolding for this research supports a qualitative methodology. A qualitative methodology allows a focus on the social context, the language and the phenomena involved rather than a focus on an *'objective'* reality of the situation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). In qualitative research the researcher is also a part of the process: a *'research instrument'*. As Punch (1994) has argued, "much field research is dependent on one person's perception of the field situation at a given point of time. That perception is shaped both by personality and by the nature of the interaction with the researched, and this makes the researcher his or her own *'research instrument'*" (p. 84). In my role of researcher, I am the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. I need to be responsive to the context, able to process information carefully as well as able to explain the phenomena under investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

2.4   Research Design

This research takes a historical design. Skocpol (1984) has argued that an historical approach is an appropriate way to answer questions about how social changes took place or why a particular form of social arrangements evolved in society. This approach is employed in my study. Historical research that takes a qualitative approach analyses social processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Thus, an historical design allows me to investigate the social phenomenon of higher education in the past and the present, allowing me to create a picture of what happened, where, and why, from the evidence left behind. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) have cautioned that numerous factors are involved in historical research and that these factors do not operate independently. They are intertwined in a highly complex way. Therefore, the development of higher education in Thailand is chronicled and explained by synthesising a range of factors.

2.4.1 Historical approach

Historical research enables us to view both ourselves and society in a meaningful perspective. It is a useful strategy for focusing on human motives and the consequences of them for other individuals or for society since an historical approach is able to enhance our knowledge of the potential, as well as the limitations, of human actions. In particular, a more informed and contextualised understanding of mistakes made in the past allows us to appreciate change in the present. However, it does not

mean that the future becomes predictable. Since circumstances and conditions may vary over time, the same outcome between different time spans can never be anticipated. Thus, both continuity and change are the hallmarks of history (McDowell, 2002).

According to McDowell (2002), historical research does not consist only in fact finding; it is often related to the interrelationship between factual evidence and the way historians interpret this evidence. In Foucauldian understanding, knowledge of the past is an interpretation of the past, always gained from a perspective, values, and interests. In spite of the perspectival aspect of history, history can help us understand and appreciate the elements of the past that have influenced the present, and as McDowell (2002) has argued, appreciate the similarities and differences between the circumstances and conditions which govern both past and present events. Individuals as well as society are surrounded by traces of the past through not only written and printed books, visual records, and artefacts, but also through landscapes. All of these can enrich our understanding of our own society. In addition, history provides a means for us to distinguish myth from evidence. History can be conceptualised as the material outcome of social practices and may be studied through the discourses of the past.

The purpose of historical research is to make sense of a series of events in a specified timeframe, to establish their authenticity, to understand the connection between them, and to interpret their wider significance. From documentary and other sources of evidence available, historical research reconstructs the past by using critical and imaginative skills. Foucauldian concepts are convenient tools to employ in historical research. Such tools are useful for undertaking a careful and critical investigation of the evidence produced of the past; an investigation that includes the motives and interests of specific individuals and groups within a society. Such an investigation involves a number of key elements, including the foreseen and the unpredictable, as well as individual actions and wider social forces.

In addition, this research is seeking an explanation the ways in which power was exercised, in relation to higher education, particularly by authorities in Thai society following the revolution of 1932. Howell and Prevenier (2001) claim that many historians have turned their attention to political revolutions and, as a result, many different interpretations about the nature and importance of these events have been offered. The 1932 revolution, and the aftermath of World War II, were both critical turning-point events for Thailand, both of which had major repercussions on the social, economic, and political fabric of Thai society. Importantly, both marked a point of significant change to higher education in Thailand.

2.5   Data Collection

In this study the data are drawn from both:

(i) historical records; and

(ii) oral accounts

(i) Records drawn from primary and secondary data sources including archival material, publications, and policy documents relevant to higher education were collected. This data set included archival accessions, policy documents and professional literature. The documentary evidence gathered was triangulated with testimony from primary and secondary sources and from policy personnel through in-depth semi-structured interviews. These contemporary viewpoints do not only provide reflections on how past and contemporary debates have influenced contemporary policy; they also provide an account of the effects of policy on society. They are used in this research to provide a complementary voice through which to view social progress and change. Together, these primary and secondary sources assisted in creating a picture of the social and economic dynamics of higher education within Thailand to present day.

2.5.1   Primary sources

Primary sources provide direct evidence of events, recorded by witnesses or recorders who experience those events. Primary sources, including historical annuals, chronicles, newspapers, yearbooks, and policies such as Thai Educational Reform,

Thai National Education Act, the National Economic and Social Development Plans, Educational Policy, were collected from various archival sources. These are the National Archives of Thailand, the National Library of Thailand, and a number of universities. The initial intention of visiting the National Archive of Thailand was to collect data from primary sources to support the information. Since the information was intended to support each period of change, it needed to be complete, cohesive, and reliable.

For the initial period (Early beginnings and Modernisation period), from the National Archive of Thailand, I had hoped to access correspondence between the kings and the Thai people. However, many documents were missing and, thus, could not be included. Thus, the documents from secondary sources such as the notes from contemporary authors, and results of searches of articles published in Thai journals were employed to assist in the analysis. Most of these documents are rarely available beyond the kingdom of Thailand. Seminal documents such as National Economic and Social Development Plans, The National Educational Act, the first and second Long Range Plans on Higher Education were also accessed.

A critical limitation relating to data access occurred at that time of the data collection process. At that time some divisions within the National Archive of Thailand were being renovated. Many important documents were moved to a safe place and were

not available in their new location. This unforeseen event presented a challenge to the data collection which was timetabled to take place over a specific period in Thailand and within a specified budget. In cases where multiple copies of an unavailable document had been made, the National Archive of Thailand arranged for borrowing from other branches and other cities but that arrangement required travel to these other sites. Photocopying of some documents was permitted. The solution was to prioritise those documents of more significance and visit other libraries where some of the documents were held, namely, the libraries at Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University, Kasetsart University, Silpakorn University, and Khon Kaen University. As a result of the changes made to the accession of documents, the original timetable for the data collection plan relating to interviews changed. Some interviews took place before the document accession which was deemed more expedient for the data collection process.

2.5.2   Secondary sources

Secondary sources are those that are produced after events have passed and include published books, monographs, scholarly articles, pamphlets, periodicals, and commissioned research reports. They sometimes offer more than fundamental information: they may provide additional details to support the research objective and offer explanations, for example, as to why a specific university was established at a particular period of time. Every type of university established in Thailand has significant differences from other types and supported the policies of the government

at a particular period of time. Secondary sources used in this research were collected from the libraries in Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University, Kasetsart University, Silpakorn University, Khon Kaen University, Royal Thai Embassy in Wellington, and relevant sources from the Office of Higher Education Commission, and the Ministry of Education in Thailand.

2.6   Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven individuals who a) are or were members of the academic community in Thailand, b) have a sound understanding of Thai history as well as social phenomena and/or c) have experiences and involvement in higher education administration in Thailand. Initially, it was considered that three interviews would be sufficient (see Information Sheet). However, as the research progressed it was deemed useful to obtain a broader perspective from Interviewees across a range of disciplines. Hence the number of Interviewees increased to seven. Interview data from the seven individuals provided reflections, based on experiences and perceptions, on how past events have influenced higher education today. Their viewpoints offered an additional perspective through which to view changes in higher education.

Interviewing, as Scott and Usher (2003) note, "is an essential tool of the researcher in educational enquiry" (p. 108) which provides data that are not always forthcoming

through other methods. Kvale (1996) has argued that an in-depth interview is an exchange of views between an interviewer and interviewee on a specific topic. Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) explain that "the purpose of interviewing people is to find out what is on their minds—what they think or how they feel about something" (p. 446). Cohen et al. (2000) have argued that interviewing is not simply about asking and answering questions, but is also about responding to what is not being said. The use of open-ended questions allowed for the exploration of a topic without direction from the interviewer. The questions also allowed for a greater richness in the responses provided and enabled the development of ideas and cross checking of information from other sources (Scott & Usher, 2003). Since all the respondents answered the same questions, comparability between answers was enhanced (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008).

The individuals interviewed in this research were able to provide an informed view of Thai society as well as offer their interpretation of higher education in Thailand. As a means of gathering data through direct verbal interaction, the interviews provided a medium for interviewees to discuss their personal experiences, their interpretations and their perspectives (Tuckman, 1972). The interviews also became a valuable tool for capturing the attitudes and beliefs of the participants (Fletcher, Zuber-Skerritt, Piggot-Irvine, & Bartlett, 2008). Through both verbal responses and non-verbal gestures and body language, including participants' emotions and

behaviours, the interviews served as a barometer of the level of discomfort or enthusiasm for the topic under discussion. In addition, each interview was completed successfully because it was conducted 'in the moment' and away from distraction.

One interview was conducted by video link at the convenience of the American-based interviewee. The video link eliminated the cost of travel to the site and saved time for both interviewer and interviewee. There were other advantages associated with the video link: the medium served to reduce the amount of 'small talk', irrelevant to the research. Further, in addition to reducing some of the stress often associated with an in-person interview, it also provided transparency of body language and visual clues—aspects of non-verbal communication that advantage in-person interviews but are not possible to attain through the medium of telephone interviews. However, some issues with the video link were experienced. In particular, a connectivity problem arose and the delay in transmission across the internet meant that the interviewee was interrupted from time to time and needed to re-start responses on several occasions.

In addition to disadvantages of video link interviewing, there are more general weaknesses in the use of all forms of interviewing as a data collection method. The most important weakness is the issue of interviewer power. Unless the interviewer takes responsibility for alleviating this issue, the asymmetric power relation between

interviewer and interviewee may impact on the ease of comfort and the level at which the interviewee chooses to volunteer. Providing the participant with some choice, such as choice of interview time and location, appeared to minimise the issue. A second weakness of the semi-structured approach is that it may lack flexibility—"standardised wording of questions may constrain and limit the naturalness and relevance of questions and answers" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008, p. 447). A third significant weakness in this research related to travel costs between interview sites. Because of the costs involved in travelling to different parts of Thailand, the number of participants selected needed to be financially realistic. Further, since the interviewing was conducted only by the researcher and, given the travel required, the logistics of interviewing became a time consuming process. However, the strengths of the interviewing process appeared to outweigh the limitations.

In this research, each of the seven interviewees had a specific area of expertise. These were, namely, history/anthropology, engineering, philosophy of education/social studies/tertiary education, political science, business management, medical science, and psychology. All the interviewees held a high reputation within Thai academic circles. Since none of them was personally known to the interviewer, making initial contact with each required a number of steps. First, it was necessary to find each of the interviewee's affiliation. Then contact was made with their representative or

secretary, to explain the scope of the research in an informal manner. After interest was gained, an official letter and information sheet was sent to each of the interviewees. The duration of the face-to-face individual interviews was between 2-3 hours each. The length of interview reflects both the interest of participants in the research and their tendency to deviate from the question at hand. The interviews were conducted in Bangkok, Lopburi, Maha Sarakham, all in Thailand, and in Palmerston North, New Zealand, as well as in New Jersey in the United States, depending on the location of the interviewees. The first interview was conducted in the office of the interviewee at Lek Prapai Foundation in Bangkok, Thailand. The second interview was conducted in Sathya Sai Alternative School's meeting room in Lopburi, Thailand. The third interview took place in the interviewee's office within the Office of President, Dhurakij Pundit University in Bangkok, Thailand. The fourth interview was undertaken in the office of the interviewee at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand. The fifth interview was conducted in the interviewee's office in Mahasarakham Business School, Mahasarakham University in Mahasarakham, Thailand. The sixth interview took place in the Dining Hall at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. The final interview was conducted through video call between the interviewer in New Zealand and the interviewee in New Jersey, the United States.

The seven individual semi-structured interviews were conducted individually face-to-face (one by video link) and were conducted in Thai language. Face-to-face medium offered more channels of communication (for example, body language) and the use of Thai language assisted the interviewee for whom Thai is his or her first language. A translation into English was conducted later. The setting chosen by the interviewee provided each with the opportunity to express their own ideas thoughtfully without constraint (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2010). Specifically, a number of questions were provided regarding the development of higher education in Thailand in relation to, for example, the context, social changes, and obstacles of development. Interviewees were invited to share their thoughts and observations. The interview guide was developed paying particular attention to the objectives of this research. Thus the participants were asked questions relating to the history of higher education and their experience of present-day practices and structures of higher education. They were also asked about their aspirations for the future of higher education in Thailand.

The interview schedule was as follows:

I) From your perspective, explain the development of higher education in Thailand.

- What changes to higher education in Thailand occurred up to the present?

- Why did these changes occur? What were the causes?

- How can you divide the periods of changes?

- What are the significances/highlights of changes in each period?

2) What are the factors influencing these changes?

- What are internal and external factors driving higher education in Thailand to change?

- What are the reasons that the internal and external influences occurred?

- Are there any relationships between those factors (internal and external factors) or not?

- In each period, what influences appear similar in relation to changes in higher education within Thailand?

- In each period, what influences appear different in relation to changes in higher education within Thailand?

3) What are the effects of these changes on Thai society?

- In your view, how have these changes affected higher education in Thailand?

4) From the development we have talked about, what is your prediction for higher education in the future? (Perhaps several ways)

- What are solutions and suggestions for higher education in the future?

- Overall, what are your views about the entire picture of higher education in Thailand?

- What directions do you want higher education in Thailand to take?

2.7   Data Analysis

An analysis of the data was undertaken to interpret and explain social processes and practices that influence higher education in Thailand. It assisted in finding out how higher education in Thailand has changed, the reasons why higher education in Thailand has changed, and in the identification of authorities and agencies who drove the change. The analysis, informed by Foucault's theory of language and social power, allowed me to investigate the explicit and implicit messages underwriting written documents and the clear and hidden meanings of individuals as they reflected on changes to higher education up to present time.

This research draws on the concepts of discourse, power and knowledge as depicted in Figure 2. It uses these concepts to explore change in higher educational within Thailand and to explore the effects of change on individuals from the interrelation of these three concepts.
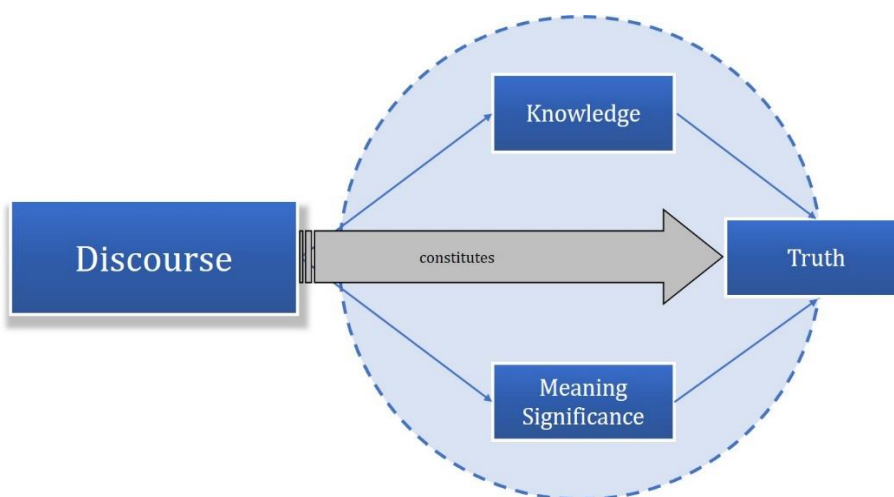
Figure 2: The Constitution of Truth through Discourse

This research takes an inductive analytical approach. The data including interview transcripts were read repeatedly to derive themes through my interpretation of the data. The interviews were transcribed and verified by professional transcribers for accuracy.

In order to begin to identify the significant issues of the topic under investigation, the interviewing schedule was employed as an analytical guide. In the process of selecting pieces of text and analysing them in generalised categories careful attention to context was required. Such attention sought to avoid the problem of decontextualisation that occurs when the meaning of the particular text being analysed is altered following the removal of a selection of text from its original context (Gibson & Brown, 2009). To ensure validity and reliability of the research

transcripts, the interviewees were given the opportunity to check their interview transcripts before they were used in the thesis.

Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) argue that an analysis based on Foucauldian concepts allows us to see the relationship between language and truth. What I am interested in finding out is how discursive practices related to higher education in Thailand were organised and articulated. To do that it was necessary to analyse who wrote or spoke those texts into existence, what their positions were, what the contexts was, for what purpose and what the political effects were (Walshaw, 2013). In doing that I was able to offer an explanation of what changes occurred, what influenced those changes, whose knowledge was legitimated, and who was affected by those changes.

2.8   Ethical Issues

An application to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee was made for clearance to conduct this study. In relation to the first data collection method involving the access and analysis of documents, the risk of harm was assessed to be low. However, in relation to the second data collection method of interviewing, ethical considerations needed to be addressed. The seven interviewees must be clearly informed about the research purpose prior to the interview and informed of their rights. The consent process must be free from coercion. Participants must have a clear understanding of what their role is and how their data will be used. They must be aware that they have the right to withdraw at any point and that neither

participation nor non-participation has an impact on them in their workplace. Confidentiality and anonymity must be assured. They must be informed that all raw data collected will be accessible only to the researcher and supervisors. At the completion of the interviews, each participant must be sent the transcript of their interview for verification and for the opportunity to remove, add, or alter any information recorded. Approval was duly given by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix I).

Prior to undertaking this study and working with all participants I ensured that all potential ethical issues were considered. With this research, several aspects required careful thought, including the consent process and protection of rights. The consent process was free from coercion and I was confident that the participants had developed a clear understanding of the purpose of the research, what their role would be and how their data would be used. They were also made aware that they had the right to withdraw at any point. Privacy, confidentiality was assured and preservation of anonymity was assured as far as possible. The research did not involve deception. The participants were also informed that all raw data collected would be accessible only to me as a researcher and to my supervisors. All this information was made clear to participants prior to their signing their consent forms.

At the completion of the interviews, each participant was sent the transcript of their individual interview, not only in Thai but also in the English version, for their verification and for their opportunity to remove or change any information recorded.

2.8.1 Informed consent

All participants and authorities contacted, including the Heads of the School, received a copy of the Information Sheet outlining the aims of the research and describing the requirements of participants (see Appendix 2). This included the estimated time that would be required for taking part in the research. In addition to the written Information Sheet, the participants were given a verbal explanation of the study prior to the first interview. The purpose of the research was emphasised so that the participants were clear about how the information they provided will be used. Informed consent should be based on the understanding that participation is voluntary. The principle of informed and voluntary consent was observed and all participants signed a form consenting to their participation (see Appendix 3). The consent forms were planned in storage in the office of my primary supervisor, and separate from the data collected. The Information Sheet also contained the address and contact number of the primary supervisor, in case any participant had concerns about the conduct of the researcher or about the research itself.

2.8.2 Privacy

The interviews were conducted in a space and location chosen by the interviewees. Most were conducted in the privacy of the participants' offices.

2.8.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

All measures were taken to ensure confidentiality. The confidentiality of the participants' responses was protected and the anonymity of their institution was protected by excluding information that might identify them. Care was taken not to identify the participants' names or details. Their names were anonymised in the thesis. The participants were also given the opportunity to read the interview transcripts so that they could edit or delete any information that might reveal their identity. All data were stored securely in accordance with the university's ethics committee policy. Access to the transcripts was restricted to me and my supervisors. The information will be stored securely on my personal files for a period of five years, in accordance with the ethics committee regulations, and after that period of time, will be destroyed.

CHAPTER 3
WESTERN MODELS AND HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THAILAND
BEFORE AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER 1932

3.1   Introduction

Thai university education has, during the 19th to 20th century, been directly or indirectly influenced by often competing western models of university education. For this reason, it is necessary to review, briefly, western developments in university education in Europe and in the North America. The history of higher education is relatively complex because each country had its unique cultural and religious origins. In addition, the purposes of knowledge creation for citizens in different countries have varied over time. The historical evidence points to the western origins of higher education in Europe during the ninth century. After that, higher education spread through a large number of countries during the colonisation era. In the case of Thailand[1], even though Thailand has never been directly colonised, western influences are apparent in the country and these influences include influences within higher education.

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[1] To assist readers' understanding, this thesis uses the terms 'Thailand' and 'Thai' consistently across the research period. It should be noted that before 1939, Thailand was known as 'Siam' and the Thai people were known as 'Siamese'.

This chapter will investigate early western models of higher education in Europe in order to set a context for the models developed in Thailand during the 19th to the 20th centuries. It will then explore the history of higher education in Thailand from its early beginnings to its modernisation period (1889-1931). Finally, it will investigate the critical period of the People's Revolution and the consequences of that event for higher education in Thailand.

3.2   Early Western Models of Higher Education

The purposes of the higher education in Europe varied depending on circumstances and on the perspectives of political leaders in each period of time. Lloyd (2004) has argued that in the first century BC, young Romans from wealthy families travelled to Athens for their education to learn about both philosophy and rhetoric precisely because of the educational benefits for a career in politics or in law. Later, in the Medieval Period (the Middle Ages), a function of universities was to secure and control the future membership of the legal and political professions. Another function was to provide a fundamental education, the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). These different conceptualisations of the purpose of the university led to the development of different models of higher education. One model was established to satisfy a thirst for knowledge while another model was established to train citizens for professional careers.

3.2.1 The university as a medium for training the mind

The Renaissance model began in Europe with the Greek philosophers and constituted the medieval university known as the liberal arts (Nussbaum, 1998). The curriculum of the early European universities was organised to train students for the professions of medicine, law, and theology with a view to students developing into 'rounded' citizens. The curriculum focused on literary arts: grammar, logic, and rhetoric as well as mathematical arts: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Nelson (2001) explains that the curriculum consisted of the following:

> …[t]heir object was to train priests, and their curriculum was designed to do that and little more. The course of study consisted of two parts, the grammar school in which the trivium (the "three- part curriculum," from which our word "trivial" is derived), consisting of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Grammar trained the student to read, write, and speak Latin, the universal language of the European educated classes; rhetoric taught the art of public speaking and served as an introduction to literature; and logic provided the means of demonstrating the validity of propositions, as well as serving as an introduction to the quadrivium (the "four-part curriculum") of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

Oxford and Cambridge in the United Kingdom are examples of early European universities which had clear historical roots. Oxford, Britain's oldest university, was found in 1096 (University of Oxford, 2017). This university has had a long history of supporting royalty and established religious, and political orders. Even in the 19th

century, more than half of the students were sons (not daughters) of professionals, typically of Anglican ministers and after graduation, three-quarters of these students became professionals. Half of them were destined for the Anglican clergy (Curthoys, 2000). The list of distinguished scholars includes many people who have made major contributions to politics, the sciences, medicine, and literature, as well as world leadership. The records of the University of Oxford clarify that "…Oxford has educated many notable alumni, including 28 Nobel laureates, 27 Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and many heads of state and government around the world" (University of Oxford, 2014).

On the other hand, Cambridge was founded in 1209 and emerged from an association of scholars who left the University of Oxford due to the violence that erupted during a townspeople's dispute. Town and gown has metonymical meaning; 'town' stands for the non-academic population and 'gown' refers to the university community. The crisis of 'town and gown' can be explained as follows:

> Conflict [between town and gown] was inevitable in the medieval university towns, where two separately governed bodies with different priorities and loyalties shared the same restricted space. Moreover, violence was commonplace in medieval life, not only between scholars and townsmen, but also among ordinary citizens, as well as between scholars from different regions of Europe who attended the universities. Violent confrontations between town and gown erupted on a recurring basis. One of the most famous was the Battle of St. Scholastica Day, which occurred on 10 February 1355, at the University

of Oxford. An argument in a tavern – a familiar scenario – escalated into a protracted two-day battle in which local citizens armed with bows attacked the academic village, killing and maiming scores of scholars. The rioters were severely punished, and thenceforth, the Mayor and Bailiffs had to attend a Mass for the souls of the dead every St. Scholastica's Day thereafter and to swear an annual oath to observe the university's privileges. For 500 years, Oxford observed a day of mourning for that tragedy. (University of Cambridge, 2017)

Oxford and Cambridge, as two ancient western universities, shared many common features. However, while Oxford graduates often become key players on the national and international economic stage, Cambridge graduates tend to hold a higher number of seats in parliament and many receive higher awards at the national level (University of Cambridge, 2017).

These two examples are representative of ancient university models retaining their high prestige. They served the thirst for knowledge of people who were destined for powerful positions in society. The point to note here is that most of those people descended from the nobilities and upper classes. That means the opportunity to access this kind of learning was not available to everyday citizens.

…[t]he English university was a school of good manners and taste, which aimed to shape its scholars' character, beliefs and ideals in an aristocratic mould. This was the process that transformed the old *noblesse d'épée* – 'nobility of the sword' – into a new noblesse de robe

– 'nobility of gown'. Even today, Oxbridge graduates gain privileged access to the highest reaches of power and society. (Tejerina, 2011, p. 158)

A further example is University of Bologna in Italy, founded in 1088 and considered as the oldest university in continuous operation (Tejerina, 2011). The university has a long-standing reputation for the teaching of civil law. Indeed, it was central in the development of Medieval Roman law according to the motto; *'Petrus ubique pater legume Bononia mater'* in Latin which, when translated to English, means *"St. Peter is the father of all places and Bologna the mother of the law."*

The university emerged when masters and scholars, whose expertise was linguistics (trivium: grammar, logic, and rhetoric), dedicated themselves to law in order to protect foreign students against city laws that punished foreigners, collectively, for crimes and debts. Additionally, as a result of its dedication to civil law, the university was well-positioned to bargain with the city during controversies between the state and the church (University of Bologna, 2018).

Right from the beginning, students hired scholars from the city to teach them but they paid the teachers a gift. The scholars could impose their demands on the course's content as well as determine the teachers' payment. A professor's tenure was determined by an elected council or by student representatives who governed the institution. However, in time, the professors formed a College of Teachers to

establish their rights. Any disagreement between council and the College was resolved through the intervention of city municipality. The professors were subsequently paid a taxable salary and, with this significant change from payment of gifts to salary, the chartered public university was instituted (Long, 1994).

The University of Bologna has maintained a high reputation since its establishment. Many well-known scholars are listed as alumni. For instance, Francesco Petraca, an Italian poet in Renaissance and one of the earliest humanists in the 14th century which was the period for artists; Nicolaus Copernicus, a mathematician and astronomer who, in the 15th century during the period of experimental science, formulated a model of the universe that placed the sun rather than the earth at the centre; and Luigi Galvani, an Italian physicist and philosopher who made important discoveries during the 18th century Industrial Revolution (University of Bologna, 2018). Many other scholars contributed their knowledge to humanity. Consequently, the University of Bologna is perceived as one of the leading academic institutions in Italy and Europe as well as the most prestigious historical Italian university.

3.2.2 The university for professional careers

A further model of university that emerged in Europe was focused on training people for specific professional careers. The establishment of this elite part of higher education in France, in particular, emphasised the training of professionals who were destined to serve the state through administration, engineering, or the military

(Nybom, 2003). This model stood outside the main framework of the French public university system. As Power (2003) has explained "…[i]n the Middle Ages, the higher education system revolved around the university but from the Renaissance onwards, the royal power felt a need to create more specialized institutions. This trend continued particularly in the 18th century" (p. 1).

For example, the Grandes Écoles originated in the 18th century. Its model, dedicated to an academy for military. After the revolution in 1789, society needed engineers, architects, physicians, lawyers, teachers, and officials (Langlois, 1894). Given the highly selective and competitive entry process of the Grandes Écoles, the number of students was small. The entry process involved passing an examination after which students would be officially considered as entering public service. According to Korchia (personal communication, October 1, 2017), "in order to gain a place at the university, perspective students were required to pass a test. Sometimes, there were 10,000 students preparing and sitting the test when only 100 seats were offered each year." Competition was fierce, particularly since there were low fees and in some cases, no fees. Indeed, students were often paid monthly stipends (Power, 2003).

There is no doubt, according to Power (2003), that late 19th century France had the best system of higher technical and scientific education in Europe. During that time, a number of institutions were established to support industry and commerce. Mathias and Postan (1978) point out that "…[b]etween 1832 and 1870,

the Central School of Arts and Manufactures produced 3,000 engineers, and served as a model for most of the industrialised countries. Until 1864, a quarter of its students came from abroad" (p. 313). The system also existed in former French colonies including Switzerland and Italy. The influence of this system has been strong throughout the world as can be seen in the term 'Poly Technic Institute' in China, the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, New Zealand, and also in Thailand.

At present, Power (2003) notes, students who graduate from the Grandes Écoles often seem to be offered good conditions of work in their contracts. However, Korchia (personal communication, October 1, 2017) has a different perspective about these schools:

> …[t]his extremely competitive system has not proven to be very efficient in terms of quality. Furthermore, the content of the education given in schools might train people for nothing; what does train the students is the system itself: the competition to enter, the competition to maintain in the school, the learning of organising themselves etc. And the consciousness (induced) of being part of elite of the people who are going to rule the country in a specific way.

A further major change occurred at the end of the 19th century following the end of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. The arrival of new civil universities came with

an emphasis on sciences and engineering. Over time, the wind of change continued to blow and, after World War II, the United States became an influential nation. Several countries adopted American systems, including the adoption of the higher education system (Anderson, 2010).

3.3   The New Movement Developing in the United States

The United States is a huge country in terms of area and population. It is the third-largest country by area and the third-most populous country in the world. It leads the world with its economy, as evidenced by its GDP, and is typically perceived as a top-level military power in the world. Thus, it is a leader of some political, cultural, and scientific force internationally.

In relation to education, the United States system is largely independent from federal government regulation and widely decentralised. The system is also extremely diverse and complex, consisting of public and private universities that might be either large or small, secular or religiously affiliated, as well as urban or rural.

Higher education in the United States emerged from colonial roots. According to Tejerina (2011), in the late 17th – 18th century, one-third of the educated men who settled in North America from Europe had been educated at Edinburgh and Glasgow universities. Most of them emigrated to Virginia and Maryland. Princeton, Yale, William and Mary College, Harvard and the College of Philadelphia, later to become

the University of Pennsylvania, were all influenced by British professors. Evidence shows that the first college in the United States was established by a religious group for the clergy. Harvard College was created by colonists in 1636 by New England settlers, who had affiliations to the British universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with a view towards developing a learned clergy and an educated civil leadership (Morison, 1998). Thomas Jefferson, who supported opportunities for higher education, had argued that the emerging democracy of America needed educated citizens just as much as the growing market economy needed a skilled workforce. The plan took seed when Abraham Lincoln signed the Morill Land-Grant Act in 1862, donating public lands to several states, leading to the provision of colleges for Agriculture and Mechanical Arts.

According to Eckel and King (2017), the United States higher education's character is influenced by three major philosophical beliefs which consist of 1) Jeffersonian ideas, 2) capitalism, and 3) equality.

Jeffersonian notions relating to limited central governance guide a range of higher education institutions and continue to protect these institutions from the levels of government control. Thomas Jefferson had a strong vision of an ideal education system which has greatly influenced American academia. He wanted people to be able to think and act independently of pressure to continue their education throughout life. His first proposal to install one of his ideals was a bill describing

how education could protect the government from undemocratic rule if the majority of the public was moderately educated.

The second characteristic of higher education in the United States is capitalism. The belief is that high quality higher education is achieved through competition. As Paschal (2016) highlights:

> …[t]he creation of the North-American research university (both public and private) was possible only within a capitalist world: the knowledge and labour that world made possible organized and influenced were a direct result of the forces unleashed by industrial capitalism in the US in the mid-19th century.

From records, it can be established that there were 4,495 colleges or universities or junior colleges in the United States in 2010 (Degree-Granting Institutions and Branches by Type and Control of Institution and State of Jurisdiction, 2010). Principled by the ideals of capitalism, all of these institutions compete against each other to best approximate the 'standard' developed by the Association of American Universities (AAU) in 1900. The educational plan makes provision for each state be free and flexible in terms of administration and management.

AAU was originally established to raise academic standards and ensure doctoral degrees earned in the United States gained respect internationally. It began with

fourteen members consisting of the University of California, the University of Chicago, Clark University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Stanford University, University of Wisconsin and Yale University. Two decades later, the state universities of the Midwest including the University of Illinois, Indiana University, Northwestern University, Purdue University, the Ohio State University, the University of Iowa, and Michigan State University; and in the South, Duke University, the University of Virginia, the University of North Carolina, and Vanderbilt University also joined the AAU. After 1960, membership extended to the South and the West. The universities participating were Washington University of St Louis, Rice University, Tulane University, the University of Washington, the University of Colorado, and the University of Kansas.

The third philosophical belief on which universities within the United States are built is a commitment to equal opportunity and social mobility. Historically, higher education was a highly stratified activity, designed for the elite class, and based on gender, religion, ethnicity, and social class. Jefferson strongly advocated for equal opportunity of education, and began taking action to make it a reality. For example, he suggested that a scholarship system be established to allow a handful of underprivileged students with intellect and potential to receive the same education.

Later, during the 20th century, economic and social changes transformed higher education into a pathway for the middle class, women and minorities.

In the early years of the twentieth century, the characteristics and purposes of universities in the United States were unclear. According to Flexner (1930), universities in the United States were hindered by their indiscriminate growth and a tendency to offer degree programmes in too many fields. As Flexner (1930) has emphasised, "…the colleges do not know what they wish: do they wish brains? do they wish industry? do they wish scholarship? do they wish character, or do they wish 'qualities that are fit for leadership'?" (p. 52).

Eckel and King (2017) have shown how the United States higher education system was derived from both the structure of the undergraduate college in Britain and the research university in Germany. This point might go some way to explain why a group of scholars, under Nazi persecution during the 1930s and 1940s, were able to flee Germany with the assistance of the United States Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars. The goal of the committee was to help Nazi-persecuted scholars find employment at universities in the United States. During World War II, German scholars such as Hans Bethe (nuclear physicist), Kurt Lewin (psychologist), Hannah Arendt (political theorist), Herbert Marcuse (philosopher, sociologist, and political theorist), Paul Tillich (Christian existentialist philosopher),

and Albert Einstein (theoretical physicist), all made groundbreaking contributions to the United States in their various fields (Northeastern University, 2017).

During the first half of the twentieth century, universities in the United States were endowed by non-profit philanthropic foundations. From this phenomenon emerged the culture of grant allocation as well as the improvement of research activities especially in medical fields and sciences. Undeniably, higher education was influenced by economic demands. When industrial production grew, departments relevant to science training were also in demand. Handford (2017) points out that by World War II, a degree became a ticket for a better life. The rise of capitalism impacted the educational market and the demand for higher education increased. Working class parents conceived of higher education as the ideal goal for their children (Tejerina, 2011).

All of these factors in western countries influenced Thai higher education, not only in an advantageous way. In the next section, the background and significant factors that led to establishment of higher education and universities in Thailand from its beginnings to the years following the Second World War are described and explained.

3.4   The Development of Higher Education within Thailand

The main purpose of higher education in the developing years in Thailand was different from the key purpose of higher education in the United States. It was also

different, in the main, from the key purpose of that in Europe. Further interest is the point that in Thailand the purpose of higher education varied over time, principally because the strategy and direction of Thai higher education has been at the whim of political interference. Such interference has often involved external influences in each period of time.

It was in the late 19th century that higher education in Thailand was formally established. However, during this period the opportunity to access higher education was the sole prerogative of the elite class. The production of qualified human resources to serve the needs of the government was paramount in Thailand and mirrored the purpose of the formation of universities in the South of Italy. There were other synergies between Thailand and Italy, not the least of which was a political system ruled by the king and royal family. In addition, both countries perceived themselves as lagging behind the rest of the world in higher education. At the beginning, the course of study in Thailand focused on the mission of government. The curriculum expanded to include more disciplines to meet the expanding needs of the kingdom (Chulalongkorn University, 2017).

3.5   Higher Education in Thailand Pre-1932

If the official commencement of Thailand's higher education is dated from the late 19th century, its informal history began many centuries earlier. During the 13th century King Rakhamhaeng the Great is said to have inspired the development of the

Thai alphabet—an initiative which set the scene for formal education. Macann (1997) explains that in its formative years, higher education was inherited from ancient traditions and although commoners were able to participate, it was preserved primarily for noble and royal offspring, especially males. The establishment of this tradition was intended to support privileged learners in developing skills for professional and administration careers. While the palace was the site designated for princes and male aristocracy to receive education, Buddhist monastery provided the location for the commoners to learn Pali, the language of the Buddhist texts, and Thai. As in the early stages of development in Europe, education was taught by monks, the difference being that in Thailand the monks were Buddhist and in Europe the monks were Christian.

The teaching principles and curricula were informed by local context and needs (Sinlarat, 2004). As Sanlayakamtorn et al. (1985) have explained:

> …[t]he process of knowledge access in this period was by traditional method. Monasteries and royal palaces were the learning centers. The offspring (males) were always encouraged to study with monks at the monastery as the 'monk's assistant'. The curriculum taught by monks was related to Buddhism, language, and literature. Later, the professional skills for future careers were usually passed on to the next generation by their own ancestors or by the skillful educators and often took place in their own residences. (p. 7)

Tunya (1999) provides evidence that education developed over time to include four settings for teaching and learning: residences, palaces, monasteries, and experts' houses. Residences were places where parents as well as extended family taught their children desirable values and behaviours. In the palace, philosophers and experts with the status of noblemen passed on to royalty their knowledge relating to official ceremony, royal art, ancient architecture, and royal affairs for the following generation. The monastery provided education for commoners, in addition to offering private tuition to the children of the nobility. It was a site where commoners could learn a range of practical skills. They could also learn about morality from the monks. Kotkam (2000) describes the aims of the monastic education as "essentially ethical and religious, with literacy as a preparation for the monastic life" (p. 202). Houses of experts or noblemen were settings that provided specialised skills for the offspring of noblemen. In these settings, students were educated in the manner of life-long learning.

Higher education was structured on the basis of gender and status in society. Amornsirisombon and Pattaravanich (2007) argue that male students in the military learned about martial art, boxing, swordplay, weaponry, strategy on war, horse riding and elephant forcing, whereas, males in civil service might choose to develop knowledge relevant to three Vidas of Hindu religion, as well as astrology, archaic treatment, Thai ancient painting, sculpture, handicraft, architecture, or irrigation. Females from the upper classes learned how to be good housewives and how to

become skillful in home-making such as cooking or needlework, how to develop good manners, how to use ancient medicine and how to conduct business exchanges. Moreover, upper class young women learned several languages, for example, Pali, Sanskrit, French, Cambodian, Burmese, and Chinese. They also learned English. However, what is remembered most by contemporary educators is the focus on religion. As Interviewee I explains:

…higher education in Thailand was based on religious teachings. In the past, there was an examination for monks whose level equalled PhD degree compared to the present. Apparently, temples settled by Buddhist were central to higher education. That was the reason why there were many temples established—in order to provide education for people. (Interviewee I, February 24, 2016)

Similarly, Interviewee III describes higher education in its formative years as follows: "…the way to obtain knowledge was to go to the temples and to learn from monks or seniors who were experts. The given knowledge was local wisdom" (Interviewee III, March 6, 2016).

Wyatt (1967) has proposed that the needs and requirements of the kingdom were key to what citizens might learn and what kinds of skills they should develop. Knowledge and skills were determined by kings because at that time the political and governance system of Thailand was a monarchy. Consequently, the king determined

what would happen in a particular period. Sanlayakamtorn et al. (1985) explain further:

> …[o]nce the western arts and innovations were brought to Thailand through missionaries, King Rama IV was afraid that the influence of Christianity would replace the traditional Buddhism which was considered as a root of the country. Therefore, the printers were ordered and imported to Thailand by the king in order to print out the philosophical doctrines of Buddhism and distribute to people competing with the Holy Bible of Christianity. (p. 7)

Boonnak (1985) has drawn attention to the fact that during this period lower classes did not have the opportunity to study, and if they did want to study, their status had to be promoted to the upper classes. The only way in which status could be elevated was through involvement in the army and by accruing an outstanding reputation on the battlefield. In that case, men could be elevated as noblemen. However, there was no assumption that all members of the lower classes wished to be promoted.

3.6   Modernisation Period (1889-1931)

The beginning of higher education in Thailand was officially recognised in the late 19th century when the first professional college was elevated to become a higher education institution (MUA, 1998; OHEC, 2010a). From the initial period of establishment, King Rama V sought to avoid the threat of European colonialism by

attempting to create a greater balance amongst classes in society. His efforts contributed to what is known as the Emancipation of 1905 (Macann, 1997; Wyatt, 1967). The period ended with a large-scale social revolution in Thailand. It was this period that witnessed the emergence of additional higher educational institutions within Thailand. However, rather than involving the creation of new institutions or universities, the process involved upgrading the former professional schools to high-level educational institutions (Sinlarat, 2004). Sanlayakamtorn et al. (1985) explain further:

> …[t]he strategies that King Rama V employed to use in the difficult time during the colonisation period were to be friendly with many countries in Europe and improve the country according to the way the Europeans were. Social structure and education were the issues. It was said that this period was considered as 'modernization' whose definition was similar to 'westernization' in this sense. At the same time, the king also travelled to many countries, for instance Singapore, Myanmar, and India in order to learn their administration. In addition, the king's sons and royal family including many scholars were sent to study in Europe in order to adopt innovation and knowledge and adapt to use in Thailand. (p. 10)

Both King Rama IV (1851-1868) and King Rama V (1868 - 1910) were key figures in this period. Both had a broad vision for education and controlled the political and governance systems. Their vision included the education abroad of many members of the royal family, as well as many scholars. While education was not formalised

and while there was no official curriculum, the subjects and content taught aimed at developing specialised skills. Teaching was based on the transmission approach where students memorised what teachers said, imitated what teachers did, and practised frequently (Sinlarat, 2004). Sinlarat (2004) has argued that both King Rama IV and King Rama V wished to support citizens to study in order for them to become as knowledgeable as 'foreigners', but in the 'Thai tradition'.

Since King Rama V visited many foreign countries, he had the opportunity to observe the expertise and knowledge which those countries had developed. Nakhonsub (2012) has emphasised that "…[t]he influence of visiting many countries inspired King Rama V, the first king of Thailand who travelled abroad, to take the western principles and styles of thinking in order to govern and administrate Thailand substantially" (p. 30). Wishing to generate knowledgeable and informed civil servants, he established many ministries. These included the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Royal Household, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Ministry of Public Instruction and Religion. It was this last Ministry to which educational affairs belonged (MUA, 1998).

In addition, King Rama V sought to upgrade the social status of lower classes by educating them in the western style, despite the fact that the kingdom was only

beginning to be influenced by western cultures. Western influences were given a clear expression when the king decreed that all citizens in every class of society from king and royal family to citizens, in general, should have the same standard of education (Ek-oun, 1999). The intention was to make high-level educational opportunities available to all citizens to improve their skills for future careers in either the professional and administrative fields. The king's intention was, arguably, advanced for the time.

However, the ambitious plan during this initial stage of higher education development did not come to fruition. Higher education institutions were primarily aimed at training only some individuals for employment within the expanded government civil service. There is evidence that those schools included a medical school, Siriraj Hospital, in 1889, a law school in the Ministry of Justice in 1897, the Civil Service College in 1902, and the Engineering School at Hor Wang in 1913 (MUA, 1998). Despite the best intentions of the two kings, students in the institutions of higher education, however, continued to be drawn from nobility and royalty and the upper classes of society (Macann, 1997).

Thailand's first university, Chulalongkorn University, was established in 1917. At that time, as Watson (1981) has noted, Thailand was in the thoes of emerging from a feudal system towards the creation of a modern state. Chulalongkorn initially comprised a separate civil service college, a medical college and an engineering school.

In keeping with Thai educational traditions, until 1927, the institution was not open to female students. Rather, its objective was to educate future male leaders of society and to train civil servants for service in government departments. Described as a "professional training school for government" (Ketudat, 1972), Chulalongkorn's mission, as Nimmanheminda (1970) has explained was first and foremost:

> …to train civil servants to serve numerous branches of government of the country which was emerging… as a modern state and concurrently fighting extremely hard to survive and to keep intact her age long independence….The university established at that time was meant to meet the manpower needs as required in an attempt to run the country, fully determined to maintain its own sovereignity. (Nimmanheminda, 1970)

At that time, the European higher education system was the model for the Thai higher education system. Thus, Chulalongkorn University was characterised as an elite institution, whose sole purpose was to educate the ruling class to serve in modern bureaucracy (Wyatt, 1967). If its purpose, as well as its character and entry criteria, might have undergone enormous transformations over time, its standing and prestige within the nation remains unchanged.

3.7   The Revolution Period (1932) and the Immediate Years Following

Arguably, the most significant period of change to higher education in Thailand followed the Thai Revolution of 1932. In the Thai revolution of 1932, when the

political system transferred from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, the new government established a committee to draw up a national education development plan which included universities' establishment in Bangkok and main cities throughout Thailand (Baker & Phongpaichit, 2005). The opportunities for citizens to study at the tertiary level broadened. More universities were established to serve a wider group of people, not only for the upper classes as before. The courses and programmes emphasised nationalisation—an emphasis adopted from Europe—through the elites, including senior military officers, and scholars who had been sent to study in western countries. As Lao (2015) has argued "…given that most Thai princes and aristocrats went to study in Europe at the turn of the modernisation period, Thailand emulated the European models in terms of public administration and higher education" (p. 39).

The genesis of the Revolution can be traced, in part, to international opportunities for Thai citizens. The influence of foreign practices became apparent when individuals who had received scholarships to study abroad returned home. Making comparisons between western ways and Thai ways, many became dissatisfied with the Thai political and governance system and sought to change it. The resulting national revolution pressed for major changes (Wyatt, 2003).

The role of the higher education institution or university was already set in place before the Thai Revolution of 1932. The development of formal education in the

period of King Rama V (1868-1910) contributed to the development of more opportunities for citizens through formal education. In addition, the concept of constitutional monarchy in Thailand and the parliamentary system had been broadened. Mahidol Adunyadej, the Prince Father, was instrumental in improving the educational administration system of Chulalongkorn between 1928 and 1932 (Sinlarat, 2015).

In 1927, students who had studied abroad and who wished to change systems in Thailand gathered together in secret. These people, known as 'Khana Ratsadon' or 'People's Party', were from both the military faction and the civil faction of the country. The party eventually included 102 members. The key promotors were Pridi Panomyong as a head of civil faction, a Law student who had studied at the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris, Lieutenant Plaek Khittasangkha, and later Luang Phibulsonggram, an army officer who had graduated from the School of Applied Artillery of France. Colonel Phahon Phonphayuhasena (Phot Phahonyothin), the head of the military faction and the leader of the People's Party, had graduated from the Prussian Military Academy, Germany (Banomyong, 2016).

After the Thai Revolution of 1932, the People's Party established the following 'Six Principles' to govern the country:

    1) to maintain the supreme power of the Thai people;

    2) to maintain national security;

3) to maintain the economic welfare of the Thai people in accordance to the National Economic project;

4) to project the equality of the Thai people;

5) to maintain the people's rights and liberties; and

6) to provide public education for all citizens

According to the Six Principles declared in 1932, education was the most effective way to change the political system (Thamrongthanyawong, 2006). It was believed that if people were educated, they would understand the new political system and would participate in the process of state development. From the doctrine of the Thai Revolution, Phraya Manopakorn Nititada, the first Prime Minister of Thailand, proclaimed that every level of education would be expanded and improved to the same level as education in civilised countries (Pongpanich, 1971).

The revolutionists (Khana Ratsadon' or 'People's Party') declared that more equitable provision of education was necessary. They argued that citizens had to be educated to the utmost of their abilities. When educational provision was expanded and aligned with the plan for economic and social development of people's party, they argued, Thailand would be on a par with civilised countries (Thumrongthanyawong, 2006). At the same time, a need was expressed (Kasetsiri, n.d.) that political leaders and civil servants be educated about the principles of democracy.

Following the Revolution, the social system changed dramatically. A long-established tradition that supported the education of the upper classes changed to wider inclusion. Interviewee I explains further:

> …*after the revolution in 1932, there were various departments and programmes created in a few universities. The idea was to disseminate information about democracy as well as to convince people in the shift from monarchy to democracy by giving them new knowledge.* (Interviewee I, February 24, 2016)

The middle classes were more openly included in educational provision, for the expressed purpose of fostering national development. As opportunities for citizens to study at the higher level widened, several new institutions were established in 1943, and the content changed to an emphasis on politics, agriculture, medicine, and arts, in line with the new policies developed after the Revolution in 1932 (MUA, 1998). Three colleges were elevated to university status in a relatively short period of time. In 1934 Thammasart University was founded, offering specialist instruction in political science and law. The University of Medical Sciences (Mahidol University), founded in 1942 and specialising in medical care, was directed by the Ministry of Public Health (Watson, 1981). In 1943 Kasetsart University was established to focus on agriculture. The objective of these institutions was, similarly, to produce competent personnel in specialised disciplines for government service and administration (MUA, 1998).

Higher education in Thailand was driven by the political goals of the People's Revolution. The evidence reveals that students from the elite classes enrolled at Chulalongkorn University. This particular University was founded as a means to shape the intellect required for work in the civil service and government. Thammasat University, on the other hand, focused on law and was designed principally for students from the middle classes. It has been argued Thammasat University was used by Pridi Banomyong as a political tool to convey his ideals. As Interviewee III explains:

> …in the reign of King Rama VII (1925-1935), Pridi Banomyong, who had begun to assemble people as 'Khana Ratsadon' or the 'People's Party' to replace the absolute monarchy with constitutional monarchy, established Thammasat University in order to support his ideas about political issues. (Interviewee III, March 6, 2016)

The People's Party chose these three colleges to upgrade as universities. However, since all of them were located in the capital city, the Party's decision did not align with the proposal to decentralise. Thus, it could be claimed that this process was on enactment of power that had previously been exercised in the former political system. The proposal to educate all people in order that they contribute to society was, likely, too idealistic, precisely because the power accrued by knowledge continued to belong to the upper classes and the nobility even though, for all intents and purposes, the

monarchy did not exist. The establishment of these universities did not widen access to knowledge.

Universities were the political means by which the people of Thailand were made to understand that the kingdom had changed in a 'progressive' and western way. At that time, Thai people believed that various sections of society were still discriminated against, and many students from all social classes were prevented from enrolment in further study. In response, the People's Party emphasised the goal of equality amongst Thai people, "…[4] to protect the equality of Thai people" (Banomyong, 2016, p. 50). The overriding task was to convince the general population that it was important to study to enhance future opportunities and their personal quality of life. By that means, knowledge became a power to control society. However, it was promoted as a two-way process to the effect that, if people had knowledge, they also could participate in decision-making and negotiate. This notion allowed people to believe in the importance of higher education and, as a result, the university became symbolic a better personal as well as social future.

Although the intention of the People's Party was to decentralise educational administration from Bangkok to rural areas, in practice, this did not occur. A number of institutions, such as the Cadet School, were eligible to be elevated to university status, but they were ignored. It is argued, here, that the People's Party chose to establish universities that, as Schools, were not under the control of the king and

royal family or the former government, to create new knowledge or information about the new political system. The Cadet School, for example, whose mission was national security, was directly responsible to the king and royal family. The People's Party recognised that it could not completely or immediately destroy society's allegiance to the king and royal family. Civil war was likely if the Party attempted to change people's strong belief and faith in the monarchy. The establishment of a new political system needed to be undertaken with care and compromise.

According to Wanlipodom (personal communication, February 24, 2016), the departments and programmes created within the newly established universities were strategic, designed to disseminate information about democracy as well as convince people of the benefits of democracy. Such widespread knowledge would be an advantage for the future of democratic administration. What the People's Party desired was absolute power. Therefore, they discredited the reputation of the king and royal family and ignored ancient traditions. The intent was to destroy the image of social classes from society by reducing the role and power of the king. As an example of a means of achieving this objective, the Faculty of Law at Chulalongkorn University was amalgamated in 1934 with the Faculty of Law at the University of Moral and Political Science (Thammasat University) (Warren, 2009). It was known that the University of Moral and Political Science (Thammasat University) had no enrolment policy which aligned with one of the Six Principles; the equality of the Thai people. Students from this university mostly came from classes lower than those

from Chulalongkorn University (Wyatt, 2003). Thus, the University of Moral and Political Science (Thammasat University) was used by Pridi Banomyong as an instrument for the infiltration of the ideas of the People's Party.

It could be implied that at that time, the government paid special attention to Political Science because the new political system was being established, at the demise of absolute monarchy. Similarly, Medical Sciences was a focus because health and well-being were markers of a civilised society; Agriculture was highlighted because it was fundamental to Thai society and since 80 percent of all citizens were involved in the agricultural field; and Arts was encouraged because the arts were used widely in Europe (from where some of the People's Party graduated). All these disciplinary emphases were used as technologies of the government to send concrete messages to everyday people.

Evidence supports this view. Silpa Bhirasri or Corrado Feroci, an Italian artist considered as the father of modern art in Thailand, founded the School of Art which later became Silpakorn University. His intention as the founder was to establish a school to teach the western style of art to small groups of Thai artists and students. The People's Party, in general, and Field Marshal Plaek Phibulsonggram, the Prime Minister, in particular, promoted the School of Art to university status, arguing that art is one of the most important cultures of the nation. In this way, not only did

arts, plays, and literature became accessible to more than the upper classes and nobility, they also became ways to disseminate political ideas.

Thus the People's Party purposefully elevated a number of schools to higher education status. At that time there were many teachers' training colleges throughout Thailand. Not all of them were considered to be worthy of the status of a higher education institution. In the eyes of the People's Party, the College of Teachers' Training belonged to the king and royal family since King Rama V had initiated and governed their existence. Given that the People's Party wished to put their 'own stamp' on things, and they did this by establishing new universities instead of enhancing the value of teachers' training colleges as higher education institutes. These allowed for easy management and endorsed one of their Six Principles.

In Thailand, there were significant social implications for establishing and upgrading the higher education institutions as universities. Earlier, Chulalongkorn University became the first university of Thailand in 1917. It had been established by King Rama VI with the expressed purpose of providing skillful people for the Thai bureaucracy. The university offered programmes within specific fields, namely, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Faculty of Public Administration, the Faculty of Engineering, and the Faculty of Medicine. Its specific course offerings aligned with those in European universities.

The People's Party employed the word 'university' to enhance the value of higher education and, in that respect, it achieved its goal. People in society were attracted to the potential of education as a way to improve their quality of life. For the People's Party, the university represented an example of the Six Principles in action, as opportunities were intended to be offered to people in every class of society. In addition, it symbolised a concrete achievement of national development. However, universities were also settings where students assimilated the ideologies that the government specifically wished to promote.

Thamrongthanyawong (2006) has argued that the attempt to transplant a western framework of thinking onto the Thai culture was misguided and resulted in unease amongst the population. He highlights an internal contradiction at this time: that the power within the society still rested with the upper classes despite the fact that the social system had changed. The privilege of higher education no longer belonged to the royal family and the military. Yet, as before, every act of legislation and decree was required to be signed by the king before any action could take place. In a legal sense, the king was the last signatory of all legal documents. Nonetheless, in a factual sense, groups of governors were the people who made decisions concerning what should happen in society. Sinlarat (2015) explains the problems associated with adapting western ways into an environment steeped in tradition:

…[t]he impact of foreign countries as well as adaptation inside the country from the reign of King Rama IV until World War II was significant on educational ideas and strategies. In the same way, education was the medium of a powerful authority transferring ways of thinking, values, ways of life to everyday people. In addition, the western styles of thinking were over-used, leading to errors in administration and, more generally, western styles of thinking were at odds with the social circumstance generally. (Sinlarat, 2015, p. 4-5)

At this time, Thai society was not prepared for wholesale change. Tunya (1999) provides evidence, for example, that a number of problems developed over the issue of agriculture. Citizens who were educated left their hometown, leaving behind what was beginning to be considered as relatively primitive work in the agricultural section, to new work in the government sector. However, agriculture workers continued to be fundamental to Thailand's economy. There were insufficient numbers of positions available in the government sector for educated individuals, and, in turn, the agriculture sector suffered from a lack of human resources (Nartsupa, 2008). Thailand thus suffered on two counts: unemployment and under-employment.

The People's Party was aware that it was impossible to demolish the entire strong social structure and ancient traditions, especially the extraordinarily sensitive issue concerning the king and royal family, given that the reigning king was now in exile. Accordingly, the People's Party requested one young royal family's presence at the throne as a new king under the new constitution. However, debates ensued amongst

the new cabinet members as to who should be the next king. A key figure in the debates was Pridi Banomyong who managed to persuade the cabinet that Prince Ananda Mahidol should take succession (Stevenson, 2001). In this point, it also appeared more expedient for the government because Prince Ananda Mahidol, the new king, was only eight years old and was based in Switzerland. Duly, Ananda Mahidol was crowned as King Rama VIII by the National Assembly in March 1935.

A further issue developed that threatened the nation's stability. Frequent political quarrels within the People's Party between 1932 to 1949 gave rise to 22 groups of party changes governing the country (The Secretariat of the Cabinet, 2015). These changes brought many issues. These included the death of King Rama VIII (Ananda Mahidol) in 1946 which was believed to be unexpected and unexplained (Wyatt, 2003). His death brought about a significant coup in 1947 by Field Marshall Sarit Tanarat and a newly established conservative group, a group which supported the king and ancient traditions. The coup rendered the power of the People's Party obsolete and following Pridi Banomyong's exile, on the basis of the accusation that he was responsible for King Rama VIII's murder, the conservative party came to power and with that change of government, the ancient traditions, previously banned by the People's Party, were reinstated. However, the unrest that emerged following the Party's establishment earlier did not diminish and created problems for the governance of the entire kingdom, including the oversight of education. In this period of unrest following the coup d'état, further groups of cabinet members sought to

exercise power. As a consequence, authority shifted from one group to another, with the result that it became increasingly difficult to execute and administer an education plan with any coherence and consistency.

There is convincing evidence that, like the People's Party, Thailand's kings had made significant attempts to change society in a progressive way. The kings highlighted social equality through many of their policies, for example emancipation (in the reign of King Rama V), compulsory education (in the reign of King Rama VI), as well as opportunities for people, in general, to study overseas (since the reign of King Rama V). The kings and royal family members, themselves, were educated in foreign countries. Thus, their ideas for development could be read as similar to those of the People's Party's. As the Thai Journalists Association (2016) reports from an interview with Queen Rambai Barni, the wife of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII): "Colonel Phraya Srivisanvaja (Thianliang Hoontrakun) knew that King Rama VII planned to change the political system and requested that he hire an American consultant, whose name was Stevenson, to write the constitution. Pridi Banomyong also knew about this situation" (p. 26). Nonetheless, King Rama VII's objective to accomplish the goal was to retain absolute monarchy. The King's objective was also different from the objective of the conservative group. While the People's Party tried to establish a new political system, build social equality, and disestablish the institution of king and royal family, the conservative group endeavoured to retain the king and royal family as merely a symbolic identity for Thailand.

3.8   Conclusion

In Europe, North America, and also in Thailand, the purposes for establishing universities have varied over time depending on current social, economic, and material circumstances and on the perspectives of people of influence during each period of time. These different purposes have led to different models of university systems. While one model was designed to develop intellect, another model was focused on training citizens for professional careers. Whereas higher education in the United States in its formative years was similar to the model developed in Europe, it later widened its provision, on the assumption that economic, social and personal empowerment would ensue. Capitalist ideals also impacted on higher education, as departments able to respond to market forces became in high demand.

In Thailand, opportunities for higher education were originally limited to the upper classes. Ancient traditions dictated that higher education was the preserve of noblemen and members of the royal family. It was the king who determined the kinds of skills that should be learned. During the late 19th century, universities were established according to the dominant European model and this era saw an increased mobility of the upper classes as they were sent to study abroad. The purpose was to generate knowledgeable and informed civil servants in order to enhance the economy and avoid the threat of colonialism.

However, when the political system changed from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, higher education became more accessible and was focused on national development. Inevitably, the problems affecting higher education in Thailand arose from both internal factors involving political instability leading to inconsistent and non-enduring policies as well as from the importation of policies from developed countries without due consideration of Thailand's own context.

CHAPTER 4
HIGHER EDUCATION IN THAILAND
FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II

4.1   Introduction

This chapter will explore the immediate effects of World War II on Thailand and the influences those effects had on higher education. It investigates, in particular, the influences of the United States and of globalisation on the development of higher education institutions. A number of significant development plans emerged following the intervention of the United States and this chapter is structured around the time-frame of those plans and investigates the impact of those plans on the mission and purpose of education beyond the compulsory sector. It also explores the impact of those plans on the social and economic framework of Thai society.

4.2   Development Planning Period (1950-Present)

A highly significant change period for higher education in Thailand occurred in what is known as the Development Planning Period (1950-present). Immediately following the devastation and Japanese occupation experienced during World War II, a number of reports published by the World Bank, UNESCO, and the U.S. Aid Agencies, emphasised a sense of urgency in rebuilding and expanding the education system. Additional to the immediate need to rebuild the economy, there was an

urgent need to establish educational systems that would cater for a rapidly growing population. In this endeavour, as Watson (1981) has noted, the Karachi Plan of 1960 (later renamed as the Asian Model for Educational Development, UNESCO, 1966), became a huge source of inspiration for Thai politicians and educators.

By the end of World War II the United States had become a significant player on the world stage. The effects in Europe of the war (1939-1945) were devastating and the United States played an important role in recovery. Since much of the conflict was confined to Europe, the United States did not suffer to the same extent from the wars. Nor did it need to rebuild its society. It had sufficient capacities to contribute funding to worn-torn countries. Apart from having a strong military, the United States was a centre where some European scholars had evacuated to from their countries. For example, under the Nazi government, university curricula in Germany were strictly controlled to align with Nazi beliefs so that some of the smartest academics fled. Thus, when the war ended, the role of the United States became one of significant influence.

Following the war, capitalist and communist powers were in a state of political and military tension, known as the 'Cold War', and tried to assist other countries and, thus, either implicitly or explicitly imposed their respective economic and political ideologies (Punpuing & Sanpuwan, 2011). Thai society opposed the communist philosophy. However, it did not oppose the concept of communism in its ideal form,

namely, sharing and equality, although authorities who exercised power in Thailand at that time led people to understand differently. Nonetheless, the communist party of Thailand was established in 1942.

In 1945, the United Nations (UN) was established to prevent conflicts among countries and many sub-organisations were gradually set up. The terms of 'developed' and 'developing' became official terms by which to classify types of countries. One year later, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was formed. Around this same time, the United States initiated their offer of support to Thailand. It has been argued that the United States intervened in Southeast Asia in order to prevent the snowball effect of communism and to calm the rising conflict in Vietnam. Lao (2015) puts it this way: "…[t]he reason behind America's increasing involvement in Thailand was based on the proliferation of American power after the war, increasing attention to preventing the spread of communism, and the growing conflict in Vietnam" (p. 30).

Since Thailand could not offer the necessary resistance to the war's expansion, the Thai government signed an agreement to support a military alliance with Japan, which was one of the Axis powers. In contrast, the anti-Japanese resistance movement, known as the 'Free Thai Movement', was organised in the United States to highlight the point that many people in Thailand did not agree with the decision

of the Thai government. Through this action, Thailand was spared further wartime involvement (Stow, 1991). Yet it did suffer in financial terms.

Well aware that Thailand was affected financially and economically by the war, the World Bank, supported by the United States, offered financial assistance in terms of loans. While the support demonstrated a positive relationship between both countries, it also created dependencies on Thailand's part on the United States. The United States was able to influence Thai politics because political parties in Thailand received an endorsement of the American involvement from capitalist business leaders mainly from the United States. In this way, Thailand became a strategic partner of the United States in Southeast Asia (Lao, 2015). Three further reasons that explain the United States' influence on Thailand are as follows: 1) Thailand, like other countries, was concerned about the indisputable power and the violence of atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; 2) European countries that had previously played important roles in the control of Southeast Asia, had suffered from the war and, hence, were focused on the reconstruction of their own countries; and 3) all of Thailand's neighbours were colonised either by Britain or France; whereas, Thailand had been able to maintain its own traditions and identity.

In 1949 the Bank of America became the first international bank to open in Bangkok. Indeed it was the first American bank branch in the Southeast Asia (Warren, 2009). Soon, knowledge of financial systems and accountancy became highly desirable

(Warren, 2009). In the same year the United States first exerted its explicit influence on Thai higher education by establishing the 'Higher Teacher Training School at Prasanmit' which later became the College of Education. It is known now as Srinakarinwirot Prasanmit.

Evidence shows that the United States provided financial assistance for two decades. It spent $US 2 billion approximately on military assistance, bureaucratic establishment, as well as technological development in Thailand (Pongpichit & Baker, 1998). These funds did not come without certain conditions. For example, there were important agreements between the United States and Thailand in relation to economic, military, and cultural cooperation. Significantly, agreements signed relating to education included the terms of economic assistance for entry to higher education in the Ford Foundation, the Fulbright Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation all played influential financial roles at this time.

Lao (2015) has argued that during this period, Thai policy elites used potential threats of colonisation "to justify and legitimise the creation of a centralised bureaucracy system. The presence of Western colonisation was used to serve a political purpose as justification for the modernisation process" (p. 171). According to Winichakul (2000), however, the acceptance of United States occupation in part of Thailand was not simply "a reaction to the colonial threat; rather it was an attempt originated by various groups among the elite… to attain and confirm the relative

superiority of Siam as the traditional imperial power in the region" (p. 529). Thailand sought to maintain its cultural pride and its independence. Clearly, American influences were assimilated into public policy, including policies related to education and with that inclusion, came a demonstrable shift from European models to American models of mass higher education and multi-campus systems.

4.2.1 UNESCO and its mission

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also played a major role in assisting Thailand and effected significant changes to higher education. UNESCO's declaration was dedicated to peace and security through the promotion of international collaboration via educational, scientific, and cultural reforms (UNESCO, 2016). It has been argued that UNESCO is an education, society, culture, and sciences broker for good relationships among countries and contributes to the equality amongst nations.

However, Charoensin-o-larn (2011) argues that UNESCO was a product of a new world order as perceived by the United States. It was created on and enacted the concept of distribution from developed countries to developing countries. Developing countries, of necessity, follow the model established by the developed countries, without recourse to their own context, conditions and traditions and without due consideration to the prospect of long-term debt and dependency following loans obtained.

In Thailand's case, membership to UNESCO was perceived as advantageous. In order to improve higher education at a level commensurate with international standards, in 1954, Thailand welcomed UNESCO education experts, as recommended by Sir Charles Darwin of UNESCO. The main recommendations included the following points:

1) Thai universities have to develop research alongside teaching.

2) Thai universities should develop according to international standards.

3) Thai universities should separate themselves from rules of ministry.

4) A University of Bangkok should be established, similar to the University of London, in order to accommodate different disciplines into one unit.

5) A University Grants Commission (UGC) should be set up to integrate policy plans and administer university funding.

Since Thailand sought to be 'modernised' and hence, in its perception, 'westernised', it accepted these recommendations. The recommendations were perceived as new discourses, in Foucauldian terms, and had a deeper effect on individuals, shaping their thinking, their viewpoints, their beliefs, and their practices. They offered individuals new preferred forms of understanding about higher education.

Field Marshal Phibulsonggram duly established the National University Council in 1956 whose primary responsibility was dedicated to policy planning and

management. The council initiated a phase of new policy development and implementation in Thailand's higher education system (Lao, 2015). Following the development of the National Economic and Social Development Board's (NESDB) Economic and Social Development Plan, the National University Council was able to trace a development pathway for higher education. The Plan was a significant driver of change in higher education and led to the formulation in 1961 of The National Scheme of Education. As Interviewee IV points out:

> …[h]igher education in Thailand seemed to start with the National Economic and Social Development Plan. Thailand was dramatically changed after having the National Economic and Social Development Plan. The role of the World Bank was obvious in pushing Thailand to have the national plan. The idea of creating a national plan for the third world countries came from the United States and the West because these third world countries would come to follow their direction for development. (Interviewee IV, December 20, 2016)

4.3   The First Development Plan (1961-1966)

The mission of the first development plan was to enhance opportunities and ensure equal rights for citizens to study in higher education. This was a period in which the nation was moving away from an agricultural economy to one that was beginning to include industry and commerce. A recommendation extended in 1964 during the period of the first plan, urged the following:

In order to improve their educational standards and achieve expansion in enrolments, all universities should pool their resources and develop strong graduate programmes in certain specific areas in accordance with the manpower needs of the country, especially in connection with the National Economic and Social Development Plan. (Nimmanheminda, 1970)

In order to finance the reform and expansion Thailand raised a loan from the World Bank (the organisation supported by the United Nations) and was given much assistance as well as access to innovative ideas, including those related to higher education, from the United States (Punpuing & Sunpuwan, 2011). The influence of the United States on Thailand is clarified by Lao (2015):

… U.S. cash and technology also helped expand the Thai bureaucracy. During this period, the total size of Thailand's bureaucracy expanded from 75,000 personnel in 1944 to 250,000 individuals by 1965. Subsequently, Thailand signed three important bilateral agreements with the United States to cooperate in terms of economics, military, and culture. Under this cooperation, several agreements were directly related to education. (p. 31)

In earlier times in Thailand the responsibility for the development of higher education had rested with society's elite class. From the early beginning and post-revolution period, these individuals were Thai princes and those from the aristocracy who had been educated in Europe. After World War II, the influence of the United States was widely apparent. The European 'style of thinking' in education was

replaced by the American 'style of development'. Harrison (2010) has argued that during this period Thai political, economic, and cultural influences fundamentally changed from those from Europe to those from North America and the practice of sending scholars to Britain or France in Europe shifted towards a preference for the education of Thai scholars in the United States (Lao, 2015).

At this time, too, with the financial and material support received from the United States, programmes and courses of higher education began to focus on national economic development and industrialisation (Lao, 2015). Interviewee III explains the context as follows:

> *…after World War II, higher education in Thailand responded to international economics and politics. Even though there was a movement across the world to change from European influence to the United States' influence, the importance of economic and industrial development remained the same everywhere. Thailand was one of many countries which adopted ideas from the United States for its use. Thus, new styles and strategies of teaching and learning from the United States were employed from that time in preference to British styles. The most outstanding things were probably the credit system used in the university and General Education's subjects, as well as a 4-year teacher training course.* (Interviewee III, March 6, 2016)

During this period, the United States was a source of protection against the communist invasions which were infiltrating Thailand's closest neighbours. The

beginning of the Vietnam War in 1964 was witness to a huge American military presence in Thailand and substantial financial assistance. Not only was western assistance welcomed but the ideals and values of western democracies were beginning to make their mark amongst various sectors within the Thai population.

Using the financial assistance as fuel and The National Scheme of Education as direction, Thailand's higher education system was extensively reformed (NEDB, 1967). Foucault (2002) has clarified that the existence of institutions, such as higher education institutions, always presupposes power relations. Higher education institutions in Thailand, were constituted by practices, aligned and fixed through the power of financial assistance and direction.

Not only was Thailand's higher education system was extensively reformed, it also expanded into every region of the country (MUA, 1998). Before the reforms, only eight higher education institutions were operating in Thailand, and five of these were located in Bangkok. Significantly, enrolments were restricted to the most able and wealthy students. The 'decentralisation of universitites' reform paved the way for the opening of new institutions modelled on a system of higher education that combined patterns and courses derived from the United States. Yet access to these new programmes continued to be based on a west-European approach. Three regional universities, Chiang Mai in the North, Khon Kaen in the northeast, and Prince of Songkla in the south were established between 1964-1967.

These new institutions were established as part of the decentralisation and diversification programme and for the expressed purpose of promoting engineering, agriculture, medicine, and natural science, in accordance with the stated priorities of study within the National Economic and Social Development Plan (ONESDB, 2007). However, there were other motives that drove their establishment. Kangsanand (1985) has argued that the spread of higher education into the regional areas was a political strategy to prevent the potential spread of communist influences. Thus, the rationale for the creation of regional universities was not entirely based on local demands and needs. Rather, it was a top-down process, used by Thailand under direction from the United States, and applied as a political tool for mutual benefits. For those in authority in Thailand, it offered a democratic move towards educational provision to a wider population, and, thus, a move towards a higher level of social and economic development. Those based in the regions could use their new access to higher education as a way to attain a better quality of life for themselves, and for society, more generally. However, for those in authority in Thailand, the spread of higher education into the regions was also a means to garner further political support and allegiance from the wider population and, thus, represented a means to strengthen and consolidate their influence.

4.4 The Second National Economic and Social Development Plan (1967-1971)

The belief that higher education was pivotal to socio-economic progress was further emphasised during the period between 1967 and 1971. It was in this period that a significant development occurred, namely the privatisation of higher education. This development would shape the future of higher education in many ways. The pressures of a growing population and the need for more highly skilled and trained personnel were foremost in the minds of the government at this time. At this time, many of the individuals who had enrolled and graduated at universities in Thailand opted to leave the country for 'greener pastures'. As a measure to avoid the loss of graduates to the United States and Europe, in particular, a University Development Council (UDC) was formed, charged with the task of developing postgraduate courses that would be directly relevant to employment needs and to the needs of the economy. The Second Development Plan reiterated the need, identified in the First Development Plan, to link programmes to the needs of society and the economy. It also clarified disciplinary areas that were deemed crucial to the enhancement of the economy:

> Higher education will expand in fields necessary for the economic and social needs of the country. High level manpower is needed in the following areas: engineering, agriculture, medicine and science.

The UDC set upon the task of developing programmes and postgraduate courses specifically tailored to fill that need. As in other countries, for Thailand this period marked a 'golden age' of university expansion, both in Bangkok and in the provinces. This was also a period of an increased presence of the American military in Thailand. In 1968 it has been estimated that 50,000 American soldiers were based in Thailand (Welch, 2011). In a quid pro quo arrangement, scholarships were awarded to many young Thai officials, scientists, and scholars to study in the United States. This symbiotic relationship between the United States and Thailand contributed to the validation of liberty, equality and new lifestyles in the minds of many Thai people.

Until 1964 the centre of higher education was firmly entrenched in Bangkok. During Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat's term as Prime Minister, and in a break from tradition and in response to the call from regions for wider inclusion, three mixed-faculty universities were established—the first, Chaing Mai University, in the north during 1964, the second, Khon Kaen University, the northeast in 1965, and a third, Songkla University, in the south during 1968. Designed to encourage local opportunities and growth, particularly in the agricultural domain, and, more generally, for the national economy, these three universities, each with its own unique natural, material, and human resource bank, and its own issues, have all maintained a strong connection to the cultural heritage and traditions of the region (Hoong, 1973).

If these three universities expanded higher education into the provinces, they did not necessarily enrol provincial students. Their creation in the regional areas was drawn from practices in the United States where the decentralisation of institutions meant that students from the provinces were able to enrol in higher education. However, this did not occur in Thailand (Sinlarat, 2005). It was Bangkok which initially supplied most of the students. Indeed, around 75 percent of positions were taken at the regional universities by students from the capital city, at the expense of potential students who confronted more difficulties in preparation for the entry examinations, and also at the expense of those who chose to study in the capital and often refused to return to their hometown. A quota system introduced in the mid-1970s ensured a more equitable balance of enrolments.

4.4.1 The 1969 Privatisation Act

In 1969 the private sector initiated its involvement with the tertiary sector. The privatisation of universities was in part a policy response to meet the growing pressures for entry into university system. Since the existing system was able to accept only around 30 percent of applicants, many students enrolled at overseas universities, often at sub-standard institutions whose qualifications were not recognised by Thailand's employers. It is estimated that up to 30,000 students left Thailand's shores for further education, at considerable financial loss to Thailand.

The enabling Privatisation Act promoted the establishment of private universities and, by that means, introduced corporate management strategies into the university administration. The objective of the policy was to encourage an enhanced role of the private sector in the provision of higher education. The introduction of the private sector, it was argued, would lead to improved quality of higher education provision. In addition, the employment of corporate management strategies, it was claimed, would provide a clear direction for and lighten the burden of the management of higher education. The introduction of the Privatisation Act presented a new discourse for higher education in Thailand. While the commercialisation discourse held much currency within the global education space in Foucault's (2002) understanding, the discourse of commercialisation not only presented a new meaning for higher education in Thailand, it also constructed it. Prior to the Act, and hence prior to the new discourse, higher education in Thailand was conceived of as a service and a medium for national development. In the new discourse, higher education became a tradable good.

The two key figures instrumental in the reform were Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, who was Prime Minister between 1963 and 1973, and Mom Luang Pin Malakul, who was the Minister of Education between 1969-1971, following a brief period during 1968 in which Thailand became a constitutional state. During the military dictatorship after 1968, these two politicians announced that the government would endorse private sector involvement at every level of education,

arguing that privatisation was in direct alignment with the Second National Economic and Social Development Plan.

The Private College Act was duly passed in 1971. However, there were specific terms and conditions attached to the private sector's involvement in higher education. Until 1984, associate degrees rather than bachelor's degrees were the qualifications offered. In addition, while the establishment of universities was granted to the private sector, the structure and management of those universities were placed under the regulatory apparatus of the Thai government. There were further restrictions for private sector higher education institutions: enrolments were confined to areas of national priority, namely, social science, business, and law. Later, the humanities, science, engineering and medicine were added to the list. By 1976, 11 private institutions were in existence and in this rapidly growing environment the Act changed to the Private Higher Education Institutions Act which strengthened accreditation criteria and limited the profit return available to the proprietors. Acting on advice relevant to standards, accreditation, and programmes of study offered, provided by the Private University Committee, and later, by the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions of Thailand, the Ministry of University Affairs ensured the Act's enactment through a coordinating role between the government and private tertiary institutions.

The privatisation of higher education heralded a new era in Thailand. Within Thailand's highly stratified society, higher learning became more available and new opportunities were opened. Until the passing of the Act, very few students from lower social classes and, in particular, very few rural students were able to succeed with the difficult examinations set for entry into higher education institutions which tended to favour the elite classes. Those who could not gain entry to public sector universities previously, now had the opportunity to enrol in private institutions. The private sector became an additional resource for an entrée into higher education for students whose parents were neither professionals, businessmen, government officials, nor tertiary qualified. However, given that the criteria for entry into full-cost-recovery institutions was lower than in the public sector and in some cases did not exist, private sector institutions, as a status access equalising resource for many students, have been challenged by the public sector in their failure to equalise academic levels.

If the privatisation of higher education represented a significant attempt to equalise opportunities, it also represented a diversification of the funding base. As a response to decreased available public funding and growing social and economic demands, the government chose to align more closely with western financial strategies by tapping into the new source of funding provided by the private sector. As a result, private institutions have now assumed responsibility for the administration of their general

functioning and, with that, for the organisation of their internal administrative structure.

4.5   The Third National Economic and Social Development Plan (1972-1976)

When the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (ONESDB) was established in 1972, under the Prime Minister's Office, Thailand embarked on a strategic plan that included extensive expansion and change within Thailand's higher education system (ONEDB, 1967) and expansion of higher education into every region of the country (MUA, 1998). At a time when the growth of industrialisation was not matched by a growth in scientific and technological knowledge, the Third Development Plan emphasised that the purpose of expansion was to "improve and promote fields necessary for the economic and social requirements of the country." The scale of expansion that took place was large and wide.

4.5.1 The establishment of the Ministry of University Affairs

The relationship between the state and higher education has changed over time. Typically, governments represent the main funding source for universities and any deviation from this arrangement tends to weaken the state/higher education relationship (Schiller & Liefner, 2007). In the early post-People's Revolution era, when the Ministry of Education assumed full responsibility for higher education, the state/higher education relationship was strong. Later, when different ministries

assumed responsibility for individual universities, the relationship became tenuous. In order to strengthen the relationship and, perhaps more importantly, to monitor and control more closely the practices of universities, the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC) was established in 1959 which integrated all universities to the Prime Minister's Office.

The Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC) was established to serve the political agenda of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat who succeeded Field Marshal Phibulsonggram (Lao, 2015). The purposes were three-fold (i) to centralise the higher education system, (ii) to ensure standards by using academic policies, and (iii) to approve new courses and programmes. Watson (1980) contends that the office was intended to integrate educational aims to the National Economic and Social Development Plan. Furthermore, Osatharom (1990) notes that the university centralised system was also initiated to reduce the discrepancies between universities in Bangkok and in regional areas.

Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat became heavily involved in higher education affairs through his leadership of a number of university entities. For example, he was the President of the University Council, President of the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC), and President of the University Committee (Osatharom, 1990). Watson (1980) has observed that the prime minister's political

sponsors strongly influenced higher education administration, through his high level involvement.

Osatharom (1990) claims that the management of higher education during this period resulted in confusion and ambivalence of structures and planning, delays in decision making and a lack of freedom and coordination between different universities and the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC) (Ministry of University Affairs, 1992). The state's direct control of higher education limited academic freedom amongst staff and this loss of freedom contributed to difficult work conditions (Osatharom, 1990). This issue also contributed to the serious debates regarding policy among academics and administrators as they sought to figure out a way forward for management and ways to sustain positive relationships between the state and universities (Ministry of University Affairs, 2003).

An internal force would soon limit and constrict the flow of the new regulatory discourse. Twelve rectors from various universities argued that the Office of the National Education Commission's regulatory control was destructive to the higher education system principally because it lacked a fundamental understanding of university functions and structures (Ministry of University Affairs, 2003). As a compromise, the Ministry of University Affairs was elevated to an independent ministry with its own minister. With that significant change, the word 'state' was

removed from the ministry's title in order to demonstrate that both public and private universities were encompassed with the Ministry's scope (Ministry of University Affairs, 2003). The stated purpose of the Ministry of University Affairs was to centralise the policies, finances, and management of higher education. It also assumed responsibility for the appointments of rectors and deans from each university, for the approval of curricula, and for the supervision of all higher education institutions that had been established. While Thai higher education remained under the control of the state, the establishment of the Ministry of University Affairs was a significant move that was intended to offer universities more flexibility and freedom than did the previous arrangement.

The establishment of the Ministry of University Affairs rendered Bangkok, the capital city, as the centre of policy planning and development in which senior civil servants, and university rectors and deans drawn from the ranks of senior civil servants, played major roles. However, this system of administration brought about several problems. Since each university was granted a measure of flexibility, it was not easy to ensure that policies were consistent across universities. In addition, since political connections and political interests influenced the resources distributed to each individual university, the development of each university began to map out its own unique pathway.

4.5.2 Unprecedented expansion of higher education

The most significant reform in this development period was the establishment of open access universities—an innovation that was later to suffer at the hands of its own democratic provision. In this period too, the scope of higher education was widened and new graduate schools and private universities began to flourish. In addition to the universities established in the provinces, additional higher education institutions were constructed to broaden the provision. Between 1960-1977 a number of colleges were established to provide Bachelor Degrees in the fields of sciences and technologies. Thonburi Technology College (now King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi) and Nontaburi Tele-communication College (now King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang) are two examples. During this period relating to the Third Development Plan, postgraduate provision also took a leap and in 1977 enrolments by postgraduate students in Thailand exceeded 8000.

For educational provision in the fields of sciences and technologies, the Ministry of Education sought to improve standards within Technology Colleges by promoting them in 1971 as Institutes of Technology offering higher education (Ministry of Education, 1976). For example, the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) was established as a graduate institution specialising in administrative and national development; the Asian Institute of Technology was established as an international graduate school, offering science and engineering to

students all over Asia; King Mongkut's Institute of Technology was created through the merging of several technical schools; and the Maejo Institute of Agricultural Technology and Srinakarinwirot University were both established.

Initially only two universities offered Bachelor's Degrees and these were Chulalongkorn University and Thammasat University. The ministers in the House of Parliament were reluctant to confer Bachelor's degrees on pre-service teachers, arguing that teachers were able to contribute their knowledge and skills to students without a higher qualification. Taking the lead from the teachers' colleges in the United States which had begun offering Bachelor's degrees to graduates, Thailand introduced a certificate to graduating pre-service teachers as a guarantee of quality achievement. The certificate, later upgraded to a degree, and following the American graduation model at teachers' colleges, was advocated for strongly by Professor Saroj Buasri, at that time the most influential figure in the field of education in Thailand (Srinakarinwirot University, 2015). The degree was introduced both to promote the notion of teachers as experts, and as recognition of the standard of knowledge achieved.

In addition, a College of Education known as Srinakarinwirot opened in Bangkok, in 1974 and while it was designed for pre-service teachers, the College also offered Liberal Arts courses. A select group of pre-service teachers received their education at this one centralised institution, and on completion of their course, were sent to

teach in rural areas. This was a strategic move on the part of the government, employed to disseminate, by geographical means, new ideas about teaching and learning that were likely to be in conflict with the old ideas embraced within the traditional Teachers' Training School, established by the royal family and nobilities. From 1990-1996 the institution had expanded into the regions and commanded eight campuses.

4.5.3   The introduction of Open Access Universities

During the era of the Third Development Plan a further and perhaps more significant initiative was set in place to "improve and promote fields necessary for the economic and social requirements of the country." Two 'open access' universities were established following the passing of the Ramkamhaeng University Act in 1971). Their establishment represented an innovative response on the part of the government to meet the increasing demands for higher education. The notion of open access was not entirely new to Thailand: as far back as 1934, Thammasat had opened its doors to part-time students and had established facilities in the regions. Several decades later, principally as a means of embracing a wider reach of fee-paying students, particularly those who had not or were not likely to pass the entrance examination required by other universities (Watson, 1981), Ramkhamheang university was opened in 1971 and Sukhothai Thammathirat University was established in 1978. Enrolments escalated and by 2010, as the World Bank (2010) has shown, student enrolments at these two open access universities, compared with

enrolments in the wider public sector of higher education in Thailand, reached a significant 40 percent.

As Thailand's largest public university, Ramkhamhaeng University, offered an opportunity to respond to the rising crisis from high school graduates for places within higher education institutions. To that end, approximately 435,000 students are enrolled each year. The university, based in Bangkok, offers courses in Law, Business Administration, Humanities, Education, Science, Political Science, Economics, Engineering and Education Technology. All but the Faculty of Engineering has an open enrolment scheme. Qualifications on offer include Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degree, and doctorates, as well as international and pre-degree programmes.

Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University was officially established in 1978 and opened to students in 1980, with courses in educational studies, liberal arts, and management science. Its premises shifted to the Pak Kret District of Nonthaburi Province in 1984, and as a regionally–based institution, it marked a shift away from the tertiary level dominance of Bangkok. It was innovative in another sense; by introducing distance learning it became the first open access university in Southeast Asia to offer this mode of delivery to students. Offering a new flexibility of place and time for study, distance learning captured the imagination and interest of many

potential students. In the contemporary context the university offers 12 disciplinary areas each providing undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programmes.

Students enrolled at these two universities are taught mainly by means of closed circuit television (CCTV). To that end, classes are larger in size than is typical of class enrolments at other universities in Thailand. Lecture notes are available for purchase and students enjoy the flexibility of taking some courses part-time and the opportunity to take a leave of absence from and returning to their courses at a later date. In many respects, these provisions have a number of synergies with those offered in on-line learning courses provided today at many universities. The important difference is that (i) students are not required to meet conventional entry-level standards; and (ii) students are not directed into courses that will bring personal and national benefits. As a result, standards are dubious and enrolments within the various disciplines are highly skewed. In particular, the universities have been challenged in their efforts to attain the academic levels that other universities in the public sector reach, and, further, the opportunity to self-select courses without guidance on what might be best for future employment has seen an over-dominance of enrolments in law and in the social sciences.

Moreover, as an UNESCO report (1991) has revealed, fewer students than at other public universities are eligible to graduate within five years, and, as the Office of Education Council (2004) shows, only one out of eighteen students from open

access universities are eligible to graduate. The quantitative equaliser to university access has not been matched with a qualitative equaliser of standards. While the two open access universities have contributed significantly to the move from elite to more equitable higher education provision and while they have welcomed self-selection and self-timing of courses, the aspiration fuelling the Third Development Plan, namely, to "improve and promote fields necessary for the economic and social requirements of the country" has not been achieved.

4.5.4 Students' revolution 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976

If the period of the Third Development Plan initiated an inclusive response from politicians to an escalating crisis for places within higher education, it also initiated a response from students to an escalating crisis within the employment sector, and, more generally, large-scale concerns over the functioning of the military government. This was an era that triggered widespread fear following a number of external events including an oil crisis, and more local concerns for Thailand resulting from the retrenchment of American troops from Southeast Asia, and the communist hold in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Unrest had been bubbling for some time and much of the local dissatisfaction was initiated by students who had returned from studying abroad and were disillusioned when confronted with unemployment and a government that showed no allegiance little ideals of democracy and freedom that were manifest abroad.

In 1973 nine students at Ramkamhaeng University were expelled for their criticism over the illegal conduct of members of the government. Protest marches of students at several universities followed, and not long afterwards in October 1973 when the demonstrators were arrested, students took to the streets again nationally. Three days of what began in Bangkok as a peaceful march for the release of the demonstrators turned into a violent clash with authorities which continued until the resignation and exile of the Prime Minister and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces signalled the end of the military rule.

The demise of the military rule was not welcomed by those in the elite sector of society. The elite who enjoyed established positions of authority believed that traditional values had been undermined. This influential group persuaded many from the other classes to turn against the student protests. Blame was duly unfairly assigned to the students for all the ills of society and for the students' alleged disrespect of the traditional moral compass of society. Tensions reached a crunch point when in October 1976 hundreds of protesters were killed at Thammasat University. When the military dictatorship returned to power the student protest movement was abandoned. However, the October Movement as it became known, was instrumental in initiating a transformation in the social and political consciousness of society, away from traditions and corruptions towards more democratic structures and values.

4.6 The Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-1981)

The overall objective of educational development as outlined in the Fourth Development Plan was "to make an intensive effort to develop every educational level and type appropriate to the nation's development." In further elaboration, an emphasis was given for the requirement of higher-level manpower "in those fields required by market demand and necessary for national development." Borrowing from practices in western nations, the government introduced a new terminology. Language that had once been the prior domain of business and corporate management now entered the domain of education.

Whereas previous Development Plans had sought to respond to a diversification of the economy and provincial socio-economic disadvantage and attempted to accommodate a growing post-school population, this era was confronted with instability and a potential communist insurgency in rural areas "which had suffered from benign neglect on the part of the central government" (Watson, 1981, p. 303). The rural people's political cause to 'emancipate' Thailand was becoming a very real threat. If local threats of unrest posed significant problems for the nation, so too, did more international events. The price of oil prices was rocketing and an international monetary crisis was imminent.

The enhancement of standards and the need for "university graduates in fields most relevant to the demands of the labour market and the needs of national development" were both put forward as a highly desirable goals in the Plan. So, too, was practical course development. To that end in 1980 Sukothai Thammathirot opened, initially for more mature students and later for school leavers, offering courses in construction management, health science, agriculture and environmental science, as well as professional development courses for teachers.

4.7 The Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986)

The Fifth Development Plan was a direct response to the problems associated with rapid economic growth in agriculture, the manufacturing industry and the service domain, all of which contributed to a deterioration of economic and financial stability. Important natural resources were "disturbingly damaged" and while the industrial activities gave rise to increased employment, they also increased urban congestion and "caused social changes in value, discipline and relationships in the society" (p. 6). In relation to the international context, nations were still recovering from the oil price explosion and the international monetary crisis of the 1970s. World-wide rampant inflation, economic recession and high unemployment all weakened Thailand's trading opportunities with affected nations.

The Plan clarified that, given the rapid economic change experienced in Thailand, the social structure required reformation in order that it might "adjust to the

changing economic environment" (p. 7). In particular, as a social service, education would "be provided to meet the requirement of the population, and distributed more adequately to the rural area in order to reduce rural-urban disparity" (p. 11). In support of the Privatisation Act of 1969, it was recommended that higher education "could well be undertaken by the private sector" (p. 11). To that end, it was proposed that "the government will promote more investment by the private sector" (p. 11).

4.8   The Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1987-1991)

By the late 1980s and early 1990s the Thai economy had recovered and booming. International interest and investment was buoyant and the Thai government was congratulated by the World Bank on its high economic performance and its ability to maintain an annual GDP per capita growth rate regularly. Economic competitiveness had been facilitated by a diversification of the agricultural stronghold to a manufacturing and industry base and, as a result, employment rates enjoyed an upsurge. So, too, did higher education. A new labour base required new skills and knowledge and many higher education institutions witnessed an expansion at all levels and in numbers of students wishing to develop new knowledge and learn new skills. Universities in Bangkok and nearby areas reaped the benefits.

A specific focus of the Sixth Development Plan was a priority giving to the role of science and technology in society. Recognition of the growing importance of science and technology was explained as follows:

> Foundations will be laid for developing production and processing capabilities in order to elevate the country's status to a level equal to or higher than that of the newly industrialized countries. This development would lead to an improved standard of living for the Thai people in general and also help make Thailand more competitive in the world market. (p. 11)

As part of the foundation laying, support and funding were promised for research in fields designated as in need of immediate assistance, namely, magnetic engineering, and biotechnology, metallurgy and material sciences and electronics.

4.9   The First Long Range Plan on Higher Education (1990-2004)

When the first 15 year Higher Education Plan was developed, Thailand was enjoying a reputation as a country of relevance. Seven years later, however, confidence in the nation had substantially declined. When the East Asian crisis of July 1997 hit Thailand, the government and its economy were soon under huge pressure. Varghese (2001) has argued that the currency crisis was an outcome of over-investment by ambitious private sectors. As he argued, "…[t]he unrestricted flow of private capital to the region, and its withdrawal,...created and accentuated the crisis" (p. 17). In

Thailand, a rapid drop of the baht's value against the United States dollar, a significant fall in exports, a collapse in share prices and property values, and spiralling unemployment put major limits on government spending. Spending on higher education was soon under interrogation.

In 1998, in the midst of a deep recession following the regional financial crisis, the first National Education Act made it abundantly clear that in order to move forward, higher education needed a major overhaul. An external aid package was offered and international financial agencies intervened. As with previous aid packages, there were conditions attached, not the least of which was the requirement that government spending be significantly sharpened. An IMF-led loan of US$ 17.2 billion required tightened monetary policy and a substantially increased value-added tax rate. In addition, a World Bank package for higher education demanded staff freezes, privatisation of university services, and increased decentralisation together with enhanced institutional autonomy. Spending on higher education overall fell dramatically and had not regained its former level by 2001 (Welch, 2011). Before the crash, public universities received around 80 percent of their budget from the government, along with around 15 percent from tuition fees and income from hospitals (Kirtikara, 2002). The government's financial arrangement with universities swiftly changed. In 1998 the Office of the National Education Commission declared:

…In order to meet the challenges facing the nation in recovering its growth rate, the universities must become more efficient, cost-effective, high quality institutions, which have the flexibility to adjust to technology and labour market needs. To achieve this transition, the universities must pursue autonomy in management, become more self-sufficient financially, raise the quality of teaching staff, and align enrolments more closely to the needs of high technology. (p. 148)

The flow-on effect of the economic contraction was comprehensive and on a scale unanticipated. In an effort to understand the ways in which governments in developed countries had responded to financial contraction and how they were reconfiguring their relationships with higher education, Thai officials arranged numerous visits to foreign countries. Visits to the United States, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom revealed a restructuring movement that was generating force. In this movement economic imperatives were articulated through the rhetoric of autonomy, devolution, and decentralisation, yet the principles underwriting the movement were those of the market, in which increased centralism played a major role to ensure that a new overriding goal of enhanced quality was achieved. Higher education institutions would pay a price for their greater autonomy and that price was greater accountability of institutional performance.

Taking on board the messages and directions gleaned from global reforms, the National Education Act was developed and released in 1999. Representing a clarion

call for immediate action, it heralded as Kirtikara (2001) the "transformations unheard of in the Thai Education world" (p. 6). For higher education the reforms involved a range of sweeping changes:

- Restructuring of the higher education adminstrative system through the merging of the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA) and the Office of the National Education Commission (NEC), and the creation of the Ministry of Education, Religions, and Culture.

- Changing of the public sector role in public higher education institutes from regulatory to supervisory, through incorporating public institutes, presently part of the civil services, into autonomous agencies or public corporates.

- Creation of a national angecy on education quality assurance that will set national education standards and undertake systematic implementation of quality assessment.

- Extensive resources mobilisation and investment in education.

- Redirecting missions of higher education towards societal participation, student-centred learning and lifelong learning.

Through these changes the intent was to improve access and participation; achieve excellence, meet standards and be assured of quality; devolve management and

introduce autonomy and flexibility; mobilise sectorial resources; and achieve a desirable balance between physical, mental, ethical strength in human development.

Not everyone is in support of the view that the government's budgetary reforms followed global reforms. In Lao's (2015) interpretation, Thailand's "aspiration to always be modern, creates a volatile context for policy change" (p. 171). According to her local reading, "Thai elites used external forces such as colonisation and globalisation to stir the need for reform." Putting an alternative spin on events, she has argued that "advocates of the [budgetary reform] policy used external forces to politically and economically justify their longstanding policy proposal." Without strong evidence, support for this view is doubtful. It is unlikely that Thailand had developed the detail of the budgetary reform before such reforms were introduced in the western world, just as it is unlikely that "[t]he IMF/ADB loan obligation provided the legitimation that this difficult decision was 'externally enforced' rather than locally desired" (Lao, 2015, p. 171).

In 2002 the National Economic and Social Development Board called for projected education costs to be shaved by 8-9 percent (The Nation, 2003). Work on new and existing projects and investment in equipment and building came to a halt, staff numbers fell significantly and the employment of new staff in universities was constrained (Varghese, 2001). Enrolments dropped sharply. Atagi (1998) has shown that many students, particularly those from less wealthy families, withdrew

from university study. Well-off parents who now found themselves unemployed, in an effort to save costs, transferred their children from private institutions to state universities. In addition, when the government tightened the scope of the overseas study fellowship scheme, more students enrolled in public institutions. Those fellowships that were granted, particularly to science and technology students for study in the United States, the United Kingdom, or Australia, were conditional on a bond that required the student, on return to Thailand, to work for the government for a specified period of time. Similarly, the funding allocated to Thai scholars with expertise in science or technology, working or studying overseas with a view towards promoting Thailand's scientific development, was dramatically reduced after the crisis (Atagi, 1998).

Staff also experienced the effects of the crisis at first-hand. Devolution from the centre, as in western higher education institutions, went hand in hand with a new drive for performance data. Further, and perhaps more significantly, prior to the crisis, privileges such as full medical care, housing allowances and royal decoration rights, were bestowed on staff (Atagi, 1998). After the crisis, these privileges traded for lower salaries and, as a result, many staff, in an effort to supplement their relatively low incomes, sought secondary employment, typically lecturing or coaching elsewhere or working in the business world. Under such conditions, and given that teaching loads were often heavy, very few staff had the capacity to undertake research activities. Promotion also became more difficult.

4.9.1 The diversification of operation

Before the crash public universities received most of their budget from the government. Following the economic collapse block grants received dropped dramatically. The devolving of financial and administrative responsibilities through the block grants distributed to the universities in the years following the crash created significant problems. Whereas some larger and wealthier universities rose to the challenge, by drawing on industrial connections, smaller and rural universities with less demand for skills from local industries struggled. Competition for students between private and public universities became fierce and allegations of corrupt practices were cited in The Nation (2003). Those allegations had been expressed earlier when the Office of the National Education Committee (2000) argued the point that "…exploitation and corruption are still rampant everywhere" (pp. 2-3).

The National Education Act of 1999 encouraged universities to generate their own income from endowments and assets, but as Schiller and Liefner (2007) have pointed out, the potential for those activities for most universities was minimal. However, in order to generate new income streams, what the public universities did engage in was a diversification of their provision. To that end, market-friendly courses were introduced. For example, a number of universities introduced an executive degree programme such as the MBA and many others offered programmes in law, education, urban planning and hospitality not during regular class time but over weekends and/or evenings. However, quality became an issue when degrees conferred at some

institutions were not recognised. Doctoral programmes that were introduced for business executives were accompanied by excessive fees and the criticism that resulted also drew attention to the quality of the programme. A further initiative to diversify the income stream saw 40 Rajabhats, formerly teachers training colleges, granted university status in 2003. A formal licensing process for teaching requires the attainment of an educational qualification, typically a five-year Bachelor of Education degree, accredited by the Teachers' Council of Thailand, as well as at least one school-based year of in-service preparation. The Rajabhats' elevation was not merely a response to funding diversification; it was also a response to an acute shortage in teacher supply throughout Thailand at which time it was deemed expedient to offer pre-service teachers a degree course (Srinakarinwirot University, 2015).

4.9.2   The introduction of performance-based assessment

Concerns from students were mounting in relation to excessive fees and unrealised guarantees of specific service provision at private universities, as well as quality variation across all higher education institutions. Quality control became a major issue and in response to the 'declining standards' identified in the 1999 National Education Act, performance-based measures were introduced. The introduction of those measures in 2000 followed a trend set within western nations to ensure desirable standards were being achieved. Like quality assurance (QA) processes undertaken in many western nations across the globe, the legal mandate involved

three aspects: self-assessment processes, followed by an internal quality assessment (IQA), and an external quality assessment (EQA).

Assessment and evaluation procedures were not new to Thailand's institutions. However, the new system of performance-based assessment introduced a new discourse, clarifying the complex ways in which performance-based assessment was intended to play out across higher educational institutions in the global space. As a discursive practice, the performance-based measurement of quality regulated the conduct of staff and institutions in particular ways.

The need for an effective regulatory regime was highlighted in the wake of widespread corruption that threatened to undermine any quality assurance processes. What the Act introduced was a unified, comprehensive and systematic approach to quality assurance procedures. It provided the legal mandate to all higher educational institutions to undertake quality assurance processes under the direction of ONESQA, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment. The creation of ONESQA also marked part of the effort to overhaul the civil service. While it receives state funding and while its reporting line is the Prime Minister's office, the agency is not required to adhere to bureaucratic traditions and stands outside the regulatory arm of both the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC).

While the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) provided the structure and mechanism of a centralised system, within that system an element of decentralisation allowed for flexibility and diversity amongst universities. Specifically, each institution is required to develop its own quality assurance system annually for its own context but with due consideration to the specific domains identified in the ministerial regulations (Ittiratana, 2002). Each submits an annual self-assessment report and invites representatives from the Office of Higher Education Committee (OHEC) to conduct an internal assessment. The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), for its part, is tasked with undertaking the external aspect of the assessment at least once every five years for each institution. The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) then publishes leagues tables of the assessment outcome and, as is the practice in many western nations, these are made available to the general public, ostensibly to provide more information for the public as well as to strengthen the accountability system in education management.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), developed by ONESQA for assessing the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions, include research outputs, publications, employability of graduates, along with contributions to Thailand as a knowledge society and contributions to the development of local communities. Staff quality, then, became a major issue, particularly at private

universities. The assessment was concerning to many, since it was well known that many lecturers held inadequate qualifications for their role. Indeed, the Ministry of University Affairs noted that 2001 data from private universities revealed that less than six percent of staff were doctorally qualified.

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), in developing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as accountability measures, in facilitating external evaluations, and by offering a level of context-driven diversity, introduced a new level of scrutiny and, perhaps unwittingly, a new level of competition amongst universities. For Foucault, the concepts, values, and positions that a reform such as performance-based assessment promotes, has particular force since it is part of a regulatory apparatus that governs the education of individuals as well as their "moral development and liberation" (Popkewitz, 2004, p. 13).

4.9.3 Autonomous institutions

Under the National Education Act of 1999, all universities were required to become autonomous and to manage their own academic affairs, human resources, and budgeting. While autonomous universities are self-governing public institutions, they are incorporated rather than privatised, since, unlike private universities, they each receive a block grant from the state budget, the amount of which is dependent on enrolment numbers. King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi

(KMUTT) was the first university to transform itself into an autonomous university. In 2003 the block grant for KMUTT amounted to 40 percent of its university budget, representing a much lower sum than at non-autonomous state universities where more than 70 percent of the funds acquired are from the state budget. Similarly, Suranaree University of Technology operates as an autonomous university in 1990. Located in the Northeastern part of Thailand, it was the first regional university to receive financial support from the government in the form of block grants. It embraced the devolution of authority by establishing its own council with full decision making powers relating to staff, curricula, and salaries.

The years relating to the First Long Range Plan in Thailand were experienced as a deeply troubling period for Thailand economically, politically, and socially. The recession prompted the most extensive reform in higher education. The major overhaul of systems provided a way forward for higher education but, like all change, it also contributed to a unsettling upheaval. The National Education Committee describe the period of reform in this way:

> …Being caught in a severe economic crisis, political turmoil, cultural and moral deterioration, and defeat in a highly competitive arena where quality and capability reign supreme, Thai people and Thai society have been jolted to follow closely the various changes with both positive and negative repercussions on the country. (National Education Committee, 2000, p. 2)

4.10   The Second Long Range Plan on Higher Education (2008-2022)

A second 15-Year long-term plan for higher education was developed, proposing strategy planning for the period between 2008 and 2022. The Plan was both retrospective and prospective in form: it reflected on the overall performance of the sector and set out a new vision for all aspects of higher education during the fifteen years following its release in 2008. The Plan was published at a time when the global economic crisis of 2008-2009 was beginning to take hold. Thus, the Plan was timely to the extent that it provided direction for the role of higher education within a society in the midst of a new round of economic turmoil. This new role was elaborated further by Laksanavisit (2009), a former Minister of Education when he announced: "The second education reform aims to promote quality life-long learning among Thai people" (p. 1). Life-long learning is especially crucial in a nation besieged by unrest. To date, during the period of the First and Second Long Range Plans for Higher Education, 20 different ministers of education have been in power. Further, the military coup of 2014 has put paid to any political stability in the immediate future.

Three major components of the Second Long Range Plan for Higher Education were identified and dedicated, respectively, to quality, educational opportunity, and cohesion amongst the educational sectors. The first major section focused on the global and local socioeconomic contexts and their impact on the higher education system developed in Thailand. It included a discussion of and direction for a new

generation of teachers, staff development, new sources of knowledge, market trends, national competitiveness, and information technology. The second major theme focused on equitable access to higher education and the changing role of youth in society. It emphasised the importance of quality graduates, increased societal participation, and life-long learning. The third major section focused on issues relating to the higher education system and included a discussion of and direction for issues such as decentralisation, governance, administration, and infrastructure, financial planning, network strengthening, and conflict resolution.

4.10.1 Broader expansion of higher education

Further expansion of higher education access was a key goal. Vocational education and community college education were both proposed as the means to assist in the production of an enhanced skilled labour force. In addition, new universities dedicated to the development of knowledge and expertise in specialist areas would strengthen the nation's position in the global landscape. A new system was proposed, that demarcated delivery into four distinct higher education institutions, each with its own unique mission and goals. These four institutions were namely, Community Colleges; four-year universities and Liberal Arts colleges; comprehensive universities as well as universities with specialist offerings including science and technology; and research and post-graduate universities. In its annual report released in 2009, the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) clarified:

…Each sub-system will serve national priorities and strategies as well as addressing global, national, and regional demands, with the goal of enhancing the country's competitiveness, and to serve as prime movers for the development of real sector workforces, manufacturing and service sectors. (OHEC, 2009, p. 1)

4.10.2 Quality enhancement

Institutional quality was also at the forefront of the Plan. Higher education needed to perform at a level that would enhance and support the nation's competitiveness and sustainable development. Since teaching quality was found to fall short of international standards, the development of high-quality teachers and education personnel was high on the agenda. A focus on the teaching and learning of technology was emphasised in order to meet the demands of the market and to prepare Thai citizens for entry into the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) Community. The point emphasised was that graduates needed to experience a quality education and were required to develop a social responsibility through their studies. An overarching interest in these proposals was that Thailand would establish itself as a world-class regional academic and education hub in Southeast Asia.

In an effort to leverage a global academic profile, Thailand focused on research and development, borrowing from models in use in many western nations. Prior to the Plan the government sector undertook most of Thailand's research and development. Continuous research was conducted by a mere 20 percent of academics, principally

because research expenditure was not funded by the public purse (Schiller & Liefner, 2007). Following the release of the Plan, dedicated Centres of Excellence were established to strengthen applied research and development activities. These also served the purpose of initiating and strengthening financial backing from industry and private sector partners. Sinhaneti (2011) has observed that nine areas relevant to the disciplines of science and technology were identified as priorities for the enhancement of research and development activity. More globally, increased networking efforts and co-operation between members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) led to the development of a three-year road map and the establishment of research clusters to undertake investigations of mutual interest and publication plans.

4.10.3 Financial contraction

New financial measures saw the budgeting system further consolidate. Funding was capped and allocated according to a funding formula relevant to the institution's tier level. This budget revision was a direct response to the problem that very few institutions had initiated institutional autonomy (Schiller & Liefner, 2007), despite the fact that autonomy had been strongly encouraged in the First Long Range Plan. As Schiller and Liefner have argued, "public universities have tried to set up management systems to circumvent bureaucratic red tape on an organisational basis instead of participating in a comprehensive approach towards university autonomy" (p. 550).

4.10.4 Internationalisation

Thailand is the third most popular study destination for higher education in Southeast Asia. Between 1999 and 2012, the number of international degree students in Thailand increased exponentially from 1,880 to over 20,000. At that time, study disciplines for international students were mainly focused on business and languages, especially Thai language and culture. However, political instability and student protests that preceded the 2014 military coup have more recently played a part in a contraction of numbers. From 2014 the number of inward-bound degree students has dropped sharply.

Most inward-bound international students arrive from other Asian countries, particularly from China, where Thailand is perceived as a low cost alternative to more expensive western destinations such as the United States. It is also perceived to offer a sufficient range of international study programmes and a number of scholarship opportunities. Thailand is endeavouring to capitalise on those perceptions and is actively promoting itself as a competitive study destination for Asian students (Sinhaneti, 2011). Outward-bound Thai students are, in the main, fully self-funded. Whereas the United States has historically been the destination of choice, an increasingly affluent middle class degree student population now tend to favour the United Kingdom.

The exchange of knowledge operates at another level also. The exchange is a consequence of the Commission on Higher Education's stipulation that universities engage in international co-operation in higher education. To that end, as Sinhaneti (2011) has explained, Thailand is extending its efforts to position itself as a global player within the higher education community and is seeking to accomplish this objective as an 'education hub' amongst neighbouring nations. Internationalisation of higher education is fast becoming an integral part of the education system itself.

The free flow of educational services within the ASEAN economic community has provided the medium for engagement in research collaborations, the development of collaborative teaching practices, and the introduction of joint degree programmes (Sinhaneti, 2011). In addition, as a measure to modernise the Thai educational system and reduce gaps in necessary knowledge and skills, satellite campuses from foreign universities have begun offering courses unavailable within Thailand. As part of this co-operative and collaborative exercise, Thailand has developed a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to facilitate both comparability and transferability of qualifications within the ASEAN community.

4.11   The Second Long Range Plan in perspective

Irrespective of best intentions for the development in higher education during the period identified in the Second Long Range Plan, the effects of the global economic crisis of 2008-2009 hit hard, not to the same extent as the calamitous effects of the

regional financial crisis during the period of the First Long Range Plan but, nevertheless, to a troubling level. Graduate unemployment increased, enrolments dropped in some private higher education institutions and the government was faced with a rising population of students unable to repay their student loans (Sinlarat, 2015).

4.12   Conclusion

The years following World War II marked a turning point for higher education in Thailand. The significance of this era may be appreciated from the perspective of growth, from the perspective of administration, and from the perspective of the global landscape. The era's significance may also be garnered from the perspective of powerful traditions. Not only did higher education grow quantitatively, it also changed in terms of purpose, access and character. All these changes to discursive practices undermined the traditional values held by Thai people.

Foucault (2002) maintains that truth is constructed and developed by societies, as opposed to something existing independently of societies. In the construction of truth about higher education, Thai universities followed in the footsteps of the western American system, promoting the massification of higher education and a multi-campus system. In a sense of obligation for financial reciprocities, Thai universities have focused on higher knowledge development propelled by an objective to satisfy the requirements of Thailand's national economic and social development

plans. Sustaining positive relationships with and obtaining assistance from the United States have been crucial strategies at times of need, particularly during periods when the United States was a dominant player throughout Southeast Asia.

In 1999 when the National Education Act was released, Thailand's relationship with higher education in the west was strengthened further. By presenting a new orthodoxy, the Act represented a strident call to arms, shifting the relationship between politics, traditions, and education in a way that shadowed developments and reforms in higher education in western post-industrialised countries. For a nation built on strong royalist traditions these reforms are, simultaneously, energising and troubling.

CHAPTER 5

ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THAILAND: THE EFFECTS OF CHANGES

5.1   Introduction

Thai higher education has formally been in existence for a century. While many changes and reforms have occurred over that period, the reforms initiated over the years following World War II have marked a crucial turning point for Thailand. During that time, and as a consequence of contractual obligations in return for financial assistance, western policies and models from the United States filtered into the borders of higher education in Thailand. The growth of higher education institutions was rapid, to the extent that over the past two decades, it has grown seven-fold (OHEC, 2014). An enrolment explosion accompanied the institutional expansion as students commenced their studies at multi-disciplinary public universities, private universities, 'open access' universities, autonomous universities, specialist institutions, research universities, and community colleges. The mission of higher education changed from preparation for civil service leadership to education as a means to meet the needs of national development and the demands of the market. Entry was no longer restricted to students from aristocractic families living in or close by to Bangkok. Nor was it necessary to pass the difficult and restrictive university entry examination.

The adoption of western innovations, however, without due consideration to Thai history and context of Thailand, has contributed to a number of issues. The effects on Thai society of transnational policy borrowing from the west can be viewed (i) from the perspective of administrative efficiency; (ii) from the perspective of democratic provision; (iii) from the perspective of the preservation of values; and (iv) from the perspective of quality and standards. From the perspective of administrative efficiency, difficulties have been encountered in the change from centralised bureaucracy's regulatory role to one of supervision of decentralised local administrative units. From the perspective of democratic provision, in opening up higher education to more than the privileged, new and unforeseen problems have arisen. From the perspective of the preservation of values, persuasive international discourses, promoting the need for global integration, in many ways work against and undermine the traditional values held by Thai people. From the perspective of quality and standards, the culture of performativity and accountability works against the culture and context of a developing country.

This chapter will explore the history and present-day structures and practices within higher education in Thailand from these four perspectives. It will draw on the experiences and perceptions of seven individuals who a) are or were members of the academic community in Thailand, b) have a sound understanding of Thai history as well as social phenomena and/or c) have experiences and involvement in higher

education administration in Thailand. The participants were asked the following questions relating to the history of higher education and their experience of present-day practices and structures of higher education in Thailand:

1) From your perspective, explain the development of higher education in Thailand?

- What changes to higher education in Thailand occurred up to the present?

- Why did these changes occur? What were the causes?

- How can you divide the periods of changes?

- What are the significances/highlights of changes in each period?

2) What are the factors influencing these changes?

- What are internal and external factors pushing higher education in Thailand to change?

- What are the reasons that the internal and external influences occurred?

- Are there any relationships between those factors (internal and external factors) or not?

- In each period, what influences appear similar in relation to changes in higher education within Thailand?

- In each period, what influences appear different in relation to changes in higher education within Thailand?

3) What are the effects of these changes on Thai society?

- In your view, how have these changes affected higher education in Thailand?

5.2   Administrative Efficiency

Higher education institutions in Thailand have grown with remarkable pace since the first university was established in 1917, but more particularly during the past few decades. From the time when the People's Party's advocated a better quality of life for individuals who did not descend from royalty or the aristocracy, opportunity and enhanced life chances have become synonymous with higher education, in general, and university achievement, more particularly. The new regime of truth entered into the minds, hearts and souls of individuals. However, as a regime of power, higher education constructs specific regulatory practices, the tacit intent of which is, through a range of strategies, to normalise the actions and thinking of individuals under their care.

5.2.1   Growth and organisational practices

Growth and organisational practices within the higher education system play a part in governing individuals. The People's Party elevated three colleges to university status in a short period of time. Later, when Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram became the Prime Minister of Thailand, three universities—Mahidol University for Medical Sciences, Kasetsart University for Agriculture and Silpakorn University for Fine Arts—were established to service the demand for manpower in particular fields.

A later status change to some institutions also brought increased enrolments. However, the debate is ongoing as to whether or not the new status is appropriate, given, among other factors, the change required of the institution's administration system following the status change.

During 2004 and 2005, 41 Teachers Colleges across Thailand were status-elevated, and nine Rajamangala Institutes of Technology consisting of 36 campuses also became universities. Thongroj (2008) points out that in these two years the number of higher education institutions grew remarkably by 77, catering to a range of student interests, and more importantly, to meet national and international priorities. For Thongroj, the total number of higher education institutions in Thailand is excessive, and invites a whole host of issues, not the least of these being administrative and lack of support. Staff work under extreme pressure and are expected to operate successfully with limited assistance and resources. Interviewee III explains as follows:

> …it was unnecessary to upgrade all Teachers Colleges and Rajamangala Institutes of Technology as universities. All of them have their own strength and a capacity to produce qualified teachers and skilful specialists (in Applied Sciences) and serve society as colleges. A college status is adequate for meeting the national requirement. (Interviewee III, March 6, 2016)

Similarly, Interviewee VI has suggested the university status upgrade has been unnecessary:

> …it was not necessary for [m]any colleges which specialise in specific areas such as Rajabhat University to be elevated as universities. Because according to the national plan, the manpower demands related to demands for skilled people in the sciences and technology. (Interview VI, January 16, 2017)

If the upgrades to university status contributed to a rise in enrolments, open access universities escalated that rise. Soon after Ramkhamhaeng University, *the first* open-*admissions* university, was established, *eliminating the student entry examination,* the numbers of students enrolled at state universities grew at a rapid pace, as many new students and previous full fee-paying students at private universities took advantage of the lower costs and open entry. However, the enrolment explosion created extra financial pressures on the state budget. Enrolments at state-based institutions further increased when the Second Higher Education Plan established the need for the system to expand more broadly. The intent of establishing vocational and community education institutions, along with universities with specialist offerings, was to grow the skilled labour force and to develop specialist knowledge in order to become "prime movers" (OHEC, 2009, p. 1) on the global landscape.

While the tuition fees for these programmes were high, these institutions proved to be a costly liability for the sitting government. Confronted with the costs associated with huge enrolment increases, and of maintaining sites for vocational and

community education, and open access, specialist, and multi-disciplinary university sites in central Bangkok and in the provinces, the financial position of the state became dire. According to Sinlarat (2015), massification took its toll on the state finances and the state budget was "almost reduced to bankruptcy" (p. 344).

5.2.2 Commercialisation of higher education

Undeniably, this grim situation led to the 'commercialisation' of higher education in Thailand. As Interviewee V notes further:

> …[n]owadays there are many universities exploiting the 'academy' for their own benefits…However, the opportunity for education is still limited within some groups of society. To create and run the programmes among universities is highly competitive. People in charge pay attention to maintaining the programme rather than disseminating knowledge to learners. (Interviewee V, December 8, 2016)

As a strategy to meet the challenges confronting the state budget, the Office of the National Education Commission declared in 1998 that "universities must become more efficient [and] cost-effective….To achieve this transition, the universities must pursue autonomy in management [and] become more self-sufficient financially." Full self-sufficiency was not required since autonomous universities each receive a block grant from the state budget, the amount of which is dependent on enrolment numbers. Within a public university, academic affairs, budgetary and asset

management were delegated to the university council which was required to "mobilise, handle, maintain, generate and utilise its own incomes…from various sources, including devising its own audit system" (Chandarasorn, 2002, p. 15). Serious financial and management issues resulted amongst many universities, principally because many council members did not have the capacity to undertake the responsibilities and tasks to which they were charged. Welch (2011) argues that international funding agencies' interventions offering aid packages, following the late 1990s crisis, made matters worse. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald* (2010), the aid "prescribed fundamentally the wrong medicine." Welch (2011) remains sceptical about improvements in current regulatory capacity.

Interviewee IV (January 16, 2017) argued that autonomy has created issues for staff, too. Staff are obliged to aim high, to make efforts to excel in their teaching and research performance, and to seek promotion. These objectives, driven by the need of autonomous universities to prove themselves as stand-alone entities, have contributed, Interviewee IV claimed, to high levels of pressure. Since each autonomous university was obliged to be self-funded, each sought out opportunities to generate funds.

Interviewee III argued (March 6, 2016) that many universities wished to become autonomous since they believed that they would enjoy a sense of freedom in administration and management. However, while they are free from central

bureaucracy they are not free from the bureaucratic culture and its ways of thinking. The interviewee pointed out that some autonomous universities had declared that they did not have the freedom to establish a unique institution precisely because they had lived and worked in the bureaucratic system.

5.2.3 The bureaucratic system

The bureaucratic system has been central to western politics and social organising for a number of centuries. Foucault alerts us to the fact that bureaucracy, as it is understood today in western society, is the effect of a specific regime of power, and is not necessarily the only way of operating. However, it has become an important global force. In Thailand, as in other nations, the bureaucratic system is invested with the multiple interests of regulation, control, and progress and plays a major role in the structures and processes of higher education. It has its own particular regime of truth which legitimises and sanctions a discursive space for certain practices and social arrangements. These practices are so entrenched that they stake out a certain space not only for establishing true and accurate ways of operating within higher education but also for determining who is legitimised to undertake those practices.

Universities and staff members who 'read' the practice-specific meanings of the system correctly will assume an identity that associates them with membership of the bureaucratic community. Those universities and staff members who cannot or refuse to identify with 'normal' system practices will be marginalised.

> …[e]ach society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1984, p. 73)

When a board of governors does not 'read' the bureaucratic system correctly, and does not understand "the techniques and procedures [that] are accorded value," it becomes difficult to administer a higher education institution with the level of efficiency required. This point applies not only to autonomous and privatised universities but also to other public universities, as Schiller and Liefner (2007) argue:

> …the government is unable to fully monitor and control the behaviour of universities. Thus, universities' objectives may differ from the government's goals, and universities' activities may not lead to the effects desired since hidden intentions or hidden actions may exist. (p. 545)

Freedom is a discourse that has applicability only to action within the higher education regime. The discursive force of freedom gains further traction for autonomous universities given that the government has assumed a supervisory role and, ostensibly, devolved responsibility, but, as Welch (2011) has argued, these institutions "find themselves pressured by more intricate regulatory architecture,

which sets real limits on their capacity to put devolution into effect" (p. 14). Crucially, too, they find themselves in a situation where government expenditure for higher education has remained static since the Asian crisis. Higher education's "relevance on the political agenda is stagnant compared with other expenditure measures and does not match the growth of the modern industrial sector" (Welch, 2011, p. 549).

Nakhonsub (2012) believes that "…[a]ll the problems regarding Thai higher education's administration and management are the result of the way people in charge think, which is framed by the traditional bureaucratic system" (p. 330). He claims that this system constrains the creativity of staff and the future of higher education in Thailand, reducing the efficiency of higher education administration and management in Thailand. The rationale behind this phenomenon can be explained. First, according to Nakhonsub, the status of universities under the supervision of the government is incredibly stable. Universities themselves will continue in existence even though many negative comments and criticisms have been expressed relating to what universities offer society. Second, the bureaucratic evaluation focuses on the 'plan', rather than the 'product'. To that end, a process or innovation will be given priority only if it is in accordance with the initial plan. Third, universities abide by the concept of 'equality is fairness' which gives rise to a lack of creativity. In application of this concept, universities are not able to enhance their point of difference, when, in reality, each university has a unique role and mission to offer

society. All of these ways of thinking and operating, Nakhonsub claims, contribute to a culture of 'mediocrity' within universities. New systems or ways of thinking create issues and affect the normal routines and rituals of universities.

5.2.4 Conflicts with tradition

Sinlarat (2004) has observed that Thailand continues to struggle with western academic cultures because it conflicts with a culture that practices patronage and maintains prestigious links to the Royal Family. Governing boards in higher education institutions are often comprised of individuals with the 'right connections' who fail to enact the norms of the higher education system. Typically in Thailand, individuals who are appointed as rector, president, or board members are those who may have an interest in higher education but have no experience or expertise in finance or the higher education system. As Nakhonsub (2012) explains:

> …[t]he serious problem of higher Thai education administration and management is that the governing board does not understand its own roles and duties thoroughly. That is because the background or qualification of board and committee does not meet the requirement. Sometimes the committees are not skilful and experienced enough in higher education administration and management. They were appointed to their position because of the patronage system; good reputation, being well-known, or respectful instead of being knowledgeable and competent in academic administration. (p. 333)

Effective governance within the western academic culture emanates from members who understand the system's regime of truth: the roles and responsibilities of the board, the structure and organisation of the higher education institution, and the techniques and procedures. Effective governors are highly principled individuals, and take their responsibilities seriously. In the management of autonomous universities, in particular, the board or university council represents the government and public interests (Kirikara, 2001) and, to that end, has responsibility in "setting the vision and direction of the university, formulating policy on education and research, overseeing the personnel system, budget and finance" (p. 10). It also provides oversight of performance assessment and undertakes internal auditing. Thus board members need to be competent and allocate the budget equitably in accordance with need.

5.2.5   Political inconsistency

A significant factor that has contributed to the current culture, the inconsistency in policies and the lack of strong coordination within higher education, is political inconsistency. Frequently, Ministers of Education find themselves replaced. As was noted earlier in Chapter I, since 1932 there have been 12 rebellions, nine coup d'état, one revolution, 28 Prime Ministers, 60 different cabinet and 18 constitutions. There have been 53 Ministers of Education in approximately 80 years. On average, a Minister of Education is in power for only 1.5 years. Accompanying the regularity

of new appointments as Minister of Education, policies are frequently adapted and changed. Interviewee II clarifies:

> …[m]any times, the expertise of people in power was not in fields of education. They took over the Ministry of Education without understanding the real nature of education. When the new group undertook to be minister, new policies gradually appeared and many strategies needed to follow. This affected government officials or subordinators in charge, who needed to practice according to the order. (Interviewee II, February 27, 2016)

Typically, it is believed that higher education is crucial to national development. Thongroj (2008) claims, however, that Thai higher education pays less attention to 'intellectual capital' than other nations do. He argues that the merger of the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA) with the Ministry of Education (MOE) went against transnational precedent in which the administration of higher education is a separate entity from that of basic education. The merger in Thailand was ill-informed precisely because higher education and basic education have different objectives and missions. Whereas basic education emphasises the development of fundamental knowledge, higher education aims to develop the level of knowledge and skill, as well as research, required for national development and for competition within the global space.

5.3   Democratic Provision

Beyond concerns those associated with effective administration lies the unrealised goal of democratic provision. In 2000 the National Education Committee noted that "[t]he gap between the rich and the poor is ever widening. True democracy is still unattained" (pp. 2-3). The concept of democracy had been first introduced to the population by the People's Party in 1932 who endeavoured to "disseminate information about democracy as well as to convince people in the shift from monarchy to democracy by giving them new knowledge" (Interviewee I, February 24, 2016). The Party also endeavoured to include the middle classes more openly in educational provision. Concerns about democratic provision rose to a crescendo with the October Movement, when calls for democracy were again placed centre-stage. Such concerns served to fuel the student protests of 1973, providing a very clear expression that the state had failed to enact the aspiration of democracy at the higher education level.

5.3.1   The decentralisation of universities

The 'decentralisation of universities' policy of 1960s was proposed as a democratic initiative, opening up access to higher education for students in the provinces who had until the policy, experienced major difficulties enrolling in higher education courses in Bangkok. As eventuated, however, the objective of democratic provision was not realised, and most of students who enrolled in the provincial universities were students who lived in the capital city. These were students who did not have

the 'right connections' or who found the entry examination too difficult to participate at a higher education institution in Bangkok or surrounding areas. Four decades later, that same expression of state failure has played out in enrolments that are "demographically skewed towards Bangkok and neighbouring provinces" (Welch, 2011, p. 88).

The opportunity for the general population to access a university remains uneven. Interviewee V claims that "…[t]he opportunity of education is still limited to some groups of society and there is a high level of competition amongst universities for programme offerings" (December 8, 2016). Competition revolves around an institution's reputation, the rank and dignity of individuals within the institution, and the location of the university. For example, a university located in a small province far away from Bangkok is always assessed on the basis of quality, the qualifications of lecturers, the standard of programmes, and the technology provided, in comparison with universities in the main cities. The assessment given might be right or wrong, but the evidence suggests that an assessment like this is passed on from one generation to the next.

5.3.2 Over-democracy

Nakhonsub (2012) has argued that in more contemporary times, 'over-democracy' is perpetuated within universities at the governance level. In Nakhonsub's

understanding, over-democracy leads to the enactment of democracy at the symbolic level only. For example, in the selection of the governing board, all university staff are eligible to vote for their board member preferences. However, unlike in western democratic elections, the minority votes, as well as the majority votes are given consideration. Those conferred with the task of making the selection are known to analyse the polls and select members according to their own personal preferences.

'Over-democracy' is also widespread amongst students attending the universities. Interviewee III (March 6, 2016) observed that the regularity of students protests in Thailand represent an expression by students of their rights to freedom and independence, as transported from the United States political system, and as interpreted by Thailand's student population. In its recontextualisation, the ideal of democracy incentivises the student population to demonstrate their rights for social equality. Consequently, protests, which are organised by students as strategies to draw attention to their rights, have become a regular phenomenon in Thailand since the October Movement.

5.3.3 Budgetary inconsistencies

Inconsistencies in the application of democracy to budget allocations have also been highlighted. In 2004, when 41 Teachers Colleges were elevated, at the direction of Office of the Higher Education Commission, as Rajabhat Universities, a major difference in budget allocation from the state was revealed. Thongroj (2008) has

highlighted the point that one university received less than 50 million baht, whereas, another received more than THB 5,000 million from the Bureau of the Budget. While these two universities are diverse in terms of size and mission, neither of these two factors is part of the allocation policy. The difference can be explained by the fact that the policy requires each university to negotiate directly with the Bureau of the Budget. Budget allocation is thus dependent on the negotiation skills and reputation of the university. It is also dependent on any 'connections' the university might have with members of the Bureau of the Budget.

Just as no policy is in place for budget allocations, there is also no policy in place for the determination of tuition fees and as a result, widely different fee scales exist, particularly between public and private universities. Within Thailand's highly stratified society, students who succeed well on the entrance examinations usually descend from the upper or middle class families (Thongroj, 2008). These are the students who, on the basis of their success, have more opportunities and options to attend 'first class' universities where tuition fees are typically lower than average. In contrast, students who struggle with the entrance examination often come from the lower class. Their option, then, is to enroll at private universities or in the 'extra-ordinary' programmes available in public universities or other higher education institutions where tuition fees are inexplicably more expensive than fees for conventional university programmes. Inequalities like these, that penalise a sector of

the student population, are rare in more advanced democracies, where principles relating to fees are both explicit and consistent.

5.3.4 Graduate over-supply

Recent times have witnessed an over-supply in the student and graduating population, triggered by an enrolment growth that has exceeded the growth of industry. For their part, the National Economic and Social Development Plans have endeavoured to match student offerings with economic needs. More specifically, they have identified the skills and knowledge necessary for social and economic development and have made recommendations that link higher education provision with manpower requirements for such development within the economy. For example, these plans initially established a demand for the preservation of natural resources through agriculture. A response to those national needs initiated courses in afforestation, irrigation and new methods of agriculture (Watson, 1981). Later, in an attempt to fuse programme offerings with national needs, courses in engineering, medicine, business studies, science and technology became higher education priorities.

The Private Colleges Act and the Ramkamhaeng University Act (the 'open access' Act) stimulated a greater demand for higher education and created a context for the development of programmes and courses beyond those related to the needs identified in the National Plans. With no strategic policy coordination that set limits on and

monitored course applications, enrolments in courses such as law and social sciences flourished, along with those in business studies. As Watson (1981) has argued, inevitably, courses were duplicated.

The strategic plans that had estimated the number of graduates required in every field and for specific careers, proved incorrect, principally because industrialisation did not develop at the same rate as the growth of enrolments. Graduating student numbers were surplus to requirements. By 2008, large numbers of students were graduating but the employment vacancies failed to accommodate them. Not only was industry not able to satisfy demand, neither did central government. Many graduates who had set their sights on civil service employment discovered that recruitment opportunities had retrenched. As Watson (1981) has put it, "the government has helped swell the numbers of educated unemployed" (p. 309). For some career pathways, more than 10,000 graduates competed for 10 positions, whereas in some other careers, such as those in the industrial and medical sectors, there were insufficient numbers of applicants to fill all the positions available. Thongroj (2008) has emphasised that in order to serve the advanced technology sector in a way that meets the national goal, there should have been more than 40 percent of students enrolled in science and technology fields, but, in reality, only 28 percent had enrolled to these fields of study.

In 2016 more than 300,000 students graduated from all universities throughout Thailand and the rate of graduate unemployment was 27 percent. More specifically, one in four graduates was unemployed. A point to emphasise is that half of those unemployed graduates were either from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, or from Education (Thai PBS, 2016). One year later, the situation had worsened. The National Statistics Office or NSO (2018) reveals that, from a survey of the Thai population undertaken in 2017 on working conditions, 476,000 people were unemployed. More than half of them (approximately 253,000) had graduated from a university. Sinlarat (2015) argues that the problem of overproduction of human knowledge means that every year many graduates do not find employment and each year the unemployment issue becomes more pressing. Yet despite the disturbing rate of unemployment, enrolments in humanities, social science and education remain uncapped.

Suwanwela (2006) has drawn attention to an imbalance between enrolments in the Sciences/Technologies, and in the Humanities/Social Sciences. In 1998, the overall ratio was 22:78. For public universities not including open access universities, the ratio was 56:44. When open access universities were included, the ratio was recorded as 8:92 and within private universities, the ratio stood at 19:81. Without tight coordination, strict monitoring and enforced enrolment caps, the situation is likely to worsen over time. According to the Office of National Economic and Social Development, in 2002, approximately one million students were enrolled at 24

public (state) universities, 86 percent of whom were studying for a Bachelor's degree. Among them, 660,000 were enrolled at open access universities. There were around 220,000 students in 56 private universities and colleges with 95 percent at the Bachelor level. While the percentage of students in Humanities and Social Sciences was 77 percent overall, the figure reached 94 percent for open universities. Further, while 96 percent of students in multi-discipline state universities complete their study and graduate, only 26 percent of those enrolled at open access universities completed their degree. In 2017, approximately 346,000 students graduated throughout Thailand, 110,000 from Sciences and Technologies (31.86%), and 236,000 from Business Studies, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Law (68.14%).

Unemployment is experienced by many graduates. Statistics provided by the Office of National Economic and Social Development Board (ONESDB) revealed that in 2018 the highest rate of unemployment is now experienced by graduates within the agriculture area, followed by those who graduated in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Overall, from the total amount of unemployed people in Thailand (402,000 people), 170,900 were graduates from universities. An informed critic might propose that, given the graduate surplus, universities are operating unethically; that democratic provision needs to be mindful of realistic long-term prospects for students enrolled in the programmes offered. However, universities appear unwilling to analyse predictions of national demand for graduates. They also appear unwilling to strategise and confront the possibility of future unemployment head-on, which,

when experienced, as Interviewee IV (February 24, 2016) notes, is likely to lead to 'demoralisation'. Universities tend to focus, instead, on power and profits, and as Interviewee IV maintained, in a tone of both concern and resignation, they are tending 'towards capitalism'.

5.4   Preservation of Values

During the boom years for higher education in Thailand, everyone, theoretically, who wished to study beyond post-compulsory education had the opportunity. While the reality was that some potential students, for a range of reasons, were prevented from enrolling, many, as was noted in the previous section, did take up the opportunity. Indeed, records show that in 2002, over 1.7 million students were enrolled at either public or private universities. Interviewee I pointed out that certificates and degrees are held in high esteem since they have the potential to change one's social status. For many, studying within the higher education system in Thailand is an investment and certificates and degrees are deemed to be indicators of income. While the rate of salary varies according to the level of the degree, without question, Interviewee IV (December 20, 2016) maintained that the degree or certificate remains synonymous with wealth.

The high demand for higher education came at a cost to long-held values. Individuals holding close to tradition maintain that higher education has derailed the social fabric. They propose that the government should be the sole provider of higher

education institutions. They reflect on the time when public universities received around 80 percent of their budget from the government, along with around 15 percent from tuition fees and income from hospitals (Kirtikara, 2002). They point to the era when higher education was in its prime: when the number of students was expanding rapidly; when there were jobs for graduates; when a new focus on manufacturing and industry within the economy created opportunities for everyone and allowed higher education to grow; and when new programmes and courses were developed that provided students with new skills and knowledge to satisfy society's manpower needs.

Joining the debate are others who argue that times and conditions have changed. They point to the importance of context; to the East Asian crisis of July 1997 that crippled the Thai economy; to the currency drop; to the fall in exports; to the collapse in share prices and property values; and to spiralling unemployment. They emphasise the need for external aid and draw attention to the severe constraints put on government spending. They highlight the point that the 1999 National Education Act became the vehicle for disseminating news of how the severe constraints on spending would impact on higher education. They note that the government promised to "meet the challenges facing the nation" by requiring universities to become "more efficient, cost-effective, high quality institutions," with "the flexibility to adjust to technology and labour market needs" (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998, p. 148).

5.4.1 Commercialisation

Schiller and Liefner (2007) have emphasised that "[b]udgetary reforms are particularly challenging for newly industrialising countries' (p. 543). They point to the fact that, for such contexts in developing countries, the "mainstream of the literature agrees that a certain level of commercialisation is necessary to ensure adequate responses to decreased public funding and new demands" (p. 544). The responses to the decreased funding and new demands that emerged in Thailand included government-led systems such as increased decentralisation, enhanced institutional autonomy, and performance-based allocation of funds, as well as incentive-based activities such as the privatisation of university services, the stimulation of university-industry cooperation, the generation of income from endowments and assets, and the commercialisation of research and teaching. Critics point out, however, that while the Privatisation Act of 1969 and the Ramkamhaeng University Act (open access Act) of 1971 represented innovative responses on the part of the government to meet the increasing demands for higher education, the two Acts, nevertheless, introduced a level of competition for students amongst universities and the introduction of market-driven strategies.

A number of universities applied strategies of the market place to promote their programmes of study. In a number of cases, these marketing strategies were exploited. Many new programmes were created, many universities promised programmes and curricula without regard to the national demand for graduates, nor the possibility of

future unemployment. Many initiated programmes for large number of students without providing additional staffing and many courses were designed at a level incommensurate with higher education. Many courses were found to be of little interest to students. In short, many universities negotiated market-driven strategies for their own ends, focusing on quantity rather than quality.

The struggles associated with maintaining fiscal buoyancy within private universities were well-understood. Because such institutions did not receive any resourcing or a budget allocation from the government, it was deemed acceptable for them to apply a level of commercialisation to generate funding. Critics deem it unethical for public universities, which received block grants on the basis of enrolments, to exploit this strategy by increasing the number of places available, by introducing additional or special programmes, or by expanding the number of campuses. An increase in funding from student enrolments was an exploitation of the students, themselves, who, as Welch (2011, p. 546) has argued, have:

> …a limited ability to anticipate the long-term benefits of programmes offered…[or are] unable to judge the quality of courses, materials, etc. Hence, students may be attracted to low levels of tuition on the one hand or by high prestige on the other hand without assessing the cost-benefit ratios of programmes.

Like all other institutional structures, the university, in a sense, is a closed system, with its own rules governing beliefs about ways of operating. As within families across generations, certain values are implicitly absorbed from one intake of students to the next. The same is true of universities. Frequently, a university will produce the 'same kind of people', with similar attitudes, similar behaviours, and the same philosophy of life. "The gentle efficiency of total surveillance" (Foucault, 1984, p. 217) ensures that the university not only normalises practice; it also, through subtle coercion, marks out social relations and create positionings amongst the people who work and study within its spaces. For their part, students in Thailand, like most students in other nations, when choosing an institution in which to study, take into consideration the image projected of a university. An image which corresponds to the image they, themselves, hold of that university, wields considerable persuasive power from the perspective of selection. Indeed, in Foucault's understanding, an image-match is more persuasive than programmes and courses on offer that might align with the student's own skills and knowledge and interests. As Interviewee III points out:

> …*Thai people choose a university with high reputation first. Unless they find out that there is no place available for them. Then they will shift their decision from the most reputable to other universities which are affordable.* (Interview III, March 6, 2016)

5.4.2   Academic inflation

When a Bachelor's degree became simply a stepping stone for further education, Master's degrees were introduced, and then more latterly, doctoral degrees were developed. Thus, the western phenomenon of 'academic inflation' was transported into Thailand, conceptualising a degree as a requirement for employment. Many students enrolled in Master's degree courses and Doctoral programmes. Suwanwela (2006) explains as follows:

> …[t]here has also been an expansion of graduate education toward Master and Doctoral Degrees. There were only 1,434 students at the graduate levels in 1994; while in 2001 there were 43,238 Master students and 2,441 Doctoral Degree candidates. In addition, there is much more diversification of course offered. Many courses for working students, in particular teachers and government's employees, have been designed. Some are at the diploma and master degree levels. Master courses in business administration, management, and information technology have become very popular. (p. 207)

This validation of a degree-for-employment not only affects students but, on a larger scale, higher education institutions and the entire economy. In creating an explosion in demand for university education, the state, along with the universities which were exploiting the market, have, perhaps unwittingly, created an artificial demand for higher education. These sentiments are unambiguously expressed in the lyrics of a well-known group in Thailand. The following lyrics are named 'University' from a song titled 'Carabao'. The lyrics are translated as follows:

…University is a big lie.

Boy and girls in rural areas have a big dream to study there.

But there is no job available after graduation.

No job, no money

But they do not give up, still make an effort.

They try to apply for many positions from many organisations.

They try many tests but they fail.

They still do not get the opportunity to work.

Because their knowledge is average, not outstanding.

Those organisations want the clever ones.

Besides, they come from the middle and low classes. Their parents have no power (no

cronyism) at all to negotiate with people.

There is no future for them.

The Bachelor Degree becomes a piece of paper.

Putting on the wall with sacred finds (to express the respect) (Thai superstition)

Graduates are supposed to have a good quality of life.

But no one knows how they really are.

They go to bed and dream at night.

But they daydream during the day because there is no future for them.

There is no hope for the superstition.
The only one thing they can do is to sell their textbooks for a small amount of money

(metaphor).

With the idea of high competition and more pressure leading to wealth, some are

successful; whereas, others are suffering from this lesson.

Not only physical but also mental capacities are exhausted from disappointment.

They wonder if it is different from what their ancestors said

'the higher level of degree you have, the better life will be.'

This is the wrong concept of inculcation.

They put a value on a degree which is not appropriate for the Thai context.

They let their offspring live on their own dream without consideration to reality.

A degree from the university is worth nothing.

5.5   Quality and Standards

In 2000, as one of the government-led systems initiated in response to decreased

public funding for higher education, the Office of National Educational Standards

and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) was established. As was noted in the previous

chapter, as an autonomous agency, it has its own board of directors but receives

funding for its operating costs from the government's budget. Its task was to develop

a quality assessment system which involved the development of standards and criteria

as measures for quality assessment, the provision of training and certification, the

oversight and the conduct of the external assessment, and the reporting of

recommendations to educational institutions in relation to the enhancement of their

standards and quality of education. As Ittiratana (2002) has explained, each

institution undertakes a self-assessment and an assessment team consisting of senior educators appointed by the Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) visits the institutions periodically for their assessment and accreditation. The Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) undertakes the external aspect of the assessment of each institution at least once every five years.

5.5.1 Performance-based assessment

Discursive borrowing of the system, as it has been developed in western nations, is prevalent amongst higher education institutions in developing countries. The system has become more and more prevalent in light of the global tightening of budgets. As a funding reform initiative that offers a cost-saving strategy for governments, performance-based funding not only provides a mechanism to distribute institutional funding on the basis of institutional performance, it also allows governments to monitor standards and quality and hold institutions accountable for performance. Suwanwela (2006) has clarified that assessment in relation to a given 'standard' is a concept that enjoys high relevance not only within national borders but also within the global space. However, Suwanwela points out, the international 'ranking' of universities is a controversial issue in that each country, at a particular point in time, has its own identity, context and purposes for higher education. In arguing that criteria and key performance indicators such as research outputs, publications, employability of graduates, used by ONESQA to evaluate productivity, have been

borrowed from other contexts for the assessment of higher education, Thailand's unique context will inevitably create points of differences with other countries. As Interviewee III points out:

> …[r]anking is a measure that advantages only those who designed the 'standards' and the assessment process. It is quite useless in Thailand because (i) Thai people do not rely on those standards as a measure of proficiency. They do not endorse the process of ranking but they want their university to be in the ranks for reputation; (ii) the system demands lots of money and budget from each university in order to fulfil all the requirements; (iii) the contexts are different between Thailand and any developed country. For example, one of the criteria requires that state universities have a certain percentage of international students. But practically speaking, if international students have sufficient money, they would rather choose Singapore or Hong Kong instead of Thailand; and (iv) private universities in Thailand have limited budgets for research. It is different for universities in developed countries where funding is supplemented by private companies or philanthropists. (Interviewee III, March 6, 2016)

In Foucauldian understanding, the concepts, values, and positions that performance-based funding promotes have particular force and are part of a regulatory apparatus that governs the behaviours, attitudes and language of individuals and institutions at particular times and locations (Walshaw, 2007). In this new government/institution relationship, the former role of government as provider and carer of institutions changes to one of monitor. Through this change, ONESQA, in setting standards

and criteria, normalises an institution's options to such an extent that institutions begin to 'watch themselves' in relation to research outputs, publications, employability of graduates, contributions to Thailand and contributions to the development of local communities.

5.5.2 Surveillance and regulation

Foucault (1984) would maintain that ONESQA functions as part of the technology of surveillance and regulation of higher institutions. Many, in support, would argue that the surveillance identifies gaps, omissions, and extremes and holds each up for inspection. Thus, they argue, ONESQA is a primary instrument of disciplinary power, politicising the work done within the institution whereby each can be appraised and by which each can assess themselves (see Walshaw, 2007). If the disciplinary power is politicising, it is also continuous, since to ensure that institutions are regularly kept in check, financial rewards are offered and financial penalties are imposed. The Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) publishes leagues tables of the assessment outcome.

Performance-based assessment in Thailand is in its formative stages of development. Given its relatively recent introduction, it is perhaps inevitable that issues have arisen that interfere with the professional operation of the assessment process. For example, Interviewee IV maintains that "…[t]he ranking of a university is questionable. Some criteria employed are not academic, for instance, the number of international

students. However, ranking becomes very important for the university's image and reputation and financial support" (Interviewee IV, December 20, 2016).

There are major quality issues across higher education institutions in Thailand. Those who argue for the merits of a performance-based funding system would emphasise that the Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) has become an important tool to address the quality variations. They would argue that practices of normalisation and surveillance are critically important for consistency and continuity across the higher education space. An institution's actions, behaviours and performance, they argue, need to be under the gaze of ONESQA, making differentiations and comparisons. The mechanism that ONESQA offers would provide hard evidence to support (or otherwise), the claims, for example, of Interviewee VI, who maintained:

> *Upgrading the Rajabhat Universities and many of Teachers Colleges initiated an excessive supply in the labour market…They did not meet the national plan requirement. Besides, their standard is still questionable.* (Interviewee VI, January 16, 2017)

The surveillance undertaken by ONESQA would also become an important tool for verifying anecdotal evidence that suggests small universities with few lecturers have introduced doctoral programmes even though lecturers are often inexperienced and lack appropriate research experience. In Thailand, the issue of the consistency in the

quality of higher education has been a concern for many years. Interviewee VII reveals that "…[s]ociety is full of graduates who have degrees or certificates, but they have no knowledge. It is said that graduation can become a reality on payment of a tuition fee" (Interviewee VII, January 16, 2017).

The unsatisfactory quality of higher education in Thailand may be the reflection of the problems associated with inefficiencies in administration and management systems at the institutional level as well as at the central level. It may also be a reflection of the aspirations of lecturers and students. Lecturers are well aware that many students wish to participate in the ideology and culture of higher education. Many students perceive higher education as a symbol of national prestige as well as a key to personal progress and advancement. Given the high demand for higher education, programmes and courses are developed and delivered to satisfy students' aspirations and to enable their participation in higher education, irrespective of what the labour market requires. Suwanwela (2006) has drawn attention to the point that these programmes and courses are typically offered within the departments of business studies and information technology. Suwanwela also notes that the curricula for the programmes remain unchanged across universities and from one year to the next.

In the more recent times of population decline within the student age group, there are multiple programme choices for students at both public and private universities.

However, partly because many degrees have been proven to have minimal currency within Thailand's labour market (Interviewee III, March 6, 2016), in 2018, only 80,000 students who completed high school chose to enrol at a university (Siambusinessnews, 2018). Across all the higher education institutions, approximately 120,000 places remain open. Thus, higher education in Thailand is now confronting the problem of 'excessive supply and low demand'.

5.5.3 A focus on teaching

Lecturers at universities are highly focused on teaching and typically take up employment for this principal purpose. In comparison with western levels of staff qualifications, they are often under-qualified. The Table 1 below provides an overview of the percentage of doctorally qualified academic staff from a selection of universities in Thailand in 2010.

Table 1: Doctorally Qualified Academic Staff

University	Percent of PhD academic staff
Suranaree University of Technology	78.5
Mahidol University	72.4
Chulalongkorn University	61.3
King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi	59.4
Chiang Mai University	52.7
Thammasat University	51.2
Khon Kaen University	47.3
Prince of Songkla University	44.9
Naresuan University	44.7
Srinakarinwirot University	42.4
Kasetsart University	42.3
Ubon Ratchathani University	39.2
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang	38.9
Mahasarakham University	36.4
Burapha University	35.7
Maejo University	34.0
Silpakorn University	33.3
Walailak University	33.3
Thaksin University	25.9
Mae Fah Luang University	24.2
King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok	23.2

Source: Ministry of University Affairs (2010), translated from
http://www.nap.mua.go.th/FacultyRecord/index.aspx

Teaching duties of academic staff are often onerous (Welch, 2011) and are characterised by an emphasis on undergraduate teaching at the expense of graduate education and research. In support, Schiller and Liefner (2007) have argued that "undergraduate teaching is a very important function in many developing countires that strive to improve the skills of their population. Graduate education and research

do not belong to [their] core activities" (p. 547) and, it is argued here, are not necessarily where their energies need to be spent. Others in the debate might argue, as does Thamrongthanyawong (2005), that graduate education is a priority. In Thamrongthanyawon's calculations, the number of PhD graduates in Thailand would not satisfy replacement needs of professors who are due to retire in the next few years.

In the past individuals pursued academic careers for the prestige rather than the salary. As was noted in the previous chapter, lecturers' salaries are not commensurate with their professional position. In current times, the disproportionately low salaries may also act as a discouragement for many in the pursuit of a professional career. The tradition of deep respect for education and the role of teachers and academics in society appears to be undermined by other more attractive professions in the private sector offering higher financial recognition.

Welch (2011) has found that salaries of academic staff in higher education instituions "were only one-third to one-seventh of their peers in the private sector." As a consequence, many resort "to a second job (such as lecturing at other unveristies or coaching schools… or business in an effort to supplement their salaries" (p. 91). Schiller and Liefner (2007) have provided futher information on salaries, specifically at Chulalongkorn University and the Asian Institute of Technology, noting that "a full professor in the top salary bracket will earn approximately US1,500 per

month….Therefore professors are teaching more hours to earn more income" (p. 551). They actively seek additional income to supplement their salaries and, as a result, they do not have the time to advance themselves in their academic field. As Interviewee IV clarifies:

> *…[l]ecturers spends lots of time teaching students, especially in the 'extraordinary' programmes to make more money. They do not have the benefit of time to improve themselves or develop their own knowledge and expertise. Eventually, those lecturers become 'academic deadwood'. Once they realise the situation they are in, it is too late to improve.* (Interview IV, December 20, 2016)

Since student quality is often a reflection of lecturer quality, academic staff described as 'academic deadwoods' have generated much concern. In Sinlarat's (2015) observation, all lecturers—'academic deadwoods' or otherwise—are entrapped within the 'academic game' of performance-based assessment which, in turn, determines lecturers' individual status. For Welch (2011), the assessment process consumes an unrealistic amount of staff time and too many resources. Poapongsakorn (2008) has described the process as "a game of maximising scores, with no real impact on output or quality of education." In a contradictory stance, the government promotes devolution as a gift, even as it demands more and more accountability. That is to say, with the hallmarks of an accounting system, the system established to assess quality requires increased performance data from an institution that has ostensibly been devolved more authority. For Welch, the process is one of

"rule by performance indicator" and, regrettably, is "increasingly burden[ing] academic work" (p. 14). It ranks lecturers according to publications and other means of dissemination of their work and assigns status and can easily be manipulated, as anecdotal evidence suggests. However, promotion is dependent on high performance.

The system of promotion is precarious. The pressure to succeed is enormously competitive, since, if successful, promotion generates more income. First, lecturers are required to pay a fee to be considered for promotion as an Assistant Professor, an Associated Professor, or as a full Professor. Individuals may not apply since they are required to be nominated for promotion. Many would-be applicants hire a skilful or experienced person as nominator, and those who are most likely to succeed with the promotion are nominators who have connections and the personal skill required to negotiate the selection of members on the promotion panel.

5.5.4   Corruption

Thongroj (2008) provides support for the view that corruption is endemic within higher education insitutions and wider systems. As he argues, the "…[p]roblem of academic corruption is widespread in Thai higher education" (p. 23) and occurs at every level. Equitable practices at the top levels are seriously undermined by charges of profiteering. Westcott (2003) has noted that an estimate given by the National Counter Corruption Commission suggested that as much as 30 percent of government procurement budgets may be lost because of such practices. Such

practices occur amongst students, too, as degrees have come to be more valuable and tradable than knowledge itself. Thongroj has suggested that students copy from their friends, take notes into the examination room, and use mobile phones to communicate with friends, who had previously passed the examination, to ask for correct answers.

Unethical practices also occur within research activity. As a key requirement within higher education in Thailand, research drives the need for staff to perform well. Thongroj (2008) highlights incidences of staff, lacking sound research experience, but who wished to be perceived as performing well, became involved in research activity and disseminated the findings of their research projects, until it emerged that many of their research projects and many of their research reports failed to meet conventional research standards. Welch (2011) raises doubts about the improvement of transparency. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some academic staff members who have not conducted any research, pay experienced researchers to write their research publications. The regulation of propriety in higher education is a major concern; currently it is also necessarily restrictive, given that agencies and ministries have very limited human, material and developmental resources at their disposal. In 2000 the World Bank had argued for "[a] coherent and rational approach toward the management of the entire higher education sector" (p. 58). Such an approach is necessary 20 years on.

5.5.5 Research involvement

Incentivisation to undertake research is necessary. According to Weesakul (2004), only 20 percent of Thai academics are regularly involved in research activity. In addition, expenditure for research and development is lower in Thailand than it is in other Southeast Asian countries. The World Bank (2000) provides a perspective from the global community, arguing that research capabilities need to be improved in order that Thailand's future needs are met. However, Interviewee IV has drawn attention to the point that the requirement to participate in research activity contributes "to high levels of pressure. At the same time, most of the research lacks quality. Apparently, the staff or lecturers are obliged to do it, but not keen to do it."

Schjiller and Liefner (2007) have argued that, as a measure of performance, research funding and publications "have their weakenesses as they tend to measure quantities rather than qualities, and short-term output rather than long-term outcome" (p. 546). In Thailand the issue is accentuated by the large number and kinds of state institutions, and the complexity of private institutional arrangements (Welch, 2011).

Interviewee III (March 6, 2016) has argued that it is not in the nature or culture of Thai people to investigate or research. Elaborating further, the Interviewee points out that Thai people are not interested in exploration and investigation. They believe what ancestors have created in the past is sufficient for the future. While some staff in universities do undertake research it is simply an undertaking to fulfil a

requirement for performance-based assessment, rather than an enjoyment or interest. Thongroj (2008) provides sound evidence to support that claim:

> …[i]n 2005, there were 50,000 lecturers in all universities throughout Thailand; whereas, only 2,000 papers were published. Ninety percent of those researches were produced from only eight universities. It means the remaining one hundred universities published papers only 10 percent. In average from only eight most outstanding universities, their lecturers published only 0.12 papers per year. Compared with other countries, where [on average] a lecturer published at least two papers per year. It is more than twentyfold of the production from the eight most outstanding universities in Thailand…. In the whole picture, there were 200,000 papers published from the lecturers in the United States, 50,000 papers from Japan, 40,000 papers from the United Kingdom, 12,000 papers from China, and 10,000 papers from India, Korean, and Singapore and so on. This information indicates universities in Thailand lack of research which is the key figure of development officially accepted by international universities nowadays because knowledge can be created by research. (p. 23)

More recent figures from 2010 confirm that research activity amongst academic staff at the following universities has not changed significantly:

Table 2: Published Articles by Academic Staff Totals per University

University	Number of Articles
Chulalongkorn University	1575
Mahidol University	1493
Chiang Mai University	859
Kasetsart University	702
Prince of Songkla University	559
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang	545
King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi	519
Khon Kaen University	518
Thammasat University	413
Suranaree University of Technology	317
Naresuan University	203
Mahasarakham University	178
Srinakarinwirot University	161
Silpakorn University	158
King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok	157
Ubon Ratchathani University	91
Mae Fah Luang University	80
Burapha University	77
Maejo University	68
Walailak University	49
Thaksin University	32

Source: Ministry of University Affairs (2010), translated from
http://www.nap.mua.go.th/FacultyRecord/index.aspx

The following Table provides further insight into research activity at a number of universities, by identifying the number of articles per academic staff member during 2010:

Table 3: Published Articles per Academic Staff

University	Number of Articles per staff
Suranaree University of Technology	0.96
King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi	0.78
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang	0.57
Chulalongkorn University	0.55
Mahidol University	0.47
Chiang Mai University	0.36
Thammasat University	0.27
Prince of Songkla University	0.25
Khon Kaen University	0.24
Kasetsart University	0.22
Mae Fah Luang University	0.20
King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok	0.20
Naresuan University	0.16
Walailak University	0.16
Mahasarakham University	0.16
Silpakorn University	0.14
Ubon Ratchathani University	0.14
Mae Fah Luang University	0.13
Srinakarinwirot University	0.11
Thaksin University	0.09
Burapha University	0.06

Source: Ministry of University Affairs (2010), translated from
http://www.nap.mua.go.th/FacultyRecord/index.aspx

Sinlarat (2015) explains that most lecturers in higher education institutions are not able to undertake teaching and research at the same time. However, if they were to participate in research activity rather than be involved in the planning, the preparation and the teaching of a course, they would benefit from (i) higher income, (ii) enhanced reputation, and (iii) elevated position.

5.6   The Issues Explored in this Chapter

The four major issues in Thai higher education explored in this chapter should not be considered as stand-alone issues. Rather, they are intertwined since they share a common context and a common culture. The diagram below, developed from the exploration in this chapter, provides a representation of the relationship amongst the four major issues: administrative efficiency, democratic provision, preservation of values, and quality and standards. These issues were raised independently by the interviewees. They are rearticulated and reformatted in the diagram in a way that underlines their complex relationships, as a theoretical contribution of the thesis.
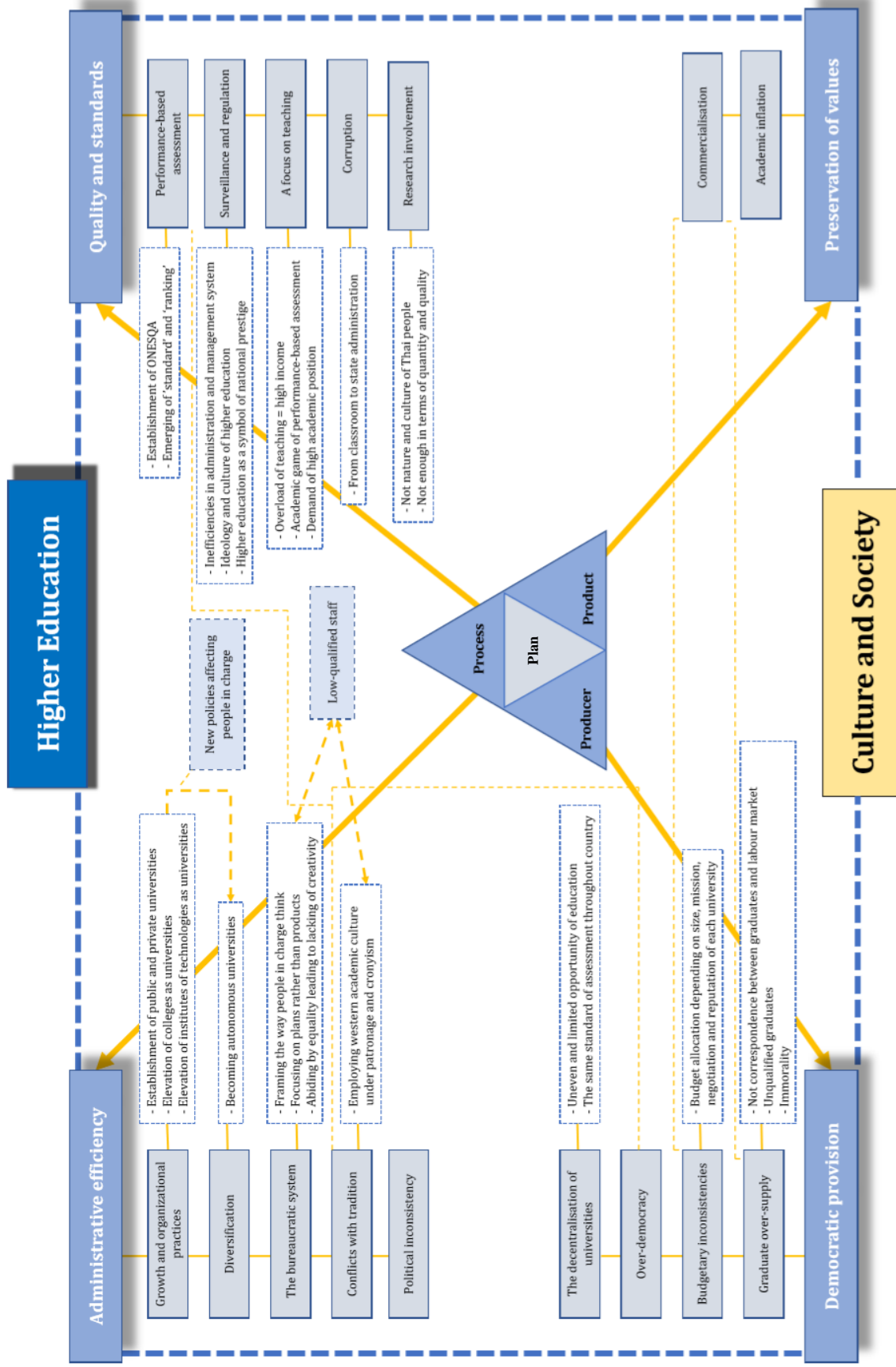
Figure 3: The Intertwinement of Four Major Issues Confronting Higher Education

5.7   Conclusion

Thai higher education has been in existence formally for a century. Not only have internal factors influenced the reforms within the system, external factors have proved a strong motivating force and direction. Discourses from the global higher education landscape have also played a significant role in reform movements in Thailand. Perpetuating those global discourses are individuals across the hierarchy from administrators and managers, lecturers, and students. In establishing a presence in Thailand these international discourses have sometimes collided with traditional understanding in Thailand about what is meant by higher education.

Several intertwined issues have been identified within the current structures and practices of higher education in Thailand. The inefficiencies of the administrative and management system, democratic provision, the preservation of values, and quality and standards are all major dimensions of concern for the Thai higher education system. The issues identified here are not the only issues that higher education in Thailand is currently confronted. However, they were deemed here as sufficiently serious to warrant exploration in this chapter. In the next chapter the ways in which those issues might be addressed for the future are explored.

CHAPTER 6

EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES
FOR THAI UNIVERSITIES IN THE FUTURE

6.1   Introduction

Higher education in Thailand is confronting a number of critical issues. In the previous chapter, these issues were explained as partly a consequence of transnational borrowing of global higher education discourses which have sometimes be perceived as in conflict with traditional understandings and ways of operating in Thailand. Notwithstanding the traditions, global discourses are perpetuated by individuals across the hierarchy from administrators and managers, lecturers, and students, all of whom have played a significant role in reform movements in Thailand. The issues emanating from the presence of those discourses were, in the previous chapter, conflated into four major problems, namely administrative efficiency, democratic provision, preservation of values, and quality and standards. The previous chapter explored the responses to those four key issues for the current system from the perspectives of participants currently involved in higher education.

This chapter will explore the future of higher education in Thailand from these same four perspectives. As before, it needs to be emphasised that the issues identified here

are not the only issues higher education in Thailand has to confront. However, these issues have been deemed by the research community as sufficiently significant to warrant examination in relation to the future of higher education in Thailand. A small number of participants' perspectives provided a complement to the perspectives identified in the research literature. The participants were asked:

From the development we have talked about, what is your prediction for higher education in the future? (Perhaps several ways)

- What are solutions and suggestions for higher education in the future?

- Overall, what are your views about the entire picture of higher education in Thailand? What directions do you want higher education in Thailand to take?

6.2   Administrative Efficiency in the Future

First, budget cuts to the higher education system have been extremely challenging for the sector and have prevented it from to fulfilling its important mission, namely, to prepare qualified individuals to meet the socio-economic demands of society. Thai society has always assumed that individuals, on graduation from an institution of higher education, would create benefits for the wider society and allow every member of society to spend his or her life free from individual and societal economic and fiscal problems. Higher education would also allow individuals and society to experience a sense of safety and security, in the knowledge that Thailand was no

longer exposed to the threat of invasion. Thus, higher education plays a major role in a nation's present and future well-being. For a role so crucial to society, appropriate funding must be available. The allocation of that budget is expected to be fair and transparent.

When the Thai government announced budget cuts that sparked major overhauls within higher education, the decision was not an isolated event. The action was reflective of strategic responses from governments around the globe to world-wide financial down-turns. Lao (2015) is critical of the budget cut policy in Thailand and what she names as "Thailand's obsession toward the culture of borrowing, which favors the supremacy of foreign ideals and models" from "a western source" (p. 171). In Lao's interpretation, Thailand's "aspiration to always be modern, creates a volatile context for policy change" (p. 171). She argues that "the availability of global policy fads and trends offer endless policy options—just like a 'supermarket of reforms'" (p. 171).

As in these other countries, the funding reform in Thailand introduced, among other initiatives, decentralisation of processes and autonomy of higher education institutions, as a means to diversify the funding base. Two decades on since the reform in Thailand, the pool of public funds in Thailand remains limited. A precedent has been established by western systems of higher education to maintain practices relating to decentralisation and autonomy. Thus, it is likely that a future-

focused Third Long Range Plan—the anticipated strategic plan for higher education during 2023-2037 in Thailand—will continue to remain wedded to the funding reforms as a means to support the development of the economy and the growth of Thai society. In support of this contention, Sinlarat (2015) has argued that:

> …[t]he future of Thai higher education will not be dramatically different from what it is nowadays. Some small scales may be slightly adjusted but it is impossible to change the entire structure. It includes the way to think and/or the strategy to solve the problems. Apparently, the troubles in the past have accumulated. Higher education cannot avoid this fate as long as people in society cannot provide the support and resources to develop higher education itself. (p. 355)

The kinds of practices that were made implicit for university autonomy within the National Education Act of 1999 have not, as yet, been fully implemented. The Ministry of University Affairs (1990) requires autonomy from both public and private universities for sustainable and consistent development. Sinlarat (2015) highlights the point that the centralisation of the past, in addition to providing universities with around 80 percent of their budget, provided full oversight of individual universities, including knowledge of their individual strengths, weaknesses, as well as knowledge of employment demand. In the new system of institutional autonomy, many universities are unconcerned about labour market demands, focusing instead on the viability and sustainability of the university and profits. Staff,

focused on their continued employment, develop courses and programmes irrespective of future labour demands.

In the view of the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (2002), the responsibility rests with the government: "The government must exercise vigilance in protecting the public against sub-standard institutions that may charge only minimal fees but provide…poor educational value" (p. v). Echoing the sentiments expressed, Sinlarat (2015) has suggested that a centralised master plan is an absolute necessity for greater effectiveness and efficiencies. However, given Thailand's high record of political instability, it is a moot point as to whether a sitting government would act on that necessity.

The funding reform, arising from decentralisation, presents as a major issue. Schiller and Liefner (2007) have suggested, however, that while budgetary reforms present significant challenges for developing countries, nevertheless, "[s]tagnant public funding is an incentive to tap all kinds of new income sources" (p. 551). Taking a positive stance, they maintain that when government funding only pays for teaching, higher education institutions are provided with a 'window of opportunity' to look beyond state funding to attain financial equilibrium. Reduced government appropriations lead to the development of a new system that embraces a range of funding sources, such as increases in student fees. In this system, new relationships are likely to be forged with industry, potential donors, and grant-awarding bodies. It

is this sector that may assist not only by supplementing the income received from the government, but also by providing the additional resourcing needed to "catch up academically with developed countries" (p. 544).

Not everyone shares the positivity of Schiller and Liefner. Welch (2011) has argued that many staff were more comfortable with their status before the reforms, even if in that earlier time there was less flexibility. At that earlier time, in keeping with tradition, they were deemed to be part of the Thai civil service. Thailand's historical legacy, Lao (2015) maintains, hinders efforts to tap into new sources of funding, and thus to some extent, create impediments that block the funding reform from achieving full implementation. Since the traditions are complex, they will be discussed individually, given the acknowledgment that they are not separate entities but are all intertwined.

6.2.1   Hierarchies within the civil service

The change of the government's regulatory role to one of supervision of decentralised local administrative units has been challenging in the extreme. The political structure with its hierarchy of seniority has greatly contributed to those challenges. Higher education in Thailand is administered and managed by experienced civil service workers who have been in the job for many decades. Historically, a pattern of strong centralisation ensured that problem solving was deferred to this hierarchy of senior power. Today, the higher education environment is much more complex. Power has

been devolved to institutions in which administrators are often either reluctant to embrace the responsibilities associated with decentralisation and governance, and/or have not received the training and skills development required. Welch (2011) has argued that while higher education has grown, "it is not clear that regulatory capacity, and in some cases transparency, has always grown in parallel, in either size or strength" (p. 14). To that end, both the hierarchy of seniority and institutional governance have the potential to stall progress with the reforms.

Nakhonsub (2012) has identified four key points for future consideration. First, the selection process of leaders or principals in every type of university should be reformed. Second, the academic environment would be enriched by the support and encouragement of university principals and through the connections of those principals. Third, principals should enhance the potential of academic staff by providing them with the resources of time and materials, to allow them to disseminate the findings of their research projects. Last, provision for retired academic staff to continue at the university, for the principal purpose of mentoring new academic staff members, would enable the university to reap the benefits of retired academics' experience and expertise. Nakhonsub (2012) recommends that, with respect to the next level down of leadership, heads of every university department need to be held responsible for the curriculum. They need to ensure that the curriculum content is aligned with the development of human resources to meet

national needs, and that its emphasis on both theory and practice incorporates morality, ethics, and social skills.

6.2.2   Patronage and corruption

Second, in explanations of impediments that prevent the funding reform from achieving its full implementation, the patronage system also plays a major role. Patronage is entrenched within Thai culture and historically contributed to the various levels of stratification that characterise Thai society. Sinlarat (2004) has argued that the Royal Family's position within the hierarchy and the traditions that characterise the society have contributed to Thailand's struggles with western academic cultures. Evidence shows that in nations in which the patronage system exist, there is also strong evidence of corruption. As was noted in the previous chapter, higher education is not exempt from the power of corruption. Granted, despite limited resources and low remuneration rates in the public sector, most academic and general staff undertake their work with upmost integrity. However, the actions of some others are less ethically sound.

Welch (2011) has highlighted the point made by the Chair of Transparency International in 2006 that "[d]espite a decade of progress in establishing anti-corruption laws and regulations… results indicate that much remains to be done before we see meaningful improvements". Transparency International facilitates the Corruption Perceptions Index which produces results from multiple expert opinion

polls relating to public sector corruption. Scores on the Index range from zero to ten, where zero provides an indicator of high levels of perceived corruption. On this Index Thailand's score of 3.6 revealed the second highest levels amongst the Southeast Asian countries.

A more effective regulatory regime would ensure, first and foremost, the development of a transparent audit system. A lack of transparency and accountability in the past has allowed practices of corruption to escalate. Thus, there are severe shortcomings in terms of the capacity of existing administrators to carry out their responsibilities in a fair and transparent manner (Watson, 1981). Nakhonsub (2012) has clarified that "…[t]he external audit of each university's administration should be undertaken and should align with good governance principles. The system should be accountable. Peer audit and the development of strategic plan for the budget, personnel, or curriculum should guide the administration" (pp. 345-346).

Sapienchai (2001) has added that it is important to select a range of external members of society to join the 'Lay Board' in order to administer the university and to diminish the power that politicians wield within higher education institutions. Evidence suggests that, at some institutions, politicians continue to be invited to be a part of lay board in the universities irrespective of their lack of knowledge of academic institutions (Sapienchai, 2001). Again, the patronage system played a part

in that university boards expected a higher level of budget allocation in return for the politicians' board involvement. The selection of the lay board should be transparent.

Looking towards the future, a more effective lay board within a university, Sapienchai suggests, would include individuals and stakeholders with vested interests in the university. For example, graduates from the university, the parents or guardians of graduates, owners of businesses and companies, as well as local people with local knowledge and interests might be invited. All of these individuals bring a wealth of personal understandings about the function and mission of a university in a local setting. At the wider level of governance, a transformation of the current infrastructural arrangements, giving rise to a more effective regulatory regime, would ensure that the reform objectives are being met. These changes, in the future, would go some way to stall the practices that are currently undermining the efficiency of the higher education system.

6.2.3   Difficulties in acquiring new funding sources

A third factor hindering the effective implementation of the reform is the need for institutions to tap into new sources of funding and to establish market-coordinated enterprises. Since government expenditure for higher education has not matched the growth in the industrial sector (Welch, 2011), the expectation is that universities will seek out new income streams, in addition to the income generated from tuition fees from increased numbers of student enrolments and new courses and

programmes. However, for most universities, particularly smaller and rural institutions, and those in deprived areas or where there is less industrial development, income from endowments and assets is presently unrealistic. In the eyes of other universities, the prestigious Chulalongkorn University enjoys an enviable position in that its ownership of land in central Bangkok ensures a steady income. Few others are able to aspire to that position.

Sivaraksa (2001) claims that current offerings across all universities in Thailand are remarkably similar since most universities have not established their own identity, mission, or unique vision, even though points of difference between universities had earlier been encouraged. While Kasetsart University, for example, was originally intended to produce educated farmers, a strong belief within Thai society that farming was an occupation for poor and uneducated people, led to a changed vision and saw the introduction of a raft of other programmes with an emphasis on those related to the humanities and social sciences. A similar change arose within Silpakorn University which was intended to attract future artists but later introduced a wide range of faculties. The concern amongst the interviewees is that universities should not succumb to the demands of the student market but should develop their own unique point of difference.

In the future, stronger relationships between universities, with established points of difference, and industry to enhance their areas of mutual interest might be

encouraged. These areas could potentially extend beyond current interests in agriculture and food science. Theoretically, the potential of universities to strengthen their income base would rise. On a practical level, however, there is a major impediment. Currently, there is evidence that "private companies do not want to cooperate at all" (Welch, 2011, p. 552). Future partnerships between industry and universities will need, as a starting point, to develop higher levels of communication and transparency which will lead to higher levels of trust between the two partners and, in time, future-focused mutual benefits. In addition to establishing an expertise point of difference, each university, whether private or public, would also benefit from enhanced communication, transparency and trust in the competition for discretionary funds within the sector.

6.2.4   The impact of a weak infrastructure

Fourth, the impact of a weak infrastructure is far-reaching. Loose infrastructural arrangements prompt inefficiencies and a lack of appropriate equipment and resourcing to support the curriculum. They also invite low transparency levels and inappropriate remuneration rates for academic and general staff. These, in turn, along with an insufficient number of trained personnel, affect managers' and administrators' capacities to meet their work objectives. The way in which managers and administrators operate within the work place influences the level of effectiveness with which academic staff carry out their responsibilities. In turn, poorly paid and over-worked academic staff, coupled with poor resourcing and a lack of coordination

of programmes and course offerings, has an effect on students. The cycle is a vicious one.

> In most developing countries no clearly identified set of individuals or institutions is working to ensure that all the goals of the country's higher education sector will be fulfilled….Policy makers must decide on the extent to which they will guide the development of their country's higher education sector, and the extent to which they think that market forces will lead to the establishment of and operation of a viable system....[G]overnment guidance is an essential part of any solution. (World Bank, 2000, p. 58)

As the World Bank has identified, "[a] coherent and rational approach towards management of the entire higher education sector is therefore needed" (p. 58).

6.3 Democratic Provision for the Future

Inequitable provision for students

In succumbing to mounting pressures from school leavers for access to higher education, the Thai government expanded the provision of universities. It did this by an expansion of existing universities by developing new campuses. It also opened up new institutions in Bangkok and provincial and rural areas. In addition, it diversified the type of tertiary level institutions, by privatising universities and creating open access universities. It created a rapid expansion of higher education in response to the issue that new areas of employment and industrial needs required

new knowledge and expertise. Indeed, as was clarified in Chapter 4, an increase in human capital to match manpower needs for the new economy was a primary objective of the Development Plans.

At the same time an unprecedented demand for higher education was given a very clear expression at the social level. The government was confronted with the dilemma of whether to succumb to mounting social pressures and expand higher education or restrict enrolments by limiting entry or by altering the criteria for entry. It chose the pathway of massification of higher education and paid the price of a number of unforeseen inequities.

Privatisation has created an environment characterised by inequitable access for students. Privatisation of higher education institutions:

> …[m]ay preclude the enrolment of deserving students who do not have the ability to pay. [Privatisation] often evokes resentment among students who do. Means-tested scholarship and loan programs are one possible approach to addressing this problem, but they have proven very difficult to administer due to the difficulty of assessing ability to pay, sometimes exorbitant administrative costs, corruption, and high rates of default. (World Bank, 2000, p. 57)

Inequitable student access to private universities does not stop at fee payment. A weak infrastructure, as was noted above, has meant that universities are unlikely to be sufficiently well controlled and monitored. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some institutions focus on the generation of income from students' fees at the expense of offering students an education of quality and purpose. Their rationale is, according to the evidence, that students are not interested in knowledge development. Rather, students merely seek the document that confirms they have acquired a degree, irrespective of the degree's value. Whether or not this point is true, the harsh reality is that many students *are* able to "envisage the potential benefit of investing in education" (Schiller & Liefner, 2007, p. 547), and, in particular, of investing in a specific degree programme at a specific university. However, many are left 'high and dry' when they discover that the degree they believe they have worked hard for is found to be virtually worthless.

Potentiality does not equate to reality, when economic growth has not kept up with the expansion of higher education. Many graduates are now finding it impossible to secure employment at a level commensurate with degree status. If there are jobs available, they are likely to offer remuneration scales much lower than are offered overseas. Welch (2011) provides an example printed in *Asiaweek* (Bacani, 2001), of "an IT specialist in Thailand [who] could hope to earn…much richer pickings abroad, including in other parts of Asia" (p. 96). As a consequence, many graduates seek employment overseas. Indeed, what is named in the western world as 'brain-

drain' is widespread amongst Thailand's graduates and also lecturers. Interviewee VI (January 16, 2017) emphasised that while "lecturing is an important occupation, the income for this career is unreasonably low [in Thailand]. This situation does not motivate intelligent people to study for a job in this area" Chareonwongsak (2001) elaborates further:

> …[t]his [differential pay] situation devalues the profession of being academic. Those elites who have previously dreamed to contribute their knowledge as a lecturer in the university will change their mind and turn to work in other occupations instead, or perhaps joining the 'brain drain' to developed countries where they can earn a more reasonable income. In fact, the government has attempted to persuade intelligent and qualified students by offering scholarships to them in order to study abroad in return for them, on homecoming, to be a part of government as an official or part of an assigned organisation. However, if the rate of income does not motivate those scholars enough, the tendency towards human capital flight will, without doubt, rise. (p. 49)

6.3.1 Asymmetric relationships between universities

Universities do not enjoy equal status, privilege, and benefits. As an example, competition within the university sector for discretionary funds from the government is uneven. Public and private universities compete for the same small pool of funds yet success tends to favour those institutions which are already, comparatively, more well-resourced. For the poorer institutions, the development of a strong facility with its unique mission and driven by the market is currently beyond reach. The gap

between large and affluent institutions and other universities is already apparent, yet Welch (2011) anticipates that this gap will become even more pronounced in the future.

The gap between the universities is also revealed in the awards of grants and donations. Schiller & Liefner (2007) has provided evidence that universities with tradition and prestige, along with courses and programmes from such universities will benefit more than others. While award nominations and grant proposals from other universities may meet the goals of society and the objectives of the government, they are unlikely to receive funding. Donor and grant-awarding foundations may be unable either "to assess the potential benefit of a close cooperation" or "to assess the quality and the future prospects" (Schiller & Liefner, 2007, p. 546) of the university and its departments. As a result, universities and programmes lacking tradition and high status may not succeed with funding applications, even when their proposals are qualitatively sound and their prospects are quantitatively rich.

6.3.2 The impact of uneven provision

While massification of higher education has opened up access to higher education for many students it has also created an environment characterised by inequitable access for students and unfulfilled prospects for graduates. Inequity plays a hand also for universities. Competition between universities for discretionary funds, grants, and

donations tend to advantage those universities steeped in tradition and basking in prestige more than others.

How might the quantitative challenge for higher education in Thailand be addressed? Interviewee III (March 6, 2016) has suggested that, putting aside the direct effects on academic staff, if a decision was made to close fifty percent of the universities in Thailand, the educational system is likely to develop in more equitable and progressive ways. Granted, the competition amongst students to gain university entry would escalate, provided enrolments were to be capped. However, Interviewee III emphasised, what is likely to happen is that individuals within society will come to a clearer and more realistic understanding of where their future life-work lies. That life-work may require a vocational education rather than a university degree. As the Interviewee explained, a university education may not be appropriate for everyone (Interviewee III, March 6, 2016).

6.4   The Preservation of Values in the Future

Outwardly, western influences are embraced by Thailand, and these influences are no more evident than the adoption and adaptation of western policies in higher education. Yet beyond the outward demonstration of western ideological acceptance lies an overriding effort on Thailand's part to maintain the cornerstones of its traditional political and social systems. Royalty, the Thai language, Thai values, and Buddhism lie at the core of Thai society. Within that core group are certain traditions

relating to hierarchies and protocols that set Thailand apart from, and its perceived superiority over, its close geographical neighbours. Bovornsiri et al., (1996) have argued that

> …[d]espite the dramatic evidences of modern materialistic culture to which higher education has shown, fundamental Thai values persist, [and are] ironically, also fostered by higher education… therefore, Thai culture is neither a clay nor an iron pot instead perhaps a bamboo pot that can easily adapt to external change. (Bonvornsiri et al., 1996, p. 75)

6.4.1 Fundamental student values and attributes

Across the class divides, a number of fundamental values and attributes underpin Thai society. Those values are no less present within the higher education experience where students are required to demonstrate the following:

- Respect and deference to superiors.

- Knowledge of etiquette for interacting with royalty and those of elite status.

- Capacity to maintain and promote social harmony.

- Knowledge of higher levels of politeness and related linguistic forms.

- Knowledge of foreign languages and cultures.

- Ability to work well in cooperative group situations. (Bovornsiri et al., 1996, p. 65)

Those who graduate from university are expected to be self-assured and confident. They should show pride in being a member of Thai society and humanity. Thephussadin Na Ayutthaya (1987) explains further:

> …[t]here are four aspects that graduates from the universities are required. First, their intellect should have developed in the use of critical thinking, the skill of decision making, and the concept of adapting things creatively. Second, their attitude needs to express affection and kindness. They are supposed to be knowledgeable, positive, and ready to face problems rather than surrender. Next, their morals need to be developed. It is believed that being highly educated without good morals is harmful to society in the long-run. Their personality needs to be acceptable. They should be healthy physically and mentally. They should have good manners and be admired by people in society. (pp. 118 - 120)

Along with those fundamental attributes is a discourse that has been passed on from one generation to another, relating to a great respect of education, particularly higher education, the role of the teacher, and the venerable forms of learning that have a long history in Thailand. Within that discourse are a number of other influential everyday sayings that have emerged from the Buddhist tradition of commitment to learning (Bovornsiri et al., 1996). These include:

- the more you study, the better life you will have, the higher social class you can attain;
- wisdom is a weapon;
- nothing compares with knowledge;

- elites (widely used to describe educated people); and

- the liberty of democracy

These discourses have led to a general understanding amongst Thai people of the superiority of educated individuals. The corollary—that uneducated individuals are inferior—goes some way to explain the enrolment explosion when enrolments for higher education were opened to all comers.

Sivaraksa (2001) has pointed out that ancient European thinkers had conceived of the university as more than a medium for the lower classes to elevate themselves to be upper class. In the conception, the purpose of the university was to shape not only an individual's intellect but also his integrity. However, since there was no guarantee that higher levels of integrity would be demonstrated by those who had received a higher education, religion was used to help shape the moral compass of individuals. It was believed that once people could demonstrate their integrity, their knowledge would be taken seriously. Thus, teachers within the early European higher education institutions were appointed from the educated clergies, to ensure both intellect and integrity were developed. This conceptualisation of the purpose of the university was strongly expressed in the beginnings of higher education in Thailand.

6.4.2 Staff as conduits of desirable values and attributes

In contemporary times, the appointment of staff needs to be given careful consideration since an overriding objective of academic staff is the development of students' intellect and integrity. Thephussadin Na Ayutthaya (1987) has argued that staff knowledge should go hand in hand with honesty and integrity. Lecturers need to demonstrate good manners in order to be role models for students in terms of attitude, personality, and knowledge. Furthermore, it is believed that students' success with their studies is partly the result of the way lecturers perform their duties. However, Thephussadin Na Ayutthaya (1987) has observed that:

…[a]t this moment, there are so many vocal academics but they are not responsible for what they have spoken. They are selfish, dishonest, ill-mannered, and have bad attitudes. All of these attributes have influenced graduates' behaviour and have initiated low standards. Their behaviour and attitudes do not correspond to what society expects of them. (p. 126)

Beliefs and values are typically difficult to change. However, western value systems have created doubts about the mission of a university that has been traditionally expressed. The powerful homogenising effects of western cultures have worked their way into the higher education student community in Thailand. For example, local wisdom and knowledge are considered out of date and impractical. Parents are often deemed ignorant and grandparents more so. It is perceived better to study overseas

than it is in Thailand. The 'individual' focus of the western system in which rationality and the scientific approach play major roles, has run up against a system of thought that takes the 'collective' as the focus, and in which morality and balance feature significantly. Humanity, morality, and balance, Interviewee I (February 24, 2016) maintained, need to filter through all courses and these should be multi-disciplinary:

> …[i]t is necessary to introduce inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary subjects in every programme in order to build a strong understanding of what it means to be human. After they understand the core content and main concept of morality, they are able to integrate the knowledge and know how to behave properly in society eventually. In Thailand's case, the problems of Thai value might be sorted out by inserting Buddhism principles relevant to balance in life and sufficiency. (Interviewee I, February 24, 2016)

6.4.3 The proposal of a new discourse

Interviewee I has recommended the introduction of a new discourse which should be validated within higher education. The recommendation is for a broad subject to be named as 'General Education' (GE), or similar, and to be taught in order to develop an understanding amongst students about society's expectations of them and, particularly, the kinds of behaviours and attributes that are validated by society. For Interviewee I, students' understanding and perceptions are in urgent need of change. The inclusion of ethics and morals in a course of study must be a fundamental aspect of all learning. Those responsible for teaching these courses need to be

knowledgeable and experienced in inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary subjects. They should understand the purpose of a course such as General Education and be able to teach how to apply the knowledge from the course to daily life.

The happiness of life and the suffering of others are central for Interviewee II (February 27, 2016) who proposes:

> …[t]o develop the intellect of a graduate, it is important not to focus on only the wealth of country or 'GNP' but to consider the real happiness of life. It is ridiculous and disadvantageous if the income is high but there are still many social problems such as crime and poverty in the country. (Interviewee II, February 27, 2016)

Interviewee VI (January 16, 2017) emphasised that the gap between rich and poor should be a consideration. The trend amongst current students, that puts more weight on individual accomplishment than on society's progress, goes against the grain of Thai tradition that seeks a better life for everyone. Interviewee VI believed that it is much more preferable for students to focus on the development of knowledge for the benefit of everyone rather than to focus on a degree for individual glory. According to Interviewee VI, graduates should realise that success is not attained when it is only measured in material terms such as the accumulation of 'capital', or a high level of 'prosperity' or even 'high education'. For this Interviewee,

the main purpose of an education from a higher level institution, is to live in society peacefully and meaningfully.

Every university is obligated to the inevitability of change for society in positive ways for the future. In particular, the Interviewees argued for a concept change of higher education in Thailand away from its historical meaning of preparation for civil service. An expanded meaning would not focus on young adult individuals destined for one occupation. Rather, it would embrace young adult individuals as well as more mature individuals for a range of occupations and for life. Courses and programmes would need to be tailored to this widened group of students. The Interviewees believed that with all the changes identified above, students and graduates could then be perceived as knowledgeable people who demonstrate integrity during and after they have completed their programmes of study. They note that the notion of higher education as conceived by Thai society is one of balance. They argue that society needs balance and, in particular, it does not require everyone to be in the same social class. The Interviewees maintain that the western ideal of a social class melting pot has never been achieved in any society and would not function in Thailand.

At the same time, the Interviewees were under no misapprehension that they are immune from the powerful effects of globalisation. Western approaches to social and economic life have unsettled Thai values, structures and priorities in varying degrees. However, according to Interviewee III (March 6, 2016), a new era will

emerge. An era of post-globalisation will become a new phenomenon, in which national systems will no longer endeavour to move in the same direction. Rather, diversity will be encouraged and will be perceived as a strength and not a limitation. Interviewee III pointed to China, Russia, and India all of which currently turn their backs on western ideologies. Taking the lead from these and other countries, higher education in Thailand will come full circle, taking pride in and capitalising on its unique identity. A new belief in its own educational system will generate new knowledge that could be applied at the political, economic, and social levels for Thailand's own context and time.

6.5   Quality and Standards in the Future

6.5.1   Teaching

The explosion in student numbers has changed the face of the higher education sector in Thailand. Teaching is one of those affected activities. Teaching staff were stretched to capacity as classes grew exponentially. While new teaching approaches involving the use of CCTV were introduced in some institutions to meet the demand, teaching at higher education institutions, more generally, remains at a transmission rather than pedagogical level. Interview VI (January 16, 2017) expressed a number of concerns:

> …the lecturer or teacher is an important occupation indeed but the income for this career
>
> is unreasonably low. This situation does not motivate intelligent people to study in this

area. So it leads to the situation of lack of qualified teachers in the educational institutes. At the same time, the teachers themselves try to do something else to earn more money. They are confronted with the lack of time to focus on their teaching in school. From this situation, the academic environment is not supportive of their development at all. (Interview VI, January 16, 2017)

Watson (1981) has identified a number of key aspects of teaching that continue to dominate the teaching-learning relationship in Southeast Asian nations First, In Thailand, as in other Southeast nations, rote memorisation of knowledge is expected of students. Students are required to recall to memory knowledge for the purpose of examinations. Second, "much of what is taught tends to be either too erudite or too unrelated to the needs of Thai society" (Watson, p. 310). Western texts, in particular those from the United States, tend to dominate. Third, academic teaching staff do not provide opportunities for discussion and debate in their lectures and classes. Rather than conceptualising students as mature and endowed with capabilities that allow them to offer solutions to problems, lecturers tend to conceive of students as 'empty vessels' which need filling with the knowledge the lecturer imparts. Fourth, time is also a factor in the lack of two-way communication. Since academic teaching staff continually confront heavy teaching commitments, and, although they may wish to teach in more open and democratic ways, they fall back on traditional ways of teaching.

Sinlarat (2015) has argued that, as a result of these kinds of teaching practices, the quality of graduates, through no fault of their own, is downgraded. Granted some improvements to curricula and programmes have been made in order to respond to manpower needs for the socio-economic context. For example, recently the development of entrepreneurial skills, particularly in technology and science and, to some extent, agriculture, have been prioritised to enhance the human capital required for shaping Thailand's socio-economic advancement.

Little has changed, however, in terms of the attributes of a graduate. The labour market requires graduates with specific cognitive and behavioural skills. These are graduates who think sharply and are able to predict problems and offer solutions to those problems (Sinlarat, 2015). They are expected to have developed finely tuned communication and investigative skills and to be able to work effectively in teams and under supervision. To date, there is some doubt that the learning experience in Thai lecture halls, overall, contributes to such attributes in graduates.

Looking towards the future, Chareonwongsak (2001) argues that lecturers should, in the first instance, be suitably qualified. Second, they should be widely knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and use effective teaching practices. Third, in addition to their capacity to be effective in the lecture room, lecturers should interact with the students in positive and friendly ways.

6.5.2 Research

In addition to teaching in pedagogical and effective ways, lecturers should, according to Chareonwongsak (2001), be committed to the dissemination of new knowledge in academic publications at an international standard. Their aspirational attitude should align with and support their professional career as a lecturer in the university. Moreover, their academic outputs should be recognised in the form of appropriate remuneration. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the budget cuts to higher education have fostered any increase in research activity. What the evidence does reveal is that most of Thailand's research and development work is undertaken by the government sector.

Schiller and Liefner (2007) have argued that requirements for research activity, as they have been developed in western cultures, may not easily be applied within a developing country. Rather than focusing on innovation and creativity as a means for the development and dissemination of new knowledge, developing countries, such as Thailand, continue to be in 'catch up' mode. They attempt to absorb and assimilate the knowledge that has been previously developed in more industrialised nations with a view towards enhancing the knowledge and skills of the population.

The government does offer some incentive for research. Funding additional to the block funding provided on the basis of enrolments, is available from competitive budgets for agenda and areas-based projects on the basis of national or provincial

policies. Yet, as was noted earlier, the funding round operates on an unequal playing field, in which well-resourced and prestigious universities tend to succeed. In addition, projects that are interpreted as too novel, or carry an element of risk, will generally not be funded. Most research projects conducted by academic staff involve replication studies that adapt available knowledge from developed countries for the local context. Reporting of this body of applied research is beginning to feature in the Science Citation Index (Welch, 2011).

However, research links between universities and industry partners are limited and, when they are forged, are limited to consulting services (49%) and technical/analytical services (35%) (Welch, 2011). The focus on consulting services is to be expected, given that Thailand, like other developing countries, is still in the process of developing its research capabilities. The small number of industry-university connections has been explained by Welch (2011) as follows: "the technological capabilities of most local companies and manufacturing subsidiaries of multinationals [in Thailand] remain low" (p. 552). Research with technologically advanced companies is not yet possible. A further explanation, as was noted earlier in this chapter, is that most academic staff believe that there is little interest from private companies in joint research activity. An additional explanation is the lack of time for staff with huge teaching commitments to conduct research.

Since research does not feature as a core activity of most academic staff, for research activity in the future, it is recommended that the university infrastructure be reconfigured in ways that will incentivise staff to enhance their research capabilities and their confidence in undertaking research. Society, as Thephussadin Na Ayutthaya (1987) has argued, expects that universities will conduct research and offer innovative solutions to the social problems it encounters. As the World Bank (2000) has argued, improving research capabilities will enable the nation "to meet the future needs of society."

6.5.3 Performance accountability

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) established in 2000 has been tasked with the responsibility of reviewing data from individual institutions' quality assurance system. It is required to monitor quality, accountability and institutional attempts towards improvement. The concept of performance accountability in Thailand has been borrowed and adapted from the western accountability systems designed to provide governments with an overview of quality and standards and provide a measure for funding allocation in a context of reduced government funding.

ONESQA is required to keep at the forefront the point that the purpose of quality assurance is to develop the institution rather than to punish it (Ittiratana, 2002). However, for institutions, the interpretation of the purpose of quality assurance is

very different. Universities understand that a poor result from the performance appraisal might mean that many programmes would need to be discontinued. Conversely, a good result from the accountability exercise would mean a high rank amongst other universities, and, along with that high rank, an enhanced reputation.

Great lengths have sometimes been taken to ensure good results, at the cost of the human, technological and material resources that should be spent on teaching, research, and regular administrative tasks. For example, Poapongsakorn (2008) has reported the case of a university that rose remarkably from 49th to 5th position, nationally, in the course of two years. Such evidence begs the question as to why the official rhetoric of quality assurance does not appear to match practice. Further, many academic staff continue to be taken on as employees, despite their inadequate qualifications. For institutional accountability purposes, the lack of qualified permanent teaching staff within many universities presents a major issue. In a measure to meet the demands placed on institutional performance, some institutions have been known to offer sub-standard degree programmes. According to the *Bangkok Post* (2008) "…degrees handed out by these institutes are not recognized."

Welch (2011) has argued that, in developing countries, a system in which government funding is linked to performance measures is likely to fail. Lack of transparency is one issue. Another is that, given that undergraduate teaching is, of

necessity, the mainspring of academic staff's work, it is a moot point as to whether institutional performance will be able to correlate with the funding criteria established which advantages academics who undertake research on a regular basis rather than those whose job description is teaching-intensive.

Thailand is engaged with the international community day by day through economic, political, and technological exchanges, thus it is anticipated that every university would work towards international standards. However, the problems associated with attaining international standards descend from problems associated with capacity to administer and manage higher education effectively and efficiently. Transparency problems, a strong focus on teaching, along with insufficiency in numbers of trained personnel to undertake the quality control process, affect the capacity of institutions to perform according to expectations. These are not small incidental matters. However, making a start to attend to those issues would go some way to enable the surveillance regime to perform its task in a way that the system was intended.

6.6   Conclusion

Many problems that have surfaced during contemporary times reflect a reliance on the past. Despite the fact that higher education has outwardly dramatically changed in Thailand over recent years, traditional ways of operating continue to gain traction. Yet these traditions, rather than being helpful to the implementation of the reform

objectives, have proved to be impediments. Lessons learned from those traditions will help develop higher education in Thailand in new and significant ways in the future. Despite the unstable political and social context that has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the administration and management of higher education, each and every university is able to formulate its own policies and guiding principles and has the potential to put them to use for the benefit of not only the university, but also for the benefit of the entire society.

From time to time, alternative ways of developing the higher education system in Thailand have been proposed for its own context, yet these proposals have not found general acceptance. Even though since the early days of higher education in Thailand, Thai society has sought to reform provision and align programmes with the needs of society, historically, it has never found it easy to oppose the influence of other systems deemed to be superior. To that end, Thailand's recent aspiration to become an education hub in Southeast Asia has served as a strong motivating force in its borrowing of foreign-based examples. Recent policies adapted from western cultures have tended to gain favour. However, because of the issues identified above for Thailand, the adapted policies have become overwhelmingly challenging to implement.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION TO THE RESEARCH

7.1   Reflections on the Research

This research has offered an historically grounded analysis of higher education reforms in Thailand in relation to different forms of internal and external forces in higher education. The purpose of this research was to investigate the development of higher education in Thailand from its early beginnings until present day. From an exploration of the early informal stage of development, the thesis interrogated the mission of 'the People's Party' and the changes that the Party made to the political and governmental system, and followed that interrogation with an investigation of the significant changes to higher education following World War II. From the investigation, four major issues have been identified that confront higher education in Thailand and the way which they are intertwined has been revealed.

The research set out to (i) investigate the internal and external influences on the development of higher education in Thailand until the present time; and (ii) investigate the experiences and perceptions of that development on individuals.

To find answers to those questions, a framework of policy borrowing that utilises Foucauldian concepts offered a useful explanation. While the purposes for establishing universities in Thailand have varied over time, at the heart of Thailand's history of higher education development lies a deeply rooted discourse of the traditional imperial power of Thailand in the Southeast Asian region. Thailand's regional supremacy has been derived from a pervasive sense that it was somehow 'more powerful' and 'more in-the-know' than its neighbours. The sustainability of that status over geographical neighbours has required a constant effort on Thailand's part to demonstrate supremacy in forms relevant to the social, economic, and material circumstances of the time. For a nation that prides itself as future focused, discourses from more 'advanced' nations from further afield have always been a source of inspiration. Thus, the cultural supremacy and symbolic power of other nations, has over time, incentivised Thailand to take up models and practices from these more 'educationally powerful' nations in order to present a more 'advanced' and educationally-astute 'face' to Southeast Asia and, more widely, to the world. Indeed, Thailand's recent aspiration to become an education hub in Southeast Asia has continued to serve as a strong motivating force in its borrowing of foreign-based examples.

Transnational borrowing of ideas and practices is always set within economic and political contexts and facilitated by the readiness of the social context. In the early years of formal higher education evidence of superiority meant restricting

opportunities and access to the upper classes. During the late 19th century, evidence of superiority meant sending the aristocracy to study in European universities and incorporating into Thai society the ideas and practices with which they returned. After the People's Party became the sitting government, evidence of supremacy took the form of embracing democracy and offering wider access to higher education. Following World War II, Thai universities followed in the footsteps of western higher education systems and these systems continue to exert a tacit influence over Thailand, just as they do in many other nations.

During all these eras, policies were accepted, adapted, modified, and recontextualised. More recently, corporations have been highly influential in leading the charge for Thailand's transnational borrowing. The asymmetrical relationship developed between financial corporations and Thailand has led to a degree of corporate influence over higher education's development in Thailand. Along with that influence, a perception within Thai society has developed of corporate condescension, and, in keeping with the unbalanced relationship, for Thailand's part, it has generated a sentiment of apology. UNESCO, the World Bank, and IMF-led loans have pressurised the government to shoulder the responsibility of higher education development through, for example, the adoption of privatisation, internationalisation, and performance accountability.

Any new global policy or reform enjoys the status of a new regime of truth, from which nations may borrow wholesale or selectively. In Thailand, as an example, a new regime of truth initiated a change to the mission of higher education from preparation for civil service leadership, to higher education as a means to meet the needs of national development and the demands of the market. Construed from the perspective of growth, from the perspective of administration, from the perspective of standards, and from the perspective of powerful traditions, not only did the new regimes of truth allow higher education to change in terms of purpose and to grow quantitatively; they also changed it in terms of access and character.

As a case in point, the Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) stands as a specific regime of truth, making it possible for particular understandings about higher education, in general, and quality and standards, in particular, to be entertained and legitimated. As a discourse and a form of tacit coercion, ONESQA positions, defines and regulates academic staff and universities. It has shifted ground, set new agendas, enforced priorities, and minimised and elevated particular academic responsibilities, without paying homage to the past. Thus, policies such as those developed by ONESQA, are never politically neutral.

In Thailand, the past is always in the present. The nation's historical legacy and normalised practices and values vie for attention, offering competing ways of

organising and giving meaning to higher education than the ways proposed by a transnationally borrowed policy. To date, local factors have tended to collide with global forces as conflicting interests and values intersect. For example, Thailand strives to maintain the cornerstones of its traditional political and social systems—Royalty, the Thai language, Thai values, and Buddhism—all of which lie at the core of Thai society. It strives to retain certain traditions relating to hierarchies and protocols. Validating tradition, these local regimes of truth contest the discourses and underlying values, along with the particular interests that they all represent, embodied within transnationally borrowed policies.

As a consequence, despite the fact that higher education in Thailand has dramatically changed outwardly over the decades, traditional ways of operating continue to hold force. As was evident from the concerns raised by the Interviewees about the risks of diminished values, protocols and hierarchies, local discourses run up against borrowed discourses and have the effect of confusing the meanings of higher education. In bumping into each other, these overlapping discourses at any given time, reproduce and legitimise local meanings; at another time, they contradict local understandings. In a context of competing discourses, adapted policies become overwhelmingly challenging to implement. To that end, Thailand has found itself on the uncomfortable side of recent policy adaptations and is currently picking its way through the destructive detritus while attempting to maintain integrity and voice.

Like all discourses, policies are never completely enduring. The current political and cultural contestation over the meaning of higher education is simply a response to a new but inevitably historical way of specifying truth and knowledge. Despite the unstable political and social context, local policy makers, honouring the privilege of hindsight, have the capacity to apply the necessary evidence to inform the contemporary debate in order to help develop higher education in Thailand in new and significant ways for the future. The hope is that higher education might proceed in a more positive way as new forms of conduct, new values, new understandings of 'quality' that do not compromise Thai identity and culture, and new democratic action, appropriate for the time, context and history, become normalised. A way forward requires both an acceptance of the potential for Thailand and a sound understanding of the constraints associated with reaching that potential. Such changes may take a long time but the end result will be worth the wait.

7.2   Recommendations for Policy

A carefully considered appropriation and adaptation of policy for use in Thai society is necessary. Since policy borrowing is never wholesale but selective, those in authority need to be bear in mind that a balanced approach is required—one that is appropriate both for the Thai context and for achieving a reputation for Thai higher education within the international stage.

From the findings of this research, a number of recommendations are offered for policy.

1. A more effective regulatory regime is needed. A peer audit and the development of a transparent strategic plan for the budget, personnel, and curriculum should guide the administration.

2. A range of external members of society, such as graduates from the university, the parents or guardians of graduates, owners of businesses and companies, as well as local people with local knowledge and interests, should be encouraged to join the 'Lay Board' to administer a university. The selection of the lay board members should be transparent.

3. Stronger relationships between universities, with established points of difference, and industry to enhance their areas of mutual interest might be encouraged. Future partnerships between industry and universities will require higher levels of communication and transparency that will lead to higher levels of trust between the two partners.

4. Diversity amongst universities and their programme offerings should be encouraged and be perceived as a strength.

5. A new subject taught across programmes should be introduced to develop an understanding amongst students about society's expectations of them and, particularly, the kinds of behaviours and attributes that are validated by society.

6. A consideration should be made to either closing some universities or capping enrolments to allow the educational system to develop in progressive ways and to guarantee employment for graduates.

7. Teaching should incorporate methods that do not rely solely on memorisation. What is taught needs to be relevant to Thai society. Teaching needs to provide opportunities for discussion and debate and two-way communication between lecturers and students.

8. The university infrastructure should be reconfigured in ways that will incentivise staff to enhance their research capabilities and their confidence in undertaking research.

9. New academic staff should be suitably qualified. Incentives should be put in place to allow current unqualified staff to achieve appropriate qualifications. Staff remuneration rates should match levels of qualification.

10. The performance assessment process needs to be reviewed to avoid the excessive time and resourcing currently demanded of individual academic staff.

However, all these recommendations are presented as a goal. They will require time, patience, careful negotiation, diplomacy, and clear communication. No changes will take place unless the Thai people understand and accept the need for change.

7.3   Limitations of the Research

There are a number of limitations to this research and these limitations are as follows:

(i)   Data accessibility is limited. Some data relevant to specific periods were not available. As noted in chapter 2, some sections of the National Archive of Thailand were being renovated and many important documents were moved to a secure place and were not in service, temporarily, to avoid potential document loss during the renovation. Further, the information provided in the thesis, relating to the early beginnings is limited. It is not informed by primary data sources, since this period preceded the era for which documents were made available. It also preceded the beginning of the Interviewees' work life. Secondary archival sources were employed instead.

(ii)   It is important to acknowledge that texts and documents are always written from a point of view. The subjective viewpoints of the writers of documents and other archival material are recognised.

(iii)   The research is limited to my selection of documents and my selection of interviewees. The 'male voice' dominates in the research since six of the seven interviewees are male.

(iv)   The research is also limited to my own interpretation of the material I chose to access.

7.4   Future Research

This research focused on higher education in Thailand. It offered a broad picture of the history of that education and thus, has opened up a number of potential dimensions for future research. In addition, Chapter 6 pointed to a few directions for the future. Some of those suggested directions might also warrant investigation.

- An exploration of the People's Party—its rise to power, the changes the Party made to higher education, and the effects of those changes on society at that time.

- A study of the development of higher education in Thailand with a specific focus on either public universities, private universities, autonomous universities, or open access universities, to explore the historical development and the mission, capacity, and limitations of the specific university.

- An in-depth study focusing on the historical development of higher education in Thailand at a specific time period, for example, its early beginnings, or its modernisation period, or its post-revolution period (1932-1949), or its development planning period (1950-present).

- A study focusing on a rural region in Thailand, investigating the similarities and differences with contemporary higher education in Bangkok, in relation

to efficiencies, democratic provision, preservation of values and quality and standards.

All of these studies would contribute to a deeper understanding of higher education in Thailand. The knowledge gained would likely assist educational policy-making and planning at both small and large levels. In addition, the findings would make an important knowledge contribution to the higher educational community in Thailand as well as to communities and organisations working with Thailand at the international level.

7.5   Final Thoughts

Formal higher education in Thailand has been established for a century with the expressed purpose of serving the nation and for recognition beyond its borders. The changes made to higher education in Thailand, during each particular time period explored in this thesis, were all initiated by a unique set of social, political, and economic circumstances. Not all changes were fully aligned to or compatible with the values held and the traditions established by Thai people at those specific times. While each change made to higher education has been championed by some sectors of society, each change has also invited criticisms from other sectors. In current times, however, the critiques are becoming more vocal. In order to avoid unintended mistakes in the future, it is proposed that if higher education is to enjoy a reputation

as the developer of powerful intellects, the hope is that reputation will soon be

manifest amongst high quality graduates.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics Approval: Massey University Human Ethics Committee

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

9 April 2015

Penpisoot Maitrarat

Dear Penpisoot

Re: **The Development of Higher Education in Thailand from 1932 to Present**

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 19 March 2015.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

> *"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.*
>
> *If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 356 9099, extn 86015, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz".*

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Brian T Finch (Dr)
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

cc   Prof Margaret Walshaw   Assoc. Prof Sally Hansen, HoI
        Institute of Education   Institute of Education
        PN 500   **PN 500**

        Mrs Roseanne MacGillivray
        Institute of Education
        PN 500

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise
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MASSEY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

The Development of Higher Education in Thailand:
Influences and Effects

INFORMATION SHEET

This research is undertaken by Penpisoot Maitrarat as a part of the requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy (Education) degree in the Institute of Education, Massey University, New Zealand. My research project entitled as 'The Development of Higher Education in Thailand from 1932 to the Present'.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the development of higher education in Thailand after the Post Revolution Period in 1932 until the present time and the effects of policies on individuals. This study may lead to the greater understanding about higher education in Thailand and the influences that lead to changes within higher education. An understanding of the changes and reasons behind them, as well as the effects of these changes, will reveal how the past inform the present. It might also offer an explanation for any higher education problems and suggest way forward.

This project will draw on historical records and oral accounts. Oral accounts will be conducted as in-depth semi-structured interviews with three individuals within academic community of Thailand.

I invite you to participate in this research to share your views about higher education in Thailand. If you choose to participate in an interview, the interview will take place at a time and location suitable to you.

Project Contacts
Researcher contact details:
Penpisoot Maitrarat
Address: Institute of Education
    Massey University, Private Bag 11222
    Palmerston North, 4442
    New Zealand
Phone: ██████████
Email address: ████████████

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

Supervisor contact details:
Professor Margaret Walshaw
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Massey University, Private Bag 11222
Palmerston North, 4442
New Zealand
Phone: +64 06 356 9099 ext 84404
Email address: M.A.Walshaw@massey.ac.nz

Please feel free to contact the researcher and/or the supervisor if you have any questions about this research project.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this opportunity.

Committee Approval Statement
" This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 356 9099, extn 86015, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

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Interview Framework

1) In your views, what is the development of higher education in Thailand?
   - What changes to higher education in Thailand occurred from 1932 to the present?
   - Why did these changes occur? What were the causes?
   - How can you divide the periods of changes?
   - What are the significances/highlights of changes in each period?

2) What are the factors influencing these changes?
   - What are internal and external factors pushing higher education in Thailand to be changed?
   - What are the reasons why the internal and external influences occurred?
   - Are there any relationships between those factors (internal and external factors) or not?
   - In each period, what are similar influences of these changes to higher education in Thailand?
   - In each period, what are different influences of these changes to higher education in Thailand?

3) What are the following effects of these changes on Thai society?
   - In your views, how have these changes affected higher education in Thailand?

4) From the development we have talked about, what is your prediction from these changes for higher education in the future? (Perhaps several ways)
   - What are solutions and suggestions for higher education in the future?
   - Overall, what are your views about the entire picture of higher education in Thailand? What are directions you want higher education in Thailand to be?

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MASSEY UNIVERSITY

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The Development of Higher Education in Thailand: Influences and Effects

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recording returned to me.

I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:...Date:.................

Full Name – printed ....