Institutional Foci and Rationales for Internationalization in Sweden

A Comparative Policy Analysis of Urban and Regional Universities

Hidehisa Matsumoto

June 2020

Stockholm University

Department of Education
Abstract

This comparative case study examines institutional policies at Swedish higher education institutions by focusing on rationales for internationalization. It is inspired by the observation that Swedish universities seem to have different motivations for promoting institutional internationalization because there is a wide range of topics covered in their state of opinion to a new national policy for internationalization. To understand reasons for the diversified motivation between universities, this study compares how the rationales are formed and differentiated between regional and urban universities. As the source of data, this study analyzes institutional policies for internationalization at six Swedish universities. A comparison of the content of these policies suggests that there are common and different contents and foci between regional and urban universities. By comparing rationales for internationalization, this study illustrates three findings: geographic differences impact motivations for advancing internationalization, the various types of rationales are mixed under the label of internationalization, and the external environment influences the motivations for internationalization more at urban universities than regional universities. However, there is room to further investigate the rationales for internationalization, and possible research approaches are discussed. Moreover, concerns related to this phenomenon will be discussed.

Keywords: the internationalization of higher education, policy, rationales for internationalization, regional and urban universities, Sweden
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>Apple University</td>
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<tr>
<td>CU</td>
<td>Coconut University</td>
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<tr>
<td>EACEA</td>
<td>Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU/EEA</td>
<td>European Union/European Economic Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDPR</td>
<td>General Data Protection Regulation</td>
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<td>HEIs</td>
<td>Higher education institutions</td>
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<td>ICE</td>
<td>International and Comparative Education</td>
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<td>LU</td>
<td>Lemon University</td>
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<td>MU</td>
<td>Mango University</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>PU</td>
<td>Pineapple University</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>THEWUR</td>
<td>Times Higher Education World University Rankings</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>UKÄ</td>
<td>Universitetskanslersämbetet</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>WU</td>
<td>Watermelon University</td>
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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank many people who have been close to me during the process of writing this thesis as well as throughout this two-year master’s program. First of all, I appreciate my parents and brother in Japan. While we live separately, they support me in various ways. Secondly, I would like to thank my partner Jin-yu Lu and our sweet cats, Arrow and Melody. Their encouragement has cheered me up along the way while finishing this master’s thesis. Moreover, I would like to thank my former colleagues in Japan and Sweden, in particular, Emily, Matilda, Miho, Vit and Yuko because they provide me with professional suggestions on how to put my research idea into a concrete plan. Also, I would like to thank Gunilla Gunner, Gustav Amberg and Kenji Suzuki, since they have shared personal views based on their experiences as leading faculty members who have engaged in the internationalization of higher education. Finally, I must thank my supervisor, Professor Meeri Hellstén and my classmates for their support throughout the program.
Chapter 1  Introduction

The internationalization of higher education is generally taking place at the institutional level. However, national governments have also influenced the development of international dimensions on higher education by implementing policies or regulations as well as by controlling funding (Knight, 2004). They have utilized the internationalization of higher education, aiming to achieve their political and economic interests.

The political use of internationalization can be found in history. For example, the Soviet Union offered educational resources and international research collaborations to developing countries during the Cold War period (Altbach, 2016). In return, the Soviet Union expected the developing countries to restrain cooperation with other Western countries and expand their political influence on those developing countries (Altbach, 2016). In contrast, the Western countries such as the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) provided scholarship programs to international students from developing countries in order to increase the number of political leaders in developing countries with positive impressions of Western countries and their political systems during the period of the Cold War (Altbach, 2016). In short, developed countries utilized the international dimensions of higher education to build strategic alliances with and maintain an ideological influence over developing countries.

To enhance economic benefits, national governments have also promoted the internationalization of higher education. Since the end of the Cold War period, the internationalization of higher education has been regarded as a tool to increase national revenue by receiving tuition fees from international students as seen in many developed countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, the US, and the UK (Jiang, 2010, Ninnes & Hellstén, 2005). For example, Australia gained 31.9 billion dollars in 2018 by receiving tuition fees from international students (Universities Australia, 2018). Moreover, international research collaborations are regarded as a vital tool to produce cutting-edge knowledge in order to survive in the era of the knowledge economy (Hellstén, 2010). Such collaborations enable universities to carry out ambitious research agendas that would not be affordable at the institutional or national levels. The international dimension of higher education is not only a part of the academic activities within the higher education institutions (HEIs), but it also involves the political and economic agendas that confer with the current globalization of world order.
Thus, Knight (2004) emphasizes examining the internationalization of higher education from institutional and national levels as well as within their dynamic relationships. From this point of view, the current Swedish situation is interesting since there exist an ongoing interaction between the national and institutional levels, namely interactions between a new national policy for internationalization and Swedish HEIs.

In 2018, the new national policy for internationalization was proposed to promote the internationalization of higher education between 2020 and 2030. A key concept of this policy is to enhance Sweden’s attractiveness as a study destination and knowledge nation (Internationalization of Swedish Higher Education Institutions, 2018). As a concrete plan, the policy aims to eliminate obstacles for hosting more international students.

While previous national policies for internationalization aimed at local students (see Section 1.4), the new national policy focuses on improving the conditions for international students in Sweden. This shift could be understood for two reasons. Firstly, to survive in the era of the global knowledge economy, Sweden faces global competition for talented individuals (Forstorp & Mellström, 2018; Maringe, 2010). By developing the internationalization of higher education, Sweden aims to attract prominent researchers and students who could contribute to the knowledge economy. Secondly, after the implementation of tuition fees for international students from outside the EU/EEA countries in 2011, the number of international students dropped and has remained low. Thus, the improvement of conditions for international students is one of the crucial national agendas within Swedish higher education.

Regarding the new policy proposal, there has been positive feedback from Swedish HEIs about the overall concept; however, some universities critically point out the lack of specific perspectives in the policy. For instance, some of the critical feedback includes the lack of consideration about research collaborations with foreign universities (Uppsala University, 2019), collaborations between universities and the international business sector (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, 2019), and the variety of institutional sizes and disciplinary fields (Södertörn University, 2019). Also, Örebro University (2019) points out that this policy hardly covers matters related to outgoing students from Sweden and the promotion of international staff exchange. Moreover, Karolinska Institute (2019) articulates the necessity of an increase in financial support for international research collaboration. Their comments seem to problematize “one-size-fits-all model of internationalization” (Knight, 2014, p.84) in the new national policy.
since each institution has worked on internationalization based on their priorities, interests and realities. In other words, there seems to exist a gap of understanding between the national and institutional levels concerning what internationalization is.

As a means of addressing this gap and question, it will be helpful to begin by comparing motivations for internationalization at selected Swedish HEIs. Such comparisons will provide the contextual background about why Swedish institutions point out different topics concerning the new policy. Also, findings will be the first step to examine the dynamic relationship between the national and institutional levels since comparison can illustrate commonalities and differences in the motivations for internationalization at Swedish universities.

Based on the above research interest, the following section will first describe the research aims, questions, limitations, and delimitations in this thesis to approach the overall question. Then, it continues with an overview of Swedish national policies for internationalization to provide an understanding of how Sweden has worked on this agenda at the national level. Finally, this chapter concludes by illustrating the significance of this research to the field of International and Comparative Education (ICE), followed by an overview of the thesis structure.

1.1 Aims

The overall aim of this study is to compare rationales for internationalization between Swedish universities since it will help us to understand the diversity of response of the new Swedish national policy. This study compares the motivations for internationalization between urban and regional universities. Stensaker, Frølich, Gornitzka, and Maassen (2008) identify two factors that affect the institutional choice of paths and ambitions concerning international dimensions in Nordic countries: institutional status and geographical locations. They insist the type of institution such as university and university college affect international dimension on their activities (Stensaker et al., 2008). However, in Sweden the border between university and university college have been blur after some university colleges are allowed to award Ph.D degree (see Section 4.5).

Along with institutional status, Stensaker et al. (2008) illustrate that HEIs located in urban areas tend to have more ambitious international dimensions than ones in remote areas (Stensaker et al., 2008). In contrast to institutional status, different institutional locations can be an appropriate comparative unit to examine institutional contexts of commonality and difference
sufficiently (see Section 4.3.1). Thus, this study focuses on geographical differences and compare rationales for internationalization between institutions.

By comparing university’s motivations for internationalization, this study attempts to understand contextual factors that cause the diversity of response of the aforementioned policy. Moreover, it aims to enhance the understanding of rationales for internationalization by conducting an empirical study as suggested in previous studies (see Chapter Three).

1.2 Research Questions

In accordance with the research aims, this study sets the following three questions. The first question aims to examine covered topics in the field of internationalization at Swedish HEIs. Since internationalization is “a means to an end” (Knight, 2014, p.85), this study first attempts to examine if there exist differences in institutional activities and practical approaches between regional and urban universities. The second and third questions are then related to the motivations for internationalization within Swedish universities. This study employs a conceptual framework of rationales to approach the motivations for internationalization (see Section 2.2.2). Also, as the question order indicates, this study separately examines the motivations for internationalization at regional and urban universities and compares findings.

1) What kind of contents are covered in the implementation of internationalization? How are the topics differentiated between regional and urban universities?
2) What are the types of rationales for internationalization that are used to promote internationalization within regional and urban universities?
3) How are rationales for internationalization similar or divergent between regional or urban universities?

1.3 Limitations and Delimitations

One major limitation is credibility; this relates to the quality of qualitative research due to relying on data from documents. Using the qualitative research framework, it is common to use a technique called triangulation to enhance research credibility. Triangulation means employing multiple methods or sources of data when examining a social phenomenon (Bryman, 2016).
However, this study relies on institutional policy documents as the source of data to compare rationales for internationalization between regional and urban universities. To improve the credibility aspect, this study widely collects document data from multiple universities in various regions as long as they meet the definition and selection criteria (see Chapter Four).

In addition, due to the limited sampling size, the findings of this comparative case study are not sufficient to formulate a theory to consistently explain the phenomenon. However, this study gathers data according to explicit definitions and selection criteria. Thus, the research findings will provide meaningful insight into Swedish higher education and help to investigate the internationalization of Swedish higher education within a dynamic relationship between the national and institutional levels.

Finally, the language barrier could be regarded as a limitation since the author’s Swedish language proficiency is limited. For example, university responses toward the new national policy were written in Swedish. It took additional time to understand what is discussed. However, most of Swedish universities offer official English translations of their institutional internationalization policies. Thus, the language issue hardly influences the data collection and data analysis.

1.4 An Overview of Swedish National Policies for Internationalization

The history of national policy for the internationalization of higher education in Sweden dates to the 1970s. Since then, internationalization has been a critical agenda in the field of Swedish higher education. However, the target groups have shifted from policy to policy.

Between the 1970s and 1980s, Swedish governments had mainly intended to motivate domestic Swedish students to study abroad and obtain international perspectives. In 1974, the Swedish Commission on Internationalization published the final report, which articulated the development of international dimensions on higher education (Kälvemark & van der Wende, 1997). The proposal promoted the internationalization of higher education stating that it would help Swedish students to develop their intercultural understanding and ability to think critically about the Swedish structure of values (Kälvemark & van der Wende, 1997). As a result of this proposal, an internationalization grant was established to cover costs related to the development
of internationalization (Kälvestamark & van der Wende, 1997). In 1989, the Swedish Parliament (Riksdagen) allowed students to use study grants from CSN for studies abroad (Kälvestamark & van der Wende, 1997). This change motivated Swedish students to participate in study abroad programs.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, government policies expanded with the intention of targeting incoming students from other countries. In 1992, the Swedish government emphasized the importance of internationalization in a bill that states “[a]n increasing proportion of tuition at universities and university colleges should take place in foreign languages. This will mean training for Swedish students, but it will also render Swedish universities and university colleges more attractive to students from other countries” (cited from Kälvestamark & van der Wende, 1997, p.177). However, Swedish local students have remained the target group in the policy. For example, the same bill also states “[o]ne precondition of Sweden deriving full benefit from internationalization is for the entire education system to prepare pupils and students for international relations and employment” (cited from Kälvestamark & van der Wende, 1997, p.177).

In 2004, the Swedish government proposed a new policy for internationalization called Ny värld – ny högskola [New World – New University]. It describes how Sweden has responded to the Bologna Process, a series of the transformation of the European higher educational system after the Bologna Declaration.¹ Since Sweden used its own higher education system such as, degree structure and credits system, Ny värld – ny högskola (2004) illustrated how Sweden would transform its education system to adopt the new standardized European system. In the policy, the government emphasized that a new structure of educational programs would help students to obtain jobs in Sweden and abroad as well as attract international students and researchers to the Swedish higher education system (Ny värld – ny högskola, 2004). In other words, Ny värld – ny högskola (2004) focused on both local and international students as their target groups.

In 2010, the Swedish government decided to charge application and tuition fees for international students from outside the EU/EEA regions beginning from the 2011 autumn

¹ The Bologna Declaration was adopted by 29 signatory countries, including Sweden (European Commission, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), & Eurydice, 2015). This statement aims to create the European area of higher education “to promote citizens’ mobility and employability and the Continent’s overall development” (Bologna Declaration, 1999, p.1). Also, it suggests three targets to be achieved across the European countries: readable and comparable degree systems, two-cycle degree system, and standard credit system (Bologna Declaration, 1999).
semester (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013). Before the implementation of tuition fees, some universities and colleges saw a significant increase in the percentage of international students in their master’s programs (Ljungberg & McKelvey, 2015). However, there was a debate that Swedish universities should attract international students based on their educational quality, rather than free education opportunities (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013). In the Nordic countries, Denmark introduced tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students in 2006 (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013). In 2009, Finland decided to charge tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students as a pilot project between 2010 and 2014 (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013). The debate in Sweden reflected the situations in neighboring countries. As a result of introducing the application and tuition fees, the number of international students declined from 46,691 in 2010 to 38,140 in 2011 (UKÄ, 2020).

Consequently, the topic of incoming international students has become a central issue in the national policy for internationalization in Sweden. In 2018, the Swedish government inquiries published a new national policy proposal for internationalization in Sweden called *Internationalization of Swedish Higher Education Institutions* (2018). The new national policy proposal emphasizes increasing Sweden’s attractiveness as a study destination and knowledge nation (*Internationalization of Swedish Higher Education Institutions*, 2018). However, as explained in the previous section, there are ongoing debates concerning this policy.

In short, Sweden has engaged in the development of internationalization at the national policy level since the 1970s. It began with motivating domestic students to experience study abroad; this was then followed by the focus of internationalization policies expanding to include international students and researchers along with domestic students over the past two decades.

### 1.5 Significance to the Field of ICE

This study will help to investigate the dynamic relationship between the institutional and national levels in Sweden since it will provide information-rich and contextual data about Swedish institutions. Moreover, this study will contribute to further research in the field of higher education from the point of international and comparative perspectives.

The internationalization of higher education has drawn worldwide attention due to the development of globalization (Marshall, 2014). In the research field of international education, there exist various topics and analytical levels (Marshall, 2014). For example, student
recruitment can be examined from the point of the institutional strategy for gaining extra income (micro-level) as well as from the national policies for increasing the skilled labor force (macro-level). Among these research fields, the rationale for internationalization can be an approach linking the institutional level to the national level since the rationale has emerged at both levels (Knight, 2004). Thus, the study regarding rationale for internationalization is a crucial research agenda in the internationalization of higher education from an international education perspective.

From a comparative perspective, findings based on the analysis of Swedish universities will contribute to expanding the understanding of institutional rationales for internationalization in three ways. Firstly, Swedish universities have been involved in a part of data collection in investigating rationales for internationalization at the institutional level; however, Sweden as a country has not been examined as a single analytical unit (see Chapter Three, and Matsumoto, 2020). Secondly, Swedish HEIs offer free tuition fees for European citizens, along with local Swedish students. Also, national agencies such as the Svenska Institutet and universities provide a wide range of scholarships that cover tuition fees. In other words, financial incentives through receiving tuition fees—a typical rationale for internationalization (de Wit, 2001)—may not apply in this context in contrast to English speaking countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom (Fischer & Green, 2018; Jiang, 2010; Willis & Taylor, 2014). Finally, Sweden is known for its moderate stratification of institutional status and small differences in resource distributions between HEIs under the label of the Nordic Model (Marginson, 2016). It will be fruitful to see to what extent the similarities and differences in rationales for internationalization exist under these circumstances. Thus, findings will contribute to diversifying perspectives about the rationales for internationalization from the comparative perspective.

Moreover, Bryman (2016) articulates that comparative research can apply to a variety of situations, rather than being limited to comparisons between countries. Among various situations, geographical locations as a unit of analysis is one of the critical dimensions of comparative studies (Manzon, 2014). Therefore, comparisons between urban and regional universities in Sweden are relevant to the field of comparative education. The details of the comparative design are elaborated on with referring to a framework for comparative education analyses by Bray and Thomas (1995) (see Section 4.3.1).
1.6 The Structure of This Study

After describing the research background, aim, questions, limitations, the significance to ICE as well as an overview of Swedish national policies in the current chapter, Chapter Two continues to illustrate the theoretical framework and key concepts of this research. The thesis is rooted in the sociology of education and uses various concepts relevant to the field of higher education. Chapter Two describes these concepts to provide a clear image for further discussion.

Chapter Three summarizes the findings of previous studies that have examined the rationales for internationalization. The chapter then aims to clarify what is known about the rationales for internationalization as well as possible approaches for further research, as suggested by previous studies.

Chapter Four explains the methodology and method of this study. Also, it describes the quality criteria and ethical considerations. As a research method, this study employs a comparative case study within a qualitative research framework. First, this thesis describes the methodological approach, along with ontological and epistemological considerations. Secondly, it continues to illustrate the selection process of target institutions as well as their profiles. And then, the quality of the thesis will be described from the point of trustworthiness. Finally, the chapter concludes by illustrating the ethical considerations, especially the reasons for using anonymous names for the selected institutions.

Chapter Five presents and analyzes the findings of this study. The order of the Sections corresponds to the research questions. Thus, Section 5.1 aims to answer the first research question related to the topics present in the documents, and then, Section 5.2 and 5.3 describe the findings to approach the second research question related to rationales for institutional internationalization. Finally, 5.4 analyzes the findings based on the previous sections. Through analyzing the collected data, this study identifies a few agendas to be further discussed.

Chapter Six discusses findings in Chapter Five and provides suggestions for further studies. The thesis then ends with a conclusion, which offers an overview of the findings, analysis, and discussion.
Chapter 2  Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

This chapter illustrates the theoretical framework and relevant concepts that are necessary to understand the topics covered in the finding and discussion sections. The applied theoretical framework and relevant concepts have a variety of understandings depending on the contexts or researchers defining them, therefore, this chapter aims to be descriptive as a means of shaping understanding, rather than identifying these terms by single universal definitions.

It begins with illustrating neo-institutional theory as the theoretical background of this study. The chapter then continues with descriptions of the concepts internationalization of higher education, rationales for internationalization, urban and regional universities, policy, globalization, and Agenda 2030.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

As a theoretical framework, this thesis employs neo-institutional theory in the field of the sociology of education. The following section begins by illustrating an overview of this theory, its theoretical advantages, and its relevance to comparative research and this study.

2.1.1 Neo-institutional Theory

Neo-institutional theory developed within the ontology grounded in a sociological theory that emphasizes the influence of culture on society (Meyer, 1999). There are two ontological positions concerning society: positivism and constructivism. Constructivism sees society as comprised of multiple realities constructed by individuals, while positivism sees society as an externalized entity (Waring, 2017). Based on the constructivist perspective, sociological studies attempt to understand social phenomena by focusing on human agency as a key actor. For example, in American sociology between the 1950s and 1960s, a dominant perspective was that society was made up of highly socialized individuals (Jepperson, 2002). Also, the American sociology of education considers education systems as central to reproducing society by its socializing activities (Jepperson, 2002).

However, this theoretical approach could not explain the gap between theoretical perspectives and empirical realities. For example, the enormous expansion of schooling and the similarity of school systems across the national borders were not explained by such dominant
perspectives since economic, political, and social conditions surrounding individuals vary from country to country. In other words, another approach was needed to understand the relationship between society and individuals.

To address this gap, Meyer and his colleagues comprehend society as “institutionalized knowledge and culture,” and examine social phenomena from analytical imagery, namely world culture (Jepperson, 2002, p.230). The culture, in this sense, means “everyday knowledge that is institutionalized as cognitive models of the everyday world, also referred to as scripts and scenarios” (Wiseman & Baker, 2006, p.4). From a neo-institutional perspective, society is regarded as made up of “institutionalized culture that creates and spreads commonly held models of the individual and the social organization,” rather than naturally occurring entities, such as individuals or organizations (Meyer, 1999; Wiseman & Baker, 2006, p.4). By using the analytical imaginary, the dramatic increase in the number of schooling children can be understood by the spread of the world culture of education and the idea that educating local people ensures political stability and economic growth (Meyer & Hannan, 1979; Meyer, Kamens & Benavot, 1992).

By envisaging this world culture, neo-institutional theory provides researchers with three analytical advantages to examine social phenomena. Firstly, researchers are able to step back from foci on individuals and nations. In other words, they can examine a social phenomenon from a broader perspective. As explained above, social phenomena cannot always be explained by the direct relationship with nations, individuals, and their behaviors. In contrast, neo-institutional perspectives help to examine and understand a social phenomenon from broader perspectives. Thus, this theory is often used to examine topics such as globalization, international nongovernmental organizations (Jepperson, 2002). Secondly, in terms of organization analysis, the theory prevails that stable organization needs and results from external legitimation (Scott & Meyer, 1994). For example, formal structure and rules are often decoupled from actual activities, and organizational decision-making activities are decoupled from actual organization actions since organizations are influenced by external environments (Jepperson, 2002). Finally, the theory offers “fuller comparative accounts by virtue of its empirical tendencies toward change over time, differences, and heterogeneity.” (Wiseman & Baker, 2006, p.6). In order to make comparisons, it is required to have “sufficient commonalities” between analytical units (Manzon, 2014, p.100). By establishing a common analytical imaginary, neo-institutional theory
contributes to expanding the field of comparative studies since the theory provides comparative accounts (Wiseman & Baker, 2006).

Comparative research of higher education has also incorporated neo-institutional theory and its perspectives. From the point of neo-institutional theory, Frank and Meyer (2007) examine the expansion of higher education. Hellstén (2018) investigates a move from the hypothetical to the actual policy imaginary in the transition between institutional policies for internationalization between Finland and Sweden. Moreover, within the same research interests as this thesis, Seeber, Cattaneo, Huisman and Paleari (2016, p.686) address rationales for internationalization within “institutional and competitive dynamics in the surrounding environment” based on the neo-institutional perspective. Fischer and Green (2018) attempt to understand the shift of institutional rationales for internationalization through the transformation of external environments particularly regarding national and international policies.

Along with the fact that recent studies—sharing the same research interests as this thesis—have been conducted from the neo-institutional perspective, there are additional reasons why neo-institutional theory is regarded as an appropriate theoretical background for the current research. Firstly, this theory provides the advantage that this research can examine a social phenomenon from a broader perspective. The internationalization of higher education and its rationales can be understood from not only the context of academic activities, but also political economic, and cultural phenomena. In other words, by adopting neo-institutional theory, the internationalization of higher education and its rationales can be seen from the interactions between the globalized world and HEIs, rather than as organizational activities within HEIs. Secondly, this theory supports the study’s consideration for the influence of external environments as a means of interpreting rationales for internationalization. If rationales for internationalization are not closely linked to organizational activities, the background of emerged rationales can be interpreted from a different angle.

From the point of neo-institutional perspective, this study considers the influence of external environment on the rationales for institutional internationalization. The following sections describe conceptual frameworks in order to provide conceptual connections between external environment and higher education and its internationalization. The internationalization of higher education and a conceptual framework for rationales are discussed considering external
influence. Moreover, globalization and UN Sustainable Development are discussed as external environments surrounding HEIs.

2.2 Conceptual Frameworks

According to Bryman (2016), a concept is identified as a way of making sense of the social world. Especially in the social sciences, the illustration of key concepts is vital since a clear conceptual understanding delivers an overview of research interests as well as frames the researcher’s perspectives (Bryman, 2016). This section illustrates the concepts of internationalization of higher education, rationales for internationalization, globalization, UN Sustainable Development Goals, urban and regional universities, and policy.

2.2.1 Internationalization of Higher Education

Internationalization has become a central topic within the field of higher education. It is regarded as a key driving force influencing higher education (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). Also, the internationalization of higher education is widely discussed in various contexts, not only as an academic matter but also as a socioeconomic agenda (Hellstén, 2010).

However, since the internationalization of higher education takes place at HEIs, the term usually is associated with a series of academic activities such as academic mobility, international research collaborations, and joint degree programs (Knight, 2004). Thus, this section begins by providing a wider view of this phenomenon since it will help to understand the conceptual categories of rationales for internationalization in the next section. This study refers to the following description of the internationalization of higher education that is in line with the statement provided by the European Parliament, described as:

The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society. (de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron-Polak, 2015, p.29)

This description is based on Knight’s (2004) working definition of internationalization. In contrast to the original definition, this description adds the aim of internationalization. It means
“to develop the quality of institutional activities as well as contributing to society. (de Wit et al., 2015, p.29)” In other words, this revision reflects the European vision that “internationalization is not a goal in itself, but a means to enhance quality, and that it should not focus solely on economic rationales” (de Wit et al., 2015, p.29).

Within this broad conceptualization, two key terms have emerged to understand the internationalization of higher education from the university’s contexts: cross-border education and internationalization at home (Nilsson, 2003; Knight, 2014). Cross-border education covers a wide range of outbound mobilities and is associated with the conventional image of internationalization since people can imagine study abroad and exchange study programs as examples of internationalization.

In contrast, internationalization at home means any internationally related activities except for outbound student mobility (Nilsson, 2003). For instance, it includes extracurricular activities and the development of curriculum, teaching, and learning styles in order to enhance intercultural and international dimensions among students (Knight, 2012). Also, internationalization at home covers the integration of international students and researchers into the life and activities of the host countries (Knight, 2012). Some studies emphasize focusing on internationalization at home since it provides opportunities for students without the option for educational mobility to gain international and intercultural perspectives (Beelen & Jones, 2015; de Wit et al., 2015; de Wit & Jones, 2018; Knight, 2012).

### 2.2.2 Rationales for Internationalization

Rationales, as a study field, has been received more attention as a research topic within the internationalization of higher education since the 1990s. Rationales for the internationalization of higher education is defined as “motivations for integrating an international dimension into higher education” (de Wit, 2001, p.78). This study employs an analytical framework for rationales formed by Knight (2004, see Table 1). Before identifying the conceptual framework in this study, the paper illustrates an overview of rationales for internationalization as study fields.

Initial conceptual categorizations seem to focus on different stakeholders, such as universities and governments. In 1991, de Wit identified academic and social rationales as a conceptual framework to understand the motivations systematically (de Wit, 2001). Also, in
1995, Knight and de Wit illustrated two groups of rationales: 1) “economic and political” and 2) “cultural and educational” (de Wit, 2001, p.78). These conceptual frameworks indicate that the internationalization of higher education has become not only an academic matter but also a socio-economic matter. Knight and de Wit (1995) developed the two groups of rationales and divided them into four independent rationales: political, economic, social/cultural, and academic. Also, under these four categories, many subcategories were added to understand the rationales systematically. For example, there are foreign policy, peacebuilding, and mutual understanding under the political group as well as the extension of the academic horizon, and enhancement of quality under the academic group (de Wit, 2001; Knight, 2004).

While the four categories help to systematically sort the motivations for developing the internationalization of higher education, some new rationales have emerged and been seen from multiple perspectives in the four groups (Knight, 2004). To respond to this matter, Knight (2004) focuses on the institution and nation/sector and categorizes new emerging rationales under institutional and national levels. In conclusion, the framework consists of six main rationale groups and many particular topics under the six groups.

2.2.2.1 *The conceptual framework for rationales*

This study will categorize institutional rationales in Swedish universities into the conceptual framework and its contents established by Knight (2004). As discussed above, the conceptual framework has been developed through the interaction between Knight and de Wit. From this background, this part refers to articles written by both de Wit (2001) and Knight (2004).

As Table 1 shows, the framework consists of six groups: social/cultural, political, economic, academic, national, and institutional. The first four groups focus on the concepts for rationales identified in the late 1990s. In contrast, the latter two groups draw attention to places where rationales can be seen. In the following part, the paper illustrates each category except for the national level since this study focuses on institutional aspects (for the detail of national level, see Knight, 2004).
Table 1: A conceptual framework for rationales by Knight (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social/Cultural</th>
<th>Existing National and Institutional Levels</th>
<th>Of Emerging Importance: National and Institutional Level Separated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National cultural identity</td>
<td>National human resource development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intercultural understanding</td>
<td>Strategic alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizenship development</td>
<td>Commercial trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intercultural understanding</td>
<td>National nation building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizenship development</td>
<td>Social/cultural development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Foreign policy</td>
<td>Institutional international branding and profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National security</td>
<td>Income generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>Student and staff development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National identity</td>
<td>Knowledge production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Economic growth and competitiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labor market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial incentives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>The international dimension to research and teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extension of the academic horizon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institution building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Profile and status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhancement of quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International academic standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Firstly, the social/cultural group focuses on educational aspects by international experience. In other words, international dimensions of higher education help to encourage personal development among students, therefore, this is regarded as a key driving force to develop the internationalization of higher education. For example, students can develop their national identity, intercultural understanding, and perspectives on citizenship by encountering other cultures through the study abroad experience (de Wit, 2001). Furthermore, the international experience contributes to overcoming the “mistakes and the prejudices of their own culture” (de Wit, 2001, pp.86-87).

Secondly, political rationales consist of foreign policy, national security, technical assistance, national identity, and regional identity. The first three motivations are mainly relevant to the period after the end of the Second World War and during the Cold War (Altbach, 2016; de Wit, 2001). In terms of foreign policy and national security, educational cooperation is regarded as a strategic investment since it enables the host country to share knowledge and bolster a
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positive national image (de Wit, 2001). Experiences gained through studying abroad in developed countries help to create sympathy for the political systems, cultures, and values of the host countries among international students. Also, academic agreements between countries are regarded as a “steppingstone” to reestablishing diplomatic relationships in the case that these were or are broken (de Wit, 2001, p.79). Moreover, the internationalization of higher education is facilitated by the point of technical assistance or development cooperation. Since it was an important agenda to support developing countries during the periods mentioned above, the international collaborations at HEIs were highly motivated by foreign policy aspects (de Wit, 2001). For example, universities sent experts to developing countries as well as provided training programs and scholarships to support nation-building.

National identity and regional identity appear to involve opposing factors; however, they can be seen to hold similar political intentions. Namely, the internationalization of higher education is motivated by developing a country or one region. On the one hand, Asia Pacific countries aim to achieve independent and equal status as a member of the globalized world through the expansion of the internationalization of higher education (de Wit, 2001). In other words, these countries aim to establish their national identities as independent countries. On the other hand, for example, the European Union aims to create “European citizenship,” a type of regional identity, by enhancing interactions among countries and their local people (de Wit, 2001, p.82). From this point of view, the internationalization of higher education would be an appropriate tool to achieve this purpose since it creates various interactive opportunities among students, researchers, and teachers across countries.

As a fourth group, the economic rationale is listed. In this group, economic growth and competitiveness, labor market, and financial incentives are regarded as driving forces for promoting the international dimensions of higher education. Technological developments achieved by international collaboration help to develop the national economy since they enhance national capacities and the market competitiveness of economic activities as well as create new employment opportunities (de Wit, 2001). Thus, internationalization is motivated in terms of economic growth and the labor market. Additionally, there exist financial incentives for developing the internationalization of higher education. For example, national governments can save budget for creating new facilities such as university building, laboratory and library by sending their local students abroad while the government can enhance the number of skilled
individuals (de Wit, 2001). This point has been particularly important to developing countries due to resource limitations at local institutions. Moreover, from the point of hosting countries they can gain extra income since international students pay tuition fees and consume their local products and services there (de Wit, 2001).

The academic group focuses on the positive effect of internationalization on universities and their activities; therefore, it is regarded as a driving force for advancing internationalization. As Table 1 shows, there are various rationales in this category. However, according to de Wit (2001), there exists a core idea behind the four rationales: the international dimension to research and teaching, the extension of the academic horizon, institution building, and the enhancement of quality. The core idea is that the development of international dimensions helps to avoid parochialism in scholarship and research at universities (de Wit, 2001). Therefore, through the development of international dimensions, the involved stakeholders can expand their academic horizons, strengthen institutional core structures, and enhance the quality of their activities as universities obtain external cooperation and interactions (de Wit, 2001). Also, internationalization efforts help to improve institutional status and international recognition. Reputation as an internationalized university contributes to strengthening institutional profiles and new partner institutions (de Wit, 2001). Therefore, universities are motivated to develop international dimensions from academic motivations.

Finally, there are four rationales under the institutional level as a category. New rationales involve multiple aspects rather than a single conceptual category, such as academic and economic groups. At the institutional level, there are five rationales: international branding and profile, income generation, student and staff development, strategic alliances, and knowledge production.

The concept of international branding and profile is, to some extent, relevant to the academic rationale. Both rationales emphasize the achievement of high-quality education and research activities through the development of internationalization. However, the focus of the new emerging rationale is slightly shifted from offering students and researchers a high-quality academic experience to competing domestically and internationally (Knight, 2004). In other words, this rationale involves not only the academic orientation but also marketing motivations.

Student and staff development is relevant to the social/cultural rationale since internationalization is regarded as a method to develop the international and intercultural
understanding for students and staff. However, this new rationale focuses on skills to respond to global issues rather than grow individual knowledge based on national or regional interests.

Income generation reflects the fact that many institutions utilize internationalization activities to obtain extra income (Knight, 2004). The financial incentive of the existing rationale covers a wide range of stakeholders from the institutional to national levels, or from micro to macro levels. In contrast, income generation is created as an emerging rationale at the institutional level. It involves, for instance, tuition fees from international students. According to Knight (2004), public institutions are attracted to this motivation in order to supplement decreased public funding and cover increased operational costs.

Finally, knowledge production is regarded as a new emerging rationale. Universities play a significant role in creating new knowledge through their research activities. New knowledge is in high demand to solve global issues and challenges. However, global challenges, such as environmental and health issues, cannot be solved by one country (Knight, 2004). Therefore, universities are motivated to develop international and interdisciplinary collaborations to produce new knowledge and solutions for global issues.

### 2.2.3 Globalization

Globalization plays a significant role as part of the external environment surrounding HEIs. Knight points out the relationship between internationalization and globalization as “[i]nternationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalization” (2004, p.5). However, globalization is a multi-dimensional concept which involves various aspects of society, there exists no single universal understanding of the phenomenon (Marshall, 2014; Held & McGrew, 2003). This study attempts to understand globalization from an empirical perspective and regards it as “the intensification of global interconnectedness” (Papastephanou, 2005, p.535).

Since globalization is traditionally associated with the economy, such as the development of the international labor market and the growth of worldwide trade, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2000) identifies globalization as the growing integration of economies around the world through technological development. However, the growth of intergovernmental organizations is also considered as an aspect of globalization from the political perspective (Spring, 2015). For example, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
(OECD) influences the national curriculum through the implementation of PISA, an international standardized test (Fraser & Smith; 2017; Lewis, 2017; Verger, Steiner-Khamsi & Lubienski, 2017). In addition, cultural influence, such as homogenization is a crucial phenomenon resulting from globalization (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000). In short, it is not easy to identify one critical aspect representing globalization.

Instead, globalization can be seen differently from an empirical point of view. For example, the development of technology provides us with close contact between people, companies, and countries. In terms of the economy, the growth of international trade provides access to items that people did not have reached before. In short, “the intensification of global interconnectedness” (Papastephanou, 2005, p.535) can cover multiple dimensions of globalization; therefore, it is worthwhile to employ this understanding.

### 2.2.4 UN Sustainable Development Goals

Along with globalization, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be regarded as an influential external factor surrounding HEIs since they are involved and expected to play a leading role in the achievement of these goals.

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) published a universal agreement also referred to as the Agenda 2030. It declares commitments to achieving sustainable development from economic, social, and environmental dimensions in a balanced and integrated way (UN, 2015). To clarify the concept of commitment, the statement announced the SDGs, which are comprised of 17 goals and 169 targets (UN, 2015).

There is a wide range of possibilities for the higher education sector to contribute to the SDGs. For example, the enhancement of access to higher education is included in target 4.3. By 2030, this target aims to “ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university” (UN, n.d., n.p.). Moreover, UNESCO (n.d.) states that education and research activities on higher education will contribute to solving issues related to ending poverty (SDG1); ensuring health and well-being (SDG3); achieving gender equality (SDG5); creating decent work and economic growth (SDG8); and combating climate change (SDG13). In short, higher education is regarded as a target itself and linked to some of the sustainable development goals. Thus, it is useful to consider the influence of the SDGs as part of the external environment when this study analyzes and interprets findings.
2.2.5 Urban and Regional Universities

In the context of Nordic countries, Stensaker et al. (2008) provide a basic framework to classify universities: urban and regional. However, there are various approaches to distinguish universities into regional and urban categories since geographical contexts vary from country to country within the Nordic region. Therefore, this study employs the definition referring to the classification of universities provided by Ljungberg and McKelvey (2015). They provide a distinction between regional and urban universities in Sweden by focusing on the institutional background along with the geographical location.

In Sweden, there were very few universities in the early 20th century. They were all located in major cities or the first tier of cities while the size of cities could be smaller than other European major cities. These universities show prominent research and education profiles and accommodate a large number of students. They are regarded as urban universities, according to Ljungberg and McKelvey (2015).

In contrast, the regional university refers to universities established in the next tier of cities after the 1960s. During the 1960s and 1970s, many university colleges were established in the next tier of cities. Local politicians in those regions facilitated the establishment of university colleges since regional industries needed high skilled workers. However, since providing higher education requires various sources, such as skilled teaching staff, most of these institutions started as branch campuses of existing universities and later became independent. Furthermore, university colleges primarily focus on education and accommodate a relatively small number of students due to limited capacity. By the early 2000s, some of the university colleges that had opened after the 1960s were granted university status because they have since developed institutional profiles through institutional mergers or independent efforts. From this context, Ljungberg and McKelvey (2015) identify this type of university as regional.

In summary, urban and regional universities are characterized as below. Since the following distinction is clear and reflects Swedish contexts, this study also applies these characteristics.

**Urban university**
- Established before the 1960s
- Has a long history as a higher education and research institution
- Located in the major cities or first tier of cities
- Large-sized universities

Regional university
- Established after the 1960s
- Started as a branch campus of an existing university, or university college
- Located in the next tier of cities
- Medium- to large-sized universities

2.2.6 Policy

In this study, institutional policies are employed as data source. However, policy as a broader term involves conceptual ambiguity as well as different understandings between individuals, societies, and countries (Smith, 2002; Yang, 2014). To provide explicit argument, the following part describes the role of policy in order to provide a connection between the research aims and policy as a source of data. For the purpose of this thesis, policy will be taken to mean any written administrative documents published by universities.

The role of policy has not achieved universal consensus. However, Smith (2002) classifies the role of policies using a taxonomy. A taxonomy is a method to categorize items based on “empirically observable and measurable characteristics” (Smith, 2002, p.381). To categorize policies within the taxonomical framework, Smith (2002) focuses on individual perceptions of policy, especially morality policy. Although this classification has only two groups, the shift from conceptual to empirical characteristics contribute to expanding the possibilities of classifying and analyzing policies.

Based on taxonomical tradition, the classification of institutional policy is developed by Nyhagen, Bleiklie and Hope (2017). Their classification categorizes policy into four groups: authority, incentive, symbolic and hortatory, and capacity tools (Nyhagen et al., 2017). Authority focuses on the authentic relationship between target groups and policymakers (Nyhagen et al., 2017). This category includes policies relevant to licenses, permits and regulations, since these policies have the power to force target groups to act in line with the policy maker’s request. The group of incentive policy consists of policies that control actions in the target groups by providing positive or negative incentives. For example, policymakers aim to direct institutional
decisions by offering grant subsidies for specific activities. In contrast to the authority group, the incentive policy is characterized by “a certain leeway to choose whether to take action or not” (Nyhagen et al., 2017, p.282). In other words, target groups have options to act or not. The symbolic and hortatory type of policies attempt to influence the behavior of target individuals or groups by adjusting the amount of information on or the motivation for specific actions. Finally, the policy as capacity tools aims to provide individuals, groups, or agencies with “training, education, and resources” in order to make decisions or carry out activities (Nyhagen et al., 2017, p.283).

Institutional policies for internationalization, as administrative documents seem to include authority and symbolic and hortatory roles. On the one hand, these policies force teachers and staff to take actions to develop institutional internationalization. This characteristic is often evident in the policies so called action plans for internationalization since the action plans specify targeting actions, responsible departments and deadlines for action completion. On the other hand, the other types of policies for internationalization generally state goals, purposes and motivation for developing internationalization. By stating these aspects, these documents attempt to share interests and influence individual’s behaviors at the institutions for developing institutional internationalization. Thus, symbolic and hortatory roles are included. Since this study examines the institutional motivation for internationalization, it focuses on policies that include symbolic and hortatory aspects. However, the action plan for internationalization also complement contents and intentions suggested in the other type of policies for internationalization. Thus, both types of documents are included as data and examined in this study.

In alignment with the neo-institutional perspectives and the focus on organizational structures, policy is also regarded as the consequence of compromises between various interest groups in the organization (Yang, 2014). In the process of making new policies, discarded or modified contents commonly occur. Also, changes are not free from social contexts (Yang, 2014). That is to say that an institutional policy can be seen as a symbol of the dominant values of the organization rather than the collection of universal, generalized, and commonsense expressions (Yang, 2014). Therefore, a policy is an appropriate material to investigate the structural conditions, such as institutional motivations for internationalization since it reflects institutional values and background.
Chapter Two has described the theoretical background in this thesis as well as some concepts to deliver an overview of the study field as well as social phenomena surrounding HEIs. The abovementioned theory and concepts will serve as a framework for the current study in order to answer the research questions as well as fulfill the aims.
Chapter 3 Previous Studies

Using the theoretical view and concepts illustrated in Chapter Two, this study will examine research questions. The second and third research questions are related to the rationales for internationalization. However, it is not easy to understand these concepts without empirical cases. Before moving on to the analysis and discussion of this study, it will be helpful to see what is known about the rationales for internationalization by addressing the conceptual frameworks found in previous studies.

The selection of articles and findings found in this section are based on the literature review that the author conducted (see Matsumoto, 2020). However, the purpose of showing previous studies is to link contexts to research interests in this thesis. Therefore, this chapter first illustrates the background of the literature review, followed by the findings especially relevant to the European, Nordic, and Swedish contexts.

3.1 Background of the Literature Review

A systematic literature review was conducted in order to understand and integrate what is already known about the rationales for the internationalization of higher education (see Matsumoto, 2020). The literature review cataloged 22 academic articles focusing on various countries and institutions across the world according to inclusion criteria.

The author (Matsumoto, 2020) questioned the oversimplified understanding concerning “the why of internationalization” (De Wit, 2001, p.78). Some studies claim that the rationales for internationalization have shifted from academic orientations towards economic incentives in the globalized world and the age of the knowledge society (e.g., de Wit, 2001; Van der Wende, 2001; Hudzik, 2016). The economic rationale is one of the critical motivations for internationalization. However, such generalization may hinder us from understanding the complexity of motivations for internationalization across countries and institutions. First, globalization is a multifaceted process with economic, social, and cultural implications and influences individual countries differently due to their “history, traditions, cultures, resources and priorities” (UNESCO, 2004, p.6). Moreover, the university, as an organization, is affected by various internal and external actors and agencies (Frølich & Stensaker, 2012). Therefore, the
literature review attempted to integrate research outcomes concerning the rationales for internationalization at the national and institutional levels.

3.2 Findings within the Relevant Research Publications

Findings in the literature review identified that at the national level, the economic incentive is dominant. At the same time, there are various subcategories such as revenue increase and the adoption of the international labor market under the economic label. On the other hand, motivations for internationalization at the institutional level could be categorized into economic, academic, and combined rationales depending on the institutional background. Since this thesis focuses on the institutional rationales, the following section summarizes findings found in previous studies according to the above three classifications.

There are only a few studies that articulate the economic rationale as a primary driving force for developing institutional internationalization. Based on statistical analysis, Jiang (2010) identifies universities in New Zealand that have increased the number of international students because the tuition fees have become an alternative source of income to address the reduction in national subsidies for higher education. Chankseliani (2018) investigates the motives of attracting international students to British HEIs by interviewing staff who are engaged in student recruitment at 14 British universities. According to her study, all interviewees emphasize financial incentives, such as tuition fees, that international students pay since British universities need to address a decrease in funding from the government and business sectors (Chankseliani, 2018).

Also, a few studies demonstrate that academic motivations drive internationalization at the institutional level. In the European context, Hudson (2016) analyzes the results of the 4th Global survey by the International Association of Universities and identifies that academic motivations are regarded as providing the most significant benefits. According to his study, the growth of student awareness of global issues and the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning are ranked as the top two benefits of internationalization (Hudson, 2016). Also, the survey results illustrate that more than 80 percent of universities have remained or increased the level of funding for academic activities (Hudson, 2016). In comparison, around 33 percent of them engaged in any activities meant to recruit fee-paying international students (Hudson, 2016).
However, the study also admits the limitation that the survey shows biased results due to socially desirable responses to specific questions (Hudson, 2016).

Most of the studies reviewed identify that the motivations for internationalization is comprised of a mix of academic motivations alongside another rationale. For example, in European contexts, Haapakoski and Pashby (2017) compare the institutional rationales for internationalization in Finland, Ireland, Sweden, and the UK by analyzing institutional strategies and interview data collected from university staff. Their study concludes that the academic rationale, such as the diversity of student backgrounds and its benefit in the classroom, is dominant (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017). In contrast, economic incentives such as revenue income are developed across the countries (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017). Kristensen and Karlsen (2018) identify that the Nordic technical universities aim to improve the quality of education and research through internationalization, while economic arguments are combined. Woodin, Lundgren and Castro (2011) compare policy documents for internationalization at British, Spanish, and Swedish universities. Their study illustrates that the Spanish and Swedish universities combine the academic rationale with the socio/cultural benefit (Woodin et al., 2011). In contrast, the British university mentions both academic and economic motivations (Woodin et al., 2011). Also, a case study at a British research-oriented university identifies that the driving force for internationalization is to obtain financial incentives in order to sustain institutional activities (Willis & Taylor, 2014). However, the university also pays attention to the educational mission through the implementation of internationalization (Willis & Taylor, 2014).

Based on the findings in the literature review, it is possible to perceive the academic motivation as a vital driving force in the internationalization of higher education at the institutional level. However, HEIs are motivated to internationalize by mixed rationales. Also, there are exceptions, such as the cases in the UK (Chankseliani, 2018; Willis & Taylor, 2014). In other words, to understand rationales for internationalization, previous studies indicate that further study attempts should be made to approach multiple motivations, rather than pursuing a single incentive for internationalization.

Concerning topics for future research, some articles suggest focusing on various institutional factors, for example, the types of institutions (research-oriented or teaching-oriented), the disciplinary fields, size, location as well as regional and cultural background
(Krsitensen & Karlsen, 2018; Seeber et al., 2016; Willis & Taylor, 2014). Among them, this study covers factors such as location and regional background as comparative factors.
Chapter 4  
Methodology and Methods

This chapter illustrates the methodological framework applied in this study as well as the quality criteria and ethical considerations. First, it clarifies the ontological groundings of the study and provides the epistemological considerations for the research design; the discussion of these philosophical concepts intertwines along with fundamental parts of the research framework. Second, the chapter describes the research strategy, design, and method, including the sampling process. The third section elaborates on how this study attempts to improve the quality of research by addressing trustworthiness criteria. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations surrounding anonymity.

4.1 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

Based on the neo-institutional theoretical perspective, this study employs constructivism as its ontological position. Ontology concerns “what is the nature or form of the social world” (Waring, 2017, p.16). From the point of constructivism, the nature of the social world is regarded as multiple realities constructed by individuals (Waring, 2017). Through the lens of constructivism, this study can approach the institutional rationales for internationalization as multiple social realities constructed by social actors and environments. This ontological position enables one to understand the diversity of rationales among universities due to different social actors and environments.

In terms of epistemological considerations, this study applies interpretivism. According to Bryman (2016, p.24), epistemology concerns “what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline.” To recognize something as acceptable knowledge in the field of social science, there are two key positions: interpretivism and positivism. In contrast to positivism, which aims to utilize natural science methods in order to understand social phenomena, interpretivism emphasizes analyzing subjective interpretations of the social world (Bryman, 2016).

There are three reasons for adopting interpretivism in this study. Firstly, constructivism is generally linked with interpretivism since “interpretivism does not see direct knowledge as possible; it is the accounts and observations of the world that provide indirect indications of phenomena” (Waring, 2017, p.16). Secondly, interpretivism is a conventional epistemological
position in the field of qualitative research (Bryman, 2016). Finally, interpretivism aims to see social phenomena as “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world” (Crotty, 1998, p.67). Thus, researchers can widely consider multiple realities, different perspectives, researcher involvement, and underlying contexts, to approach what happens in a given context (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug, 2001).

4.2 Research Strategy

This study aims to investigate the rationales for internationalization at Swedish universities and enhance the understanding of rationales for internationalization, therefore, the qualitative research paradigm is deemed to be the most appropriate strategy. Qualitative research is a prominent research strategy that focuses on the use of words in the collected data rather than numbers or quantification (Bryman, 2016). Within the qualitative research paradigm, researchers can examine collected data at the micro-level and then attempt to understand behavior, values, beliefs, or the context of research objects (Bryman, 2016). The qualitative research applies to interpretivist perspectives as an epistemological position (Bryman, 2016). The epistemological position corresponds to one in this study as discussed above. From these points of view, this study employs qualitative research as its research strategy.

4.3 Research Design

This study employs a comparative case study as its research design. Comparative case study research is a typical research design in the social sciences, especially in urban and regional studies, since it provides an understanding of commonalities and differences across places (Krehl & Weck, 2019). The case study method generally attempts to address the unique features of the case since it enables researchers to approach the complexity and nature of the case (Bryman, 2016). It is a fruitful approach for understanding a social phenomenon intensely and is often used in qualitative research. Within the case study as a research design, the comparative case study can describe findings based on the understanding of commonalities and differences across places or between comparative units through case observations (Krehl & Weck, 2019,). However, to make comparisons meaningful, research needs to draw attention to the units of analysis, whether
not they have “sufficient commonalities” (Manzon, 2014, p.100); thus, the following section illustrates how this study pays attention to these aspects.

4.3.1 Comparative Aspects

The overall purpose of comparison in this study is to contribute to “improving practices of schools and governmental programs” (Suter, 2019, p.4). The study aims to examine the contextual background of diversified comments toward the new national policy for internationalization in Sweden. Findings will be the first step to fulfill the gap in perspectives concerning internationalization between the national and institutional level, and between institutions.

To pursue the above purpose, meaningful comparison is required. Thus, this study refers to a framework for comparative education analyses by Bray and Thomas (1995). The framework is constituted of three dimensions: “geographical/locational levels”, “nonlocational demographic groups”, and “aspects of education and society” (Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2014, p.9).

In terms of the comparative framework, urban and regional areas where universities are located from the dimension of geographic/locational levels are focused on with adopting the classification by Stensaker et al. (2008) and Ljungberg and McKelvey (2015). While there are various types of institutions within this group, this study primarily compares universities that offer multiple disciplinary areas from natural science to humanities and social science. The reasons for this specific focus and the selection process of the universities are elaborated on in Section 4.5.1. From the aspect of education and society, this study compares institutional administrations concerning internationalization. Finally, regarding the nonlocational demographic aspect, international actors in the Swedish HEIs are compared.

4.4 Research Method

According to Bryman (2016, p.40), the research method refers to “a technique for collecting data.” To examine research aims and questions, this study adopts documents as data sources and collects institutional policy documents from the point of feasibility and fair comparison.

The literature review revealed some applicable research methods for examining rationales for internationalization, such as conducting questionnaires, interviewing institutional staff or
faculty members, and collecting institutional documents (Matsumoto, 2020). There are two reasons for choosing documents as a source of data. First, it is significant to obtain integrated views of an institution since this study attempts to examine institutional motivations for internationalization. From this point of view, the collection of institutional documents has a relative advantage compared to the other applicable methods. Generally, appropriate document data covers relevant topics broadly, accurately, and consistently (Bowen, 2009).

In contrast, the other methods found in the literature have difficulties identifying and collecting institutionally representative views due to a variety of organizational structures, job responsibilities, and personal views concerning internationalization. Furthermore, the other methods may be influenced by biased sampling procedures because each university has different structures and staff availability. Secondly, documents as data sources can save resources such as time and costs since the method addresses existing materials (Bowen, 2009; Bryman, 2016). Since this study focuses on a comparison between two different geographical locations in Sweden, it prioritizes collecting document data from universities at both regional and urban universities across Sweden as opposed to conducting interviews or questionnaires in limited geographical areas as a result of limited resources.

In terms of the sampling method, this study applies the generic purposive sampling approach, which allows the researcher to establish the criteria for approaching research questions (Bryman, 2016).

4.5 Sampling Process

To minimize the possibility of biased data selection and to enhance transferability (see Section 4.7), this section describes how this study conducts data collection in detail.

4.5.1 The Process of Selecting Institutions

The study collected document data from six universities in urban and regional areas. According to the annual report published by UKÄ (2019), a governmental agency responsible for official statistics on Swedish higher education, there are 17 universities, 18 university colleges, and 13 independent education providers that are equivalent to higher education. The distinction between the Universitet [University] and Högskola [University College] is that the university has the authority to award Ph.D. degrees while many university colleges are unable to (Eurydice,
However, some university colleges have been able to offer Ph.D. degrees in specific disciplinary fields since the early 2000s (Eurydice, 2018).

First, this study needed to focus on universities for two reasons. The primary reason is that this study considers institutional research capacities. Along with the educational role, the research aspects in higher education have recently been emphasized. However, the fact that university colleges and independent institutions have a limited authority to award doctoral degrees would otherwise be a driving force to develop research capacities. Thus, this study focuses on universities to eliminate risks of missing research aspects due to their limited authorities for awarding Ph.D degrees since the first research question aims to examine focused activities through the implementation of internationalization.

Secondly, this study focuses on universities offering multiple disciplinary areas from natural science to humanities and social science. This study aims to obtain an overview of the rationales for internationalization depending on the geographical differences. However, previous studies indicate the influence of the subject area on the motivations for internationalization (Kristensen & Karlsen, 2018; Willis & Taylor, 2014). Therefore, the study needed to eliminate universities focusing on a single subject area such as the Karolinska Institute and the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH). As a result, 11 universities are identified as the first target institutions in the data collection.

Thirdly, three out of eleven universities were excluded from document data collection since these universities do not hold overall institutional policies concerning internationalization according to the international officers at the universities.

Finally, the author categorized the universities into two categories: regional and urban universities. As previously mentioned, the study follows definitions by Ljungberg & McKelvey (2015). However, it is not an easy task to distinguish the selected universities into two clear cut groups. For example, an urban university emerged as a small regional university college in the early 2010s. In this case, there is the question of whether the institutional policy purely reflects views of urban university. Also, the border of geographical locations has been blurred due to the development of public transportation between cities. Considering university background and access to the universities, two universities were also excluded as target universities since they do not fit the definition and research aim.
Consequently, three urban universities and three regional universities were nominated as target universities. In the following sections, the detail of the institutional profiles is described to provide background information. The section then ends with illustrating the criteria for data collection.

### 4.5.2 Institutional Profiles

This section provides the background of the selected universities for further discussion. However, the descriptions about institutional profiles are somewhat limited, and the institutional names are anonymized in order to draw attention to ethical considerations (see Section 4.8). Also, the anonymous names will help to deliver readers to research results without their preconceptions regarding the selected universities.

Besides, Swedish universities offer a wide range of opportunities for study, such as degree programs, single courses, and distance learning curriculum. Due to this study flexibility, there seems not to exist consistency regarding the number of registered students since each institution tracks this according to their definitions surrounding enrollment. Therefore, to make consistent comparisons of the number of registered students, a crucial factor in judging the size of the university, this study employs the number of registered students cited from the national report (UKÄ, 2019). In contrast, the other information refers to institutional annual financial reports as well as institutional websites (see Appendix A).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University classification</th>
<th>Regional universities</th>
<th>Urban universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University names</td>
<td>Apple University (AU)</td>
<td>Coconuts University (CU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lemon University (LU)</td>
<td>Pineapple University (PU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mango University (MU)</td>
<td>Watermelon University (WU)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Apple University**

Apple University (AU) is a middle-sized regional university located in the west-central part of Sweden. It became a university college in the 1970s and was granted university status in the 1990s (AU, 2019b). There are approximately 80 programs and 13,000 registered students (AU, 2020a; UKÄ, 2019). In terms of international profile, the university has more than 200 partner universities around the world (AU, 2020b). It accepted approximately 300 international
students and sent about 130 students abroad in 2019 (AU, 2020c), and the number of incoming and outgoing students has increased over the past three years. Regarding its position in the international ranking, AU is ranked between 500-1,000 in the World University Ranking (WUR) in 2020 (THEWUR, 2019b).

**Lemon University**

Lemon University (LU) is a large-sized regional university in a southern county in Sweden. It was recently established by a merger of two regional university colleges that were established between the 1960s and 1970s (LU, 2019a). Therefore, LU maintains two campuses where the two university colleges were initially located. It teaches about 27,000 students with over 150 programs (LU, 2019a; UKÄ, 2019). Regarding the international dimensions, there are approximately 500 partner universities in over 50 countries (LU, 2020). According to the institutional report, the university accommodated about 700 incoming students and sent 300 local students abroad in 2018 (LU, 2019c). Furthermore, the number of outgoing students has increased over the past three years. LU is not listed in the WUR in 2020 (THEWUR, 2019b).

**Mango University**

Mango University (MU) is a middle-sized regional university in a centrally located county in Sweden. While its root as a HEIs stretches back to the 1960s, Mango University College was established through a merger of branch campuses and programs offered by the urban universities in the 1970s (MU, 2019). The university college has since expanded its disciplinary fields, academic programs, and research fields and received university status in the 1990s. MU supports 12,000 students with about 80 programs (MU, 2019; UKÄ, 2019). Concerning international profiles, the university has about 160 partner universities in the 36 countries (MU, 2020a). According to its institutional report, there were approximately 300 incoming students and 180 outgoing students in 2019 (MU, 2020b). In addition, the number of incoming students has slightly increased, while the number of outgoing students has been stable for over three years (MU, 2020b). MU is ranked in between 300 and 500 by the WUR in 2020 (THEWUR, 2019b).
Coconut University

Coconut University (CU) is a large-sized urban university located in one of the three most prominent cities in Sweden. In the early 20th century, it became an independent university college and changed its institutional status from university college to university in the 1950s (CU, 2018a). The university expanded the number of students between the 1950s and 1960s (CU, 2018a). It has since become one of the top universities in terms of student numbers (CU, 2018a). CU supports about 40,000 students, offering more than 300 degree programs (CU, 2020a; UKÄ, 2019). It covers various study and research fields; however, it emphasizes developing the six multidisciplinary fields since it will contribute to solving global societal challenges (CU, 2018b). In terms of internationalization, it has more than 1,100 exchange agreements with around 70 countries (CU, 2019). Also, there were about 1,100 incoming students and 600 outgoing students in 2018 (CU, 2020b). Over the last three years, the number of outgoing students has increased slightly, while the number of incoming students has been declining (CU, 2020b). CU is one of the top 200 universities in the international rankings (THEWUR, 2019b).

Pineapple University

Pineapple University (PU) is a large-sized university in the southern part of Sweden. It was established as a university in the 17th century and is regarded as one of the oldest universities in the Scandinavian countries (PU, 2020a). It offers around 35,000 students about 270 programs from traditional as well as cross-disciplinary fields (PU, 2020b; UKÄ, 2019). In terms of research profiles, PU has a large research environment and shows research excellence in the field of medicine (PU, 2020a). Regarding internationalization, PU has about 500 partner universities in over 60 countries and hosts the most significant number of exchange students amongst Swedish universities (PU, 2020c). While the number of incoming students has declined since 2016, PU hosted about 1,700 students, which is the largest number of incoming exchange students amongst the Swedish universities (PU, 2020c; 2020d). Also, PU sent about 1,300 local students abroad in 2019, and the number of outgoing students has slightly increased over the last three years (PU, 2020c; 2020d). Finally, PU is listed as one of the top 200 universities in the international ranking in 2020 (THEWUR, 2019b).
Watermelon University

Watermelon University (WU) is a large-sized urban university in one of the three most prominent cities in Sweden. It started its educational activities in the late 19th century and was granted university status in the 1960s (WU, 2019a). It offers about 4,5000 students over 300 programs in various disciplinary fields (WU, 2020a). The university has internationally strong research capacities in the field of environmental sciences, humanities, and social sciences (WU, 2020a). Concerning internationalization, WU has about 1,000 active exchange agreements across 50 countries (WU, 2020a). According to the annual institutional report, WU hosted about 1,500 incoming students and sent about 650 outgoing students abroad (WU, 2020b). The number of incoming students has been stable while the number of outgoing students has declined over the past three years (WU, 2020b). WU is one of the top 200 universities in the international ranking in 2020 (THEWUR, 2019b).

4.5.3 The Criteria for Data Collection

Before data collection, this study set four criteria that the documents must meet: (1) published as official institutional documents, (2) publicly available, (3) have implemented as of place in 2019, and (4) written in English. Along with the above criteria, the study used keywords to approach appropriate data systematically. Since this study examines institutional policies for internationalization, this study looked for policy documents and cataloged those that included “internationaliz[s]ation” in the title along with terms such as “policy,” “plan,” “strategy,” or “mission.”

Most of the selected documents were publicly available on university websites. In addition, the study gathered relevant policies by contacting international officers at the selected institutions since sometimes universities had not uploaded English versions. In Sweden, the right to access public documents is guaranteed, according to Chapter Two in the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act (Tryckfrihetsförordningen in Swedish, Riksdagen, n.d.). Since universities are a part of public organizations, anyone has a right to access these official, public documents from universities. The list of cataloged documents is listed in Appendix B.
4.6 Analytical Method

This study uses two analytical methods to examine the collected data. The following section describes the characteristics of each method.

4.6.1 Document Analysis

Document analysis is used to answer the first research question. Document analysis is identified as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents,” and its analytical process consists of finding, selecting, appraising, and interpreting data contained in documents (Bowen, 2009, p.27). In the process of interpretation, document analysis facilitates techniques in both content analysis and thematic analysis (Bowen, 2009). However, it does not mean intimidating all features of these analytical methods. In terms of the thematic analysis approach, document analysis aims to find themes pertinent to a phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). In contrast, the content analysis approach in the document analysis focuses on organizing information into categories related to the central questions of the research rather than quantifying the number of words in the documents (Bowen, 2009). In other words, researchers are required to distinguish relevant information from others and focus on pertinent parts in the documents (Bowen, 2009).

Since the first question aims to provide an overview of topics and focuses on the policy documents, document analysis is the most appropriate. Policy documents generally include various information such as background, numbers for goals or achievement, and the names of projects (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, document analysis that mixes the content and thematic approaches is useful to answer the first question that attempts to overview covered contents.

4.6.2 Thematic Analysis

This study employs thematic analysis as an interpretive and analytical framework to approach the rationales for internationalization related to the second and third questions. Thematic analysis is identified as “a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). It is one of the conventional approaches within a qualitative research framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2016).

This paper follows six steps illustrated by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87): 1) familiarizing data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and
naming themes, and 6) producing the report. However, as Braun and Clarke (2006) point out, analytical steps eventually become more circular between phases which is true for this study because it examines many policy documents (see Appendix B) at six universities that can be organized into two different categories: regional and urban universities.

Thematic analysis involves both limitations and advantages as an analytical tool. Concerning limitations, thematic analysis may lack theoretical identification. However, theoretical flexibility at the same time offers researchers an “accessible and theoretically flexible approach” to the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.77). Another weakness is the subjectivity of the decision making process about what is considered a theme since there are no logical guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, such subjectivity in understanding the social world is, to some extent, accepted in qualitative research within interpretivist perspectives.

However, the author is convinced that there are advantages as analytical method that covers its weaknesses. Firstly, thematic analysis enables researchers to overview datasets, reduce the amount of data through the coding process, and approach themes across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This point helps to identify themes concerning rationales across the universities and compare them between two categories since this study addresses various policy documents at six different universities. Also, many relevant studies use thematic analysis to examine the rationales for internationalization (e.g., Fischer & Green, 2018; Gao, 2015; Sanders, 2019; see details in Matsumoto, 2020). Thus, this study is convinced that thematic analysis is an appropriate method to examine rationales for internationalization.

4.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is one of the standard criteria for assessing qualitative research and is constituted of four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bryman, 2016). Since qualitative research addresses words and contexts, Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose assessment criteria for qualitative research. These criteria, to some extent, correspond to criteria for quantitative research, however, they focus on different aspects (Bryman, 2016).

Credibility is a criterion for acceptability as an account for researching phenomena (Bryman, 2016). In terms of qualitative research, multiple analytical methods or sources of data will enhance the credibility when researchers examine a social phenomenon (Bryman, 2016).
Although this study relies on policy documents as the data source, the study collected data from six universities (three universities per category) across Sweden according to the definition provided by Ljungberg and McKelvey (2015). To some extent, policy documents from different universities within the same category will help to improve credibility.

Transferability generally concerns whether research findings are replicable or generalizable (Bryman, 2016). However, since qualitative research examines the social world, it is not easy to ensure the replicability of findings. Instead, researchers are encouraged to use thick description that provides a rich account of research contexts (Bryman, 2016). In this study, the process of selecting institutions and their profiles are illustrated to deliver rich details about these research contexts.

Dependability concerns every step of the research process (Bryman, 2016). To enhance dependability, researchers should keep audit trails that include accurate, systematic, and thorough records of the whole phase of the research process. Since this research focuses on institutional policies, the author has kept and organized all documents analyzed in this study and has taken a detailed account of the research process, as evidenced throughout this thesis.

Finally, confirmability concerns research objectivities (Bryman, 2016). According to Bryman (2016, p.386), confirmability involves whether “a researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith.” In other words, researchers are encouraged to approach research objects without personal inclination. To enhance confirmability, this study has systematically collected documents based on explicit definitions and has analyzed collected data using illustrative analytical frameworks.

As discussed above, this study draws attention to all aspects of trustworthiness to enhance the quality of research. In short, this study systematically has cataloged policy documents from multiple universities in terms of credibility and confirmability. Also, the methodological process is well described to enhance transferability. Finally, these policy documents are kept in a proper manner by the author from the point of dependability. However, this study decided to use anonymous institutional names that make difficult to reach the original source of resources against the principle of thick description regarding transferability. In the next section, the reasons behind the necessity of using anonymous names are illustrated by addressing ethical considerations.
4.8 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are considered from a relatively standard set of three principles: minimize harm, protect the integrity, and respect autonomy (Hammersley, 2017). Considering the ethical principles and the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), this study uses pseudonyms for universities while examining institutional policy documents. Therefore, this part illustrates the reasons for such a decision and its importance by referring to the contents of ethical principles.

The crucial reason for using anonymous names is to protect institutional reputations. In terms of the risk of harm, the use of real institutional names may damage the reputations of the universities or involved policymakers. From a research ethics perspective, the harm is understood as not only causing physical injury but also disturbing participant development and influencing a loss of self-esteem. Comparisons in this study aim to diversify the understanding of the rationales for internationalization. However, there are possibilities that readers interpret research findings negatively. Also, since the number of universities in Sweden is limited, it is relatively easy to track ones that do not have policies for internationalization. In both cases, there are risks that damage institutional reputations due to the lack of policies or its contents and rationales.

From the point of privacy protection, handling personal information has become more sensitive since the GDPR was established in 2018 (EU GDPR.ORG, n.d.). While this study does not involve research participants such as interviewees, there are a few indirect informers that have helped to access institutional information and documents. In general, there are often only a few staff members who work as the international coordinators at a university. Therefore, this is another reason why the study uses pseudonyms for institutions.

Since this study uses public and accessible textual data, it mainly draws attention to the first two principles among the standard set of three ethical considerations. Besides, in terms of facilitating this project, this study pays attention to honesty, responsibility, and preciseness as the national ethical framework of Sweden emphasizes in its guidelines (Swedish Research Council, 2017).
Chapter 5  Findings and Analysis

Based on the above methodology and methods, this study examined institutional policies for internationalization at both regional and urban universities in the context of the Swedish higher education sector. The following findings are aligned with the order of the research questions. After illustrating findings concerning research questions, the next chapter continues to discuss topics to be further investigated and concludes with what can be learned from this study.

5.1 Contents Covered in the Institutional Policies

This study has examined policy documents and their contents to compare topics focusing on the explained comparative units, in short regional and urban universities. Consequently, this study identifies that policy documents cover education and research activities as the main foci on internationalization beyond the difference in geographical locations. Also, there are no significant divergences concerning practical approaches within education and research sections between the urban and regional universities.

However, there exist different foci in the policy documents. In short, regional universities describe practical agendas to be improved, such as reforming management structures. In contrast, urban universities mention external environments that lead universities to be internationalized, such as the development of globalization and the response to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, this section contrasts the unique contents found between regional and urban universities after outlining what is illustrated in the education and research sections.

5.1.1 Education Section

Both regional and urban universities focus on the development of cross-border education and internationalization at home. To improve cross-border education, four universities mention the development of partnerships (AU, MU, PU, and WU). While MU aims to increase the number of partner universities quantitatively, the remaining three universities focus on developing a strategic partnership with a few current partner universities. Also, MU (2015) and PU (2019a) point out the credit recognitions and the process of credit transfer as an agenda to be improved. Moreover, MU (2015) and LU (2015) mention modifying the program structure to
make space for study abroad opportunities. Finally, PU (2016) and WU (2019b) promise to send at least 20 percent of their local students abroad.

Regarding developing the aspect of internationalization at home, AU (2019a), LU (2015), and PU (2016) mention increasing the number of teachers with an international background and the interaction between local and international students in the classroom. In addition, language support is suggested as a means of developing internationalization at home. For example, four universities (CU, LU, PU, and WU) emphasize offering English language support for students and teachers. In contrast, MU (2015) aims to promote opportunities to learn Swedish for students and teachers.

Moreover, four out of six universities (AU, LU, MU, and WU) emphasize increasing the number of courses taught in English. For example, AU (2019a, p.2) illustrates this aspect: “[m]ore courses in English are needed to attract incoming exchange students, which is also a requirement for obtaining exchange places at partner universities for outgoing students.” WU (2019b, p.3) recognizes that many courses are available for incoming students; however, it states that “[t]he opportunity to study in English or other languages at the university will be further highlighted.” The increase in the number of English-taught courses can be seen as both internationalization at home and cross-border education. Courses instructed in English can be seen as a part of the activities for cross-border education since they will prepare local Swedish students for study-abroad or exchange programs. However, considering the high English language proficiency among Swedish people (Education First, 2019), the increase in the number of English taught courses is mainly regarded as internationalization at home; it increases the opportunities for receiving many incoming students as well as functions as a platform to increase interactions between local Swedish students and other incoming students.

5.1.2 Research Section

In terms of research activities, all universities emphasize the value of international research collaboration to improve their research activities. In particular, the recruitment of international researchers is emphasized in the policy documents at the six universities. However, only three universities (CU, MU and WU) mention concrete plans to implement international recruitment of researchers. CU (2016) emphasizes utilizing a system of visiting researchers to develop international recruitment for prominent researchers. MU (2015) promises to increase the
budget for inviting foreign researchers and providing accommodations. WU (2019b) describes the strategy of looking for candidates through the European Research Council.

Furthermore, universities also list some approaches for developing the international dimensions of research activities. There are, for example, the improvement of a staffing plan to enable international staff exchange (AU, 2019a), sending doctoral students to partner universities as a part of their research projects (LU, 2015; WU, 2019b), and increasing travel budgets for research activities (MU, 2015).

5.1.3 Different Foci between Regional and Urban Universities

There exist differences in the policy contents between the regional and urban universities. In short, regional universities focus on the practical aspects of the agenda while urban universities describe the environmental background for promoting internationalization.

All regional universities describe reforming their administration and organization structures to develop their international dimensions. For example, AU (2019a) promises an increase in the number of opportunities to obtain international experience offered by the student support office. Also, it promises to improve the organizational support for making agreements and research contracts with new partner universities, following GDPR and ethical issues, and developing data management (AU, 2019a). LU (2015, p.4) illustrates that the university needs “comprehensive and well-functioning systems” to organize international dimensions systematically. In particular, LU lists new systems for documentation and follow-up of the internationalization work. MU (2015) articulates how the university has built up and will further develop the organizational structure for developing internationalization. As an example, the establishment of the International Board and the appointment of pro-vice-chancellor for internationalization are proposed. Also, the university defines the role of the International Board, the head of the schools, and individual researchers. Along with such organizational reform, LU (2015) articulates its intentions to increase the number of international conferences held at the university and the amount of information available in English on the institutional website.

In contrast, urban universities mention how external environments influence and direct their internationalization motivations. For example, CU (2014, p.2) identifies globalization as “a starting point and driving force” for institutional internationalization. CU’s policy document has
a section for describing globalization and the internationalization of higher education as mutual processes (CU, 2014).

Also, urban universities elaborate on the necessity of their efforts for internationalization from the perspective of their contributions to sustainable development. While this topic will be discussed in the next section, regional universities seem to draw attention to sustainable development as well. However, urban universities explicitly mention this topic as a strategy in their policies. For instance, WU (2019b) states that the university continuously contributes to the achievement of objectives in the Agenda 2030 through international collaborations. Also, PU (2019a) says that internationalization contributes to providing necessary conditions for the implementation of Agenda 2030.

5.2 Rationales for Internationalization at Regional Universities

Based on the thematic analysis, this study identifies the following institutional motivations for internationalization at regional universities. Also, the rationales are categorized into conceptual groups in the framework of rationales for internationalization (see Table 3). After describing each rationale and its contexts, this section summarizes institutional rationales at regional universities.

Table 3: The list of rationales and their categories at regional universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationales</th>
<th>Conceptual group *1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing the quality of education and research</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting attention nationally and internationally</td>
<td>International branding and profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing student employability</td>
<td>Economic/ International branding and profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing global mindsets</td>
<td>Student and staff development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to sustainable development</td>
<td>Knowledge production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note *1 refers to Knight (2004, p.24).

5.2.1 Developing the Quality of Education and Research

The first motivation for internationalization is to develop the quality of institutional education and research activities. In other words, the implementation of internationalization is regarded as a driving force to develop their education and research capacities. Regional
universities emphasize the positive influence of internationalization on the quality of education and research. For example:

“[A] high quality degree of internationalized activities serves to strengthen the quality of education, research and administration” (AU, 2019a, p.3).

“[I]nternationalisation will become a means to accomplish the highest quality in the various parts of the university’s activities” (LU, 2015, p.2).

“[T]he primary goals for internationalization at Mango University are: Increased research quality and increased quality in education” (MU, 2015, p.2).

Similar statements are repeated in the section for both research and education activities in the policy documents. Also, policy documents mention a few points that justify how the implementation of internationalization lead to the quality enhancement of education and research. In terms of research development, policy documents emphasize that the development of internationalization can minimize practical barriers, such as language issues (LU, 2015; MU, 2015). Moreover, the development of institutional internationalization is regarded as a tool to access new perspectives and prominent research communities. For example, MU elaborates on this perspective:

Through systematic internationalization, our researchers and teaching staff gain new perspectives. All internationalization activities offered to faculty and staff at Mango University should be viewed in the context of the explicitly stated purpose of maximizing opportunities for making and maintaining key contacts with the international front line (MU, 2015, p.3).

Concerning the development of education quality, institutional perspectives vary between regional universities. AU (2019a) demonstrates the benefit from the point of opportunities among local students. Through the implementation of internationalization, local students will obtain more options to study abroad (AU, 2019a). MU (2015) articulates how international contacts lead the university to a better quality of education since students can access cutting-edge knowledge produced by the internationalization of research activities. Also, language support or
the use of English could be used to attract talented local and international students, but regional universities have not approached this (MU, 2015). In contrast, LU (2015) emphasizes how internationalization stimulates the student learning process through the diversified interactions with those who have a different background.

In short, the development of quality research and education activities is regarded as a vital motivation for driving internationalization. This motivation is categorized into the academic group since it clearly fits into the enhancement of quality, a subcategory of the academic group.

5.2.2 Attracting Attention Nationally and Internationally

The second motivation for internationalization is to attract attention nationally and internationally. Since regional universities are relatively new and remotely located from cities, it can seem to be a vital agenda to enhance their institutional reputations. From this point of view, internationalization is facilitated as a means of drawing attention both nationally and internationally. AU (2019a) articulates how internationalization efforts work to promote institutional reputation at home and abroad. Also, LU (2015) describes that internationalization strengthens its position internationally. MU (2015, p.4) states that progressive internationalization is a way “to increase market attractiveness internationally.” Also, it expresses that “active internationalization creates a competitive advantage (MU, 2015, p.3).”

Regional universities explicitly elaborate on the link between internationalization and increased institutional visibility in their internationalization policies. These documents describe how offering programs and courses in English helps regional universities to reach international students in the European market (MU, 2015). Furthermore, providing English taught courses promotes opportunities for an increase in the number of partner universities (MU, 2015). LU (2015) considers that international study environments attract prominent researchers who enhance the possibilities for obtaining external funding and listing LU’s name on internationally well-reputed journals. Consequently, the regional universities facilitate institutional internationalization in order to develop their institutional reputation and increase their visibility. Of the emerging rationales, these findings are categorized into the international branding and profile since regional universities offer thematically overlapping content in their policy documents.
5.2.3 Increasing Student Employability

A third motivation is that regional universities aim to increase student employability through the implementation of internationalization. For instance, LU (2016, p.2) believes institutional internationalization helps students to “[be] well equipped for the future job market.” Also, MU (2015, p.5) is motivated to offer students study abroad programs or internships abroad since such experiences “will facilitate the international employability of students.” Also, it emphasizes the values of participating in international activities for Ph.D. students in terms of their career development. MU (2015, p.6) explains that “Ph.D. students may also have parts of their research training at a foreign university, to establish international collaborations and partnerships, thereby advancing their academic careers.”

AU does not directly relate student employability to internationalization. However, it states the attractiveness of their graduates in the labor market since “the university has an international and national profile based on its quality and world-leading research and teaching” (AU, 2018, p.1). The quality of education is partly supported by the implementation of internationalization. Therefore, it is possible to link student employability to institutional internationalization in AU’s policy documents as well.

In terms of the rationale category, an increase in student employability is situated in the economic orientation, because it is relevant to economic growth. However, these findings can also be seen from an international branding perspective since maintaining a reputation of having successful graduates in the labor market is attractive to local and international students. Thus, this rationale is categorized as both economic and international branding and profile.

5.2.4 Developing Global Mindsets

The fourth motivation for internationalization is to develop global mindsets among students, teachers, researchers, and staff. AU (2019a) states that it is vital to develop international understanding and intercultural competences among graduates, therefore, the university facilitates institutional internationalization at home and abroad. Also, AU’s policy document states that institutional internationalization helps to develop local students’ cultural understanding through interactions with incoming students and international researchers (AU, 2019a). MU shares the same view as AU. MU’s document describes that participation in the study abroad programs and internship abroad develop students’ global citizenship (MU, 2015).
Moreover, LU (2015, p.3) illustrates that the university “wants to build on and develop an international mindset in students and members of staff” through the development of institutional internationalization. Since the above descriptions are matched, this rationale is categorized into student and staff development under the institutional level.

### 5.2.5 Contributing to Sustainable Development

The last identified motivation for internationalization is to contribute to sustainable development. Regional universities emphasize the importance of leading sustainable development in their policies:

“Our students and staff develop knowledge and skills for individual enrichment and to contribute to a sustainable society” (AU, 2018, p.1).

“Mango University heralds the value of global sustainable development, including promoting a good, healthy environment, along with economic and social welfare” (MU, 2015, p.1).

“We profile ourselves by developing our ability to disseminate and, in collaboration, utilize knowledge that significantly and consistently contribute to sustainable societal development” (LU, 2019b, p.1).

And then, policy documents for internationalization elaborate on possible contributions through the implementation of internationalization. For example, MU (2015, p.1) focuses on developing international research collaborations “that can provide solutions to global challenges.” Also, LU regards internationalization as a tool to improve the quality of research for solving issues concerning sustainable development (LU, 2015). In short, international research collaborations are also motivated to solve the global sustainability agenda with the help of regional universities.

In terms of the conceptual category, this rationale can be categorized into knowledge production since universities are motivated to be internationalized to create new knowledge to meet global challenges. International collaborations are needed from the point of addressing worldwide challenges that cannot be addressed at an institutional or national level.
5.2.6 Summary of Findings for Rationales at Regional Universities

Through examining policy documents at Swedish regional universities, this study identifies five institutional rationales for internationalization at Swedish regional universities. Also, there are three findings through overviewing each rationale and its category.

First, the academic rationale remains as a critical motivation for internationalization at Swedish regional universities. Regional universities expect to develop their education and research quality through the internationalization of higher education. Also, international branding is based on the academic rationale while it draws attention to competitive aspects (Knight, 2004).

Secondly, regional universities aim to improve the institutional reputation through the development of internationalization since two out of five rationales are categorized into this group: attracting attention nationally and internationally and increasing student employability. In other words, regional universities utilize internationalization to compete with other universities nationally and internationally.

Finally, the contribution to sustainable development has emerged as a rationale for internationalization since universities can contribute to producing knowledge that helps to solve global issues through promoting international research collaboration.

5.3 Rationales for Internationalization at Urban Universities

Based on the thematic analysis, this study identifies four institutional motivations for internationalization at urban universities. Also, the motivations are categorized into conceptual groups in the framework of rationales for internationalization (see, Table 4).

Table 4: The list of rationales and their categories at urban universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationales</th>
<th>Conceptual group *1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing the quality of research and education</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining visibility on the international area</td>
<td>International branding and profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving external goals</td>
<td>International branding and profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to sustainable development</td>
<td>Knowledge production/ student development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note *1 refers to Knight (2004, p.24).
5.3.1 Developing the Quality of Research and Education

The first motivation for internationalization at urban universities is to develop the quality of research and education. For example, the three universities discuss this point briefly.

“The quality of our research and education is strengthened through close contacts with the world around us” (CU, 2016, p.11).

“The internationalization contributes to increased research quality, [and] to more relevant education” (PU, 2019, p.1).

“[I]nternationalization is a transformative and natural part of the university’s development and helps to increase the quality of its activities” (WU, 2019b, p.1).

However, the benefits of internationalization seem to be more emphasized within the research aspects. CU (2014, p.2) recognizes international research collaboration as a critical condition for the development of “cutting-edge competence.” PU (2019a) claims that international collaboration reinforces the quality of research. Also, PU creates an institutional policy for internationalization with British universities. A primary reason for establishing a specific policy is to address Brexit issues. However, it also elaborates on the advantages of collaborating with British universities from the point of improving research quality at PU since British universities generate prominent research outcomes (PU, 2019b). Also, WU emphasizes the value of international research collaboration since it is regarded as essential “to the University’s operations and an integral part of excellence (WU, 2019c, p.3).”

Policy documents explain the relationship between developing the quality of research activities and the implementation of internationalization. For instance, CU (2016) explains that internationalization enhances the possibility of attracting world-leading researchers as visiting scholars, which leads to high-quality research. Moreover, WU (2019b) states that the development of internationalization enables universities to recruit prominent researchers from across the world.

In contrast, policies implicitly mention the causal relationship between internationalization and the quality enhancement of education. CU (2014) explains that educational environments with students and teachers with various backgrounds contribute to diversity, intercultural interactions, and knowledge exchange. On the other hand, WU (2019b,
p.2) states that “the university will continue its [institutional] efforts to increase student mobility” in the education section. The following part then describes the percentage targets and how WU will achieve this goal by using current international networks (WU, 2019b). However, PU hardly elaborates on this aspect. Regarding the conceptual category, this motivation is categorized into the academic rationale since one of its subcategories mentions development of the quality of research and education.

### 5.3.2 Maintaining International Visibility

The second motivation for internationalization is for urban universities to stay visible internationally. As described in the institutional profiles, urban universities are highly ranked in the international ranking system and have positive reputations. To persist as a prominent, international institution, universities need to create new knowledge by collaborating with other research universities and attracting talented students and researchers from across the world. Therefore, institutional internationalization is motivated and facilitated.

Concerning this perspective, PU (2016) illustrates that internationalization is regarded as a driving force to reinforce its institutional position as a leading research university since internationalization enhances the opportunities to contact research universities beyond its national border. WU (2019b) highlights how its institutional internationalization aims to “increase visibility and presence on international research and education arenas.”

Also, the motivation for internationalization is elaborated on from the point of intensifying institutional competition based on international rankings. CU regards international ranking as a significant criterion to “be a truly globalized academic institution in all aspects” (CU, 2014; 2016, p.10). Many international rankings such as Times Higher Education World University Rankings, QS World University Rankings and Shanghai Ranking consider international aspects such as the number of international students and faculties as well as the number of research citations across the world. Therefore, universities take it as vital to draw attention to the dimension of institutional internationalization to maintain a university’s position globally.

In terms of the category of rationale, these findings are situated under international branding and profile since this rationale focuses on academic capacities and institutional competitiveness.
5.3.3 Achieving Externalized Goals

The third rationale for internationalization among urban universities is identified in this study as the achievement of external goals. Intergovernmental organizations such as the EU and UN create goals for the internationalization of higher education based on their vested interests. Urban universities have integrated these external goals into institutional goals and thereby facilitate internationalization to achieve them. For example, PU (2016) and WU (2019b) refer to the percentage of student mobility designated by the EU and set the same percentage as their institutional goal for mobility. Also, as discussed below, Agenda 2030 influences motivations for internationalization.

This perspective is partly overlapped with maintaining institutional visibility since the achievement of external goals will promote a better institutional reputation internationally. Thus, the category for this rationale can be regarded as international branding and profile.

5.3.4 Contributing to Sustainable Development

As the fourth motivation, urban universities facilitate internationalization in order to contribute to sustainable development. In their university’s general mission statements, the universities draw close attention to the development of a sustainable society. For example, the following statements are listed:

“Sustainable development is important to us; we always consider the long-term social, economic, and ecological consequences and allow them to guide our operations” (CU, 2016, p.7).

“[PU’s] strengths will be all the more important in the next ten years as society faces great global challenges in the environment and climate, sustainable development, migration, digitalization, and demographic change. […] PU shall attract and retain committed and enthusiastic students and employees and emphasize sustainable development” (PU, 2016, p.3).

“In a changing and globalized world, universities should contribute to a sustainable democratic society on a long-term basis through a solid and broad scientific foundation” (WU, 2019c, p.2).
Such a perspective is reflected in the overall strategy of institutions and then appeared as a motivation for promoting internationalization. For instance, CU believes international experience and cooperation increase students’ knowledge in relation to global issues and strengthen research capacities to solve global problems and challenges (CU, 2014). PU states that internationalization contributes to offering indispensable conditions for implementing sustainable development (PU, 2019a). WU mentions that international collaborations enable achievement objectives that set forth the tackling of global societal challenges (WU, 2019b). In short, internationalization is motivated from the point of sustainable development, since these efforts can contribute to creating new knowledge to solve global issues and provide students with relevant knowledge and awareness concerning the global issue.

As well as regional universities, this rationale can be categorized into knowledge production since universities aim to be internationalized in order to create new knowledge for global challenges. In addition, urban universities also mention providing students with awareness regarding global issues. Therefore, this rationale also includes student and staff development aspects.

### 5.3.5 Summary of Findings for Rationales at Urban Universities

Through examining policy documents at Swedish urban universities, this study identifies four institutional rationales for internationalization. Also, there are two findings through overviewing each rationale and its category.

Firstly, the academic rationale remains a crucial motivation for internationalization at Swedish urban universities. The quality development through efforts for internationalization is identified among three urban universities. Also, two rationales can be categorized into international branding and profile, which includes both academic and competitive aspects.

Secondly, the motivation for internationalization at urban universities is affected by external environments. As discussed in the part of “maintaining international visibility” the growth of international rankings requires efforts to be made to develop internationalization and to maintain their prominent reputations since internationalization is a crucial assessment of the ranking. Also, the EU’s policy influences institutional goals as described in the part of
“achieving externalized goals.” Moreover, the contribution to sustainable development is regarded as an important rationale.

In the next section, this thesis compares identified rationales between regional and urban universities that illustrated in Section 5.2 and 5.3.

### 5.4 Comparisons between Regional and Urban Universities

Table 5 illustrates a summary of the comparisons between regional and urban universities. Consequently, this study identifies one common rationale, two similar rationales, and three unique rationales between the regional and urban universities. The following section describes the details of these findings.

**Table 5: Comparisons of rationales between regional and urban universities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common rationale</th>
<th>Regional universities</th>
<th>Urban universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing the quality of research and education (Academic)</td>
<td>- Attracting attention nationally and internationally (International branding and profile)</td>
<td>- Maintaining international visibility (International branding and profile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to sustainable development (Knowledge production)</td>
<td>- Achieving externalized goals (International branding and profile)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5.4.1 Common Rationale**

Based on findings, the development of research and educational activities is identified as a common motivating factor for institutional efforts towards internationalization. Both regional and urban universities clearly state the importance of developing these activities by advancing internationalization. From the perspective of regional universities, the development of
internationalization promotes access to new perspectives and prominent research communities. Urban universities consider that internationalization contributes to research outcomes through collaboration with partner universities although there is little clarification concerning the educational aspects. Therefore, this study would conclude that Swedish universities, regardless of geographical location, utilize internationalization as a tool to develop their research and educational activities.

5.4.2 Similar Rationales despite Different Foci

Both regional and urban universities are motivated to promote their international branding through internationalization. However, theme and background contexts differ from regional universities to urban universities. On the one hand, regional universities aim to attract attention nationally and internationally. In terms of institutional rankings, regional universities are not outstanding internationally. Also, there are many competitive universities in Sweden due to their long tradition or good location, while regional universities are new and remote from cities. From these points of view, internationalization is regarded as a solution to be competitive nationally and internationally. By implementing institutional internationalization, universities are able to enhance the possibility of reaching prominent students and researchers. Furthermore, an increase in international students and prominent researchers will help to promote institutional reputations and attractiveness.

On the other hand, urban universities have been known as prominent universities and gained good reputations as leading in research. However, they need to make efforts towards internationalization to maintain such positions. Institutional popularity is influenced by the international ranking system, which regards the international outlook as one of the critical criteria. Also, the development of internationalization helps to attract prominent researchers to urban universities. Moreover, research collaboration will produce new knowledge. In other words, the lack of effort towards internationalization may cause a negative effect. Therefore, urban universities need to work on the development of the international dimensions of education and research activities to stay visible internationally.

Also, Contribution to sustainable development commonly emerged as rationale between regional and urban universities. As an essential part of knowledge creation, universities are expected to play a vital role in producing new knowledge for solving global challenges.
However, there exist slightly different foci between them. While regional universities focus on creating new knowledge through international collaboration, urban universities consider the aspect of cultivating students’ awareness along with producing new knowledge.

Sustainability has been widely discussed in various contexts across the world after SDGs published. Therefore, it is reasonable that the SDGs influence institutional rationale for internationalization since there are possibility for solving global issues through international collaborations. In the discussion section, however, this thesis argues that the development of internationalization may include a controversial aspect for achieving SDGs (see Section 6.2).

### 5.4.3 Unique Rationales

From the above findings, this study identifies three unique rationales at the regional and urban universities. Although further investigation is required to understand these unique social institutions, this section attempts to elaborate on these unique rationales while considering institutional background and the external environment, such as globalization.

First, the development of a global mindset is identified as a unique rationale for internationalization at regional universities. For example, AU (2019a) and MU (2015) illustrate that international and intercultural competence among students will be developed through interactions with those who have a different background. Also, LU (2015) aims to facilitate institutional internationalization since it helps to build on the international mindset among students and staff. However, international and intercultural competence seems to be a vital skill in the globalized world. Thus, it is interesting that this rationale was only identified within the documents of regional universities.

Concerning this finding, two interpretations can be considered. Firstly, urban universities have received a large number of international students (see Table 6 and 7). In other words, they have already provided rich environments to grow international and intercultural competence. Thus, they do not emphasize this aspect of the policy. The other possibility is that urban universities may integrate this rationale into the other rationales, rather focus on it independently. For instance, CU (2014) considers the development of the global mindset as a matter of educational quality. Also, CU (2014) discusses students’ global mindset from the point of contribution to sustainable development through internationalization.
Secondly, attention to student employability appears as a unique rationale at regional universities. In the globalized world, an increase in access to the international labor market is an important role at higher education. Therefore, it is reasonable to be identified as a rationale for internationalization. LU and MU describe how institutional internationalization leads students to global labor markets. Also, AU implies a relationship between institutional efforts for internationalization and graduate employability.

Regarding this point, two possible reasons can be illustrated. Firstly, as described in Chapter Two, regional universities initially were established to fulfill the demands for skilled workforces in remote cities. In other words, the attention to increase graduate employability would be embedded culturally across various institutional activities at regional universities. Therefore, an increase in student employability would also emerge in the institutional policies for internationalization at regional universities. In contrast, as de Wit (2011, p.16) points out, internationalization is to some extent regarded as “humanistic ideas against the world of pure economic benefits”. Therefore, urban universities do not emphasize this aspect in their policy documents. Another possible explanation is that urban universities have already gained international reputations concerning student employability. According to the Global University Employability Ranking 2019 (THEWUR, 2019a), the selected urban universities are ranked in the table. Therefore, student employability seems to be identified as a unique rationale at regional university.

Thirdly, achieving externalized targets emerges as a unique rationale at urban universities. For example, PU and WU refer to the percentage of outgoing students designated by the EU policy and integrate it into their institutional policies. This uniqueness can be interpreted from two points of view. One interpretation is the differences between the current institutional situations. As discussed in the section on institutional profiles, there is a vast gap in international profiles between regional and urban universities. Since it is not feasible for regional universities to integrate externalized goals into their policies, achieving externalized goals has emerged as a unique rationale at urban universities.

The other possibility is that external goals are expected to play the role of integrating diversified organizations at urban universities. Urban universities offer a large number of programs in the various disciplinary fields. In other words, at urban universities, there are many departments, faculties, and staff that have different views on internationalization. However,
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Urban universities need to set an overall target as an institution regardless of the challenges faced by institutional diversity. Thus, the externalized target is integrated into institutional policies since it can be regarded as a universal target across European countries.

In this part, the thesis elaborated on unique rationales between regional and urban universities while considering the external contexts surrounding them. In other words, the unique rationales can be empirical evidence that external contexts influence motivation for the internationalization of higher education at the institutional level. However, as mentioned at the beginning of the section, further investigation is required to comprehend these unique social environments. Concerning this point, possible research approaches are illustrated in Chapter Six (see Section 6.5).

5.4.4 The Summary of Comparisons and Findings

This study has compared the rationales for internationalization between regional and urban universities based on the analysis of institutional policy documents. From the above comparisons, this study summarizes the key findings and implications as follows.

Firstly, geographic contextual differences between Swedish institutions have an impact on the motivations for advancing internationalization. Regardless of institutional locations, Swedish universities are motivated to develop internationalization in order to improve the quality of their educational and research activities. However, the other motivations for internationalization differ between regional and urban universities. Regional universities facilitate institutional internationalization to promote their positions. In other words, regional universities aim to increase their status through the development of internationalization, while Swedish universities are regarded as having less stratification between institutions (Marginson, 2016). In contrast, urban universities need to continue their efforts for internationalization to maintain their current positions nationally and internationally.

Secondly, in terms of rationale categories, this study has identified various rationales. In other words, there are no universal motives for internationalization at Swedish universities. The various types of rationales are mixed, to some extent, under the label of internationalization. Contrastingly, economic incentives, such as gaining extra income, have not been identified as a driving factor in the development of internationalization at both regional and urban universities in Sweden.
Finally, the motivations for internationalization at urban universities seem to be more influenced by the external environment. For example, urban universities pay explicit attention to external goals created by the EU. Also, urban universities describe how they contribute to sustainable development through their activities in detail. This finding indicates that future studies concerning the rationales for internationalization need to draw more attention to the influence of intergovernmental power over institutional policy. This point is elaborated on further in the next chapter (see Section 6.4).
Chapter 6  Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter discusses contribution for the research field by this study and a few concerns to be further investigated before reaching conclusions. It begins with contrasting the emerged rationales in this study with ones in the previous studies. The chapter continues to illustrate a few issues to be further investigated. Although this thesis has examined rationales by interpreting institutional policy documents, the emerged rationales involve controversial aspects as a driving force to develop internationalization of higher education. Thus, this section describes these issues and possible research methods to approach them. It then ends with overviewing findings, discussion, and contribution to the research field.

6.1  Relationship with Findings in the Previous Studies

As indicated by the previous studies, Swedish universities are also motivated for internationalization by mixed rationales. The common rationale across the comparative analytical unit is an academic rationale. Sampled universities are motivated internationalization for developing their research and education activities. This rationale is along with findings in the previous case studies in European countries (e.g., Hudson, 2016; Woodin et al., 2011).

In contrast, the other institutional rationales for internationalization seems to be different from others that identified by the previous studies. Financial incentives, such as receiving extra income by charging tuition fees, are not identified through this study although Swedish universities have implemented tuition fees for international students from EU/EEA regions since 2011. Instead, attention to institutional competitiveness and contribution to the sustainable development appeared as motivation for developing institutional internationalization at Swedish universities. These findings will be a piece of new empirical evidence in a European country to question the economic dominance that Hudson (2016) problematizes.

6.2  Concerns over Contributions to Sustainable Development

There is a message brought about in the results and which point to a significant need for universities to contribute to developing sustainable societies or solving global issues. These needs are also aligned with Agenda 2030. International collaboration that addresses significant global challenges—such as the pandemic of the COVID-19 and global lockdown—is needed to
produce new knowledge for solving global issues. However, there are some concerns to interpret sustainable development as a driving force for internationalization of higher education.

First of all, although contribution to sustainable development appeared as a theme at both regional and urban universities, the emphasis upon this differed. Regional universities discuss sustainable development within the context of knowledge production. In contrast, urban universities include student development along with the knowledge production aspect.

There may exist controversial relationships between response to global issues and the development of internationalization. For example, an increase in the number of mobilities would have a negative influence on environments. The increasing mobilities of students and researchers has an impact upon global warming since travel to international destinations requires fossil fuel consumption. In terms of the issue of the current pandemic, the global society now observes travel as increasingly risky in terms of exposure to contagions. Moreover, through international recruitment, such as degree programs and research positions, host institutions can receive talented students or researchers. In contrast, these recruitments may cause brain-drain, especially in countries with emergent economies. In other words, institutional efforts towards internationalization hinder sustainable development in the sending countries as these countries lose their talented work force since they will help to achieve SDGs such as expanding decent work and economic growth within their home country.

These concerns and the responses to them are not appropriately reflected in the current institutional policies for internationalization. Thus, further investigation will be necessary to understand sustainable development as rationale for internationalization from a broader perspective.

6.3 Gaps between Policy Goals and Institutional Realities

All of the universities emphasize the development of the international dimensions in their policy statements. However, gaps exist between policy goals and institutional realities. For example, CU and PU face a decrease in the number of incoming international students (see Table 6). As Table 7 shows, the number of outgoing students is behind their policy targets, which aim to send 20 percent of their local students abroad.

In terms of international reputation, the international ranking at WU has declined year by year while it is internationally ranked amongst the top 200 universities (THEWUR, 2017; 2018;
2019b). Also, the regional universities have maintained their institutional reputation at lower levels while institutional policies have been implemented (THEWUR, 2019b). To understand this gap, further investigation will be required that approaches institutions in different ways such as, interviewing policy makers (see Section 6.5.1).

Moreover, the international dimensions of universities face unprecedented challenges due to the spread of the COVID-19. From a short-term perspective, international students need to suspend their exchange studies in the middle of the semester, other students have limited opportunities to interact socially or academically, and still other students are currently stuck in the host country without opportunities to return home. Additionally, students with future international study prospects have had to cancel or freeze these plans. In terms of research activities, academic conferences have been canceled, and research collaborations with partner universities are currently postponed. From a long term perspective, universities need to address how to support their local students studying abroad and incoming students who are not familiar with the local languages and socio-political contexts. In short, universities need to reconsider how they carry out institutional internationalization with addressing epidemic risks.

6.4 The Influence of Intergovernmental Organizations

As discussed in the conceptual framework, one of the social phenomena resulting from globalization is the increased influence of intergovernmental organization over local agendas. In terms of higher education, the Bologna Process represents the growth of intergovernmental power as European countries committed to employing this standardized structure within their higher education systems.

This study also identified a few of the rationales for internationalization relevant to intergovernmental organizations. For instance, the development of the quality of research and education is identified as a common institutional rationale. At the same time, this statement is overlapped with the intention for internationalization of higher education by the European Parliament. Moreover, attention to sustainable development as established by the UN are seen at both regional and urban universities.

As illustrated above, intergovernmental organizations can affect the rationales for the internationalization of higher education as an emerging key sector. However, rationales relevant to intergovernmental organizations vary between the regional and urban universities. From these
observations, the messages from intergovernmental organizations may function to some extent as a form of world culture and lead the direction of higher education internationalization. Thus, further investigation is necessary to address the influence and role of intergovernmental organizations’ rationales for the internationalization of higher education.

6.5 Suggestions for the further Studies

Through examining policy analysis, as well as considering current social contexts, this study lists three research approaches for further examining institutional rationales for internationalization.

6.5.1 Interviewing Institutional Policy Makers

Through policy analysis between the regional and urban universities, this study has identified a lack of explanation concerning specific motivations as well as the background of unique rationales. For example, there is little elaboration concerning the contribution to sustainable development at regional universities. Also, urban universities do not elaborate on a causal relationship between internationalization and the quality of education. Moreover, developing global mindsets, increasing student employability, and achieving externalized goals as unique rationales can be understood from various perspectives. Besides, as discussed above, there is a gap between reality and policy goals.

To fulfill these gaps, qualitative interviews with institutional policymakers will be conducted since they can provide rich contexts to approach these questions. For example, through interviewing policymakers, studies will prevail the internal process of policy making. Also, studies will identify the background of selected contents in an institutional policy for internationalization.

6.5.2 Policy Comparisons from Longitudinal Perspectives

This study examined institutional motivations for internationalization by focusing on geographical differences. However, the longitudinal comparison of policies and its contents at an institution will also be fruitful due to two reasons.
Firstly, institutional recognitions and reputations have changed. For example, if a regional university succeeds in raising its rankings and international reputation, a new strategy for internationalization will shift from the current motivation to the others. Through analyzing the shift, the study can overview how the university motivated for developing internationalization. Secondly, universities may need to look for new approaches to international collaboration that do not require physical interactions in order to address the new realities of the pandemic before a vaccination is widely disseminated.

Therefore, by observing institutional policies before and after 2020, prospective study will identify how universities respond to influences from the external environment along with the shift and emergence of new rationales for internationalization. Consequently, this research encourages future longitudinal policy studies which have the potential to provide fruitful findings from these two perspectives.

### 6.5.3 Comparative Studies between Countries

This study focused on a Swedish case study to compare rationales between regional and urban universities. However, an important question is whether the emergent rationales are unique phenomena in Sweden or not from the point of transferability and generalization. To approach this question, a future comparative study would be useful since comparative education can examine the variety and efficacy of all levels of educational practices between different and similar cultural contexts (Suter, 2019). For example, a possible approach would be to compare rationales by using the same classifications between two or more countries.

A comparative study will help to determine whether the emergent rationales are unique phenomena in Sweden or not. As discussed in the research design, however, meaningful comparisons need “sufficient commonalities” between comparative units (Manzon, 2014, p.100). In response to this, other Nordic countries would offer feasible options for future comparative studies due to the commonalities between them and Sweden.

### 6.6 Concluding Remarks

From a broader perspective, this thesis has examined the small-scale structural conditions of the internationalization of higher education in Sweden. In particular, the author identified that there seems to exist different rationales and motivations for internationalization at institutional
levels from observing commentary on the new national policy for internationalization. Thus, this study focused on comparing the institutional rationales for internationalization between regional and urban universities by analyzing their institutional policies.

In terms of contents in the policy, both regional and urban universities mention education and research area as a target domain of institutional internationalization. Both regional and urban universities aim to develop the international dimensions of their education by increasing the number of partner universities, incoming and outgoing students, and courses in English, providing language support, and changing program structures. From the point of research aspirations, the policies set out to promise to increase financial support for international research collaboration, recruit international staff and researchers by increasing outbound mobility at doctoral levels.

While regional universities list practical agendas such as organization reform and administration; contrastingly, urban universities describe external social contexts such as globalization and the establishment of Agenda 2030. In short, there are no notable differences in the practical approaches to developing the international dimensions of research and education activities between the regional and urban universities. However, there exist slight differences in the topics covered in the policies between the regional and urban universities. Regional universities depict practicalities to develop institutional internationalization, while urban universities describe the contextual background for advancing internationalization.

From the point of rationales, this study identified the five rationales at regional universities and the four rationales at urban universities. At the regional universities, these rationales include developing the quality of education and research, attracting attention nationally and internationally, increasing student employability, developing global mindsets, and contributing to sustainable development. And then, by examining and categorizing rationales into the framework for rationales, this study has concluded that the regional universities are motivated toward internationalization in order to develop their academic capacities and institutional competitiveness nationally and internationally. In contrast, developing the quality of research and education, maintaining international visibility, achieving externalized goals, contributing to sustainable development have been identified at the urban universities. Also, by analyzing these rationales, this study has concluded that urban universities facilitate institutional
internationalization in order to develop their academic capacities and respond to externalized goals.

This study contrasted the commonalities of and differences in internationalization rationales between the geographical locations of institutions. As a result, academic motivation as a driving force for developing internationalization exists across geographical differences. However, while the regional universities facilitate institutional internationalization to address the institutional agenda, such as student employability and institutional reputation, the urban universities are motivated to internationalize to maintain their prominent positions and respond to externalized goals. In short, this study would conclude that locational differences influence institutional motivations for internationalization.

However, there are a few concerns that require further investigation to understand institutional rationales. For example, contributions to sustainable development emerges as the institutional rationale for internationalization at both regional and urban universities. In contrast, the development of internationalization hinders, to some extent, sustainable development since increasing mobilities damages environments due to the use of fuel energy and the impact of brain-drain in the sending countries. Also, creating new knowledge is a key concept to contribute to sustainable development; however, policies do not elaborate on what kind of knowledge will be produced through international collaboration to contribute to sustainable development. Moreover, some of the policies have been implemented, but there exists a gap between institutional realities and policy goals. Besides, due to the expansion of new epidemic issue, social contexts surrounding internationalization of higher education will drastically change. Considering these aspects, it will therefore be necessary to examine institutional rationales using different approaches, as discussed in the suggestions for further studies.

Finally, the thesis concludes that while there are particular topics to be further investigated, this study has contributed to an examination of the internationalization of higher education. It has identified that institutional internationalization at Swedish universities is driven by mixed rationales, rather than a single rationale. In line with other case studies about European countries (see, e.g., Hudson, 2016), academic motivation is rooted as a core rationale. Along with this, there are different types of motivations, such as employability, international branding, knowledge production, and student and staff development. Furthermore, this study has also found that the financial incentive is not identified as a rationale, although Swedish universities
started to charge tuition fees for international students from EU/EEA regions. Thus, this study would conclude that findings will contribute to diversify the understanding of rationales for institutional rationale for internationalization as a piece of new empirical evidence.
Reference


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https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2020/world
ranking#!/page/1/length/100/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats


Uppsala University (2019). Remissvar ökad attraktionskraft för kunskapsnationen Sverige (SOU 2018:78) [The statement of opinion on increased attractiveness for the knowledge nation Sweden (SOU 2018: 78)]. Retrieved from https://www.regeringen.se/495fdb/contentassets/ec78dac0600d4127b75d78628a8cc40b/uppala-universitet.pdf


Appendix

A. List of Institutional Data Source


LU (2019a). This is Lemon University. Retrieved from https://lu.se/en/meet-lemon-university/This-is-lemon-university/lemon-university-in-numbers/

B. The List of Institutional Policy Documents


### C. Relevant Tables

*Table 6: The number of incoming students in the first and second cycle between 2016 and 2019*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Universities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>310</td>
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Note: The number of incoming students at universities are cited from AU (2020c), CU (2020b), LU (2019b), MU (2020b), PU (2020d) and WU (2020b).

*Table 7: The number of outgoing students in the first and second cycle between 2016 and 2019*

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</table>

Note: The number of outgoing students at universities are cited from AU (2020c), CU (2020b), LU (2019b), MU (2020b), PU (2020d) and WU (2020b).