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Thai students and their reasons for choosing to study in United Kingdom universities

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Thai students and Their Reasons for Choosing to Study in United Kingdom Universities

Estelle F.Tarry

A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Education

University of Bath

Department of Education

May 2008

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I would like to thank all my family members and friends for their support and understanding whilst I was studying. I would also like to give a special thank you to my tutor Dr. Felicity Wikeley who has given me support and advice during this critical time.

Abstract

This thesis seeks to consider Thai students and their reasons for choosing to study in United Kingdom universities. Through the literature review it has been identified that higher education is globally expanding. Competing knowledge-based economies with higher education institutions have led education to be considered a market commodity and consequently the marketization of higher education in competitive world markets. This is exemplified by discussion of the United Kingdom higher education policies and the resulting demand for higher education in the United Kingdom. The numbers of overseas students studying at higher education institutions in the United Kingdom is rising, with a notable increase in the number of students from South-East Asia. In its endeavour to increase its knowledge-based economy, Thailand has increased opportunities for Thai nationals to study overseas through scholarships and Government policies. The advantages of overseas degrees to individuals, these include a facility with English language, enhanced employment and promotion prospects, and increased social status, are discussed.

A study of Thai students studying in the United Kingdom has been used to explore the reality of these advantages for individual students. A case study approach was used and personal interviews with students and questionnaires with their parents and grandparents. The data was analysed using a 'categorical-content perspective' narrative method (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998).

The thesis concludes that, despite as a nation Thailand having good geographical links with other advanced countries such as Japan and China, living in an economically stable and democratic country, having excellent opportunities to access Thai universities and having no direct links with the United Kingdom, Thai students still see real advantages to studying at higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. This decision is influenced by social and cultural factors, in particular the extended family, and potential financial rewards. However as a result of studying overseas in the United Kingdom the Thai students experience and have to resolve various social and cultural tensions. They have become more individualistic in their attitudes and opinions, which are at odds with the traditional collectivist values, held by their families and deeply entrenched in Thai society.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to consider Thai students and their reasons for choosing to study in United Kingdom universities. My interest in the topic arises from four sources; namely a previous pilot study entitled ‘Why do Thai national parents want to send their children to an international school?’ (Tarry 2005), recent literature, research based on the global expansion and massification of higher education, and my personal interest in higher education. During the pilot study I found that Thai parents largely lacked confidence in the Thai education system (Tarry 2005). Hofstede (1994) agrees with this notion and stressed that in some countries the socio-economic elite parents lacked confidence in their own national education system and therefore decided to send their children to an international school in order to obtain entry to other educational institutions. Previous interviews with parents of ‘early years’ Thai students attending an international school in Thailand, emphasised this lack of confidence. Comments obtained included,

*‘Teachers not caring’, ‘don’t support and advise the parents’, ‘boring’
‘Thai curriculum’, ‘large classes 40-60 students’, ‘hierarchy-rich parents
get priority’, ‘corporal punishment’, ‘too disciplined’, ‘no independent
skills-nannies and teachers do everything for the children’, ‘poor teaching
of maths’, ‘copy-memorise-read aloud’, ‘can’t question-can’t be wrong’,
‘no discussion’, ‘kids can’t speak, kids told what to do’, ‘teachers have big
egos’, ‘no hands on teaching’, ‘no thinking, kids like puppets’ and ‘too
much homework’.*

At the particular international school under investigation, it was found that there were 50% more Thai boys in attendance than Thai girls. Some fathers said that they refrained from sending their daughters to international schools but instead would send them to a local Thai school, with an excellent reputation, in the attempt to prevent their daughters being exposed to ‘sexuality’ and more positively ‘have good friends’, ‘learn respect, Thai ways and culture’ and ‘to be polite’. During this previous research (Tarry, 2005), one Thai parent expressed the following opinion regarding the reason why Thai parents choose to send their children to international schools;

(*R* is the respondent and *I* is the interviewer)

R: *'Well actually I can tell you why people want to sent their kid to international school. You can look at 3 groups.*

1. *One group is the one that the parents graduated from abroad or was abroad before and has an, uh, international mind. They can see it is important of sending their kid to an international school to export in English language or nationality, so in the future they have a chance to be in the international area or whatever, they don't have to suffer?*
2. *The second one are the parents who are afraid that not be able to catch up with people just like, uh, just a fashion. You see a lot of parents Thai parents, want to be lifted up.'*

I: *'They want status.'*

R: *'That's right, when they are talking with their friends they say are my kid is in an international school they are proud of themselves they are.*

3. *The third group are – not a little English and sometimes, uh, send them to an international school anyway because, uh, good to let them people the go kid to know more English and you know the environment'*

This is a specific illustration of a more general finding that concurs with my previous findings, that the dominant reason for the Thai parents to send their child to an international school was purely for learning the English 'like a native,' as their child would be taught by a native English speaking teacher, rather than an English speaking Thai teacher. Thai parents have encouraged their children to learn English an early age because,

'There is a naturalness with which they [children] assimilate another language once they are regularly exposed to it.' (Crystal, 1998, p.14)

I discovered that the Thai national parents of 'early years' children ultimately desired their child to attend a British, American or Australian university with the aim of enhancing both personal and familial social and cultural capital, on their return to Thailand.

'An overwhelming majority of the respondents acknowledged a family member had either attended a Thai university and/or a family member had attended a university abroad. Of these, only two respondents stated that it

was a grandparent; the majority stated it was a member of the younger generation i.e. the parent's generation.' (Tarry, 2005, p.26)

Furnham and Bochner (1986) suggest that overseas students, who were awarded a scholarship and studying in America, had four principal reasons for studying overseas: to obtain a degree, gain academic or professional expertise, learn the host culture and for professional development. However, that research is now over twenty years old, relates only to the United States of America and specifically targets scholarship students, whereas this study has addressed specifically Thai nationals attending a university in the United Kingdom.

'Globalization has impacted on higher education such that there is an increasing flow of students across borders. Higher education is part of an increasing globalization of the trade in goods and services.' (Pimpa, 2004, p.352)

This research 'Thai students and their reasons for studying in United Kingdom universities' currently reported will expand on my earlier research (Tarry, 2005) and will investigate, the reasons and influences affecting Thai students who are presently attending a university in the United Kingdom (or who have completed their studies at a university in the United Kingdom), the advantages that both the students and families will gain by choosing an overseas university in the United Kingdom and the tensions that result from that decision. It will also examine the influence of multilateral agencies, the United Kingdom Government's educational policies and marketization of higher education on the increasing demands for overseas education and the 'massification' of higher education. With the results of this new research, the findings will be analysed for the impact of studying overseas on the students' changing perspectives towards their own culture, the breakdown of the family structure and claims for the changing nature of the Thai culture.

Chapter 2 Review of Literature

This review of literature will investigate the evidence and factors that are promoting the global expansion of higher education, why students may wish to ‘buy’ into higher education overseas and consequential possible social changes.

2.1. The marketization of higher education

‘The marketization of education is a relatively recent phenomenon.’

(Waslander and Thrupp, 2001, p.439)

This section will provide an account of the global expansion of higher education within world markets, promoted through the marketization of higher education by United Kingdom Government higher education policies and university marketing strategies.

2.1.1 The United Kingdom Government higher education policies

Various multilateral agencies such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (OECD)¹, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Economic Commission (UNEC) perceive economic development as ‘knowledge-based’ and actively promote ‘lifelong learning’. Since the early 1990’s, in the endeavour to advance a ‘knowledge-based’ economy, countries have invested in human resource development. In 1995 the General Agreement on Trade Services (GATS) treaty by the WTO was implemented, and extended the ‘global markets to higher education’ (Lauder *et al.*, 2006). In 1996 the OECD published the document entitled ‘The knowledge-based economy: Organization and economic cooperation and development’ (OECD, 1996). This idea of a ‘knowledge-based’ economy has also been the new policy and research agenda’ and has expanded to include an OECD conference in South East Asia in 2002, ‘Policy strategies for a knowledge-based economy in Thailand’. These agencies are considered policy drivers of productivity and economic growth supporting the notion that higher education can be considered central to the global ‘knowledge-based’ economy (Torrance, 2000; International Labour Office, 2000; Rizvi and Lingard, 2006). Stromquist (2002) suggests that,

Note 1: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries are Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, The United Kingdom, the United States of America, Japan, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Korea and Slovak Republic.

‘‘A knowledge-based economy’ is expected to be a driving force behind many applied developments and the university becomes a special place from which to advance new visions and ambitions.’ (Stromquist, 2002, p.103)

However it could be argued that this is a very mechanistic view of universities and raises the issue of what the previous purpose of higher education institutions was, and whether the concept of a ‘knowledge-based economy’ is new or not?

Consequently higher education policies are high on the agenda of the United Kingdom Government both democratically and economically. Universities are considered to be ‘manufacturers’ of knowledge and as Scott (1995) suggests at the heart of economic and social activity is the production of knowledge. This move has led to economies being increasingly dependent on knowledge, information and skills. The United Kingdom Government is therefore effectively promoting education, in the endeavour to promote ‘economic competitiveness’ through their education policies. The United Kingdom Parliament has produced a White Paper entitled ‘The Future of higher education’ which, ‘sets out a vision for all education in England’ (DFES, 2003). This includes universities, university colleges, colleges of higher education, colleges of further education, and other institutions. This White Paper focuses on ‘lifelong learning’, student access, funding, the quality of teaching and learning, research excellence and knowledge transfer. It recommends strategies for reform, to include inclusiveness for ‘less advantaged families’ and promises to ‘support students fairer’, although controversially the United Kingdom Government has introduced the ‘top up’ fee. Despite this, the ‘United Kingdom Government promises to continue to pay most of the cost involved in studying for a degree’. However this last point could be seen as highly debatable by students and families, especially those families who have had members attend universities without ‘top up’ fees. The United Kingdom Government has continued to raise ‘top-up’ fees as they recognise the ‘learning dividend to the individuals’ (Brown and Lauder, 2006). However it could be considered that the Government also recognises the ‘learning dividend’ to the countries that sponsor the student. The idea of ‘life-long learning’ has also been promoted through conferences such as ‘Life-long Learning UK 1st Annual Conference’ and web sites, such as www.ukskills.co.uk. This has also permeated through other United Kingdom Government policies such as the further education White paper ‘Further education: Raising standards, improving life chances’ (DFES, 2007). In the endeavour to

increase learning opportunities the United Kingdom Government has developed capabilities for lifelong learning, 'policy has been expanded to part-time places in higher education' enabling students to study as mature students as well as being able to study simultaneously along with part-time employment (Fuller, 2000).

2.1.2. Global competition within higher education

The United Kingdom Government now considers education as a market commodity; higher education being perceived as a 'service' or 'good' (Pimpa, 1994). This also reinforces Gibbon's (1998) notion that higher education is becoming global and increasingly integrated into extended financial markets. Bruch and Barty (1998) expand on this by suggesting that not only does the United Kingdom Government perceive the internationalisation of education as adding to the cultural value of the institution but it also means that the institution is benefiting economically and financially from the 'full-fee paying international student', highlighted by Robertson *et al.* (2006) who state that 'education has a huge potential income generating item'. As suggested in the United Kingdom Government White paper 'The Future of Higher Education' (2003), the income, obtained from overseas students attending institutions in the United Kingdom and in university satellite institutions around the world, can then be used as financial support for local citizens who also attend British institutions. Therefore, it is in the interest of the United Kingdom Government to promote and market higher education.

'British exports of education and training are worth some eight billion pounds a year-money that feeds into our institutions and helps open opportunities for more people to study.' (DFES, 2003, p.65)

The Department for Education and Skills (DFES, 2003) has researched the number of overseas students in comparison to the student population, stating that,

'In 1962-63 there were 28,000 overseas students in Great Britain, representing 8 percent of the student population; by 2001-02 there were about 225,000 almost 11 percent.' (DFES, 2003, p.11)

The Government is also aware of the necessity of reform in a world that is,

‘Changing faster than it has ever done before and the pace of change will continue to accelerate.’ (DFES, 2003, p.2)

It appears determined to maintain its position with the world’s leading higher education institutions. Throughout the White Paper ‘The Future of higher education’ (2003) there is a constant reference to the global market highlighted with phrases such as, ‘compete on the world stage’ (p.2), ‘compete globally’ (p.5), ‘increasing global competition’ (p.24), ‘compete effectively with the world’s best universities’ (p.23). As highlighted earlier, this concurs with Pimpa (2004), that global trade and goods now includes higher education,

‘Higher education is becoming a global business. Our competitors are looking to sell higher education overseas into the markets we have traditionally seen as ours.’ (DFES, 2003, p.13)

The Government reflects the growing importance of the internationalisation of education through the recent introduction of policies designed to attract greater numbers of overseas students.

‘Higher education is a typical super-structural institution, functional to the infrastructure-but it is finding problems in responding rapidly to the greater demands of the knowledge-based society of advanced capitalism.’ (Jarvis, 2000, p.43)

Jarvis (2000) considers the needs of universities due to the increasing commodification of higher education and the United Kingdom’s lack of consideration for the changing market. However, since Jarvis’s (2000) article the United Kingdom Government has acknowledged this weakness (DFES, 2003), especially in light of the United States and Australia being identified as a competitive threat. This has been addressed by implementing the Prime Minister’s Initiative (1999-2025), with Phase 1 (1999-2006) and Phase 2 launched in 2006 (British Council, 2003). The Prime Minister’s Initiative is a ‘united effort to promote UK education overseas’ with the intention of attracting more international students to the United Kingdom ‘bringing long term political and economical’ benefits, including ‘3.8 billion pounds’, ‘fresh perspectives’, ‘mutual understanding’ and producing ‘advocates’ for the United Kingdom (British Council, 2003). According to the British Council (2003) the resulting impact of the Prime Minister’s Initiative is that the number of non-EU international students has grown by 91% with 91% of the responding Asian students

recognised the Education UK Brand. Skeldon (2005) also highlights that the United Kingdom is one of the five major destinations for overseas students, the others being the United States, Germany, Australia and France.

In the quest for economic prosperity, the marketization and promotion of United Kingdom universities has become paramount. In order for British universities to cater to this global economic competition, universities are compelled to market the services they provide, such as their courses, facilities, the degree classifications their students achieve, and the 'positional good' that they can offer to students through league tables, especially in the global educational markets (Marginson, 2006).

In addition other marketing strategies include the endorsement of the British Council, Education UK Branding, websites, publications, advertising campaigns and building marketing partners to attract an additional 70,000 international students to higher education and 30,000 into further education by 2011 (British Council, 2006). The British Council (2006) supports the marketization of British universities and is present in over one hundred and fifty countries, and manages the British Government international education marketing strategy, the Education UK Brand, with the intention of communicating the values of receiving a United Kingdom education to eighty five countries. At present three hundred and seventy universities, colleges and schools in the United Kingdom are eligible to use the Education UK Brand logo through subscription rates dependent on the number of overseas students that are attending the institution. The British Council also administers the British Chevening Scholarships, which are funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, who are responsible for overseas relations and foreign affairs. At present they offer two thousand three hundred new scholarships per year to overseas students for postgraduate or research at United Kingdom institutions of higher education. Another marketing strategy that the United Kingdom Government fund is the British Council managed Global Gateway (British Council, 2006). The aim of the Global Gateway is to add 'an international dimension to education' by providing a 'gateway to educational partnerships between schools and colleges across the world'. Through the Global Gateway individual countries are invited to become a 'Strategic International Partner' but despite Thailand having access to the British Council it has yet to become a partner.

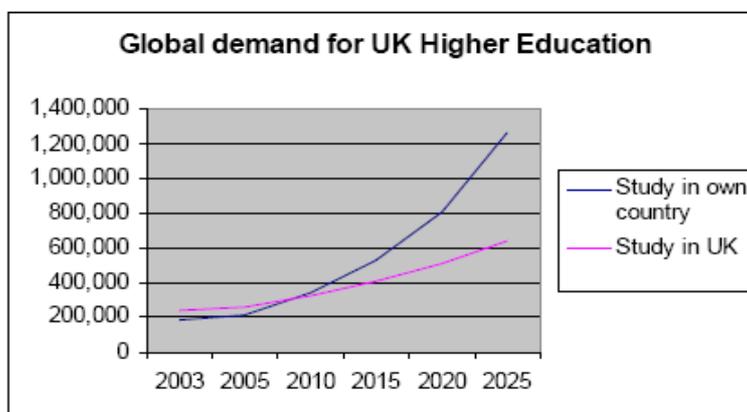
2.1.3. Massification of higher education

The increase in the numbers of students attending universities overseas is an indication that higher education is expanding globally, although Gibbons (1998) considers that figures for overseas university students are comparatively low and only in a few countries, compared to the total proportion of students attending universities. In contrast, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS) conducted an Education Survey 2006 (UIS, 2006), which found that

‘Mobile student populations grew almost three times as fast as domestic enrolment in these host countries, 41% compared to 15%.’ (UIS, 2006, p.37)

The research involved one hundred and eighteen ‘countries or territories’. From the results it was discovered that for tertiary education, six countries *host* 67% of the ‘world’s mobile students’; The United States (23%), the United Kingdom (12%), Germany (11%), France (10%), Australia (7%) and Japan (5%). There were three surges of mobile students, 1975-1980 (30%), 1989-1994 (34%) and 1999-2004 (41%). It must be noted that student flow is uneven, and as Marginson (2006) suggests ‘some nations are primarily exporters’, ‘others are primarily importers’ and a third category, parts of Europe and Japan, which maintain a balanced ‘two way exchange’. Figure 2.1 below, shows that there is still a continuation in this growth of student numbers in the United Kingdom.

Figure 2.1: Global demand for United Kingdom higher education



Source: British Council (2003) (Y-axis indicates student numbers/ X-axis indicates year)

In recognising the financial benefits higher education has to universities, governments and countries economies, worldwide access to higher education has also been targeted. Blight *et al.* (2000) suggests that higher education is set to globalize through the internationalisation of universities, especially in 'English speaking OECD countries' and gives as reasons for his conclusion, offshore campuses where universities set up satellite campuses in other countries, increased telecommunications and information technology and 'consortia and strategic alliances' in matters such as quality assurance and accreditation. Ultimately, it is undisputable that 'western' education is extending its global reach as satellite campuses of 'core western universities' are spreading across Asia, with China being the main destination (The Japan Institute of Labour OECD, 2003). With portals such as the British Council actively promoting the English language (Phillipson, 1992), universities locating satellite campuses such as Websters University (United States of America) in Thailand and the Open University (United Kingdom) in Europe, and universities such as the University of Bath and Oxford Brookes University (United Kingdom) establishing networks in other countries, there has been a growth in distance learning opportunities, resulting in the fact that,

'Globalization has transformed the national boundaries of the educational territory in the world.' (Mehdizadeh and Scott, 2005, p.484)

With increased distance learning through the internet by universities and bodies awarding Overseas Validated Courses, such as those run by the United Kingdom Government,

'There has been a rapid increase in the number of individuals from developing countries who are studying for foreign qualifications without travelling overseas.' (Blight *et al.*, 2000, p.102)

The European Commission is also encouraging distance learning, as Higgins and Cox (1992) suggest, it is more convenient for the 'mobility of minds' than would be expected for students attending courses at the university campus. Therefore this supports the suggestion for a growing global trend of the expansion of knowledge and universities which 'possess global affinities and international networks' (Scott, 1998). This prompts the question, how effective are the United Kingdom's tactics of enticing overseas students through the implementation of policies and marketing strategies?

2.2. The consequences of the massification of higher education

MacLeod (2005) suggests from the Higher Education Agency Statistics that the number of overseas students, including those from the European Union, rose by 9% to 300,055, in the previous year, 2004; there was a 13.4% increase. This indicates that there is a general increase in the number of overseas students but recently in the early 2000's this has slowed down, concurring with Skeldon (2005),

‘Four countries [the United States of America, Germany, Australia and France] registered marked increases in numbers of students over three years 1998/99 to 2001/02 (1999/00 to 2002/03 in the case of Australia). The United Kingdom registered a marginal decrease in numbers of students over the same period, raising some question about its global competitiveness in this dynamic field.’ (Skeldon, 2005, p.15)

MacLeod (2005) also suggests that this drop maybe due to the increase in the United Kingdom visa charges, especially for Chinese students. However the United Kingdom universities should be able to take advantage of the United States restrictions on student visas since the 9/11 attacks and the United Kingdom should be able to ‘woo students who might otherwise have gone to American institutions’.

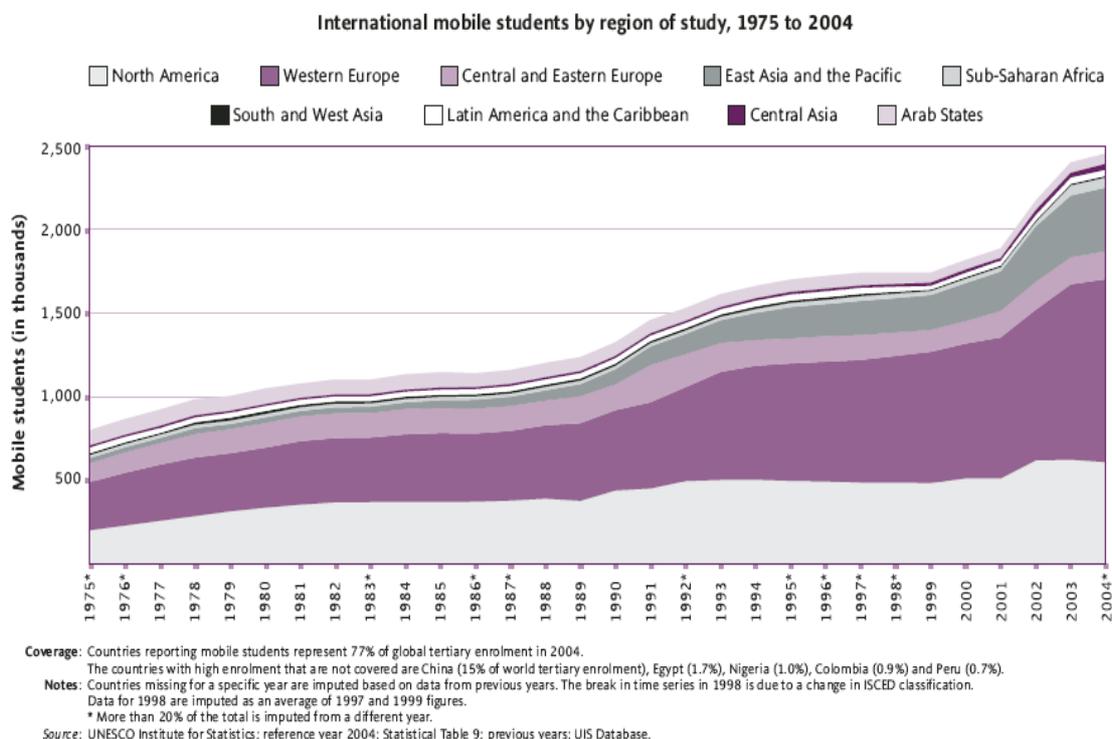
Table 2.1: United Kingdom forecast demand-Baseline Scenario

	2003	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	Growth
Africa	19	20	26	34	44	57	5.3%
Sub Saharan	16	17	23	30	39	51	5.5%
North Africa	3	3	3	4	5	5	3.6%
Middle East	10	10	13	16	20	24	4.2%
Asia	74	85	130	188	266	370	7.6%
East Asia	43	50	75	112	164	236	8.2%
South East Asia	19	20	27	37	48	62	5.7%
South Asia	12	15	27	38	53	70	8.2%
Central Asian republics	1	1	1	1	1	1	4.6%
America	23	23	26	30	33	37	2.3%
North	18	18	20	22	24	27	1.9%
Central	2	2	2	3	3	4	4.0%
South	3	3	4	4	5	6	3.3%
Europe	111	115	127	137	146	154	1.5%
West	99	103	112	119	125	131	1.3%
East	12	13	15	18	20	23	3.1%
Oceania	2	2	2	2	3	3	2.0%
World	238	256	325	407	511	644	4.7%
Growth rates		3.837	5.350	5.091	5.088	5.202	

Source: British Council, 2003 (numbers in thousands, growth rate %)

However according to Table 2.1 above, the United Kingdom Government predicts an increase in the numbers of overseas students, with Asia being projected as providing the largest increase in student numbers.

Figure 2.2: How the absolute number of mobile students has changed since 1975



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2006)

Bruch and Barty (1998) suggest that because there has been a ‘fluctuation in the South East Asia economy over the past decade there has been a ‘volatility of international student mobility’. It can be seen from Figure 2.2 above, that there has been overall an increase in student’s mobility in Asia and across the world in all regions. Western Europe has had a sharp increase in numbers from 2001 onwards which coincides with the continuing expansion of the European Union. East Asia and the Pacific also displays a sharp increase from 2001, which can be accounted for by the increase in China’s economy and other East Asian countries governmental policies, such as Thailand, encouraging higher education. Bennell and Pearce (1998) conclude, through their research, that there is an increase in Asian overseas students due to a

‘Lack of domestic higher education capacity, coupled with the adoption of aggressive human resource development strategies by governments and a

clear recognition of the critical importance of ‘learning from foreigners’
(Bennell and Pearce, 1998, p.5)

The increase in number of mobile students suggests there must be a reason, or reasons, for these students to study in an international setting, so what are the factors that affect the students’ decision to study overseas?

2.2.1. The global expansion of the English language

Held *et al* (2000) and Brown *et al.* (2004) suggest that the global expansion of a social process, in this case higher education, requires speed of movement and spread,

‘Transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power’ (Held *et al.*, 2000)

With the United Kingdom Government higher education student recruitment policies and the Government’s and universities marketing strategies there has been an increase in the number of overseas students seeking higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. However it seems reasonable to assume that there are additional factors/forces that are encouraging the speed of movement and the spread of higher educational institutions, these will now be considered.

Phillipson (1992) suggests that English has risen to its position due to historical, military, economic and cultural power.

‘English is now entrenched worldwide, as a result of British colonialism, international interdependence, ‘revolutions’ in technology, transport, communications and commerce.’ (Phillipson, 1992, p.23)

Historically there was the promotion of the English language through the expansion of the British Colonies, in America and Asia, and after World War II the United States and the United Kingdom politically influenced other countries. Additionally the United States, with the rapid development in science and technology, and media, advanced as a strong economic power again influencing the spread of the English language. Geographically, in Europe, North America and Australia the majority of the population speak English and in some Asian and African countries, English is the official language (Du Hui, 2001). Phillipson (1992) also claims that English is the primary world language due to its

dominant position in science, technology, medicine, computers, business, international organisations, entertainment, journalism and education. This claim is supported by Crystal (1998) who reports that 85% of international organisations make official use of English, at least 85% of the world's film market is in English, about 90% of published articles are written in English and that 70% to 90% of journals and periodicals are published entirely in English. However Crystal (1998) suggests that although English enables the writer the opportunity to reach a worldwide audience, using a second or foreign language maybe to the detriment of their own cultural identity.

In 19th Century Asia, the British educational system became the leading model with English developing into a 'prestige *lingua franca*' for the educated and those in professional society (Crystal, 1998). Lai and Byram (2006) support this continuing notion that linguistic capital perpetuates 'social differentiation'. Crystal (1998) also reflects on the usage of English in academia,

'Since the 1960's, English has become the normal medium of instruction in higher education for many countries.' (Crystal, 1998, p.103)

According to (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS) figures as mentioned previously, in their Education Survey 2006 (UIS, 2006), 42% of mobile students sought education in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia, highlighting the desirability of the acquisition of the English language. This raises the question why do overseas students procure the English language? In the global market place the English language is the 'one truly global language' both on the economic and political stage: a major factor in the global expansion of higher education with the result that English is central to international markets and global academia. Crystal (1998) defines 'global language' as,

'A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognised in every country.' (Crystal, 1998, p.2)

As Skeldon (2005) suggests the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States are able to take advantage of the fact that the English Language is their official language. According to Crystal (1998), there were over four hundred thousand candidates worldwide participating in English language examinations administered by the British Council. As Crystal (1998) proposes, English has achieved this position through its development across the world as a first language, official language or main language for foreign speakers.

Crystal (1998, p.54) defines three 'circles' of English speakers, the 'inner circle' consists of countries that comprise of native English speakers, such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom, and he notes that this encompasses approximately 320-380 million people. The 'outer circle', includes countries such as India and Singapore whose official language is English where there are 50-300 million speakers. Within the 'expanding circle', countries such as China and Russia, there are 100-1,000 million. Thailand would be included in the 'expanding circle' with the research conducted by Tarry (2005), supporting the desirability of English and that Thai parents of 'Early Years' age children would like them to become fluent English speakers,

'No other language is more widespread geographically than the English language.' (Du Hui, 2001, p.5)

This long lasting desire for English language skills continues as Thai parents require native English speaking teachers. Tarry's (2005) research findings highlight the fact that some Thai parents also desire the entire curriculum to be taught in English, thereby ensuring their child is 'immersed' in an English language programme.

'The language what we like, because English is an international language' and 'You know more [international schools] are bilingual, that not half English and for me don't agree with bilingual, if you want to be good in English and good in language you have to be 100% there.'(Tarry, 2005, p.23)

Phillipson (1992) rejects the idea of native English speakers being more beneficial than non-native English speaking teachers suggesting that non-native English speaking English teachers will intrinsically know the 'language learning process' and will be aware of the cultural needs of the learners. However this notion is not acknowledged by the Thai parents.

2.2.2. Increased employment opportunities

Another factor in the increase in the demand of higher education is the incentive of better employment prospects as a result of obtaining overseas qualifications. Students and employers can also be assured of the quality and standard of the United Kingdom higher education system, through quality assurance processes such as the Students National

Annual Survey (implemented in 2003) and regular inspections by external examiners. Although arguably,

‘An unintended consequence of the massive expansion of tertiary education may be to create a substantial wastage of talent amongst college and university graduates unable to find a demand for their skills.’ (Brown and Lauder, 2001, p.181)

Or alternatively the employers faced with many graduates with similar qualifications are able to dictate lower wages whereas the minority skilled craftsmen are able to command higher rates of pay. However Lauder and Hughes’ research (1999) suggests that statistically education accounts for 12% of adults achieving a higher income. Overseas students may therefore be turning to higher education in the United Kingdom because,

‘Those who have been through higher education in the UK earn on average 50% more than those who have not [with honours, 64%].’ (DFES, 2003, p.11)

2.3. The results of the increasing demand of higher education

It has been argued that for various reasons there is an increase in overseas students studying in western countries, this section will now examine the effect the increase in demands of higher education has on nations and if the arguments can be made for cultural and social change.

A consideration that has to be made is whether the English language will ever cease to be the global language. According to Crystal (1998), even though there has been a ‘remarkable growth in the use of English’, he suggests that only one-third of the world’s population use it, but with the rise in the economic power of China and their increasing population, will Putonghua (Chinese Mandarin) take the place of English? As Marginson (2006) suggests, Putonghua, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and Indonesian/Malay could all be ‘alternatives’ to English but continues by stating that,

‘The university markets relentlessly reproduce the hegemony and homogeneity of English.’ (Marginson, 2006, p.905)

From research conducted by Tarry (2005), it was found that some parents of the ‘early years’ children were considering encouraging their children to learn Putonghua as a third language, and a few were considering changing their child’s international school whose mode of instruction was English, to a bilingual international school, where the languages of instruction were Thai and Putonghua.

According to Crystal (1998) the world’s military and economic power will have the monopoly on the global language and presently that is the United States of America. He also suggests that if there was a global change of the United States of America’s military or economic power, then the ‘global status’ of English would be questionable. Although arguably, if China was to obtain dominant military or (more probably), economic power it is unlikely that there would be a move away from English as the global language immediately as China does not yet possess the historical or cultural power required to make the change necessary.

Historically, countries such as Britain, Holland, Portugal, France and Spain have exerted military power on other countries, such as Sri Lanka and Indonesia, often with the aim of colonisation. Despite widespread independence for these colonised countries, there remains a willingness to retain existing colonial educational institutions, and particularly educational establishments based upon a better ex-colonial western or ‘Anglo-Saxon’ model of education, therefore perpetuating cultural imperialism; the embodiment of ‘distinct perceptions and identities’ of power (Bromley and Smith, 2004). More affluent countries are now avoiding the use of military power to colonise countries and are now applying their economic power or neo-colonialism (Mkandawire, 2004). In order to achieve this Halsey *et al.* (2001) suggest that education is now utilised as a global ‘weapon’ as countries are ‘embroiled’ in global competition and countries ‘fight’ for economic prosperity and this can be argued as a precursor to neo-colonialism, with higher education being one of the forerunners, again perpetuating cultural imperialism.

The role of universities in the eyes of Welfare State Liberals is perceived as a way of guaranteeing citizenship irrespective of wealth and power. Conversely the continuum of New Right is the social radical perspective of neo-Marxism which holds the view that universities are institutions that the government has central control over and therefore may control the individual, directly or indirectly. One example of this control would be the introduction of ‘top up’ fees, as mentioned previously, which encourages debt and therefore a level of financial control over the workforce. Through debates and discussion

of higher education including (Pieterse, 1995; Bruch and Barty, 1998; Blight *et al.*, 2000; Held *et al.*, 2000), higher education has been considered as westernisation and cultural imperialism,

‘Cultural imperialism requires the creation of colonial educational establishments and training of teachers.’ (Held *et al.*, 2000, p.330)

Along with Marginson (2006), Pieterse (1995) would also suggest that the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) figures (Figure 2.2, p.21) merely support the view that the flow of ‘education’ is only in one direction and that what is taking place is purely the ‘westernisation’ or even imperialism of education increasing its global reach. Global trends start and emanate:

‘From Europe and the West. In effect it is a theory of westernisation by another name, which replicates all problems associated with euro centrism: a narrow window on the world, historically and culturally.’ (Pieterse, 1995, p.47)

Phillipson (1992) suggests that the British Council is able to deal with key professionals such as lecturers and teachers and organisations without being linked to the United Kingdom Government or be perceived as having a ‘diplomatic mission’, however, with the British Council responsible for administering United Kingdom Government initiatives such as the British Chevening Scholarships and key British marketing strategies, how can the British Council not claim a ‘diplomatic mission’? With the implementation of these marketing strategies and European Union (EU) funded programmes, such as the Asia Universities Network (Robertson, 2006), it can be argued that western countries have moved away from colonialism through the use of military force and are now exerting their power through neo-colonialism (Mkandawire, 2004) and as Robertson (2006) suggests,

‘Higher education has become progressively important in the strategic armoury of the EC [European Community].’ (Robertson, 2006, p.1)

However, the implementation of these strategies is often perceived from a western (or white Anglo-Speaking Protestant) countries view point and overseas students risk feeling like pawns in the spread of colonialism, cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism. Blight *et al.*’s (2000) suggestion of increasing numbers of offshore campuses, telecommunications

and quality assurance and accreditation etc. support global forces increasing homogeneity and ,

‘The potential and demise of national university systems and the risk of cultural imperialism.’ (Blight *et al.*, 2000, p.97)

Linguistic imperialism is a primary component of cultural imperialism and as Phillipson (1992) suggests, this leads to social imperialism which aids the transmission of values and behaviour. What is clear is that the desire and need for higher education is continually growing and thus provides an important and integral part in any development strategies especially in global economic markets.

2.4. Summary of the global expansion of higher education

In light of the global perception of a ‘knowledge-based’ economy by multilateral agencies, it is obvious that in the endeavour to increase the nation’s economy and global power, the United Kingdom Government are encouraging higher education as a ‘service’ or ‘good’. They are implementing higher education policies such as the White paper ‘The Future of Higher Education’ (2003), and marketing strategies including the Prime Minister’s Initiative (British Council, 2003) to promote the United Kingdom’s higher education to prospective overseas students. The universities themselves are also aware of the competition between universities (league tables) through the massification of higher education institutions, the financial advantages and status or ‘positional good’ that universities can achieve. Therefore universities are promoting their services and profile, especially the English language, to attract overseas students. In addition the universities have increased access opportunities and relevancy of programmes. All this has resulted in the increasing numbers of overseas students attending higher education in the United Kingdom, bringing with them valued income to the Government and universities coffers. This has also fuelled the increasing demand of higher education. However, are individual students consciously aware of these issues and how is their decision to study overseas influenced by the global economy and the United Kingdom Government and the universities marketing strategies?

But what are the consequences on the individual student? Are students of non-western countries being influenced by the western culture and is there a possible transmission or change in social and cultural capital as a consequence of studying in higher education

overseas? In order to explore these issues three research questions have been identified and will be addressed through the course of this thesis.

1. What are the factors that affect students' decisions to study overseas?
2. Why do students decide to study at universities in the United Kingdom?
3. What are the resulting cultural and social implications of their decisions?

Chapter 3 Thailand

3.1. Why Thailand as a choice for study

Having addressed in general in the Literature Review, the factors that influence students' decisions to study overseas the question then arises as to how this affects particular nationals?

Thailand has been chosen as a focus for four significant reasons. The first reason is that despite historical European expansion into the area, for example Great Britain colonised Singapore, Burma, Sri Lanka and India, and France colonised Cambodia and Vietnam, Thailand remains un-colonised by any power, western or Asian. The second reason is that Thailand can no longer be described as a 'Third World' country. Crow *et al.* (1983) suggest that 'Third World' countries have at least one of the following characteristics: non-aligned, non-industrial, ex-colonial, poor, populist and peripheral/marginal/dependent. However Thailand through its economic, social and political changes now shows the characteristics exhibited by 'Advanced Developing Countries', '...otherwise known as newly industrializing countries', (Sarre and Blunden, 1996). Thirdly, Thailand is renowned for possessing a unique culture with a strong, binding familial and bureaucratic hierarchical infrastructure. The implication here is that Thai nationals do not have an urgency to leave Thailand for economic or personal survival. Thai students who chose to study at universities outside Thailand are therefore an interesting group. Mulder (2000) reports that in 1961 there were an estimated two thousand Thai national students studying abroad, which by the early 1990's increased to an estimated eight thousand. This has been part of a trend in the United Kingdom to increase the number of international students studying in higher education by attracting another 50,000 students from outside Europe by 2005. Bruch and Barty (1998) advocate that 'presently' for recruiting overseas students, South East Asia is 'the main area for recruitment by UK institutions'. Whilst there has been a plethora of research on overseas students attending universities, which date from the Lee-Warner Committee Report, 1907 (Else and Kinnell, 1990) and continue to include research on university knowledge transfer (Rhea, 1997), there is little on Thai students specifically. Finally Thailand was chosen as a focus because of my personal experience of the country context. I have a personal interest in the topic under investigation, having previously been a head teacher in an international school for seven years, with six years experience in Asia, two of which were in Sri Lanka followed by four years in an

international school in Thailand. The international school in Thailand had a clientele of 85% Thai nationals therefore enabling me to become very familiar with Asian and Thai culture, the basic Thai language and the educational expectations of Thai nationals. Presently I am employed as a senior lecturer at a university in the United Kingdom in the University's School of Education, working with Teaching Assistants who are aspiring to become teachers with qualified teaching status. Through anecdotal evidence I have observed an increasing number of overseas students attending the University where I am employed. My experience in Thailand and at the university in the United Kingdom has laid down the foundations for my interest in Thai nationals attending overseas universities in the United Kingdom. As Alasuutari (1995) advocates,

'Every study is based, to a greater or lesser degree, on earlier research and on the researchers' earlier experiences.' (Alasuutari, 1995, p.59)

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) investigated the 'push and pull' factors that affected the students from Taiwan, India, Indonesia and China choice to study at higher education institutions in Australia. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) define the 'push and pull' factors as follows,

'Push factors operate within the source country and initiate students to study overseas' and 'Pull factors operate within a host country to make that country relatively attractive to international students.' (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002, p.1)

Through the three studies carried out by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) between 1996 and 2000, it was discovered that the students involved in the research sought an overseas education in Australia for a number of reasons: lack of access to institutions in their home country, the reputation and recognition of the host countries education system, the geographic proximity of Australia influencing cost issues, to raise ones' 'economic and social status', and family recommendation. However this research fails to address Asian students studying overseas in a country outside the same region i.e. the United Kingdom, and does not address the fact that China/Taiwan, India and Indonesia have at some point in their history been colonised or had close trade links with a western country (Great Britain, Holland, France or Portugal). Can the reasons for the students from Taiwan, India, Indonesia and China to study overseas, be transposed to Thai nationals seeking a higher education in the United Kingdom?

3.1.1. Thailand as a newly industrialising country

From the previous discussion on the influences of the United Kingdom Government and their policies and strategies on attracting overseas students, it is important that this thesis also considers the role of the Thai Government in encouraging Thai nationals to seek higher education overseas rather than remaining in Thailand and studying at a Thai university.

Table 3.1: Percentage distribution of women and men aged 6 years and over by grade of school completed, 1970 1980 and 1990

Grade of school completed	1970		1980		1990	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No-education	31.1	21.4	19.0	12.9	12.9	8.6
Primary level	64.5	70.7	71.6	72.9	70.5	69.7
Secondary level	3.6	6.3	7.4	11.4	11.5	16.1
University level	0.5	0.9	2.0	2.4	5.1	5.3
Other education	0.3	0.7	..	0.4	..	0.3

Source: Thailand National Statistics Office; Population and Housing Census (1970, 1980 and 1990).

The Thai State sponsored formal education in 1921 but in the 1930's, when education was implemented in most communities, the aim was that education created a gateway to 'Buddhist religious contexts' (Knodel, 1997). However, universities were also established during this period: Chulalongkorn University first and in 1932 Thammasart University, followed by Kasetsart, Mahidol and Silpakorn universities in the 1960's. During the 1990's and with the sudden upturn in the economy, the Government responded to a greater demand for higher education by allowing the private sector to enter the university market Phongpaichit and Baker (1999). By 1994 there were over 120,000 students attending twenty six private universities and technical colleges. However Phongpaichit and Baker (1999) suggest the Thai Government's main motive for the establishment of these universities was to educate the Government staff and officers of administration. They believe the Thai Government purposefully denied higher education to the rural population as this favoured the middle class and those already with close links to officialdom. Whilst more recent statistics (Table 3.1, p.32) show that the numbers of Thai students completing their education to university level has increased substantially over a twenty year period, the

Thai Government have for over a century acknowledged the importance of education and the economy, by awarding of scholarships to send officials to study abroad (Chalamwong, 2002).

However, by 1997, Thailand had increased the number of upper secondary enrolments and at the end of this stage of education it was anticipated that 43% of students would sit the National University Entrance Examinations with a Government set target of 42,502 places or 32% of the total number of candidates (134,654), being admitted to higher education institutions (University Science and Engineering Education Project, 1997). Also in 1997 the Thai Ministry of University Affairs followed the United Kingdom in establishing and implementing university league tables as a 'quality assurance mechanism' (Luke and Luke, 2000). More importantly Thailand is competing against other countries for students, especially as there are now global university league tables increasing 'competition' between universities and other countries.

'Increasing flows of international students has increased the pressure for league tables to reflect the quality and reputation of universities in different countries.' (Lauder *et al.*, 2006, p.41)

More Thai students have the opportunity to attend higher education institutions. In Thailand in the 1970's, 'the idea of open universities, accessible to everybody, was finally implemented' (Mulder, 2000). With a clear focus on the importance of education arguably beginning in the 1970's Thailand appears to maintain that focus to the present day. Although Scott (1995) analyses the 'growth of mass higher education' in the British context, this analogy can be used and comparisons made with Thailand. Thailand exhibits qualities of the early stages of massification of higher education not only through the rise in the number of internal private sector universities and the increase in the state provision of education, but also encouraging strategic educational alliances with other countries, notably Europe, the United States of America and Australia.

'Global tendencies are also actively promoting an interest in lifelong learning.' (Field, 2000, p.20)

The Thai Government aspirations to improving the country's higher education system and education have been 'shaped' by the increasing 'lending policies of the World Bank' (Dale, 2001). The World Bank lent Thailand monies to assist in financing eight

developmental projects from 1975 to 1996, and in 1997 granted an additional 143.4 million United States Dollars (USD) to finance the Universities Science and Engineering Project (East-Asia and Pacific Regional Office, 1997). In total Thailand's Public expenditure for higher education rose from 3.1 million Baht a year in 1976 to 11.5 billion Baht a year in 1990. The European Union also 'targeted' Asia and financed a range of projects and programmes including The Asia Link Programme and the Erasmus Mundus (Robertson, 2006).

Rajamangala Institute of Technology (2003) identified the roles of Thai universities as academic, technological, international, social and industrial, which would increase 'efficiency and effectiveness' and would be a hub of traditions and cultures located in its area. Interestingly they suggested that there should be international collaboration among universities and that scholarships for student exchange should be encouraged between 'bilateral universities'. Unfortunately the Thai Government failed to encourage the development of engineering and science and technology within its universities and had a low educated workforce with an increasing rise in 'shortages of science and technical skills' (East-Asia and Pacific Regional Office, 1997; Phongpaichit and Baker, 1999). The response from the Thai Government was to reform and expand the education system and also increase the number of scholarships to cater for the demand for more scientists and engineers (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1999).

'The key leadership role in Thailand's technological transformation will be played by graduates in science and engineering produced by universities.' (East-Asia and Pacific Regional Office, 1997, p.1)

Most importantly, and fundamental to this thesis, is that Thailand extended its vision to supporting students seeking higher education outside Thailand. From Table 3.2 it can be seen that the main destinations for Thai students for Bachelor of Arts (BA), Masters of Arts Degree (MA), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees, are universities in western countries with the United States of America (209) and the United Kingdom (196) being the primary destinations. China and Japan, two of the Asian Economic Tigers with regional links, are also popular, as is Australia.

Table 3.2: Statistics of popular destinations for Thai students awarded a Thai Government Scholarship (2005)

Country	Government Scholarships			Total
	BA	MA	PhD	
Australia		10	29	39
China	10	4	15	29
France	2	5	10	17
Germany	4	7	13	24
Japan	5	1	14	20
UK	13	56	127	196
USA	33	77	99	209

Source: The Civil Service Commission (CSC), Thailand (2005)

However,

‘There is a patent need to avoid creating or sustaining a brain drain, which results in the most highly qualified persons emigrating and taking valuable human capital investment with them.’ (International Labour Office, 2000, p.9)

The Thai Government, aware that despite the increasing opportunities for student to remain and study at Thai universities, Thai students would still be drawn overseas helped ensure that they return to Thailand by offering scholarships tied to their return. It is important to highlight that the Thai Government were also encouraging students to study abroad in an endeavour to exchange and transfer knowledge, as

‘Lifelong learning is widely regarded as a defence against global competitors.’ (Field, 2000, p.20)

In addition to various governmental scholarships available to Thai nationals: the main sponsors include the Office of Civil Service Commission (OCSC) and the Ministry of University Affairs non-governmental sponsors include the Bank of Thailand and international sponsors such as the British Council, the Fulbright Scheme and the World Health Organization (WHO). Thailand also has close educational knowledge transfer links, with Australia who is the ‘largest provider of tertiary scholarships to Thailand’ (Rhea, 1997), although these also have mixed agenda. For example, the United States,

‘Quite openly acknowledged that their [Fulbright Scheme] aim was to boost the economies of the recipient countries, incidentally creating markets for their own export industries.’ (Furnham and Bochner, 1986, p.114)

However, in comparison to previous generations, Thai students now have an increasing number of opportunities in obtaining financial support to study overseas.

Furnham and Bochner (1986) also imply that this has strengthened future military and diplomatic alliances. In addition, since the 1930’s the Thai Government has exhibited a growing demand for democratic reforms with policies introducing various education acts. A main component of democracy is that of inclusiveness, education must be ‘open and non-selective’ (Lauder, 2001) and,

‘Education may also mean better informed voters and ones who are more able to master the complex issues of the ballot.’ (Levin and Kelley, 2001, p.240)

Held *et al.* (2000) has indicated that democracy in other Asian countries such as India has occurred through the Indian elite attending higher educational institutions and this has contributed to Indian ‘nationalism and democracy.’

‘Education has been ultimately linked in the western thought to democracy.’ (Brown, 2001, p.13)

This knowledge transfer is continuing with Thai educational institutions seeking co-operation from other universities within Thailand, and with overseas universities in order to ‘retain and upgrade’ lecturers and curriculum developments (Chalamwong, 2002).

3.1.2. Thailand’s strong family culture

Another influencing factor on the Thai student’s decision making process is the role of the family and the family members’ values, perceptions and expectations.

‘The family is the place where most people receive their first cultural programming.’ (Hofstede, 1994, p.86)

Bada (2003) defines the term 'family' as,

'...liberally spread to any group of people who are both situationally and emotionally related, and are living together in the sense that in addition to living together they experience life together and form a certain singularity very different from a group randomly thrown together.' (Bada, 2003, p.7)

And highlights the importance of the family in preserving and perpetuating culture.

Extensive research exists regarding the Asian family, including, generational changes (Knodel, 1997), parenting styles and influences (Chao, 1996; Sijuwade, 2001; Kim and Hoppe-Graff, 2001), and family influence (Pimpa, 2003, 2004; Brooks, 2003; Bada, 2003). Particularly relevant is Pimpa's (2003) research which investigated parental influence on Thai students' choice of studying at higher education institutions in Australia, a country with different cultural values and beliefs. Pimpa's research used a quantitative method, the 'Likert Scale', and it could therefore be suggested that the results were simplified due to the lack of opportunity to probe for further information. However she identified five elements of familial choice; *finance, information, expectation, competition and persuasion*. The United Kingdom higher education policies also reiterate the importance of the parent's desire, for parental choice and parental involvement in their children's education. As Brown and Lauder (2001) suggest, middle class families have an advantage in the marketization of education in relation to choice and competition. They are more likely to have cultural capital themselves and are therefore more aware of educational competition and can provide greater opportunities to their children. Reay (2004) during her research in the United Kingdom, albeit in schools, found that parents of middle class families were well educated and lived in areas with the best schools and that there was a correlation between the mothers' educational and personal background involvement in their child's education.

Tarry (2005) highlighted attitudes, values and beliefs that are fundamental to the Thai culture (Table 3.3, p.38) and emphasises that attitudes, values and beliefs can be reflected in the behaviour, emotions, motivations, actions and reasoning of individuals.

Table 3.3: Thai attitudes, values and beliefs (Tarry, 2005)

Thai Attitudes	Thai Values and beliefs
1. They like to 'save face' e.g. They do not like to disagree with anyone.	1. Raise those with money.
2. They are financially extravagant when competing in society.	2. Raise those with power.
3. They express gratitude as a response to supporters	3. Raise those with status.
	4. Raise those with seniority.
	5. Raise those who are educated.

Hofstede (1994) suggests that the family is the initial place where children learn their values, which are then transmitted from 'one generation to another' and Oppenheim (2001) argues that,

'Attitudes are acquired or modified by absorbing, or reacting to, the attitudes of others.' (Oppenheim, 2001, p.178)

The transmission of beliefs and values becomes a chain reaction, with individuals desiring to conform to the views of the group or family and ultimately society i.e. social conformity. The family's influencing role and the individual's early experiences is important in this research, as they may contribute to the student's decision making process and consequently may affect the student's choice of seeking an overseas university.

Cultural factors may also influence the decision making process,

'Thais measure seniority in relation to power, wealth, professional rank, age, merit [where merit includes qualifications] and birth.' (Holmes and Tangtongtavy, 2000, p.26)

These can also be observed in 'behaviour, emotions, motivations, actions and reasoning of individuals'. Religion is a strong element of Thai culture and family life. 95% of the Thai population are Buddhist (Thailand Country Review, 2005), and this has remained stable at 95.2% and 94.2% respectively over the ten year period, 1990 to 2000 (Thailand National Statistical Office, 2005) and its importance was highlighted by Thai parents in the author's previous work (Tarry, 2004),

'[My] Parents are [were] worried their daughter was in an international school as they were worried she would change her religion. The family monk wanted to make sure Buddhism was her main religion as in those days there were few international schools and they were usually Christian.' (Tarry, 2004, p.24)

3.2. Some reasons why Thai students study overseas

Students seek to study overseas for various reasons, but are these reasons the same for Thai students who study overseas in universities in the United Kingdom? It is important to realise that not only are there influences from government policies and the family but there are also the students' individual economic, social and cultural reasons. This section will now address Thai students' desire to increase their economic, social and cultural capital.

3.2.1. Thai students' desire to increase career opportunities and financial rewards

Despite the massification of Thai higher education, Phongpaichit and Baker (1999) suggest that places at Thai universities are still limited and prosperous families seek education overseas. Also those families living in the main cities, who have better access to Thai universities still seek institutions overseas to 'prepare their children for life in a globalizing economy' (Skeldon, 2005, p.15) in the endeavour to increase their children's advantage in the work place. Internationally recognised educational qualifications can guarantee economic capital. This is achieved by exchanging these educational qualifications in the labour markets, for better occupations and ultimately better income and wealth,

'It makes it possible to establish conversion rates between cultural capital and economic capital by guaranteeing the monetary value of a given academic capital.' (Bourdieu, 2001, p.51)

Having obtained an overseas qualification the students have the opportunity to achieve careers with higher financial rewards especially as competition for employment has increased following the 1997 Asian financial crisis which affected 'career stability among the Thai workers in various sectors and occupations' (Chalamwong, 2002).

Considering the figures from the National Statistics Office of Thailand (2006) for Table 3.4: Employed persons by occupation for whole Kingdom (Thailand): 2001-2005 (See

Appendix A) and Table 3.5: Employed persons by industry for whole Kingdom (Thailand): 2001-2005 (See Appendix A) it can be seen that the number of people in all occupations and in particular industries has remained constant and stable throughout the period 2001–2005. From the figures, Table 3.6: Where Employed persons by level of education for whole Kingdom (Thailand): 2001-2005 (See Appendix A) there is a gradual but noticeable increase in the number of people educated at all levels, with the numbers receiving higher education increasing without fluctuation. This may suggest that in a more competitive market where employment is not rising, that employers and industries are in a position to select their employees from a more highly qualified population.

‘The more people have access to university, the less a degree serves as a badge of distinction in the job market.’ (Lauder *et al.*, 2006, p.12)

With this massification of education and increasing competition (Brown, 2006), it could be argued that more students are seeking an overseas education in order to widen their employment opportunities and placing less reliance on traditional social and familial networks, which will be discussed later on in the thesis in section Chapter 3.

In addition to advanced English language skills, other benefits that employers may perceive when employing a candidate who has studied overseas, is that the employee is more ‘inquisitive, analytical and able to draw on logical conclusions’. Tarry (2005) highlights that this perception as one reason why Thai parents have encouraged their children to attend international schools in Thailand,

‘The collective parents interviewed were interested in a ‘Western’ and ‘Anglo Saxon’ style of education involving more skills and understanding, such as the application of knowledge, thinking and problem solving.’ (Tarry, 2005, p.35)

A consequence of obtaining overseas academic qualifications is that through the acquisition of this new cultural capital there is an increase economic capital. This is the *Education and Competence Orientation*, as identified by Komin (1990), who suggest that this dictates the Thai nationals aspirations of increasing social, cultural and economic capital through higher education, giving better career prospects, better salary and a higher position in society; Bourdieu (2001) identifies cultural capital as the impact of class, gender and ethnicity on the transmission of privilege. As Bourdieu (2001) discusses there

are three forms of cultural capital; ‘*embodied state*’, ‘*objectified state*’ and ‘*institutional state*’. The ‘embodied state’ of cultural capital is ‘in the form of long lasting dispositions of the mind and body’ (Bourdieu, 2001, p.47). Bourdieu (2001) continues by suggesting that this cultural disposition, or ‘embodied state’ is inherited and inculcated at an early age, and is in effect inbred and cannot necessarily be learnt; they are embodied characteristics and capabilities, and practical cultural competences. On the other hand the ‘objectified state’ refers to material objects which can be obtained, such as books and paintings. More importantly educational qualifications and languages are classified as part of the third form, the ‘institutionalised state’ of cultural capital and as Stafford (2005) highlights ‘overseas study has been and remains a strategy to accumulate cultural capital’. However not only is an increase in economic capital a consequence of the increase in cultural capital i.e. the acquisition of higher education academic qualifications, but an increase in social capital, which will now be discussed.

3.2.2. Thai students’ desire to increase status

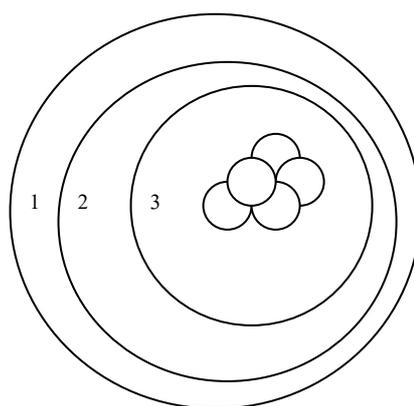
‘Social capital is the aggregate of the actual potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network....membership to a group.’
(Bourdieu, 2001, p.51)

The concept of social capital is embedded in the Thai culture; including the ability to network among others of similar social standing such as kin, friends and acquaintanceships and the ability to maintain one’s status and one’s position within the societal hierarchy. The importance of close relationships is highlighted by Hofstede (1994) and Komin (1990) who identify Thai society as having an, *Interdependence Orientation*. Holmes and Tangtongtavy (2000) describe the structure of Thai society as having three circles (Figure 3.1, p.42). The outer circle (1) represents the individual members of the family, the middle circle (2) represents the school, office, doctor, clubs and social networks, the community, in a collectivist society (Hofstede, 1994) and the inner circle (3) represents the public and officialdom. Members of Thai society aspire to move inwards.

With an increase in social status comes the increase in social networks (circle 2) and the possibility of a *Grateful Relationship Orientation* (Komin, 1990), which is exhibited through gratitude, help and favours leading to better employment opportunities and consequently greater economic capital. Hofstede (1994) identified four dimensions in national cultures. Hofstede’s (1994) four dimensions are *Individualism*, *Power Distance*,

Uncertainty Avoidance and *Masculinity*, with different societies being identified along a spectrum and an index given. The research ranged over fifty countries including Thailand, throughout three geographical regions, and was devised by a multicultural team. The methodology included a pilot study, which was carried out within ten countries to ensure a minimalisation of western orientation and bias. *Individualism* describes the family and social links between individuals. If these links are weak then the society can be described as being individualist. Alternatively societies where family and social links are strong can be described as ‘*collectivist*’. *Power Distance* ‘informs us about the dependence and relationships in a country’, (Hofstede, 1994, p.27.) whereas *Uncertainty Avoidance*, can be defined as ‘the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations’ (Hofstede, 1994, p.113). The final dimension, *Masculinity*, has *Femininity* as the complete opposite on the spectrum. A culture with a high *Masculinity* index exhibits distinct ‘gender roles’ whereas a culture with a low *Masculinity* index can be described as being *Feminine* and exhibits ‘overlapping gender roles’.

Figure 3.1: Structure of Thai society



Through utilising Hofstede’s (1994) findings and index values, the national culture of Thailand can be described as a culture exhibiting: *High Power Distance* where the individual is dependent on their hierarchical position within the society; many aspects of a *Collectivist* society with the ‘power of the group’ being strong; high *Uncertainty Avoidance*; and characteristics of a *Feminine* society; non-aggressive with resolution of conflicts through negotiation both in the home and the workplace. Burn and Thongprasert (2005) have researched the ‘implementation of virtual education delivery’ in the context of the Thai culture using Hofstede’s research. Their findings largely correspond with Hofstede’s four dimensions and give the Thai language equivalent as, *High Power* ‘Bhun Khun’, *Uncertainty Avoidance* ‘Kreng Jai’, *Collectivism* ‘Kam Lang Jai’ but unlike Hofstede fail to recognise or investigate the *Masculinity/Femininity* dimension. Hofstede (1994) suggests that in a *Feminine* country there is a ‘stress on equality’. However

Yukongdai (2005) argues that Thai society still operates with traditional gender roles and stereotypes, despite being classified as *Feminine* country by Hofstede (1994). For example, women's choices of courses in Thai universities are limited to ones, perpetuating traditional values such as 'being caring and nurturing' (Yukongdai, 2005). Yukongdai (2005) advocates education and social class can play an important part in the stereotyping of gender. It could therefore be suggested that stereotyping of gender generally only occurs in the lower class whereas the gender of an individual becomes irrelevant in the higher classes. However a criticism that Hofstede (1994) maintains is that whereas numerous researchers have applied his four dimensions it is often overlooked that these dimensions relate to the national culture and *not* to individuals.

The National Readership Survey (NRS Ltd, 2005) have used social grade definitions for 'decades' and have become a generic reference series for 'classifying and describing social classes'. This leads to the clarification of the Thai class structure. According to Wilson (1962) the Thai social class structure has been characterised by a 'gross two-class' structure, with a mass lower class consisting of farmers and domestics, and a small ruling class. However as Funatsu and Kagaoya (2003) suggest, by adopting a 'western perception of class' there is a rising middle class, an affluent urban based elite, namely 'intellectuals'. Funatsu and Kagaoya (2003) also believe that there is a flow of individuals across class boundaries and there is 'intergenerational occupational' change but emphasise that credentials 'solidify and become very pronounced'. Social status is initially dependent on one's position of birth but status can also be increased through a higher positional good of higher education and the institutions attended.

'Individual properties, such as level of education or employment status, make significant impact on the level of social capital.' (Bukreekul, 2002, p.10)

Thai students can obtain a higher status through attending overseas universities. Komin (1990) identifies this as *Achievement Orientation*, where Thai people gain more social status through work which increases their drive for achievement, therefore 'overseas education has been a means of legitimising social status' (Stafford, 2005).

The main destinations being western countries or institutions that offer a western education, according to Elliott (1998), Asian students want,

‘To improve their English or enjoy a different cultural experience, fee-paying students above all want internationally recognised qualifications.’
(Elliott, 1998, p.37)

In Thailand, English has had a high status with the indigenous elite having been educated at overseas universities through the medium of English. Meek and Wood (1998) imagine this ‘positional character’ is gained through a better education and equates to a better career. This implies higher status maybe perpetuated through education, education being seen as a ‘positional good’. Yet Thai students are not only concerned with this ‘positional good’, they also recognise the ‘positional competition’ of the institution as an influence on their choice of destination. In Thailand, students tend to choose a university that holds the best ‘reputation’ and hence gives the highest status; at present the Chulalongkorn University is often quoted as the ‘University of Choice’. Certain universities are therefore thought of as holding a higher ‘positional good’ than others. The introduction of league tables for Thai universities has enabled students to more easily formally identify the most elite and prestigious universities, the ‘exclusive rather than the inclusive’ (Brown, 2006), rather than rely on traditional verbal recommendations.

Western education is perceived as being more advantageous and a higher ‘positional good’ is obtained within the society. Therefore the Thai students want to attend a university overseas that has the best reputation, such as Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard and are able to establish the ‘best’ universities and courses through other countries published league tables. University league tables provide some measure of differentiation between the universities, for all those involved in the decision making process, regardless of country of origin. In the United Kingdom these are readily available through the four newspapers that publish British university league tables: the Sunday Times, the Times, the Financial Times and the Guardian. These enable parents and students to access the ranking of universities for that particular year. These league tables use certain score criteria such as, Advanced Level (‘A’ Levels) entrance requirements, Teaching Assessments, number of Firsts and 2:1 awards and dropout rates. In addition to an overall league table, there are subject tables identifying the top twenty universities for each particular subject, using an overall combined score from ‘assessments of teaching quality and research, average ‘A’ Level scores of entrants and destination’. These league tables can be very problematic and contentious. As Beckett’s (2002) article implies, the criteria should be re-evaluated and a university’s ‘place in the league tables can shift wildly’. However, one advantage a university might obtain from this is an increase in overseas students’ applications as these

students and their families may consult these tables and use them as indicators for their applications. Overseas governments, such as Thailand also stipulate which university and course they are willing to provide a student scholarship for, according to these league tables. However a problem that students and parents may encounter is that the position of the university on the league tables may vary from one source to another, for example the overall position of the University of York is four on the Guardian league table (MacLeod, 2006) and on the Sunday Times league table is placed seven (O’Leary, 2006), although there are some universities that appear to be comparably positioned.

3.2.3. Summary of reasons

Through the family’s role and influence, and the prospects of increasing their economic, cultural and social capital, Thai students of middle class, wealthy families aspire to attend overseas educational institutions. The global expansion of higher education is additionally fuelled by the Thai Government’s educational policies, encouraging economic and political development, exchange and knowledge transfer and Government financial support via scholarships. Therefore overseas students are faced with a difficult decision making process, involving conflicting ideals, aspirations, desires, expectations and cultures, resulting in tension. There is the dilemma that on one hand the overseas students seek to acquire better employment opportunities by increasing their cultural capital through obtaining overseas qualifications and English language skills, increase their social capital or status, and ultimately increased economic capital, whilst on the other hand the students have to consider the financial and cultural implications and family concerns, when deciding to study overseas. Consequently it is important to investigate the possible tensions that the students experience when deciding to study overseas.

3.3. Tensions for Thai students resulting from studying overseas

With the opportunities for Thai students to increase their economic, social and cultural capital, the Thai Government’s policies for awarding scholarships, and the United Kingdom Government’s policies and marketing strategies, more students are attending universities in the United Kingdom. This begs the question, what are the consequences of studying overseas for the individual?

‘Lifelong learning is now the guiding principle for policy strategies concerned with objectives ranging from a nations economic well-being

and competitiveness to personal fulfilment and social cohesion.’

(International Labour Office, 2000, p.3)

At the centre of the knowledge-based economy as Field (2000) advocates, is ‘individual behaviour and attitudes’. This has led to the phenomenon of ‘individualisation’ or the development of individualistic and competitive values according to Lauder *et al.* (2006) is ‘increasing’.

In addition to nations recognising education as a key to ‘competitive economy’ they also regard education as the ‘foundation of social justice and social cohesion’ (Brown and Lauder, 2006). With the benefits of higher education such as better employment with higher financial rewards fuelling competition it could be argued that competition

‘Causes the isolation of individuals within homogeneous social groups.’

(Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2006, p.145)

Rizvi and Lingard (2006) also imply that economic goals are being perceived as being more important than social and cultural goals both by individuals and nations. Field (2000) concurs with this by suggesting that,

‘Individualism represents an abandonment of social purpose.’ (Field, 2000, p.55)

In the endeavour to achieve economic, social and cultural goals, choices have to be made. Festinger (1970) highlights that when a choice has to be made between two or more alternatives, each having positives and negatives, ‘cognitive dissonance’ or conflict may occur. The students have a dilemma when making the decision to study overseas. The first dilemma is to obtain an overseas qualification but this maybe costly and they may experience psychological processes such as ‘culture shock’. However by obtaining an overseas qualification they will be able to raise their social status through ‘institutionalised’ state of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2001), develop possible international networks which will again raise their social capital and ultimately have the opportunity to increase economic capital. Alternatively the student may opt to gain a Thai qualification which will enable the individual to remain within the family unit, reinforcing family values and culture, develop Thai social networks, thereby raising social capital and of course reduce financial implications by staying at home. Festinger (1970) also suggests that

following a decision there are three possible consequences: an increase in confidence in the choice made, an increase in the discrepancy between the two choices, in this case to study overseas or remain in their home country, and the opportunity to seek out further information. When participating in this decision making process there is the potential for dissonance between the family members. One party or the other will attempt to reduce this by offering opinions or incentives in an attempt to convince other members to agree to their own point of view; of course this dissonance may lead to arguments and disagreements. Any person possessing sufficient knowledge, experience or prestige, such as a family graduate of an overseas university, may increase or reduce the dissonance caused between the two choices. However, the views of this person may have to be balanced against those of the other party if they hold a numerical superiority.

‘The human organism tries to establish internal harmony, consistency, or congruity among his opinions, attitudes, knowledge and values.’
(Festinger, 1970, p.260)

Additionally, in order to reduce dissonance in a new context such as a university or new job or new achieved status, the participant will then adopt new opinions. By increasing their personal social circle the participant will find it easier to change their opinions as they will be more likely to find alliances with others having similar opinions. The result is that there will be a reduction in conflicts regarding the decision made and, ultimately, less dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance pressures can not only cause changes in opinion but can also cause changes in behaviour due to stress, as the individual reacts differently in order to cope with the new situation.

‘Stressful behaviours may be a result of a host of complementary and competing motives, which are often difficult to disentangle.’ (Furnham and Bochner, 1986, p.35)

However as Komin (1990) suggests, Thai nationals exhibit a *Flexibility and Adjustment Orientation* which is the cognitive ability to ‘decision-shifting’. This may consequently reduce the pressure of choice and decision making, but may result in the Thai student being more open to suggestion and influence from others.

Until a change in 1996, Thai legislation would not allow Thai students to attend an international school, even if one parent was of a non-Thai nationality. Previously the main alternative for Thai nationals wishing to attend an overseas university was to seek an international education abroad, e.g. boarding schools. Now Thai students are able to remain at home *and* attend an international school in Thailand allowing students to obtain internationally recognised qualifications. However, the noticeable disadvantage is that if Thai students attend an international school in Thailand and ultimately wish to attend a Thai university their choice remains very limited indeed. At the time of writing there were a limited number of Thai universities that would admit such students including Assumption University, Mahidol University, Bangkok University and Thammasart University. The reason given is that the other Thai universities believe that these Thai students do not reach the required standard in 'Thai' to attend, indicating that there could be a possible erosion or loss of culture.

Educational leaders at Thai universities are often noted as obtaining higher 'western' qualifications, which arguably, may support the claim for Thai universities operating through inherited western patterns and systems, again pointing towards cultural imperialism and colonialism. Additionally, Chamarick (1993) suggests that the growth of modernisation of the education system and the westernisation of the universities, may have a detrimental social impact, which in turn 'depurates and divides' society. Therefore, it could logically be reasoned that Thailand itself must accept some responsibility for any resulting cultural change.

For the purpose of this research Brown *et al.*'s (2004) definition of culture will be assumed,

'Culture consists of the body of value preferences, customs and perspectives that enables a society to function.' (Brown *et al.*, 2004, p.190)

Fundamentally a culture,

'Affects not only our daily practices; the way we live, are brought up, manage, are managed and die; but also the theories we are able to develop to explain our practices.' (Hofstede, 1994, p.170)

Alasuutari (1995) proposes that there is a 'hierarchical notion' to the term 'culture', which implies that a particular culture is superior and displays 'the best and most glorious achievements' of that particular civilisation which can therefore lead to reinforcing imperialism.

Through the previous discussion it can be concluded that attitudes, values and beliefs including those involving family, status and hierarchy are firmly set in Thai society. However there continues to be much debate on the subject of the globalization of culture (Bochner, 1982; Held *et al.*, 2000; Brown *et al.*, 2004) and opinions range from a globalization of culture operating through 'modes of interaction', 'from imposition, emulation through to diffusion' (Held *et al.*, 2000) through to Brown *et al.*'s (2004) claims for culture as being 'fluid' and that 'cultures borrow from one another'.

Held *et al.* (2000) advocate that globalization of culture is dependent on three main factors: geographical extensity, intensity and rapidity. With the technological advancement in all forms of transport, and increases in migratory (both voluntary and involuntary) traffic and travel opportunities, the movements of larger numbers of people is occurring at a greater speed across longer distances and seems set to continue, especially with the changing of national borders, international networks and the expansion of the European Union. Additionally, with the advancement of information technology, such as television, internet, mobile telephone services and other media, cultures are increasingly moving through these 'modes of interaction'.

'Language, technology, communications and popular cultural cross most frontiers with relative ease, and introduce new cultural alternatives to communities that earlier were more insulated.' (Brown *et al.*, 2004, p.219)

Cultures can therefore be considered as 'stretching', as people move and share their culture with others.

'People have proved to be the most important and most influential agents of cultural transmission.' (Held *et al.*, 2000, p.329)

It therefore follows that the flow of culture remains dependent on the ability of people to transmit their own culture and receive those of others. If this fails to occur then culture could therefore be considered as 'contracting', as migratory people remain in cultural units

living in the same vicinity. This can be observed in the United Kingdom where although Asian communities establish themselves in certain areas, for example in Birmingham and Leeds, these communities still permit the 'stretching' of culture by regulating the flow of their culture through the introduction of takeaway shops and the establishment of local places of worship for their community. The idea of a 'contracting' culture can also be observed in Thailand and other countries, where British Expatriates establish British enclaves which include societies and clubs, but unlike the Asian communities in the United Kingdom, exclusivity is maintained from local nationals through high membership fees, which could be construed as reinforcing cultural imperialism.

Where there is a desire to accumulate western experiences in order to maintain one's status or to maintain cultural imperialism, then culture will not homogenise. Cultural absorption can occur through the consumption of cultural products such as brands, fashion, and music and sport, although it could be argued that these do not affect other areas such as cultural practices and beliefs. Huysmans (2004) proposes that culture is not a unity of 'shared values' but,

'A contest of values among people who claim to belong to the same cultural tradition.' (Huysmans, 2004, p.331)

Sophonpanich (2003) advocates that sending Thai children to international schools or universities abroad will add to the erosion of the Thai culture as it does affect cultural practices and beliefs,

'The best and brightest of the next generation of Thai society would not grow up with deep roots in our Thai ways of life. Not only would it create difficulties for them to assimilate on their return to Thai society but it would also lead to the fragmentation of our society's values.'
(Sophonpanich, 2003, p.5)

It could be argued that Sophonpanich (2003) as is a Thai national with a high social status may have a biased perspective. However Brown *et al.* (2004) considers the impact of globalization on certain aspects of culture and also concludes that it does 'erode traditional local cultural patterns' but he also suggests that new cultural patterns should not necessarily be considered as 'alien or threatening,' generally happening when one group feels 'endangered by the other', but alternatively the new cultural patterns may also be

considered ‘attractive and enriching.’ Finding a culture to be ‘alien and threatening’ or ‘attractive and enriching’ may be part of a continuum of a ‘psychological and social process’ of euphoria, culture clash, and acculturation that may ‘accompany an intercultural experience’ (Hofstede, 1994). Hofstede continues by suggesting that on arrival an expatriate, or in this case an overseas student, may initially exhibit elements of euphoria from new experiences in a new land. Following this initial reaction the student encounters differences and difficulties in language, work, and everyday culture developing into ‘culture shock’, however, as self-confidence increases, greater integration is achieved and acculturation is reached.

‘Acculturation is the process by which cultural differences are resolved and cultural change and adaptation between different groups takes place.’
(Cambridge, 2001, p. 204)

Mohamed (1997) through his research confirms that South-East Asian students exhibit elements of acculturation whilst attending a university in the United Kingdom. This massification of higher education or ‘education explosion’ has not only occurred in Thailand but across the world, which Scott (1995) suggests increases a possible distribution of common culture.

Table 3.7: Outcomes of cultural contact at the individual level: psychological responses to ‘second culture’ influences, Bochner (1982, p.27)

Outcome of cultural contact	Type	Effect on individual	Effect on society
Reject culture of origin, embrace second culture	‘Passing’	Loss of ethnic identity	Assimilation Cultural erosion
Reject second culture, exaggerate first culture	Chauvinistic	Nationalism Racism	Inter-group friction
Vacillate between the two cultures	Marginal	Conflict, identity confusion, over-compensation	Reform, social change
Synthesise both cultures	Mediating	Personal growth	Inter-group harmony, pluralistic societies, cultural preservation

Bochner (1980), Bochner *et al.* (1980) and, Bochner and Hutnik, (1986) research the cultural interactions and psychological responses to a second culture and the degrees of cultural change including cultural preservation and cultural erosion. Table 3.7 above lists the outcomes of the influences of a second culture on the individual and on society. It

must be remembered, as Bochner (1982) reiterates, these outcomes relate to social influences rather than to whether the individual likes or dislikes the country host country.

‘Passing’ as Bochner (1982) suggests can be observed when students ‘embrace’ the new culture in which they are living and studying and, on completion of their course, become unwilling to return home i.e. they become acculturated. According to Chalamwong (2002), there are large numbers of emigrating Thai favouring Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Korea and Germany,

‘During 1999-2000, the number of total departures from Thailand was respectively 10.37 and 10.35 million of which 77.8% departed to OECD countries and 25.9% to non-OECD countries. In 2000, the favoured emigration destinations to OECD countries were Japan, the UK, the US, Korea and Germany.’ (Chalamwong, 2002, p.379)

This increase in numbers of Thai emigrating supports the claim for global expansion and therefore the increase in exposure to other cultures, leading to possible acculturation and therefore erosion of their own culture as they acquire experience of others. If students do eventually return to their home country, Bochner (1982) suggests they may now apply their newly learned skills and knowledge without regard for any local problems that they encounter, a more subtle ‘passing’. Some students may become marginalised and find it difficult to become accepted members of either of the two societies as value and beliefs become ‘incompatible’. Other students may become ‘chauvinist’ and begin to detest the country in which they received their higher education – a phenomenon recently observed in those with ‘extremist’ tendencies.

As explained earlier, Thai society and culture are founded on social class and status and it follows that any claim for an erosion of culture would ultimately imply an erosion of class. Traditionally, class was measured through the application of narrow job classifications, such as lower, middle and upper class but as Scott (1995) advocates class should be measured through broader cultural identifications such as ‘lifestyle choices’ and that this also includes the ‘participation in post-compulsory education’.

Scott (1995) considers that there are two implications for society experiencing an increase in student numbers. Firstly, there is a division of economic labour across society and secondly, an enhanced opportunity to change ‘lifestyle choices’, implying that,

‘Massification is among the most powerful instruments of social change.’
(Scott, 1995, p.105)

In accordance with Tarry (2005) more Thai parents who would not traditionally have been classified as middle class are now encouraging their children to attend international schools. In effect the ‘middle class’ in Thailand is expanding whereas the lower class is contracting as they are becoming more affluent and receive wider access to more diverse economic and educational opportunities. According to Thai Government statistics (Table 3.2, page 35) greater numbers of students are attending post-compulsory education, including universities. The flow of students from rural locations to the larger urban areas (and overseas universities), may result in the breakdown of traditional social networks. More pressure on these networks becomes likely where graduating students opt to stay away from home for long periods of time or move away permanently, therefore as suggested by Scott (1995), ‘The cement of society crumbles’.

3.4. Summary of tensions resulting from the decision to study overseas

In summary there are disadvantages to studying overseas. There are resulting tensions that the overseas students have to deal with: tension caused by the decision making process, tension between cultures and tension within society. The Thai student therefore has to consider all the ‘push and pull’ factors (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) when opting to study overseas. Once the students have embarked on living and studying overseas they have to learn to adapt to their new country, the English language and the university environment.

‘The knowledge economy and reflexive individualisation are at the heart of both the problems and solutions.’ (Field, 2000, p.33)

Through this research the intention is to investigate why Thai national students choose to study at a university in the United Kingdom, to include the familial influences on this decision and the ultimate consequences of the Thai students’ decision to study overseas.

Chapter 4 The Study

The aims and purpose of the study are to investigate why Thai national students decided to study at universities in the United Kingdom, what advantages or benefits the students believed they would gain, what were the influencing factors on making that choice and what were the consequential tensions resulting from studying at a university in the United Kingdom. The intention was to interrogate the ‘real life’ experiences of Thai nationals who were either studying, or had studied, at a university in the United Kingdom.

4.1. The context

The intention was to locate Thai national students who were willing to participate fully as case study participants. Two access points were established: University X and University Y. University X is a medium-sized university having been granted full university title and research degree awarding powers in 2005. Presently it has approximately 10,000 students with over 700 international students, studying on courses from foundation and undergraduate level to postgraduate, professional and doctoral qualifications. Subjects offered include traditional arts, humanities and sciences, as well as more modern subjects such as entrepreneurship, product design and advertising. By 2010, University X intends to increase their student numbers by 20% (University X, 2006). University Y is a long established university, with its history being traced back to the mid eighteenth century. Subjects offered include, humanities and social sciences, traditional sciences, engineering and management. In 2006 there were approximately 12,000 students studying on both full and part-time courses, with over 3,000 international students (University Y, 2006).

4.1.1. The respondents

Under the Data Protection Act (1988), the universities were not permitted to release confidential information regarding names and contact details of individual students. Therefore other strategies were considered.

In University X a ‘snowball’ approach was adopted. The process of ‘snowballing’ relies on ‘networking’, with the respondents having close contact with other possible participants. This appeared to be a particularly appropriate method to adopt in seeking Thai national participants as Thai society is ‘collectivist’ and maintains close family and social networks (Hofstede, 1994). However Welch (1975) and, Kalton and Anderson (1986) suggest that there are some disadvantages in this method of locating possible participants, such as

‘deviant’ and ‘isolated’ unpopular individuals within the community being ‘under-sampled’ or omitted from the sampling frame although they admit that the process of ‘snowballing’ is a good way to access a population that is ‘thinly dispersed among a larger population’ (Welch, 1975, p.237). University X’s International Department acknowledged that there were only seven Thai national students attending the University at the time of the study; a small percentage of the population (See Figure 2.1, p.18 and Table 3.2, p. 35). As Oppenheim (2001) proposes in order to obtain respondents via the ‘snowballing’ method,

‘A few appropriate individuals are located and then asked for the names and addresses of others who might also fit the sampling requirement.’
(Oppenheim, 2001, p.43)

Existing students attending University X were accessed through a ‘gatekeeper’ who officially or unofficially ‘controls access to a setting’ (Neuman, 2006). In this instance the ‘gatekeeper’ was a senior lecturer who was in contact with overseas students in the University’s International Department. The lecturer approached one Thai national student (student A) and asked whether they would be willing to be contacted by myself. Student A involved students F, E and D.

The sample at University Y was developed slightly differently. The international office informed me that there were twenty three known Thai students but as there was no ‘gatekeeper’ another strategy was used to access these students. From the University website it was discovered that there existed a Thai Association and through that Association website, a ‘blanket’ email was sent to all members asking for volunteers willing to be involved in a research study. Two Thai national students came forward who had previously studied at University Y and were willing to participate. Table 4.1 below identifies each student and university at which they attend.

Table 4.1: Summary of respondents

Student	University
Student A	University X
Student B	University Y
Student C	University Y
Student D	University X
Student E	University X
Student F	University X

4.2. The research approach

‘A common complaint about case studies is that it is difficult to generalise from one case to another.’ (Yin, 1994, p.37)

The purpose of a case study approach is to ‘generalise findings to ‘theory’’ (Yin, 1994). It is also regarded as an excellent strategy ‘when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context’ (Yin, 1994, p.1); in this case, Thai students attending higher education institutions. As ‘real life’ experiences were under investigation, a multi-method approach was used to obtain this intended data, this included semi-structured informal interviews which were recorded and transcribed, questionnaires which additionally raised biographical data, and various methods of communication such as informal telephone conversations and email. By using this multi-method approach data was compiled over time as it enabled me to approach the students for clarification of issues raised and was not just a ‘snap-shot’ in time. These data collecting methods had already been trialled during the pilot study that has previously been mentioned (Tarry, 2005). By collecting a broad and detailed range of data enabled the acquisition of a more comprehensive view.

‘The use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal and behavioural issues.’ (Yin, 1994, p.92)

By using purely one data collection method, for example a survey approach would only raise a small amount of statistical data, especially as surveys are renowned for having low response rate (Oppenheim, 2001), therefore the quantitative and qualitative methods have been advantageously integrated.

Social processes including opinions, attitudes and values are influencing factors on the students’ choice in studying overseas and can be observed through behaviour, emotions, motivation, actions and reasoning. A qualitative approach method is ‘particularly suitable for examining such processes’ (Alan and Skinner, 1991). This is also supported by Goldthorpe (1984) who suggests that referencing statistical data would not enable the researcher to record these underlying actions,

‘Motivations and underlying action cannot be usually understood simply by reference to statistical data.’ (Goldthorpe, 1984, p.187)

As has been highlighted by Hofstede (1994) the initial place for the transmitting and learning of values is the family. Chapter 3: Thailand, also emphasises the importance of the family members and their influence on others opinions and attitudes (Komin, 1990) and (Holmes and Tangtongtavy, 2000), therefore it was important to collect data from the students and from their parents and grandparents. Preference was given where possible to interviews, but if the participants were residing in Thailand a questionnaire was initially issued, followed by correspondence via email, which enabled further probing for information.

4.3. Data Collection

The following sections will address each method of data collection: semi-structured informal interview, questionnaires, telephone conversations and email. It will highlight the reasoning as to why these methods were chosen and the ethical issues addressed and how they were implemented to ensure validity and reliability and how the data was analysed.

4.3.1 Semi-structured informal interviews

In my previous study a ‘cross-cultural research team’ carried out the interviews, which enabled a Thai national researcher to effectively interview the Thai-speaking parents whilst myself as a ‘western’ researcher interviewed the English-speaking parents (Tarry, 2005). This approach was not necessary for this research as the students attending universities in the United Kingdom, under the universities admissions criteria, had already achieved a good level of English communication skills, and therefore I carried out the interviews in English.

In order to identify the reasoning and motivations for the Thai students’ decision to study at a university in the United Kingdom, semi-structured informal interviews with open-ended funnelled questions were the main methods of data collection for the students who were presently studying and regularly attending a university in the United Kingdom (See Appendix B). An open-ended funnelled strategy was used as it starts with broad open questions and then becomes more specific and structured during the course of the interview (Merton and Kendel, 1946) allowing a more relaxed approach to the detailed data required. The use of interviews is advantageous in looking beyond the individuals’ behaviour and gives a better insight into the meaning and values of actions that people take, it also pushes

the lines of enquiry by gaining a view ‘from inside’ and identifies social influences, such as authority patterns such as social hierarchy. The order of questions is important (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992) as this would relax and put the respondents at ease, resulting in more fruitful responses, hence the initial questions posed during the interviews were biographical, which also ensured validity of the research, followed by open-ended questions,

‘A type of survey research question in which respondents are free to offer any answer they wish to the question.’ (Neuman, 2006, p.286)

By using ‘open’ questions, errors in memory and periodic behavioural variations were minimised and had a fixed effect on ordinal and contextual influences. It was also ensured that the open-ended questions were not leading and did not contain any double barrelled questions, jargon or slang (Oppenheim, 2001; Neuman, 2006).

As the students were interviewed in their second or foreign language, extra thinking time was allowed, increasing the student’s opportunity to consider the question and to answer. It also enabled me, as the interviewer to include additional probing questions, rephrase any questions and offer equivalent words or ‘equivalence’ Neuman (2006). This allowed clarification of the respondent’s answers when required, ensuring that any misunderstandings that might have occurred be avoided. For example, American-English may use words such as ‘trunk’ and ‘sidewalk’, and in Sri Lanka, the use of old colonial English remains prevalent and phrases such as ‘my leg is paining’ and ‘I scolded a child’ (‘I told a child off’) are used.

After consulting relevant literature (Oppenheim, 2001), the interviews took place in a familiar setting; the University, therefore reassuring the students. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in order to ensure validity i.e. the exact wording of long responses and dialect and intonation were recorded. As Benney and Hughes (1984) suggests ‘linguistic differentiation’ within society may give further information on the social backgrounds of the individuals.

4.3.2 Questionnaires

In order to access parents and grandparents, and obtain the desired information, the students became the next ‘gatekeepers’ and access point for the data collection. This was

vital as the parents and grandparents were residing in their country of origin, Thailand. This resulted in three possible alternative methods of data collection; the students interview their parents and grandparents, use 'Likert type' surveys (Oppenheim, 2001) or use written questionnaires. Initially the first option was considered but on reflection it was thought that the students would produce 'bias' and the parents and grandparents would not give full open answers. Although using a 'Likert scale' would be less time consuming for the responding parents and grandparents, it would only offer simple responses and would be open to 'response set' bias where the respondent through 'laziness or psychological predisposition' may answer all the questions in the same way (Neuman, 2006). Therefore a self-administered questionnaire with open-ended questions which would enable the gathering of in-depth answers was decided upon (See Appendix B). Self-administered questionnaires rely on personal contact and ensure high response: in this case they were administered by the students to their parents and grandparents. The students were then able to encourage their parents and grandparents to complete the questionnaire, thereby enabling the parents and grandparents to 'save face' rather than me reminding them. Where necessary to ensure simplicity the questionnaires were translated into Thai and the responses were translated into English for analysis. Where parents or grandparents were deceased the biographical data was obtained from the students.

4.3.3. Telephone conversations and email

After the initial interview and questionnaire, further correspondence was made via telephone and email, in order to clarify answers and queries and to probe further.

4.3.4. Data collection summary

Through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and telephone conversation and emails with the students, the following themes were used to collect the relevant data:

- Biographical data: age, sex, number of siblings and languages spoken etc.
- Financial background: family business, scholarships etc.
- Educational background; higher education, primary, secondary and English as a second language
- Present education: institution, first/second degree and subject choice
- Reasons for choosing a particular university
- Reasons for choosing a university overseas in the United Kingdom

- Expected gains from obtaining credentials from overseas
- Possible disadvantages from attending an overseas university
- Future intentions and desires

The questionnaires that were issued to the parents and grandparents contained the following themes:

- Biographical data: age, sex, languages spoken etc.
- Financial background: employment, family business.
- Educational background: higher education, primary and secondary.
- Reasons for sending their child/grandchild to an overseas university in the United Kingdom
- Expected gains from obtaining credentials from overseas
- Possible disadvantages from attending an overseas university
- Changes in their child/grandchild’s behaviour/attitude/culture

Table 4.2: Summary of respondents and family members

Name	Data collection method	Parent Father	Parent Mother	Paternal Grandparents	Maternal Grandparents
Student A	Interview, email, telephone	Questionnaire	Biographical data	Questionnaire	Biographical data
Student B	Questionnaire, email	Biographical data	Biographical data	Questionnaire	Biographical data
Student C	Questionnaire, email	Questionnaire	Biographical data	Biographical data	Biographical data
Student D	Interview, email, telephone	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Biographical data	Questionnaire
Student E	Interview, email, telephone	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Questionnaire
Student F	Interview, email, telephone	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Biographical data	Questionnaire

Student A, D, E and F were initially formally interviewed at University X. These interviews were tape recorded as well as transcribed; all meetings were conducted in English. Subsequent communication was via email, telephone calls, and informal coffee meetings at the University. In addition they also completed a questionnaire. Student B and C initially completed a questionnaire; subsequent communication to obtain further information and clarification was through email. Table 4.2 above identifies the data collection method used and a summary of the family members who also participated in the research.

4.3.5. Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability is an important aspect of any research. As supported by Denzin (1970), Yin (1994), Oppenheim (2001), Allan (2002), Gomm (2004) and Spicer (2004), triangulation of data and evidence obtained from different sources, in this case questionnaires, interviews with further correspondence, enabled the cross-checking of the results ensuring validity and reliability of the data obtained especially,

‘In a complex dynamic process of cultural interaction, variables cannot be controlled.’ (Allan, 2002, p.68)

Social processes, such as rapport, are very influential in research, therefore as Chawla-Duggan (2007) suggests, it was important for a good relationship to be established between the researcher and the respondent,

‘One of the issues concerned with access is the relationship between the initial contacts and the researcher, because that relationship can influence the direction of the research programme.’ (Chawla-Duggan, 2007, p.188)

Access was therefore step by step thereby developing a strong rapport and trust, maximising the likelihood of receiving ‘true’ responses and helping ‘create understanding and ultimately empathy’ (Neuman, 2006). Supporting the validity of the research, a pre-established pre-amble was used to outline the purpose of the interviews for the respondents therefore the respondents were fully aware of my expectations and their role within the research. To maintain this rapport between me and the participants the questions posed included questions based on biography, education, happiness/wellbeing and income which Neuman (2006) considers as being ‘non-threatening’. As I have lived in Thailand for four years and was familiar with the Thai social processes and Thai culture, I was readily accepted ‘by the individuals’ Bell (2005). Data was also analysed in relation to the previous pilot research ‘Why do Thai parents want to send their children to an international school?’ and the literature, which again emphasised the reliability of this piece of research. The triangulation of the interviews, questionnaires and follow up correspondence of the data ‘offset any bias of a single research method’ (Spicer, 2004). Eliminating or minimizing possible forms of bias, such as ‘interviewer’, ‘western culture’ and, ‘courtesy and social desirability’ bias, (Jones, 1963; Mitchell, 1965; Neuman, 2006), was an important issue in ensuring the reliability and validity of the research. As Neuman (2006)

advocates, it is unrealistic to be totally free of western cultural and interviewer bias. However, as the participants had attended or were attending universities in the United Kingdom they were aware of the western culture therefore bias would be minimised. The questions developed for both the questionnaire and the interview questions were also carefully posed in order to prevent ‘courtesy and social desirability’ bias. ‘Social desirability’ bias occurs when,

‘Respondents distort answers to make their reports conform to social norms.’ (Neuman, 2006, p.285)

Therefore questions such as income, were not included, in addition I was aware of the Thai culture and as a lecturer was considered and perceived as having a good social standing. As mentioned previously within the Thai culture, the social value of ‘saving face’ is a very important aspect of Thai culture,

‘Face is a concept that dominates social and business contact throughout the Far East.’ (Khan–Panni and Swallow, 2003, p.27)

This needed to be considered carefully to ensure the relationship and respect between myself and the participants was maintained. Therefore during the interviews and questionnaires, opportunities for ‘saving face’ were offered by rephrasing questions appropriately. In addition, the questions posed were structured in such a way that they eliminated the respondent’s opportunities to offer answers that they assumed I required, ‘courtesy bias’ (Jones, 1963; Mitchell, 1965; Neuman, 2006). Mitchell (1965) also highlights ‘politeness’ as being a key factor in the South East Asian society and must be maintained during the interviews,

‘‘Politeness’-a phenomenon reminiscent of ‘the courtesy bias’, observed in South East Asia interviews.’ (Mitchell, 1965, p.681)

4.4. Ethics

‘Researchers must comply with the legal requirements in relation to the storage and use of personal data as set down by the Data Protection Act (1998).’ (BERA, 2004, p.9)

As research involves obtaining information from people, there are inevitably many ethical and moral issues that have to be considered. As Neuman (2006) states there are conflicts between,

‘The pursuit of scientific knowledge and the rights of those being studied or others in society.’ (Neuman, 2006, p.129)

These were addressed in accordance with the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Guidelines (2004).

It was vital that that the research did not affect the participants. The research assumed an overt approach which meant that before the research commenced, the students were fully informed about the procedures and given a brief outline of the information that was being sought (Gomm, 2004). Access to the students was in accordance to the British Educational Research Association Guidelines (BERA, 2004) and as mentioned previously both University Y and University X maintained the student’s confidentiality. Once the students were accessed via ‘snowball sampling’ and University Y Thai Student Association an ethical statement and relevant forms were issued and signed by all stakeholders. The respondents were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality (BERA, 2004, p.8), were informed that they may withdraw from participation at any time, and that a summary would be available to them. Of the six students who were willing to participate, Student D and Student B were initially reluctant to participate fully. Eventually with the building of respect between the participant and researcher, concurring with Neuman (2006), Khan–Panni and Swallow (2003), and (Chawla-Duggan (2007), who highlighted the importance of the relationship between the researcher and participant, influencing the ‘direction of the research programme’ (Chawla-Duggan, 2007) both students participated. Student B’s reason for being reticent towards participation was because he believed his parents were not suitable for the research as the questionnaires were not, ‘*A perfect fit for them since my circumstances are rather different from other students*’. In order to gain further insight this issue was pressed but Student B was unwilling to expand on this statement. However Student B agreed to participate. Again in accordance with the BERA guidelines (2004), all data was subsequently stored securely.

For this research to be accepted by the academic and research community it was essential that the research was ‘truthful and transparent’ and that all ‘reasonable precautions’ were

enforced (Gomm, 2004). Therefore the analysis of the research data was open and analysed following the procedure stated within the next section.

4.5. Method of analysis

The research adopted a case study approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. This meant that a 'broader and comprehensive body of material' was collected for each case study and although at the time of collection may not have seemed relevant (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998), enabled me later on during the research to collect further data for other 'themes and phenomena' (Alasuutari, 1995). The result was that 'an in-depth examination of an extensive amount of information' had to be analysed (Neuman, 2006). In order to identify the reasons and influences on Thai students' decision to study overseas at universities in the United Kingdom it was important that the biographical data was analysed (See Table 4.3, p.65) in order to ensure that although the students located were not necessarily representative of all Thai nationals, they did need to be 'typical' Thai nationals.

The analysis of the biographical data was followed by a 'categorical-content perspective' narrative method of data analysis (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998). The 'categorical-content perspective' method of analysis involved,

'Breaking the text into relatively small units of content and submitting them to either descriptive or statistical treatment.' (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998, p.112)

In this case the data collected, through the interviews, questionnaires, telephone conversations and emails were coded (Oppenheim, 2001). As Oppenheim (2001) notes, transcriptions should be coded in order to assist the analysis of the respondent's responses. A first 'passing' was undertaken and 'piori codes', as described by Johnson and Christensen (2003), were developed. These initial categories were broad and both descriptive and interpretative. A second 'passing' was conducted and 'inductive codes' (Johnson and Christensen, 2003) were developed and as Neuman (2006) suggests these smaller, more concise segments give a more accurate analysis of the data and consequently allowed me to identify new ideas. The following categories were identified: biographical data, reasons and influencing factors affecting the students to study overseas and the resulting tensions experienced through making such a decision. Through the 'second

Table 4.3: Profile of respondents

Student	Ethnicity	Age	Language spoken	Parents spoken language	G'dparents Spoken language	Present Degree	Previous Degree	Class	Finance	Sibling Ages	Siblings Study Institution	Sibling Study
A	Thai	27	Thai English	Thai	Thai	Full time Yr 2 BA Accounting and Finance	Thailand BA Business	Working	Self 30% UCN Scholars'p	30 22 15	Thai high school Thai university Thai secondary school	
B	Thai/ Chinese	25	Thai English	Thai English Chinese	Thai Chinese	MA Economics	Philosophy Politics Economics Top UK university	Middle	Scholars'p	28 23	USA university USA university	MBA BA
C	Thai/ Chinese	25	Thai English	Thai	Thai Chinese	MSc Management	BA Communication Arts Advertising	Middle	Parents	27	Thai university UK university	BA MA
D	Thai/ Chinese	24	English Speaks Thai	Thai	Thai	Part time Yr 2 MSc Business computers Yr2	UK BA Business Information Systems	Middle	LEA			
E	Thai/ Chinese	31	Thai English Mandarin	Thai Chinese	Thai Chinese	Full time MBA Management	Thailand BA Sociology and Social Science	Middle	½ Parents ½ Self	38 36 26	Thai university Thai university Thai university	
F	Thai/ Chinese	27	Thai English Chinese dialect	Thai Chinese English	Thai Chinese	Full time Yr 3 BA Joint combined Business and human resources		Middle	Father	30 29	USA university Thai university	MA PhD

passing’ these categories were subsequently broken down into smaller categories. Table 4.4, below, shows the ‘priori codes’ in bold, with the ‘inductive codes’ listed underneath. Table 4.5 (p. 67) offers an example of the next stage undertaken; the coding framework is applied to each student’s speech, identifying the ‘inductive code’.

Table 4.4: Coding influencing factors

Biographical Data	Questions
Family data	Section (I) Q.1 to Q.7
Education data	Section (II) Q.1 to Q.4 Section (III) Q.1 to Q.4
Finance data	Section (II) Q.3 Section (I) parents Q.7
Reasons for studying overseas	Questions
English language	Section (IV) Q.2 and Q.6
Better employment opportunities	Section (IV) Q.2, Q.6 and Q.7
Recognition of qualification	Section (IV) Q.2 and Q.6.
Prestige and ranking of university	Section (III) Q.3
Opinions on education	Section (IV) Q.1 to Q.11
Opinions on State education	Section (iii) Q.4, Section (IV) Q.5 and Q.6
Influences on decision to study overseas	Questions
Family influence	Section (III) Q.1 to Q.4 Section (IV) Q.1, Q.2, Q.7, Q.8 and Q.9.
Gender	Section (I) Q.5 and Q.6
Other social influences	Section (II) Q.3 Section (IV) Q.2, Q.3 and Q.7 Section (V) Q.1, Section (VI) Q.1 to Q.4
Cultural and social implications	
Cultural tensions	Section (IV) Q.2 and Q.6 Section (V) Q.1, Q.2, Q.3 and Q.5
Social tensions	Section (IV) Q.2 and Q.6 Section (V) Q.1 and Q.5
Generation changes	Section (III) Q.1 and Q.2

The interview scripts and questionnaires were read carefully and using colour coding pens and computer colour options, the relevant information was highlighted in accordance with the ‘priori’ and ‘inductive’ codes. This information was then collated and cross referenced.

‘All sources of evidence were reviewed and analysed together, so that the case study’s findings were based on the convergence of information from different sources, not quantitative or qualitative data alone.’ (Yin, 1994, p.91)

By applying this ‘categorical-content perspective’ a wider relevance of the information and ‘naturalistic generalisation’ was obtained and used,

‘To formulate a picture of the content universe in certain groups of people or cultures.’ (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998, p.114)

A narrative was then adopted to ‘formulate’ this ‘picture’ and by using case studies, people are able to understand better, as they are provided with ‘information that is in the form in which they usually experience it’ (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

Table 4.5: Example of coding a script

Speaker Utterance	Speech	Inductive code
Student F	<i>‘You go to the ‘right’ school. I wouldn’t consider those with degrees from a low-ranked UK school to have a better chance in finding jobs than those with degrees from a top Thai uni.’</i>	Better career opportunities
Student F	<i>Yes, my Thai has become much worse than before actually. Being in the UK for so long, I have had content collapse when I speak Thai--people have to really pay attention to what I say. And I sometimes can't think of Thai words. My writing is different too; my academic papers, for example, 'read' a lot more like a translation of some English articles than something that is originally written in Thai. My reading is not affected, nevertheless.</i>	Cultural tensions (Thai skills)
Student F	<i>I am sure you're aware of this: in Thailand, English is almost a symbol of class. When you speak it, and do so with certain accent, people automatically assume that you're rich and well-educated. So when I speak English or say English words when I speak Thai, I am--to those I am speaking to-- implying that I am wealthy, etc...(and I am not!!)</i>	Social tensions (Status)

Chapter 5 Case Studies: What are the experiences of real Thai students?

Having completed the analysis of the data and in accordance with the method outlined in the section 4.5: Method of analysis, the required information was obtained for each student (See Table 5.1, below) under the following headings: biographical data, reasons for studying overseas, influences on decisions to study overseas and the tensions the participants experienced. As these are experiences of real students, each case study participant was considered individually with the following broad headings; Introduction-Biography, The factors affecting the student's choice to study overseas, Outcomes from making the choice and a Summary of the resulting consequences to studying overseas. These heading enabled the important issues to be highlighted. The biography outlines the individuals' family and educational background. The second section addresses the participant's reasons for studying overseas, focussing on their expectations, hopes and desires. The Outcomes section considers the expected and unexpected social, cultural and economic consequences, and tensions to studying overseas. This is followed by a summary for each student and a summation of the findings (See Table 5.2, p. 97).

Table 5.1: Case study participants

Section	Case Study	Student
5.1	Case study 1	Student A
5.2	Case study 2	Student B
5.3	Case study 3	Student C
5.4	Case study 4	Student D
5.5	Case study 5	Student E
5.6	Case study 6	Student F

5.1. Case Study 1-Student A

5.1.1. Introduction-Biography

Student A is a single female of twenty seven years of age, a Thai national and, in contrast to the other student respondents in the case studies, Student A is of wholly Thai heritage. Presently Student A lives with her non-Asian British boyfriend. She originates from a rural, agricultural district in the north-east of Thailand where the people are predominantly from poor working class backgrounds, *'My family not posh, working class.'*

Student A's mother passed away two years ago and her father, has now remarried and operates his own hardware shop, mainly selling knives, in Surin. Student A's father was educated up to primary school level in northern Thailand.

Student A has one brother who is thirty years old, who attended a Thai school up until high school level and is presently employed in a hotel but is attending night school in order to gain formal qualifications as a chef. Student A also has two sisters, both younger than herself; the youngest is fifteen years of age and is attending secondary school. The other sister is twenty two years old and is attending a university in Bangkok studying for a degree in Marketing.

Student A's paternal grandmother, is a seventy-one year old widow and presently also lives with Student A, her father, her siblings and Student A's unmarried uncle and aunt. Her grandmother, along with her five siblings and great uncles and aunts, was educated up to primary school level in a town, 100 Km due west of Bangkok. Student A's grandmother was married to a farmer and did not have the opportunity to attend a university, due to finance and that in *'those days women didn't go to university'*.

Student A has already obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Marketing from a university in the centre of Bangkok, having previously studied at local Thai schools. Student A, who is presently studying at University X, is in her second year of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Accounting and Finance, majoring in Business.

5.1.2. The factors affecting the student's choice to study overseas

Student A gave three reasons for her decision to study at an overseas university, first, for better career opportunities with higher financial rewards resulting from the recognition of a degree from the United Kingdom, in Thailand and other countries.

'To become qualified here I will be recognised anywhere. Even in Thailand now even in a foreign country will recognise me and get good salary.'

Despite being 'working class', Student A believes that having already graduated from one of the 'top five' Thai universities the addition of a degree from the United Kingdom would assist her employment opportunities. She was 'special!' and the fact that she was not from a 'richer or higher class' family would not be an issue when searching for employments within the business network 'if I work hard enough, I can do it'. Second, it would enable Student A to increase her status within the Thai community,

'Make my family think they are better than other families, so proud, qualification abroad, at party talk about it tell them, what a parent want to talk, father likes to talk-my daughter study in the UK.'

However, the third and main reason for Student A to obtain an overseas degree arose from her employment in the customer services department of a Thai bank in Bangkok, prior to studying overseas. Here, she worked for a Thai manager who had received an education in the United States of America and had obtained a university degree there. Student A reasoned that this factor enabled the manager to earn ten times as much as Student A, and yet Student A, in her opinion, had more experience. Student A felt that although she had more experience and knowledge than her manager her efforts in the workplace were not acknowledged. This provided the prime motivation for Student A to obtain an overseas degree.

'What I think in my country all about degree more important than experience.'

Interestingly, Student A did not consider attending a university in the United States of America stating,

'USA culture concentrate on money, not their style. The UK concerned about community, environment and animals.'

Student A had high regards for the United Kingdom,

'I love about the politics; people have freedom, what they think about. UK best Government in the world.'

Student A was less interested in improving her English as she felt that her previous experience of *'foreigners'* in Thailand had not given her any cause for concern.

Originally Student A wanted to attend a university in northern England as some of her distant family resided there; this would have enabled her to keep living costs to a minimum. Perhaps more importantly, in her father's opinion she would remain *'respectable'* and provide additional reassurance for the extended family circle in Thailand. Unfortunately Student A did not achieve the required admission criteria.

Student A identified three main reasons for choosing to attend University X;

1. She received a 30% scholarship from University X, without which she would not be able to afford an overseas education.

Student A's family sponsor her to attend the university. She did not apply for, or obtain, a Thai Government scholarship as it is highly competitive and she was not prepared to work for the Thai Government for the required *'two or three years'*. However, Student A did explain that a very distant acquaintance had obtained a Government Scholarship and had a father already working in the Thai Government, which enabled them not to have to work for the required time.

Student A was awarded an International Scholarship by University X and contributed 30% towards the annual tuition fees at the institution. This scholarship is awarded to overseas students who exhibit a high academic ability and are accepted on a full time or postgraduate programme at University X. During the summer holiday 2006, Student A worked at University X restaurant, primarily to finance her accommodation cost and her desire to socialise more, especially with *'older people'*.

2. The University X had a lower admission criterion.

'University X don't have high standard to get in. The other University 6.5 level and demand need to have a GMAT report of 60%, didn't have it and study English before came here, very poor at English.'

3. Her boyfriend was already employed at in the town of University X.

However, league tables and rankings had no influence on Student A's decision to attend this University.

The major motivations for Student A to seek an overseas education were for better career prospects and ultimately financial rewards that would be obtained through obtaining a globally recognised qualification. However, there were other underlying reasons for Student A to study in the United Kingdom. These other influences on Student A's decision to attend an overseas university were examined.

Although the initial idea to attend an overseas university was Student A's idea, and despite the fact that neither Student A's parents nor grandparents attended a university either in Thailand or overseas, both Student A's siblings were being encouraged to attend university. In addition a *'very distant cousin'* attends a university in London, in the United Kingdom, studying for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Web Design.

5.1.3. Outcomes from making the choice to study overseas

Student A did express dissatisfaction with the Thai education system *'In Thai universities - no questioning'* and highlighted the differences between the Thai and British system by giving the opinion that,

'Only theory-learn theory. Theory is always right. Here in this university can ask questions, other ways of being right.'

In response to whether Student A intended to returning to Thailand after she had obtained her degree, Student A expressed that when she initially decided to study overseas she believed that she would return to Thailand immediately after completing the course but,

'Now because I am uncertain to go back to Thailand. I want to get a job here and become qualified-need to become complete.'

Student A was also concerned that if the opportunity arose for both her and her boyfriend to go to Thailand she would become *'depressed'* if they were to go as her boyfriend has a good job here in the United Kingdom and, whilst she would probably have a good job as an accountant in Thailand, he would have to search for a job and would have to *'start again'*.

There were also other aspects of family influence and expectations,

'They will be proud of me, Asian parents think education most important thing, more important than money-most important-parent can do everything, sell their house and land- children have best education.'

Student A's father and grandmother confirmed their expectation and benefits with comments such as,

'I hope she got a good job and come back to Thailand after she get a degree.' (Grandmother)

'She will be able to find a better job and get pay more.' (Father)

'We will proud of her because it is not easy thing to do and not lots of people can do it.' (Father)

Interestingly, Student A believes that British parents have a low opinion of education,

'This country, parents not really, Government got lots of support, many things available for anybody.'

Student A is experiencing *'culture shock'*; during the first interview Student A stated that when she initially moved to the United Kingdom to study two years ago she was lonely and cried for insignificant reasons,

'Then also the weather. I never even been here 2 years, I cry no reason, soap opera make me cry, not a big deal. November, December and January, I find it difficult, I can't concentrate on study, how can I survive?'

After returning to this subject six months later during another meeting, Student A expressed that she was *'waiting for winter'* to see if she had *'changed'*.

Through the snowball sampling methods it was learned that Student A knew only one other Thai student attending University X and she was willing to pass on that student's details.

Despite being only twenty seven years of age Student A expressed the desire to associate and develop friendships with more mature individuals rather than the younger students who acted *'inappropriately'*. Student A also suggested that the socializing opportunities were different in the United Kingdom compared to Thailand; Thai people tended to socialise at night on bustling streets, but here in the United Kingdom *'it was cold and dark at night and not many people about, unlike Thailand'*.

Student A did comment that as a consequence of studying in the United Kingdom most of her friends were now mainly non-Thai speaking overseas students, such as Chinese students. Student A believed that her Thai language skills were declining, especially as she rarely returned to Thailand. Other family members had not raised this issue although Student A did only return to Thailand once a year. She had expressed that initially she was not concerned about her oral English, but now she was living in the United Kingdom had experienced difficulties in everyday communication,

'Definitely English, before I came I was really good, deal in bank and communicate with foreigner. Can't understand me here, to feel like an alien, even bus driver cannot understand.'

Student A felt that the United Kingdom was multicultural,

'It is multi-culture in this country. Colour-where you come from? Landing in Heathrow-can't be in England, landing in India!'

Despite this Student A did exhibit an element of acculturation by confirming that,

'I learn culture, change my attitude. Before attitude was high ambition, only concerned about my success. I now learn there are more things, have an easy life. High ambition therefore can't enjoy rest- so change my attitude. I don't want to be rich and earn money as much as I can-now I want basic life and enjoy what I have.'

With regards to religion Student A did not express any particular concerns,

'Most days' religion not black and white, you can do what you want, if you don't upset people.'

In the questionnaire, Student A's grandmother responded that Student A was not required to follow the Thai culture if Student A herself did not think it was necessary to do so. Student A did confirm her opinion,

'My point of view changes, no need to worry about sexy clothes, other people can criticise me. If drink and smoke make Thai people think are bad people. I don't smoke but I drink.'

Yet Student A's grandmother did raise the issue that for her generation this would not have been possible as it was expected that she follow the Thai traditions and culture *'But for my generation we have to'*. This was also expressed by Student A's Father *'However it depend on my daughter.'*

The issue of marriage arose during the conversations with Student A; she replied that she would prefer to marry a Thai national rather than her British boyfriend, because of cultural issues,

'Marry Thai-tricky one- Thai man know what to do. Has to do a lot for the family. In UK not bothered about family, not even his own. Prefer to marry Thai man-know culture.'

Student A did experience both cultural disadvantages and advantages in studying overseas and an amusing comment was obtained, this occurred in quite a few of the meetings,

'[In the UK] No need to be perfect, in Thailand have to be aware of your manners and the way you talk. I bought a book 'How to be a Lady in England'; how to talk, and how to eat-not really useful in X [Town of University X]-useful if I see the Queen!'

Even though Student A had only returned to Thailand once a year, due to financial reasons, her grandmother thought she had *'become independent and more confident'*.

Student A believes that there are only a small number of Thai students attending universities in the United Kingdom, and felt that these relatively low numbers would not adversely affect the Thai culture but would *'bring something new to our society'*.

5.1.4. Summary

Student A had many 'push-pull' factors, as mentioned in section 3.1, in choosing either a continuation of Thai education or studying overseas in the United Kingdom (and ultimately University X) which had cultural, social and economic consequences. In summary, her family encouraged and supported Student A's decision to study overseas and were presently supporting her both financially and emotionally. Their ultimate desire is for Student A to obtain a globally recognised degree which is seen to have the potential to obtain higher financial rewards and status within the community.

Although Student A's sister is not considering studying overseas due to the lack of *'determination'* and poor English language skills, the concept of studying at an overseas university will now be instilled within Student A's family. Interestingly, Student A has a niece residing with Student A's parents, (niece's grandparents), as the niece's parents work in Bangkok. Student A considers the niece to be very capable and Student A will encourage her to eventually study overseas. In addition, as Student A intends to seek employment in the United Kingdom this will effectively provide the familial stability and financial support base if the niece should also study in the United Kingdom.

5.2. Case Study 2 –Student B

5.2.1. Introduction-Biography

Student B is a twenty five year old male, a Thai national, from a middle class background, with a Chinese heritage.

He lives in an affluent area near the international airport, but spends most of his time in an area which is the prime real estate and commercial shopping centre of Bangkok, Thailand. He is currently employed as a lecturer at a highly respected and prestigious university in Thailand.

Throughout the research Student B said very little about his parents, so his true relationship with them was not ascertained. The only information that was offered was that his father spoke Thai, English and Putonghua; an indication that he was of Chinese heritage and fairly well educated. There was also a precedent in studying overseas. His brothers had studied for their first degrees at Thai universities but both were awarded their Masters Degrees from the same university in the United States of America. Student B has studied in the United Kingdom since he was seventeen years old, having completed a first degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at a top university in the United Kingdom, followed by a Masters Degree in Economics at University Y. His cousins too had gained degrees from Thai Universities and higher degrees from the United States of America.

5.2.2. The factors affecting the student's choice to study overseas

Student B was awarded a Thai Government scholarship to study overseas, so he had '*no choice in the matter*'. A condition of this scholarship was that after qualification the recipient must return to Thailand and work at a university in Thailand. He suggested that the Thai government wants to '*expose scholars to different environments*' and that in the same year that he was awarded a scholarship, between ten and twenty others were awarded for overseas study at universities in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and Canada. However, the higher status of overseas qualifications was an important factor.

'To be honest, I would have chosen to study abroad anyway. The degree I would have got would be better recognised.'

Overseas qualifications can also raise personal status and would give his family a,

‘Better standing in society, perhaps. It’s a typical brag of the neighbourhood if your offspring gets degrees from abroad.’

His reason for choosing a particular university in the United Kingdom was also based on the importance of the recognition, the ranking and prestige of the university. His first degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics was chosen because he found the subject interesting and also believed that this branch of economics would be *‘readily applied to Thailand as well’*. When choosing where to go for his higher degree his choice was somewhat restricted but he was still concerned with the university’s ranking.

‘Not many universities offer the course (10 maximum). Y is among them, and is the best ranked university I could get in at the time. I also got offers from University W (which would have otherwise been my choice), but I was required to obtain a first—I ended up getting only a 2.1.’

It is obvious that Student B was a little disappointed in obtaining *‘only a 2.1’* for his first degree, but he did comment that *‘it was all too stressful to cope with the workload’* when at one of the top universities in the United Kingdom.

Although improving his English was not one of Student B’s stated reasons for studying overseas, he stressed that being able to speak English is a way of gaining social capital,

‘I am sure you’re aware of this: in Thailand, English is almost a symbol of class. When you speak it, and do so with certain accent, people automatically assume that you’re rich and well-educated. So when I speak English or say English words when I speak Thai, I am...to those I am speaking to... implying that I am wealthy, etc...(and I am not!).’

However, whilst the status gained from studying overseas was important there were also some disadvantages. Student B suggested that those students who had not studied in higher education in Thailand would find *‘job-hunting much tougher’*, especially if they had not graduated from a *‘top school’*. Studying at a Thai university would enable *‘connections’* to be established and

'You will have a circle of friends in Thailand who could help you with job applications, etc, or who would recommend you for a job even.'

He did not believe that there were any 'monetary' advantages to studying abroad, as those who attended overseas universities were 'not poor anyway' and better employment prospects would only be true, if

'You go to the 'right' school. I wouldn't consider those with degrees from a low-ranked UK school to have a better chance in finding jobs than those with degrees from a top Thai uni.'

The fact that Student B, his siblings and other family members attended higher education overseas could suggest that these families lacked confidence in the Thai education system although it was not expressed explicitly. However, Student B made comparisons between Thailand and the West and used these to justify his choice of an overseas education.

'However, I have grown to dislike certain elements in the Thai society, e.g. Paternalism and the client-patron relationship, etc...'

And although he believed English 'A' levels were 'studied in the same way' and in 'similar subjects' to Thailand, he,

'Only felt that British education was different when I attended [a top university in the United Kingdom], (and Y but to a lesser extent) there, the focus was on how students would develop logical and critical thinking, whilst in Thailand it is impossible to have students do that, possibly due to class size as well; we usually have 50 students per class in Thailand and it is difficult for lecturers to pay attention to each individual.'

'I think good memory and some creativity are required, equally in both systems, but higher education in the UK would be much more logic-oriented and would train students to become consistent thinkers. In Thailand, however, the emphasis is more on vocational training and as such similar skills that are useful at lower levels of education are useful at higher levels as well.'

5.2.3. Outcomes from making the choice to study overseas

One of the main advantages of studying overseas was gaining independence.

'You also gain experiences that you would never have if you were in Thailand, which would certainly make you a stronger person, mentally. To elaborate, I am referring to the fact that attending a university overseas entails living on your own. Middle-class Thai families are way too protective (and loving?) to allow their children to, say, do their own laundry, make their own meals or go clubbing and come back home at midnight. I know mine wouldn't.'

However, he admitted he found it difficult to make friends with British students.

'Mainly, I associated with the Thais, but I also had a few overseas friends whom I went out with often as well. It was probably because I felt I had an urge to speak Thai. I think you probably have this feeling when you're abroad as well--you find comfort in speaking your own language. And also I think the Thais in the UK have similar experiences with me as well: we could share stories and we had the same interests.'

'Sometimes it is difficult to befriend the British. Apparently, you have a different approach to initiating a conversation. Thai people would usually speak to anyone they meet, but the British are much more reserved.'

But he was concerned that on his return to Thailand his ability to speak his native language, Thai, had been affected.

'My Thai has become much worse than before actually. Being in the UK for so long, I have had content collapse when I speak Thai--people have to really pay attention to what I say. And I sometimes can't think of Thai words. My writing is different too; my academic papers, for example, 'read' a lot more like a translation of some English articles than something that is originally written in Thai. My reading is not affected, nevertheless.'

He also found, when he returned to Thailand, various aspects of the Thai culture irritating, such as the *'laid back approach'* and the Thai peoples' inability in *'queuing'*.

Although his new work colleagues had also been *'educated abroad'*,

'It seems that when I was starting out as a lecturer, I got a feeling that people thought I was a bit too 'self-confident'. I was outspoken and spoke too much English that they felt I was showing off, even though I didn't mean to. 'It took me almost 4 months to try to keep a 'low profile', and try not to say too many English words when I speak Thai. Now that my Thai is coming back, I feel more accepted and, I think, happier.'

However, his intention is, once he has completed his obligation to his Government scholarship, to further his education, again overseas, and study for a doctorate in the United States of America.

5.2.4. Summary

Whilst Student B presents both advantages and disadvantages of being educated overseas there does not appear to have been any real consideration of staying in Thailand for his higher education. The main 'push' factor in deciding to study overseas was, obviously, the award of a Thai Government's scholarship and there were clearly expectations from his parents and other family members. But a key factor was also the status he felt he would gain within the intellectual and social communities from attending a high ranked university in the United Kingdom.

5.3. Case Study 3 – Student C

5.3.1. Introduction-Biography

Student C is a twenty five year old male Thai national of Chinese heritage; his father being of Chinese extraction. He has one brother and they both currently live with their parents in Bangkok.

Student C speaks Thai and English, but his father and maternal grandparents speak only Thai although his paternal grandparents speak Thai and Phutonghua.

Student C's father is a businessman, and has a first degree and a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) in Marketing from a university in the United States of America.

5.3.2. The factors affecting the student's choice to study overseas

Student C regarded it as his own choice to study overseas although there is clear precedence in his family. Like his father, his uncle also attended a university in the United States of America and whilst Student C and his older brother studied for their first degree at a prestigious university, in Bangkok, his brother was already studying for a Masters Degree at a university in London. His cousins too had attended both high schools and universities in Australia, the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Student C gave three significant reasons for choosing to study overseas. His prime motivation was to improve his English. He tried to avoid Thai nationals when in England, in order to improve his English language,

'I am not really want to contact Thai student because I don't want to speak Thai. I want to practicing English much as I can. I know lots of Chinese students who can't speak English very well because most of their times, they speak Chinese. I do make friends with other oversea students because we alway exchange experiences and help each other.'

The second motivating factor was the recognition of the qualification and status going to an English university would give him. He perceived studying abroad would raise his status in the work place,

'Probably better employment and get respect and acceptance from colleagues, subordinates and other people I have to deal with.'

This is also supported by Student C's father,

'Possibly better status in some people's point of view.'

When it came to choosing a particular university Student C considered the university's reputation and ranking,

'Reputation, ranking, location, not so many Thai students.'

His chosen university also had good social networks.

The third reasoning for studying overseas was to gain overseas experience,

'Need experience in terms of living overseas, studying with foreign students. Have a chance to travel.'

Student C's father also supported the idea of broadening horizons,

'An opportunity to manage everything by himself without helps from family.'

'Exposure to different environment: education system, way of living, culture...etc.'

'Exposed to different culture from his classmates. This experience may teach him how to work with others who have different attitudes and manner.'

'Multicultural experiences' would be important if his sons were to continue the family business successfully. Student C agreed as his aim is to,

'Successfully run the business and expand it to other industries.'

His father had also had pragmatic reasons.

'I wanted to finish both bachelor and Masters Degree within the shortest period of time. Studying in Thailand wouldn't be possible.'

This could indicate a lack of confidence in the Thai education system. Student C admitted to experiencing educational difficulties whilst studying in the United Kingdom, but found that the university lecturers and professors were far more willing to assist and support than those in Thailand.

There were however concerns about studying overseas. Student C believed that the Masters Degree course in the United Kingdom was too short and consequently the content, explanations and input was very limited and was *'superficial'*; most of the required knowledge and skills had to be acquired through reading. Student C's father also thought that *'the one year course is too intense'*. However, this was an advantage financially especially when compared with courses at American universities where a Masters Degree would take two years. As he did not have the Thai Government Scholarship to study at an overseas institution of higher education, Student C's father had to finance his studies. His father stressed that fees and living expenses were a consideration. If Student C had stayed in Thailand he would have been able to be employed whilst he studied.

5.3.3. Outcomes from making the choice to study overseas

His father identified changes in Student C on his return from studying overseas in the United Kingdom.

'He's become more mature. In addition, he feels more confident that he can help me run family's business as he has certain level of knowledge about business management.'

Student C's reflections were more mixed; he experienced some 'culture shock'

'British people are very polite and have strong discipline like queuing and being on time, therefore when I was in a situation where other people didn't act politely, I would get frustrated. This still happens now.'

He also was concerned that whilst he found the British very polite; they '*always say thank you for every occasion*', he experienced a '*negative perception from European students*' and he felt that '*they believed that Asian students were inferior to them*'. Student C also found that he now made mistakes in his Thai language, '*because I don't speak Thai that often*'.

5.3.4. Summary

Choosing to study overseas is not a simple choice. There is a complex interaction between a variety of factors, both for Student C, and himself and for his father. Both can clearly see advantages in the potential gains in both economic (through the family business) and social (through increased status) capital. However, this is not without its costs. Student C's father balances financial costs against the potential business contacts. Student C's concern about the course content was balanced by the perception of more helpful tutors as well as the status accrued by attending a highly ranked university.

5.4. Case Study 4- Student D

5.4.1. Introduction-Biography

Initially Student D was reserved with her answers and explanations, but as trust and respect developed Student D offered more detailed information. Student D is a single female of twenty four years of age, a Thai national and interestingly, in contrast to the other case studies, has '*indefinite leave of stay*' which means that Student D has permanent residence in the United Kingdom. This is achievable through obtaining a work permit for over four years and eleven months. Obviously Student D's parents obtained this status and were therefore able to enrol Student D at a state school. Student D has now been living in the United Kingdom for twenty years.

Presently Student D, an only child, lives with her parents, who are both of Thai heritage, in the town of University X, although her parents frequently commute between Thailand and the United Kingdom due to their mini-market business commitments. Neither of Student D's parents attended a university in Thailand or overseas. Student D suggests that in those days '*well, our parents and their parents before didn't have a lot of education*'.

Student D attended an all-girls state school in the town of University X. Student D has already gained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Information Systems from the University College of X, which in 2005 was awarded full research degree awarding powers and has been known as University X. Presently Student D is in her second year of a two year part-time Masters Degree course in Business and Computers again at University X, whilst working as a Systems and Project Assistant in the Finance Department at University X; Student D's first job.

Currently Student D has a Malay/Chinese boyfriend whose family also reside in the town of University X.

5.4.2. The factors affecting the student's choice to study overseas

Student D believed that obtaining a degree from a university in the United Kingdom will give her '*better career opportunities*'. She acknowledged that qualifications would be recognised in Thailand, '*I think it's um, more recognised back home*'.

Surprisingly, albeit Student D has permanent United Kingdom residency through *'indefinite leave of stay'* and having lived in the United Kingdom for over twenty years, Student D still considers Thailand as home. As Student D is a fluent English speaker, to improve her language skills was not an issue.

Thirdly Student D believed that attending an overseas university and obtaining a recognised qualification would enable Student D to increase her social capital, *'Um, I hate to say it but better status as well'*.

Student D's main reason for choosing University X, was the University's location, the town, as this had financial implications; she was able to stay at home and would not have to finance living expenses,

'Um, I lived in X, I live in X anyway, because my parents are here so, and, to go local didn't have to take a loan which is a good thing.'

Fortunately Student D was eligible for a funding for her first degree from the Local Education Authority (LEA), *'it was LEA assessed, so I didn't really have to pay'*.

As mentioned in the biography Student D is now studying for a Masters Degree. Interestingly Student D has decided to opt for a part-time course enabling her to work, also part-time. There are two reasons for this, one is that University X are financing the course; all employees of University X have 100% of tuition fees paid for, if they are studying at the University, otherwise 50% finance is provided if the employee enrolls with another institution. The second reason is that Student D is aware that by working and gaining experience her employment prospects will increase.

However Student D implies that her decision to study for a Masters Degree was due to family influence,

'I think it's more of a cultural thing especially with Thai, I don't know whether you know, that's why I am doing my Masters as it's, well, it's not really to develop my career which it is in a way, but it's more of a personal goal. Because your parents push you to go as far as you can in education.'

Student D does not have any siblings or relatives who have or are attending an overseas university. Student D only has one distant cousin who attends a Thai university in northern Thailand. Moreover her parents did not have the opportunity to gain higher qualifications.

5.4.3. Outcomes from making the choice to study overseas

Through the snowball sampling methods, it was learnt that Student D knew two other Thai students, Student F and Student E, who were both attending University X. Student D has also assumed the role of mediator for her Thai friends. Student D belongs to two language communities in addition to family, work and recreational groups. Student D confirmed that she was unable to read or write Thai and that she spoke Thai, *'but I am more fluent in English than I am in Thai.'*

After discussing her *'return'* to Thailand she revealed that she had experienced difficulties,

'Culturally I think, when I go back home, I find it difficult going back as they always see me as the foreign English girl and a bit of Thai in.'

On a visit to Thailand for a vacation, she noticed that the girls in Bangkok did not dress appropriately, according to the traditional Thai culture; they wore *'spaghetti strapped tops'* and *'revealing clothes'*.

Incidentally on Student D's return to the United Kingdom her Malay/Chinese boyfriend's mother commented that she *'looked different'*. Afterwards Student D enquired to her boyfriend what his mother meant, as Student D believed she had not changed her appearance, but he said it was because of her tan. Whilst in Thailand she did notice whitening creams in Thailand *'although they don't work'* indicating that she had tried them.

Asked if she intended to return permanently to Thailand, Student D responded by stating, *'I do, I do, not at the moment perhaps in three or four years'*. She continued by clarifying that she would not work in the family business as she would like to return and stay in Thailand.

Student D highlighted the change in the Thai society and that in today's generation the gaining of educational qualifications did not increase the individuals marriage prospects and that it was not so important,

'I suppose in today's generation, not so much, maybe 5/10 years ago it would be an advantage.'

5.4.4. Summary

Student D is a unique case study as despite the fact that she has been residing in the United Kingdom for over twenty years, she still perceives herself as being Thai with Thailand as her home.

Through the interviews and various methods of communication it was clear that from an early age her family expected her to continue with her education. It was an easy decision for Student D to study at University X as it was a local university, it provided a relevant course, and finance was provided for through the Local Education Authority.

5.5. Case study 5- Student E

5.5.1. Introduction-Bibliography

Student E is a single female of thirty one years of age, a middle class Thai national of Thai/Chinese heritage. Both parents speak Phutonghua and Thai, Student E only speaks Thai and English, however Student E's father would like Student E to speak Phutonghua and learn the Chinese ways,

'My father, um, he Chinese and he wish me, I, I, I can go to China to learn Chinese culture but I am not sure when I came here that or not.'

Presently she lives in students' accommodation but prior to this, she was residing with her aunty who lives in town of University X and whose son recently studied for a Masters Degree in Management at University X.

Student E has three siblings, one older brother of thirty six years, an older sister of thirty eight years and a younger brother of twenty years. All the siblings studied in the north of Thailand, up to first degree level, the sister studied a Thai university and the two brothers and Student E at a northern Thai university, as these were local universities. All siblings still live with Student E's parents, who own and run a business on the border of Thailand and Laos.

Student E's first degree was a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science, majoring in Sociology. Presently Student E is in her second and final year studying for a Masters in Business Administration at University X.

5.5.2. The factors affecting the student's choice to study overseas

Student E prior to arriving in Thailand was living with her Thai partner, but unfortunately this relationship broke down so she decided to take the opportunity to study in the United Kingdom. Student E continued by giving other reasons for studying overseas; improved English language, status and better career opportunities with a higher income. Studying in the United Kingdom would give her the advantage of learning and speaking with native English speakers which would consequently give her the advantage, *'in Thailand we don't use English as our first language'* and *'English will be a benefit for my job as well'*. She

did not consider studying in the United States of America or Australia due to the financial and social advantages of staying in the United Kingdom with her relatives. This alleviated the living expenses, as her parents were financing half the costs and Student E was personally financing the remainder, and it was socially accepted to live with relatives at her mature age. She did not apply for any sponsorship or consider admission criteria or league tables when applying to University X.

It was Student E's idea to study overseas in the United Kingdom. However the major motivation for Student E to study overseas in the United Kingdom was that she was able to live with relatives who reduced her living expenses and gave her respectability with her family and within her social circle having recently separated from her Thai partner in Thailand,

'Um, they said because I am not so young they are alright for me so they [the parents] are OK..'

'So I think it better to, um, study now, so that is one reason, so it wouldn't be a problem with my parents that they would worry because that there is a concern, um, for my happiness as far as I am happy they will be OK..'

5.5.3. Outcomes from making the choice to study overseas

Student E did highlight that her parents are proud of her and that it was Student E's intention to return to Thailand and work in the family 'export' business,

'I think if I go back and I work for the company but before that I might, um, find a proper job here and uh, gain some more experience.'

Student E has experienced some cultural problems; with her academic study, environment and western culture.

'I find it a bit difficult to, um, communicate and even for essay writing.'

'I have found it difficult at first because, um, surrounding, my surrounding have totally changed so I have to adapt and, um, learn a new thing and everything myself but it is not that difficult because they, I have my aunty

who live here for a long time so it is not that difficult, but I think for some student who never been here before or have never have friend or family here I think they might find it difficult here.'

'Sometimes I don't understand them at all, sometime think, um, western, um, um, think it easy, not that easy, yes, they're friendly but sometime I don't understand them what they think or what they react to you, its like, quite take time to know them, I don't want to say that, that they are cold or not that open compared to Asian people but, um, sometime they make me think like that.'

It is obvious through the 'snowball sampling' that Student E associates with the other Thai students at University X and through her responses she also associates with the Chinese students.

5.5.4. Summary

Student E had limited 'push-pull' factors (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) in choosing to study overseas. She chose University X in the United Kingdom as her aunt lives there and her cousin attended the University. Her family encouraged and supported Student E's decision as this gave her respectability within Thai society. Ultimately Student E's employment and income opportunities she believes will be raised by obtaining a degree from the United Kingdom.

5.6. Case study 6-Student F

5.6.1. Introduction-Bibliography

Student F is a single male of twenty seven year of age, a Thai national of Thai/Chinese heritage. He speaks Thai, English and understands a Chinese dialect of Putonghua which his grandparents and parents all speak. Student F has one brother and one sister, twenty nine and thirty years of age respectively. His brother has already obtained a PhD in Business Studies and his sister has obtained a Masters Degree also in Thailand both from Thai universities.

Student F has been residing in the United Kingdom for five years, having previously studied English in the south of the United Kingdom, town Z and now is in his third year at University X, studying for a Joint Combined Degree in Business and Human Resource.

Student F's parents own their own business in Thailand, dealing in the export of stationery, especially in the production and export of pens.

5.6.2. The factors affecting the student's choice to study overseas

Interestingly Student F was not able to offer any specific reason for studying overseas; it was really down to the influence of his parents,

'They did want me to go, go for a long time but I didn't say yes until, you know I realise that I might as well just give it a go and told them and they say straight away.'

Student F also believed that his parents would be proud of him and would be able to say that *'my son has finished his degree in England'*.

When deciding on which country to study in, it was his sister and friends that influenced his decision,

'Uh, it, I get it from my sister though she sort of in England it quite, um, I don't know let me put it this way, the way of the country in England is not, uh, can I put it America like not as civilised as England, just a bit more

like so many things can lead you the back way, you can see a lot of things going on, rather in England people are quite quiet they know you can see the house, it is like old style, you know. To be different as well, another thing back then 5/6 years ago, um, a lot of people, a lot of student like to go to America. Instead of like England, England I think I think, just getting more popular lately.'

Student F decided to study at University X, not because of the admission criteria, university ranking or league tables but because of his friend in the south of the United Kingdom

'Uh, uh, uh, right Ok to be honest to you, I got a friends racing track, it's quite stupid. I was in town Z and I got to know a friend who has a car garage there I brought another 2 or 3 friends with me from town Z. They are all Chinese.'

5.6.3. Outcomes from making the choice to study overseas

Despite the fact that it was his parents' idea and persuasion that encouraged him to study overseas in the United Kingdom, Student F did now perceive three benefits to studying overseas; status, better employment opportunities and improved English language,

'Um, first thing it look good though, it look posh or whatever I think that. Secondly the second think if you try and get a job you know. Firstly you definitely speak English better than the person who finish qualify in Thailand, right, I assume, yeh, you know might not. And um, third thing probably will be easier to try and get a job with somebody that, um, like sort of international, which have to contact you have try some another country that uses English, but for myself not really.'

However Student F did not realise that studying overseas in the United Kingdom would be a good opportunity in improving his English language,

'Err in Thailand I did really when I was young, maybe like 8 years old. But at that time I didn't realise that English is such important so I didn't

really, I didn't really, um you know, pay attention to learn English because when before I came to England I couldn't speak English at all.'

It is only now that he realises the benefits to improving his English language for his future in his father's business and his marriage prospects on his return to Thailand,

'Uh, just realised that English is such important for my dads business and mainly to, um, to get to learn English you know.'

'I first thing you have to have qualifications right to get you know, not saying posh girl, anything like that, but a nice girl, good person, good family or anything like that and um obviously meeting someone else have qualification in England you know, just the picture of it really, that's what I am saying, yeh.'

Student F has made some friendships at the University and in the United Kingdom which is evident in the 'snowball' sampling, as he knew all the other three Thai students and other Thai students in other cities, through his town Z and family connections,

'It could be because X is not famous city though because Thai students like to come like London. Has got so many friends in London and you know like Oxford, Leeds, Birmingham I think, those kinds of city like have a lot of Thai students.'

However Student F did have some negative opinions about studying in the United Kingdom and in X,

'Truthfully, ah, I really don't know whether it is worth it or not. All the money I spend on her [The degree and living expenses], which you know I could say is too much money to spend on everything, it.'

'To be honest X city is not interesting at all, I wouldn't be here if my friend wasn't in the garage. He left, he just left last year. Not interesting at all.'

Student F's intention is to return to Thailand although he intended to return for a holiday before his degree finals and then complete his dissertation from Thailand,

'I am going back, um, in three weeks time for Easter break and coming back for exam, and then that's it, but I have dissertation left, which I am doing next year but I am just going to do it back home.'

Student F did experience and express his distaste of some aspects of the British culture. It however this may be due to individuals rather than cultural differences,

'Not really, no, experience but I have see the way you know, friends that treat friends and, urm, you know, like, like the way English people treat us and they not really loyalty.'

Student F did perceive certain aspects of the British culture as being advantageous, such as independence, thinking and decision making skills,

'I have to do everything on my own really, which I didn't do when I was in Thailand and which I didn't know being on my own and so sort everything out on myself you know but, um, I think it is good, good, good side of it, is experience to try to, you know, something have to think you know all on my own, make decisions myself which I never done before or like when I was in Thailand, I keep, kept asking somebody else and find the answer so, its good for to, to being here and um (silence).'

5.6.4. Summary

Interestingly there were only two 'push' factors that affected Student F's decision to study overseas and they were his parents' desire and his sisters' encouragement to study in England. He is only now aware of the benefits of studying in the United Kingdom, such as improved English language, employment opportunities, improved marriage prospects and status, since he has been attending University X. He has experienced cultural differences but has not become acculturated within the British society.

Table 5.2: Summation of findings

Student	Reasons for studying overseas								Influencing factors			Tensions from studying overseas		
	English	Status	Ranking	Recognition of qualification	Better career	Financial reward	Overseas experience	Location of the university	Parents	Family members	Finance	Limited reading and writing Thai	Limited spoken Thai	Frustrations 'culture shock' 'reverse culture shock'
A														
B														
C														
D														
E														
F														

Key

If student agreed with the issue 

Chapter 6 Discussion

Having analysed the data raised through the 'real life' case studies, the following research questions will be addressed in light of the findings and literature.

- What are the factors that affect the students' decisions to study overseas?
- Why do Thai students decide to study overseas at universities in the United Kingdom?
- What are the resulting cultural and social implications of their decisions?

6.1. What are the factors that affect the students' decisions to study overseas?

Through the qualitative methods employed the following issues were addressed, the influence of government policies, the lack of confidence in the Thai education system, the familial role, and financial influences, which affect the students decision to study overseas.

6.1.1. The effect of government policies on individual choice, opportunities and perspectives

Through the analysis of the data it is obvious that all of the students and their families have been influenced by the massification of universities in both the United Kingdom and Thailand due to national economies increasingly becoming knowledge driven. Student A and her sister attended different universities in the centre of Bangkok and both universities had recently been established in response to the massification of higher education over the past thirty years. Student A's first university was originally established in 1949 as a Teacher Training institution but in 1979 it was awarded university status. This university presently has numerous international links with various universities in the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom. Student A's sister's university also participates in academic exchanges with other countries such as Japan, Korea, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Russia and thus reinforces Thailand's desire to develop trans-global educational networks. It was established as recently as 1971 and due to the increase in the demand for student places has continued to expand both facilities and faculties which are in response to the Thai Government's economic policies. Student A's younger siblings, who are presently attending secondary education, are also aspiring to attend university and obviously see no barriers to taking advantage of the opportunity of studying at a higher educational institution.

Bangkok has consequently become the main educational and economic centre in Thailand, encouraging people to take advantage of the massification of higher education and to migrate from the rural areas to seek higher qualifications and employment. Student A's family, as mentioned previously, come from the rural north-east Thailand and as Student A's grandmother stated, '*[In] those days women didn't go to university*', however the massification of higher education has been intensifying, highlighted by the small difference between the percentages of boys obtaining each level of education compared to the percentage of girls in Table 3.1, (p.32), just over the past thirty years and the fact that Student C's father, who is over sixty years of age and along with his siblings all attended a university in Thailand and the United States of America. As mentioned previously through research (Tarry, 2005), it was also found that some Thai parents favoured sending only their sons to international schools and universities while the girls received alternative education. However none of the students interviewed, male or female expressed this view. This massification of education continues today and according to Table 3.6: Employed persons by level of education attainment for whole kingdom (Thailand): 2001-2005 (See Appendix A) there has been a general increase of students obtaining 'higher level education' from 3,618.3 to 4,989.0 (in thousands). Consequently, as Brown (2001) suggests, through the massification of higher education there has been an 'over-supply' of higher educated students. These students are equal in 'hierarchy of academic and social worth' which consequently devalues the first degree. However if this was the case and the first degrees were being devalued there is the argument that,

'Whatever social prestige the mass university may lose, as a result of wider more dramatic access, will be more than compensated for its increasing economic power.' (Scott, 1995, p.109)

This massification of higher education has therefore led graduate students' desire to increase their cultural and economic capital through the increase in their competitive academic credentials or human capital, highlighting the notion of individualism. This is best achieved by obtaining a Masters Degree and seeking 'work experience programmes'; lifelong learning.

All six case study participants were mature students when they attended their chosen university in the United Kingdom. Student A and Student F were mature students studying for their first degree in the United Kingdom; however Student A had already obtained a

first degree in Thailand. She obviously perceived the obtaining of an overseas first degree as being more advantageous in competing with graduates who have only obtained a first degree in Thailand. In contrast, Student B, Student C, Student D and Student E were studying or have studied for their Masters Degree directly after their first degree.

Of the students attending University X, 98% are from a state school (O’Leary, 2006). Interestingly, prior to Student D attending University X she attended an all-girls state school in X. This supports the theory of the increasing massification of higher education in the United Kingdom, enabling the middle and lower class the opportunity to further their education and increase their cultural and economic capital.

Brown (2001) suggests that the massification of higher education has enabled students of ethnic minority to access institutions and,

‘The recent move towards mass systems of education in a number of European countries, such as Britain, is removing the problem of access to higher education from middle class families.’ (Brown, 2001, p.741)

Controversially and according to the Department for Education and Skills Performance Tables for state schools (DFES, 2006), parents are using these tables to seek schools for their children with the ultimate desire for their children to attend a university. For this state school the percentage of pupils achieving five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) was 78% in 2005.

‘However, results can swing enormously from year to year and it would take a consistent trend over 3 or more years before one can say with certainty that things were indeed going better or worse than elsewhere.’ (Torrance, 2001, p.325)

The results for students achieving five or more GCSE’s were 67% in 2002, 73% in 2003, 68% in 2004 and 78% in 2005; indicate good scores in achievement and teaching practice. Although arguably as Torrance (2001) implies, these summative results do not actually ‘reflect true aptitudes and achievements’. Student D’s parents referred to these tables and results when choosing a school for their daughter, which shows the effectiveness of the United Kingdom Government and the school’s marketing methods.

6.1.2. Lack of confidence in Thai education system

‘Thai parents are justifiably concerned that the Thai education system is ill-equipped to prepare their children to succeed in the modern world.’
(Sophonpanich, 2003, p.5)

Both Student B and Student C’s siblings and their family members attended higher education overseas which may suggest that these families lacked confidence in the Thai education system (Hofstede, 1994) which could be due to the massification of Thai universities and consequently more graduates. During the previous research I highlighted that Thai parents were dissatisfied with the Thai education system (Tarry, 2005). Student A in accordance with this dissatisfaction clarified her opinion by stating that,

‘In Thai universities - no questioning. Only theory-learn theory. Theory is always right. Here in this university can ask questions, other ways of being right.’

Student C and Student B also admitted to experiencing educational difficulties whilst studying in the United Kingdom, such as ‘workload’, which highlights that there is a difference in university culture and learning styles (Hofstede, 1994) and (Mehdizadeh and Scott, 2005). Students,

‘Students may need to adjust to a new educational system which differs considerably from methods of study in their own country.’ (Mehdizadeh and Scott, 2005, p.485)

However Student B continued by explaining that ‘A’ levels in the United Kingdom were ‘studied in the same way’ and ‘similar subjects’ as Thailand, Student B did express that he,

‘Only felt that British education was different when I attended Oxford (and Y but to a lesser extent) there, the focus was on how students would develop logical and critical thinking, whilst in Thailand it is impossible to have students do that, possibly due to class size as well; we usually have 50 students per class in Thailand and it is difficult for lecturers to pay attention to each individual.’

Student B's comments on the Thai and United Kingdom education methods, suggest that in the United Kingdom students require a 'good memory' and 'logic-orientated' skills whilst the Thai system supports a more 'vocational route'. This concurs with my previous findings (Tarry, 2005) that discovered that the Thai state education involved more rote systems with emphasis on memory and testing highlighted by comments from Thai nationals who had experienced the Thai education system included,

'Everyday they always ask did you do your homework, you have to memorise this. There are 10 questions you do this and then at the end you memorise it and when the exam come you know, you have to work through the revision in the book and you get all the questions and the answer, just memorise the answer you will be able to do the exam. You never have a, uh, chance to give comments.' (Tarry, 2005, p.33)

However, the British education system also underwent some criticism by Student C and his family. Student C believed that the Masters Degree course in the United Kingdom was too short and that as a result the content, explanations and input was very limited and was 'superficial'; most of the required knowledge and skills had to be acquired through reading. Student C's father also thought that 'the one year course is too intense' however financially this was found to be an advantage especially supported by the fact that to study in fact for a Masters Degree in the United States of America would take longer, two years. Student C reiterated that studying in English exacerbated difficulties but found that the university lecturers and professors were far more willing to assist and support than those in Thailand.

6.1.3. The family role and influence

'In developing countries the family is more important than in developed countries.' (Argyle, 1982, p.70)

There are many conflicting components affecting the students and their decision to study overseas. The following will be addressed; family values, sibling pressure and parenting style.

Obtaining data from Student C's and Student A's fathers and Student A's grandmother was important as in these two case studies both the students' mothers had died and they had

been brought up by their fathers and in the case of Student A also her grandmother. It was therefore obvious that these relationships had a major impact on the students' opinions, attitudes and values stressed by Komin (1990), and Holmes and Tangtongtavy (2000).

Student A's extended family live together with Student A's parents in a traditional Thai family unit and yet despite this Student A still decided to study overseas. However it must be remembered that there were family ties when Student A initially wanted to study overseas at a university in northern England. Her relatives resided there but unfortunately she did not achieve the required standards. Student A also emphasised that, in her opinion contrary to British parents attitudes towards education, her family had strong educational values and would endeavour to do anything to enable their child to achieve the '*best education*' possible. This is further supported through the students' decision to study overseas.

'One should perform according to one's position among one's extended and classificatory kin.' (Mulder, 2000, p.62)

Student F's parents obviously exerted pressure on Student F and eventually encouraged him to study overseas. Importantly, his brother had already obtained a PhD and his sister had an MA Degree awarded from Thai universities; it was his sister who finally convinced him to study in the United Kingdom. This 'encouragement' may have been because both Student F's siblings had experienced the massification of higher education in Thailand and were aware of 'positional competition' (Meek and Wood, 1998) between graduates and were therefore aware of the advantages of obtaining an overseas degree.

Student C's family exerted a strong influence on Student C's decision to study overseas highlighting the fact that Thai parents are aware of the globalizing economy and want to give their children every possible opportunity and advantage to succeed (Skeldon, 2005). Student C's father, and his younger brother, Student C's uncle, as mentioned previously, had attended universities in the United States of America and as Coleman (2001) proposes, parent's qualification increases the child's, or in this case, the student's human capital. Student C's father who is now a businessman, gained a first degree and an MBA in Marketing, giving his reason for studying overseas as being time constraints,

'I wanted to finish both bachelor and Masters Degree within the shortest period of time. Studying in Thailand wouldn't be possible.'

Moreover not only did Student C's siblings attend universities abroad but so did his cousins, who attended both high schools and universities in Australia, the United States of America and the United Kingdom which are three of the five main destinations for overseas students (Skeldon, 2005). However Student A regarded a negative attitude towards studying in the United States of America and the American culture. Again this highlighting the families expectations and influence is the fact that that Student C, his brother and some of his cousins had attended Thai universities, especially prestigious and less established ones, as did Student C's father who continues and states that his siblings also attended Thai universities, *'Five of my siblings, Thammasart, Kasetsart...etc.'*

There were other family influences in Student B's decision to study overseas. Not only had his two brothers studied overseas but his cousins had gained degrees from the Thai universities and higher degrees from the United States of America again highlighting the competition element between family members, *'My first cousin is studying at a university in the States. And two of my much older cousins also did their MBA in the US'*. This element of family pressure is also supported by Modood (2004),

'The parents have enough authority and power over their children, suitably reinforced by significant relatives and other community members, to ensure that the ambition is not ephemeral or fantastic but the children do whatever is necessary at a particular stage for its progressive realisation.'
(Modood, 2004, p.95)

Student B and Student C's parents did attend universities overseas and yet Student A and Student D's parents and grandparents did not have the opportunity to attend a university in Thailand or overseas, as Student D stated, *'well, our parents and their parents before didn't have a lot of education'*. This could be due to class distinction or it maybe an indication that Thai families are now taking advantage of the massification of the Thai universities and are encouraging the next generation to strive towards a higher education i.e. 'familial persuasion' (Pimpa, 2004). Moreover family influence or 'familial competition' (Pimpa, 2004) is exhibited, as all six students have relatives who are or have attended higher education institutions overseas albeit Student A's case a *'very distant cousin'* attends a university in London, in the United Kingdom, studying for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Web Design.

As mentioned previously (Hofstede, 1994; Chao, 1996; Modood, 2004) advocate the Asian authoritarian parenting style, with the expectation of high achievement and obedience towards parents. Hofstede (1994) continues and suggests that son's tend to 'share the occupation of their fathers.' Student C is already employed in his father's family business, a car dealership in Bangkok; to work in his fathers business was Student C's ultimate goal. He was enthusiastic about his role in the family business and strived to, '*Successfully run the business and expand it to other industries*'. Being able to network within the global market would ultimately enable Student C to increase the family's financial and social status, therefore higher education was perceived as a way of increasing the family's cultural, economic and social capital. This also supports Holmes and Tangtongtavy's (2000) notion that Thai nationals with Chinese heritage aspire to be their 'own boss'. Chao (1996) through her research 'Reconceptualisation of the authoritarian parenting style and parental control', with questionnaire statements such 'I do not allow my child to question any decision I make' and 'I take the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but I would not decide something simply because my children want it' (Chao, 1996, p.8) also advocates the strong parental authority of East Asian parents, which has a positive effect on the expectations and achievements of the students. This is supported by Hofstede's (1994) theory that Thailand has a large Power Distance and that 'children are expected to be obedient towards their parents'. Student B stated that it was his idea to attend an overseas university and yet according to Hofstede (1994) the Asian society is 'collectivist' with a 'higher power distance' and therefore subject to hierarchy, therefore these findings may concur with Modood's (2004) findings that parents and other relatives impart their ideals onto their children and that South Asian parents,

'Are successfully able to convey this view to the children who to a large degree internalise it and even where they may not fully share it they will develop ambitions and priorities that are consistent with those of their parents.' (Modood, 2004, p.95)

Although interesting, through the statement,

'However, I have grown to dislike certain elements in the Thai society, e.g. Paternalism and the client-patron relationship, etc...'

Student B now exhibits an erosion of vertical intergenerational authority and supports the notion of increasing 'individualisation',

‘Individuals have broken free of ascribed roles within the family, employment and wider community’. (Brown, 2006, p.387)

This maybe because Student B had been exposed to western ideas and ideals over the past eight years of studying in the United Kingdom resulting in the breakdown in his relationship with his parents. Throughout the research and on occasions when issues concerning his parents were approached, Student B was not forthcoming, so his true relationship with them was not ascertained.

6.1.4. Financial influences

For Student B the most significant influence for attending a university in the United Kingdom was finance and the fact that he was awarded a 100% Thai Government scholarship, with the United Kingdom being the second favourite destination for Thai Government sponsored students (CSC, 2005).

‘As emerging nations strengthen, more of their international graduates return or invest in the country of origin and feed their knowledge and skills into the national university system.’ (Marginson, 2006, p.907)

Student B also expressed that as a consequence of receiving a Thai Government scholarship he was under extreme pressure to attend a prestigious university. This is also reiterated by Mohamed (1997) who states,

‘Academic success is imperative for most South-East Asian students. For government-sponsored students enormous pressure results from contractual obligations as well as the need to save face.’ (Mohamed, 1997, p.167)

Student A was also awarded a scholarship, an International Scholarship from University X and in this instance it was for only 30%. However, this did mean that Student A was not under any obligation to the Thai Government. Financial implications were also a major factor in Student E’s and Student D’s reasoning for attending a university in the United Kingdom. Student E was able to reside with her relatives thereby reducing living expenses and Student D was able to reside in her parents’ home, which was vital for Student D as

she was entitled to a grant awarded by the X Local Education Authority (LEA) for her first degree and for her Masters Degree her employers contributed 100% tuition fees.

Student C and Student F were the only students who participated in the case study, who did not receive financial assistance from outside the family; Student C's and Student F's parents financed their studies. Student C's father did stress that fees and living expenses were a disadvantage and he believed that if Student C had stayed in Thailand and studied there, Student C would have been able to work at the same time. This would mean there would be less expenses but Student C's father felt that there would have been disadvantages. This included lack of '*multicultural experiences*', which he felt was important in his sons' success in the family business, again reiterating the globalization of the world's economy. However Student F was unsure '*whether it is worth it or not*' and suggested that it was '*too much money to spend on everything, it.*' Consequently Student F was returning to Thailand on completion of his exams and would complete his dissertation in Thailand.

6.2. Why do Thai students decide to study overseas at universities in the United Kingdom?

This section will consider the Thai national case study participants and their specific reasons and motivation for choosing to study overseas, at a university in the United Kingdom.

6.2.1. English Language

During the study 'Why do Thai parents want to send their children to an international school?' I found that the main parental motivation for sending their children to an international school, and ultimately an overseas university, was for their children to be proficient in the English language and hence acquire increased cultural, social and economic capital (Tarry, 2005). Student B also supported the fact that English language was a source of social capital. However, only two students, Student E and Student C, identified language improvement as the prime motivation for attending a university in the United Kingdom. Student C obviously recognised that English is vital for the global market place (Skeldon, 2005; Phillipson, 1992; Crystal, 1998) and believed that this would increase his opportunity to expand his fathers business. Interestingly Student F had not recognised English language improvement as a benefit to studying at a university in the

United Kingdom, however this may be because he had already studied English in town Z and Student F had already taken advantage of studying English in the United Kingdom albeit not whilst studying for a degree. It can therefore be concluded that at some point during Student F's childhood his parents had realised the benefits for Student F to learn English maybe for the family business or the global advantages of English or the family business had enabled the parents to consider something that was previously unattainable. Student A was less interested in improving her English as she felt that her previous experience of '*foreigners*' in Thailand had not given her any cause for concern. Student A did admit that one of the reasons for opting to study at University X was because of the low English admissions criteria for that particular university. The English language requirements for international students wishing to study at University X are set as followed,

‘All international students whose first language is not English are required to provide a recent recognised English Language qualification such as IELTS [International English Testing System], TOFEL [Test of English as a Foreign Language], Cambridge. All qualifications must refer to your level of competence in speaking, understanding, writing and listening and must be acceptable to University X.’ (University X, 2006)

For study at undergraduate level the minimum acceptable standard is IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent) and for Postgraduate courses, the required level is IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent).

‘Departments and centres in institutions of higher education normally develop their own policies with regards to providing applicants with advice on language competence and possible need for tuition.’ (Macrae, 1997, p.132)

It could therefore be argued that with the massification of universities, universities are under pressure to maintain economic and student number levels and that, ‘sometimes corners were cut in order to increase overseas recruitment’ (Williams, 1991). This leads to the argument that elite institutions may be eroded and universities will become heterogeneous, however considering a university such as Cambridge has an English language admissions criteria of IELTS 7.0 and the required exceptional A' level grades, there still remains elitism in the entry requirements for the more prestigious universities.

6.2.2. Better career opportunities

According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) the main ‘driver’ for Asian and African students to seek international higher education overseas was the lack of access to appropriate higher education institutions in their home country. This was not the case in Thailand as Thailand has already undergone the massification of their higher education institutions; Student E and Student A had already obtained a first Thai university degree. Interestingly Student A felt that she was at a disadvantage in her employment in a Thai bank as due to the massification of higher education, many of her colleagues had also gained a first degree; she was not rewarded for her efforts and was not taken seriously by her ‘boss’. This is supported by Holmes and Tangtongtavy’s (2000) findings that Thais believe that employees cannot ‘influence’ their boss, especially in this case without an overseas qualification, whereas with the relevant work experience western employees believe that they can. Therefore Student A’s prime motivation for studying overseas was for better career opportunities and ultimately higher financial rewards resulting from the recognition of a degree from the United Kingdom.

‘When Educational credentials become the gateway to occupational opportunity, their acquisition tends to become the chief purpose of education.’ (Lowe, 2000, p.24)

This correlates with Lauder and Hughes’ (1999) findings and the fact that employees with a United Kingdom higher education qualification will earn on ‘on average 50% more than those without’ (DFES, 2003), highlighting

‘External forces wielding a substantial impact on the university are clearly linked to economic globalization trends, such as the development of credentials that can easily move across borders.’ (Stromquist, 2002, p.103)

Perrucci and Wysong (2006) also advocate that graduating from a prestigious institution increases one’s earning potential, concurring with student B’s comment that it is more advantageous to graduate from a ‘*top Thai uni*’ than a low ranked one in the United Kingdom. With the Government’s policies on ‘lifelong learning’ increasing the flexibility and widening opportunities for studying, both Student D and Student A were employed at the same time as studying; Student D, because she realised the value of experience in increasing her employment prospects and Student A reasoning for working at University

X's restaurant during the summer holidays, was primarily to finance her accommodation cost and her desire to socialise more, especially with '*older people*', rather than gaining experience.

From the students', parents' and grandparents' comments, and along with Student A's father's considerable financial support, especially in light of being a working class family living in a rural part of Thailand, it can be concluded that Thai families put a high value on education and encourage members of the family to obtain further qualifications. In Student E's case it is also a way of 'saving face' after a failed relationship, again supporting the fact that academic qualifications are an important factor in the legitimisation of social status (Stafford, 2005) or in the case of Thailand the hierarchical social structure of Thai society. This also resonates with my previous findings that,

'In general, the Thai parents in this study are striving towards increasing their cultural and social capital i.e. gaining international credentials, increasing their preserving the Thai hierarchy and increasing their status and ultimately increasing their economic capital.' (Tarry, 2005, p.43)

During this research it was found that all six students and some family members, including Student C's father, either stated or implied that status was a beneficial consequence to studying at a university in the United Kingdom, the result being in the form of advantageous social networks leading to employment opportunities.

Despite the fact that Student B suggested that studying in the United Kingdom rather than in Thailand has led to the breakdown of social networks resulting in less employment opportunities, it could be argued that Thai learned society's powerful networks still exist, giving prestige and patronage. Attending an overseas university will inevitably extend opportunities and networks within the international intellectual community,

'A further important source of learning for East Asian countries was postgraduate education in developed countries which not only accessed technological knowledge but also gained access to international networks.'
(Athreye and Simonetti, 2004, p.370)

6.2.3. Recognition of qualifications

Arguably and in accordance with Elliott (1998), and Bruch and Barty (1998),

‘The most important considerations for students, after the speaking of English, were related to recognition of UK qualifications and the UK’s reputation for quality education.’ (Bruch and Barty, 1998, p.21)

Five students highlighted the fact that a degree obtained from the United Kingdom would be globally recognised concurring with Williams (1991) who states that,

‘Higher education is one of the few areas of activity in which Britain is still recognised as an international leader.’ (Williams, 1991, p. 32)

Student B inferred that students attending an overseas institution would not be seeking financial rewards, as their families would already be financially secure, although he does suggest that if the qualifications are awarded from a ‘prestigious’ university then their acquisition would increase employment. The fact that Student B believes the students would be financially secure would indicate that Student B perceives students studying overseas as being middle classed, according to Funatsu and Kagoya (2003) suggestion of a rising Thai middle class. However, from Student A’s accounts and background, she does not have the advantage of family financial security has to rely on her part-time employment and her boyfriend’s generosity in addition to her University X scholarship. Considering Funatsu and Kyagoya (2003) developing lower, middle and upper Thai social class structure, it can be seen that by examining the case study participants’ parental occupations, not all students can be categorised as middle class; Student A’s parents and grandparents are farmers. However, the method of classification of social class purely through the classification of occupation is dubious, as other elements such as social etiquette and speech are not taken into consideration, and as mentioned previously it is adopting a western perception of social class (Funatsu and Kagoya, 2003).

Student A attends an overseas university which highlights Scott’s (1995) idea of ‘lifestyle choices’, supporting the notion that through ‘individualisation’,

‘People demand the right to develop their own perspective on life and able to act upon it.’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2006, p.144)

It also concurs with Modood's (2004) findings that the socio-economic profile of students attending higher educational institutions suggests that it is not wise to use purely class to distinguish between low and high achievers but to use the concept of cultural capital. This reiterates, as mentioned previously, that the massification of higher education is a 'powerful instrument of social change' (Scott, 1995) exacerbating the erosion of class and the central hierarchical class structure of the Thai society.

6.2.4. Ranking and reputation of the university

Regardless of the problems implicated by Beckett (2002) of the university league tables and the individual university ranking due to universities competing on the world market stage, some parents and students are influenced by them and refer to them when seeking a university in the United Kingdom. Student B and Student C highlighted that their decision to study at University Y was influenced by the importance of the recognition, ranking and prestige of the university, which indicates their desire to increase their social, cultural and economic capital via 'positional competition' of the institutions. For the subject Economics, University Y is very highly ranked on the Times league table (O'Leary *et al.*, 2006) and the university where student B studied for his first degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, is ranked one of the top universities in the United Kingdom (O'Leary *et al.*, 2006). Not only did Student B choose Philosophy, Politics and Economics at this top university because he found it interesting and believed that this branch of economics would be '*readily applied to Thailand as well*', but he also had the desire to attend a prestigious/high ranked university. This highlights the importance of league tables in a competitive market place and that as Scott (1998) suggests the publication of these league tables fuels students 'consumer choice',

'African and Asian students who wish to study abroad have to attend a western university, although they can exercise a consumer choice within an increasingly competitive market-place between different countries and of course between rival universities.' (Scott, 1998, p.117)

Student B's brothers studied at top Thai universities in Bangkok, Thailand, highlighting the aspirations of Thai students to acquire 'reputational capital' (Potter and Hayden, 2004). Student C obtained his first degree from the most prestigious university in Thailand, which according to The Times Higher Education (O'Leary, 2006) ranked number one university

in Thailand and one hundred and sixty first in the world university ranking. But Student D, Student E, Student F and Student A did not take the ranking position of their chosen university into consideration when making their decision to attend the University; University X is ranked one hundred and third in the Sunday Times Leagues Tables (O'Leary *et al.*, 2006). Interestingly as mentioned previously 98% of students attending University X are from state schools, which may indicate that due to the massification of universities more lower and middle class students attend non-high ranking universities and possibly the elite are still drawn to the prestigious universities.

Stromquist (2002) suggests that due to the concept of a knowledge-based economy,

‘New fields of study are emerging in institutions of higher education that have experienced veritable explosions of scientific technical specialisation.’ (Stromquist, 2002, p.109)

Although arguably this would mean that the universities are producing specialised ‘technocrats’ which may be detrimental to the idea of ‘life-long learning’. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) suggest that 85% of students enrolled in universities in Australia in the early 1990’s were enrolled on business, administration or economic programmes and in 1995 the figure had dropped to 71%. However despite an obvious decline in students studying economic based subjects all six case study students who are/were are engaged in some form of economics and/or business education.

Through this research and the case studies, it was concluded that the reasons for the Thai national overseas students’ decision to study the United Kingdom included; English language, better career opportunities and ultimately financial rewards, recognition of qualifications, and ranking and reputation of the university.

6.3. What are the resulting cultural and social tensions from studying overseas?

Scott (1995) suggests universities have three evolutionary axes. Obviously universities are producers and transferors of scientific knowledge and technology but importantly, universities are transmitters and interpreters of cultural norms, and agents of socio-economic change. Having made the decision to study overseas in the United Kingdom, during the research it was discovered that the students did experience and encounter various cultural and social tensions. Ultimately the students had to deal with cognitive

dissonance (Festinger, 1970) in deciding to study overseas. In the case of Student A, she concluded that to obtain an overseas university degree was worth both the financial cost and the social cost incurred by spending three or four years abroad and detached from her usual family and social networks. It was only in hindsight that Student F did not have the same opinion. It can therefore be deduced that and A must have experienced difficulties and experienced tensions as a result of studying overseas. This section will examine the cultural and social impact that studying overseas had on the students and family, including possible psychological responses to the second culture, (Hofstede, 1994; Furnham and Bochner, 1986).

I found that during interviews with Thai parents of children attending an international school, discovered that some parents were concerned that their children may culturally change, as mentioned previously, religion is a strong element of Thai culture and family life,

'[My] Parents are [were] worried their daughter was in an international school as they were worried she would change her religion. The family monk wanted to make sure Buddhism was her main religion as in those days there were few international schools and they were usually Christian.' (Tarry, 2005, p.24)

Student A confirmed that her opinions and attitudes were changing and her grandmother had also recognised this but realised that the next generation culture was changing, or possibly adapting to globalization. This supports Held *et al.* (2000) who suggest that culture is globalizing and Sophonpanich (2003) who recognises that students educated in the western style would not be aware of the Thai way of life and would lead to the 'fragmentation of our society's values'.

Initially Student A intended to return to Thailand after gaining her degree but she has now reconsidered the situation and intends to provide finance and support to other members of the family who may decide to also take the opportunity to study in the United Kingdom,

'On the basis of this principle a family may collectively cover the expenses for sending one member to get a higher education, expecting that when this member subsequently achieves a well-paid job the income will be shared.' (Hofstede, 1994, p.59)

In addition during the pilot study I found that,

‘Once Thai nationals obtain western qualifications they tend to seek employment opportunities outside Thailand, which offer greater financial rewards.’ (Tarry, 2005, p.41)

Student D also acknowledged this phenomenon and intended to continue working in the United Kingdom and was not considering returning to Thailand for ‘*three or four years*’.

All six students expressed frustrations on a temporary or permanent basis when they returned to Thailand. As Harris (1997), and more recently Skeldon (2005) suggest, there has been very little research on former overseas students returning to their country of origin and their career development. However, Bochner *et al.* (1980) identify ‘reverse culture shock’ for people returning to their original country after a lengthy sojourn. It is therefore possible that overseas students on return to their host country may experience difficulties and changes,

‘For students who have been staying for several years in the host country, preparing for readjustment to life at home may be important, for such is the speed of social change in South-East Asia that students’ home countries may differ markedly from that which they left some years earlier, and a transient ‘culture shock’ in reverse may occur.’ (Mohamed, 1997, p.172)

As Student B was studying overseas on a Thai Government Scholarship he was under the obligation to return to Thailand and to work at a university in Thailand,

‘In most of the rapidly developing economies of the world the increasing demand for higher education is expected to be met through the expansion and improvement of local universities and colleges.’ (Gibbons, 1998, p.72)

Through the questionnaires and other communication Student B expressed the view that despite associating with Thais during his sojourn and having lived in the United Kingdom for eight years, on his return to Thailand he encountered frustrations, such as queuing or

basically ‘reverse culture shock’ (Bochner *et al.*, 1980), Student B had begun to embrace some aspects of a new culture,

‘Thais now have spread out pretty well everywhere, and they bring their experiences back home with them when they return.’ (Mulder, 2000, p.13)

This was highlighted by Student A’s comment that Thai students studying abroad would not change society but would ‘*bring something new to our society*’.

In addition and as mentioned previously, Student B highlighted difficulties with his spoken Thai, it had become weak and he experienced ‘*content collapse*’. He was also perceived by his colleagues as being ‘*outspoken*’, ‘*too self-confident*’ and ‘*showing off*’ because he would converse a lot in English. This notion is supported by Lai and Byram (2006) who suggest that the,

‘Politics of bilingualism thus escalates the tensions between different social groups in the society.’ (Lai and Byram, 200, p.504)

Student C on his return to Thailand also experienced ‘reverse culture shock’ especially with his Thai language; it had suffered since studying abroad and this was confirmed by his father. This is a concern and as I proposed during the former research, some Thai parents considered the fluency of Thai language skills was of high importance in the ‘*Thainess in society*’ and that,

‘They [the parents] were concerned that their child maybe disadvantaged within society.’ (Tarry, 2005, p.24)

Student D also expressed difficulties, although she could speak Thai she was unable to read or write Thai, which resonates with Wallace and Athamesara (2004), and Sophonpanich (2003) who are concerned about the negative influence of the global expansion,

‘The concerned [Thai] parents send their children to international schools or abroad, but to the detriment of leaving them [the children] unschooled in Thai culture.’ (Sophonpanich, 2003, p.3)

As mentioned earlier, some sojourners experience ‘reverse culture shock’ on their return to their home country (Bochner *et al.*, 1980) and as suggested by Mohamed (1997) this is intensified in South East Asia due to the dramatic social change that is occurring. Both Student A’s grandmother and Student C’s father also noticed changes in the students and that they had gained certain attributes such as, independence and self-confidence, although it is arguable if this is due to a change in culture or another factor such as growing maturity.

However Hofstede, (1994) suggests that in a collectivist society such as Thailand, a motivation for obtaining a higher education was in order ‘To obtain a more attractive marriage partner’ (Hofstede, 1994, p.63). This may be true as Student D suggests in past generations, but not in today’s generation. However, although Student A’s opinions and views appear to be changing, when the issue of marriage arose during the conversations, she replied that although her British boyfriend was in local employment and was contributing towards her living expenses, she would prefer to marry a Thai national rather than her boyfriend. Student A’s reasoning was based on cultural issues, such as the importance of the Thai family nucleus, which she believed he seemed not to value so highly. Student F also highlighted the benefits of studying overseas in relation to marriage and he suggested that it would increase the opportunity of finding a ‘*nice girl, good person, good family*’. In addition, Student D also noticed changes in the Thai culture in Bangkok; namely westernisation. As mentioned previously Brown *et al.* (2004) suggests that popular western culture is globalizing with ‘relative ease’ and these individuals may be seeking status through adopting western culture, but it must be highlighted that this may not necessarily affect the individuals values and beliefs.

The only information that Student B offered regarding his parents was that his mother spoke only Thai, his father spoke Thai and English, and his grandparents spoke Thai and Putonghua, which leads to the conclusion that his father was fairly well educated and of Chinese heritage as in supporting the notion that Thai nationals with Chinese heritage,

‘Struggle to obtain an education in the best Thai universities.’ (Holmes and Tangtongtavy, 2000, p.29)

This again may have influenced Student B’s thoughts and opinions on studying at the best universities in Thailand and the United Kingdom. Student C is also of Chinese heritage but both Student C and Student B describe themselves as being Thai,

‘Most ethnic Chinese, particularly those of third generation or so, now consider themselves very much ‘Thai’’. (Holmes and Tangtongtavy, 2000, p.29)

Student C’s paternal grandparents speak Putonghua, but unfortunately neither Student C nor his father speak Putonghua. In addition Student B also lacks the ability to speak Putonghua indicating that English as a second language spoken is becoming more popular, through the generations. Interestingly these changes in languages spoken through these generations highlight the fact the English is becoming more dominant to the detriment of Putonghua which Lai and Byram (2006) suggests as having a local, regional and global importance.

Furnham (1997) highlights that social networks and social support provide ‘information, emotional and moral support’, especially during times of stress and adjustment,

‘Recent research suggests that psycho-social adjustment is influenced by various cross-cultural variables, such as the amount of contact with host nationals, length of residence, finance, and accommodation.’ (Mehdizadeh and Scott, 2005, p.485)

During Student F’s interview he informed the researcher that he knew two other Thai students but interestingly he had obviously not informed Student A of the other Thai student’s existence. In Student A’s opinion, Student F was from a ‘*very wealthy*’ family and ‘*was not really interested*’ in obtaining a degree. She also hypothesised that Student F did not really need an overseas qualification due to his family’s advantageous financial position. Considering this, and that the fact that the other Thai national students were also from affluent middle class families, the possible conclusion for Student A’s ‘isolation’ could be that Student A did not ‘fit’ this criteria of the friendship circle.

Bochner and Hutnik (1986) investigated the friendship networks of overseas students, living in a student residence in Oxford, England and identified three distinct networks of friendship; ‘mono-cultural’ networks, where the student identifies with friends of the same nationality; ‘bicultural network’, where the student identifies with both friends of the same nationality and a network of academics, professionals and officials that they encounter through their study and stay in the foreign country. Finally, multi-cultural networks

describe general networks of friends that they encounter through their study and recreational activities, such as sports, bars and other social events.

‘They form associations with different categories of individuals for different and predictable reason.’ (Bochner, 1982, p.31)

By application of these three friendship networks Student A’s friendships could be identified as ‘multi-cultural’ (Bochner and Hutnik, 1986) as she associated with one Thai student, other student sojourners and host nationals. Obviously Student A has created or joined networks with students who are experiencing similar educational and cultural difficulties. Whereas Student E and Student F could be perceived as having ‘mono-cultural’ networks as they only associated with Thai/Chinese in town X and in Student F’s case in other regions of the United Kingdom as well. This reluctance to integrate with other students maybe due to their perception of the ‘*English*’ and cultural/social aspects, such as the ‘*English*’ lack of ‘*loyalty*’ between friends and the ‘*English*’ being ‘*cold or not that open compared to Asian people*’.

University Y has good social networks not only through the Universities Student Services but also via the internet and University Y Thai Student Association. The students have a close knit relationship, concurring with Hofstede (1994) who suggests that Thai society exhibits ‘monoculture’ networks and supported by Furnham (1997) who advocates that the friendships established consist of, ‘close friendships with other sojourning compatriots’ (Furnham, 1997). Bochner and Hutnik (1996) during their research also discovered that 17% of the overseas students they investigated preferred ‘non co-national’ foreigners rather than co-national and that 83% had ‘compatriot’ friendships. However, Student C admitted that he tried to avoid Thai nationals in order to improve his English language. As previously mentioned Student B did not perceive the advancement of English as a purpose for studying at a university in the United Kingdom, but later on during the interview Student B did highlight that befriending the British was ‘*difficult*’, which may have impacted on his ability to associate with host students. Bochner (1982) also states that,

‘The groups that individuals belong to greatly affect their attitudes, values, perceptions of the world, and ultimately the persons very sense of identity, of who they are.’ (Bochner, 1982, p.5)

Interestingly he also suggests, when an individual belongs to more than one group, problems may arise due to 'contradictory demands on the individual'. This conflict of values was highlighted during the interview with Student D. Student D admitted to aspirations of status, a Thai value, which conforms to the statement of a Thai parent in the research I carried out previously, '*You see a lot of parents want to be lifted up*' (Tarry, 2005). However Student D is apologetic about her following statement and desire, exhibiting her awareness that this is contradictory to British values, '*Um, I hate to say it but better status as well.*'

As previously mentioned, children receive their first 'cultural programming' from the family (Hofstede, 1994); children learn their values at an early age. However it could be argued that as Student D has lived in the United Kingdom for over twenty years, and attended a British state school, she would have learnt British values. As Furnham and Bochner (1982) suggest,

'The main prediction is that sojourners with appropriate host culture friends will learn skills of the second culture more easily than sojourners whose friends are compatriots.' (Furnham and Bochner, 1982, p.174)

Student B also highlights globalization and the necessity for experiencing living overseas and working with '*foreigners*', this concurs with Bennell and Pearce (1998) who advocated the importance of 'learning from foreigners'. This was also confirmed during the previous study during the course of an interview with a Thai father who also highlighted the importance of his son becoming familiar with '*foreigners*' (Tarry, 2005). Student C's father, did not perceive any other cultural benefits or advantages in attending a university in the United Kingdom. However he did contradict himself by highlighting the importance of independence and the understanding of other cultures attitudes and manners. Student F and Student E also emphasised this social skill with comments such as '*I have to adapt and, um, learn a new thing and everything myself*', '*do everything on my own*', '*sort everything out on myself you know*' and '*make decisions myself which I never done before or like when I was in Thailand*', which demonstrates that Student C's father, Student F and Student E are aware of globalization and maybe the homogenisation of cultures to the detriment of the Thai family values and way of life. However Field (2000) would argue that,

‘It is not that systematic and social integration are collapsing, but rather that their foundations are being questioned and are slowly changing; in a learning society, citizens are not only more highly individualised but are also ever more reflexive.’ (Field, 2000, p.146)

Student D has also assumed the role of mediator for her Thai friends assisting in ‘inter-group harmony’ (Bochner, 1982), Student D is aware of both Thai and British values; therefore minimising the Thai students experiences of the ‘culture shock’.

In addition to intended outcomes, such as advancement in social, cultural and economic capital, Student B has been exposed to other impacts due to studying overseas. Student B has been able to experience independence from family members and Thai traditions. Student B is from a middle class family and previously dependent on the family; parents who maintain a strong influence and control on family members, with maids who ensure the smooth operation of the housekeeping.

Student B’s intention is that once he has completed his obligation under his Thai scholarship scheme, he wishes to continue his education by studying overseas for a Doctorate in Economics in the United States of America.

‘This has become a particular problem for international educational exchange schemes, with countless overseas students unwilling to return home from abroad after completion of their studies because they have become acculturated to the society in which they attend the university.’ (Bochner, 1982, p.28)

Student B during the course of the research did expand on the issue of social change within Thailand due to Thai nationals studying overseas,

‘The majority of people in Thailand are still those without overseas education anyway, so I don't think there will be any major changes. And if there were to be any changes, it would be difficult to say how Thai culture would change with Thai students being in so many different countries, from New Zealand to Japan to China to the UK and to the US, and these countries having different cultures. I have heard stories where two Thai co-workers, one educated in the US and the other in the UK, argue about

how to go about doing a particular task and each of them thinks they're better than the other!'

Scott (1995) has the opinion that a growing mass global culture, through higher education, will erode 'class, gender, religion and the nation'. Student A also suggests that as she has already graduated from one of the 'top five' Thai universities she will not be disadvantaged. This may demonstrate a more classless society if it holds true, or may be Student A has undergone acculturation, adopting western ideals and values or just a naïve opinion as Student A has never associated with the Thai middle class. Moreover, Mulder (2000) suggests that,

'Most Thais are rather confident; as they have always been that future developments will be adapted to the way of life rather than that this way will suffer from its contact with foreign elements.' (Mulder, 2000, p14)

6.4. Summary of the factors affecting Thai students' choice and the resulting tensions

As mentioned within Chapter 3: Thailand, there was 'push-pull' (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) factors that encouraged the students to seek to study overseas. The 'pull' factors are the influences that the destination country has that encourage the student to seek higher education in that particular country. The 'push' factors are the factors within the student's home country that encourage students to choose to study overseas (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). During these case studies it has been found that there are 'push' factors which have influenced the Thai students and parents primarily the lack of confidence in the Thai education system. Even stronger were the 'pull' factors of the advantages of attending a university in the United Kingdom which included: the opportunity to improve the students English language skills, overseas experience, increased status through the acquisition of a recognised qualification, the university ranking and reputation of the university and ultimately an increase in economic capital. However there were 'pull' factors within Thailand; economic, cultural and social which caused various tensions. Only one student, Student F, having made the decision and studied overseas realised that the perceived 'pull' factors of Thailand out weighed the Thailand 'push' factors and the 'pull' factors of the United Kingdom, and the outcomes were not as beneficial as first thought. Ultimately though, when all the students made the decision to study overseas, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

Making particular reference to ‘real life students’ the intention of the research was to consider:

1. What are the factors that affect students’ decisions to study overseas?
2. Why do students decide to study at universities in the United Kingdom?
3. What are the resulting cultural and social implications of their decisions?

7.1. The factors affecting Thai students’ decisions to study at a university in the United Kingdom

Multilateral agencies such as the OECD, World Bank, WTO and UNEC have all been actively promoting globalization through higher education. Therefore it was considered important to research this aspect of higher education as universities are set to be embroiled further in global competition and will have to adapt as a response to increasing globalization especially with knowledge being perceived as,

‘Central, indeed intrinsic component of economic production and activity.’
(Rizvi and Lingard, 2006. p.252)

7.1.1. The United Kingdom and Thai Government’s educational policies

From the literature cited in this study it has been concluded that the global expansion of higher education is rapidly increasing (UNESCO, 2006; UIS, 2006; MacLeod, 2005; Blight *et al.*, 2000). Historically British education has spread rapidly throughout the world via colonisation through military domination, the global spread of the English language but more recently through economic power or ‘neo-colonialism’. Education is perceived as a way of raising government’s economic power and individual’s economic capital; ‘individualisation’. This has led to an increasing demand for university places by overseas students with an expected continuation in this demand (British Council, 2003) with South East Asian students specifically being identified as a significant leader in this demand (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006).

It can be drawn from the literature that in addition to the multilateral agencies, the demand for higher education has been fuelled through the United Kingdom Government

educational policies such as the White paper 'Further education: Raising standards, improving life chances' (DFES, 2007). This highlights lifelong learning and the White Paper entitled 'The Future of higher education' (DFES, 2003) additionally emphasises the financial benefits of attracting overseas students. The British Chevening Scholarships and the British Government's Prime Ministers Initiative (British Council, 2003) also actively market and promote British universities to overseas clients, especially in Asian countries (Bruch and Barty, 1998). This is in response to the United Kingdom awareness of other competitors, the United States of America, Australia and other European countries (DFES, 2003). Universities are now 'embroiled' in global competition as nations are now concerned with knowledge-based globalization. These Thai students have obviously been 'wooded' to study at an institution of higher education in the United Kingdom rather than by another competing countries such as the United States of America, Australia or other European countries (MacLeod, 2005). The students themselves also expressed their disillusionment with the United States of America culture, highlighting the cultural benefits of studying in the United Kingdom.

Thailand has also realised that education is a major factor in Thailand's advancement in the global market place with globalization, liberalisation and technology being the three main global forces impacting on education (The Rajamangala Institute of Technology, 2003).

'The globalization force had affected the community first and then the government implemented a policy of change on schools and educational institutions by issuing the Education Reform Act.' (The Rajamangala Institute of Technology, 2003, p.1)

The Thai Government's economic and educational policies have led to the massification of higher education. This can be seen in the increase in the number of universities, opportunities in, access, scholarships to study overseas, the country's changing demographics i.e. expanding educational middleclass, and the exposure to new ideas and opinions. This draws the question, what affect has this had upon the Thai students? The expansion of educational opportunities has encouraged people to move to cities such as Bangkok and Chiang Mai, and to overseas universities in countries including the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australia, three of the top five destinations (Skeldon, 2005), enabling them to have better 'lifestyle choices'. Student A is a typical example. As more people strive for education and have the opportunity to attend local

schools and universities, and international schools and overseas universities, the concept of elitism is becoming diluted therefore intensifying competitive and individualistic values.

Despite the military coup in 2006, Thailand is still regarded as a democracy, with recent elections in December 2007, reiterating the Government's accountability. However the press and the media are still censored but increasingly society is becoming more educated and is aware of the impact of the Government's policies and the impact of globalization on the economy. The Thai Government is aware of the economic, political, financial, educational and technological advantages to encouraging their Thai nationals to study overseas. By encouraging Thai nationals to study overseas, through the increased access opportunities, Thailand benefits by developing global networks, increasing knowledge transfer, with the result of increasing technological advancement and consequently makes Thailand a better competitor on the political and economic global stage.

‘The explosion of access to higher education in many countries and greater connectivity between ideas and use are positive.’ (Stromquist, 2003, p.128)

However, the future of universities is widely contested (Thorne, 1999). With lower level ‘individual’ industries such as manufacturing easily moved to other countries where labour force is cheap, including Thailand, and with ‘collective’ higher technology industries congregating in central areas such as Malaysia’s high technology parks and the United States Silicon Valley, what will drive ideas and innovation? Overseas students with higher education qualifications will have to relocate in these central areas, so what will happen to cultures in the future?

7.1.2. Parents and family influence

The research clearly shows there are other influences, or ‘push’ factors affecting the students’ decision including parents, sibling and ‘classificatory kin’ (Mulder, 2000) pressure, scholarship awards, changing demographics and lack of confidence in Thai education system due to the massification and global expansion of higher education. Thailand still remains a hierarchical society with traditional values and beliefs.

7.2. The reasons why Thai students decide to study at a university in the United Kingdom

The students' reasons and influences on their decision were investigated by adopting a multi-method approach which enabled ongoing conversation into the issues raised. Through this approach the research findings suggest that on a micro-level the students are exposed to 'push-pull' factors (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) in addition to which the United Kingdom and Thailand educational policies and the United Kingdom's increasing marketization have also encouraged students to study overseas. Through the six case studies it is clear that the main 'pull factor' for the Thai students to study overseas were improvement of the English language, better career opportunities, recognition of qualifications, ranking and reputation of the university and financial implications such as scholarships. Concurring with Furnham and Bochner's (1986) statement that

'Uppermost in their [the students] minds are concerns about tangible payoffs a sojourn might provide in the shape of career advancement, prestige and upward mobility.' (Furnham and Bochner, 1986, p.38)

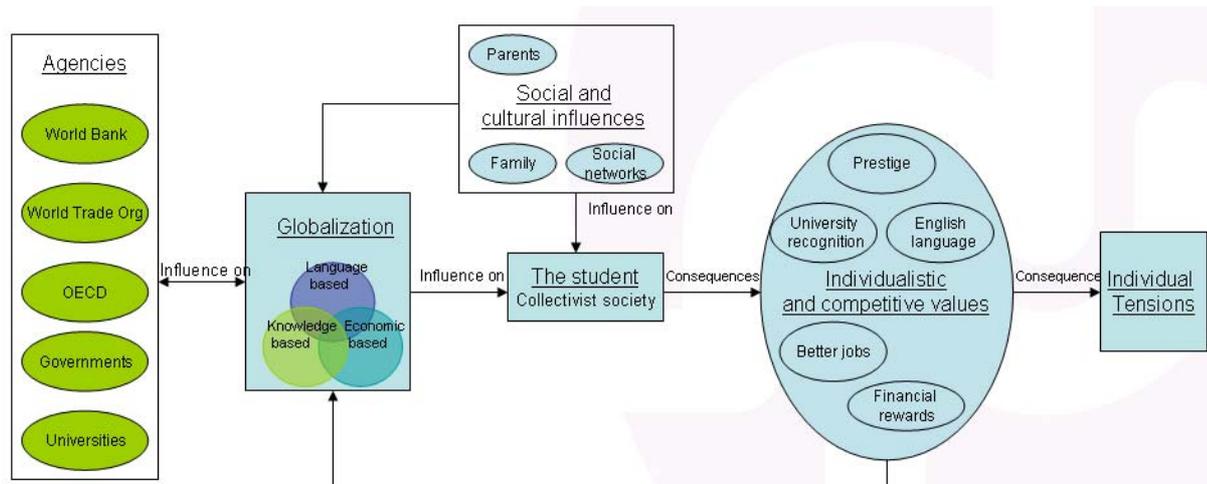
7.3. The cultural and social tensions that Thai students experience when studying at a university in the United Kingdom

For this research case study Thai national students were specifically chosen as participants. Thai students are an interesting focus because, as mentioned previously, in Chapter 3 of this thesis, Thailand historically has not been colonised, can be classified as an 'Advanced Developing Countries' (Sarre and Blunden, 1996), and has a 'unique culture with a strong, binding familial and bureaucratic hierarchical infrastructure'. Also highlighted is that religion is a 'strong element' of the Thai culture and family life, 95% of Thai society is Buddhist (Thailand Country Review, 2005) and with the trend set to continue (Thailand National Statistical Office, 2005). However as more people are educated especially overseas, they move away from spiritual religion as they become 'enlightened' and the push-pull between science and religion becomes dominant. With the increasing opportunities in overseas education the students have become dispersed from their families contributing to the breakdown in the Thai social structure and hierarchy. This is amplified with the students' completion of overseas higher education and with the increasing globalization of economies the students strive to find better careers with financial rewards and may decide not to return to Thailand. Those students who do decide to return to their

home country, in this case Thailand, having become acculturated in some aspects of British society and culture, experience ‘reverse culture shock’ (Bochner *et al.*, 1980). This was identified by the case study students in their diminishing cultural skills, such as Thai reading and writing, English overriding Putonghua as their second language and their differing social interaction for example on their return to Thailand they experienced frustration in the local Thai’s lack of willingness to ‘*queue*’. With this fundamental shift in social attitudes incited by dispersing family members comes the further breakdown of Thai society as cultural family ties wither.

‘Wide-ranging social and cultural process of erosion and evolution has been unleashed by the on-going individualisation.’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2006, p.144)

Figure 7.1: The conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between the global expansion of higher education and Thai students attending universities in the United Kingdom



Culture may or may not be eroding but it could be argued that it might be transforming due to the impact of overseas higher education. In light of the findings of this research it can be concluded that the resulting cultural and social tensions exhibited by the students are a direct result of studying and living overseas. Consequently to a certain degree higher education has eroded the hegemonic position of Thai national sentiment especially among the elites. Despite this research does not consider the theory of rational choice it cannot ignore the rational choice in terms of globalization. As mentioned previously, Thailand is regarded as a collectivist society (Hofstede, 1994) but despite this the globalizing ideology of decentralisation, privatisation and deregulation of higher education is thwarting the

collectivist society and has led students to adopt competitive and individualistic values (See Figure 7.1).

7.4. Reflection on the research process

A mixed data collection approach was adopted and rich data was collected and analysed. During this research there were various methodological challenges encountered; bias, language barriers, misconceptions and the use of equivalent words, ‘equivalence’ (Neuman, 2006). In order to ensure validity and reliability of this research these were either minimised or where possible, eliminated. The major issue was locating respondents who were, as mentioned previously ‘thinly dispersed among a larger population’ (Welch, 1975). Despite its disadvantages, ‘snowballing’ (Oppenheim, 2001) was considered advantageous, as each student became the ‘gatekeeper’ (Neuman, 2006) and ensured that there was an initial network and rapport with the other located students, which was vital considering the collectivist Thai culture (Hofstede, 1994). Ideally family members could be interviewed but due to financial constraints it was impossible. In addition to this, a Thai speaking researcher would have been required and this again may have caused further bias due to the nature of the Thai culture.

7.5. Policy implications

Through this research and the study ‘Why do Thai nationals want to send their children to an international school?’ Tarry (2005), despite students having educational opportunities within their home country, students are still seeking to study overseas. Through the global expansion of higher education this phenomena is set to continue with inevitable changing social and cultural values. This scenario is important as this increase in competitive and individualistic values is set to intensify further and considering it has occurred in Thailand which already has a good higher education system, could also occur in other countries of a similar vein. It can also be concluded that despite the advanced global expansion of higher education through market competition Thai students’ choice to study overseas has not been affected. The students’ choice to study overseas is based on traditional and cultural influences and despite the United Kingdom Government policies the Thai students would have chosen to study overseas in the United Kingdom anyway; the global expansion of higher education has in reality narrowed choice. The United Kingdom universities are therefore in a dilemma, not only are they imparting knowledge and skills they need to attract overseas students for financial reasons in the competitive globalizing university

market, but universities especially in the United Kingdom now need to consider the impact they have on overseas students both culturally and socially. They must realise that they are partly responsible for these changes. If higher education institutions instead of imposing a worldwide uniform approach tried to understand and cater for overseas students' differing cultures and values the recruitment of overseas students would increase and more importantly would prepare and limit any changes that overseas students may experience.

7.6. Future considerations

Further study should explore the continuing trend of students seeking to study at universities in the United Kingdom and the long term effect that studying overseas has on students especially on the return to their home country. This could be achieved through a longitudinal study of individuals from when they enter university to maybe five years after they have left but obviously this is a large scale research project and would require significant financing. By continuing such research explored in this thesis it would also guide the universities to consider their changing roles within the global market place.

‘Universities will be at the heart of the knowledge economy but only if they become capable of greater dynamism and innovation.’ (Leadbeater, 2000, p.243)

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Appendix A

(In thousands)												
Occupation	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 2 Apr. - Jun.
Total	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	33,423.6	35,591.4	34,050.1	36,001.8	34,638.1	35,502.3
1. Legislator, senior officials and managers	2,144.4	2,313.3	2,451.0	2,396.4	2,472.3	2,412.3	2,460.7	2,499.4	2,572.8	2,563.1	2,578.6	2,548.4
2. Professionals	1,327.6	1,204.9	1,197.3	1,192.4	1,229.2	1,252.8	1,306.2	1,367.9	1,380.0	1,393.0	1,433.1	1,450.7
3. Technicians and associate professionals	1,162.0	1,210.0	1,216.8	1,190.6	1,242.2	1,262.3	1,313.8	1,404.2	1,376.9	1,445.4	1,491.4	1,476.7
4. Clerks	1,090.4	1,115.9	1,156.4	1,110.7	1,151.9	1,193.9	1,178.4	1,240.3	1,253.7	1,265.2	1,310.2	1,313.0
5. Service workers and shop and market sales workers	4,109.1	4,177.3	4,446.6	4,357.3	4,585.0	4,615.2	4,938.3	4,927.0	5,095.9	4,918.0	5,080.8	5,073.9
6. Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	9,334.7	12,931.1	10,197.4	13,323.4	10,276.7	12,734.9	10,008.0	12,614.2	9,642.8	12,976.9	10,528.5	12,218.7
7. Craftsmen and related trades workers	4,152.0	3,336.9	4,109.3	3,533.3	4,320.6	3,814.6	4,421.9	3,757.9	4,677.6	3,749.9	4,429.5	4,201.9
8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers	2,625.7	2,499.7	2,574.0	2,595.6	2,731.0	2,685.9	2,921.2	2,964.1	3,082.8	2,976.3	3,018.8	3,006.1
9. Elementary occupations	4,489.4	4,290.6	4,410.7	4,141.6	4,733.6	4,573.2	4,857.2	4,788.0	4,938.7	4,665.0	4,721.1	4,166.4
10. Workers not classifiable by occupation	9.5	20.9	8.5	19.6	19.9	19.7	18.0	28.4	28.95	48.92	46.2	46.44

Source : Report of the Labor Force Survey, National Statistical Office.

Source: Report of the labour force survey, National Statistical Office

Table 3.4: Employed persons by occupation for whole Kingdom (Thailand) 2001-2005

Employed person by industry in whole Kingdom		2001-2005				
Industry	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
Agricultural						
1. Agriculture, hunting and forestry	14,423.7	14,638.1	14,237.2	14,394.4	14,719.8	
2. Fishing	520.0	477.6	466.4	519.6	450.0	
Non-Agricultural						
1. Mining and quarrying	43.7	33.1	44.3	55.3	47.8	
2. Manufacturing	4,803.6	4,963.8	5,270.9	5,291.6	5,436.7	
3. Electricity, gas and water supply	90.4	94.4	105.2	105.4	100.6	
4. Construction	1,447.2	1,543.7	1,724.4	1,893.2	1,825.3	
5. Wholesale and retail trade, repair of and household goods	4,710.4	4,986.4	5,221.6	5,523.2	5,361.7	
6. Hotel and restaurants	1,946.2	2,066.1	2,148.8	2,240.5	2,273.7	
7. Transport, storage and communication	1,010.3	1,020.6	1,080.8	1,081.4	1,074.5	
8. Financial intermediation	316.1	279.9	300.1	310.7	302.7	
9. Real estate, renting and business activities	517.5	522.1	559.3	633.8	642.3	
10. Public administration and defence, compulsory social security	942.6	947.7	966.2	994.0	1,118.9	
11. Education	970.6	952.3	974.0	986.7	1,052.9	
12. Health and social work	477.5	453.9	514.3	590.0	600.5	
13. Other community, social and personal service activity	614.0	638.9	674.8	703.8	709.2	
14. Private households with employed persons	246.8	227.5	253.9	232.7	229.6	
15. Extra-territorial organisations and bodies	4.4	0.9	1.2	2.4	1.4	
16. Unknown	15.4	14.0	21.3	32.9	54.1	

Table 3.5: Employed person by industry in whole Kingdom (Thailand)

Source: Thailand National Statistical Office

Table 3.6: Employed persons by level of education for whole Kingdom (Thailand): 2001-2005

Level of Education Attainment	(In thousands)											
	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 4 Oct. - Dec.	Quarter 1 Jan. - Mar.	Quarter 2 Apr. - Jun.
TOTAL	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	33,423.6	35,591.4	34,050.1	36,001.8	34,638.1	35,502.3
None	1,093.1	1,135.1	1,203.1	1,168.3	1,144.1	1,166.2	1,167.9	1,248.1	1,189.3	1,293.2	1,232.6	1,261.6
Less than Elementary	12,183.8	13,106.1	12,492.9	12,979.1	12,353.8	12,811.9	12,092.3	12,391.4	11,566.2	12,591.3	11,861.5	12,024.2
Elementary	6,706.2	7,486.4	7,003.2	7,853.4	7,375.0	7,740.5	7,469.5	8,013.0	7,505.0	7,891.8	7,575.7	7,635.6
Lower Secondary	3,840.2	4,248.0	4,051.8	4,511.1	4,331.0	4,753.2	4,635.8	5,073.6	4,922.7	5,101.5	4,848.3	5,116.0
Upper Secondary	2,957.7	3,300.2	3,114.1	3,324.0	3,445.8	3,704.0	3,680.0	4,021.5	3,951.8	4,147.8	4,031.0	4,271.6
- General/Academic	1,923.0	2,205.7	2,055.6	2,255.4	2,332.7	2,590.4	2,550.1	2,885.8	2,806.2	2,943.4	2,894.9	3,102.6
- Vocational	1,009.6	1,073.5	1,041.9	1,052.6	1,098.1	1,098.4	1,114.8	1,120.0	1,130.0	1,187.6	1,119.7	1,155.7
- Teacher Training	25.2	21.0	16.6	16.1	15.1	15.2	15.2	15.7	15.7	16.8	16.4	13.3
Higher Level	3,618.3	3,719.3	3,791.8	3,923.1	4,005.2	4,283.3	4,260.9	4,675.0	4,717.0	4,803.4	4,963.0	4,989.0
- General/Academic	1,737.2	1,786.7	1,844.7	1,940.7	2,015.5	2,145.3	2,186.8	2,424.5	2,493.4	2,527.8	2,683.9	2,676.7
- Vocational	1,117.2	1,154.3	1,169.7	1,222.5	1,245.5	1,343.1	1,291.1	1,446.3	1,407.0	1,433.5	1,438.1	1,483.2
- Teacher Training	763.8	778.3	777.5	759.9	744.2	794.8	783.0	804.2	816.6	842.1	840.9	829.1
Others ^{1/}	9.4	15.4	9.9	17.0	16.7	8.3	16.9	25.2	23.3	15.6	21.1	23.6
Unknown	36.0	89.9	101.2	84.9	90.8	97.6	100.3	143.6	174.8	157.2	104.9	180.8

Source: Thailand National Statistical Office

Appendix B

Possible Interview Questions-Thai Students

I. Biographical Data

1. Name _____
2. Age _____
3. Male/Female
4. Languages spoken, 1st _____, 2nd _____, 3rd _____
5. Number of brothers _____ Ages _____
6. Number of sisters _____ Ages _____
7. How long have you been in the United Kingdom? _____

II. Your Education

1. What course are you enrolled on, and what year are you in?

2. What is the major area of study (by division)?

3. How is your education financed? (Scholarship/Government, parents/family, family business, self financed etc)

4. Did you attend international school, if so which one?

III. Siblings and relatives Education

1. Do any of your siblings attend an international school or university, if so which of your siblings and where?

2. Do any of your siblings attend a Thai school or university, if so which of your siblings and where?

3. Have you got any other relations who have or are attending a university overseas? Where?

4. Have you got any other relations who have or are attending a Thai university? Where?

IV. Overseas Education

1. Whose idea was it to attend a university overseas?

2. Why did you choose to attend a university in the United Kingdom? (Status, quality of education, employment prospects, family)

3. Why did you choose the course?

4. Why did you choose this university?

5. Why didn't you attend a Thai university?

6. What would have been the advantages and disadvantages of attending a Thai university?

7. What are the advantages to attending a university overseas/UK?

8. What are the benefits of obtaining a UK qualification? (Better employment/career, status, marriage prospects)

9. How will the family benefit?

10. What are the disadvantages in attending a university in the UK?

11. Have you encountered any difficulties whilst attending a university in the UK? If so, what?

V. Your Aspirations

1. What do you intend to do when you leave this university? (continue education, if so where, return to Thailand, seek employment in the UK/Thailand, work for your families business, get married)

V. Culture and Religion

1. Have you encountered any difficulties at the university? If so, what?

2. Have you encountered any cultural or religious difficulties whilst being in the UK? If so, what?

3. Are there any cultural benefits to attending a university in the UK? If so, what?

4. What cultural participation did you undertake pre-university? (Art exhibit, classical music concert, ballet, learnt an instrument, classical play, opera etc).

Possible Interview Questions-Thai Parents-Father

I. Biographical Data

8. Name _____
9. Age _____
10. Languages spoken, 1st _____, 2nd _____, 3rd _____
11. Thai National (1st /2nd /3rd Generation Thai)? _____
12. Does your family own a family business? If so, what is it?

II. Your Education

5. What is your occupation?

6. What is your highest academic achievement?

7. What is the major area of study (by division)?

8. Did you attend a Thai school or international school? If so, where?

9. Did you attend a Thai or overseas university? If so, which one?

10. Why didn't you attend a Thai/Overseas university? (finance, just didn't want to, wasn't suggested)

III. Siblings and relatives Education

5. Did any of your siblings attend an international school or university? If so, which of your siblings and where?

6. Did any of your siblings attend a Thai school or university? If so, which of your siblings and where?

IV. Overseas Education

12. Whose idea was it to send your child(ren) to a university overseas?

13. Why in the United Kingdom and not Australia or the UK? (Status, quality of education, employment prospects, family)

14. Why The University Y?

15. Why not a Thai university?

16. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of attending a Thai university?

17. What are the advantages to attending a university overseas/UK?

18. What are the benefits of obtaining a UK qualification? (Better employment/career, status, marriage prospects)

19. How will the family benefit?

20. What are the disadvantages in attending a university in the UK?

V. Your Aspirations for your Child

2. What do you hope your child will do now they have obtained their qualification? (Seek employment in the UK/Thailand, work for your family's business, get married)

V. Culture and Religion

5. Have you encountered any cultural changes in your child? If so, what?

6. Have you encountered any religious disadvantages in your child attending a university in the UK? If so, what?

7. Are there any cultural benefits to attending a university in the UK? If so, what?

8. What cultural participation did your child undertake pre-university? (At exhibit, classical music concert, ballet, learnt an instrument, classical play, opera etc).

9. How has your child benefited?
