

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Concepts

2.1 Transnational Media Flows

Over the last few decades, media flows have increased across the world due to increasing mobility during the globalization era. The “dominant flow” coming from the US-led West has been known for long time. It creates what is termed as “Americanization” or “McDonaldization”, which refer to two great symbols of America’s transnational corporate power and way of life (Ferrari 2007: 35). The emergence of this cultural homogenization is tightly accompanied with economic supremacy, and is called “cultural imperialism” in neo-Marxist terms. Therefore, many studies on Western media have been done, especially on the dominance of American media flow to the rest of the world.

Thussu (2007), in “Media on the Move” appreciatively indicates that the United States is the leader in exporting cultural products, and its entertainment industry is one of its biggest export earners. Its film industry is a key reason for US domination in the global entertainment market. Hollywood movies are aired in more than 150 countries worldwide and have a dominate market share in most countries; American TV programs are seen in over 125 nations (Miller *et al.* 2005). Lu (2013) emphasizes that the active role of the USA government is a crucial factor contributing to its domination in the global cultural industry and the promotion for American culture abroad. Europe has continuously been the largest market for the distribution of American film and television content (Thussu 2007). However, although the USA is still the leader in selling TV programs to the rest of the world with more than 70 per cent of all sales, Britain is the largest exporter of television formats in the world and also leads Europe in general media exports (Thussu 2007).

Along with the “dominant flow”, media landscape in the world has witnessed the rise of non-Western media flows, which can be called “contra-flow”, over the last few decades. According to Kavoori (2007: 49), “contra-flow” can be understood as “the semantic and imaginative referents for the institutional, cultural and political matrix of a

world framed by processes of global cultural power and local negotiation: a world experienced through the identity politics of nations, individuals and cultures and negotiated through contestations of locality, nationality and global citizenship”. Nowadays, global media flows are a two-way movement (Kavoori 2007), which not only comes from the West to the rest of the world, but also derives from the less powerful regions of the world. The development of digital technology, satellite technology, broadcasting networks, and the physical movement of people around the world have promoted the growth of media flow from non-Western countries to the Western countries (Thussu 2007). The contra-media flows can be exemplified as such of the widening of the Indian media industry – known as Bollywood, the spread of Latin American telenovelas, and the expansion of the geo-cultural pan-Arabic entertainment network MBC (see examples in Cunningham and Sinclair 2001, Thussu 2007). As the contra media flows have been strongly emerging, many media scholars have started paying attention to study this situation.

With respect to transnational contra media flows in Asia, Japan has been positioned as a strong cultural industry. Iwabuchi (2002), in his reputed work “Re-centering globalization”, studied the significant increase of Japanese popular culture (J-pop) consumption in the regions of East and Southeast Asia beginning in the early 1990s, and driving hitherto domestically contributed to orient Japanese cultural formation to become more extroverted. By looking at the diffusion of Japanese commercialized popular culture, especially TV dramas and popular music in Tokyo, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, and Hong Kong, Iwabuchi (2002) indicates that popular cultural forms in Asian contexts are an intertwined composition of global homogenization and heterogenization which promote the orientation of indigenized modernity in East and Southeast Asia.

While Japan had been one of the main dominant non-Western media flows in Asia throughout the 1980s and 1990s, beginning in 1997, a phenomenon of an increasing amount of Korean popular cultural content that comprises TV dramas, movies, pop songs and their associated celebrities, has started gaining significant popularity in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other East and Southeast Asian nations (Shim 2006). K-pop has been replacing J-pop through Asia for almost two decades, and its popularity still remains important today. Nowadays K-pop products not only

concentrate in neighboring Asian nations but also reach as far as the United States, Mexico, Egypt and Iraq (Kim 2007).

The success of K-pop beyond its national border is attributed by combined reasons which come from “Korea’s tragic history, the intensive of Korean emotive culture, and the non-threatening nature of its people” (Kim 2007: 132). The rise of the K-pop phenomenon contributes to create a regional cultural manifestation in Asia against the long domination of Western culture (Dator and Seo 2004). Similarly, Leung (2004) states that K-pop’s popularity can be considered as a strong confirmation for the power of Asian modernity, in terms of economics and cultural development, which might challenge the threat of the Western dominant media powers.

In the present study, the transnational mobility of Thai and Filipino dramas to Vietnam is seen as contra media flows. It is previously shown that Thai and Filipino soaps have been emerging in Vietnam while Korean dramas still maintain their popularity among Vietnamese audiences. In Southeast Asia, Thai series have become familiar to Vietnamese audiences for only the past few years whereas they have been consumed by Cambodian, Laotian, and Burmese audiences for a long time. Similar to Thai soaps, Filipino series are currently known among Vietnamese people. However, Filipino dramas have been exported to many different regional countries as a competitive strategy between Filipino TV companies to grasp more and more viewers, and also in response to the demand of a large number of Filipino migrant workers and diasporas working and living abroad. The transnational flows of TV series not only make Vietnamese people’s media consumption become more diverse today but also contribute to widening regional knowledge for Vietnamese audiences.

2.2 Consumption of Transnational Media Flows

2.2.1 Trends in Media Studies

There are two main approaches in media studies - political – economic and cultural. Both of them seek to find out how ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, nationality and additional impacts may affect the way in which we interpret and understand media (Goodwilliam 2013). However, there are distinctions between the two disciplines, which are the applications of macro or micro analysis (Zanetta 2013). The perspectives of political economy usually use macro-level analysis that focus on

structural and institutional issues regarding exploitation, power and class, whereas cultural approaches often employ micro-level analysis to particularly examine generation of meaning (Zanetta 2013).

Looking at studies on the popularity of K-pop in Asia as an example, it is known that most existing works on K-pop have been able to be grouped into the two categories: the political-economic and the cultural (Yang 2012). Similar to Zanetta, Yang (2012) in her research on the K-pop consumption among audiences in China, Japan and Taiwan, indicates that the political-economic approaches, whether critical or not, concentrate on analyzing structural or institutional backgrounds for the boom of Korean popular culture in Asia, and have contributed valuable understanding on K-pop's material base. From the political – economic points of view, the rise of K-pop is seen as the result of recent capitalist development, or as a response to the 1997 economic crisis. Nonetheless, Yang (2012) argues that these perspectives are not sufficient in explaining the complex process of reception, which should be regarded as the main factor for the success of Korean cultural products in the receiving countries. The authors who follow political-economic approaches, at best, show that audiences are passive and manufactured by cultural industries or media when they consume without much considering whatever products provided to them by cultural industries or media (Yang 2012). Therefore, some media scholars look to cultural aspects of Korean cultural products to explore a clue to their success. They have paid more attention to the content; for instance, Confucian elements or traditional values in Korean TV series contribute to attract a large portion of the population in the receiving countries (Han 2005). Along with the analysis of cultural contents, cultural tastes and the transnational reception process of the audiences have been studied and found to contain common elements with Korean popular culture (Yang 2012).

Audience reception in media study started to receive greater attention from the work of pioneering sociologist Stuart Hall. In contrast with the idea that mass media overpowers and manipulates audiences with standardized cultural commodities (Gao 2012), Hall (1973), in his article “Encoding/Decoding in Television Discourse”, argues that audiences are more active towards the impacts of mass-produced culture, and textual meaning is not simply fixedly determined by the sender, but rather can be “decoded” by audiences in various ways (Morley and Chen 1996). This approach

appreciates the role of audiences in consuming media products in the way that media consumers have control over the meaning of TV, popular music and film (Gao 2012). Regarding the role of active viewers in watching television, Livingstone (2000) states that people are emotionally involved with television; they perceive television as “a bridge” to connect them to the rest of the world through a shared imagined community, through updating what is being taken in other places and through having common topics to talk with others in their everyday lives.

2.2.2 Audience-Approach Studies on Media Consumption

In line with the active audience approach, Moores (1993) in “Interpreting audiences: The ethnography of media consumption” emphasizes that in order to explain the relationship between media genres and the social patterns of taste, it is important to account for the role of situational contexts which the media are used and interpreted. It can be understood in the way that media consumption closely related to people’s daily life. Supporting this idea, Yang (2012) also states that people’s media consumption tastes are differentiated according to diverse social factors, such as their socio – economic status and demographic characteristics (e.g. lifestyle and life experiences), in the era of information and post-modernism. Moreover, gender is also an important dimension in studies of media consumption. Moores (1993) analyzes many examples to see the differences in media consumption between women and men to examine the issue of relationships between gender, genre and media consumption. Particularly, in the case of soap operas, it is indicated that to appreciate soaps, it is compulsory for social readers to possess a number of extra-textual competences (Moores 1993). Those extra-textual competences include a basic understanding of generic rules, knowledge of a particular series’s characters and history, and an ability as well as willingness to engage emotionally in the moral codes of personal conducts (Brundson 1981). The last one is seen as the most crucial factor, and it is the skill that women are more likely to possess than men. It can be considered as a type of cultural capital (Moores 1993) that makes women have more interests in soap operas than men; or as Brundson states, the genre of soap opera in present conditions “textually implies a feminine viewer” (Brundson 1981: 37).

Ahmet (2012) agrees with the point that soap operas in general have predominantly female audiences. Hobson (2003) markedly emphasizes that women

typically use soap operas as a way of talking indirectly about their own attitudes and behavior. It is clear that viewing and talking with family and friends about soaps is experienced by many women as a pleasurable experience (Ahmet 2012). Furthermore, soaps are considered as “an example of women’s literature that supports the status quo regarding women’s place in the social order” (Ahmet 2012: 2). Yongye (2012) in her research on “Hmong Dubbed Series: The Production and Consumption of Asian Dramas among Hmong Community in Lao PDR” explores the idea that the Hmong women who consumed Thai and Korean series in Hmong dubbed language revealed the changes in their identity by comparing themselves to the characters portrayed in those dramas.

Nonetheless, although soap operas are generally regarded genre particularly for women, it in fact is aimed at a wider audience. The audience for soaps actually does comprise men sometimes (Ahmet 2012). In a study about gender construction of young Filipino men and their serial drama connection, Bantugan (2012: 2) found out that “the connection between male audiences and serial dramas lies deeper than a desire for entertainment. It lies at the very core of a man’s being – in the union of his mind and heart – in his gender – which society helps construct”. Bantugan indicated that most of the participants in his research were exclusive-heterosexuals, which contrasts with the notion that only men having tendencies towards non-exclusive heterosexuality are the most exposed to serial dramas. Moreover, the author also realized that most of the male audiences of dramas clearly “gave more attention to narrative format than relationship, character traits or values found in the serial dramas they watched – revealing a high stimulation from and significant concern for how a narrative is told” (Bantugan 2012: 6).

In the present study, the rise of transnational Thai and Filipino dramas in Vietnam is looked at from the political – economic and cultural approaches, but more focus is placed on the cultural aspects. From the political – economic perspective, institutional factors are drawn that bring advantages for the free flows of products among ASEAN, including media products, particularly from Thailand and the Philippines to Vietnam. From the cultural perspective, how Vietnamese audiences generate understanding on Thailand and the Philippines through watching their TV serial dramas is explored. Amporn (2008) in her work on the consumption of Thai soaps

among Shan communities in Burma shows that consuming Thai dramas shapes Shan people's imaginations about Thailand. To Shan audiences, Thailand appears in the Thai series as a place where everyone possesses a cellphone and has a luxurious life in a nice house, driving a nice car (Amporn 2008). The author argues that because Thai soap operas usually portray the lives of characters from upper-class or rich families, it has led to the ways in which Shan audiences have come to see Thailand as a beautiful and modern place. Moreover, Amporn points out that the beauty and the modernity of Thailand in Shan viewers' minds have been linked with the development of new technologies and the economy. Thai dramas bring "an aspect of life – a world of unrestricted fulfillment of the consumerist imagination", which the local economy under long-time military rule has not yet been able to provide (Amporn 2008: 48).

Obviously, today under globalization and regionalization forces, media products are vehicles to "bring the whole world" to individuals. Consuming transnational cultural products is a way to help people fill up the physically trans-border distance and get to know the world. It is shown that very few studies have actually looked at the consumption of popular culture in Southeast Asia or examined the cultural impacts of the emerging ASEAN Community to people living in this region (Otmazgin 2011). Looking at the regional flow of popular culture in Southeast Asia, especially in cities, help provide empirical and theoretical understandings of how the regionalization process actually works.

According to Otmazgin (2011), while studying the operations networks contributing to the regional dissemination and transnational consumption of popular culture reveals the collaboration between companies or individuals involved in regionalization process, the creation of transnational cultural bases, the distribution of products, and the policy of governments applied to drive the regionalization; examining specifically the transnational consumption of cultural commodities expressed with images, ideas, and emotions provides new frameworks to understand feelings of proximity and belonging between people in Southeast Asia. No one would deny that popular culture makes a special relationship and a commonly-shared experience between consumers. The reality of people in Southeast Asia spending many hours every day watching TV, going to movies, and listening to music raises the concern that these practices have an effect on people's lives and perceptions (Otmazgin 2011).

In line with the concern, the present research focuses on examining the effects of inter – ASEAN cultural exchange on Vietnamese people’s perception about Southeast Asia. Studying the impacts from the consumption of Thai and Filipino dramas among Vietnamese audiences reveals how ASEAN viewers perceive the region, in the senses of both commonalities and differences under the driving force of the regionalization process in building ASEAN community.

2.3 Cultural Proximity/Cultural Affinity and Reflexivity

The consumption of foreign TV serial dramas in one country results from the perception of audiences that those soap operas are both “close” and “different” with what audiences experience. Closeness is for audiences’ understandings the context where stories in the dramas take place while difference is for attraction to engage audiences following the stories. The closeness refers to what is called “cultural proximity” and “cultural affinity”. As a non-Western cultural flow, over the past decade, Asia has witnessed the popularity of K-pop replacing J-pop, and still remaining in its crucial role today. Most scholars studying the popularity of K-pop agree that the huge consumption of Korean popular culture across the region is the result of the depiction of “cultural proximity” through its cultural products (Yang 2012).

“Cultural proximity” and “cultural affinity” are assessed as major factors which determine the flow of cultural products across countries, and their competitions in international market (Suh, Cho and Kwon nd). It is mainly argued that cultural values and characteristics of the home country are embedded in its cultural products and these values and characteristics are transferred to other cultures when the products are consumed in other regions (Shanahan and Morgan 1999). Cultural proximity thesis emphasizes the view that local audiences actively consume foreign cultural products which are relevant and close to their local customs/values. Cunningham and Jacka (1996: 14) define the notion of cultural proximity as “the theory which provides a hypothesis on how the audience will have preference for cultural products from countries with which they share cultural ties in recognition of their own culture”. Regarding the notion of audience preference for culturally proximate texts, Straubharr (1991) argues that audiences firstly prefer national material, and when it cannot be satisfied in certain genres, the audiences tend to look for regional cultural products

which are closely more cultural proximate than those of “less-proximate”. By studying the Brazilian TV industry, Straubharr (1991) found that the popularity of Brazilian telenovelas in countries like Venezuela and Argentina were attributed to the similar Latin American cultural roots shared among those nations. Cultural proximity is a complex notion with many dimensions. Language is the most crucial factor in considering cultural proximity, but there are also other elements such as religion, dress, music, non-verbal codes, humor, story pacing, and ethnic types (Iwabuchi 2002). In addition to these factors, cultural proximity is sometimes included: gender images, lifestyle, knowledge about other lifestyles, values, education, family, personal and group networks, and organizational affiliation (Straubhaar 2003).

The establishment of geo-linguistic and geo-cultural TV markets provides undeniably empirical validity for the notion of cultural proximity. Other works have also indicated that local and intra-regional TV programs tend to be the most popular in any country or region (Lee 1991). It is shown that high cultural proximity comprises and promotes active flow of cultural products between countries (Kim and Barnett 1996). As a result, “the higher the cultural proximity or affinity is, the recipients of the cultural products show favorable response to foreign cultural products” (Suh, Cho and Kwon nd: 4).

Iwabuchi (2002) indicates that the popularity of Japanese dramas among Taiwanese audiences lies in proximities of physical appearance (such as skin color), and the sense that Taiwan shares the same modern temporality with Japan. The thesis of cultural proximity provides a theoretical foundation to explain the wide distribution of Korean cultural products in the Asian region (Richstad 1998). Jung (2009) supported the idea when specifically indicating that Korean dramas provide a similar cultural proximity to many Asian nations. It is clear that Korean series touch the right point of Asian sentiments, such as family-oriented values and respect for elders, which are very familiar in many Asian countries (Jung 2009). Moreover, Korean dramas construct an appearance and feeling of “Asianess” into the cultural content, and the “Asian Face” is a key feature of Korean popular culture for regional export (Siriyuvasak 2010).

However, cultural proximity cannot account for the fact that audiences also wish to see the “difference” between themselves and what is shown on screen. It refers to the imagination of audiences analyzed in the above section. In “Implications of Korean pop

culture trends in Southeast Asia”, Chua (2010) revealed that some audiences in Southeast Asia embrace a sense of difference at the societal level. According to Thomas (2004), Vietnamese youth living in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City see in Korean dramas their desired “future”. For the Vietnamese youth viewers, the urban scenes portrayed in Korean series with the dominant feature of capitalist consumerist modernity are the “imaginary” and “imaginable” future that they can aspire to for themselves and for Vietnam as Vietnam is on the progress of liberalizing and marketizing its economy. In reality, Vietnamese audiences do not desire “Korean” culture for themselves per se, but regard it as a symbol of their capitalist-consumerist future.

In the case of Shan communities in Burma consuming Thai soaps, Amporn (2008) pointed out that the cultural proximity perceived by Shan people after they watch Thai soaps comes from Shan belief system that they and Thai people share the same origins and are closely linked by culture, religion, language and history. Moreover, while Bollywood and Hollywood movies provide a distance version of modernity, which may be less accessible or applicable for Shan audiences in their local situation, Thai soaps are more culturally proximate to Shan audiences. When they depict modernity, they still keep “Asian” cultural values by not presenting sexual scenes and respecting Buddhist morality. The modernity through the settings, the showing of new technologies and foreign products, the economic and material prosperity and the beauty of Thai actors/actresses portrayed in Thai dramas are characteristic differences that attract Shan audiences. Through seeing the beautiful images and prosperous lives in Thailand on screen, Thailand becomes an “imagined space onto which Shans projects their hopes and desires”, and “Thailand has effectively embodied the Shan’s aspiration of modernity” (Amporn 2008: 49-51).

From all the points mentioned above, it arises the question of whether or not the consumption of transnational popular culture products can create a sense of regional connectivity or curiosity about the region in consumers’ minds. The target to promote the regionalization process in ASEAN is the idea of establishing an ASEAN Community with three pillars: the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) (AEC Blueprint 2008). The last of these is seen as the most challenging of the three pillars (Acharya 2008). The idea of ASCC aims to bring regional interactions and

identity-building to the popular level, which contribute to broadening and deepening ASEAN regionalism (Acharya 2008). The transnational flows of cultural products in Southeast Asian region, specifically the soap opera flows from Thailand and the Philippines to Vietnam are evidence for promoting ASEAN cultural integration. The regionalization in culture needs to be considered through the perception of people about the region both in commonalities and differences.

In fact, talking about cultural proximity in ASEAN has been far less visible. Southeast Asia is considered to be the most diverse region in the world. The countries in this region have different histories of nationalism. For instance, Thailand's nationalist goal was to protect the nation's independence through stability rather than revolution and "meant that Thais supported the status quo as centered in the royal family", whereas Vietnam and the Philippines gained independence through resistances to colonial powers (Rodell 2007: 22). Moreover, there are multiple ethnicities with different languages within each Southeast Asian country. These make the process for thinking of cultural proximity among people in the region become more difficult.

In order to get the perception of commonalities and differences depicted on transnational TV serial dramas, audiences need to interpret their texts by making reflections between what they are watching on screen and what they passed or are experiencing in their society and their social relationships. The process of making reflection or "reflexivity" for the interpretation of transnational media has been seen in many media studies. The reflexivity is evidence to show the active role of audiences in consuming media as social actors (audiences) become conscious of and are able to reflect upon social life in ritual and other cultural performances (Ashley 1990), which are "reflexive in the sense of showing ourselves...arousing consciousness of ourselves as we see ourselves" (Myerhoff 1982: 105). Thus, reflexivity can be understood as "re-examinations of the self and the self's relation to others and social issues" (Hu 2008: 116). According to Giddens (1991), reflexivity is a crucial part which leads to the self and self-identity in a modern society. There are different levels of account for reflexivity (Lash 1994). The first level is "structural reflexivity" which is defined as the reflection of an agency on the "rules" and "resources" of social structure, and then on "agency's social conditions of existence" (Lash 1994: 115). The second level is "self-reflexivity" perceived as the reflection of an agency on "itself", which is a form of "self-

monitoring”, comprising the “autonomous monitoring of life narratives and love relationships” (Lash 1994: 115-116). It can be seen that the notion of reflexivity is applied to explain not only the audiences’ interpretation process of transnational media, but also its effects on the receivers. It takes place in transnational media’s audiences in various ways which depend on their living context and their experiences.

In a study on the practices of online Chinese fans of Japanese TV dramas, Hu (2008) realized that their written posts from a forum and their blogs were not only about Japanese drama itself, but also their reflections on the self, life, and reflective thoughts that could help to stimulate and develop individual growth. Huang (2008) argued that through interpreting transnational media texts people reflect on existing norms in their own society and then to position or determine their stand. In the same vein, Yamato (2014), in the research on the consumption of Japanese popular culture among Malaysians, saw transnational media texts of Japanese cultural products as latent materials for Malaysian consumers to reflect upon and discuss the individual proximity in people, and existing social issues.

The present study seeks to explore reflexivity of Vietnamese audiences on both similarities and differences between Vietnam and Thailand and the Philippines through consuming their soap operas. Both of the reflections on commonalities and differences help to generate understandings for Vietnamese audiences about the two regional nations. If the perception of cultural proximity makes the viewers quickly accept and become familiar with Thai and Filipino cultural products, then their reflexivity upon differences towards these two countries, on the one hand, reinforces the idea that Southeast Asia is a truly diverse cultural region when each nation embraces its own cultural characteristics. More importantly, on the other hand, it can help the Vietnamese audiences get the feeling of affinity with Thailand and the Philippines when they can see and get to know cultural features of these countries. Hence, it can be said that the reflexivity of the viewers on both cultural proximity and differences partly assists the construction of people-to-people links, which is essential in the progress of promoting regional cultural integration for the ASEAN Community.

2.4 Regionalism and Regionalization

The terms “regionalism” and “regionalization” are usually used interchangeably to describe the construction of regional entities (Camroux 2006). However, it is necessary to have a conceptual clarification of the terms in order to consider various dimensions implied in the terms. Before defining “regionalism” and “regionalization”, it is suggested to understand the concept of “region”. An international “region” can be defined as a “limited number of states linked by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence” (Kacowicz 1998: 5). According to Pempel (2005: 6), “regionalism” can be understood as “a top-down process of government to government formation of institutions ... and regionalization as the bottom-up process of cross-border cooperation driven by non-governmental actors”. Kim (2005: 40) also conceptualizes “regionalism” as referring to “State led projects of cooperation” whereas describing “regionalization” as “akin to globalization, referring to non-state driven – processes of integration.” In the same vein, Wisnugroho (2012) emphasizes that “regionalism” refers to top-down governmental project and it is proceeded through intergovernmental negotiation and dialogue. This process can be considered as a conscious, deliberate and purposive attempt implemented by national states in *de jure* regions to create formal agreements and mechanisms for dealing with common transnational issues (Wisnugroho 2012). The author defines “regionalization” as actual processes of real integration which pull people and tie economies together overcoming national political boundaries. This process could be based on societal integration, but most often considered in terms of economic integration resulted from investment and trade relationships. “Regionalization” creates a *de facto* region with transnational spaces that is not necessary a formal regional organization to flourish (Wisnugroho 2012). However, in the researcher’s point of view, it is not absolute for state/non-state distinctions in definitions of “regionalism” and “regionalization”. Through reviewing the literature in international political economy, Camroux (2006) indicates that states in Asia have heavily engaged in processes of integration. Moreover, lack of state capacity can affect to these processes of regionalization (Hamilton-Hart 2003). As such, it can be seen that both state and non-state factors play important roles in the process of motivating integration.

Referring to the conceptual definitions above, the process of building ASEAN Community with the coming of the AEC at the end of this year and the motivation for making deeper integration in culture and security among ASEAN countries in a long term is a process of “regionalism”. National states in this region commit agreements serving for establishment of a common Community. In this study, the process of “regionalism” is seen as a situational background for the flows of Thai and Filipino cultural products to Vietnam. Within this context, the researcher focuses on analyzing the process of “regionalization” taking place in the field of media among Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines. In the present study, this process is referred to co-operations among media organizations between Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines in order to satisfy entertainment demand of Vietnamese audiences and promote regional economic integration in the media field. More importantly, it is concentratively purposed to find out the practical integration process attributed by Vietnamese audiences’ consumption of Thai and Filipino TV series, which partially contributes to pull Vietnamese audiences closer to the two ASEAN countries.



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