Exploring the Dynamics of Higher Education Curriculum Change in Myanmar: A Case Study of Internationalisation in an English Department.

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Abstract

The thesis problematises the rationales for international and regional engagement in Myanmar's higher education sector, with a particular focus on the curriculum, through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of key documents related to the beginning of reform process in 2010 through to 2015. Two reports on Higher Education produced under the umbrella of the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) were analysed as well as a 2014 conference report on higher education in Myanmar. Interviews were carried out with development partners involved in the HE sector to determine their priorities for engagement. The analyses found evidence of a complex set of overlapping and competing policy discourses and rationales for the future of higher education in Myanmar related to economic growth, quality, autonomy, and regionalisation. A case study exemplifies competing rationales in the context of internationalisation. A small scale action research initiative, aimed at redesigning a strand of undergraduate curriculum at the English department of Yangon University was supported as part of a British Council led strategy aimed at establishing a nationwide teacher-training programme. Whilst the English department sought academic modernisation the international agency's motives were predominantly political.

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own

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Impact Statement

Looking back over the last five years and the landscape of ideas I have encountered, the views are expansive and detailed. The trail is marked by quite extreme changes in my professional working life as I moved from several years of involvement in political education in Myanmar to a year as a teacher trainer at Yangon University, a project manager on a nationwide teacher training project and finally a return to the UK and my present post as a teaching fellow at Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL). These critical moments are described in both the first and final stages of the doctorate.

The first module 'Foundations of Professionalism' (FOP) raised my awareness of key contemporary dilemmas facing educational professionals in the early part of the 21st century and it brought into focus a particular dilemma I was facing in the workplace. The concept of critical incidents, presented in this first module, has proven to be a very useful reflective tool with which to explore and understand such dilemmas and is also a concept I am currently integrating into a research project on the intercultural dimension of RHUL's international student exchange program. Indeed, all three taught modules provided opportunities to explore the phenomenon of reflection itself as a model of learning, a means to improve practice and, in my own study carried out for Methods of Enquiry (MOE) 1 & 2, as a data-gathering tool in action research (Torbrand, 2014; Smith et al, 2010; Iacono et al, 2009; Lewis and Williams, 1994).

The organisational background to the particular professional dilemma I chose to explore in the first assignment moved to the fore in the institution-focused study (IFS) and figured prominently in the thesis. The five years of the doctorate coincided with the final five years of my professional working relationship with the British Council and each change in role entailed changes to relationships with colleagues and clients as well as to the original research site for my thesis at Yangon University.

The studies I have carried out to date all have as their central focus an account of first person experience that aims to empower the voices of those 'co-researchers' in the process. Thus the paper I wrote for MOE2 gave a phenomenological account of an international exposure trip undertaken by a group of young Burmese political activists. The evidence was gathered from reflective diaries and testifies to types of transformative learning based on the realisation of 'guiding principles', the exposure to powerful exemplars of practice and the taking of critical decisions; with the support of my supervisor this is currently being revised for publication in the coming year.

The evidence collected from MOE 1 and 2 formed the basis for the institution- focused study (IFS). A major challenge was how to arrive at a holistic understanding of activists' political socialisation in relation to the British Council and its long running political education programs. The development of the concepts of orientation, positionality and trajectory was useful in this endeavor. Orientation referred to activists' subjective and inter-subjective experience of the British Council – a key organisation in their lives in terms of the significance to them of scholarship opportunities and also as a conduit for political socialization. Positionality referred to the actual circumstances in which activists forged their relationship to the organization, the social capital they were able to leverage in order to compete for scholarship opportunities and the nature of the selection processes, which the study suggested left a lot to be desired in terms of transparency. Trajectory referred to the journey activists had taken, up to the point of encountering the British Council (many of these involved lengthy periods in prison) and the critical decisions taken by them in regard to their future praxis.

Understanding these three dimensions necessitated a methodological eclecticism in which I attempted to combine phenomenological and realist approaches. This multi-methodological, non-dual perspective resulted in rich description of the subjective

experiences of activists caught up in the logic of opportunity structures. One of the most intriguing findings was the existence of subtle hierarchies within the activist community and forms of elite activism.

This thread of methodological experimentation ran through the entire doctorate, even when, due to shifting organizational priorities, the main focus of my research up to the thesis stage – the lives and political careers of young Burmese political activists – changed quite dramatically. The terrain was thus subject to several seismic shifts, which fundamentally altered my own professional trajectory. This was particularly challenging at the thesis stage when I became separated from the site of my research.

Each of these critical moments engendered a sense of regret but also of excitement at the prospect of new challenges and areas for exploration. The methodological challenge was to maintain a phenomenological orientation in the face of this separation. The ability of social media to achieve the depth of analysis required in phenomenological studies was a significant discovery and represented a continuation of the text based interview methods I had used in the earlier research papers and the IFS.

I feel confident that this doctorate, combined with further research, can make a genuine contribution to the literature on internationalization of higher education and specifically to a greater understanding of the intercultural and ethical dimensions of North-South international partnerships, especially those involving curriculum reform. The thesis critically analyzed the redesign of a strand of undergraduate English literature curriculum within a context of national and regional policy discourses.

All of the research I have carried out on the doctorate, including the thesis, has highlighted the necessity for both micro and macro political analysis of international educational partnerships. Partnerships are composed of relationships between

individuals in quite specific organizational settings; however, these settings are themselves housed within broader networks of policy discourses, strategies and initiatives. The action research described in chapter five exemplified the micro-political approach and the critical document analyses of policy represented the macro context.

The research makes clear that Inequalities and asymmetries of power and prestige within such partnerships have implications for relationships on the ground. This theme figured prominently in both the IFS and the thesis. The thesis described forms of grassroots (inter) cultural diplomacy in evidence during a yearlong teacher-training project at Yangon University. Key obstacles to achieving genuine mutuality at the grassroots level were inequalities of status and wealth and a situation in which we were positioned as 'foreign experts' whose practices were to be imitated.

In July 2015 I left Myanmar after nearly 13 years of continuing personal and professional engagement. I was keen to take on a more academic role, ideally, one that related to my MA in Citizenship Education and/or to my previous experience in ELT / EAP (English for Academic Purposes). I currently hold a permanent position as 'teaching fellow' at the Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS) at Royal Holloway University of London. I have begun to put my experience of the doctorate into practice; for example, through the formation of a regular college-wide reading group on internationalisation. I am also collaborating with a senior member of staff on a research project into the intercultural dimension of our international exchange programme. The influence of the doctorate on my professional working life has been profound and in some respects unsettling. At the same time, it has clarified the lines of future enquiry I wish to pursue.

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

1.1   Background and Rationale

Myanmar, also known as Burma, is the largest country in South East Asia. It shares borders with Bangladesh, China, India, Laos and Thailand. The population of Myanmar is estimated at over 51 million with only 30% of its population living in urban areas. It is home to more than 135 different ethnic groups, each with its own history, culture and language. The majority Burmese ethnicity are the Burman, accounting for approximately two-thirds of the population. Myanmar has suffered from a variety of conflicts, including those stemming from ethnic groups desire for self-determination and those arising from the pro-democracy movement. There has been a long-standing religious conflict between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine state. These conflicts have had severe negative impacts on the country's educational system, including higher education.

The British ruled Myanmar (then Burma) for over a century, leading to three wars (1824-26, 1852 and 1885). Myanmar achieved independence from the British Empire in 1948. From 1948 until 1962, Burma was governed by a parliamentary democracy based on the September 1947 constitution. In 1962, following a protracted period of civil unrest, a military coup led to one-party rule under a military dictatorship devoted to socialism. Education during this period was provided for and organised by the state. The curriculum was reoriented to focus on science education rather than the arts and humanities, which were considered intellectually inferior (Lwin, 2000).

At the beginning of independence, higher education was of an international standard, with degrees recognised in the West and elsewhere (Tin, 2008). The years between 1962

and the present have witnessed massive underinvestment in education accompanied by civil conflict as students demonstrated against military rule. In 2016, Myanmar ranked 150 out of 187 countries on the UN's Education Index (UNDP, 2016). Following the 1988 protests, universities were closed for two years. Similar closures have occurred since then and universities have been relocated, in a divide and rule policy, to the outskirts of cities (Lall, 2008). Undergraduate courses at Yangon University were suspended for two decades until 2013.

Myanmar elected its first quasi – civilian government in 2010, following nearly sixty years of, often draconian, military rule. This event heralded an unprecedented period of openness during which political prisoners, including opposition leader Aung San Su Kyi, were released from long periods of detainment and were given the freedom to participate unhindered in politics. In parallel with these internal reforms, the international community was welcomed back into the country, leading to the lifting of economic sanctions and an historic visit by US president Barack Obama during which he addressed invited guests at Yangon University (Gaens, 2013). He spoke of the need to revitalise higher educational institutions in Myanmar and of America's intention to support the process of higher education reform through the establishment of international exchange programs. Other visits followed, including that of UK Prime Minister David Cameron. Myanmar took over the chair of ASEAN in 2014.

The drafting of a national education law in 2014 marked a major legislative landmark. It defined the key issues facing higher education in Myanmar as university autonomy, the right to form unions and 'the right of universities to formulate their own curriculum' Kamibeppu and Chao, 2017, p19). This was followed by a wave of student protests, targeting provisions within the law guaranteeing a continuing role for the centralised authorities in university governance. Autonomy and the design of the curriculum are

thus established as core priorities for reform of the system. The thesis traces the development of these themes through the analysis of policy documents in chapters 4 and 5.

Educational reform has been high on the agenda of visiting delegations to Myanmar and has resulted in a number of policy dialogues between representatives of Myanmar's academic community, universities in the UK, US and Australia, ministers from Myanmar's parliament and members of the NLD (National League for Democracy) education committee. One of the key objectives of these dialogues is to 'attempt to define a vision for Higher Education' (British Council, 2015, p3). The most tangible result of this resumption of engagement thus far is the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR), which was launched in 2012 with the cooperation of ADB (Asia Development bank), AusAID, British Council, DFID (Department for International Development, UK), EU, JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency), UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, governments of Denmark and Norway and others. The terms of reference for the CESR define its objective as developing a body of knowledge on the Myanmar Education Sector, including Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Chapter five presents a critical document analysis of two core CESR documents. Myanmar is a member of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), the ASEAN University Network (AUN), the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL) and the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU).

This study seeks to analyse the views and visions of some of the interested parties to the reform process mentioned above. These views and visions will determine the nature of the commitments they are able to make and the actions and interventions that follow from these commitments. At present, little empirical research has been carried out on

how educational policy is formulated and put into practice within such a rapidly changing political environment, the rationales for educational reform that underpin it or the ethical implications of such international partnerships.

This study evaluates the extent to which various rationales and their accompanying discourses are present in the Higher Education reform agenda in Myanmar and the strength of their influence. It evaluates how international development partners view their participation in higher education reform in Myanmar and their priorities for involvement. It is hoped that evidence collected from the research will contribute to a better understanding of the HE sector reform process.

The thesis will also interrogate recent claims that pressures to increase economic growth are exerting a powerful influence on the shape and structure of curricula around the world (Nussbaum, M, 2010). It is argued that these pressures appear to manifest in a 'squeezing' of the curriculum whereby a 'core' of highly specialised scientific and technical, career oriented subjects, of which the MBA (Master of Business Administration) is a good example, supplant and come to dominate the syllabus to the exclusion of disciplines in the liberal arts and humanities which are perceived as irrelevant, pushed to the periphery or otherwise discontinued (Priestley, M, 2011). According to this argument, a philosophy of neo-liberalism that prioritises the use of market principles in public services, coupled with a belief in managerialism as the most effective means to achieve this, has come to dominate both the discourse and practice of education (Bottery, M, 2000). The Myanmar governments' current push toward educational reform and openness render it open to such ideological pressures and there are debates within the current HE policy frameworks circulating in Myanmar concerning how to define and differentiate TVET and HE as well as the relative significance attached to them.

The Myanmar higher education sector has received a lot of international attention in recent years with the spotlight on Yangon University. The sector is a traditionally contested site of struggle between student activist movements and ruling elites and one isolated from the international arena for several decades. Curriculum also represents a site of struggle over definition and meaning and influences a vast ocean of student experience, having a potential to influence the 'kinds of human beings education might seek to develop in the twenty-first century' (Barnett and Coate, 2005). Internationalisation, in its many forms, is ubiquitous in higher education and it is important to build cross-national partnerships that can result in genuinely mutual benefits. The question thus arises:

1.2   Research Question(s)

What influence is internationalisation having on the process and direction of higher education curricular policy and reform in Myanmar? What rationales are in evidence?

1.3   Thesis Statement

This thesis problematises international engagement in Myanmar higher education, using evidence drawn from document analysis, interviews and professional reflection, in order to expose and evaluate the rationales on which it is based and the relationships of which it is composed. It covers the period from the start of Myanmar's transition to greater democracy in 2010 to 2015 during which time I was professionally active in the country.

1.4 Summary of Literature Review

There are currently a number of contested views as to what the term curriculum should encompass; for some the focus is on subject content for others the term embraces all facets of the learning experience, including the relationship of learning to ones wider

social, cultural and political life. Curriculum has been variously described as 'planned, written, enacted, measured, experienced, learned, collateral, incidental, concomitant, implicit, hidden, null and extra to name but a few' (Ellis, 2004, p8). The study reviews the literature on curriculum theory in order to arrive at a working definition that will be capable of grounding the research methodology.

The influence of internationalisation on educational curricula around the world – a result of policy borrowing and global partnerships - was central to the present study, which sought to examine the opening up of Myanmar's educational system to international scrutiny and assistance. Research on the implementation of North-South international partnerships is scant and the present study addressed this gap. The study aimed to uncover the various influences on curricular policy in Myanmar and the rationales that underpin them; particularly the economic rationale, which many argue is having a detrimental effect on the quality of higher education globally.

1.5   Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives

This was a qualitative study that aimed to explore the rationales and associated discourses behind internationalisation in Myanmar higher education by analysing the organisational strategic priorities for curriculum reform of various development partners. There were three main sources of data: documentary evidence, semi-structured interviews and professional reflection. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) utilises a critical realist approach to analyse the relationship between discourses, circulating in the policy environment and non-discursive social practices, exemplified in the case study of an action research project in chapter five. This was situated within Yangon University - the subject of much policy interest and implementation as a burgeoning centre of excellence. Analysis of data utilised Critical Policy Analysis (CPA),

and, in particular, Gale's (1999) theory of 'policy settlements' (see chapter two), which entails a combined analysis of text, discourse, ideology and actors.

1.6   Methods of Data Collection

1.6.1   Document Analysis

Analysis of policy documents pertinent to the process of higher education reform in Myanmar, including those produced by international bodies: The document analysis aims to clarify and compare policy discourses and strategies of key stakeholders in educational reform in Myanmar. The primary source of data is a 2014 conference report produced by the British Council in Burma. The conference took place in Yangon in 2014 as part of the Global Education Dialogue (GED) series, also organised by the British Council. It was international in scope with participants from SE Asia, Europe, the UK and Myanmar. The report is a summary and synthesis of the twenty-six presentations, which comprised the conference. Critical Discourse Analysis was used to analyse the data. Two further documents are analysed in chapter five: The CESR phase one and phase two technical annexes on higher education.

1.6.2   Online Interviews

Interviews were conducted via SKYPE with key representatives of three organisations involved in higher education reform in Myanmar. These were the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Open Society Foundations (OSF) and Central European University (CEU). The purpose of the interviews was to better understand the strategic priorities of organisations involved in higher education curriculum reform in Myanmar.

1.6.3   Professional Reflection

Reflection on my own professional participation in a small-scale action research initiative aimed at curriculum reform is central to the case study presented in chapter five. A key focus of action research is the improvement of practice through professional reflection and critical investigation. This involves the identification and representation of problems and their solutions. According to Schön (1983, p40) it is a process 'in which interactively we name the things to which we will attend and frame the context in which we will attend to them'. Professional reflection became a shared activity within the team of local teachers I helped to establish in the English department of Yangon University.

1.7 Models of Curriculum Change and Reform

As might be expected, there exist a wide variety of competing perspectives on the nature of curriculum change. For example, we can distinguish between utilitarian and non-utilitarian discourses (Adam, 2009). Utilitarian discourses prioritise skills, application and problem solving and can be seen as a response to market demands for competent knowledge-workers. Alternatively, these discourses may emphasise the socio-political dimension of higher education and the development of social skills such as critical and creative thinking, which are crucial to sustaining democratic practices. Non-utilitarian discourses, on the other hand, assume that learning is an extremely diverse and heterogeneous experience that can serve a wide variety of purposes, aesthetic, developmental, psychological etc, that are not immediately or primarily concerned with meeting the needs of society. Vidovich (2012) refers to the cyclical swings that occur between neo-liberal and liberal-humanist approaches to curriculum.

Moll's (2004) notion of curriculum change as a function of societal responsiveness is both broad and multifaceted, delineating four dimensions of responsiveness, including

economic, institutional/cultural, disciplinary and pedagogical that seem at time to span the utilitarian / non - utilitarian divide and provides a useful framework within which to begin to observe and analyse processes of change.

1.8   Relevance and Value of the Study

The area of Higher Education curricular reform is generally under researched (Barnett and Coate, 2005). This potentially poses a threat as debates concerning the nature and purpose of reforms, especially those involving international partnerships, are either closed down or narrowed due to a lack of empirical evidence. Vidovich et al (2011, p283) have proposed a 'global case study' to study empirically how university curriculum policy is changing in response to the 'global knowledge era'. The present thesis is capable of contributing to such a study by analysing how curriculum is viewed in the key policy documents that have arisen as a result of renewed international engagement in Myanmar's HE system.

The thesis is also relevant to contemporary educational debates that revolve around a supposed crisis in curriculum (Priestley, 2011). Several authors have pointed to a squeezing of curricula whereby disciplines and departments traditionally associated with higher education, especially those in the liberal arts and humanities, are being downsized or replaced by more vocationally based subjects such as business administration. They argue that this has a negative effect on critical thinking and imaginative empathy, which universities have a duty to cultivate if they are not to lose their identity as seats of higher learning. Higher learning is defined here as education not merely for employability but also for the development of intellectual and imaginative powers (Nussbaum, 2010).

The present study represents an empirical investigation of the rapidly changing educational context in Myanmar in which the international community, for the first time in several decades, is vying to influence the process of educational reform, alongside national and local bodies and against a backdrop of underfunding, neglect and oppression. The study will examine the visions, policies and strategies for higher education reform in Myanmar. It should be able to provide valuable information for those involved in the process of higher education curricular development in Myanmar and will be in a position to make detailed recommendations concerning the directions(s) such a process should take.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

'Most education occurs at the local level, but localities have never been more connected to outside forces' (Rizvi, Lingard and Lavia, 2006, p257).

2.1. Overview

This thesis examines the opening up of Myanmar's higher educational system to international scrutiny and assistance. The research question asks:

What influence is internationalisation having on the process and direction of higher education curricular policy and reform in Myanmar? What rationales are in evidence?

Various rationales for internationalisation have been proposed (Knight, 2003, De Wit, 2010). I will review the literature on these and seek to find evidence of their possible influence on higher education curricular reform in Myanmar with a particular focus on Yangon University (YU), described as a special institution which has a central role to play in Myanmar's transition to democracy (Griffith, L, 2015). Myanmar has recently begun to reengage with the international community after nearly 60 years of isolation and military rule. Research on the design and delivery of learning programs in different cultural contexts is scant (Reid et al, 2009, p4).

Nowhere is this truer than in Myanmar where the concept of research itself has been viewed with suspicion by the authorities who have sought to limit criticism of its own failures. Since 2011, there has been an easing of restrictions such that research institutes do not have to act secretly and foreign researchers can now apply for research visas (Thawnghmung, 2017). The thesis is a response to a gap in the academic research literature concerning higher educational change in Myanmar. It is situated in a vein of scholarship, which seeks to explore the 'theoretical conundrums and contradictory

ethical implications of […] overlapping policy agendas' (Pashby and Andreotti, 2016, p771). I take as my starting point a broad definition of curriculum which includes the aims of a study program, the assessment methods, the subject content, the instructional plans as well as their eventual realisation in actual classroom processes, experiences and relationships (Glatthorn et al, 2009).

2.2 Theoretical Models of Curriculum Change

Moll's (2004) notion of curriculum change as a function of societal responsiveness offers a model of change that is potentially useful in understanding processes of curricular reform in a national context, influenced by foreign governments and international organisations. His is a broad, multifaceted model that delineates four dimensions of responsiveness: a. economic b. institutional c. cultural d. disciplinary and pedagogical. These dimensions are interactive and not necessarily meant to be hierarchical. Although Moll does acknowledge the dominance of the economic dimension, he does not consider it to be the only driver of change that needs to be taken into account when examining the process of higher education reform. The model arose out of research into the South African post –apartheid educational context. This has applicability to the contemporary situation in Myanmar especially in the way in which issues of diversity and inclusion in education are surfacing, following the collapse of an authoritarian regime.

Scott's (2002) reflections on change in central and Eastern Europe and how universities responded to the development of systems of political pluralism and market engagement, following the fall of the Soviet Union, are particularly germane to the present study as Myanmar re-enters the international arena after decades of isolation under military rule. Scott offers two contrasting narratives of higher education

responsiveness following the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. The first envisions institutions embracing freedom from totalitarian control and involving themselves in a process of catch up with the west. The second conceives of them as independent and autonomous from the west - free to develop new models of educational practice. This is not dissimilar to the context of HE reform in post- junta Myanmar in which rapidly changing regional imperatives are impinging upon national policy processes (see chapter four). Myanmar is at its own crossroads, it is welcoming the west into its institutions and yet, as a member of ASEAN, it shares in the vision of an ASEAN university (see chapter four). Whether it can develop its own models of educational practice depends heavily on the degree of autonomy universities are able to possess and this is key theme pursued in chapters 4 and 5. A 'policy settlement' (Gale, 1999, p394) on this vital issue has not yet been reached and is the cause of much recent student protest (Phyu, 2016) around the drafting in 2014 of National Education Law. Students claim that the law upholds centralised control over university governance and the curriculum (ibid, 2016).

There is a body of literature that posits the existence of a dominant discourse shaped by economic priorities which is putting pressure on decision makers to narrow the scope of the higher education curriculum in order to make it more responsive to the demands of industry and the market. Authors such as Giroux (2002, 2004) and Apple (2004) argue that this is being carried out under the aegis of an ideology of neoliberalism. There are arguments that a crisis in the humanities exists - that disciplines such as philosophy, history and literature are being squeezed out of the HE curriculum (Nussbaum, 2010) and there are counter arguments that 'place education and skills at the heart of national competitive advantage' (Brown, Lauder and Ashton, 2008, p15). These models emphasise the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as a means to achieve this.

2.3 Internationalisation of Higher Education

According to Marginson, (2006, p.9) 'internationalisation refers to any relationship across borders between nations, or between single institutions situated within different national systems'. However, two terms globalisation and internationalisation have been distinguished from one another in the literature. Globalisation has been conceptualized as 'something that happens to universities and internationalisation as how universities respond' (Cantwell and Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009, p290). In their view, such a dualism is unhelpful and rests on assumptions of automaticity, rationality and institutional autonomy. In its place they propose a more nested model in which local and global are considered to be in continuous mutual dialogue and negotiation. This post-modernist account views institutions not as monolithic and homogeneous but as, 'complex assemblages with an array of interactions at local, national and global levels' (Cantwell and Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009, p292). Actors within such assemblages may struggle to reconcile policy agendas with their own educational beliefs and practices, which, while not necessarily clearly defined, are nonetheless capable of directing actors' commitment to and involvement with policy initiatives; For Ball and Olmedo (2013, p85), creating strategies that directly address such struggles and looking 'for answers to questions about the how(s) of power inside and around him or her, the how(s) of his or her beliefs and practices.' constitute a 'care of the self'.

That education is increasingly and ever more rapidly becoming internationalised is something of a truism. A more difficult task lies in identifying the drivers of this phenomenon, the processes by which it is occurring and the directions it appears to be taking. One obvious challenge when considering the literature is how to delimit description of a phenomenon, which is capable of eliciting such a wide range of potential interpretations, rationales and purposes. These can encompass political,

economic, educational, cultural or academic, scientific and technological dimensions (Quiang, 2003).

A variety of such rationales have been put forward to explain the internationalisation of higher education:

2.3.1 The economic rationale.

The global market for educational products and services is vast and accounts for tens of billions of dollars annually (Bennell and Peirce, 2003). Knowledge has come to supplant physical capital in its importance to the global economy. The so called knowledge economy has emerged to meet the growing demand from high tech industries for individuals with highly specialised knowledge and skill sets designed to increase competitiveness and drive up profits. Universities in the global North are eager to attract international students onto courses which aim to develop such skills as well as entering into collaborative partnerships with overseas institutions. The opening up of educational spaces to foreign providers fosters greater competition and local institutions in the South have been forced to respond to these pressures in order to survive (Bennell and Peirce, 2003). When ministers from several Islamic countries convened in 2006 to discuss how to raise the position of Islamic universities in the Times Higher Education Supplement (THE) global university rankings they were convinced that becoming a world class university would enable them to compete more effectively in the global knowledge economy (Cantwell and Maldanado-Maldanado, 2009). This term has been inserted into the discourse of higher education reform in Myanmar, which is characterized by lofty aspirations for swift and radical changes outlined in the macro-analysis of policy in chapters four and five. An emphasis on accountability in the form of

Quality Assurance (QA) is frequently associated with an economic rationale that prioritises global competitiveness (Mok, 2007).

A defining feature of the knowledge economy is the dependence on intellectual capabilities rather than on solely tangible, physical assets. One possible way such a shift can be measured is in the change from the production of tangible to intangible, or information goods, especially in newer industries such as biotechnology and wireless communications (Powell & Snellman, 2004). These industries are transforming the way we live and work, requiring competent knowledge workers who have received quality training in science and technology. The ways in which knowledge and information is handled, stored and disseminated is changing and this is affecting the nature of work as IT advances and developments in internet technology create new virtual workplaces (Brinkley, 2006). Universities are currently under pressure to produce graduates who have the necessary skills and attributes to contribute to the growth of the new knowledge intensive industries. There is a growing need for transnational knowledge workers who are able to negotiate complex scientific, technological and business environments that encompass local and global cultural realities (Colic-Peisker, 2010).

Critics argue that this is leading to a narrowing of the curriculum as more specific skill sets are being called for (Wheelahan, 2008). On the other hand, there are suggestions that knowledge workers need to possess a very wide range of skills, including interpersonal, intercultural and self-management skills in order to be able to function successfully in the contemporary global knowledge economy (Bridgstock, 2009). This raises the question of how university policies are geared up for this task as well as the influence of international networking on policy making at the institutional level.

2.3.2   The Political Rationale

This views investment in higher education as a means to strengthen political and economic relations, ostensibly in the interests of international security but also as an accompaniment to increased trade relations (Quiang, 2003). This is a form of soft diplomacy in which states seek to exert political influence abroad through the advancement of educational and cultural exchange programs. Cultural relations organizations, such as the British Council (BC), which are said to have an arm's length relationship with government, have established themselves as leaders in the promotion of education overseas. In Myanmar, the BC has played a pivotal role in the higher education sector reform process, brokering relationships – 'global dialogues' – between foreign and local universities and establishing some of the first concrete interventions in higher education in the form of teacher training programs implemented by international staff.

2.3.3   The Academic Rationale

This argues that academic quality can be strengthened through internationalisation of curricula either through the inclusion of discrete disciplines such as international studies and multicultural education or through the broadening of existing curricula to include an international dimension (Jones and De Wit, 2012). This can also include platforms for the delivery of pedagogical approaches aimed at the development of critical skills. The academic rationale extends to processes of institution building expressed through the brokering of strategic partnerships designed to improve infrastructure and raise capacity.

2.3.4 The Social Cultural Rationale

This is aimed at fostering understanding, cooperation and intercultural learning between nations (Quiang, 2003, Coelen, 2013). It is expressed in policies directed at attracting foreign students and teachers in the belief that diverse student populations not only increase intercultural learning but can also expand the global perspective of domestic students. The rationale varies from narrowly economistic versions to more liberal models that emphasise broad goals such as global perspective (Barnett and Coate, 2005).

South East Asian nations place great emphasis on the notion of regional identity based on common ideas, norms and values. Policy makers refer to this socio-cultural community as exemplifying the so-called 'Asian way' which consists of at least four basic principles: (1) the freedom of states from external interference; (2) Restraint from criticism of other states' policies (3) Removal of the threat of force; (4) Decision making through consensus-building (Katsumata, 2003). More importantly, the ASEAN way is seen to embody regional 'norms' such as

'the principle of seeking agreement and harmony, the principle of sensitivity, politeness, non-confrontation and agreeability, the principle of quiet, private and elitist diplomacy versus public washing of dirty linen, and the principle of being non-Cartesian, non-legalistic'. (Goh, 2000, p114).

These principles and norms are claimed to inform the intercultural landscape of international relations in the region and underpin the ideal of an ASEAN university and a common ASEAN identity.

2.4   Internationalisation and Policy Borrowing in East Asian Higher Education.

In East Asia, approaches to internationalisation have been categorized as either 'independent' or 'cooperative' (Chan, 2013, p324). The former approach, represented by countries such as Japan and Taiwan, has sought to attract foreign students through the development and export of their domestic HE systems. Scholarship programs and other incentives have been used in preference to the establishment of dependent relationships with foreign institutions or the radical reorganization of their domestic systems. The latter approach, represented by countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, on the other hand, have sought foreign assistance in order to improve their domestic HE systems, inviting foreign HE institutions to set up branch campuses and participating in twinning programs. Policy borrowing is a feature of this approach as foreign institutions are viewed as models of best practice (Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). It seems likely that the Myanmar HE system will follow the latter approach as it struggles to modernise after half a century of neglect (see chapter four), although one could also expect resistance from traditionalists within the system who remain wary of too much foreign influence.

Phillips and Ochs (2004) distinguish policy imposition from policy borrowing. They define borrowing as a 'deliberate, purposive phenomenon' (p774) in which policies from one context are consciously adopted by another. Policy imposition, on the other hand, is exemplified by the imposition or previous acceptance of colonial approaches to education. This can also include curricular content. This is very relevant to the antiquated nature of the English literature curriculum that teachers had inherited following 16 years during which undergraduate courses were forbidden and which forms the basis of the case study in chapter five.

The Bologna process in Europe has served as a model for other regions of the world, wishing to integrate their higher education systems. Indeed, it has explicitly sought to promote itself and the European Higher Education Area as the exemplar of a certain form of regionalisation. The declaration, which was signed in 1999 by 29 European countries, makes claim to a world-wide degree of attraction (Zgaga, 2006). This has led to greater rivalry between regions, particularly when their goals for higher education are based on an economic rationale of increasing competitiveness and links to industry, as is the case in East and South-East Asia. It is also possible that the standardised ideals of a regional, or global, model could potentially threaten values of institutional autonomy and academic freedom (Zmas, 2015). This tension is present within the policy discourses characteristic of Myanmar's higher education reform process. Representing the Bologna process as the prime model for regionalisation projects elsewhere questions the agency of Asian nations to construct their own unique systems or to adapt or reject others (Dang, 2015).

It is not easy to arrive at an unambiguous definition of international partnership given the varied forms it can take. For example, the term North-South does not exhaust the geographical range across which partnerships can be established. There is a gap in research on how the normative, aspirational rationales underlying many partnerships are realised in practice and the asymmetrical benefits that can arise from inequalities in resource and status (Downes, 2013). Connell (2007) points to the hegemonic influence of Northern HEIs on the design of university curricula in the global South, leading to the standardisation of curricula and the marginalisation of indigenous voices and visions.

2.5. Higher Education Curriculum Reform

Debates concerning the nature of curriculum encompass a number of complex dimensions. Philosophically, they question what counts as knowledge and what knowing about something means. Psychologically, they question how knowledge is best obtained. Sociologically, they question what knowledge should be taught and prioritised and how society is to be portrayed. Politically, they question whose voices are expressed in the construction and implementation of curricula (Smith and Ewing, 2002). Describing these debates and dimensions forces us to acknowledge a view of curriculum as a broad phenomenon that is not restricted to merely the content or subject matter to be taught. We can also include in this definition the pedagogical practices and forms of instruction through which any curriculum is eventually enacted.

The influence of internationalisation on HE curricula has received very little attention in the academic literature (Vidovich, O'Donoghue and Tight, 2011). Nonetheless, curricular change has been taking place, sometimes in quite radical ways, and it is therefore a cause for concern that not enough explicit attention has been paid to it. Leask (2015) regards Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC) as a distinct field of study and develops a definition through addressing five common misunderstandings. First, it cannot be delimited to the presence or absence of international students, though this will clearly play a role. Second, it is not the adaptation of existing curricula to foreign contexts. Third, it is not the introduction of new teaching practices in order to better realise local learning aims - this she refers to as 'localisation'. Fourth, it does not have to involve any form of outward mobility. Finally, it should not be taken to mean a generic, homogenised curriculum that can be rolled out anywhere and to anyone.

She goes on to argue that the defining feature of IoC is its potential to develop students' international and intercultural perspectives. Furthermore, an internationalised curriculum should represent a negotiated settlement rather than the reproduction of western policies and practices. Such a process would involve the questioning of assumptions on which such dominant paradigms are based and the learning aims they give rise to. This is a much more critical and ethically oriented approach to internationalisation of the curriculum – one that prioritises the destabilising of dominant paradigms and explicitly addresses issues of social justice, in particular, the privileging of western conceptions of knowledge.

There is an argument that a lot of this change is being driven by policy actors from outside of academia, principally the state and commercial interests related to industry and trade (Barnett and Coate, 2005). Writers of this ilk bemoan the fact that this is leading to an economising of the curriculum, by stealth. They contend that the changes they describe are the result of pressures to make the curriculum more responsive to the needs of business and the economy. In this view, the discourse of curriculum has shifted from a concern with traditional disciplinary knowledge to that of vocational abilities and dispositions, especially those that are considered relevant to the needs of the knowledge economy. Internationalisation means that alliances between academia and business / industry can also be forged across borders.

Engaging in serious debate about curriculum design and content necessitates asking thorny questions about ultimate educational aims (Barnett and Coate, 2005). In this view, the current importance placed on the development of vocational skills means that such questions and debates are not of interest to the major stakeholders involved in educational reform and may even be said to represent a threat to their interests. Admittedly, these are difficult issues and there are no easy solutions to the questions

they pose. On the other hand, that should not bar us from debating them and there is always the danger, if we do not, of allowing hegemonic influences to dominate educational thinking and practice (Fairclough, 2001). Looney (2001) equates curriculum making with policy making, pointing to their common roots in cultural beliefs, preferences and expectations.

It is worth noting that the theoretical history of the field known as curriculum studies has frequently been characterised as fluctuating between two divergent approaches to curriculum design - the technical - scientific and the non-technical or humanistic (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). Technical approaches are said to derive from a rationalist philosophy that prioritises ends over means and in which the selection and organisation of learning experiences – the means – are justified only in so far as they are able to meet learning objectives or outcomes in the most effective and efficient manner possible (Posner, 1998). The primary role in curriculum design in this model goes to technical experts who base their decisions on scientific, empirically verifiable study and specialist knowledge (Posner, 1998). Proponents of a technical-rationalist tradition attempt to approach curriculum design in an ideologically neutral manner. However, one can argue that such an approach is well suited to the neoliberal concern with meeting economic needs in the most efficient and effective manner possible. In chapters four and five, I address the issue of learning outcomes within the curriculum; their effectiveness as a means to support student learning as well as their power to induce instrumentalist forms of learning. As an example, I critically examine the AUN-QA course goals.

2.6 Neoliberalism and Educational Reform

Neoliberalism is frequently referred to as being hegemonic in education policy. First, it is argued that the marketisation of society has influenced all spheres of life, including

education, and this has led to profound changes in the nature of social relations, in particular the narrowing of the notion of student into that of consumer and a concomitant commodification of the learning experience (Giroux, 2004; Brancaleone and O'Brien, 2011). Second, the hegemony of the economic rationale, at least in the US, is said to be the result of a close alliance between (1) neoliberalism with its emphasis on free market economics, (2) neo-conservatism with its insistence on a return to traditional values, including the religious right and (3) the new managerialist class who are committed to greater accountability and systems of performance management (Apple, 2004).

Neoliberalism itself is a contested concept. The *neo* implies something new and neoliberalism, as a set of beliefs and practices, synthesises elements from earlier liberalisms to achieve a quite distinctive character (Thorsen, 2010). Nor should it be thought of as a static entity but rather one that has evolved and has a history. Earlier phases of neoliberalism characterized by deregulation of markets can be contrasted with subsequent phases in which the state assumes a more active role in institution building and re-regulation in order to ensure greater market discipline and to help further market principles and goals (Peck and Tickell, 2002).

Neoliberalism, it is commonly assumed, can be adequately summed up in the belief in a minimalist state, a commitment to laissez-faire economics and an abiding faith in the organising power of markets. However, according to Olssen and Peters (2005), the defining characteristic of neoliberalism as opposed to classical liberalism, which shares these same beliefs and commitments, lies in the positive conception accorded to the state in generating an appropriate market by supplying the structures in which it can flourish.

The state's role extends to measuring or evaluating the performance of its citizenry, or that portion of its citizenry constituted as a potential workforce. In doing so it is in a stronger position to regulate performance, ensuring that individuals are willing and able to harness their energies to the development of markets. The emphasis on competition and increased performance calls for increased surveillance and evaluation and this has led to the development of national curricula, national testing regimes and managerialist systems of performance evaluation which have eroded teacher's professional autonomy (Apple, 2004). Neoliberal discourse assumes a close relationship between government, society and the individual in which the authority of the state is directed at empowering 'entrepreneurial subjects' (Davies and Bansel, 2007, p249).

Vidovich, O'Donoghue and Tight (2011) propose a global case study to examine and compare the various ways in which higher education institutions around the world are responding to economic pressures and what he describes as 'the hegemony of neo-liberal ideology in education policy' (p293). Such a study would examine the cyclical swings between ideological polarities of generalist or liberal humanist curricula on the one hand, and vocationally-oriented, utilitarian or neo-liberal curricula on the other. The argument that an ideology of neoliberalism has become hegemonic in HE policy has been propounded by a number of authors. For Giroux (2004, p494) neoliberalism has colonised Higher Education, placing the successful reproduction and legitimation of "market driven identities and values" at its core. Utility, in the form of an employability agenda, has, in this argument, become the key determinant of how learning aims and outcomes are framed, supplanting earlier liberal-humanist traditions in which 'the quest for knowledge is worthy both in itself and in its contribution to our understanding of the state of humanity' (Ransome, 2011, p214).

There is a need to look at specific educational contexts in which internationalisation efforts are taking place in order to better understand the many ways, in which, in practice, it might materialise. Myanmar is a test bed for international efforts at educational reform, having only in the last five years fully welcomed the international community into its schools and campuses after decades of protection from foreign influences.

We should not assume that market influence is the only factor to be taken into account when evaluating educational and curricular reform; leadership roles within particular institutions, history and tradition and the local challenges that institutions face may all interact to produce change (Adam, 2009). Different disciplines may also be differently positioned to embrace or resist change (Muller, 2005). The present research takes account of each of these elements as well as recognizing the international dimension as countries in the developed world invest themselves in educational systems in the developing world. This is occurring in Myanmar at an ever-increasing rate. One argument goes that economic pressures diminish the importance of local loyalties and place commitments, replacing them with 'extra local policy learning' in the form of elite partnerships (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p392). There is a paucity of research in this area and 'The theoretical underpinnings of bilateral and multilateral university partnerships remain to be fully analysed and understood' (Hagenmeier. 2015, p41).

2.7 Neoliberalism and the Design of HE Curricula

There is a strong argument that neoliberalism tends to engender a more technical-rationalist approach to education policy and by extension to curricular design (Patrick, 2013). The outcomes based method mentioned above has been cited as an example of such an approach. Brancaleone and O'Brien (2011) argue that learning outcomes now

function as a site of exchange value. Under the aegis of neo-liberal perspectives, they have come to represent a commodity, in the form of an agreement, by which knowledge, or rather transferable skills, can be quantified, accredited and exchanged. The aim of standardising learning outcomes across European universities was central to the Bologna process, which envisaged a system by which credits could be determined in a homogenous fashion, allowing them to be accumulated and transferred between institutions. In keeping with the nature of a commodity, the exchange value of these credits could be assessed using quality assurance measures, which they liken to 'accountancy criteria' (ibid, p515). In their view, the introduction of this system represents a mechanism to promote labour mobility across Europe. They argue that this devalues the meaning of education, reducing it to a narrow set of purposes based on ownership and utility. The focus on outcomes as measurable products obscures all other considerations such as pedagogy. The claim that ethical values can also become subject to commodification is integral to arguments put forward by those who believe in the centrality of humanities education to the HE curriculum (Nussbaum, 2010).

One example given of this is the UK Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) benchmarking statements that lay out the intended outcomes of HE courses in terms of the knowledge, abilities and dispositions that graduates are expected to develop. The outcomes based approach, whilst not new to curriculum design, has been taken up by a more neoliberal establishment keen to increase the vocational relevance of HE courses (Grubb and Lazerson, 2005; Shay, 2013). Learning outcomes are well suited to performativity regimes, ensuring that achievement and progress can be accurately metered and measured (Bourke et al, 2013). There is criticism that the outcomes themselves have not been subject to the type of rigorous academic debate reserved for other aspects of higher education reform such as the use of new technologies and

pedagogic practices. Indeed, they could potentially represent a 'tightening or closing down of possibilities' for curricular development (Barnett and Coate, 2005, p29). According to Hadjianastasis,

'Learning outcomes […] are not at all an innocent tool for clarifying expectations, ensuring quality and making achievements assessable. They are firmly seated within an understanding of education as an economic transaction, often serving as part of the 'packaging' for the consumer '(2016, p510).

A closer examination of benchmarking statements reveals a far more nuanced picture however. The outcomes described for many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, for example, retain key subject specific dispositions and a range of cognitive and affective goals, requiring abilities that could be considered useful not only economically but also in personal and social / civic spheres. In history – the generic or transferable skills to be developed through disciplinary study include self-discipline, self-direction, independence of mind, empathy and imaginative insight, and the ability to work with others and to have respect for the reasoned view of others. These may well make one more employable but they are also necessary prerequisites for participation in society at large in an age of uncertainty and increasing complexity.

2.8 The Nature of Knowledge in the Global Knowledge Economy

There is a strong consensus that pressures are mounting on higher education institutions to become more responsive to the needs of the global knowledge economy. International donor agencies are keen to increase funding and to encourage national governments to increase investment in higher education in order to meet such needs. This can mean changing curricula so that they become more relevant to the world of work and shifting resources away from disciplines that are not seen as relevant to this

mission. In this way utilitarian discourses can come to dominate curriculum design and content. This may entail a shift from subject knowledge to generic abilities or what Gibbons refers to as *mode 1* to *mode 2* knowledge (Gibbons et al, 1994).

Mode 2 knowledge or as Gibbons calls it socially distributed knowledge has a number of features that set it apart from mode 1 knowledge or disciplinary based knowledge. First, the context in which mode 2 knowledge is generated and applied is complex and transcends any particular disciplinary boundaries or trajectories. It is responsive to a wide range of social demands for appropriate knowledge; this may be geared toward commercial purposes but may also constitute a response to broader social imperatives. Generally, it represents a shift toward more utilitarian or application based forms of knowledge. Second, it is a trans-disciplinary approach to problem solving.

Problem contexts are transient and varied and problem solvers are highly mobile and likely to come from outside of academia. Research teams will consist of practitioners from a variety of disciplines. Such teams may arise and later disappear, depending on the nature of the problem and the vagaries of multi-donor funding, although their networks may well persist. Mode 2 knowledge contributes less to particular disciplines than it does to social and economic needs. Third, it is heterogeneous. Knowledge is produced and disseminated not just within universities but in a range of 'expert institutions' (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2003, p189) such as think tanks, consultancies and government agencies. This knowledge is situated within networks, which are dynamic and unpredictable. The knowledge encoded within these networks may be applied in many different ways depending on societal needs. Fourth, it is socially accountable. Public concerns in a variety of fields drive the research agenda and participants in the process of knowledge production cannot fail to become sensitised to such concerns. Finally, quality assurance is managed through a wide variety of social,

economic and political interests not just by academics. Gibbons is positive that quality in mode 2 knowledge is determined by 'a wider set of criteria that reflects the broadening social composition of the review system' (Gibbons, 1997, p7). However, he sites two examples that would seem to represent an extremely narrow range of economic interests, 'Will the solution, if found, be competitive in the market?' and 'will it be cost effective?' (Ibid, p7).

Although Gibbons refers in large part to the research environment in higher education, he is clear that whatever changes he is describing also feed into curriculum development and pedagogy. He argues that the nature of knowledge production has changed, predominantly, in response to the state's attempt to identify areas of research capable of enhancing 'global economic competitiveness' (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2003, p182). He presents several sources of evidence to support this argument. For example, he claims that there is currently more steering of research activities by agencies external to academia such as ministries of trade and industry but also by research councils. He describes how the research environment has become increasingly commercialised, arguing that the attempt by governments to define their role in relation to research funding in quasi-commercial terms is likely to reduce diversity and creativity in research and the quality of science in general may suffer as a result of commercial confidentiality; if the products of research are considered intellectual property to be sold for profit, then open debate and peer review become problematic. Finally, Gibbons discusses the ways in which science has become subject to more rigorous forms of accountability. He argues that new systems of research management, designed to evaluate effectiveness and assess quality, are having deleterious effects on actual practice by (a) devaluing creative research in the borderlands between disciplines and (b) helping to encourage 'industry style production' (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2003, p184). Gibbons, like

Barnett and Coate, does not explicitly refer to neoliberalism, however, the connection is clear. Neoliberalism is frequently described as having strong governmental steering mechanisms that are designed to stimulate market activity (Olssen and Peters, 2005). In higher education this manifests as increased interest and investment in those disciplines that are perceived to be capable of generating economic growth and marginalisation of those that are not.

Proponents of mode 2 knowledge argue that it can promote greater inclusiveness in education and reduce elitism, making it more relevant to the needs of society and the needs for students to find useful employment. Opponents argue that by treating knowledge as a commodity curricula are becoming reduced to training packages and that this is undermining the traditional conception of the university as a place of higher learning where the theoretical conceptions and discourses underlying vocational practice can be debated (Adam, 2009; Wheelahan, 2008).

The real value of Gibbon's work is in his re-envisioning of knowledge and the ways in which we approach it. Criticisms of mode 2 knowledge fail to appreciate the translatability of knowledge into different social contexts, not only those that are market driven or subject to commercialisation but also those involving the complex ethical dilemmas we are daily confronting in this age of super-complexity which denotes 'a fragility in the way that we understand the world, in the way in which we understand ourselves and in the ways in which we feel secure about acting in the world' (Barnett, 2000, p257).

I argue that the strict division between mode 1 and mode 2 types of knowledge that Gibbons proposes rather contradicts his view of the flexible nature of knowledge. The specific skills allied to a particular discipline are also capable of being interpreted in

more generalist terms. Take a very disciplinary specific outcome such as the ability to 'make informed and mature musical judgments' which features as a learning outcome on a BSc course in Physics and Music Performance at Imperial College, London; is it not appropriate to ask why such judgmental prowess could not be translated into contexts other than music?

Scott (2004) has proposed further modes of knowledge. Mode 3 is applied knowledge, practice based, in which personal development occurs through reflection on the context of practice. Mode 4 is critical political knowledge, which is change, action and impact oriented as it 'seeks to problematise, understand, influence or change external structures' (p 15).

Since Myanmar opened to international involvement in 2010, a diverse and rapidly increasing array of international NGOs, universities and foreign embassies have signed MOEs (Memorandum of Understanding) with Yangon University (Appendix one). The British Council has played a pivotal role in this process by brokering relationships and helping to establish networks of such 'expert institutions' (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2003) or what Lee (2015, p354) terms 'education hubs'. The 2014 'Global Education Dialogue' conference in Yangon, organised by the British Council, offers a striking example of mode 2 knowledge production, involving an agglomeration of such institutions. The conference reports on the evolving regional landscape of higher education policy making in SE Asia. The regional context for curriculum policy reform in Myanmar is based upon partnerships between traditional universities and organisations such as the ATC21C (Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills) and the AUN (ASEAN University Network). This is described in chapter four.

We should be cautious of treating curriculum as something immutable and capable of being installed everywhere in the same manner. This tendency is central to the debate over precisely how new interactive pedagogies should be implemented in Myanmar and has led to calls for a 'Myanmar-Centric' approach, which would incorporate Asian values (Lall, 2010, p2). A range of literature exists on the tensions that exist between 'competence pedagogic ideals and the conditions and cultures of schooling' (Sriprakesh, A; 2010; p8). Such an absolutist, homogenising approach can result in the 'marginalisation and decline of other approaches effective or otherwise' (Carter, 2009, p59). However, the notion of 'Asian Values' is highly contested (Barr, 2000). The document analyses undertaken in chapters four and five reveal the fluid and permeable nature of a so-called Asian approach to Higher Education reform, characterised by forms of policy borrowing.

2.9 Internationalisation and Post-Colonialism

The discourses of internationalisation and development are frequently conceived of in ahistorical terms and in this way neoliberalism too can be viewed as 'a set of naturalised economic processes operating in a reified fashion' (Rizvi, Lingard and Lavia, 2006, p255). By contrast, internationalisation takes place in particular locations at specific periods of time and is undertaken by particular agencies that have the cultural resources and power necessary to carry it out. The important contribution made by post-colonial theory (Said, 1978, Bhabha, 1994) is that it has put the genie back in the bottle and sought to embody these discourses as on-going relationships between post imperial nations and their former colonies in the developing world. Post-colonial investigation of contemporary processes of development 'seeks to investigate the structural relations of domination and discrimination that are expressed, manifested, constituted, and legitimised in and by discourses' (Omar, 2012, p45). It is, however, extremely eclectic in

how it theorises these relationships and their associated discourses. Said (1978) viewed orientalism as a discourse aimed at control and power over formally colonised peoples while Bhaba (1994) defines discourse as ambivalence and describes how in the colonial encounter the colonisers are also subject to change -'The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation' (ibid, p 201).

Martin and Wyness (2013, p30) place the 'intercultural encounter' at the heart of global partnerships, highlighting the importance of 'ethical relationships'. They draw on post-colonial analysis to argue that substantial inequalities in financial resources, while challenging, should not stand in the way of forming ethical relationships. They focus instead on a notion of equality based on non-coercive, non-hierarchical partnerships which are jointly conceived and executed.

2.10   Internationalisation and Regionalisation

A key dimension of the internationalisation of higher education systems is regionalisation, which can occur at a variety of levels and in a range of forms. Marginson (2010) defines the model pursued by countries in East Asia as 'Confucian', characterised by strong state steering of the sector and the prioritising of quality in the pursuit of world-class status over autonomy and the exercise of academic freedom. The strength of this model in increasing access and quality, it is argued, lies in its fusion of Confucian concepts of respect for education, familial investment, state provision and a high stakes examination culture. Many of these features are present in Buddhist Myanmar as are the disadvantages such as a lack of equitable access, limited autonomy, lack of creativity and capacity for international engagement. The emphasis on STEM is a defining feature of policies favoured by governments in Confucian systems (Marginson, 2010).

Internationalisation can proceed from the top down or from the bottom up, encompassing macro policies designed to use the HE sector to strengthen regional economic and political objectives or local or national initiatives that are aimed at developing closer academic ties between institutions (Knight, 2014). The Bologna process supported the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and has served as a model for regionalisation efforts elsewhere (Vögtle and Martens, 2014). According to Sirat, Azman and Bakar (2014, p20), the idea of harmonising higher education systems in Southeast Asia was inspired by the development of regionalism in higher education in Europe, specifically the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Delanty (2006) describes the diverse ways in which the global and local can be combined within international projects; the emphasis here is on moments of 'world openness' created out of the encounter of the local and the global rather than in terms of a universal system. Such moments should be seen not just as an encounter between different ways of life but as a process of culture making (Ibid, 2006). The case study, described in chapter five, was in many ways constitutive of such a process.

A key characteristic of the process of regionalisation, at least in Asia, is the hegemony of the English language, as subject and medium of instruction (Choi, 2010). In Myanmar, it is a legacy of the colonial era and is the official language of higher education. The use of English by national governments to foster nation building is an important consideration when evaluating its place in the world. It is also the chosen medium for both business and academia (Le Ha, 2013). In addition, ASEAN has adopted English as its official language and this functions as a powerful tool to construct a common regional cultural identity, expressed in its motto - 'one vision, one identity, one community' (see chapter four). A controversial issue within Myanmar is how to reconcile the use of English with

the immense plurality of ethnic languages, which are spoken throughout the country (South and Lall, 2016). Language policy is one aspect of the intercultural dimension of internationalisation / regionalisation which influences reform of curriculum and pedagogy.

2.11   Liberal Education and the Humanities

Mulcahy (2009, p307) differentiates between liberal education and what he refers to as 'specialised education'. Traditionally, the aim of liberal education has been to provide a core of general, theoretical, knowledge and basic intellectual skills of analysis to the exclusion, initially at least, of knowledge and intellectual skills of a more specialised, practical, vocational or professional nature (Mulcahy, 2009). The arts and humanities as well as the natural and social sciences have played a leading role in promoting such an education. The contrasts between these two approaches are manifest in the design of curricula and can readily be observed in the marked differences that characterise US and UK systems of education. Whereas in UK universities, with the possible exception of Scotland, students specialise early on in their academic careers, in the US, students are expected to spend the first two years of their undergraduate degree studying a range of minor subjects which may, or may not, become the area of specialisation which they later choose as their major subject.

Mulcahy draws on a range of scholarship, which suggests that this traditional division between theoretical and practical forms of education is beginning to morph into more progressive notions of liberal education, which embrace the necessity for practical knowledge. He argues that such a synthesis has the potential to revitalise the humanities at a time when interest in them is dwindling both in the US and UK and

questions concerning their relevance are being raised in many countries around the globe, including his own country of South Africa.

Claims have been made that the arts and humanities are being squeezed out of the higher education curriculum because of an ever-increasing emphasis on vocationally based programs. The spread of ICT and the prominence now being given to science and technology are presented as evidence of this shift (Adam, 2009). The emphasis on Science, Technology, Mathematics and Engineering (STEM) within the HE curriculum is balanced by a parallel disengagement from fields in the social sciences and humanities in both the developed and developing world. In Ethiopia, for example, government policy, steered by the World Bank, has sought to increase the intake ratio of sciences and technology to social sciences and humanities from 58:42 in 2008/9 to 70:30 in 2014/15 (Molla, 2014). According to Kabir (2012), in Bangladesh, there is a popular perception promoted by both state and media that degrees in market related subjects, such as business, engineering or IT are more valuable than other non-market related degrees and parents, being persuaded of this, try to convince their children to enrol on these courses and none other. Students in this study who tried to enrol on non-market related courses reported being subject to negative feedback from parents and society. In this view, Higher Educational practice in Bangladesh, under pressure from neoliberal ideology and 'market fundamentalism', is depoliticising student experience, bypassing the development of critical and ethical thinking and, in its place, encouraging a 'commodity-centric mentality' in the coming generation (Kabir, 2011, p99). In Myanmar policy literature, confusion is expressed over the definitions of HE and TVET and there is debate over which should receive the most priority.

The fate of the humanities has been described as being in worldwide terminal decline, evidenced by the closure of many departments of philosophy and modern languages

(Nussbaum, 2010). In the wake of the ascendancy of science and technology, the humanities, at least as disciplines within higher education, are said to be becoming largely irrelevant. Other commentators link these changes in institutional priorities directly to the nature of neo-liberal ideology, which focuses more intently on revenue generation and economic rationality. Market pressures are said to encourage 'curricular models that favour industry while displacing the humanities' (Schuetze, Mendiola and Conrad, 2012, p20). This has led to, 'a vocationalisation of the curriculum that was not present in previous incarnations of the university' (Saunders, 2010, p55). A key proponent of this view is Henry Giroux for whom:

'Knowledge with a high exchange value in the market is what counts, while those fields such as the liberal arts and humanities that cannot be quantified in such terms will either be underfunded or allowed to become largely irrelevant in the hierarchy of academic knowledge' (Giroux, 2002, p442).

Martha Nussbaum claims that the humanities are being cut away in virtually every sphere of education around the globe. Not only the disciplines themselves but also their place within the hard sciences is being diminished as governments choose to reduce investment in them in favour of more profit-oriented courses. She laments the loss of their humanising influence and the detrimental effect this is having on the development of critical reflection and imaginative empathy, both of which are prerequisites for meaningful engagement in the life of society.

'Seen by policy makers as useless frills, at a time when nations must cut away all useless things in order to stay competitive in the global market, they are rapidly losing their place in curricula and also in the minds and hearts of parents and children' (Nussbaum, 2010, p2).

These accounts acknowledge the privileged position the humanities occupy with regard to the super-complex, networked nature of the knowledge society we increasingly inhabit. The demise of the humanities may also be the result of a tendency they have shown to somehow 'overreach' themselves - to posit a concept of humanity as apart from and above the natural world (Barnett, 2013, p46). Unfortunately, there are few clear examples of how this is supposed to have occurred. Nevertheless, the contention remains that in order for the humanities to survive, they must begin to address more fully the concerns of a 'post-human' age characterized by 'super-complexity' (ibid, p45). They can do this by becoming more practical, technical, performative, interdisciplinary, imaginative, critical and 'willing to engage with the world' than has hitherto been the case (Ibid, p52).

The humanities, through their disciplinary commitments to philosophical and philological critique, their questioning of deeply rooted social and cultural assumptions and their ability to produce 'plural narratives and plural explanatory paradigms' (Parker, 2008, p84), whether it be through history, literature, anthropology or the arts, are uniquely placed to understand and respond to current socio-cultural issues, particularly those related to hegemonic discourses. In the complex, shifting and uncertain terrain that characterises the early 21st century the humanities perennial and evolving concern with identity formation, expression and deformation has much to offer (Parker, 2008).

The rationales for Higher Education Curricular reform in an international context that I have described are not usually viewed as being mutually compatible. We should also consider synthetic models that are capable of spanning the so-called utilitarian – non-utilitarian divide, combining theoretical and practical traditions in ways that can benefit both individual and societal needs. Barnett and Coate outline several possible responsibilities that curricula could seek to develop - toward a discipline and its

standards, toward the world of work, toward the wider society and toward the self (Barnett and Coate, 2005).

There are strong arguments to support the position that STEM disciplines are increasing in prominence to meet the demand of students, especially those in the developing world, for qualifications that will lead to employability and thus raise their chances of escaping poverty. In addition, innovations in STEM disciplines have changed the way we are able to learn as new digital platforms make knowledge ever more available. Distance education has opened up new opportunities for students in countries, such as Myanmar, where access to quality higher education remains in doubt. Ironically, it is changing how humanities are delivered and creating new interdisciplinary possibilities in digital humanities projects which are capable of bringing together scholars from across the so called STEM – humanities divide (Kirschenbaum, 2012). Similarly, the humanities have a crucial, yet under-utilised role to play in the ethical questions that accompany new discoveries in the sciences (Biagioli, 2009). What is also important is a (re) humanisation of the processes and aims of higher education not merely the dominance or survival of certain disciplines.

2.12 Conclusions

Definitions of the internationalisation of higher education are varied, focusing on external measures such as numbers of international students, levels of student mobility or take up of international programs; still others place greater emphasis on what students are led to learn, giving rise to the term internationalisation of the curriculum. There is a well-documented literature on the apparent polarity between liberal-humanist and neo-liberal visions of curriculum with much agreement on the dominance of the latter. Four rationales – economic, socio-cultural, political and academic were

differentiated. The role of learning aims and learning outcomes are crucial to how these various rationales are expressed. Their rephrasing as graduate attributes and transferable skills has spread to Asia and can be seen in the ASEAN University Network's quality assurance framework, analysed in chapter four.

Less well documented are examples of how Internationalisation manifests as partnerships in specific contexts, especially those in the developing world and particularly in relation to higher education reform. The present thesis arose in one such context in Myanmar. The extent to which the various rationales were discernable in a context such as Myanmar, which has only recently opened its educational sector to international involvement, inspired the present research question. At stake are different visions of the aims and purposes of higher education.

Chapter Three: Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives

This was an empirical study that aimed to examine the influence of internationalisation on higher education curricular policy in Myanmar. The research question asked:

'What influence is internationalisation having on the process and direction of higher education curricular policy and reform in Myanmar? What rationales are in evidence?'

3.1. Critical Realism and Critical Discourse Analysis

Bhaskar's (1997) view of critical realism asserts the separation of ontology (the science of being) from epistemology (the science of knowing) or in his terminology the transitive and the intransitive. In other words, there is a reality that exists separately from our experience and knowledge of it. According to Bhaskar, this reality is composed of three strata-like layers – the real, the actual and the empirical. The real is defined as those structures or mechanisms that serve to generate events and these can exist independently of our knowledge of them. The actual 'may not be observed at all or may be understood quite differently by observers' (Easton, 2010, p.223). It is open to interpretation. The empirical, consisting of events or outcomes, the visible manifestation of people, systems, ideas and discourses, is the initial object of experience, enquiry and evaluation. The aim of enquiry in critical realism is to explain how structures and mechanisms interact to generate, or not to generate, processes and events. Reality is defined as existing beyond the empirical and not to be conflated with what can be experienced or observed.

Objects or entities are further theorised to possess emergent properties that differ from those of their base. The whole is the sum and structure of its parts but is simultaneously

more than them, with emergent causal powers that are not possessed by the parts themselves or their aggregation (Elder-Vass, 2005). These emergent wholes do not have to be crudely material, although Banta (2013, p390) argues that they do need to be 'socially consequential'. This opens the door to conceptualising discourses as emergent wholes. He further employs the idea of directionality to explain how discourses can 'enable' or 'constrain' agency (p391) and thus assume causal significance in line with a critical realist social ontology.

Given the theoretical assumptions of critical realism, its transferability to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) depends heavily on how discourse is understood. A critical realist understanding of discourse, based on the stratified ontology described above, would, of necessity, consider discourse one of many types of social mechanism capable of generating processes and events rather than granting it exclusive rights. According to Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer (2004, p1), 'critical realism is compatible with critical semiotic analysis, particularly critical discourse analysis'. They propose a dialectical-relational approach in which discourse is analysed in relation to its referents in the context of social practice and in dialectical relationship with actors, intentions, social relations, and the material world. Fairclough (2005) argues that CDA within critical realism must include analysis of the dialectical relationships between discoursal and non-discoursal elements of social practice. He claims that social practices mediate the dialectical relationship between structures and events, defining them as 'more or less durable and stable articulations of diverse social elements, including discourse' (p922).

This dialectical –relational approach has been criticised for offering a reductionist explanation of discourse, or more generally semiosis as the key mediating social practice, ignoring other possible explanations; the notion of social practice also remains under theorised (Flatschart, 2016). The case study in chapter five analysed the

discourses and rationales that emerged at the level of social practice thus completing Fairclough's dialectical-relational perspective.

One of the problems with these accounts is the very general way in which discourses are conceptualised. Potential emergent causal powers are more clearly in evidence, I would argue, in discourse expressed as policy. CPA offers a set of theoretical lenses through which the causal efficacy of policy can be better understood. I refer, in particular, to the notion of 'policy settlements' (Gale, 1999) – relatively enduring configurations from which strategic priorities can be deduced and implementation procedures initiated.

3.2. Critical Policy Analysis

Critical policy analysis (CPA) is used in this study to analyse processes of curricular policy making and implementation and to identify which particular policies have come to prominence in the discourse of Myanmar higher education reform. Diem et al (2014) are keen to point out that there are a variety of critical theories and that the intellectual landscape of critical policy analysis is constantly changing and evolving as it responds to new types of problem. At the same time, they point to three similarities that they argue typify the theoretical approach. First, a belief in the efficacy of empirical research; second, a tendency to use qualitative research approaches and, third, recognition of the complex, often contradictory and contested nature of policy processes. This latter leads to the elaboration of research questions and techniques that aim to expose the main debates and competing discourses that are said to be characteristic of policy processes (Taylor, 1997). It requires analysis of how 'nebulous concepts become reality and how ideas become normalised' (Diem et al, 2014, p1076). CPA theorises relationships of causality between the global and the local and is committed to analysing phenomenon in an international context (Rata, 2014).

CPA is focused not only on the substance of policy but also on the complex processes involved in policy making. These processes are often non-linear and are as much about what, and who, is excluded as about what, and who, is included and they involve the analysis of policy at different levels and in different contexts. As mentioned in chapter two, curriculum itself can be construed as policy (Looney, 2001) and curricular reform as a form of policy making.

Gale (1999, p394) asks how particular 'policy settlements' are arrived at and has theorised four explanatory contexts that would need to be taken into account in order to fully describe this process. These four dimensions of the policy process form the theoretical framework for the present study. In what follows, I draw on other sources in an attempt to further flesh out this framework. In doing so, I assume that policymaking is not confined to formal locations or arise exclusively from within government and is 'contextually contingent' (Trowler, 2002, p1). Depending on the level of autonomy, it could also arise at a grassroots level from within an institution or an individual department.

According to Gale, there is policy construed as text, narrowly, as documentation - physical codes that represent the temporary settlement of competing claims and counter-claims. Policy texts are wide-ranging, they may represent the end to a policy process, a form of settlement manifested in an officially mandated document, or they may represent the means through which official texts are produced, interpreted, questioned, challenged and ultimately changed. The inter-textual environment or context is varied and demands analysis of an array of documents relevant to the policy process. The analysis of key documents relevant to HE reform in Myanmar aimed to arrive at a better understanding of what policies were being promoted at a macro level

and inferences made concerning the extent to which different rationales for internationalisation were in evidence.

There is also policy construed as discourse, drawing on the work of Foucault and others, discourse influences how texts are produced and how they are interpreted in the light of other texts (Gale, 1999). In this view, texts are temporary, context specific, asymmetrical manifestations of discourse(s) in dominance (Gale, 1999). Discourse has often been characterized as an amalgam of language and practices that define the ways in which issues are framed and problems constructed. Discourse has been described as the interpretive or conceptual schemata that define a terrain or set the parameters for discussion and debate. It is frequently portrayed in a negative sense as setting the boundaries of 'what can be said and thought' (Ball, 1994, p22) thereby delimiting possibilities for action and attempts at change. We can also assume that discourses are capable of opening up possibilities for action and change. Critical discourse analysis (see below) is used as a means to expose and explicate the key discourses present in the HE reform process in Myanmar. Attention to the types of discourse that are present in the reform agenda at a macro level should yield an understanding not only of how particular policies are being promoted but also how they might be interpreted, challenged, changed or ignored at the micro level of institutional practice.

There is policy construed as ideology. Ideology can be conceived of as a meta-discourse, consisting of concepts, beliefs, assumptions and values that have the power to shape the discursive contexts within which settlements are reached and texts produced (Gale, 1999). Examples of contrasting ideologies relevant to the present study are the neoliberal and liberal humanist rationales for higher education curriculum design and learning, described in chapter two. These rationales are ideological in nature and shape the contours and the substantive content of the discourses, policies, practices and

contests that are constituted through them. I define ideology broadly as axiomatic principles or core beliefs shared by members of a social group that function to organise and help actualise its aims, actions, norms and values (Van Dijk, 2006).

Curriculum has itself has been described as a form of policy and, as such, inherently political and ideological in nature, involving compromises, trade-offs and settlement (Looney, 2001). I have used a Critical Discourse Analytical (CDA) to systematically investigate evidence of ideological framing of policy as articulated in key documents related to higher educational reform in Myanmar. This should provide evidence of why particular policies are put forward and be able to explicate the values and beliefs of which they are, in part, an expression.

Finally, there are the 'policy actors' who mediate the policy process at various levels (Ball, 2011). Their position in interpreting, revising and creating policy discourses are what ties Gale's theory to a critical realist social ontology that goes beyond discourse to examine the causative influence of social practice. Gale makes the claim that policy settlements are 'defined by the discursive strategies of dominant policy actors and, as such, are intrinsically skewed or asymmetrical' (Gale, 1999, p401). These actors, by virtue of their superior social control within the policy environment, are able to generate greater acceptance of policy initiatives. For example, they may be active in the construction and production of 'official' texts at a ministerial level. Nevertheless, such texts are also subject to processes of interpretation and translation by mid-level policy actors whose role is to adapt official texts to the context of practice within which they are to be realised (Singh et al, 2013). At the next level in the hierarchy are those tasked with enacting policies and who in many cases can be said to suffer the consequences of policies as their everyday working lives are reshaped, often in contradistinction to their own beliefs and preferred practices.

Gale's framework is infused with relations of power and it is therefore incumbent upon researchers to understand who 'controls what, where, when and how in relation to policy texts' (Singh et al, 2013, p468). This is especially pertinent to Myanmar as it re-enters the international arena and begins to engage with, often elite, institutions and organisations whose interests may be appealing but also potentially disquieting to the status quo. The question of power and whose voices are being prioritised in educational policy making and implementation is never far from the surface in Myanmar and any attempt to analyse such processes must inevitably take account of how such power is distributed amongst the various policy actors, both domestic and international. The present study attempted to determine the extent to which competing curricular discourses and rationales were present within the Myanmar policy environment.

3.3   Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as applied to critical policy analysis provided a broad trans-disciplinary approach, which I adapted for the purposes of this study. CDA seeks to specify the relationships between text and context. Linguistic and semiotic analyses of the discourse features of policy texts are coupled with analysis of the 'network of social practices within which the discourse is located' (Thomas, 2005, p30). CDA offers a useful framework for understanding the ways in which text, discourse, ideology and real people intermesh in the day-to-day implementation and interpretation of policy. CDA is useful for documenting multiple and competing discourses in a text, highlighting marginalised and hybrid discourses and documenting discursive shifts in policy implementation (Taylor, 2004).

I applied CDA to the analysis of core documents relating to the process of higher education reform in Myanmar. The chief texts I analysed in chapter four were a series of

26 PowerPoint Presentations that formed the core of a 2014 Global Education Dialogue (GED) conference held in Yangon in 2014 and a report which summarised the content of these PowerPoint Presentations (see above). The purpose of the analysis was to gather empirical evidence of discursive shifts in curricular policy associated with the process of internationalisation of the kind outlined in chapter two. CDA relates such discursive shifts to ideological changes and contests, which these discourses both reflect and also contribute to. The critical aspect of CDA is that it seeks to analyse how ideologies become hegemonic and how certain voices, visions, strategies and policies become prioritised over others. It is thus extremely applicable to the field of critical educational policy analysis.

In the most recent iteration of his work, Fairclough (2011) incorporates argumentation theory into the analytical framework of CDA in an attempt to arrive at a more critical realist understanding of policy texts. In doing so, he claims that the longer stretches of text in policy documents are the expression of normative practical arguments. These practical arguments constitute reasons for action and builds on a critical realist argument that reasons can be causes (Fairclough, 2011). Practical arguments are used by policy makers to advocate for or against particular courses of action on the basis of particular problematisations of existing circumstances and / or particular goals and values (Fairclough, 2013). Critical Discourse Analysis, informed by argumentation theory, seeks explanations for such problematisations not only in terms of situational factors but also in terms of agency and the subjectivities of policy actors involved in their development and implementation. In this way, the arguments upon which policies are based can be evaluated and challenged. This is the approach I have taken in the analysis of policy documents relating to the process of higher education reform in Myanmar.

There are at least three ways in which arguments can be challenged within this framework. First, criticism of the claim; the claim or conclusion of the argument, as this pertains to advocacy of a particular course of action, will fail to realise the goals being advanced or contradict the values being expressed and in so doing will lead to unwanted consequences. Second, criticism of the validity of the argument; there are better means to realise the goals or, indeed, there are other goals that could be pursued and other values that could be considered. Third, criticism of the rational acceptability of the premises; the ways in which circumstances are interpreted, represented and problematised are not rationally acceptable because that they are based upon unquestioned assumptions drawn from prevailing dominant discourses and alternative explanations are possible (Fairclough, 2013). Policy proposals are based upon implicit representations of problems (Bacchi, 2009) and these need to made explicit in order to better understand and critically evaluate them. This is the rationale for the policy analysis undertaken in chapters four and five.

Fairclough maintains that social practice, incorporating social identities, relations and systems of knowledge and meaning, is, to an extent, constituted by non-discursive factors and that discourse analysis alone is not sufficient to appreciate the variety of possible mechanisms through which this occurs. This aspect of Fairclough's model has been criticised for its inability to analyse with sufficient precision the relationships between discursive and non-discursive factors (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). This may be unfair, according to Fairclough (2013), critical discourse analysis involves the analysis of discourse in relation to other forms of social practice and interaction. It examines, for example, how dominant global discourses such as neoliberalism and the knowledge economy remain open and are challenged by local discourses, arising from within particular social practices and actual interactions, which adapt, contest or offer

alternative representations of how things are or could be. Cross-national educational partnerships can be considered as one type of social practice and this forms the basis for the case study in Chapter five.

3.4 The Research Context

The opening up of Myanmar's higher educational system to international scrutiny and assistance is a very recent episode in a history characterised by strong centralised control and distrust of foreign influence. Yangon University (YU) is arguably the most prestigious institution in Myanmar and the one that has attracted the most international interest. It has a vibrant political history of student protest and demonstration which has been accompanied by, often violent, acts of repression and the creation of policies deliberately targeted at undermining the development of protest and protest movements (Tin, 2008) for example, by closing down campuses and splitting up departments - placing them as far away as possible from each other - a form of 'divide and rule' most commonly attributed to Myanmar's erstwhile colonisers.

The international community has been quick to seize the new opportunities for involvement that have arisen in the wake of the first quasi-civilian government to be elected in the last 60 years. Change, at least within the urban centres of Yangon and Mandalay, is proceeding rapidly and there has been a rush by foreign governments to engage with Myanmar whose considerable mineral wealth and geopolitical position represent an attractive proposition; indeed, foreign direct investment has soared in just a few years (Xu and Albert, 2015). Opportunities to conduct educational research within the tertiary education sector have only just become possible and published materials on HE in Myanmar are limited (CESR, 2013).

3.5   Research Design

3.5.1   Document Analysis

3.5.1a Analysis of policy documents pertinent to the process of higher education reform in Myanmar, including those produced by international bodies: The document analysis aimed to clarify and compare policy positions, arguments and discourses of key stakeholders in higher educational reform in Myanmar. The analysis in chapter four is focused on the 2014 GED (Global Education Dialogue) conference, which took place in Yangon, Myanmar in June 2014. The title of the conference was:

 'Locally Engaged, Globally Facing: From national industry to regional player to global system – What is the role of the ASEAN University?'

The twenty-six presentations were given by a variety of Higher Education practitioners from South East Asia and beyond and the proceedings were summarised in a final GED report. The stated aim of the conference was to:

'Help Myanmar's higher education sector integrate into a vibrant and inclusive economic region' (British Council, 2014).

The analysis looked for evidence from within the texts of how the broader educational and curricular context of higher education in Myanmar was being construed. It sought evidence for the problematisations that were being produced, the arguments that were being constellated and the ways in which these related to broader debates over the purpose of higher education and the relative merits of STEM and the humanities within the curriculum. The analysis began with an examination of the twenty-six PowerPoints that made up the bulk of this two-day conference. Chapter five widens the analysis to include the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) phase 1 and 2 documents.

Discourse analysis was composed of two principle stages.

Stage one: I highlighted those stretches of text, or individual words, which most clearly articulated the claims being made concerning educational reform in Myanmar and in the region and the lines of argument being put forward. These were examples of the practical arguments described by Fairclough (see section 3.3). I also highlighted examples of language being used to represent the context of reform and how this was being problematised. There were also examples of figurative language – metaphorical references, which, consciously or unconsciously, expressed views on the nature of HE reform; two examples explored in chapter four are the use of 'nurture' and 'evolve'. Key language was highlighted in green.

Stage two: Once identified, these arguments and representations were subject to the three forms of criticism outlined by Fairclough (2013). Analysis aimed to identify the policies being prioritised and the positions being taken. Initial comments arising from the analysis consisted of a blend of critical questions, summarisations and references to links within and between the texts. Such comments formed the basis of the critical commentaries developed in chapters four and five. They were highlighted in yellow. The PowerPoint corpus represented twenty pages or approximately 20,000 words; an extract is included in appendix two. The final analysis of the GED report was thus anchored in a rich bed of description and extrapolation.

3.5.2   Qualitative Case Study

The purpose of the case study design was to examine a particular exemplar of cross-national partnership. According to Easton (2010), a critical realist case approach is

'Particularly well suited to relatively clearly bounded, but complex, phenomena such as organisations, inter-organisational relationships or nets of connected organisations' (p123).

This approximates to the scope of the present research, which sought to obtain evidence of the rationales for cross-national involvement in Myanmar higher education reform. Case study is an appropriate means to investigate or describe a phenomenon in context using a range of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In the present study, context translates into the policy environment - local, national, regional and international - within which Myanmar higher educational curricular reform is taking place. The case study was a curriculum re-design initiative that took place at Yangon University, English department in 2013 – 2014. It constituted a piece of action research that possessed a clear cross-national dimension. It allowed me to provide a quality, first hand, detailed account, of the events, relationships and rationales accompanying the project.

Qualitative case study, by virtue of the multiple sources of data collection, which it employs, is able to provide rich, holistic description. The object of inquiry or 'case' has been defined as a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context (Baxter & Jack, 2008); one which is specific to time and space. Gerring (2004) refers to 'case' as a single unit of analysis that is spatially bounded and observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time. In these terms, the action research described in Chapter five qualifies as a case study as it is bounded in time, place and number of participants.

Criticisms have been voiced concerning the inability of case study to supply generalisations that will be more widely applicable (Miles, 2015). However, this depends heavily on the ability of the researcher to establish connections between case and

context. I have tried to converge evidence from document analysis, interview data and professional reflection.

3.5.3 Action Research

Despite its long history of use in the field of education in general (Greenbank, 2007) action research has only recently been adopted for use in higher education (Gibbs et al, 2016, p12). It has been used extensively in research in both curriculum and pedagogy and is 'a central tool in the development of institutional change' (Ibid, p12). It is often described as a cyclic process composed of at least three basic stages – planning, action and reflection / evaluation (Greenbank, 2007; Hine, 2013; Tripp, 2005). It focuses on action – as an intervention or experiment undertaken to better understand and improve the material and discursive conditions of practice - and systematic, sustained reflection upon that action by the same practitioner (Torbrand, 2014). Action research shares with critical realism the ontological notion that the reality on which knowledge is based exists prior to cognition in the form of the social, cultural and historical context in which the research is positioned (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010).

Action research is frequently conceived of as collaborative or participative in nature (Hine, 2013; Greenbank, 2007; Gibbs et al, 2016) necessitating understanding of first person, second person and third person perspectives (Varela and Shear, 1999; Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). Three commitments or values are said to be foundational to these kinds of participatory action research; they create new knowledge capable of challenging that of dominant groups, they are transformative of oppressive relationships, challenging the conventional roles of researcher and researched and they give voice to local knowledges and cultures (Smith, et al, 2010). I use these criteria to evaluate the action-research project in chapter five.

Coghlan and Brannick (2010) identify one pre-step and four key stages in the action research cycle and these inform the structure of the case study. For greater economy, I collapsed the second, third and fourth of these into a single constructing and taking action stage. The fifth evaluation stage remained the same. I was thus left with a pre-step, which described in detail the context and purpose of the action research and two main stages in its implementation.

The initial Pre-Step sought to understand the macro contextual aspects, political, economic and social, that impacted upon the research site as well as the local structural and cultural factors; it identified the problems and the purposes of the research and began to develop collaborative relationships in which participants had shared ownership of these goals. The defining feature of the constructing and taking action stage was mutual dialogue between teachers in a professional team, in which key issues and themes underlying the planned curriculum initiative were reflected upon, discussed and put into practice. The case study evaluated the outcomes of the action research project in terms of the opportunities and barriers to partnership, the strategic priorities and rationales for cross-national engagement and the efficacy of the revised curriculum to realise teachers' aspirations.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The overreliance on personal reflection, tacit knowledge and intuitive knowledge in action research has been criticised for its lack of empirical rigor (Greenbank, 2007). The present study addressed this perceived deficit by widening the data sources through interviews and complementing reflective accounts with critical document analysis. The decision to incorporate more than one method of data collection was a deliberate attempt to increase the validity of the findings by triangulating evidence from multiple,

overlapping sources. The latter took place in an iterative fashion. Document analysis generated hypotheses to pursue during interviews and information and insights gathered during interviews and professional reflection generated hypotheses pertinent to the document analysis.

In chapter four, the research sought to find evidence of rationales for internationalisation in documents related to a conference on higher education, which was held in Yangon in 2014. The wide-ranging nature of the conference, encompassing national, regional and global perspectives, the availability of relevant documentation, including original PowerPoint Presentations and a succinct summary conference report, all made it an ideal source for analysis. In chapter five, the research broadened to include analysis of the key documents pertaining to the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR), the progress of the higher education law and the policies and priorities of the various development partners.

3.6.1 Document Analysis

This included analysis of policy documents pertinent to the process of higher education reform in Myanmar, including those produced by international bodies. The document analysis aimed to clarify and compare policy positions, arguments and discourses of key stakeholders in higher educational reform in Myanmar. The analysis in chapter four is focused on the 2014 GED (Global Education Dialogue) conference, which took place in Yangon, Myanmar in June 2014. The title of the conference was:

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The twenty-six presentations were given by a variety of Higher Education practitioners from South East Asia and beyond and the proceedings were summarised in a final GED report. The stated aim of the conference was to:

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The analysis looked for evidence from within the texts of how the broader educational and curricular context of higher education in Myanmar was being construed, the problematisations that were being produced, the arguments that were being constellated and the ways in which these related to broader debates over the purpose of higher education and the relative merits of STEM and the humanities within the curriculum. The analysis began with an examination of the twenty-six PowerPoints that made up the bulk of this two-day conference. Chapter five includes a detailed analysis of the CESR phase 1 and 2 documents that inform the rationales for the proposed reforms of the phase 3 National Education Strategic Plan (NESP).

Discourse analysis was composed of two principle stages.

Stage one: I highlighted those stretches of text, or individual words, which most clearly articulated the claims being made concerning educational reform in Myanmar and in the region and the lines of argument being put forward. These were examples of the practical arguments described by Fairclough (see section 3.8.1). I also highlighted examples of language being used to represent the context of reform and how this was being problematised. There were also examples of figurative language – metaphorical references, which, consciously or unconsciously, expressed views on the nature of HE reform; two examples explored in chapter four are the use of 'nurture' and 'evolve'. Key language was highlighted in green.

Stage two: Once identified, these arguments and representations were subject to the three forms of criticism outlined by Fairclough (2013). Analysis aimed to identify the policies being prioritised and the positions being taken. Comments arising from the analysis consisted of a blend of critical questions, summarisations and references to links within and between the texts. Such comments formed the basis of the 'critical commentaries' developed in chapters four and five. They were highlighted in yellow. The PowerPoint corpus represented twenty pages or approximately 20,000 words; an eight-page extract is included in appendix two. The final analysis of the GED report was thus anchored in a rich bed of description and extrapolation.

3.6.2   Semi-Structured Online Interviews

The implementation of cross-national partnerships took place during an extraordinary period of rapid and profound social and political change in Myanmar. It was important to elicit the voices of those closest to this process in order to obtain evidence of their strategic priorities and rationales for change. Qualitative interviewing is generally categorised into three categories; unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews (Robson, 2002). These differ according to the role played by the interviewer. In structured interviews, the questions are fixed and the participant is presented with a set of answers to choose from. In unstructured interviews, neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined. Semi-structured interviews allow the participant to answer a set of questions in their own words and encourage an in-depth evaluation of participants' attitudes toward the research topic, in this case the strategic priorities of the organisations represented by the participants (Robson, 2002). This type of interview has been characterised as a conversation and to succeed it was important to take into account the position of the participants, in particular, the limited time they had available, given the time difference between the UK and Myanmar. To address this, I

sent the list of possible interview questions to each participant prior to the SKYPE interview. The full set of interview questions is reproduced in appendix three.

In reality, given time limitations, the majority of responses were to the first of these questions: 'What are [name of organisation] main priorities for reform of the higher education curriculum in Myanmar?' I chose to use online interviewing using SKYPE. There were several reasons for this decision. The curriculum initiative was completed in September 2014 and this coincided with the ending of my contract at YU. I left Myanmar in 2015 without having been able to conduct any face-to-face interviews. SKYPE is free and relatively simple to use - given a reliable Wi-Fi signal and adds the potential for synchronous face-to face communication in real time (Fontes and Mahony, 2008). Participants were invited to respond to each question in as much detail as they wished and probing questions such as 'could you expand on this?' encouraged participants to reflect more fully on them. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

3.6.3 Sample and Recruitment

Sampling of respondents was carried out purposively as the priority was to capture rich and detailed, in depth, data on participants' experience of internationalisation and the curriculum. A small sample was selected as I was attempting to create an in depth understanding of the research topic and question rather than trying to make broader claims for a larger population. The three respondents to the present study were selected primarily on the basis that they had all been integrally involved in the implementation of higher education programmes in Myanmar. Care was taken to ensure that the data did not identify the participants.

3.6.4 Professional Reflection

Reflection is a core feature of the action research cycle (Gibbs et al, 2016) and is capable of unearthing hidden assumptions, cultural biases, doubts and tacit expectations (Smith et al, 2010). The action research provided an opportunity to engage in deep reflection on the curriculum initiative and my professional role within it. For this I kept a reflective diary in which I recorded the main stages of the action research, the partnerships that were formed and the outcomes of the in terms of learning aims, pedagogy, and assessment. This formed the first iterations of the case study described in chapter five. It built on Schon's (1987) theory of 'reflection in action', as a means to extract key learning points and decisions from within the action research process. This more systematic reflective process was on going for two years during which time I moved away from the university and the country.

The reliability of reflection as a data gathering tool has been challenged; one alleged disadvantage is attributed to the personal biases that can exist, based on one's own beliefs or one's own influence on other participants (Iacono et al, 2009). Another criticism centres on the possibility of objective detached observation when one is immersed in the phenomenon one wishes to reflect upon, as is clearly the case in many kinds of participatory action research such as this one. This was partially addressed through the collaborative nature of the project, which engendered shared reflection on the process of curriculum redesign. The establishment of a professional team of teachers provided a forum in which ideas could be exposed to the critical reflections of others. According to Jaipal and Figg (2011), collaboration can lead to change in teaching practice if there are opportunities for critical reflection on issues that teachers themselves identify as problematic. They argue that 'collaboration and reflection have been identified as foundational for successful teacher professional development'.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Up until recently, Myanmar was ruled by a military Junta who outlawed political opposition and cracked down hard on anyone who dared question their legitimacy, especially students. Research has traditionally been viewed with suspicion and actively discouraged. This situation has eased since the accession of the first quasi-civilian government in 2010 and the election of the opposition party to power in 2015. Nevertheless, I was aware of the need for sensitivity when carrying out the research. The following measures were taken: Prior to beginning the interviews, the purpose and design of the research project was fully explained to each respondent and their informed consent sought and gained. They were informed of their right to withdraw at any time during the data collecting process (BERA; Guidelines 10/11/ 14/15). Confidentiality was maintained throughout the data gathering process (BERA; Guideline 13). All hard copies of data were stored securely as were soft copies, including interview transcripts. Anonymity was guaranteed unless participants decided that their interests would be better served by disclosing their identities. Pseudonyms were used throughout the thesis. Questionnaires contained no identifiable reference to their respondents. Respondents were invited to participate on a voluntary basis. The researcher made the aims of the research clear to them prior to collecting any data as well as encouraging them to speak as openly and frankly as possible. An information leaflet outlining the aims, rationale and methods of the research was distributed to respondents prior to the data collecting process along with a consent form which they were asked to sign and return. All recorded and transcribed data, in whatever form, was made available to respondents for reflection, comment and revision (BERA; Guideline 31). I have adhered to the British Educational Research Association ethical guidance for Educational

Research (2004), which includes a commitment to respect 'the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom'.

Chapter Four: Critical Discourse Analysis: Global Education Dialogue: Myanmar

4.1 How the Context is Construed and Problematisations Produced.

4.1.1 The Global Education Dialogues: East Asia Series: 2013-2014

This section is devoted to a linguistic and semiotic analysis of documents related to a conference on Higher Education that was held in Yangon, Myanmar in 2014. This particular conference formed one of a series entitled the 'Global Education Dialogues' (GED), which were held in several East Asian countries from 2013 to 2015, in each case hosted and organised by the British Council. Two document sources will be examined - a short preamble (appendix four) to the whole series and a 2014 report (appendix five), produced by the British Council, following the Myanmar conference. Where possible, I try to identify the inter-textual links, the explicit and implicit references that emanate out of each text, connecting each one to others with a similar focus. Some of these documents are seminal in the sense that they inform the ideas, beliefs and values of others in the array. Examining the links between documents makes it possible to build up a picture of how the policy environment in which HE curricular reform is taking place is being represented. To understand the claims and arguments being put forward as HE policy it is vital to understand how circumstances are being represented and an agenda for change drawn up. By tunnelling between texts, following lines of reference, implicit or explicit, within them, it is possible to piece together the ideas, beliefs and values which are dominant in propelling a vision of higher education reform in Myanmar and in shaping the curriculum to fit these purposes. I draw liberally from the texts themselves to illustrate the nature of this process.

4.1.2 The GED Conference Series

In a preamble to the whole series (British Council, 2013), each conference, or policy dialogue, is described as having 'a specific and focused agenda' (p2), although it is possible to discern a number of interlinking themes. The overall purpose of the dialogues is described thus - 'The East Asia Series provides a programme of dialogues to frame the debate on the issues affecting higher education in East Asia and the UK' (p2).

The preamble opens by stating that 'East Asia faces a fundamental question in how to sustain or even accelerate the economic growth of recent decades' (p2) and continues by asserting that

'The emphasis is on higher productivity and competitiveness in an increasingly global market with investment in human capital, research and development (R&D) and technological progress' (p2).

It goes on to describe the crucial role played by Higher Education in overcoming obstacles to economic growth. East Asia is singled out as a region 'undergoing a transformation' (p2) and this is coupled with a reference to statistics, which show that five Asian universities are in the 'top 50' of the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2012-2013 – a measure of performance designed to 'judge world class universities' (p2). The preamble refers initially to the 'international environment' (p2) and then, more specifically, to the 'globally integrated economy' (p2). It describes the need for 'collaboration' (p3) and the formation of 'networks' (p2) in order to overcome 'common challenges' (p3) of which four are cited; first, the 'education and skills they [HEIs] offer to young people' (p2); second, the need to be 'successful in

research' (p2); third, 'the needs of local and global communities' (p2) and finally, the implications of the international landscape for 'university leadership' (p2).

The dialogues are promoted as an opportunity for a 'facilitated dialogue' between 'governments, universities and industry' (p2) in which 'leading thinkers', 'policy makers and influencers' and 'government and industry leaders' (p2) can come together to reflect, explore and debate the future of higher education. This is undertaken in order to better equip participants to 'play their role in the future-proofing of higher education in their countries' (p2). As mentioned above, there are a number of common themes running through each series of conferences. A focus on the potential uses of digital technology in higher education is shared by conferences in Beijing, Dubai, Seoul and Ho Chi Minh; a focus on the need to develop greater links and partnerships between HEIs and industry in the pursuit of commercialisation and economic growth is shared by conferences in Ho Chi Minh, Singapore, Phuket, Canberra, Tokyo and Gwangzhou. Individual themes include reputation management (Tokyo), inclusive leadership (Hong Kong), approaches to internationalisation (Indonesia) and universities as agents of social change (The Philippines). The theme of the Myanmar conference concerns the role of the ASEAN university, setting the context for discussion and debate on contemporary issues of internationalisation.

4.1.3 Critical Commentary

The GED literature promotes itself as a time and a space for exploration and debate on the future of Higher Education. The parameters for this debate are clearly laid out in this short three paragraph preamble with eight references to 'economic', five to 'productivity', eight to 'growth' and three to 'competition'. The debate is centred on how to make HEIs more responsive to the economic needs and aspirations of East Asian

countries. The problem faced by these countries is how to 'sustain or even accelerate' (p2) economic growth. This is set against a backdrop of increasing ASEAN economic integration and the development in 2015 of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The goal of the conference series is to contribute to 'evidence led policy developments' (p2) that will deliver solutions to this problem in the form of successful research and there is an argument that greater collaboration and networking across the region is a means to accomplish this goal. The rationale underlying these proposals is for the most part couched in economic terms with Higher Education envisioned as a means to promote economic growth.

The conference titles (appendix six) generally reflect a preoccupation with the economic benefits of an expanding knowledge economy, powered by technological innovation in the shape of digital platforms. This is not unusual and as outlined in chapter two there is a large and growing body of literature pointing directly to this phenomenon. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to construe this as a single story or as a single plot. Another discourse can be detected along the margins of the text, a GED conference in Phuket, Thailand bears reference to social and economic growth (my italics) and one of the conferences in Cebu, The Philippines devotes itself more or less exclusively to the role of HEIs in social change, democratisation and issues of social justice.

Although curriculum is not mentioned explicitly, there are clear implications for its development. The text defines the purpose of reform as 'greater productivity, growth, and technological development' (p2). However, there is also evidence of another more socially and culturally oriented rationale for Higher Educational reform and the existence of a discourse which could strengthen the case for continued support of the liberal arts and humanities.

4.2 The 2014 GED Conference in Myanmar

The conference was held in Yangon, Myanmar in June, 2014. The title of the conference as stated in the subsequent report was:

'Locally Engaged, Globally Facing: From national industry to regional player to global system – What is the role of the ASEAN University?' (British Council, 2014)

The event was a collaborative undertaking between the British Council, UNESCO and the Myanmar Ministry of Education (MOE). Speakers were from Myanmar, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia, Australia and the UK and represented Academia, Industry, the UN, and various research organisations. The conference took place over two days and was attended by government ministers, parliamentarians, national and international academics and education experts. Attendance was by invitation only. I was fortunate to have been invited to attend. It left a residue of twenty-six PowerPoint Presentations, which serve as 'corollary documents' (Yates and Orlikowski, 2007, p11) to the event itself. The twenty-six presentations were given by a variety of higher education practitioners from South East Asia and beyond. The report is a summary of the key themes that were discussed and the arguments concerning higher education reform that were put forward during the conference. The introduction to the report consists of a background, a forward by Dr Jamil Salmi, Global Tertiary Education Expert of the World Bank and an executive summary by Caroline Chipperfield, Deputy Director, Education (East Asia), British Council. This is followed by four sections written by contributors to the conference and, finally, a set of conclusions.

4.2.1 The GED 2014 Report

The document consists of an introductory sequence, followed by three sections, each reflecting a different perspective on Myanmar HE reform – national, regional and global, written by selected presenters from the conference; a fourth section is entitled 'a peek into the future' and the document ends with a set of bulleted conclusions. In its design and layout it resembles a series of PowerPoint slides, reminiscent of the series of twenty-six PowerPoint Presentations, which make up the backbone of this particular conference. The introductory sequence comprises a background, a forward and an executive summary. The first two sections both contain a subsection entitled 'the challenges ahead' and another entitled 'case study'.

4.2.2 Introduction to the Report

According to the background of the report, the purpose of the conference was to 'redefine the role of universities within the establishment of the ASEAN economic community (AEC) in 2015' (p2). The executive summary phrases it more succinctly, 'to help Myanmar's higher education sector integrate into a vibrant and inclusive economic region' (p6). A significant discussion thread concerning the problematisations of quality is introduced; how to achieve quality improvements across the region and the use of global rankings systems and benchmarking as a potential means to accomplish this. There are references to either 'regional / ASEAN' and/or 'global' / 'international' standards throughout the text.

The forward is by Jamil Salmi, who until recently served as the coordinator of the World Bank's tertiary education program, and consists of three paragraphs. It begins with the claim that 'long term prosperity' (p5) is dependent upon 'an innovative higher education system' particularly in countries with 'limited human capital' (p5). The present simple

tense is used throughout the paragraph to describe the role of HEIs. This tense is typically used to refer to factual or routine situations as opposed to those that are possible or hypothesised. In this account, HEIs exist to 'support knowledge-driven economic growth and poverty reduction strategies'. They do this by training 'high level professionals … generating new knowledge … accessing and adapting … existing stores of global knowledge' (p5) to resolve 'local challenges and problems' (p5). Research universities are described as 'crucial in … the preparation of advanced human capital' (p5). The problem for HEIs in low-income countries such as Myanmar is that they are not currently in a position to access this knowledge or be able to 'participate effectively … on an equal basis with the top academic institutions in the world' (p5). The modal verb must is used to exhort participants to action, 'ASEAN universities must rise to this important responsibility' (p5). There is an 'imperative' need to:

'create a sense of urgency among the entire university community and to convince everyone of the necessity of achieving a good fit between the outputs of the university and the development requirements of ASEAN societies and economies' (p5).

The present tense is also used in the final line to describe the current context which once again reinforces the idea that HEIs have a predominantly economic role to play; 'as government authorities and university leaders team up to align ASEAN universities closer to the economies of the Region'. However, inserted into the last few lines of the second paragraph we find:

'In addition to their contribution to economic development, research universities play a key societal role by serving as cultural institutions, centres for social commentary and criticism, and as intellectual hubs' (p5).

4.2.3 Critical Commentary

The title of the report itself, with its twin references to 'global' and 'local, appears to be pointing to a particular view of globalisation as glocalisation - a phenomenon that has been described in both economic and socio-cultural terms. The title makes visible a certain stance with regard to globalisation - one that is taken to be desirable, yet not without tension. 'Engaged' (p1) implies activity and commitment whilst 'facing' (p1) suggests a more observant position. The theme of the conference suggests a process of evolution in the role of HEIs. This is described in nested fashion, 'from…national…to regional…to global' (p1) and signals the structure of the whole document with each section being devoted to a particular perspective. The nouns which these adjectives complement move 'from…industry…to player…to system' (p1). Industry is the starting point. 'Player' (p1) has strong entrepreneurial connotations related to influence in the world of business. 'System' (p1) implies organisation beyond national borders. The verbs 'evolve' (p6), 'develop' (p6), 'deliver' (p6), 'steer' (p6) and 'nurture' (p6) are used to describe the strategic path that HEIs should follow if they are to be 'fit for the future' (p6). 'Fit' is used twice in the introduction to refer to the adaptation that HEIs in Myanmar must make if they are to meet the development requirements of the ASEAN economic zone. The argument uses evolutionary metaphors, possibly unconsciously, to make the case for a closer association between HEIs, industry and regional development. The use of the present tense reinforces the notion that this process is somehow natural and inevitable. The close association of 'urgent' and 'imperative' (p5) in the making of the argument adds further to its rhetorical force.

In contrast to this, scattered throughout the introduction, is an appeal to '…consider the role of higher education as a public good and the need for universities to balance an economic focus with a focus on society and culture' (p2). These segments are positioned

toward the end of their respective sections almost as an afterthought or as a savoury accompaniment to the main meal; a strikingly similar pattern to that found in the preamble. They sit uncomfortably alongside phrases such as, '…the preparation of advanced human capital' (p5), which has inescapable associations with the preparation of a bacteriological sample of some kind. Thus, two discourses are introduced and two distinct arguments as to the purpose of higher education are made. The economic argument receives the most attention yet a socio- cultural rationale is clearly present from the beginning. The former is contextualised – a response or alignment to the perceived challenges facing ASEAN economies - while the latter appears de-contextualised and somewhat adrift from the main thrust of the text. The relationship between these two discourses as well as their ideological differences will be pursued in subsequent sections.

4.3   Section One: The National View

Section one is entitled 'The National View' (p7) and is written by Dr Morshidi Sirat of the University of Malaysia. It begins with a quote from his presentation that strongly reinforces the economic rationale for HE reform:

'Education is about development of the people and higher education reforms in Myanmar which focused on human capital and capacity building for economic development is a step in the right direction' (p7).

The 'National View' is coloured by the fact that Myanmar currently holds the chairmanship of ASEAN and that ASEAN itself is 'on the cusp of integration' (p7). The current political context in Myanmar is characterised as one of 'great change' (p7) toward 'liberalisation … democratisation and Internationalisation' (p7), following the official dissolution of the military junta in 2011. Educational reform measures are

referenced firstly to the Comprehensive Educational Sector Review (CESR) a wide-ranging assessment process, which began in mid-2012.

Dr Sirat also points to the Education Promotion Implementation Committee (EPIC). EPIC was set up by the Myanmar government in 2013 to accelerate the reform process and to 'create a fast track (or a number of quick wins) for reform' (British Council, 2015). The term 'quick wins' has proliferated in the literature on Myanmar educational reform. These initiatives are perceived to be precursors of new legislation, most notably the drafting of a higher education law in 2015/2016. The implementation of which would be under the control of a new ministry.

The main priorities and goals for HE reform in Myanmar are defined as institutional autonomy, TVET and the growth of 'private universities and colleges' (p8). However, alongside the clear economic chorus is a refrain, also detectable elsewhere, that is concerned to 'balance an economic focus with a focus on society and culture' (p2). Indeed, the first recommendation that the report makes refers explicitly to the need for universities to be:

'considered in both economic and social/cultural terms, with opportunities in developing human capital, research and innovation as clearly articulated as those in curating knowledge…' (p9).

There is a strong emphasis on the need to develop research universities that have strong links to industry and research capabilities that are focused on 'energy generation and/or food security' (p9). Reforms in the governance of HEIs centre on the need for greater institutional autonomy, a stronger grassroots leadership as well as a 'robust regulatory framework' (p9) to ensure accountability to society. The final recommendation in section one is reserved for 'innovative teaching and learning practices based on the

needs of 21st Century students and national skills priorities' (p9). Internationalisation is visualised as the main means or 'tool' (p9) to realise these goals yet there is also an expressed commitment to 'the community' (p9) and the university as an 'anchor institution deeply connected to society' (p9).

Page nine of this section is devoted to a case study of the evolving partnership between Oxford University and Yangon University to provide academic, administrative and infrastructural support in the fields of English, law and medicine. A series of targeted initiatives have been developed, aimed at creating 'joint research programmes in history and gender studies and curriculum support for a possible political science programme' (p10).

4.3.1 Critical Commentary

The initial quote characterises the role of education as 'development of the people' (p7). This is formulated in financial terms - 'human capital and capacity building for economic development' (p7) - a conception which establishes education as a vehicle for the production, or preparation, of skilled labour. This constitutes a view of development that puts people at the service of the economy and views education as instrumental in the achievement of this goal. This is what Dr Sirat claims is 'the right direction' (p7) and in the initial line of the argument, the parameters of the debate are set quite narrowly on the best, or quickest, means by which this could be achieved; the term quick wins, a predominantly business and marketing expression, is frequently used in the context of HE reform in Myanmar and signals an urgent need for certain goals to be realised in the short, rather than long, term. Dr Sirat defines the current political situation in Myanmar in fairly positive terms following the 'official dissolution' (p7) of the ruling military junta in 2011. 'Dissolution' is quite a strong term to use, of course, when one quarter of

Myanmar's parliament is reserved for unelected ex-military officers whose block vote ensures that proposals to change the constitution are vetoed and who wield immense financial power.

ASEAN is set to become a fully integrated economic community in 2015. At the same time, Myanmar has assumed the chairmanship of ASEAN for the first time since joining the organisation in 1997. This is a particularly challenging position for a country whose relations with its regional neighbours has until recently been depicted as 'turbulent' (Sun, 2014, p1). An NVIVO count of word frequency patterns within the document is revealing of the reorientation that is currently taking place. Global and international are used with far less frequency than regional and ASEAN. Indeed, ASEAN is the third most frequently used word in the document after education and higher. The context for internationalisation is the region and, in particular, the nascent ASEAN Economic Community' (AEC). We can observe here the beginnings of a major line of argument, one that is committed to the idea that the purpose of higher educational reform nationally is to help promote greater regional integration. At the same time, internationalisation is represented as a 'driver' (p9) of this change and as a means by which it might be achieved. Circumstances are depicted as labile and the international landscape of higher education as 'fast moving' (p6), building the momentum of the argument.

The tone remains positive throughout with one notable exception when there is a reference to Myanmar HEIs 'reluctance to consolidate' (p9). This refers to the historical situation, in which HEIs, each under the control of a particular ministry, have competed for funding and prestige and to the extremely fragmented nature of the educational landscape - a result of the former military governments' traditional fear of student rebellion and its divide and rule response which decentralised the student population by moving campuses to the outskirts of cities. The 'challenges ahead' (p9) section similarly

refrains from any overt criticism of the current system and simply lists a set of eight recommendations for change. As outlined above, the first recommendation combines diverse reform rationales, economic, social and political. In this initial representation, economic and social rationales appear to be in equilibrium, equally significant and worth pursuing; however, the curating of knowledge is never mentioned again.

Much more weight is given to issues of governance and especially to the notion of autonomy. Myanmar's higher education system is a highly centralised affair in which announcements and pronouncements cascade from above to be acted upon by individual institutions in a timely manner, as I have myself witnessed while working in the English Department of Yangon University. The final recommendation takes up a similar theme as it calls upon universities to be 'deeply connected' (p9) to the [local] community as anchor institutions. As well as signalling the need to obtain the right balance between autonomy and accountability, the metaphor also points toward a notion of stability in a sea of rapid change.

The proposal to develop research capability is a very recent development in the history of Myanmar's HE sector, which, as a result of years of centralised military control, has traditionally been very suspicious of research. In the GED report it is linked quite explicitly to the needs of industry and the growing demand for human capital. Myanmar has one of the lowest levels of expenditure on research and research output in Asia. This reflects the comparatively low levels of enrolment onto Masters and Doctoral programs in general. The main areas for research focus have traditionally been medicine and agriculture with a more recent heightening of interest in computer sciences. Japan and Thailand are the chief international collaborators.

4.4 Section Two: The Regional View

Section Two is written by Dr Dr Libing Wang, Chief of Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) and Senior Specialist in Higher Education, UNESCO. Myanmar has sent ministers and senior level academicians to higher education events hosted by APEID, including the 2014 Higher Education Summit in Hong Kong. Its overall aims are to promote technical co-operation and sustainable development in the region (UNESCO, 2015). The section opens with a statement in quotation marks:

'Education is key for a successful ASEAN, particularly the free movement of staff and students through harmonisation' (p11).

It is apparent that a successful ASEAN will not be limited to academic mobility but will also involve the creation of 'a strong regional identity' (p11) and a 'distinctive ASEAN identity for universities' (p12). Dr Wang quotes the ASEAN motto, 'one vision, one identity, one community' (p11).   Despite this, ASEAN is characterised as unequal and divided with the low income countries focused on purely national priorities while the higher income countries are concerned with issues of quality improvement and greater international recognition. This regional identity it is argued will help to 'define an ASEAN student experience' (p12). The distinctive attributes of such an identity are to be based on a 'range of ASEAN competencies' (p12), which are derived from a transnational consortium - the ATC21C - led by Melbourne University in partnership with global telecommunication corporations Cisco, Microsoft and Intel with which Dr Wang is affiliated. The ATC21C have developed a set of what they call '21st Century skills' (p12). These are curricula designed to better equip graduates with the kinds of transferable skills necessary for 'an improved workforce' (ATC21C, 2015). These skills are said to

reflect, 'the international outlook of the ASEAN community and the need for their graduates to compete successfully in a global marketplace' (p12). A distinctive feature of such a model, according to Dr Wang, is that it is 'unconstrained by history or established systems' (p12) and can 'leapfrog' (p12) such thinking in order to speed up the process of regional alignment. The section ends with a short one paragraph case study of the ASEAN University Network (AUN), which aims to promote collaboration and cooperation within an existing network of thirty member universities and 'serve as the policy-oriented body in higher education in the ASEAN region' (p14).

Increasing global competition is posited as the main driver of regional integration as the countries of ASEAN seek to form a single economic community. Dr Wang claims that increasing mobility, particularly student mobility, between these countries is increasing and organisations, including HEIs, are therefore feeling the 'pressure… to harmonise' (p11) their systems. There is also recognition that such a process cannot take place without a simultaneous cultural reorientation - one of the foremost priorities of the ASEAN five year Work Plan on Education (2011 – 2015) is to 'cultivate a regional perspective' (p11). Questions arise as to what such a perspective might consist of, how educational systems are to be utilised in its constitution and how this could eventually impact on the shape of the HE curriculum.

4.4.1 Critical Commentary

Internationalisation imagined as regionalisation is the dominant discourse employed in this section. It is not made clear whether the creation of a 'regional identity' (p11) is a means to realise such unification or an end in itself. The concept is central to related texts, which develop this discourse in more detail. Section E of the 'ASEAN Socio-Cultural Blueprint' (Secretariat, ASEAN, 2009) describes what such identity might consist of. The

blueprint is a key policy document outlining the concrete actions that must be taken in order to establish an ASEAN socio-cultural community. This forms one of the three pillars of the ASEAN community alongside the political and security community and the economic community. Section E is entitled 'Building ASEAN Identity' (p20) and revolves around five strategic objectives. The first and foremost of these is to promote ASEAN awareness and a sense of community through deeper mutual understanding. This assumes that there is a unique history to the region and that there is a distinct ASEAN cultural heritage. Both of these ideas are problematic given the extremely heterogeneous nature of South East Asia which exhibits a wide range of social and economic disparities, from low income countries such as Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar to middle and, arguably, high income countries such as Malaysia and Singapore (Archarya and Layug, 2012). Culturally, many South East Asian nations are internally very complex consisting of diverse ethnic groups, traditions and aspirations that challenge the presumption of a common heritage (Jonsson, 2010). Another difficulty is the competing vision of a wider ASEAN +3, including the North East Asian countries of Japan, China and Korea. This may prove to be a stronger bloc in terms of global market competitiveness (Jonsson, 2010). Finally, the notion of region, so central to this conference, is a contested concept and does not easily map onto existing geographical locations, so, for example, East Timor is not a member of ASEAN. Archarya and Layug (2012) argue that ASEAN identity is an elitist concept configured by regional authoritarian regimes and that the most salient feature countries in this region share in common is the presence of autocratic forms of government, eager to preserve their sovereignty through policies of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.

Within the GED conference, higher education is being represented as the principal means by which awareness of such a regional identity can be developed and a

distinctive ASEAN identity for universities' defined and articulated. However, there is ambivalence as to how such a regional system is to provide students with a uniquely ASEAN experience - not necessarily a direct replication of a more globalised, westernised, version. At this stage, there is little evidence for much beyond a narrowly economistic version of regionalisation, which prioritises a shared need for human capital capable of fuelling the knowledge economy and building ASEAN's competitive strength in relation to China and the West. A question also arises as to the position of ethnic minorities within the higher educational system and how curricula aimed at constituting a regional identity, as with those which aim to foster a national identity, might relate to their own values, beliefs and aspirations.

The package of 'ASEAN competencies' (p11) described in this section is typical of similar sets of what have loosely become known as graduate capabilities, qualities or attributes, produced by universities across the world; partly, it is argued, as the consequence of an increasing emphasis on employability (Leask, 2015). The ATC21C, it is claimed, '…reflects the international outlook of the ASEAN community' (p12). This is ironic, given its roots in western institutions and ideas; the ATC21C has been developed by Melbourne University. Indeed, the concept of '21st Century skills, of which the ATC21C is an example, has been elaborated by institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and development (OECD) education directorate and the European Union and the US Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) and has attracted the interest and support of major global IT companies such as Microsoft and CISCO. According to Voogt and Roblin (2010, p1) 'these frameworks seem to converge on a common set of 21st century skills namely: collaboration, communication, ICT literacy, and social and/or cultural competencies. It is clear that the dominant attributes are geared toward employment in the global 'knowledge economy' and it is telling that, in the GED report,

Dr Wang is so quick to tie these competencies to industry and competition in the global marketplace. The section as a whole takes what could be termed a hard business approach to curricular development by deemphasising the development of a wider set of potential graduate attributes beyond employability. It is tempting to put this down to the rush toward economic and commercial development so characteristic of the current climate in Myanmar as foreign investment increases and the economy, measured in gross domestic product (GDP), continues to expand – a growth rate of 7% in 2014 – 2015 (Findley et al, 2015).

The section ends with a one paragraph 'case study' (p14) of the ASEAN University Network (AUN). It is important to understand the position of the AUN with regard to higher educational reform in Myanmar. The AUN promotes itself as '…the policy-oriented body in higher education in the ASEAN region' (p14). Its initially stated aim is to:

'hasten (my italics) the solidarity and development of a regional identity through the promotion of human resource development so as to further strengthen the existing network of leading universities and institutions of higher learning in the region' (AUN, 2015).

This resonates strongly with the sense of urgency articulated earlier in the GED document and with Dr Wang's claim that '...developing national systems have an opportunity to leapfrog their thinking and immediately align their national systems with a regional standard' (p12). On the other hand, these exhortations are identified as a possible issue or challenge to university governance; at the end of the report, in a summary of discussions held by groups of participants to the conference, under the label 'speed of transition' (p27).

One consequence of the rapidity with which change is taking place is the manner by which international organisations currently engage with institutions within Myanmar. For example, many partnerships have been initiated not by Yangon University but by foreign organizations. Foreign universities poured in after 2012 and Yangon University has developed an 'opportunistic approach' to signing agreements with them (Griffith, 2014, p19); however, many of these agreements lack a clear purpose and there is a need for the university to take a more strategic approach to internationalisation (ibid, 2014). According to Griffith, the main stumbling block, is the low level of autonomy enjoyed by the university.

The goals of the AUN are to be realised through strategies aimed at increasing student and staff mobility and exchange between countries in the region, collaboration on the development of courses, programs and research and in the establishment of regional quality assurance mechanisms (AUN, 2015). Between 2004 and 2006, the AUN published guidelines and then a manual entitled 'Guide to AUN Actual Quality Assessment at Programme Level' (AUN, 2011). The guidelines set standards and propose mechanisms, such as benchmarking procedures, that it claims are applicable to any university in the region, enabling them to implement quality assessment practices. Quality audits based on the guidelines have been carried out since that time. AUN have been gathering data at Yangon University since September 2015.

The 'AUN Guide to Actual Quality Assessment at Programme Level: Criterion One' (ibid, p14) outlines a broad spectrum of learning outcomes that the general HE curriculum would be expected to promote. These consist of a commonly encountered blend of skills and dispositions as well as broader attitudes or competencies. Its modus operandi is described in quite mechanistic terms. For example, there are 'control mechanisms' (ibid, p9) which can be put into place to ensure quality of 'input, process' and output' (ibid,

p44) in teaching and learning. The rationale for curriculum design is framed as the promotion of learning and learning how to learn. Initially, there is a strong emphasis on personal intellectual development. The guide outlines certain dispositions which it aims to 'instil' (ibid, p14) in students such as 'willingness to experiment with new ideas and practices' (ibid, p14) and commitment to lifelong learning and critical enquiry. Sandwiched within this arrangement are study and IT skills. The curriculum offers to students the chance to develop abilities beginning with the ability to 'develop their own personality, to have an academic attitude and to be competent in their field of study' (ibid, p14). The appeal to a seemingly more academic rationale for higher education sits alongside the 'transferable [and] leadership skills' (ibid, p14) students should have and the notion that they should be 'oriented to the job market and able to develop their careers' (ibid, p14).

The document is replete with diagnostic questions and the very first asks - 'why are we educating? - What is the educational philosophy behind the programme?' (ibid, p15). It is unfortunate that such philosophical questions are quickly eclipsed by more practical concerns such as 'to what extent and how do we try to tune the programme to the labour market?' [and] 'Is there a well-defined job profile?' (ibid, p15). The goal of the AUN-QA is to ensure quality education and graduate competencies and to promote student, professional and workplace mobility.

The emphasis on mobility is problematic if it is conditional on students remaining in the host country to work. Such policy-conditional forms of assistance, prioritising the role of the private sector, are also characteristic of the ADB's approach to development aid and have been criticised for their overtly neoliberal stance, which it is argued has led to increasing inequality (Guttal, 2005; Ryder, 2000).

4.5   Section Three: Global Systems

The final section is written by Phil Baty, editor of the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings. In it, he claims that a successful national higher education system is increasingly linked to the image of a successful nation within the global knowledge economy, arguing that many universities are 'on a quest to achieve world-class status' (p14). There is a strong assumption that competition is the main driving force behind higher educational reform in the rhetorical question - 'But how does a university, maybe strong nationally, compete with the international heavyweights?' (p14). The solution put forward to this perceived problem is the use of global league tables such as the THE as a means to benchmark performance against other universities. The argument acknowledges the growing criticisms of such systems and their use of indicators such as the number of Nobel prizes awarded to a particular university and admits that they could be seen 'as a way of creating an exclusive club' (p14). He suggests instead that their real value lies in their ability to provide data, which universities can then use to develop strategies for improvement. The Times Higher Education 100 under 50 Rankings are given as an example of what can be achieved by newer universities, especially those in ASEAN, in a comparatively short time. According to this argument, the key to such success depends on HEIs 'being distinctive and confident' (p15). The section ends, as do the others, with a case study. In this instance King Mongkhut University of Technology Thornburi (KMUTT) in Thailand. This is a science and technology institute that has evolved as a result of international cooperation, originally between Thailand and Japan. It is included in the THE along with seven other Thai HEIs.

4.5.1 Critical Commentary

Evaluation of the performance of HEIs in regard to the World Rankings has become dominated by quantitative measurement, mostly focused on research output in terms of publication and citation rates, rather than the quality of learning or teaching (Marginson, 2007). There are other concerns that are not addressed in these rankings – curriculum, in the sense of the range of disciplines that are on offer, the interest and funding that particular departments are able to attract, how curricula are designed and, most significantly, the extent to which they contain an international dimension all appear to go unremarked. The only exception to this in the THE 2014-2015 description of its ranking system is a reference to the inclusion of issues relevant to employability in the curriculum (THE, 2015). Very germane to the present thesis is that the methodologies employed by ranking systems rely on citation counts in high impact journals which tend to favour STEM subjects and thus 'the arts, humanities and to a large extent the social sciences remain underrepresented in rankings' (Rauhvargers, 2013, p19). There is a strong weighting given to publication in prestigious journals and this is indicative of an emphasis on reputation based on research excellence; such ranking systems favour elite institutions whose status and reputation is perpetuated as HEIs seek to strengthen their position with regard to only those indicators most valued in the ranking system. The consequence of this is a homogenisation of what universities seek to prioritise in the curriculum (ibid, 2008) and this contrasts strongly with the argument put forward in this section regarding the need for distinctiveness.

The stress on research excellence leads to the privileging of elite institutions, which are specialised in fields such as medicine and engineering, rather than in the arts and humanities. This is borne out in the above-mentioned Times Higher Education 100 under

50 Rankings in which for the past two years the top five ranked institutions have all been specialised in technology.

A vocal critic of the disadvantages of such systems is Phil Baty himself who has written of the '…extraordinarily rich diversity [of HEIs], which can never be captured by the THE World University Rankings' (Baty cited in Rauhvargers, 2013, p21). He has also pointed to an innate subjective bias exercised by the rankings when academics are asked for their opinions on what they consider to be a world-class university; in this case, they tend to favour those institutions with an already high reputation thus reinforcing their dominance in the rankings. Reputational rankings have been criticised in particular for their reliance on subjective opinion (Marginson, 2007; Delgado-Márquez et al, 2011). The use of an internationalisation indicator has also been criticised as it relies solely on volumes such as publication in internationally recognised journals, numbers of foreign students studying at an institution or numbers of student- faculty exchanges rather than the quality of learning. Marginson argues that 'In fact there is a serious danger that the incentives triggered by rankings will detour universities from the renovation of pedagogy and curricula, which will not show up in the rankings position' (Marginson, 2007, p140). These criticisms go unmentioned in the GED report, which represents the goal of inclusion into the rankings as an unalterable fact of higher educational reform in Myanmar. The upsurge of interest in and openness to the development of research expertise is to be welcomed; however, there is a danger that the rush toward world class status will detract from efforts designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and put pressure on those disciplines which are not perceived to be contributing to commercial research.

The inclusion of a case study provides an evidence base for policy arguments put forward in this section. King Mongkhut University is represented as an example of a

successful regional university, as measured by its rapid rise in the THE Asia rankings, exceeding that of the more traditional Thai liberal arts universities, such as Mahidol and Chulalongkorn. This success is predicated on the strong ties it has made with industry, its practical orientation, described here using the term 'practical mindfulness', and a commitment to education, which is regionally and locally relevant. It claims to work not only in the productive sector but also with rural and less fortunate communities. Its key activities, however, reside squarely within the productive sector and are especially focused on SMEs (Small and Medium sized Enterprises) in fields such as agriculture, bio-pharmacology and IT.

The case study appears to shift the argument away from a preoccupation with prestige toward a more practical concern with quality improvement and the use of rankings as a performance tool through which universities can compare themselves to others, nationally, regionally and globally. The limitations on rankings systems described above can be applied in the case of KMUUT whose rise in the rankings is based on increases in income from industry and rising citation counts. These counts and associated measures such as impact factors have been criticised for the fact that the evaluation of the worth of research is in the hands of commercial enterprises, namely publishing companies, who stand to make large profits from sales of their journals which are boosted by citation counts (Figà-Talamanca, 2007). Numerous cases of manipulation have been reported such as company editors, attempting to increase their own Journal Impact Factor (JIF) by putting pressure on authors and institutions to include citations of other journals owned by the company in their publications (Matthews, 2015). Notwithstanding these criticisms, KNUTT has risen in the rankings and is being held up as a model for Myanmar HEIs to follow.

Three contrasting pieces of evidence suggest that the inclusion of KMUTT in the THE rankings systems do not adequately reflect its nature or ethos and thus cannot and should not be used as a model for reform elsewhere. First, the university has carried out some fascinating experiments in hands on learning in remote communities, not all of which have been successful, but which are suggestive of a more humanistic non-profit approach to research and development. These were based on close collaboration between researchers and local people and have been described as 'living laboratories' (Commins et al, 2011, p2). Second, KNUTT has recently been accused of embezzling over fifty million US dollars. This impropriety has been explained as a failure in university governance (Terdpaopong & Trimek, 2015). Third, its commitment to relevant excellence is called into question in the following comment, which challenges the supposed success of KMUTTs activities and competence in a variety of areas;

'One major problem is the limited entrepreneurial activity, its techno entrepreneurial programme has generated limited interest among students, and few spin-offs have emerged from the university and its industry-related facilities. Furthermore, there is little activity in the industrial campus built around the university' (UNCTAD, 2015, p25).

None of these facts are capable of being reflected in the THE rankings system with its narrow focus on citation counts yet they are crucial determinants of KMUTT's institutional identity both past and present and call into question its suitability as a model for Myanmar HE reform.

4.6 Section Four: A Peek into the Future

The final section includes several significant announcements, signalled by the use of the modal 'will'. ASEAN is represented as being on the rising cusp of a process of union that in 2015 will put it in a position to deliver policies aimed at increasing regional integration

of higher education systems – 'deliver a mandate' (p17) is the chosen expression. These systems 'will play an important role in leading social change and economic growth' (p17). Three stakeholders in the higher education reform process are cited - The British Council, University Alliance and HE experts. They are 'considering these questions, exploring the future of higher education in South East Asia' (p17). The result of this engagement will be a Mont Fleur scenario planning exercise which the report states will allow 'debate of the challenges facing the region and creative thought about the future' (p17).

4.6.1 Critical Commentary

Regionalisation is once again cast as the sine qua non of higher education reform in South East Asia. The declared mandate is most likely a reference to the formation of the AEC in 2015. Stakeholders are UK organisations apart from the enigmatic HE experts. The British Council's continuing involvement in Myanmar's education systems has been long and deep reaching, including support for the CESR process and the brokering of partnerships between UK and Myanmar HEIs. University Alliance is a grouping of 23 UK universities that was established in 2006. The group has strong connections with business and seeks to promote the interests of member institutions through strengthening links with industry as well as affording a platform on which HEIs with a similar mission can collectively lobby for changes in HE policy. Its predominant interest is in disciplines such as science and technology (University Alliance, 2015). Such groupings are increasingly making their presence felt in the international arena. Their inclusion in the Myanmar reform process indicates the extent of this outreach, the economic rationale behind the strategy and the direction such a relationship is likely to take to support the translation and commercialisation of knowledge (Ibid, 2015).

One might think that the Mont Fleur scenario planning exercise, which was originally developed in post-apartheid South Africa, would be an appropriate vehicle with which to explore the possibilities of HE reform in Myanmar, given the diversity of the stakeholders involved. Scenario planning exercises such as this one typically focus on long term opportunities and challenges rather than short term strategic imperatives (Sayers, 2010) and this accords with the various 30 year plans much favoured by the Myanmar government. According to Van Notten (2006, p5), the exercise is an example of 'pre-policy analysis' in which various futures, both positive and negative, are imagined and a preliminary set of policy recommendations drawn up. The broader appeal of such an exercise lies in its emphasis on argumentation and debate, however, there are questions, previously mentioned, concerning how broadly the parameters of such a debate are set and how inclusive and dialogic it needs to be in order to avoid being merely cosmetic (Van Notten, 2006). The evidence of this analysis suggests a strong push toward a market-oriented, vocational and research led model of HEI evolution with an accompanying accent on regional identity and South East Asian cultural awareness. This has been presented as a seemingly unassailable argument, one that has profound implications for curriculum diversity and design.

Five factors – social, technological, economic, environmental and political - are represented as key influences on the size and shape of higher education in the region. Socially, the expansion of the middle class is linked to 'a change in young people's aspirations and family expectations' (p14) concerning the value of higher education. Technologically, social media, distance education and technology in the classroom are cited as the chief considerations. Economically, the relationship between education and employment is highlighted as well as 'collaboration between business and universities on skills and research' (p14). Environmentally, there is recognition of the need to 'raise

environmental standards [and] provide a lead on environmental/sustainable areas of research' (p14). Politically, leadership, regional collaboration, student mobility and ASEAN as 'the platform for international partnership and competition' (p15) are the constituent features. Two factors or dominant themes were eventually selected – the social and the economic - underpinning the development of four rudimentary scenarios. These two themes are represented as mutually exclusive - 'The social extreme looked at the primary purpose of universities and whether in the future it would be to create jobs and skills *or* for social good' [my italics].

The scenarios are arranged from 1-4 on a spectrum. First position is characterised by a government led focus on practical learning and strong engagement with industry - 'with degrees becoming a license to practice in industry' (p15). In scenario two this is substituted for a market based model with universities 'competing for industry links and students' (p15). In scenario three the 'entire sector [is] focused on social development and links with community' as well as 'international outlook' (p15). In scenario four the emphasis is on 'regional priorities e.g. health, food security and sustainable development' (p15).

The emphasis here is mainly on the private benefits that higher education can confer. Little mention is made of the social benefits or the challenges faced by young people in an increasingly complex and precarious society. There is a potential mismatch of student aspiration and parental expectation, which could become a source of conflict between the generations, especially amongst Asian students and their families. There is evidence, which suggests that Asian families tend to put pressure on their children to pursue courses with high prestige and high earning potential (Shen et al, 2014). This is likely to prioritise STEM disciplines as well as those in business and management.

The political factors are reduced to collaboration and partnership within ASEAN in pursuit of greater competitiveness; issues of access, inclusion, democracy and human rights are omitted from the description. If an academic rationale is implied in this formulation, then it is instrumental to the social and/or economic rationales that are deemed dominant. The initial sequencing of the dominant themes as 'social and economic' (p15) is reversed as the scenario descriptions which follow place the more economically oriented scenarios before those of the social and environmental with the implicit implication that these rank higher in terms of desirability. The two dominant themes are those we have encountered throughout the analysis of the report and are presented here as either/or 'extremes'. It is legitimate to question the authenticity of such rationales and to examine the possible biases operating on them. The report does not make clear who the participants to this process are or how inclusive such participation is. Clearly, regional and global organisations are increasingly taking an interest in Myanmar's higher education system. Despite these criticisms, it is clear that a social rationale is being put forward as an alternative future to the dominant economic narrative, a theme that is repeated throughout the report.

4.7 Conclusions

The analysis of the GED conference documents has provided a rich source of data on the ways in which the reform context is construed and problematisations produced. These representations underpin the arguments put forward concerning the trajectory of HE curricular reform in Myanmar. Two core rationales can be detected:

First, Internationalisation in the form of regionalisation is exerting a strong influence on the direction of HE reform in Myanmar and beyond. The formation of the ASEAN Economic Community represents a significant step in a process of increasing regional

integration and growing global competitiveness. Higher education is viewed as a crucial component of this process, supplying the human capital that will drive the economies of the region forward and feeding the aspirations of a steadily rising middle-class. The ASEAN University Network is an organization tasked with promoting greater regional cooperation and harmonisation between HEIs in the form of a common Quality Assurance (QA) system. The QA system outlines a range of what have come to be called 'graduate attributes' that are to be pursued as curricular goals. However, these can be criticised for being too narrowly economistic and technocratic in design, leading to a narrowing of student academic experience and an exclusive focus on the development of skills and dispositions oriented toward employability.

Second, underpinning the discourse on regionalisation is the notion of an ASEAN identity at both individual and institutional levels. This is an idea, which has yet to be clearly defined, but which has curricular implications; the promotion of South East Asian cultural studies is one example. The thorny question of Asian values and what they might or might not consist of is obviously germane to this discussion. Ironically, models of curriculum design most favoured at present are derived largely from Western institutional thinking. The GED conference is testament to the breadth of interest in the future of Myanmar's Higher Education sector, spanning both East and West in fairly equal measure. However, the evidence suggests that these nested affiliations – local, national, regional, global do not sit easily together.

There is a dominant economic discourse, reflecting a neo-liberal perspective, which makes the case for a reform process that prioritises the links between HEIs and Industry. In this discourse, university education is explicitly associated with the development of vocational skills relevant to employment in the global knowledge economy and there is an increasing pressure to develop research capacity as a means to engage with global

ranking systems. However, an accompanying socio-cultural discourse can also be detected which emphasises the importance of ASEAN identity. These two discourses sit uncomfortably alongside each other in an uneasy settlement that calls for more debate.

Chapter Five: Critical Discourse Analysis (2): The Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR).

5.1 Introduction

In the following sections, I paint a picture of the political and legislative landscape pertaining to HE in Myanmar in 2015/16 by critically analysing a set of proposals that were intended to feed into the policy process. The proposals are contained in two documents produced as part of the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR). The CESR was tasked to carry out a thorough review of Myanmar's education system, including higher education, to identify the strengths and challenges of the education system and prioritise key areas for reform. It encompasses all areas of education, including education policy, access to education, and quality of education, education systems and educational management. It would also provide capacity building to Myanmar staff involved in the project (CESR, 2012). Based on this, it is due to produce costed educational plans, which will be implemented as part of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) in the period 2016-2020.

The first document is the CESR Phase 1: Rapid Assessment Report: Technical Annex on the Higher Education Subsector, 2013. The second is the CESR Phase 2: In Depth Analysis: Technical Annex on the Higher Education Subsector, 2014. Both were produced by the Ministry of Education, authored by international consultants and with technical support from development partners such as ADB, AusAID, British Council, Denmark, DFID, EU, GIZ, JICA, Norway, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and civil society organisations such as OSF and CEU.

The CESR consists of three phases. The emphasis in the first 'Rapid Assessment' phase was on identifying urgent priorities and reform issues. This phase also sought to identify gaps in knowledge. The second phase – an in depth analysis – required a sector analysis that was large scale and participatory in approach. The third phase will see the development of a costed National Education Sector Plan (NESP). For the purposes of this research, I will attempt to identify and evaluate key priorities that pertain to internationalisation and the curriculum. I provide critical commentaries, using Fairclough's argumentation paradigm (see chapter three) to question the assumptions and arguments underpinning them.

The management of the CESR process appears highly centralised with a strong role for government ministries at each level of the process. At the top of the hierarchy is a steering committee headed by the Minister of Education which oversees the work of the Task Force at the next level, headed by the Deputy Minister of Education, which in turn oversees the work of the CESR Task Managers and Chief Technical Adviser, composed of two senior MoE members who coordinate the work of the technical teams and sub-teams who are ultimately responsible for the implementation of the process. These consist of MoE or government leads, national and, where required, international consultants. The wording is important. The CESR reports are prepared by international consultants and advisors in collaboration with the CESR team, consisting of a national consultant and other senior Myanmar academics, who provide interpretations and reformulations of government policy recommendations and express views that are at times surprisingly critical of these policies as well as the inequities of the current system.

5.2 Introduction to the Phase One Report

Under the umbrella of the CESR Phase 1 Rapid Assessment Report, a technical annex on Higher education was published in 2013. The report was principally funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with support from AUSAID and UNESCO. The principle authors were consultants Anthony Welch and Martin Hayden but with a wide range of inputs from within the CESR team as well as from the ADB and UNESCO.

5.3 Preface: Summary and Recommendations: Critical Commentary

A section entitled 'summary and recommendations' (p.vi) prefaces the report. This contextualises Myanmar HE reform within The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). It cites as a given Myanmar's desire to adopt ASEAN standards as benchmarks for its own reform goals and acknowledges the liberal use of regional statistics to position Myanmar in relation to its neighbours. The current state of Myanmar's HE system compares unfavourably with its neighbours in the region in terms of investment in education, research output, knowledge economy indices, and enrolment ratios. Alongside the need for infrastructure development, the authors identify capacity building in teaching, administration and research quality as the most significant priorities for higher education reform. Two key points are made. First, these priorities should target the skills needs of an expanding service sector. Second, the report identifies access and equity as key areas for reform, suggesting that processes of differentiation, present throughout the whole education system, serve as filters, excluding the majority of Myanmar's youth from accessing higher education. This is represented as a brake on equity, and a significant loss of economic efficiency.

The measures used to determine the relative standing of Myanmar HE within ASEAN, based on investment in education, research output, knowledge economy indices, and enrolment ratios provide a useful statistical basis with which to understand the structural constraints and opportunities that impinged upon the Myanmar HE sector in the period following the introduction of quasi-civilian rule in 2010. There is a call for a broad vision, representative of widespread community consultation. The community is defined as the state, the ministries, the HEIs and the labour market. No explicit reference is made to student representation. The nexus of the many policy trajectories is defined as the drafting of a higher education law.

Several priorities are identified as part of an overall vision for reform of the public and private higher education sectors. The first of these is the granting of academic and financial autonomy. This is followed by a call for better system coordination and a clearer definition of the differences between HE and TVET. The development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is cited as a means to achieve this. The third priority area targets the development of quality assurance measures and the final priority is improving access and equity, underpinned by an index of minimum quality, which would address key issues such as teacher-student ratios, academic staff qualifications, infrastructure facilities and inclusivity. The report proposes further research into a possible system of student loans. It points to the swelling international interest in Myanmar that is destined to continue. The need to avoid duplication of effort is thus a significant factor in how development partners interact and the report proposes a single door point of entry for all projects and programmes.

There is an immediate reference to the region and to a rationale based on greater regional integration. It is important to acknowledge the role of the ADB as it has supported the CESR through its Policy and Advisory Technical Assistance programme

(PATA). The position of the bank in this process is both economic and political. The ADB was established in 1966 in order to provide and facilitate development financing for countries in Asia and the Pacific. Article 1 of the agreement establishing the Asian Development Bank states that the purpose of the bank is to promote economic growth and cooperation in Asia and the Far East and to contribute to the acceleration of the process of economic development of the developing member countries in the region, collectively and individually. Dent (2008) describes its approach as one which links development to trade and investment liberalisation, strongly influenced by Japanese developmentalist ideology, emphasising regional cooperation and the benefits of a developmental state in contrast to western style neoliberalism. A contrasting view is critical of the ADB for its neoliberal approach to development, prioritising economic growth and private sector fundamentalism, linking development aid with policy conditionalities, which serve market interests (Guttal, 2005). There is consensus on its position in promoting greater regional economic and cultural integration and it has been described as a catalyst for regionalisation (Hirsch, 2001).

There is a strong emphasis on employability and the needs of the knowledge economy in the report consistent with that of the GED conference analysed in chapter four. However, there is ambiguity surrounding the definition of HE and TVET and the absence of a national qualification framework is cited as a major obstacle to achieving such clarity. The precise purpose of an NQF is not discussed in detail. The oft-cited purposes of an NQF, typically based on well-defined learning outcomes, are to ensure greater transparency, lower barriers to advancement and increased mobility, although their benchmarking function can also be used as a tool for governments to measure efficiency and hold institutions to account. The need for greater monitoring can result in a tightening or narrowing of learning outcomes for assessment purposes to the detriment

of teaching and learning (Young, 2003). In theory, a comprehensive classification system for both HE and TVET could help to clarify their relatedness as well as allow for some progression between the two systems. However, there are epistemological issues that must be dealt with first; there is an argument that in comparison with TVET, disciplines in HE attribute greater significance to theoretical understanding and to methodological and analytical ability, which raises questions concerning the feasibility of such an approach (Spottl, 2013).

Pressures to internationalise Myanmar's higher education system can also be influential. The evidence thus far suggests that Myanmar wishes to align its HE system with its neighbours in the region and to become a world-class system (see chapter four). In other words, it wishes to enter the global university rankings system. The construction of an NQF would represent a first step to realising this goal. There are indications that Myanmar HEIs are beginning the process of integration into the ASEAN AUN-QA framework, this will also drive the need to develop an NQF. These rapid changes address concerns that Myanmar needs to catch up with other economies in the region and arguments for a qualifications system that will promote greater workforce mobility.

Chapter two pointed to the similarities faced by developing countries transiting to democracy such as the need for a stronger focus on inclusivity (Moll, 2004). The significance attached to issues of access and equity in the phase 1 report also points to a less economistic, more socio-cultural rationale for reform, expressing a commitment to address issues of ethnic and gender bias, greater inclusivity and a more rounded concept of education beyond that of vocational training.

The main body of the report consists of five sections – Introduction; Overview of the Higher Education Subsector; Policy, Legislation and Management; Access and Equity; Quality and Relevance.

5.4 Section A: Introduction: Critical Commentary

Section A (p1) introduces the report and presents the aims and structure of the CESR process. It outlines the scope of the report, which focuses on five key areas for HE policy reform (a) policy, legislation and management; (b) access and equity; (c) finance, (d) international dimensions, and (e) quality and relevance. Some serious methodological weaknesses affecting the data collection process on which the report is based are mentioned: The paucity of published research, 'limited' (p1) access to data from onsite visits and the centralised nature of Myanmar's bureaucracy, at both ministerial and institutional levels, represent significant obstacles to understanding. The report states that only a quarter of Myanmar's 164 HEIs responded to the questionnaire, which was the main source of data.

5.5 Section B. Overview of the Higher Education Subsector: Critical Commentary

The aim of section B is to provide an overview of the HE sector. The difficulties of achieving this are acknowledged. The sector, consisting of 164 HEIs, is far from homogenous as there are many specialised universities such as for agriculture, engineering or medicine. In addition, the borders between higher education (HE) and technical and vocational education (TVET) are not clearly defined.

5.5.1 Organisation of the System

The report describes the structure of the higher education sector. It begins by stating the significance of the 1973 university education law in generating the centralised structures of governance prevalent up until now. Two centralised bodies are responsible for decision-making. The highest body is the Universities Central Council (UCC), which has responsibility for several key structural decisions such as the types of qualifications that universities may confer, academic staff qualification requirements and enrollment quotas. It also has a determining role to play in identifying and prescribing research projects, providing 'guiding principles' (p6) and supervision of institutional management structures. The subsidiary body is the Council of University Academic Boards (CUAB), which the report suggests has the same membership as the UCC and with some overlapping functions, such as deciding qualification requirements and coordinating research projects. This body has responsibility for curricular issues such as reviewing and supervising 'systems of instruction' (p6) and the rules and regulations of examinations.

The membership of both bodies is drawn from the various ministries that preside over Myanmar's heterogeneous HE system. The CUAB is also said to be responsible for decisions regarding changes to course content and structure; however, the report acknowledges the limitations of the current understanding of these processes. A new body established in 2011 – the National Education Committee (NEC) is reported to have an executive role in advising and coordinating higher education policy and legislation in the form of Myanmar's 30-year Long-term Education Development Plan. It also has a strong role in coordinating with development partners in the implementation of training programs.

The 1973 law establishes the governance mechanisms of individual HEIs, which comprise two committees. The management committee is responsible for campus business, including the maintenance of hostels, sporting and cultural events and disciplinary matters. It can also select certain students for stipends. The academic committee is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to the curriculum and the subjects taught for approval by the CUAB as well as suggestions for new postgraduate courses. A key question raised by the report is how solid these bodies are and how a new HE law might change their structure and function. The development of such a law has become somewhat of a holy grail for Myanmar's lawmakers. Yet, its realisation is of questionable value in the face of a growing call for institutional autonomy, in which case, universities could develop their own charters. A major weakness of the system is the centralised structure of the governance system and the degree of control exercised by various ministries.

5.5.2 Access and Equity

The report identifies a significant gap in existing research: It is not clear how Myanmar's wide ethnic diversity is represented in higher education. This lack of data is prohibitive of efforts to create greater inclusivity. A stark figure, quoted in the report, is that only 11% of Myanmar youth are able to access Higher education (p4). Quality of teaching and learning is poor with rote learning as the norm, out-dated textbooks, lack of IT infrastructure and high teacher-student ratios. Salaries are 'unattractive' (p4). The system is under resourced, lacking specialised teaching spaces such as laboratories. The report cites the World Bank's knowledge economy index (KEI), which states that graduate employability is very low – the sign of a 'poorly aligned higher education system' (p5).

Large tracts of university curricula are off limits to students who fail to score highly in the secondary school matriculation exam or who have taken the exam in previous years in which case they are only eligible for enrolment on 'distance education courses' (p7). Thus, two thirds of students, repeating the matriculation exam, are excluded from regular HE. These mechanisms, designed to limit access to higher education, contradict Myanmar's commitment to human resource development espoused by regional partners. One of the most pernicious of these filter mechanisms discriminates against female students who must achieve a higher passing grade in the matriculation exam than their male counterparts if they wish to enter medical schools, engineering schools and technology schools (Soe, 2014). Despite this, girls tend to outperform boys and outnumber them in HE. An undergraduate degree consists of six possible combination of seven subjects of which three – Myanmar Language, English and Mathematics – are compulsory in all combinations. Students grades in the matriculation exam determines which of these combinations they are able to choose with higher marks giving students access to the more prestigious courses such as medicine. Further filtering by gender occurs in universities and colleges that are specialised in disciplines such as 'forestry and engineering' (p8), which are almost exclusively male.

5.6   Section C: Policy, Legislation and Management: Critical Commentary

The formative influence of the 1973 Higher Education law, which establishes higher education systems of governance, is accompanied by the formative influence on the HE subsector of the 30-Year Long-Term Education Development Plan, which began in 2000-2001. This is composed of 36 programmes across six priority areas. Superimposed upon this framework is the National Development Plan for higher education, which was formulated in September 2012 and which articulates 13 priorities. The following table

maps the Myanmar Government's priorities for HE reform onto the priorities identified

by the CESR.

Priorities for HE reform	CESR identified priorities	30-Year Long-Term Education Development Plan priorities	National Development Plan for higher education priorities
p = position in reported lists	(p1) Capacity building in teaching, administration and research quality (p2) Academic and financial autonomy (p3) Meeting the skills needs of an expanding service sector (p4) Better 'system coordination' (p5) A clearer definition of the differences between HE and TVET (p6) The development of a national qualifications framework (p7) Quality assurance measures (p8) To improve access and equity (p9) The development of an 'Index of minimum quality' teacher-student ratios academic staff qualifications infrastructure facilities	(p1) Human resource development' (p2) The 'utilisation of technology' (p3) The 'expansion of research' (p4) The development of lifelong learning (p5) The 'promotion of quality' (p6) The preservation of national identity and national values	(p1) The reorganisation and extension of the number of faculties in MoE universities (p2) The development of a QA system (p3) Reform of the current university admission system (p4) The creation of TVET courses for delivery as human resource development (HRD) programs offered by universities (p5) To improve the quality of administrative officials, teachers and laboratory technicians (p6) To improve the quality of students (p7) The development of a law for private

	inclusivity		higher education
	(p10) A 'single door' point of entry for projects and programmes.		(p8) The promotion of the quality of education up to an international level
			(p9) The creation of a vibrant academic community at universities
			(p10) Upgrading English language teaching
			(p11)) To improve the instruction of international relations, law and economics
			(p12) To encourage exceptional talent by providing scholarships across the arts and sciences.

Table 1: Comparison of Myanmar HE Reform framework priorities

The Myanmar Government's position is complex and confused with contrasting priorities depending on which plan one examines. There is a strong overlapping priority in all three frameworks given to the development of Quality Assurance (QA). The clearest example is the notion of upgrading quality in all areas of the sector 'up to international standards' (p9). However, the notion of quality is left undefined and in many cases phrased as very general and vague exhortations such as 'to improve the

quality of students' (p9). No specific mechanisms for monitoring the attainment of quality objectives are proposed, either external at the national and supranational level or internal at an institutional level. The recommendation to develop an index of minimum quality represents the most concrete proposal. There is also a question of how to balance the need for robust monitoring of standards, which is an essential component of QA, with the achievement of greater institutional autonomy.

The absence of a national system of quality assurance means that it is difficult to approximate to regional or international standards. The phase 1 report recommends the development of a national qualifications framework and points towards UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) as a possible model, which is internationally recognised and differentiates between degrees of various types and levels such as between TVET and HE programs. One proxy measure employed by the ISCED to achieve this is the percentage of lecturers on HE Bachelors level degree courses who have a doctoral qualification. In Myanmar this percentage is very low and therefore cannot comply with the international standard.

A simpler approach is suggested in which 'preferred graduate attributes are explicitly embedded in the curriculum for all bachelor and postgraduate programmes' (p15). This may not be as simple as it is represented to be. What graduate attributes should be included? Should they, for example, only be related to the knowledge and skills required for employment or should they relate to wider social and ethical concerns? Is it possible to arrive at consensus on the definition of the types of values and dispositions that students require in an age of 'super-complexity'? (Barnett, 2000). The notion of 'graduate quality' (p30) that is put forward is based solely on employability and the lack of skills graduates possess after completing their courses.

An explicit employability agenda is present in all three frameworks, expressed in references to TVET and the skills needs of an expanding service sector. The phase 1 report problematises the definition of these terms and recommends further analysis aimed at differentiating TVET from HE.

There are clear differences of emphasis. The CESR's priorities differ significantly from those of the government by including a more political focus on issues such as expanding institutional autonomy, increasing access and equity and creating a more strategic approach to internationalisation. The phase 1 report also gives a high priority to 'enhancing system coordination' (p31) and points to the structurally fragmented nature of the system with 13 different ministries responsible for HEIs each with different priorities and conceptions of education. Autonomy is identified as a first priority in the phase 1 report but is entirely absent from the two existing policy frameworks. The first priority mentioned by the National Development Plan for Higher Education specifies the reorganisation of the faculty system.

The six points of the 30 year plan are the most general and echo regional commitments to the development of IT infrastructure, research capacity and 'lifelong learning'. The final priority is quite different and ties Higher Education into the preservation of a national identity and values. This is of course highly problematic given Myanmar's high levels of ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity.

5.7 Section D: Access and Equity: Critical Commentary

The report acknowledges the 'limited information' (p1) on which this section is based. Equity is represented in terms of a traditional belief in 'the five pillars of Myanmar society - farmers, workers, students, monks and the military' (p22) and the need to unite them. This is in order to foster an atmosphere of 'empathy and trust … in the pursuit of

a common goal' (p22), which is posited as 'the development of the nation' (p22). The main priority here is thus nation building. The difficulties involved in achieving this are acknowledged and wealth inequality is cited as a major obstacle. The representation of equity in terms of pillars can serve to marginalise those who fall between these categories. How, for example, is the generic term 'worker' to be interpreted? Should it include non-paid work in the household, which is carried out traditionally by girls and women?

Two recommendations are made. First, to support modeling exercises designed to determine the relative costs and benefits of widening access, including the option of raising fees. Second, to develop an index of minimum quality. The suggestion here is to use the same proxy measures of quality as used by the THE global university rankings system namely teacher- student ratios. There are problems with such a measure, as it pays no attention to actual classroom practice or pedagogy. Further research into differential access to higher education is also recommended.

The report highlights ethnicity and differential access to higher education as a result of ethnicity. Ethnic conflict is cited as a barrier to access and the Rohingya crisis is offered as a current example. It does not shy from using terms such as 'ethnic cleansing' (p25) and 'militant Theravada Buddhism' (p26) to describe the situation and it points to the impact of conflict on access to higher education by the Rohingya population which has seen a sudden decrease. The report points out the evident departure from regionally and globally agreed inclusivity agendas this represents. The Rohingya have been denied Myanmar citizenship since 1982 and are denied access to education, healthcare, employment, freedom of movement, and religion. This has accounted for mass migrations in 1978, 1992 and 2016 to Bangladesh and subsequent repatriations (sic)

following military crackdowns (Milton et al, 2017). By contrast, the phase two report refrains from such explicit and critical references.

Gender differentials in the student population are highlighted with the ratio of female to male students cited at 70% and the ratio of female to male teaching staff as over 80%. Further research is recommended. Class divisions are evidenced in the preferential access to sources of financial loans offered to middle class students. Transparency and accountability in the wider societal context and a weak taxation system are cited as examples of weak governance in this respect. Lack of training of staff charged with implementing student loan schemes is an example. Recommendations are the ultimate means by which the report puts forward its arguments concerning the trajectory that the second phase of the CESR should take. In this case, further research or capacity building projects designed to augment greater equity in the system of student loans.

5.8   Section E: Quality and Relevance: Critical Commentary

The next section 'quality and relevance' (p29) identifies several priority areas. The first area focuses on teaching quality. The report states that all new academic staff at Myanmar HEIs must now attend a two-month training course. As described in chapter two, teaching practices largely employ teacher-centric, whole class methods, which are aimed very narrowly at mastering the content required to pass an examination. The recommendation is to create a more robust QA system, including 'teaching learning support centres' (p30), which are tasked with ongoing teacher professional and pedagogical development aimed specifically at more student centred forms of instruction.

Research is also identified as a priority. A culture of research is not established in the Myanmar higher education sector and no benchmarking has taken place with regard to

international standards. The report recommends a national research scheme, offering incentives for researchers to carry out projects that can directly benefit the Myanmar people.

The report points to the static nature of the curriculum that has not changed in many years and has not taken account of international content, models and standards. Knowledge of an abstract kind has dominated the curriculum and pedagogical methods based on rote learning reflect this. The report recommends giving priority to skills training of a practical kind that will be useful in preparing graduates for employment.

Another priority area is internationalisation. The main issues identified are limited local capacity, lack of system coordination, the avoidance of duplication and the development of a coherent approach amongst the development partners. The report recommends mapping of the development partners' positions, perspectives and priorities with a view to improving coordination and training and reducing duplication. Myanmar's 'knowledge diaspora' is identified as a 'significant' (p31) problem as numbers of 'higher level human resources' (p31) have left the country, in the main to work in other ASEAN countries. Regional mobility is a core feature of ASEAN's vision for higher education, however, and such flows of skilled graduates are encouraged. For countries like Malaysia and Singapore such exchange is likely to be reciprocal, characteristic of brain-circulation, whereas Myanmar is currently an unattractive destination for foreign students, characteristic of brain drain.

5.9   Introduction to the Phase Two Report

This section summarises the tasks carried out in phase 2 of the CESR project. The main goal of the second phase was to build on information obtained during the first rapid assessment phase by carrying out 'in-depth analysis' of the education sector, including

higher education, and making a set of recommendations to feed into phase 3 – the drafting of costed education plans. The report attempts to represent the 'current laws, policies and disciplines' of higher education in Myanmar. Specifically, it proposes examining teaching programmes, management systems, quality assurance, research capability, exchange of knowledge between universities and finally the ASEAN labour market. The text is organised into the following sections: Introductory overview, access and equity, quality and relevance, management and financing, policy and legislation, improving partnerships in HE and the reform process. Each section is prefaced by a series of short, medium and long-term recommendations; this is followed by several paragraphs of explanation that can be seen to provide a rationale for the policy prescriptions that are put forward. These are tabulated at the end of each section and further priority actions outlined. The report's main review states that it is necessary to enact a university education law to govern university education policy. The trajectory toward a new higher education law is thus firmly established. At the time of writing, a new national education law had been passed in July 2014; however, a subsector law on higher education was still in its draft stages.

5.10 Introduction and Overview: Critical Commentary

The introduction and overview section draws heavily on the phase 1 report and I will not repeat my comments on it except in regard to some important updates. One of these is the inclusion of a definitions pane early in the report. Such definitions are an important source for understanding how problems are represented or indeed underrepresented or misrepresented (Baachi, 2005). The first of these concerns the definition of 'curricula and (syllabi)' (p6) which are lumped together under a single heading. This is problematic as they are widely viewed as two quite different concepts; curriculum, denoting the overall content taught in an educational system or a course, and syllabi, referring to the

topics covered or units to be taught in a particular subject. The definition consists of 'teaching plan, describing content and objectives for subjects' (p6). This further confounds the issue, making it difficult to distinguish between general educational goals and specific course learning outcomes. Curriculum standards are defined as statements of knowledge, skills, understanding and learning expected at each grade level. These standards are established during the process of curriculum development and are found in the teaching and learning plans produced for each subject at each grade level. It is clear that the Myanmar model adheres very closely to the outcomes based approach - 'All measurements of achievement standards will be related directly to the outcomes and goals stated in the curricula and associated frameworks' (p6).

The phase 2 report 'identifies key elements of a policy framework and priorities for HE' (p9) and states that these will be addressed in a forthcoming National Education Sector Plan (NESP). However, early on it repeats a further definitional problem introduced in the phase 1 report that makes it difficult to distinguish between HE and TVET. Ministries other than the Ministry of Education such as the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) operate courses at HEIs under their control that are clearly more oriented toward TVET.

The Myanmar government's 'proximate' (p8) goal of approaching ASEAN standards is repeated. The use of the term proximate suggests something more achievable in the short term and it attests to the activities of the AUN, the maturity of its QA framework and the promotion of the ASEAN socio-cultural vision, described in chapter four. By contrast, the MoE's vision, expressed on its website, seeks 'to nurture the students to become the Myanmar citizens who obey the rules and regulations in accordance with ethics and democratic practices' [and] 'to become citizens who value, preserve and transmit their language, culture, customs, art, historical heritage and natural

environment, with union spirit' (MOE, 2016). The reference to union spirit is characteristic of the earlier military junta and appears to differ from the regional aspirations of the AUN with its emphasis on student and workforce mobility.

The report develops the argument that to function effectively in the current global environment, the Myanmar HE system must base itself on three pillars or foundations, which it is claimed underlie HE systems throughout the world. This argument is referenced to the ADB and to the World Bank – two organisations that have been criticised for their commitment to a particular neoliberal economic vision, prioritising private enterprise, market driven reforms and competition (Guttal, 2005). The first pillar is governance and is said to encompass an overall national vision for education as well as better system coordination and standardisation of approaches. Institutional autonomy is referenced as a key feature of governance. The second pillar is a 'sustainable financing strategy' (p28), which, it is claimed, rests on three strategies: government funding, institutional self-funding and cost recovery, presumably from the raising of student tuition fees although it does not make this explicit. Enhanced cost recovery is a common policy prescription for the ADB alongside other market friendly reforms. It has been argued that they are having deleterious effects on access to education through the concomitant reduction in government subsidies and support (Guttal, 2005). The third pillar is a 'robust quality assurance system' (p28). This, it is argued, should be implemented at an institutional and programme level. The report points to the fact that Yangon and Mandalay universities have already begun to adopt the ASEAN AUN–QA system and recommends that this be further expanded. The report states the significance of a QA system in establishing the medium and long-term goals of the higher education system.

The report restates the importance of the 30-year long-term development plan as the basis for the 24 policy prescriptions, developed by EPIC, which it will put forward. Interestingly, it criticises EPIC's initial vision of the long-term goals of higher education as too narrow in its description of universities as potential 'business hubs' (p29); as unrealistic in its promise to provide all citizens with education and as misleading, for failing to address issues of access. The report then puts forward its own 'generic system goals for HE' (p29). It argues that this should, in turn, form the basis for the development of autonomous institutional visions and goals.

The overriding goal is articulated as an improvement in 'systemic quality'. Eight further goals are elaborated. The first two are focused upon employability, targeting the skills needs of the workplace and the expansion of the private sector. The following four all address aspects of internationalisation – the need to approximate to standards found elsewhere in ASEAN and internationally, the need for broader international collaboration and the development of internationally recognised standards and certification. The final goal is a reformulation of the first and is aimed at nurturing graduates workplace competencies. It is clear that these goals predominantly express an economic rationale positing internationalisation as a means to achieve greater prosperity. Regionalisation is again high on the agenda and the goals are aligned to the positions of the ADB and to the AUN on the need for greater regional economic but also cultural integration. The report is careful to point out the current lack of precision in the formulation of these goals and the need for clearer assessment criteria and timelines for achievement.

The issue of autonomy is discussed with reference to government plans to 'consolidate' (p22) the university system. This is central to debates around the curriculum since greater institutional autonomy would mean further decentralisation of decision-making

powers over curriculum matters. A further aspect of academic autonomy discussed is the centralised system of staff rotation whereby university teachers are regularly transferred to different locations around the country. The report criticises this system for undermining faculty-based teamwork and proposes that decisions involving the hiring and firing of staff be in the hands of the HEIs themselves.

5.11 Access and Equity: Critical Commentary

Following this broad introduction, the first section deals with issues of access and equity. The profile of this crucial dimension has been raised since the phase one report and it is dealt with before any of the other main areas of reform. There are 11 recommendations made in an imperative form in this section; these include several that have a strong neoliberal rationale such as legislating for the entry of private HEIs into the system and investigating the development of a 'possible' student loan system. There is a focus on bringing distance education and full time degree courses into greater alignment with each other and on the development of a 'comprehensive Myanmar qualifications framework' (p31), which could provide 'equity of qualifications' (p36). The report recognises the government's increased expenditure on higher education but also the huge disparities in funding across the 188 universities and 13 responsible ministries.

In terms of curriculum, the report strongly criticises the rigid nature of the matriculation exam, which streams students into particular courses and HEIs and bemoans its failure to take into account students' aptitudes, interests and motivation to study particular courses within the curriculum. An argument is made for HEIs to manage their own admissions system in order to create more opportunities for enrolment. The data gathered points to a broad and deep consensus amongst university rectors that students should be free to choose where they wish to study and which courses they wish.

In comparison with the phase one report, which identified barriers to access on the basis of ethnicity as a key priority, explicitly referencing the Rohingyas, the phase two report shies away from explicitly addressing exclusion resulting from ethnicity, gender, religion, language or disability. There is a lack of research into access to higher education in Myanmar based on such characteristics. The presence of armed conflict between Myanmar's diverse ethnic groups and the government has led in some cases to the development of separate education systems in which mother tongue based instruction has been able to prosper to a greater or lesser extent. The curriculum, particularly in areas of armed conflict, at least at primary and secondary levels, may diverge significantly from that of the government. This has implications for students wishing to access state run education, and by extension higher education, which is carried out in Burmese (South and Lall, 2016).

5.12 Quality and Relevance: Critical Commentary

This section of the report addresses issues concerning the quality of current HE courses and their relevance to the needs of students and employers. The first recommendation poses two questions, equating these needs directly with employability – will graduates be prepared to enter the workplace and will employers be satisfied? It then proposes the establishment of a national quality assurance body that would lead on the design of a national quality assurance framework, although it is hard to see how this could mean anything other than training in the components of the AUN-QA framework prior to its rollout in Myanmar. The report puts forward the UNESCO definition of quality in higher education,

'QA in higher education can be defined as systematic management and assessment procedures to monitor performance of higher education institutions. The overall

direction of education quality assurance in Myanmar must be developed as a mechanism to raise educational quality level nationwide and to allow Myanmar academic awards to be recognized by regional and international standards. However, the ultimate goal of the QA system must focus on improving the graduates' qualifications and strengthening the country's competitiveness'

How problems are constituted within the policy process is important and definitions are themselves a constituting agency (Bacchi, 2005). In this case, the primary problem is represented as a lack of monitoring and this is prioritised over improvement or harmonisation. The repetition of the modal 'must' is authoritative and compelling. The influence of ASEAN is clearly in evidence in the reference to regional and international standards. Chapter four critically analysed a particular definition of higher education as the harmonisation of standards and greater regional integration set out in a 2013 conference. Harmonisation is at the core of ASEAN's overall vision for higher education in the region. The strong emphasis on standards ignores important ethical aspects of quality such as access and equity, discussed above, and discounts partnerships or how students, academics and other actors interact with each other. The final sentence lays out the 'ultimate goal' as strengthening competitiveness and further confirms the strong and evolving economic rationale, rooted in Human Resource Development (HRD).

The EPIC team puts forward thirteen policies on quality and relevance. Each of these is accompanied by a commentary from the CESR main author that are 'in line with current regional and international HE systems' (p34). These are further subdivided into a total of 28 divisions or individual policy statements. In this section I will focus on those policies most relevant to the higher education curriculum and to processes of internationalisation.

5.12.1 The University Quality Promotion Policy (C1) proposes that 'universities will attempt to gain the qualities of world ranking universities' (p47). The author commentary suggests that this is not a policy but a policy objective and its long-term nature is emphasised – a somewhat polite way of pointing out the grandiose ambitions of the Myanmar government. The notion of a 'world-class university is analysed in chapter four and its relation to world rankings systems is discussed. At present, Myanmar's preparedness to play a role in this is heavily dependent upon its capacity to absorb existing QA frameworks while retaining its own capacity to steer the process as it sees fit and with as much input from as diverse a variety of stakeholders as possible.

5.12.2 The Teacher Quality Promotion Policy (C2) is divided into three proposals centred around three forms of mobility. The first is outward with faculty being 'sent abroad' (p47) for training. The second is inward with the recruitment of foreign trainers and the third is reciprocal in the establishment of an IT infrastructure that would allow, for example, the fusing of universities through an E-library. With relevance to curriculum, the report puts forward results from a survey carried out as part of the CESR to ascertain rectors' assessment of teaching quality. An overriding majority (80%) felt that quality is satisfactory and students are satisfied. However, weaknesses in the survey methods – no criteria for quality were established – seriously cast doubt on these results.

5.12.3 The Learning Quality Promotion Policy (C3) is divided into six proposals. The first of these (C3.1) recommends the application of student-centred learning methods of teaching. The Myanmar Government has voiced their support for the development of child centred learning at primary and secondary levels. However, the report defines the primary issue in a more nuanced manner and refers to the need to understand 'different teaching and learning modalities' (p48) and identify the competencies that would enable

teachers to utilise them. Further proposals are linked to the development of IT infrastructure and faculty and student exchange programmes.

5.12.4 The Quality Assurance Enhancement Policy (C4) is divided into four proposals. The report calls for internal QA mechanisms to be established at institutional level and external QA mechanisms designed to ensure comparability with Myanmar's neighbours in ASEAN. The need for capacity building to heighten awareness of quality issues is identified as a key priority. At issue is how capable Myanmar HEIs are to take responsibility for the running of QA systems once they have been established. Section C5 is omitted from the main body of the report.

5.12.5 The Curriculum and Syllabus Policy (C6) is perhaps the most pertinent to the present research. This calls for 'curriculum development teams [composed of] a wide range of academicians' (p50) to be formed at each university in order to 'design the curricula and syllabi that can supply the needs of the region/industry' (p50). The latter interprets the goal of higher education curricular reform through the lens of human resource development (HRD). The author commentary recommends input into curriculum design from the commercial sector and suggests that the content should aim to develop analytical and problem-solving skills that will 'prepare graduates for employment' (p51). The role of national and international academia is mentioned but not elaborated. The policy proposal is to offer capacity building support to 'subject experts' tasked to develop curriculum frameworks that:

'promote active learning by requiring problem solving skills, the application of knowledge to solve practical problems, and the integration of workplace-based learning with conceptual learning' (p51).

This is a good example of the dominant economic / HRD discourse, arguing for an instrumental - technical – rational curriculum that prepares graduates to solve practical problems in order to meet industry needs. The final sentence highlights the problem, stated earlier in the report, of how to differentiate TVET from HE, since integration implies separation, in this case, dichotomised as 'workplace [and] conceptual learning' (p51). In chapter two I argued that this was a false dichotomy. Problem solving is a core feature of the humanities, underpinning many of the soft, transferable, skills currently valued by business and industry and there is no reason for the exclusion of theoretical / conceptual understanding from more vocationally oriented courses in STEM. The focus on 'practical' (p51) problems is ambiguous and does not specify what it includes. Important aspects of curriculum design such as the role of learning outcomes, the relationship of formative and summative types of assessment and the ability of the curriculum materials to deliver more interactive lessons are left unmentioned.

5.12.6 The International Collaboration Policy (C7) has four divisions. The first proposes that universities have autonomy to form international partnerships. International collaboration should be focused on the strengthening of academic mobility, student and faculty exchange programs, and the development of joint degree and research programs. There is no acknowledgement of the need to develop an internationalisation strategy. 2014 was a year of rapid change in Myanmar's openness to the outside world with the development of regional and global partnerships in education. In just two years, Yangon University developed a plethora of international links, established joint courses, participated in international exchanges and benefitted from curricular redevelopment. It is arguable that while these agreements have been successful in terms of capacity building and infrastructural development, many have been signed

without much sense of purpose and in an opportunistic manner and the need for a more strategic approach to internationalisation has arisen (Griffith, 2014).

5.12.7 The English Proficiency Skill Development Policy (C8) represents the main problem as a lack of motivation amongst students for courses in EFL or English as a Foreign Language. The report argues that linking the teaching of English to specific programmes will be more motivating and seems to be making the case for courses in EAP or English for Academic Purposes. However, no evidence is provided to back up these claims and it can be argued that without EFL to ground students general language ability, the introduction of EAP courses could prove demotivating.

5.12.8 The University Entrance Policy (C12) is relevant to the curriculum since at present students' choice of undergraduate subjects is dependent on achieving a combination of scores on the school leaving matriculation exam. The report cites evidence gathered from surveys of rectors and principals, which suggests that an overwhelming majority would prefer selection procedures to be the responsibility of individual HEIs and for students to be free to choose the institution they wish to study at and the courses they wish to study. Although not addressed in the report, there is growing evidence that students' successful performance on school leaving exams is linked to their socio-economic status and especially the ability of households to pay for extra private tuition (Bray, 2009). A 1992 report described private tutoring in Myanmar as 'virtually indispensable to complete secondary education' (Myanmar Education Research Bureau, 1992, p24). The phenomenon is widespread throughout Asia and household spending on it is therefore generally very high (Bray, 2007), although precise statistics for Myanmar are scant.

5.13 Improving partnerships in HE

Section F consists of one short paragraph and addresses the question of internationalisation and the approaches that should be taken. The recommendation is for a 'consistent and systematic approach to international collaboration' (p58) that will avoid divergence of Myanmar HEIs. However, at present, it is clear that Yangon University has differentiated itself from other HEIs in the density of networks it has formed with regional and international universities and organisations, serving as a gateway for international partnerships (appendix one). The influence of Daw Aung San Su Kyi can be seen in the revitalisation of Yangon University initiative she has helped to promote and she has pioneered a partnership with St Hugh's College at Oxford of which she is an alumnus. Her father, the leader of the independence movement, was a student at Yangon University and the institution has always been at the forefront of student protests against the repression of previous regimes. There is a proposal to turn Yangon University into a centre of excellence with full academic autonomy as a pilot and model for other HEIs to follow.

5.14 The Reform Process

The first part of section G includes a questionnaire that HEIs can use to determine the robustness of their strategic planning processes. The second part is entitled 'Vision and Goals of HE' (p59). Here, the authors define as a vision 'the leaders' ambitions for the university' (p59). This representation tends to narrow responsibility for the development of a vision or mission statement to a central figure of authority, which should not be surprising given the highly centralised chain of command that exists within Myanmar HEIs, but which abnegates the need for wider stakeholder participation. The rationale for developing such a vision, it is argued, is twofold: To communicate standards of

excellence and to differentiate universities as unique institutions. Both of these have been cited as sound reasons for developing vision statements in addition to creating a sense of shared purpose and making organisational priorities clear to staff. The generalised nature of vision and mission statements and their relevance to strategic planning has, however, also been criticised (Morphew and Hartley, 2006). The report elaborates the need for such a vision to be realistic, optimistic and achievable. It then criticises EPIC's formulation as being too narrow and better thought of as strategic goals rather than as the basis for an overall systemic vision.

5.15 The National Education Sector Plan

Four priorities for higher education reform are identified in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP, 2016), which represents the final stage of the CESR process. These are aimed at, respectively, autonomy, quality and access and consist of three sets of strategies, programmes and end outcomes. Each of these is discussed in chapter eight in the light of the case study and interview data, which are presented below.

Chapter Six: Case Study of a Cross-National Partnership at Yangon University (YU)

6.1 Introduction

This section is devoted to a case study of a small-scale, cross-national initiative aimed at curricular reform at the English department of Yangon University (YU) in Myanmar in 2014. It includes analysis of my own professional involvement in elements of internationalisation, change and reform outlined in the analysis of the CESR documentation. It describes the realities of internationalisation in practice, within a particular institution in a developing country context, emerging from isolation and marginalisation, at a time of rapid and accelerating change. In contrast to the previous sections, which explored the influence of internationalisation on the macro process and direction of higher education policy through the analysis of policy documentation, the case study addressed the research question at the level of implementation and social practice in which multiple agencies and governments sought for influence in the Myanmar higher education sector. In this particular case, local teachers at the English Department chose to enlist my professional help in order to, in their words, upgrade the existing BA English literature curriculum.

My professional relationship to the university began in 2014 when as an employee of the British Council in Myanmar I was seconded to Yangon University to take part in a two-year teacher-training project, funded by the British Council. This was a landmark development, reflecting a new political openness that would not previously have been possible. My main role was to assist the British Council teacher training manager in planning; designing and delivering appropriate training programmes to teachers and

trainers from the state higher education sector. The action research constituted an extension of my professional role in response to a direct request from the department.

The case study explored the rationales for international involvement that were present in practice, in which internationalisation as an ideal was realised. This involved an unusual amalgam of a top-down, political rationale with a bottom-up, academic rationale (see chapter two). The British Council was keen to use the opportunity to extend their involvement in Myanmar's higher education sector reform process and through it to further the broader economic and political goals of the British government, of which they are an arm. The staff of the English Department chose to use the opportunity to address key academic concerns related to Quality Assurance (QA), foremost of which was to develop a more critical and communicative curriculum based on a student-centred pedagogy. As I will demonstrate, these political and academic rationales proved very difficult to negotiate in practice and presented a number of barriers to a successful and sustainable model of cross-national partnership, in which the academic aspirations of the department could be realised.

The alignment with ASEAN was already having effects in 2012 when three-year degree courses were lengthened to four-years. A radical change occurred in the 2013-2014 academic year and saw the lifting of a 16 yearlong ban on undergraduate courses at YU. With regard to internationalisation, at the time of my arrival, the English department had already developed an extensive number of regional and international partnerships with the governments of Brunei Darussalam, Japan, the US and Singapore, and with such institutions as Australian Volunteer International, the British Council, Temasek Foundation, and SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. Macmillan publishers had also introduced a set of course books for English Language Teaching to the department.

The drive toward student centred learning had already begun to influence Myanmar educational thinking and was familiar to teachers as a theory they could apply to their own teaching (Lall, 2010). However, for the most part, they were unable to put the new approach into practice due to constraints on their time, lack of training, large class sizes and the need to teach to the examination. There was no question at that point of removing English Literature as a subject and replacing it with Myanmar Literature, although it could easily be considered an example of policy imposition (see chapter two). The consensus was to review and plan changes to the existing learning aims and course structure, to pilot some new content beyond the prescribed and very narrow focus on 18th and 19th century literature and to create guidance notes for teachers on how to utilise more student-centred pedagogical techniques.

The initiative constituted an experiment in grassroots higher education 'curricular internationalisation'. I use this term in preference to 'internationalisation of the curriculum' (Leask, 2015). The remit of the initiative was for myself as a foreign consultant and teacher trainer to assist in the creation and design of new learning aims, subject materials and assessment procedures for a revised BA English literature curriculum. There was no overtly stated intention to internationalise the subject materials in the sense of deliberately including an intercultural and/or global perspective into the learning aims.

The case study was a piece of 'insider action research' (Coghlan, 2001) conducted within a cultural and institutional context in which I was already immersed. The initial purpose of the initiative was to assist in revising a strand of curriculum capable of engaging students' interests in literature and enhancing teachers' capability to teach in a more interactive fashion. The educative curriculum that eventually resulted was the product of collaboration between the researcher and local teaching staff at YU and builds on the

work of Davis and Krajcik (2005), described in chapter two for whom curriculum and pedagogy are intimately intertwined. According to Schneider & Krajcik (2002, p223)

'Curriculum materials can be educative for teachers by offering support for teachers in thinking about: (a) content beyond the level suggested for students, (b) underlying pedagogy, (c) developing content and community across time, (d) students, and (e) the broader community'. Curriculum can thus become a vehicle for the training of teachers as well as students.

The action research reported here represented an opportunity, within the context of my professional role as a teacher-trainer, to respond to a direct request for academic support from within the English department. It addressed key areas of quality assurance outlined in the CESR, most notably the formulation of learning aims. Such learning aims should not be considered value neutral as I have shown in chapter two. Their structure, the way that they are phrased as knowledge, disposition or ability, reflects how learning and the nature of knowledge is viewed. They define the areas of knowledge that will be prioritised and the types of abilities to be developed, whether these are subject- specific or transferable or a mix of these two.

6.2 The Curriculum Initiative as Action Research

The following sections provide an account of the stages of the action research based on Coghlan and Brannick' s (2010) framework described in chapter three, evaluating its significance in the light of the four rationales for internationalisation and their associated discourses described in chapter two.

6.2.1 Pre-Step (Context and Purpose)

Yangon University is considered the most prestigious higher education Institution in Myanmar. It is classed as a 'liberal arts and science' university and has a broad curriculum unlike all other universities in Myanmar which are highly specialised (Welch & Hayden, 2016). It was founded in 1920 and has had a long and often troubled history. The last 100 years has witnessed wave after wave of student uprisings against tyrannical regimes (Koon-Hong, 2014). YU has witnessed the evisceration of the university in the partitioning of the student body and the parcelling out of departments and undergraduate degree studies to far-flung corners of Yangon division. This divide and rule response of the military to student protest is only now being healed as undergraduate studies once more resume at Yangon University, following two decades during which they have not been permitted (Naing, 2016).

Myanmar organisational culture is extremely hierarchical in nature (Tin, 2008) and this permeated the entire institution into the culture of the classroom itself that is predominantly teacher-centred and informed by practices of rote learning and memorisation. It came as quite a shock to be surrounded on all sides by the sound of chanting as students repeated the text of their lessons over and again in a bid to memorise the set texts. Learning by rote has become the default method of teaching throughout the entire Myanmar education system (Lall, 2010) and classrooms are run along extremely predictable lines with little opportunity for student to student or student to teacher communication. Such pedagogical practices can result in 'poor problem solving skills and creativity, as well as limiting the capacity of students to work independently' (Duggan, 2001; Pellini, 2008; cited in Phelps, R and Graham, A; 2010; p1).

The resumption of ties with the university after several decades of isolation has positioned the British Council as a key player in the Higher Education sector in Myanmar. It is by no means the only one, as the US state department is now active within the English department at YU as are the governments of Australia, India and Singapore (English Department, 2016). Two teacher-trainers from the Australian Volunteer International (AVI) program set up an office adjacent to our own. Thus, we found ourselves building relationships both locally and internationally.

The political rationale for internationalisation was described in chapter two and the strategic and diplomatic mission of the British Council at YU was in alignment with this. As a world expert on the teaching of English language it made sense that the English department should be the focus of a targeted intervention; however, the British Council's rationale for English language training contrasted with those of the English department who also identified English literature as a priority. English language training was able to fit easily into the British Council's strategy in the region which positions English as a key competence able to support the development of generic employability skills. The emphasis on English Literature as a core humanities subject lay outside of this remit and meant that my professional involvement was not officially sanctioned or supported by the British Council.

However, teachers were keen to bring about change to this curriculum and to the dominant pedagogical paradigm of memorisation and rote learning. Some of them had been in the system for decades and told me how they struggled to satisfy the needs of the new generation of students, heirs to the sweeping political and technological changes of recent times. Indeed, the strong drive of teachers to develop professionally was an autonomous response to an increasingly tech savvy and knowledgeable cohort of undergraduate students. The teachers were adamant about the changes they wished to

make. These included a move toward a more critical and communicative curriculum capable of developing skills relevant to students' employability needs and a shift toward more student centred teaching methods that they believed would be more engaging.

It became clear that contextualising such an approach required a much closer working relationship with members of staff. I therefore suggested the establishment of a literature working-group to discuss the issues involved; in particular, the framing of learning outcomes, assessment and the integration of student-centred pedagogical techniques into teachers existing classroom practice. A group of six teachers, all of who shared, or would share, responsibility for teaching the literature curriculum, met once a week for two hours to discuss the features such a revised literature curriculum should include both in terms of its structure and its scope. Discussion soon became debate on what new subject matter might be included and how it could best be taught. The space represented an opportunity to deconstruct projections of foreign expertise and best practice that characterised official representations and rationales for our presence in the department.

At the time, I did not anticipate that any changes made to the syllabus at YU were likely to be rolled out nationally. This was a result of the head of department's position on the board of studies. According to the MoE, HEIs are not allowed to determine their curriculum, syllabus and textbooks. All departments of the same study field, even at different HEIs, must use the same curriculum, syllabus, and textbooks authorised by Council of University Academic Bodies. If HEIs want to make revisions, they must discuss the revisions in the University Academic Body at each HEI. With its approval, they can submit the proposal to the Council of Academic Bodies. The Council of Academic Bodies has sub-technical working groups called Boards of Studies for each department, consisting of one representative from each HEI that contains the department in

question. Each Board of Studies discusses the revision and submits its recommendations to the Council of University Academic Bodies for final authorisation at the Council's annual meeting (JICA, 2013). The power of the board of studies to make such changes demonstrates a high level of centralised control over the curriculum.

As representatives of the British Council we were ceremoniously welcomed into the department and introduced, in a speech by the principal, as foreign experts whose practices were to be imitated. According to McDonald (2012, p1817), 'policy borrowing can occur in a variety of ways, including in-country training'. Phillips (2004, p54) defines the process of educational borrowing as 'policy makers in one country seek to employ ideas taken from the experience of another country'. Such borrowing frequently ignores cultural differences that influence how teaching and learning is viewed. For example, Myanmar students expect teachers to transmit knowledge rather than to facilitate critical thinking, debate and discussion. The Myanmar Ministry of Education has pursued western educational approaches such as the Child Centred Approach (CCA) since the 1990s. However, this has proven difficult to reconcile with traditional methods of rote memorisation.

Compared to English language learning which has clear utilitarian value in the global knowledge economy, the study of English literature, particularly 16th and 17th century poetry, appeared antiquated – a relic of a bygone colonial era. Certainly, the traditional manner in which it was taught with students memorising pre-packaged sets of explanations in preparation for the exam was far from ideal. This was discussed in the literature working-group and a number of possibilities were suggested. English literature, it was agreed, could be used to explore and contextualise nuances of language that conventional English language teaching typically overlooked such as the use of metaphor, symbolism, irony, sarcasm and humour. It could also be used to

develop students' critical thinking abilities, notably critical reading and writing. Bloom's taxonomy was familiar to the teachers as a theory but not yet as a framework that could be used for lesson planning. Teachers were keen to stress that the study of literature was able to foster aesthetic appreciation – a non-utilitarian goal that found expression in the set of learning aims that were eventually formulated. Finally, literature could be used to engage students in issues of personal and social significance.

6.2.1a The English Department

The Burmese academic year is punctuated by many cultural and religious celebrations as well as numerous formal academic ceremonies and frequent ministerial and other official visits, entailing elaborate preparations – the work of which mainly falls on the shoulders of teachers. The hierarchical nature of relationships within the department became manifest during these visits when teachers, with whom we had begun to develop closer working relationships, transformed into waiters standing obediently besides tables while ministers or other officials sipped tea. In such a position it was difficult not to feel uncomfortable and this complicated our efforts to create a more egalitarian working ethos.

The silent respect for teachers' authority in Myanmar described by Lall (2010) was deeply in evidence throughout the department. Such a culture of respect needs to be problematised. Ceremonies often accompanied by traditional song and dance mark important points in the academic calendar such as the beginning and end of semester. They end with a homage paying service, during which students prostrate themselves before their teachers. From the outset, my colleague and I felt uncomfortable with this and asked if we could be excused participation and to receive handshakes instead. This was a difficult and quite messy example of intercultural negotiation that was accepted

by some but not others, including the Australian teachers who viewed our actions as disrespectful of local culture, sparking fierce, but friendly, debate for many weeks afterward and it was to remain a thorny issue throughout our sojourn.

Linked to this was the kow-tow[1] which is a deeply embedded behaviour in Burma, signalling status. It was particularly in evidence within the department and not something that would easily change. Another issue surrounded the mounting number of gifts we were receiving which necessitated an announcement by the principal to desist. These outward ceremonial type encounters were uncomfortable and an obstacle to achieving an authentically reciprocal and more egalitarian form of partnership. At the same time, we needed to build relationships with the heads of department, the principal and the ministry of education, which meant negotiating and challenging notions of status and respect.

The development of a mentoring model helped to create an ethos of mutual respect and a mutual curiosity and desire to understand each other's perspectives on teaching and learning. Mentoring became a two-way reciprocal process in which teachers' views were actively solicited, challenging the view of the mentor as a 'super-exponent of the well-functioning, helpful, predictable teacher, clear and direct in exposing her norms for behaviour' (Sundli, 2007, p208). The nurturing of opportunities for mutual deliberation underpinned the moves we made toward a curriculum that blended teacher-centred, whole class teaching and student-centred pedagogical techniques. I worked closely with teachers in the literature working-group to create schemes of work that were educative - containing background notes and instructions for teachers on how to set up more student centred activities.

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[1] Kow-Tow - act of deep respect shown by prostration, that is, kneeling and bowing so low as to have one's head touching the ground.

6.2.1b   The British Council

The nature of information flow and our position within the organisation of the British Council in Burma was such that my colleague and I were not fully apprised of the underlying political rationale behind our placement at the university. Soft diplomacy - the ability to establish good diplomatic relationships with the department was emphasised from the beginning; this should have indicated that we were to be considered as pawns in a much larger strategic vision. The BC's interest in our activities seemed to evaporate almost as soon as the stiff and elaborately rehearsed traditional Burmese welcoming ceremony had finished and we were issued into the arcane routines and rhythms of the department. In 2014, the organisation's strategic priorities were shifting away from closer involvement with Yangon University toward a far more ambitious nationwide teacher-training project (EfECT) funded through DFID. It became clear that the British Council viewed our position as a means to an end, part of a longer-term strategic imperative, which meant we received far less support in terms of meeting requests or backing for extending my professional remit to include curriculum redesign.

The deputy minister of education, the British Council's key contact within the MoE, was actually resident in the grounds of the English Department over which he was able to exercise considerable influence over the head of department. Although this was a special case, it did mean that the English Department became a venue for high-level meetings, leading eventually to the signing of an MOU for the nationwide teacher-training project - English for Education College Trainers (EfECT). The decision to partner with YU thus constituted a soft diplomatic move on behalf of the British Council to further its broader strategic goals. This instrumental approach challenged our ability to forge genuinely mutually beneficial relationships – a central tenet of the British Council's mission globally, based on an equal exchange of perspectives, concerns and visions.

6.2   Constructing and Taking Action

The establishment of a working-group of local teachers represented an opportunity to begin to reflect on and discuss issues of quality assurance and curriculum design as well as share thoughts, ideas and feelings about English literature and how it could be made relevant to students' needs and interests. Existing documentation from the department showed that that the learning aims of the BA course had not changed since it had last been taught at YU 16 years previously. Indeed, for the most part learning aims were ignored and played no significant role in the design, delivery or assessment of lessons. We examined online examples of curricula from the UK, Europe, Canada and Asia in order to visualise what the literature curricula of schools, colleges and universities elsewhere consisted of and the different ways in which, for example, learning outcomes could be framed and assessed.

6.3   Evaluating the Outcomes of the Curriculum Initiative

6.3.1   Learning Aims

The focus on learning aims was quite a shift for local teachers who had not previously considered their significance. We discussed their role in shaping the direction and design of the new scheme of work; what it was students were progressing towards in terms of learning and what it was they would be assessed upon. The existing learning aims were aimed solely at knowledge and understanding and we therefore examined and discussed examples of curricula that incorporated a more general range of knowledge, abilities and dispositions, including transferable-skills, such as team-working, problem solving and negotiating - integral to employability in a fast changing economy and to the communicative, student-centred pedagogical approach teachers wished to move toward.

In order to visualise what such learning aims might consist of, we examined online examples of BA literature curricula. We compared Middlesex, Portsmouth and Oxford Brookes Universities in the UK, the UK AQA GCSE A level English Literature curriculum, the University of Toronto, Canada BA English Literature curriculum and finally the non-literature specific, generic learning aims of the ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance framework (AUN-QA) which was at the early stages of being unrolled at YU. A number of patterns could be discerned.

1. Learning outcomes were usually defined in a student centric manner in terms of three dimensions.

a. Ability - what students will be better able to do; these use 'process verbs' - 'identify', 'reflect', 'engage' and 'participate' were commonly used examples.

b. Knowledge – what students will learn; 'understand' was a frequently used term to indicate mastery of subject specific content.

c. Disposition – attitudes that students will develop - 'willingness', 'commitment' and 'appreciation' were typically phrased examples

2. Learning outcomes phrased in terms of ability, exemplified by the UK universities, were far more numerous than those that are ascribable to either knowledge or disposition in this small sample. These were phrased in a range of ways, which were aimed at the development of students' critical skills.

3. There were well-defined categories of 'practical', 'graduate' and 'transferable' abilities in the UK curricula, which referred quite explicitly to employability. The AUN – QA more closely resembled the UK in this. Many of its learning outcomes were ascribable to

vocational abilities, some specifically such as 'clinical skills' and 'laboratory skills'. There was thus a more explicit emphasis on employability.

In comparison, the existing learning aims for the BA literature courses at YU were more general in definition – 'study', 'tackle' and 'attention to' were the sole exemplars of ability type outcomes. The remainder were framed in perceptual terms such as 'become acquainted with', 'get a broader view of', 'get a glimpse of' or 'provide a unique perspective on'. The headwords used - 'getting', 'gaining' and 'enhancing' were very different from the quite specific skills based descriptions of the other curricula and there was no obvious association with vocational needs or the kinds of skills relevant to employability.

As pointed out in chapter two, the QAA benchmarking statements are an important consideration for university departments in the UK who need to meet QAA assessment standards. The QAA teaching assessment methodology has been subject to strong criticism for being over – prescriptive,

'Based on the prior articulation of aims, objectives and learning outcomes, and the utilisation of appropriate pedagogic techniques as the most efficient and effective means to these predetermined ends' (Laughton, 2003, p318).

However, the QAA statements for English literature begin with very broad aims that are tilted toward appreciation, enthusiasm and inspiration for the subject itself. It is interdisciplinary in nature with a strong emphasis on the breadth and varieties of literatures in English (QAA, 2014). The value of generic and graduate skills are articulated in both socio-cultural and the economic terms:

'Graduates who have studied English can contribute to society and are sought by employers because they have skills in and positive attitudes towards, research, communication and active learning' (QAA, 2014, p7).

Indeed, many of the so-called employability skills such as 'develop working relationships with others in teams, especially through constructive dialogue' (ibid, p8) are capable of being recast in terms of a more socio-cultural rationale. This is also true of subject specific skills such as 'articulate a critical understanding of complex texts and ideas' (ibid, p7), which is easily generalisable. Such considerations informed our discussions concerning the feasibility and desirability of prioritising a new set of learning aims for the BA (hons) English course at YU. The learning outcomes we eventually selected were both subject-specific and transferable. They could be considered useful vocationally and socially, not only transferable to the workplace but also to the wider arena of public debate.

6.3.2 Assessment

Myanmar has been described as an examination culture (Hayden and Martin, 2013). High stakes summative exams are the principal means by which students are assessed and there is no tradition of formative assessment. The tests are in the form of short multiple-choice questions and / or essay length questions. The questions themselves mainly require descriptive answers rather than those based on critical evaluation. Answers are frequently memorised through rote learning and regurgitated in the exam (Lall et al, 2013). The creation of new curricular materials, including new learning aims, had implications for existing assessment procedures. The end of semester and end of year examinations had to be changed to reflect the new content we had introduced.

Although, given the short length of the project, we were unable to fundamentally alter this system, we were able to introduce more critical assessment questions aimed at students' higher order thinking skills, such as the ability to make inferences and formulate arguments. These better reflected the communicative activities in the new educative curriculum.

6.3.3 Teacher Training

Supplementing the curriculum with interactive materials of this sort entailed a responsibility to train teachers in techniques of practical application. However, because most of them had such a busy teaching schedule and a mountain of administration to keep up with, I was not able to direct my training efforts at them in discrete sessions. As an alternative, we developed a mentoring model wherein I was able to co-teach groups of students, working closely with small groups of teachers to plan and deliver lessons. Mentoring is 'the support given by one (usually more experienced) person for the growth and learning of another' (Malderez, 2001, p. 57; cited in Bukari, et al, 2015). This can involve modelling of pedagogical practice on the assumption that unless teachers have experienced or been able to visualise a new or different type of practice, they will not be in a strong enough position to be able to implement it in their own practice (Westbrook et al, 2013). Mentoring can involve the forging of a close personal and collegiate relationship of 'equal partners' based on 'mutual choice' (Awaya et al, 2003, p48). However, partnership in such a context was challenging as it involved the navigation of an intercultural environment infused by unequal relationships of power, authority and status.

6.3.4 Pedagogical Change

The project represented an opportunity to strengthen the provision of English literature and at the same time to introduce elements of a more interactive pedagogy, but one that tried to take into account the reality of higher education teachers in Myanmar whose practice is rooted in recent traditions, which have emphasised rote learning. The communicative approach is inherently more student centred, envisaging a role for the teacher as a facilitator who assists and monitors students' own process of pair and group learning. This can be challenging for teachers unused to relinquishing their position at the front of the class. Wherever possible, we supplemented the new schemes of work with educative materials designed to train teachers in their use.

The Myanmar teachers' approach to student-centred learning envisioned a strong facilitation role in which they positioned themselves as central to the process of learning. This reality informed our design of the scheme of work, which integrated a whole-class dialogic set of question and answer exchanges between teacher and students with options to segue into pair and group work if the teacher felt confident enough to do so.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

The curriculum initiative revealed barriers to and opportunities for successful partnership. First, assumptions of foreign expertise and so-called best practices were pervasive amongst local staff and needed to be addressed. The establishment of a working group of teachers interested in curriculum design and pedagogical knowledge provided a forum in which issues such as the wholesale transplanting of curricula, including pedagogical approaches, from one context to another could be discussed, debated and challenged and issues of quality assurance addressed. Second, asymmetries

of status and power between local and international partners as well as inequalities of socio-economic status inhibited the establishment of genuine mutually beneficial relationships. Hierarchies arising from within the nexus of our relationships with the department, replicating historical and cultural submission to traditional conceptions of authority reinforced barriers to successful partnership. Third, the long-term political and strategic interests of both the British Council and the Ministry of Education engendered an instrumentalist approach to the partnership with Yangon University, which meant that they were unable or unwilling to offer their support to any new initiatives arising from within the department.

The initiative was a spontaneous response to the expressed need of local teachers to develop skills in curriculum design and pedagogy. The establishment of a professional team or working group opened up opportunities for teachers to participate in research on the curriculum at multiple levels. This led to the development of a type of practitioner-to-practitioner partnership, based on mutual deliberation and choice and grounded in a mentoring approach. The autonomy that teachers were able to exercise in shaping the curriculum was an important determinant of their motivation to participate. If, as seems likely, Yangon University is to become a test bed for future sector-wide reforms, including greater institutional autonomy, then more opportunities need to be made available for local staff to play a role in curriculum design and policy.

Chapter Seven: The Role and Priorities of Key Development Partners

7.1 Introduction

The analysis of the GED conference documents included the views of representatives from a broad social network of academicians, international consultants and representatives of organisations such as the British Council and UNESCO. The CESR was supported by the ADB (Asia Development bank), AusAID, British Council, DFID (Department for International Development, UK), EU, JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency), UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, governments of Denmark and Norway and others. Of these, AUSAID, DfID and to a great extent the British Council have chosen to focus on basic education in Myanmar. JICA continue to support some aspects of higher education. The Open Society Foundation (OSF) has latterly provided support, especially through the Central European University (CEU), which is supporting curriculum development in a range of humanities subjects at Yangon University.

Interviews were undertaken with representatives of JICA, OSF and CEU. The full range of interview questions is reproduced in appendix three. In practice, due to time constraints, responses to the first question - 'What are [X] main priorities for the reform of the higher education curriculum in Myanmar?' constituted the bulk of the responses and other questions were used for further probing. Chapter seven contains critical summaries of the data gathered from these three interviews that aimed at uncovering the rationales underlying their strategic priorities.

7.2 The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The overarching rationale for JICA's involvement in HE globally is on human resource development in science and mathematics education. In higher education, this is realised through international partnerships in the field of engineering. In Myanmar, JICA works with Yangon Technical University and Mandalay Technical University. Their priority is to address the poor state of research capacity. Seven Japanese departments support six departments in Myanmar. The work they are doing with the engineering colleges is categorised by JICA as HE rather than TVET, since it is aimed at strengthening research capacity. The goal is to promote advanced engineering education, research /teaching skills, and networking. 40 teachers/ lecturers from Myanmar have received PhD training in Japan.

JICA is implementing the ASEAN University Network/Southeast Asia Engineering Education Development Network programme (AUN SEED-NET), which aims to establish a region-wide system for advanced education and research by member Institutions, in collaboration with Japanese supporting universities. It consists of the implementation of graduate degree programs, collaborative research programs, mobility and networking programs, university – industry linkage activities and the promotion of a credit transfer system between universities in the region. AUN SEED-NET provides integrated support consisting of scholarships, grants for faculty development and network establishment.

Critical Commentary

JICA's rationale for partnership is rooted in a developmentalist approach to education that has been influential in Japan and throughout East and South East Asia. This approach stems from the definition of states in the region as developmental (Thompson, 1996). It is claimed that developmental states are characterised by strong political elites

whose policies are geared toward rapid economic development and 'mechanisms to link trade and industry policy to education and training policy' (Abe, 2006). This manifests as a prioritising of the STEM disciplines and helps to explicate JICA's partnerships with the engineering departments in Myanmar. It is also clear from JICA's global position paper that the approach has evolved and is now embedded in a notion of 'human security' based on sustainable development goals and embraces a political and socio-cultural rationale that aims to address poverty and environmental issues and 'lays the foundations for a peaceful and inclusive society by fostering understanding of diverse cultures and values' (JICA, 2015, p1).

JICA's strategy for international partnership is based on an approach it terms 'mutual learning' which it defines as 'a collaborative practice among teachers, schools and regional and global actors, to promote professional communities for providing solutions for educational challenges' (JICA, 2015, p6). This is predicated on the building of social capital or trust between partners 'through trial and error on the ground'. This resonates with the British Council's goal of 'mutually beneficial relationships' (The British Council, 2018).

7.3 The Open Society Foundation (OSF)

Open Society Foundation (OSF) works closely with the Central European University to implement their overall strategy, which is focused on support for the departments of law, political science and international relations at Yangon and Mandalay universities respectively. CEU has signed a 2-year Global Teaching Fellowship Agreement with both institutions. One pillar of their work is to strengthen academic capacity through faculty exchange, with staff from CEU visiting Myanmar and delegations from Myanmar visiting CEU in Budapest, Hungary. Another pillar is support for IT infrastructure in the form of

an online library network shared between seven universities in both upper and lower Myanmar.

Critical Commentary

OSF does not have any direct involvement in STEM or TVET provision and are one of the few development partners in Myanmar higher education to prioritise humanities education. This reflects OSF's global mission to strengthen democracy, human rights and the rule of law and to foster civil society. Strengthening legal education at YU is a priority for international partnership building with Myanmar and is being supported by both OSF and Oxford University.

7.4 Central European University (CEU)

In early 2012, Central European University were approached by the MOE, through the Open Society Foundation, with a request to send visiting instructors to help develop MA and PhD courses in the humanities, notably Law, International Relations and Archaeology at Yangon and Mandalay Universities. CEU's focus is on intensive graduate Master and PhD programmes in the social sciences and humanities as part of its global 'Higher Education Support Program'. The rationale for the MOE's request was entirely pragmatic. Maritime law was specified because the Myanmar Government were involved in various international disputes and needed to better understand the legal frameworks involved; international relations because Myanmar were then preparing for the chairmanship of ASEAN and they needed training for government officials to be able to handle various officials and attend conferences; archaeology was chosen because they needed to learn how to comply with UNESCO's world heritage program. Despite this, CEU saw this as an opportunity for further involvement. A visiting fellowship programme was the foundation for CEU's involvement with YU and this later changed to

the sending of PhD students to YU and MU to teach public policy and environmental studies program for undergraduates.

CEU seeks to promote OSF's interests in Myanmar mainly through projects focused on change at a systemic level, aimed at improving academic practice. Their first priority is to address what CEU perceive to be a major problem with the system of transfers that operates across the higher education sector. Teachers are regularly transferred, without any negotiation, to different locations around the country. According to the respondent from CEU, they are expected to 'teach whatever is needed, wherever it is needed'. Teachers are given a script and are expected to teach from that using a method of rote learning. This acts as a brake on them developing a specialism and ignores whatever research interests they may have. The aim, therefore, is to move towards a system in which teachers remain in their institutions and are able to specialise and to develop research interests and teaching skills in those specialisms. CEU recognise that this clearly demands a move towards far greater institutional autonomy than exists at present. Another priority addresses the silo status of university departments and aims to create a faculty system in which departments will be combined. This should introduce a greater degree of interdisciplinarity. A further priority for curriculum development at YU and MU, and later elsewhere, is to create 'centres for teaching and learning' - resource and training units composed of 'master trainers', providing advice, support, resource support and training.

Critical Commentary

CEU's involvement is focused at departmental level and combines rationales aimed at improving academic practice with a specific emphasis on institutional autonomy as a broader socio-political goal. CEU's political position is in alignment with that of its sister

organisation OSF, both of which were founded by the philanthropist George Soros. The promotion of democracy provides a shared rationale for its decision to partner with the departments of law, political science and international relations. At a more programmatic level, the types of visiting fellowships and scholarships enacted by CEU have more direct effects upon the curriculum through the development of research skills. Reciprocal mobility encompassing inbound and outbound exchanges is a key feature of this partnership.

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

The document analyses identified a number of problems and challenges facing the Myanmar Higher Education sector, following decades of underinvestment, mismanagement and disruption. The CESR focuses strongly on a lack of institutional autonomy and on issues of access and equity. The Myanmar government, on the other hand, generally links higher education to economic competiveness and to a lack of robust quality assurance mechanisms capable of holding HEI's accountable and lifting the sector to world-class status. These two competing discourses of autonomy and quality are discussed below.

8.2 Autonomy

Autonomy has found its way into the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) as its first priority, quality as the second and 'equitable access' (MOE, 2016a) as the third. There is a strong political rationale underlying the discourse on university autonomy in Myanmar, rooted in the long history of conflict between universities and the central authorities (see chapter one). The centralised nature of the current university governance system underpins the argument for greater institutional autonomy put forward in the CESR.

The response in the NESP is a stronger assertion of the need for accountability in the form of government control of both internal and external quality assurance processes. This appears to legitimise continued centralised control over higher education in areas of finance, policy and, most significantly, of curriculum. It brings into question how competing demands for autonomy and accountability will be managed. The degree or scope of autonomy that individual institutions will be able to exercise over the curriculum is significantly absent from the discourse.

The interviews revealed CEU's strong commitment to the promotion of greater autonomy at YU, particularly in regard to challenging centralised mechanisms that regularly transfer teachers to other institutions around the country, discouraging the development of greater specialism.

At the level of social practice, autonomy was very much in evidence as teachers in the English department used the opportunity presented by international partnership to negotiate support for curriculum development. The rationale in this case was academic, aimed at bridging the gap between students' rising expectations and their own level of professional development. The development of a professional group provided a space for teachers to deliberate and eventually decide on new learning outcomes, pedagogy and assessment procedures. This deliberative process provided further opportunities for teachers to develop their professional competence in relation to key features of the curriculum.

8.3 Quality

The second priority identified in the CESR and carried forward into the NESP is a focus on quality and relevance. Quality assurance systems are at an elementary level in Myanmar and await legislation that will create formal mechanisms. It is beginning to adopt regional QA systems and frameworks although the lack of university autonomy and highly centralised administrative bureaucracy will make such a development difficult to implement. The CESR identified the ASEAN QA framework as the model to which Myanmar should approximate. However, as pointed out in chapter four, ASEAN itself approximates to global benchmarking standards in the form of world rankings and the borrowing of westernised conceptions of graduate attributes and learning outcomes.

The AUN) is currently developing regional quality assurance assessment guidelines that will influence the nature of higher education curricula throughout the region in a similar manner to that of the Bologna process (Feuer and Hornidge, 2015). The overall thrust of this initiative is to define and determine a set of graduate attributes that articulate the competencies deemed necessary for students to contribute effectively to the needs of the regional labour market. These mechanisms, alongside systems of mobility, are predicated on a neoliberal discourse of employability that tends to construct students as a capital resource. This economic rationale is dominant in the wider ASEAN higher education policy environment and was also strongly in evidence in the analysis of the CESR documents and the GED conference in Myanmar.

The action research supported teachers in the English department in developing awareness of key elements of quality assurance. The significant role played by learning outcomes was explored in some depth. Beelen (2015), writing about the obstacles to the formation of constructive international partnerships, points to the lack of skills related to the articulation of learning aims as well as the paucity of literature on the subject. Involving teachers in the process of curriculum design provided a powerful forum for in-depth discussion, a space in which a range of expertise could be shared and opinions discussed in a friendly but critical manner. Teachers, in collaboration with the researcher, crafted a set of learning aims for the literature course that expressed a range of competencies related not only to employability but also to elements of personal development. Other crucial elements of quality assurance such as assessment procedures were less amenable to change.

8.4 Internationalisation

At the national level in Myanmar there is no overarching policy or strategy for international cooperation in higher education, although a general intention to avoid institutional

divergence is put forward in the phase 2 CESR Report. The current stage of the internationalisation of higher education in Myanmar is mainly taking place at the institutional level with Yangon University as the prime example and characterised by the involvement of an eclectic and opportunistic mix of international partners that resembles to some extent the context of knowledge production, referred to in chapter two as *mode* 2 (Gibbons, 1994).

8.5 Regionalisation

The foremost rationales for internationalisation at the national level are economic and socio-political and are evident in policy discourses surrounding greater regionalisation. This is expressed most succinctly in the quest for a so-called ASEAN university. The document analyses indicate that the future development of higher education in the region rests on increasing competitiveness underpinned by a growth in the knowledge based economy.

The use of ASEAN rather than Asian suggests a political ideal that transcends national or ethnic differences. This is problematic in a number of ways. First, the concept is under theorised and lacks a robust definition. Second, the need to be globally competitive is leading countries in the region to borrow global benchmarking and ranking systems. Third, western systems of curriculum design and delivery such as the ATC21S are being valorised above regional or local versions and the impetus toward policy copying is strong. Finally, the difficulties of achieving a common identity are enormous, given the various nationalisms, ethnic tensions and steep socio-economic inequalities, which are characteristic of countries in the region, including Myanmar (Jones, 2004).

The evidence suggests similarities and differences between the Confucian model (see chapter two) and the context of higher education reform in Myanmar. The strong role of the state in education, rooted in decades of military control, the commitment to increasing

access and the institution of quality assurance systems are comparable. However, this is balanced by policies targeted at limited autonomy and lack of equitable access, prioritised in the CESR and NESP. The findings contradict the claim that ASEAN is peripheral to national policy making in Southeast Asia (Marginson, 2010). Rather, they demonstrate a strong role for ASEAN in key issues of quality assurance in Myanmar, while the quest to create a unique regional identity for universities, especially with regard to the curriculum, remains weakly constituted and subject to policy borrowing.

8.6   Limitations of the Study

My own personal and professional trajectory led me away from the research site and sources of data collection. While social media has made it possible to maintain this connection, it seems that there is no substitute for remaining close to the site. In addition, documentation on Myanmar's higher education sector is scant and often difficult to obtain.

The synthesis of theoretical tools such as CDA, CPA and critical realism offers a holistic approach to social research, combining analysis of discourse and non-discourse elements. However, further research is needed to ground this in practical techniques.

8.7   Concluding Remarks

The thesis has contributed to a better understanding of the rationales for higher education change that exist in Myanmar and the policy discourses and strategic priorities that were in evidence between 2014 and 2016. These represent a range of global, regional, national and local positions and priorities.

Different rationales give rise to different forms of partnership. The economic argument construes the context of higher education reform in Myanmar in terms of the disjunction between university curricula and the needs of industry, the poor level of knowledge and

skills attained by graduates in Myanmar as well as the need for more sustainable forms of development. Thus, JICA's partnership is focused very much on developing research capacity in STEM. The prioritising of STEM is in line with other countries in the region (see chapter two) and fuels a continuing debate in Myanmar policy documentation concerning the relationship between HE and TVET. By contrast, OSF and CEU are unusual in exemplifying a more political rationale in their partnerships with the departments of law and international relations.

The British Council also exemplified a more distinctly political rationale for partnership; its status as a cultural relations organisation has made it a vehicle for UK soft power in Myanmar. This has paved the way for increased economic ties. According to the UK government's Department for International Trade (DfID, 2015, p1) 'The UK has a strong brand in Burma which means there is demand for British products and services'. Neoliberalism was portrayed in chapter two as collusion between the state and the market in which governments help to create the conditions for greater market activity.

The professional development of local teachers through collaboration in an action research project aimed at curriculum redesign was a central focus of my own professional involvement at Yangon University. The development of local expertise in areas of quality assurance helped to strengthen institutional autonomy. The thesis argued for a reassessment of the role played by graduate attributes and learning outcomes in achieving quality objectives and for a broad approach to curriculum design that crosses the so called STEM-humanities divide.

The thesis has taken an initial step in investigating international involvement in Myanmar's higher education system. It should be noted that such involvement was proceeding at a rapid pace in 2015. My own professional secondment to Yangon University represented a

resumption of a UK-Myanmar educational partnership that had lain dormant for several decades.

The thesis notes that, thus far, Yangon University is the only higher education institution in Myanmar that has been able to develop extensive links with international agencies (see appendix 10). It has the ambition to become a 'centre of excellence' and the chair of the 'University of Yangon Revitalisation Committee' is Daw Aung San Su Kyi, the de facto leader of the government. This elite involvement has helped broker partnerships with so-called global players such as Oxford University and the National University of Singapore. International partnerships are mainly focused on improving the central activities of teaching and research. As described in the case study, there is a strong desire amongst Myanmar academics to replace methods of teaching based on rote learning and memorisation with more up to date methods emphasising critical thinking.

In the absence of an internationalisation strategy, Yangon University has entered into opportunistic arrangements with a wide range of international agencies, often without much direction (see 4.4.1). YU can be considered a microcosm for future efforts at systemic reform of higher education in Myanmar and exemplifies the attitude of Myanmar's policy makers toward the international community; how discriminating they are toward offers of help and advice, the extent to which they are prepared to genuinely change entrenched systems of governance and the ways in which they balance competing visions of the reform process. The thesis provided evidence of uncritical forms of policy borrowing at the institutional, national and regional levels (see 2.4, 6.2.1 and 8.5) and it is incumbent on international agencies to be aware of this when establishing cross-national partnerships. The ASEAN University Network has been active in providing consultancy to YU on matters relating to Quality Assurance. A key issue identified in the thesis is the extent to which YU might be

tempted to borrow or to imitate the AUN-QA framework, without fully developing its own internal QA processes.

At a macrocosmic level, the international conference analysed in chapter four suggested a strong economic rationale for higher educational reform in Myanmar, predicated on higher productivity and competitiveness in a global education market (see 4.1.3). The thesis also revealed a weaker set of arguments for HEIs as centres of social commentary and cultural renewal (see 4.6.1). The former discourse, as promulgated by ASEAN, the Asian Development Bank and the ASEAN University Network, has resulted in international partnerships aimed at building research capacity in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic disciplines (see 7.2). The latter has resulted in international partnerships, such as those with Oxford, the Open Society Institute and Central European University, which are aimed at curriculum development in humanities disciplines such as law, international relations and political science (see 7.3 and 7.4). International agencies are thus involved in a wide range of activities that span the whole curriculum. By contrast, at a microcosmic level, within a department, the case study provided evidence of a strong academic rationale for international partnership, guided by the need for an improved pedagogy and teaching materials.

The thesis revealed the continued centralised nature of control exercised by Myanmar's various ministries over the HE sector, including YU, within a context of rapid internationalisation. This has tended to favour the development of an elite partnerships model, which has helped to inflate still further the Myanmar government's lofty ambitions to become a world-class research university (see 4.5 and 5.12.1). The case study demonstrates the importance and also some of the challenges of establishing international partnerships capable of engaging academic staff at a grassroots level in the setting of

strategic priorities, in order to counteract some of these centralising tendencies and over-ambitious targets.

As I have tried to demonstrate, in 2014-2015, the rapid expansion of YU's partnerships with international agencies was occurring in an ad-hoc, opportunistic manner and the local initiative piloted by the British Council was no exception (see 5.12.6 and 8.4). The British Council's partnership with YU was an opportunity to further relationships at a ministerial level in order to realise its longer-term strategies in the country. This exercise in soft diplomacy was in keeping with its identity as a cultural relations organisation with a long history of involvement in Myanmar (see 6.2.1b). Despite this instrumentalist approach, over the course of a year, grassroots involvement in the English Department helped to develop the capacity of local staff to operate under more autonomous conditions. As discussed, this is a key requirement if YU is to become a viable model for sector-wide reform. Despite the explicit priority accorded to autonomy as a policy goal in the 2014 Education Law, the research pointed to the fact that the extent or depth of such autonomous status has yet to be clearly defined in current national strategies such as the National Education Sector Plan (see 8.2).

The establishment of a working group of local teachers and lecturers proved to be an antidote to claims that YU is engaging with international agencies without any sense of genuine purpose (see 4.4.1). It allowed for the negotiation of several key academic priorities, most notably, the improvement of teaching content, methods and resources. While there is a demonstrable need to improve the research capability of Myanmar HEIs, the priority of staff in the English Department at YU was clearly focused on improving the curriculum. Further research would be needed to establish the priorities of other departments, or indeed other HEIs, and the nature of ministerial control over the sector in Myanmar makes this an extremely difficult proposition (see 6.2.1a).

The thesis analysed claims that international engagement may impede the development of local institutional autonomy (see 4.4.1). Partnerships with YU tend to be initiated by international agencies rather than by the university itself and this can lead to projects that are not aligned with the needs of the institution and that do not reflect, or allow it to develop, its own vision. However, the case study demonstrated the strong sense of autonomy that was present at a grassroots departmental level in which teachers engaged strategically to enlist assistance in curriculum development. It also revealed how entrenched hierarchies within the institution and tendencies toward policy borrowing or imitation confounded this.

The thesis explored the tensions between quality promotion, accountability and institutional autonomy in so-called Confucian systems and more generally within ASEAN (see 2.4 and 2.10). The document analysis demonstrated that these tensions are present in Myanmar policy discourses. It also revealed the highly politicised nature of higher education reform in Myanmar. The 2014 education law met with widespread student protest over the perceived lack of genuine commitment to autonomy and academic freedom in the wording of the legislation, which students claimed guaranteed continued centralised control over the curriculum (see 1.1 and 2.2). The extent to which universities in Myanmar are able to define their own priorities for international assistance and to respond to opportunities that arise in a proactive manner will depend on how much autonomy they are granted. The thesis questioned how much autonomy individual departments could hope to possess, given the current centralised structure of most institutions. The case study offered a possible model of cross-national practitioner to practitioner partnership that was capable of fostering autonomy amongst local teaching staff in the English Department of YU and that helped to raise awareness of quality issues at a grassroots level.

In many ways, the practitioner-to-practitioner model of cross-national partnership that evolved during the course of the action research challenged the dominant political and economic rationales driving the Myanmar government's policy discourses on higher education as well as those aimed at strengthening ASEAN integration. At a departmental level, the priorities that emerged were primarily academic, driven from below by the demands placed on local staff faced with a sudden and rapid resumption of undergraduate courses and with out-dated curricula (see 2.4).

The chaotic and unplanned nature of international partnerships at YU in 2014, put pressure on international agencies, including the British Council to establish coordinated systems of working together to ensure that their efforts were in alignment with each other and with the needs of the university. A robust internationalisation strategy based on the needs and priorities of local staff in individual departments rather than the dictates of either international agencies or the Myanmar government would guarantee a more proactive stance in relation to the formation of international partnerships than is currently the case.

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GLOSSARY

ADB   Asia Development Bank

AEC   ASEAN Economic Community

APEID   Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development

APRU   Association of Pacific Rim Universities

AQAN   ASEAN Quality Assurance Network

ASAIHL   Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning

ASEAN   Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ATC21C   Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills

AUN   ASEAN University Network

AUN-QA   ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance

AusAID   Australian Agency for International Development

AVI   Australian Volunteer International

BC   British Council

BERA   British Educational Research Association

CCA   Child Centred Approach

CDA   Critical Discourse Analysis

CESR   Comprehensive Education Sector Review

CEU   Central European University

CPA   Critical Policy Analysis

CUAB   Council of University Academic Boards

DFiD   Department for International Development

EfECT   English for Education College Trainers

EHEA   European Higher Education Area

EPIC   Education Promotion Implementation Committee

GIZ   Gesellschaft Für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

HRD   Human Resource Development

IoC   Internationalisation of the Curriculum

EU   European Union

GED   Global Education Dialogue

ISCED   International Standard Classification of Education

JICA   Japanese International Cooperation Agency

JIF   Journal Impact Factor

KEI   Knowledge Economy Index

KMUTT   King Mongkhut University of Technology Thornburi

MOE   Myanmar Ministry of Education, Myanmar

MOST   Ministry of Science and Technology

NEC   National Education Committee

NESP   National Education Strategic Plan

NLD   National League for Democracy

NQF   National Qualifications Framework

OSF   Open Society Foundations

PATA   Policy and Advisory Technical Assistance Programme

P21   Partnership for 21st Century Learning

QA   Quality Assurance

QAA   Quality Assurance Agency

SEAMEO   Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation

SEED-NET   Southeast Asia Engineering Education Development Network Programme

STEM   Science, Technology, Mathematics and Engineering

THE   Times Higher Education

TVET   Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UCC   Universities Central Council

UNCTAD   United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP   United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF   United Nations Children's Fund

YU   Yangon University

Appendix One: Main International Partnerships with Yangon University: 2015
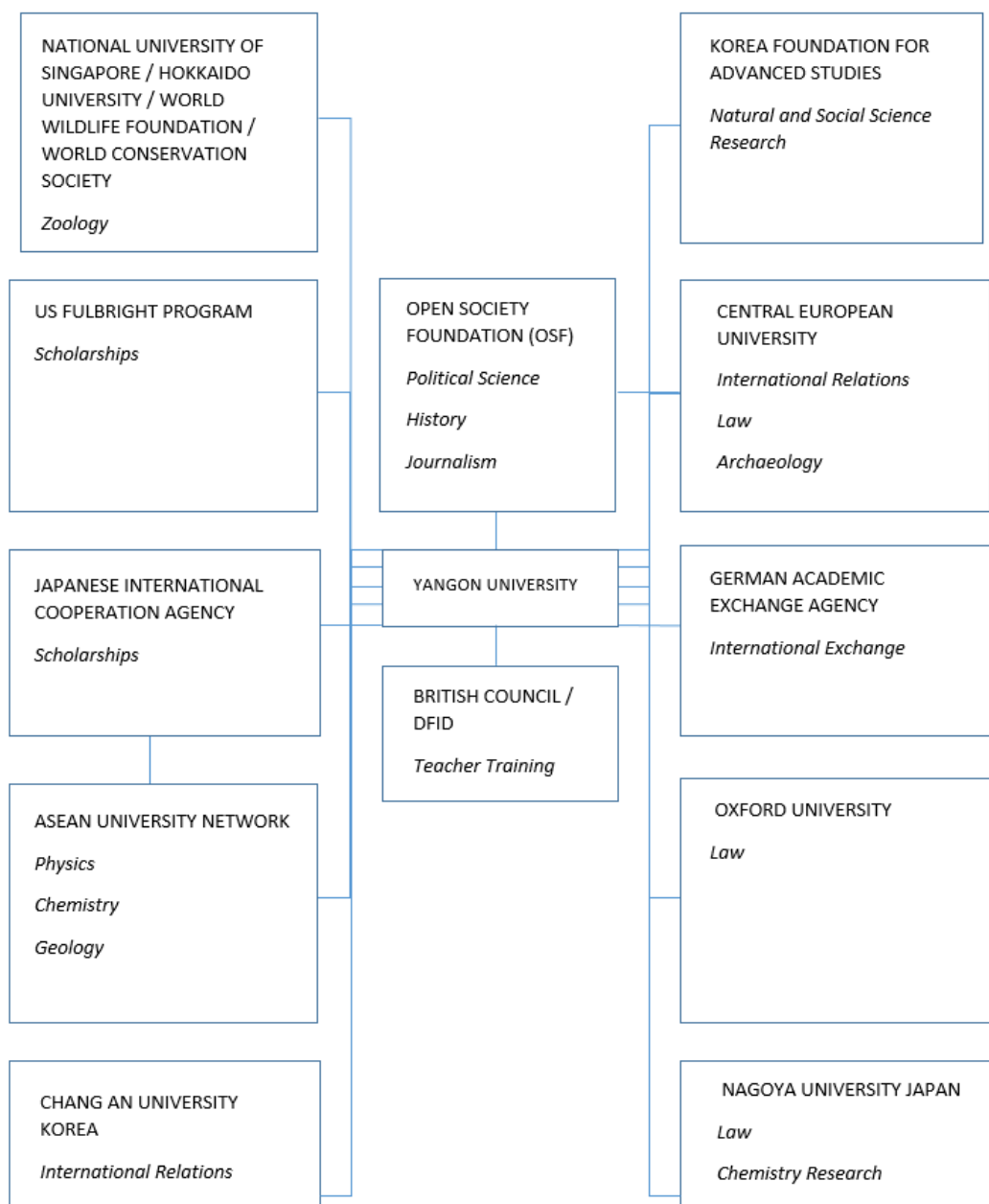
Appendix Two: Extract of GED PowerPoint Analysis

PPT 2. Christine Ennew, University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus

Address the role and benefits of HE, highlighting its importance and significance

And Emphasise the breadth of the contribution that HE makes in developing and developed economies

Explore the implications for policy and for the development and management of HE systems

Highlight the particular value of global engagement (Specific reference to internationalization)

The national significance of higher education

Higher education = 1. Economic [Human capital + research and innovation [Does this definition have to refer only to science and technology?] and 2. Social Cultural [curating knowledge]

[How generic are these benefits?]

Much of the research on HE and its impact has been oriented towards more developed countries, so how generic are these contributions?

[Argument discounts 'social cultural'…(as well as ignoring the academic and personal]

1. Are there good enough returns to investment in HE?

a. Empirical evidence is ambiguous

b. Importance of recognising public and private benefits

[What are 'private returns' exactly?]

c. Anecdotal evidence (the case of China) [in economic terms]

2. Are the returns well distributed or do they just benefit elites?

a. Unclear but dependent on how HE is managed

Significance of changing labour market dynamics

Growing need for skills development and updating

build self reliance and competitiveness

Argument pointing toward a neoliberal ideal emphasising the market and competitiveness – the discourse of 'knowledge wars' – of knowledge (or rather skills) as a weapon. The notion of 'self-reliance' points to the discourse on 'rugged individualism' – a prominent idea in the conservative –republican tradition which posits individuals as entrepreneurs.'Updating' suggests something neutral - akin to 'uploading'. In other words, you need to modernise in the following ways…

Implications

Importance of investment in HE as part of balanced development (What is this?)

Issue of scale in the face of low participation and young populations

1. Financing the growth of HE

a. State provision: recognises and supports the public benefits of HE. [Vulnerability to politicisation > Definition of private sector as apolitical]

b. Private provision: support for research? Managing quality ('managing quality' is a widely used phrase?)

c. Other options – virtual? international? Looking at 'distance education' [selling Nottingham]

2. Managing and governing growth

a. Market governance problematic

b. Clear state role in relation to regulation, but dangers of excessive control [Swedish model?]

c. Importance of human capital in HE training and development [explicit ref Economic]

3. The case for enhancing international engagement

REPEATS FORMULA WITH NEW SLOTS [Higher education = 1. Economic [A. Human capital + research and innovation (Does this have to refer only to science and technology?)] [B. Access to Talent / Access to Funding] and 2. Social Cultural [A. curating knowledge [B. Mutual Understanding + Soft Power] [The assumption of 'soft power' as value neutral or indeed invariably positive]

To summarise

1. Diversity of national benefits from investment in HE whether developed or developing country.

[Only mentioned two rationales – economic and social-cultural.]

2. Benefits are both private (skill/salary premium) and public (innovation, knowledge)

['private' defined as skills and wealth.]

3. Competing demands on state funding in the face of buoyant demand [reference to 'supply and demand']

4. Both private (domestic and international) and public sector have roles to play in supporting the development of HE [Opinion clearly stated as fact]

Challenge for the public sector is the development of a sensible regulatory framework to ensure that HE is accountable to society without compromising the autonomy that is so important for a successful HE system

[Mixed economic approach which appears to balance public and private]

Appendix Three: Interview Questions

What are XXXs main priorities for reform of the higher education curriculum in Myanmar?

What is your approach to curriculum design? Is it outcomes based? Competency based? How does it compare to the AUN's approach for example or that of the government or other organisations working in Myanmar?

How strong an influence is ASEAN (AUN-AQ / ADB?) on the reform of the higher education curriculum? (According to the CESR, 'Myanmar has a stated goal of approaching 'ASEAN standards' as a proximate goal for higher education').

What is your assessment of the coordination between the development partners   and with the various government bodies?

Is it possible to speak about policy or strategy of the internationalisation of higher education at the national level?

Appendix Four: The East Asia Series: GLOBAL EDUCATION DIALOGUES 2013-2014

Available at: http://www.rihed.seameo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GED_FA2.pdf

Appendix Five: Global Dialogue East Asia Series: Yangon, Myanmar 2014:

TITLE: 'Locally Engaged, Globally Facing: From national industry to regional player to global system – What is the role of the ASEAN University?'

Available   at:

https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/final_ged_myanmar_2014_report.pdf

Appendix Six: The East Asia Series: 2014 - 2015

From national industry to regional player to global system: 4 to 5 July 2014 | Myanmar

Universities as anchors: Re-positioning the knowledge economy: 12 to 13 July 2014 | Guangzhou, China

Universities as agents of social change: 25 to 26 September 2014 | The Philippines

The power of consortia: 20 and 21 November 2014 | Indonesia

The role of technology in the race for global talent: 26 to 27 February 2015 | South Korea

From catapults to commercialisation: 9 to 10 March 2015 | Australia

2013 - 2014 series

Co-innovation for social and economic growth: 13 to 14 February 2014 | Thailand

Inclusive leadership: 17 to 18 February 2014 | Hong Kong

A smarter internationalisation agenda: who benefits? 3 March 2014 | Indonesia

Reputation management in Higher Education: 6 to 7 March 2014 | Japan

A degree of importance: How significant is the degree in the future Asian economy: 18 March 2014 | Singapore