MOVING FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH: UNDERSTANDING SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATION TO BANGKOK, THAILAND

By

ROBERT D. GARRETT

Bachelor of Arts in History
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
2001

Master of Arts in International Studies
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
2006

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
July, 2019

MOVING FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH

TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH:

UNDERSTANDING SELF-INITIATED

EXPATRIATION TO BANGKOK, THAILAND

Dissertation Approved:

Dr. Rebecca A. Sheehan

Dissertation Adviser

Dr. Thomas A. Wikle

Dr. Alyson L. Greiner

Dr. Steven M. Perkins (Sociology)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people I would like to thank for providing me support and assistance in the writing of this dissertation. First, with the deepest of gratitude and appreciation, I would like to thank my chair and adviser Dr. Rebecca Sheehan. Without her endless encouragement, patience, and guidance during my graduate student career, I would not have been able to successfully complete my dissertation and doctoral studies. Professionally, I want to thank Dr. Sheehan for providing me with her expertise and insight, especially in regards to qualitative research and methodology. On a personal level, I cherish Dr. Sheehan as both a mentor and a friend, as she has always provided a sympathetic ear when I needed someone to talk to, and I am forever grateful for her tireless support.

Besides my adviser, I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Tom Wikle, Dr. Alyson Greiner, and Dr. Stephen Perkins, for their time, knowledge, and support. I want to thank Dr. Wikle for agreeing to serve on my dissertation committee, despite his time consuming responsibilities as an Associate Dean. I appreciate Dr. Wikle for all of his valuable academic and professional advice. I want to thank Dr. Greiner for the role she has played in my student career. Through her coursework and instruction, Dr. Greiner has helped shape my thinking as an academic and a geographer. As an undergraduate, I took Dr. Greiner's "Geography of Africa" course, which first sparked my interest in geography, and for this I am grateful. I want to thank Dr. Stephen Perkins for his role as my outside committee member. As a master's student, I had the privilege to enroll in Dr. Perkins' "Globalization and Culture" course, which was an eye opening experience, which exposed me to new ways of critical thinking and viewing the world.

I would like to give special thanks to my friend and colleague Dr. Declan O'Sullivan for all his time and personal and professional support. Dr. O'Sullivan's keen eye for detail was critical during my dissertation revision and editing process. I want to thank the Oklahoma State Geography department for offering me funding during my graduate studies; as well as the faculty members, staff and peers who provided me with constant support and guidance. Big thanks to my colleague Dr. Aswin Subanthore for his friendship and advice, as well as providing me with different perspectives on my research findings. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Vivian Wang and Tim Huff of the International Students and Scholars office for providing me funding during summer sessions at Oklahoma State, by giving me the opportunity to assist with exchange programs for visiting international students and faculty. Thanks is also due to the Norris family for offering me the Robert E. Norris "Field Research Award," which helped offset the cost of traveling to Thailand for my field research. Also, thanks to all the participants, both Western expatriates and Thai citizens, who formally or informally participated in this study.

Last but not least, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all my friends and family. Without their endless love and support this dissertation would not have been possible. Special thanks to my mother who has been patient and supportive throughout my doctoral studies and dissertation writing process. During my times of struggles and doubt, she was there to provide encouragement. I also want to give thanks to my father who is no longer with me. He shaped me into the man I am today, and although he did not always agree with my actions or decisions, he accepted me for the person I am, and loved me unconditionally.

Name: ROBERT DON GARRETT

Date of Degree: JULY, 2019

Title of Study: MOVING FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH: UNDERSTANDING SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATION TO BANGKOK, THAILAND

Major Field: GEOGRAPHY

Abstract: Globalization and advances in technology have led to an overall increase in the complexity and intensity of global mobility. Most of this mobility is from low-income to high-income countries, or from poor countries to richer ones. However, another form of mobility that has received attention from scholars is the movement of Westerners, colloquially referred to as expatriates, who relocate from relatively affluent and developed countries in the Global North to less developed countries in the Global South. In this dissertation, I focus on self-initiated expatriation to the Global South. Specifically, I examine the movement of working-age Westerners who relocate to Bangkok, Thailand under their own direction. I employ qualitative inquiry and use semi-structured interviews, convenience interviews, as well as participant observation, to investigate the lives and experiences of U.S. and U.K. self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), who relocated on their own in order to live and work in Bangkok, Thailand. By using postcolonial approaches, transnationalism, as well as integration and acculturation theories I unpack the perceptions of participants in this study, and examine the implications their mobility has on Thai society. Results from this study show that mobility from the West combined with the economies in the Global South produce relationships of imbalanced power, which tend to favor white, male Western SIEs. Additionally, I show that Westerners occupy a precarious position in Thailand, because, despite being considered outsiders, from the Thai perspective they are seen as the superior "other," in regards to their skin color, material wealth, technology, and education. Because of this perception, which is a legacy of orientalism, Western SIEs enjoy a relatively high socio-cultural status in Thailand. Consequently, Western SIEs are easily able to acquire jobs and romantic partners, and enjoy a higher standard of living when compared to their home countries. Subsequently, Westerners are mobilizing the colonial past, and expatriating to Thailand, as well as other countries in the Global South. In summary, this dissertation shows, that from a postcolonial perspective, self-initiated expatriation to Thailand is in a sense a continuation of colonial modes of mobility, which privileges Westerners and perpetuates unequal relations and understandings of the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and advances in technology have led to an overall increase in the complexity and intensity of global mobility. Most of this mobility is in the form of traditional migration (i.e., migration from poor countries to rich ones); however, new forms of global "flows" have emerged in the last few decades, making global mobility more heterogeneous than previously presumed (Koser 2007; Castles 2010; Schiller and Salazar 2013; Castles et al. 2014; Besharov and Lopez 2016). One form of mobility that has received attention from scholars is the movement of Westerners, colloquially referred to as expatriates, who relocate from relatively affluent and developed countries in the Global North to less developed and less affluent countries in the Global South (O'Reilly 2003; Fechter 2007a, 2007b; Howard 2008, 2009a, Smith and Guarnizo 2009; Green 2015; Butler and Hannam 2014; Maher and Lafferty 2014; Botterill 2016). Traditionally, this form of privileged mobility has mostly been ignored in migration studies, because it is considered unproblematic for receiving countries and their host societies, as well as for the expatriates themselves (Knowles and Harper 2010; Kunz 2016). In general, the majority of research about international migration focuses on low-skilled and economically challenged migrants, mainly those who move from the Global South to the Global North, whereas less academic attention has been focused on relatively affluent Westerners who relocate from Europe or North America to the Global South (Hugo 2006, 2007; Fechter and Walsh 2010; Lan 2011)

Additionally, the research dedicated to studying movements from the Global North to the Global South has mainly focused on that of retirees or "assigned expatriates." Yeoh and Khoo (1998, 162) explain that an assigned expatriate is a "highly skilled individual who by his qualifications is employed by a foreign country or sent by his employers from his home to perform certain specialized functions on a contract of at least six months." Indeed, much research has centered on assigned expatriates, because of the crucial role they play in the global economy (Findlay and Gould 1989; Findlay and Skeldon 1996; Koser and Salt 1997; Tung 1998; Yeoh and Khoo 1998; Mahroum 2000; Clegg and Gray 2002; Selmer 2006; Scott 2004; Beaverstock 2011; Andresen et al. 2013). Also, due to an aging population in Europe and North America, there has been a recent focus on the movement of retirees from the Global North to the Global South (Toyota 2006; Howard 2008, 2009a; Gustafson 2008; Miyazaki 2008; Oliver 2008; Ono 2008; Botterill 2016).

Alternatively, the goal and purpose of this dissertation is to explore the experiences of working-age Western self-initiated expatriates or SIEs, defined as individuals who have voluntarily migrated from a developed country to a less developed one, without the benefit of a company or organization's support (Andresen et al. 2013) Namely, I employ qualitative inquiry and use semi-structured interviews, convenience interviews, as well as participant observation, to examine the lives and experiences of U.S. and U.K. self-initiated expatriates, who relocated on their own in order to live and work in Bangkok, Thailand. Using postcolonial approaches, transnationalism, as well as integration and acculturation theories, I unpack the experiences of participants in this study and examine the implications their mobility has on Thai society.

Self-initiated expatriation typically involves Westerners seeking a better lifestyle, through living or traveling long-term in the Global South (O'Reilly 2003; Ono 2008; Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Benson 2010; Hayes 2014, 2015; Benson and Osbaldiston 2016). In recent years, the disciplines of international business and human resource management (Thorn 2009; Tharenou and Caulfield 2010; Doherty et al. 2011; Doherty 2013; Froese 2012; Andresen et al. 2013), as

well as the social sciences (Howard 2009a; Benson 2013; Hayes 2014; Maher and Lafferty 2014; Botterill 2016), give special attention to exploring the structural and motivational factors that drive lifestyle and self-initiated expatriation. Altogether, literature about why Westerners move or travel long-term to foreign locations, especially locations found in the Global South, is expanding (Fechter 2005; Howard 2008, 2009a; Farrer 2010a, 2010b; Cohen 2011; Lan 2011; Benson 2013; Croucher 2015). To date, studies on self-initiated expatriation uncover a variety of reasons and motivations for expatriation, which are typically influenced by the attributes of both the country of origin and the country of destination. In this dissertation, I examine the factors that motivate Westerners to move to Thailand. I discuss how expatriation is influenced by structural, historical, and political factors, such as visa regimes and economic disparities between regions, as well as individual motivational factors, such as the search for an improved socio-cultural status.

Furthermore, global mobility, in the form of lifestyle travel or self-initiated expatriation, from the Global North to places such as Thailand, produces experiences and circumstances that can reshape an expatriate's cultural identity. Cohen (2011) writes that physical mobility can challenge the ways in which individuals experience themselves, other people, and places over time. Thus, while in the "contact zones" (Pratt 1992) of the Global South, Western identities may become challenged, reified, and transformed, as they come into contact with people of different cultural backgrounds. A "contact zone" is a geographic area or space in which large flows of people from different cultural backgrounds meet and interact (Pratt 1992; Yeoh and Willis 2005a; Farrer 2008a, 2008b, 2011). Often a "contact zone" is a space where people who are historically and geographically separated come into contact (Yeoh and Willis 2005a; Liu et al. 2011). According to Hall (1996), identities are constructed through difference, as the recognition of what one is and what one is not in relation to the "other." Cohen (2011) indicates that tourism and long-term travel allows increased contact with various cultural praxes and ways of life that can challenge notions of self-identity. Accordingly, several scholars have written on identity

formation and the pursuit of idealized self in terms of long-term travel, tourism, mobility, and global travel in general (Pratt 1992; Desforges 2000; Cresswell 2006; Gogia 2006; Leonard 2008, 2010; Cohen 2011; Lan 2011; Stanley 2012; Adams and van de Vijver 2015). Additionally, when encountering foreign peoples and cultures, Western expatriates often pursue strategies and practices which help them maintain their original Western cultural identity (Fechter 2007a, 2007b; Fechter and Walsh 2010; Leonard 2010, Smiley 2010a, 2010b; Benson 2013). In this dissertation, I build upon these understandings, as I examine the ways Western expatriates negotiate their encounters with the local Thai "other" and show how they attempt to adjust and live within Thai society, yet maintain a Western cultural identity.

Moreover, movements from the Global North to Global South can reproduce the colonial past in the present (Tupas 2004; Coles and Walsh 2010; Benson 2013), because expatriates often relocate to previously colonized or semi-colonized countries. In Marxist theory, a semi-colonized country is a place which was never officially colonized, such as Thailand, yet it was dominated by outside imperial influences (Chilcote 2000; Jackson and Harrison 2010). Western expatriates engaged in the pursuit of better lifestyles in the Global South are typically visibly differentiated from local citizens and other migrant groups, as they are "embodied bearers of culture, ethnicity, class and gender" (Yeoh and Huang 2011, pg. 682). Notably, Western expatriates and tourists act as representatives of the hegemonic power of the West. In the context of Westerners expatriating to the city of Bangkok, Thailand, people of various cultural and historical backgrounds intersect, and consequently uneven neocolonial power relations are produced and often reinforced, favoring Western expatriates and tourists. In this study, I interpret my analyses using a postcolonial approach, in order to examine whether or not neocolonial attitudes are being continued or discontinued by expatriates who relocate to live Bangkok, Thailand.

In regards to Bangkok, it is a city which as has emerged as one of the main "contact zones" of Southeast Asia. Undoubtedly, Bangkok is a diverse global city, serving as a primary

travel hub in Southeast Asia, bringing millions of tourists annually (Howard 2009b, 2010). Thailand also draws a substantial amount of illegal or irregular migration from China, Burma, Laos, and Cambodia (Hugo 2006). Moreover, Bangkok's international community has grown in recent years, attracting populations from Japan, Korea, India, Africa, Middle East, Europe and the Americas (Howard 2008, 2009a), and in more recent years from China (Fernquest and Wangkiat 2016). Furthermore, the movement of Western SIEs to Bangkok has implications on both the individual expatriate as well as the local Thai society. Namely, through their interactions with local Thais, Western SIEs often perpetuate unequal relations which are reminisce of the colonial era. Although, Thailand itself has never officially been colonized it has been subject to foreign influence, namely economic domination by Britain, as well as being used as a buffer zone between French and British colonies in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, during the Vietnam War, Bangkok was the main R&R destination for American soldiers, which helped transform the city into a Western tourist destination (Ouyyanont 2001). The legacy of Western influence continues in Bangkok today, which is evident by the number of Western tourists, as well as expatriates who live in the city.

Through this study I contribute to the understanding of the relatively new trend and understudied phenomena of Westerners electing to leave their relatively affluent homes in the Global North in order to move to less developed and poorer regions of the Global South. By unpacking the reasons Westerners expatriate, and examining the impacts they have on their host societies, I contribute to the understanding of self-initiated expatriation. Additionally, my findings may be used by individuals considering moving to the Global South on their own, as well as inform government agencies in both the Global South and the Global North, potentially to influence migration policies.

Outline of Dissertation

Typically, scholars involved in research on migration, including expatriate studies, attempt to answer three principal questions: 1) who moves; 2) why they move; and 3) what happens after they move (Brettell 2003; Brettell and Hollifield 2008). With these questions in mind, this dissertation is intended to provide insight and an understanding about self-initiated expatriation to Bangkok, Thailand.

In the following chapters, I analyze the lives and experiences of Western SIEs, specifically U.S. and U.K. citizens, who live and work in Bangkok, Thailand. First, in Chapter Two, I provide a literature review where I define international migration and survey contemporary migration trends and movements, including the economic and social factors driving international migration. I then define transnationalism, and explore more recent studies of highly-skilled or expatriate migration. I address research concerning expatriate everyday lives, links to home, and acculturation. Additionally, I discuss postcolonialism, and explain that although Thailand was never officially colonized, this critical view provides an appropriate interpretive approach to understanding expatriate mobility to the country. In Chapter Three, I explain my research methodology, including an overview of qualitative inquiry, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and convenience interviews. I also explain my analysis process, and discuss how I coded and used Nvivo to organize and analyze the data. Additionally, I provide maps and details about the places where I conducted participation observation, as well as offer biographical data about my participants. In Chapter Four, I discuss the structural and motivational factors which influenced participants to expatriate to Bangkok, Thailand. In Chapter Five, I explicate the everyday lives of participants. First, I examine participants' spatial integration, and show their impacts on two historically Thai neighborhoods, On Nut and Prakanong via gentrification. I then analyze participants' modes of transport and the places and spaces they frequented. In Chapter Six, I examine the transnational activities, or the lack of transnational

activities, participants carried out, and how these activities helped them maintain a Western cultural identity. In Chapter Seven, I use acculturation theories to investigate participants' integration, or lack of integration, into Thai society, and discuss participants' tendency to become embedded in Thailand despite their lack of a strong sense of belonging. In Chapter Eight, I summarize my findings and discuss original contributions which emerged from my research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

International migration and mobility has increased considerably in the last few decades, due to globalization, and advances in transportation and communication technology (Castles et al. 2014; Czaika and Haas 2014; Skeldon 2014). According to the United Nations (2013) nearly 250 million people are currently living outside their country of origin. Traditionally, international migrants relocate in order to seek better economic and political environments (Lee 1966; Salt 1992; Cohen 1997; Castles 2000; Castles 2002; Castles et al. 2014; Skeldon 2014) Thus, the majority of international migration is from low-income and middle-income countries to high-income countries, or from poorer less developed countries to richer more developed ones (Yamanaka 1993, 2000; Castles 2002; Li and Teixeira 2007, Castles et al. 2014). Furthermore, most international migrants are stereotyped to be poorly-educated laborers from less developed countries (Castles 2000, 2002; Li and Teixeira 2007). However, some international migrants are highly trained and originate from affluent countries. Thus, today's international migrant populations and movements are more diverse than ever before, representing a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, including refugees, manual workers, highly-skilled professionals, entrepreneurs, retirees, and millionaire capitalists (Li and Teixeira 2007; Castles et al. 2014).

These international migrants are shaping today's world, having economic, socio-cultural, and political impacts on both migrant-sending and migrant-receiving nations. Economically,

international migrants regularly send money to their country of origin in the form of remittances, which helps stimulate and develop economies, especially in poor countries where people often rely on money from relatives abroad to survive (Taylor 1999; Koser 2007; Castles et al. 2014). Retirees and affluent migrants typically accompany investment when they relocate, and they can help create jobs for native workers in economies which lack capital (Croucher 2012). In addition, international migrants also transfer and exchange work skills and technical knowledge. For example, high-skilled transient workers and professionals are acknowledged for their role in financial and business knowledge transfer or exchange from first world cities to the developing world (Beaverstock 1996, 2002, 2005, 2011). Socio-culturally, international migrants transform both origin and destination countries via "social remittances," through the transfer of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, norms, fashion and technology (Levitt 1998; Hugo 2006, 2007; Koser 2007; Castles et al. 2014). Politically, greater human mobility combined with more frequent movement between international borders, especially illegal or irregular movements, can challenge individual nation's sovereignty and security (Moses 2006; Koser 2010). National political agendas can also be influenced by ethnic voting blocs compromised of immigrant voters (Tichenor 2002; Koser 2007). Accordingly, countries are sometimes encouraged to tighten migration and citizenship policies because of anti-immigrant sentiment (Kivisto and Faist 2010). Yet, some countries wanting to fill labor gaps and attract foreign direct investment (FDI), may be encouraged to lower migration barriers for both manual laborers and highly-skilled workers (Hugo 2006, 2007; Li and Teixera 2007; Javorcik et al. 2011).

Thus, international migration is evolving, and although long-standing and traditional migration flows from developing countries to Western industrialized ones persist, new migration trends and patterns have emerged in recent decades (Koser 2007; Castles et al. 2014). For example, temporary, repeated and circular migration has expanded, eroding the dichotomy between origin and destination countries (Hugo 2006, 2007; Koser 2007; Castles et al. 2014).

Moreover, the fastest growing type of migration is the movement of relatively privileged persons from rich developed countries in the Global North, that is countries in North America and Western Europe, to poorer less developed countries in the Global South, such as countries in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia (Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Croucher 2012; Castles et al. 2014; Hayes 2014, 2015). Additionally, an increasing amount of affluent Japanese long-term tourists and retirees are relocating to destinations in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia and Thailand (Toyota 2006; Miyazaki 2008; Ono 2008; Toyota and Xiang 2012), and the movement of wealthy Chinese migrants to Thailand is also on the rise (Fernquest and Wangkiat 2016).

Outline of Literature Review

In the remainder of this chapter, I define international migration and explore the economic and social factors driving and influencing highly skilled international migration. Second, I define transnationalism, and investigate the type of transnational activities migrants undertake. Third, I review some of the research involving issues related to expatriate acculturation and segregation. Then, I define postcolonialism and examine how postcolonial approaches have previously been used to investigate expatriation to the Global South.

Defining International Migration

Migration means human movement from one place to another, involving the crossing of some type of political or administrative boundary for a certain minimum period of time (Boyle et al. 1998; Castles 2000; Castles et al. 2014). Internal migration indicates a move within a country, such as relocating from one province to another, whereas international migration refers to the crossing of international borders (Newbold 2010; Castles et al. 2014). However, these broad distinctions are somewhat misleading, as they do not account for spatial scale or characteristics of a specific move. For example, international migration could involve a short distant move between

socio-culturally similar regions, whereas internal migration could stretch large distances and bring together people of different backgrounds and culture (Castles 2000; Castles et al. 2014).

Furthermore, cross-border movement does not always entail migration, as tourist and business people account for a large portion of internal and international movements (Castles 2000). Thus, most governments distinguish between short-term visitors and long-term immigrants, with the latter typically being individuals who stay at least 12 months within a specific country, usually for work or study (Castles 2000). Accordingly, the United Nations define international migrants as persons who reside outside of their home country for at least one year (Koser 2007).

Contemporary International Migration Trends and Movements

According to the United Nation's (2013) definition of international migrant, more people move away from their country of birth than ever before. In 1965 only 75 million people were classified as international migrants. By 1990, the number rose to 154 million, and by 2000 it rose to 175 million. In 2013, approximately 232 million people moved internationally – roughly 3.2 percent of the world's population (United Nations 2013). This demonstrates that international migration has grown considerably, more than doubling in the last half century (Kivisto and Faist 2010).

When considering macro international migration trends, three broad categories of movement exist: 1) flows among developed countries; 2) flows linking developing and developed countries; and 3) flows between developing countries (Newbold 2010). Flows among developed countries (i.e. from Global North to Global North) account for 23% of migration movement (United Nations 2013). Movement from developing to developed countries (i.e. from Global South to Global North) increased dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s (Castles 2000; Koser 2007; Newbold 2010), and currently accounts for approximately 35% of contemporary international migrant movement (United Nations 2013). Throughout the latter half of the 20th

century, migration from the developing to developed world was the primary global migration trend (Koser 2007). However, recent data indicates flows between developing countries (i.e. from Global South to Global South) are now as common as flows from developing to developed countries, currently accounting for 36% of total migrant movement (United Nations 2013). In addition, international migration from the developed to the developing world (i.e. Global North to Global South) remains relatively low, making-up approximately 6% of total international migration movement (United Nations 2013). Nevertheless, this flow is significant because it is mostly dominated by high-skilled professionals who fill labor gaps, transfer knowledge, are accompanied with foreign direct investment, and greatly impact newly industrialized countries economically (Findlay and Salt 1989; Beaverstock 2011). Culturally, Western expatriates' consumerist lifestyles are reputed to influence the shopping and consumption behaviors of well-to-do individuals in developing countries; conversely expatriate consumption and lifestyle can also heighten the sense of inequality and injustice among the poor living in the Global South, who realize they cannot access the same benefits and lifestyle afforded to Westerners living in their country (Findlay and Salt 1989; Mignolo 2011).

Causes of International Migration

Fundamentally, social and economic factors drive migration, yet ultimately reasons for migration vary, since decisions to move are most often decided at the individual or household level (Newbold 2010; Bohra-Mishra and Massey 2011). For example, Howard (2008, 2009a), who utilized participant observation and online surveys, examined the push and pull factors that influenced Western expatriates and retirees to relocate to Thailand. He claims the Thai lifestyle, climate, low-cost of living, and availability of attractive sexual partners are the most influential pull factors for relocation to Thailand (2008, 2009). Similarly, Ó Brien (2009, 2010) utilized in-depth interviews to study expatriate chefs and restaurateurs in Thailand, focusing on migration push and pull factors. He found most expatriates first arrive to Thailand as tourists and relocate

for lifestyle reasons, but the most common reasons for moving to Thailand was "love of Thailand" and opportunism (2009, 50). Ó Brien (2009, 2010) also found negative push factors influenced expatriation to Thailand, which he labels "critical events," such as a divorce, professional burn-out, or failed business in their home country. Although Ó Brien and Howard's studies were similar, the push and pull factors they discovered are slightly different, showing that motivations for international migration vary depending on the individual.

Nevertheless, many works dedicated to explaining the macro determinants of international migration are influenced by neoclassical theory of migration, which primarily focuses on size of the labor force, wage differentiation, and employment opportunities (Boyle et al. 1998; Hugo 2007; Koser 2007; Kivisto and Faist 2010; Newbold 2010; Skeldon 2014). One important aspect neoclassical theory emphasizes is the tendency of people to move from low-income areas to high-wage areas (Castles 2000). Kivisto and Faist (2010, 37) explain, "when there is a surplus of labor, and wages are consequently depressed in one place, a segment of the surplus population is attracted to a destination characterized by labor shortages and, due to the demand for labor, higher wages." Simply put, differences in wages and the availability of work, from one place to another, drive people to move. This reasoning or approach is sometimes referred to as the "push-pull" theory, because causes of migration are a combination of "push factors" (i.e. not enough jobs, low living standards, etc.) and "pull factors" (i.e. job opportunities, better living conditions, etc.) (Castles and Miller 2009).

Globalization and the Drivers of High-Skilled Labor Migration

Indeed, international migration is a key component of globalization (Castles 2000; Koser 2007), and globalization has become an accepted lens for analyzing contemporary international migration trends and movement (Castles and Miller 2009). As Stiglitz (2003, 9) explains, globalization has brought "the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world which

has been brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and people across borders." Thus, globalization makes international migration more feasible, first due to technology advances, and second because nation-states reduce trade and migration barriers, which allows multinational corporations to enter their country, subsequently leading to the arrival of high-skilled laborers.

Advances in communication and transportation technology are key elements of globalization which help drive international migration (Castles 2000; Castells 2010; Schiller and Salazar 2013). For example, satellite television, cell phones, and the Internet increases global linkages, and allows people to know about life in other parts of the world, consequently making people aware of social and economic disparities (Koser 2007). Moreover, due to cheaper air travel, people can move farther, and travel back and forth between countries more easily (Castles 2008). However, despite decreasing costs of communication and transportation, the majority of the world can still not afford to travel or move internationally (Koser 2007), thus middle-income individuals and groups are the most likely to depart their country of origin (Castles 2008). The exception is forced migration, which involves refugees or displaced persons, such as those who flee their homes because of persecution or environmental change/disaster (Koser 2007; Newbold 2010; Betts 2013; Castles et al. 2014).

Government trade and migration policies also help shape the new geographies of international migration. For example, the removal of hard borders inside the European Union (EU) allows freer movement of workers within the region (Koser 2007; Favell 2008). In Southeast Asia, Singapore's economy relies on the importation of high-skilled labor, and consequently the island nation attracts professional workers by providing them privileged immigration status (Beaverstock 2005, 2011). Similarly, Hong Kong requires foreign labor, and makes special immigration exceptions for qualified professionals, mostly those who work in

finance and business (Findlay and Skeldon 1996; Castles and Miller 2009). Together, countries throughout South East Asia, have made it relatively easy for corporations to have access to foreign skilled labor.

Additionally, countries such as China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, have implemented economic policies which promote skilled labor migration (Khoser and Salt 1997; Chia 2006; Kaur 2010a, 2010b). Through developing infrastructure or providing tax breaks, governments can attract foreign direct investment and entice multinational corporations to relocate (Mahroum 2000; Jensen 2006). Consequently, highly skilled professionals leave traditional industrial countries in the Global North in order to relocate and operate production facilities in the new world cities located in the Global South (Findlay and Skeldon 1996; Jensen 2006; Ewers 2007). Moreover, foreign direct investment in developing countries typically necessitates high-skilled labor, which developing countries often lack, in order to train local talent and ensure the quality standards of the home company (Mahroum 2000; Jensen 2006; Malecki and Ewers 2007).

Thus, international mobility of highly skilled migrants or expatriates is perceived as a key ingredient to knowledge transfer, and expatriates play a critical role in the sharing of technical or financial expertise and know-how in foreign countries (Beaverstock 2002; Athukorala 2006; Malecki and Ewers 2007). Undoubtedly, the drivers behind highly skilled migration are complex and interconnected. Developing countries desire foreign direct investment and knowledge transfer, and multinational corporations want to expand into foreign markets. Therefore, developing countries create trade and migration policies to encourage investment. Once multinational corporations enter a new market, they usually prefer technical skill or managerial expertise to be transferred from the home company. Overall, economic globalization and international business expansion is driving the mobility of highly-skilled migrants.

Defining Transnationalism

The processes of globalization, increased global mobility, including high-skilled labor migration, help facilitate the development of transnationalism (Favell et al. 2007; De Haas 2010; Castles et al. 2014). Schiller et al. (1992) originally presented the concept by stating:

> A new type of migrating population is emerging… Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field… We call this new conceptualization "transnationalism,"… We have defined transnationalism as the process in which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin to their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated "transmigrants." Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders.

Similarly, Mitchell (2000, 853) defines transnationalism as, "an ongoing series of cross-border movements in which immigrants develop and maintain numerous economic, political, social and cultural links in more than one nation."

For example, expatriates' continued cross-border activity and exchange between home and host country can lead to the emergence of transnational communities (Portes 1999, 2001; Yeah and Willis 2002; Waldinger 2008). Furthermore, the agency of transnational communities and individuals produce transnational social spaces in global cities (Beaverstock 2005, 2011). Accordingly, scholars have studied the everyday lives and experiences of Western expatriates living in the Global South, examining their transnational activities, which includes maintaining links to home and acculturation or integration strategies.

Expatriate Transnational Activities

An important component of transnationalism is the capacity for migrants to maintain links with their family members, communities, and institutions in their home country (Vertovec 2003). For example, expatriates carry out transnational exchanges, through both economic and social

remittances, which connect countries of destination with countries of origin (Itzigsohn 1995; Castles et al. 2014). Furthermore, expatriates living abroad are able to maintain connectivity to their country of origin through communication technology, high mobility, and domestic practices (Christiansen 2004; Cohen and Sirkeci 2011).

In order to examine transnational communities in China, Yeoh and Willis (2002) conducted in-depth interviews with British and Singaporeans, finding that fast postal services, telephone, and Internet (i.e., email and online newspapers, etc.) played a vital role in maintaining contact with friends and family in the home country. Furthermore, Willis and Yeoh (2002) explain strategies to access home, such as phone cards and English language newspapers, were provided at the workplace as part of the expatriate package.

Similarly, Scott (2004) utilized semi-structured interviews to explore the transnational lives of British expatriates residing in Paris, France. He claims that British expatriates utilize cross-border exchanges and transnational links to minimize culture shock and isolation (2004). For example, Scott (2004) explains that British expatriates maintain links to home through the Internet, and also through British television, newspapers, and radio. Scott (2004, 400) claims, "British media links were an omnipresent feature of expatriate life" because "mother-tongue audio and visual media was seen as relaxing and comforting."

Mobility and the ability to travel back and forth between country of origin and destination also allows expatriates to maintain links to home (Waldinger 2008). Willis and Yeoh (2002) claim British expatriates often undertake trips home in order to see their families or children. Likewise, Scott (2004) states that expatriates, especially new arrivals to Paris, frequently return home to visit friends and family, and often host visitors from the UK. One of Scott's interviewees claimed to go home at least once month, while another said they took trips home regularly during the holidays (2004). Scott claims that physical migration for expatriates rarely

results in the relocating of social lives, and instead expatriates conduct a variety of transnational exchanges, such as hosting visitors from home, and moving back and forth from host country to country of origin (2004).

Additionally, links to home can be produced through every day domestic practices (Tolia-Kelly 2004a, 2004b). For example, Walsh (2006, 2007) immersed herself in Dubai for 18 months and used ethnographic methods (i.e. participant-observation and informal interviews) to examine the everyday lives of British expatriates. Walsh (2006) focuses on one British expatriate woman's experience of living and working in Dubai. Walsh (2006) admits to having reservations of using only one participant, yet argues this approach provides an in-depth and more nuanced understanding of the migration process within everyday life that other approaches do not offer. In regards to links to home, the author claims Jane (the main participant of the article) brought objects from her home country to Dubai, and cleaned her flat frequently in order to recreate her home and establish a sense of "belonging" (2006). Additionally, Walsh (2006) discusses objects and pictures brought from home, and how the participant uses these various items as a coping strategy to maintain a feeling of closeness to her family and friends in Britain. Furthermore, Walsh (2006) claims the feeling of belonging, especially inside the space of one's own home, is important for emotional well-being, and explains many British expatriates are provided relocation allowances so they can move their possessions and recreate home and the feeling of belonging during their expatriate assignment.

Likewise, Scott (2004) explains that his interviewees consumed or utilized various British commodities as a transnational link to home. For example, Scott (2004) states that expatriate homes are often filled with large English video and book collections, as well as keeping and preparing mostly British food. In general, Scott (2004) argues that transnational activities, behavior, and exchanges are used to provide emotional well-being, comfort, and identity resonance. However, Scott (2004) admits that the intensity and regularity of transnational activity

varied according to the individual, and that evidence of some identity transition or evolution exists, thus interviewees usually developed a hybridized position of allegiance between the UK and France.

Scott's findings supports the idea of flexible forms of identity, where identity and positionality can be altered and influenced by mobility (Easthope 2009). Moreover, the emergence of hybrid identities and allegiance to more than one nation-state among immigrants and expatriates challenges the current citizenship model (Faist 2000; Castles 2002). Traditionally, citizenship was intended to be singular and exclusive. However, because of mobility and transnationalism, nation-states are changing laws in order to recognize dual citizenship (Vertovec 1999; Faist 2000; Castles 2002). Faist (2000) argues dual allegiance and dual citizenship can create greater ambivalence among immigrants, thus hindering adaptation and commitment to the country of settlement, while weakening the ties to the country of origin. Portes (1999; 2001) argues dual nationality or citizenship can provide a voice for foreign interests within the country of settlement, by allowing immigrants/expatriates to vote and participate in politics.

In general, transnational links and activities are often embedded in Western expatriates' everyday lives (Beaverstock 2002; Yeoh and Willis 2002). Portes (1999) claims transnational activities provide the following benefits to immigrants/expatriates: 1) through economic transnationalism immigrants can bypass host country discrimination and have more job alternatives and economic mobility, because they can rely on transnational networks to help acquire jobs; 2) political transnationalism allows immigrants to participate in politics, which can empower immigrants by giving them a voice (either in the country of settlement or through continuous participation in politics in the country of origin); 3) cultural transnationalism allows immigrants to retain self-identity, and transmit country of origin culture to their children.

Literature about political transnationalism typically focuses on migrants from poor countries and their potential political impact on host countries in the Global North, as well as their struggle to gain political rights, such as citizenship and the right to vote (Guarnizo 1998, 2003; Levitt 2001a, 2001b; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Smith 2003; Smith 2006). There also exists literature on transnationalism which examines the involvement and impact of migrants, as well as expatriates, on the political happenings in their home country (Kong 1999; Tambiah 2000; López-Guerra 2005; Croucher 2009a, 2009b; Boccagni 2011). Some examples of political transnational activity includes: retaining membership in a political party in one's home country and/or actively participating (voting) in political elections, and following political activities and events (via the media) in one's home country.

However, debates exist about whether transnational activity and continuous identification with the home country impedes immigrant adaptation and integration into the host society (Faist 2000; Vertovec 2003; Castles 2002). Oudenhoven and Ward (2013) argue that transnationalism can lead to biculturalism, where immigrants are integrated into two separate societies (i.e. country of origin and country of settlement), and that some immigrants engage in transnational activities that can facilitate avoiding contact with locals and the host society. Overall, transnationalism and transnational activities provide wider options in life for expatriates that affect ideas, experiences, practices, career paths, citizenship, and identity. Below some of these options are explored through examining Western expatriate acculturation approaches or strategies.

Expatriate Acculturation Strategies

Acculturation was first presented by cultural anthropologist Redfield et al. (1936, 149) and refers to "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups." Berry (1997, 2005, 2008, 2010) stresses two main ideas about acculturation: 1)

acculturation is different from assimilation, as assimilation is one of four strategies within the acculturation framework; and 2) acculturation is "mutual," as it is a process that can impact all groups involved with cross-cultural contact (dominant and non-dominant groups are affected).

Berry (1997) explains that when groups or individuals relocate to a new society they must reestablish their lives and go through the acculturation process. Moreover, Berry (2005) stresses that no individual or group acculturates in the same manner. Berry (2010) explains that two issues are key in appropriate acculturation strategies: 1) the degree to which a person or group wishes to maintain their culture and identity (i.e. cultural maintenance or preservation); and 2) the degree to which a person or group wishes to participate and come into contact with the host society (i.e. partner attractiveness). Based on these two factors, four broad approaches or strategies to acculturation are possible: 1) integration: attraction to the host culture with efforts to preserve one's own cultural norms; 2) assimilation: attraction to the host culture but little attempt to preserve one's own culture; 3) separation: preservation of one's own cultural norms but little attraction to the host culture; 4) marginalization: no preservation of one's own cultural norms and little attraction to the host culture (Berry 1997, 2005, 2008, 2010). Berry (2005, 2010) explains the framework or model assumes that individuals or groups involved in cross-cultural contact have the freedom to choose their acculturation strategy, and admits this is not always the case, especially when dominant groups impose a certain form of acculturation on non-dominant peoples. Moreover, Berry (2010) stresses these strategies are not fixed, as they can change throughout the acculturation process.

When considering the four strategies, most migrant studies show that integration is the most common form of interaction between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds, and other forms of interaction typically fall between assimilation and separation, whereas marginalization is very rare and considered dysfunctional (Berry and Kalin 1995; Berry 2005, 2008, 2010; Schwartz et al. 2010). However, specific research on expatriate experiences

overseas shows that separation is the most common mode of acculturation that emerges, especially when considering the spaces or places expatriates tend to socialize and live. Indeed, Western expatriates typically occupy and frequent physical and social spaces intended for transnational elites or expatriates; spaces where host nationals might be present but the space is predominantly Western or transnational. When referring to spaces frequented by expatriates in China, Yeoh and Willis (2002, 553) write, "While local Chinese may be present, the spaces are clearly not 'Chinese' and social networks are not embedded within local social practices and norms."

In general, expatriates are highly localized, as they choose to restrict their activities to particular areas and places. Beaverstock (2002) notes that expatriates are "bounded" to very tight spaces and often frequent or socialize at the same bars and restaurants. Expatriates are often members of charity groups, fitness clubs or sport organizations, yet host nationals are regularly excluded from these expatriate social networks. Expatriate time and space often revolves around work, bars, and expatriate clubs, especially in developing countries or non-Western places, therefore little interaction with locals occurs outside of work (Ley 2004).

Beaverstock (2002) provides the following reasons for segregation between expatriates and host nationals. First, expatriates possess very different socializing practices than locals, especially in regards to alcohol consumption and sports. For example, Beaverstock (2002) claims expatriate socializing typically centers around drinking beer and watching sporting events such as soccer or rugby in expatriate bars, whereas locals are more likely to socialize and spend time with their families or local networks. Secondly, expatriates tend to live in well-defined expatriate enclaves or zones which segregate them from the local population (Beaverstock 2002, 2011).

Below are expatriate studies which examine specific causes of and strategies for adaptation employed by Western expatriates. For example, Yeoh and Khoo (1998) explored

expatriates everyday lives in Singapore by using questionnaires, participant observation and in-depth interviews. In regards to everyday social lives and acculturation, they assert that Western expatriates initially feel isolated and insecure after relocating to Singapore and, as Walsh (2007) found, attempt to recreate an exclusive social world similar to what they were accustomed to at home. Thus, their social spaces are often times expatriate clubs and community groups (Yeoh and Khoo 1998). However, their respondents claim that diversity of the expatriates combined with a high turnover rate within the expatriate community itself, made it difficult to build strong social networks like those they enjoyed at home (Yeoh and Khoo 1998).

Additionally, participants claimed that language barriers prevented them from socializing with local Singaporeans, as well as expatriates from other countries (i.e. Chinese, Japanese, or Indian expatriates). Likewise, Yeoh and Willis (2002, 2005a, 2005b) claim that exclusive social clubs or expatriate-friendly bars were the main spaces British expatriates frequented while they were in China. Furthermore, they found expatriate interaction with Chinese coworkers was relatively low outside the workplace, because of language, and social and economic differences (Yeoh and Willis 2002). Moreover, segregation between expatriates and locals was reinforced in transnational social spaces, such as expatriate-friendly bars or exclusive expatriate sporting clubs (Yeoh and Willis 2002).

Similarly, Beaverstock (2002, 2005, 2011) examines everyday lives and expatriate social spaces, using surveys and interviews to study British expatriates in Singapore, Hong Kong, and New York. In Singapore, Beaverstock (2011) shows that British expatriate social clubs provide drinking, sporting, and leisure activities, which help reproduce the characteristics of lives and social networks they enjoyed at home, as well as re-affirming identity and sense of community. Thus, Beaverstock (2011) claims expatriate clubs function as transnational social spaces, where expatriates carry out their ordinary and professional everyday lives.

Geographer Sarah Smiley employs surveys and in-depth interviews to study segregation and everyday lives of Western expatriates in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (2010). She indicates that Western expatriates' daily lives are spatially separated from local urban residents (2010). Similar to Beaverstock and Yeoh and Willis, she argues expatriate communities' social activities are confined to a few places, such as the home, exclusive social clubs or expatriate bars (2010). Furthermore, she states Western expatriates desire to live in expatriate zones or areas, and they avoid "local" sections of town because of perceived dangers (2010). Smiley (2010a, 2010b) claims that despite efforts from the government to integrate the city more completely, through legally prohibiting segregation and racial discrimination, expatriates' daily lives, such as living, socializing, and shopping is almost exclusively conducted in expatriate zones which are too expensive for most locals to reside within, thus reinforcing the historical legacy of colonial segregation. Due to the difference in amenities provided between expatriate and local areas, this results in expatriates leading relatively privileged and comfortable lives when compared to their local counterparts (Smiley 2010a, 2010b). Ultimately, Smiley (2010a, 2010b) claims expatriates' everyday segregated lives prevents them from having meaningful interactions with locals, thus limiting their knowledge about the lives and world of Africans.

Fechter (2005, 2007a, 2007b) spent twelve months conducting ethnographic research on Western expatriates in Jakarta, Indonesia. Fechter focuses on public spaces, and how expatriates' daily lives in the city are guided by the desire to avoid the "gaze of the other" (2005). Additionally, Fechter (2005) explains how white expatriates are labeled and called *bule* in public by locals, which is a term for people of European descent, and can be used in a neutral or derogatory manner. Therefore, in order to avoid being "othered," expatriates utilize various practices to avoid locals, such as wearing sunglasses and using a personal stereo in public, avoiding public transport, and using taxis even for short walking distances (2005, 2007). Furthermore, expatriates frequent exclusive or private shops, restaurants, and clubs, and often live

in high-rise apartments which shelter them from the local street environments (2005). Fechter's findings show that white expatriates actively self-segregate to limit unpleasant interactions with locals, thus implying that separation is the preferred acculturation strategy for expatriates in Jakarta.

Sociologist James Farrer has spent over 14 years conducting ethnographic research on expatriates in Shanghai, China; his work has mainly concentrated on expatriate social spaces, night life, and interracial sexuality and intermarriage (2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011). In regards to acculturation, Farrer (2008b) claims Western expatriates live cosmopolitan lifestyles; and although many Western men learn to speak Chinese fluently and intermarry with local Chinese, they mostly socialize with other Western expatriates (Farrer 2008b). He shows Western expatriates can integrate into Chinese society to certain degree, yet ultimately his findings show expatriates tend to self-segregate and congregate in exclusive expatriate social circles and spaces (2008b).

When examining everyday lives and acculturation strategies, Western expatriates tend to create and frequent exclusive expatriate or transnational social spaces (Fechter 2007a, 2007b). Although moderate interaction occurs between expatriates and locals, most expatriates choose to separate themselves from their host society, and live a unique transnational lifestyle when compared to their host or local population (Fechter 2007a, 2007b). Indeed, international migrants often create their own territorial social spaces within the cities they reside. Similarly, Western expatriates' everyday practices and social activities produce transnational social spaces. As Ley notes, "the social geography of the transnational elite may be highly localized, restricted to particular territories… the transnational capitalist class are island hopping from one expatriate enclave to another" (Ley 2004, 157). Thus, studies of everyday transnational lives reviewed above provide insights into how expatriates self-segregate and use separation strategies in order to cope and adjust to foreign environments.

The reasons expatriates use separation as an acculturation strategy is complex. Issues such as perceived dangers and attempts to avoid being "othered" can motivate expatriates to avoid contact with locals (Fechter 2007a, 2007b). Furthermore, expatriates who want to establish a sense of comfort and belonging, as well as reaffirm their sense of identity and community may utilize separation as a mode of acculturation (Butcher 2009). Differences of language, income, education, social class, and socializing practices also play a vital role in the lack of interaction between expatriates and host nationals (Yeoh and Willis 2002; Castles et al. 2014).

Therefore, expatriates often revert to seeking friendships with members of the same ethnic group or from people who possess a similar sociocultural background (Cohen 1977; Beaverstock 2005). Although it appears that expatriates typically socialize mostly with other expatriates, some studies hint to other forms of acculturation. For example, Erik Cohen (1977, 1984, 1986) utilized ethnographic approaches to study expatriates and expatriate enclaves in Bangkok, Thailand. Cohen's main study group in Bangkok was non-traditional expatriates or what he labeled as "dropouts" or "marginals," individuals who left their home country and relocated to Thailand as a lifestyle choice (Cohen1984).

Cohen argued the "dropout" expatriates were a third group of foreigners, and included individuals who did not embrace or associate themselves with the expatriate community or the host society (Cohen 1984). Cohen claimed most of the "dropout" expatriates were heavy drinkers, drug users, and pursuers of sexual pleasure (Cohen 1984). Cohen's study is unique as it is one of the few studies of non-traditional or SIEs (although Cohen did not utilize the term self-initiated expatriate). Furthermore, it is one of the few studies where Western expatriates choose marginalization rather than integration as an acculturation strategy. However, Sussman (2000, 2002) claims expatriates with previous overseas experience are more adapt to cultural adjustment or assimilation, and they generally interact more with locals. Additionally, self-initiated or locally hired expatriates are reportedly more inclined to interact with those of the host culture (Thang et

al. 2002). Additionally, according to Farrer (2008a), intermarriage between expatriates and local Chinese has increased dramatically in recent years, and more expatriates are becoming long-term settlers within China, and connecting themselves into local society. So, despite literature showing expatriates mainly choose to separate themselves from locals or non-Westerners, exceptions exist, and other forms of acculturation may become more common, especially with an increase in self-initiated expatriation.

In general, Western expatriates are assumed to be vehicles or means of cultural exchange and the drivers of westernization and globalization in developing countries. Yet, according to the literature, Western expatriates generally tend to associate with individuals or groups that possess similar socioeconomic backgrounds or status. Furthermore, since most Western expatriates often confine themselves to exclusive expatriate spaces and zones, their interaction with locals is quite limited, thus meaningful cultural exchanges between expatriates (at least traditional assigned expatriates) and local citizens is relatively limited. However, the ability to interact with locals and develop long-lasting friendships with host-nationals is considered a key factor in successful cultural adjustment overseas (Mendenhall and Oddou 1985; Choi 2001; Chen et al. 2011).

Postcolonialism as a critical interpretive approach

To understand the lives and experiences of Western SIEs in Bangkok, Thailand, I also employ a postcolonial theoretical approach to much of my analyses. Blunt and McEwan (2003) claim postcolonialism is a contested term, but is usually associated with two main meanings. First, postcolonialism refers to the period after colonization. Second, it refers to the "critical aftermath" related to the cultures and discourses influenced by colonialism. Accordingly Lester (2012, 1) a postcolonial approach focuses on the processes and ways, "[in] which the beliefs and behaviors of the colonial past are carried into the postcolonial present." Moreover, postcolonialism is concerned with, "the diverse, uneven and contested impact of colonialism on the cultures of

colonizing and colonized peoples, in terms of the ways in which relations, practices and representations are reproduced or transformed between the past and present" (Yeoh 2009). For Hall (1996, 247), postcolonialism is about the "deconstruction-reconstruction" of power relations, which occur after decolonization, with emphasis on inequalities and the continuities from the colonial to imperial relations (cited in Fechter and Walsh 2010). In short, postcolonial theory is a critical approach to examine power relations, both material and discursive forms, which help maintain colonial and neocolonial legacies (Radcliffe 2005).

Lester (2012, 1) argues that scholars engaged in postcolonial studies should, "research specifically the people, practices, relationships, and places that allow for the active repetition of colonial patterns of Western privilege in the wider world." Moreover, Lester (2012, 2) claims postcolonialism is useful to examine Western expatriates, because they are the "closest colonial progenitor," and many expatriates live and travel through non-Western spaces, or work in regions which were previously colonized. However, places never colonized may still experience neocolonialism; therefore, as Coles and Walsh (2010) stress, postcolonial analysis should not be limited to the once-colonized. Thus, many scholars employ a postcolonial approach to critically examine Western expatriates living in the developing world, with emphasis on continuities from the colonial period to present imperial relations. For example, Smiley's (2010a) study, already discussed above, utilizes a postcolonial approach to examine the persistence of colonial segregation in Dar es Salaam. More postcolonial research, however, addresses other topics such as class hierarchy and diversity among Western expatriates (Yeoh and Willis 2005; Farrer 2010a), whiteness and identity (Bhatia and Ram 2001; Fechter 2005; Fechter and Walsh 2010; Leonard 2010; Rogaly and Taylor 2010), and "colonial imagination" (Coles and Walsh 2010; Korpela 2010).

Postcolonial approaches can also be used to examine expatriate integration with locals in the host country. For example, Farrer's (2010b) study focuses on Western expatriates who have

settled in Shanghai for more than five years, examining "narratives of emplacement," which describe how contemporary expatriates situate or position themselves in continuity with earlier expatriates. Farrer (2010b) finds that two main groups exist. First, are the "Shanghailanders" who desire to be more like the colonial settlers of the past, which socially and spatially separated themselves from local Chinese. Second, are the "New Shanghainese" who attempt to integrate themselves more into Chinese society, yet find themselves excluded. Farrer (2010b) claims the narratives show expatriates are diverse with varying possibilities of temporalities and positions.

Leonard (2010) examines white British expatriates in Hong Kong exploring how identities and relations between expatriates and Chinese have changed since the 1997 handover from British to Chinese control. Leonard (2010) explains that when white British expatriates arrive in Hong Kong they inherit identities which were constructed during British rule. Subsequently some expatriates embrace the "traditional" understandings of Britishness and whiteness, and pursue and perform lifestyles of privilege which resemble those of previous colonial officials. Leonard (2010) claims British expatriates sustain notions of social hierarchy through their everyday lives, especially at work. However, similar to Farrer's (2010b) findings, some expatriates question and reject the legacy of attitudes and identities which were formed during the colonial period, and imagine a new Hong Kong were social hierarchies do not exist (Leonard 2010). Furthermore, Leonard (2010) notes the meaning and privilege associated with "whiteness" is being challenged in postcolonial Hong Kong, mainly because many new expatriates are working on local salaries and live a less privileged lifestyle compared to the British expatriates of the colonial period.

Another concept related to postcolonialism is the "colonial imagination." (Spencer 1997). Korpela (2010) investigates the "colonial imagination" of Westerners living in Varanasi, India. Korpela (2010, 1299) defines "colonial imagination" as "how those involved in the colonial project defined the colonized lands and people, and such an imagination was a very ethnocentric

project: the West defined itself against the colonial 'other'." Korpela (2010) claims India was portrayed negatively in colonial discourse, yet contemporary Westerners in Varanasi view colonial India in positive terms, but negatively define present and future India. Korpela (2010) explains that Westerners are attracted to the "authentic" India of the past, thus they romanticize traditional Indian culture. However, Korpela (2010) argues Westerners view of "authentic" India was constructed under Westerners terms, thereby denying Indian people their own voice. Furthermore, despite romanticizing Indian culture, Korpela (2010) claims Westerners exclude or separate themselves from the Indians they encounter in contemporary Varanasi. Moreover, colonial beliefs about Westerners having strong work ethics and Indians being lazy continues despite romanticized views of India's past. Korpela (2010) finds that although Westerners take interest in Indian culture on the surface, the negative views and hierarchical practices from the colonial period persist.

Overall, as evident in the above studies, postcolonialism can be used to examine the influence and continuity of the colonial past (or the perception of the colonial past) on the contemporary lives of both expatriates and locals living in the Global South. Fechter and Walsh (2010) explain that expatriates relate to the colonial past in varied ways; therefore, some embrace their colonial identity and attempt to recreate colonial lifestyles, while others reject or deny colonial legacies. Expatriates who live and work in the "contact zones" of the Global South come into contact with people of different nationalities, as well as those from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, from poor low-skilled workers such as taxi drivers and domestic workers, to wealthy high-skilled professionals engaged in business and finance (Fechter and Walsh 2010). Postcolonial approaches provides the means to investigate and interpret interactions between expatriates and various individuals and groups.

With regards to Thailand, although never being "officially" colonized, similar to China, the kingdom was under foreign domination by European powers throughout much of the 18th and

19th century (Jackson 2004, 2007; Jackson and Harrison 2010). Indeed, during the age of imperialism Thailand was coerced to provide many economic and political concessions to the West, and signed over 13 uneven trade and administrative treaties in order to avoid direct colonization (Jackson and Harrison 2010). Namely, Britain and France forced Thailand to give up many aspects of its autonomy, such as control over taxes, tariffs, and trade (mostly in relation to the timber industry), as well as judicial authority (Winichakul 2011). Moreover, Thailand was forced to concede large territories to both Britain and France, and was subsequently spared from direct colonization in order to serve as a "buffer zone" between the two rival European powers (Strate 2015).

Thus, historically, instead of being a completely independent state, Thailand was a semi-colony. Loos (2006, 2) defines a semi-colony as a country whose status is between a completely sovereign state and a colony, and is, "neither fully under the authority of a foreign power nor completely in control of its own population or territory." Additionally, in order to gain respect from European powers and preserve independence, the Thai monarchs sought out Western advisors in the 19th century, which led to the creation of Western-style postal services, police and military forces, as well as modernized legal and administration systems (Winichakul 2011). Until the 1930's, Western advisors maintained strong influence over the kingdom's political and international affairs, which eventually led to democratic changes in the Kingdom (Jackson and Harrison 2010).

Therefore, despite never being formerly colonized, Thailand was heavily influenced by Western powers, and its colonial experience resembled that of other formerly colonized places. Accordingly, due to Thailand's semi-colonial past, a postcolonial approach was warranted and utilized to examine if and how colonial attitudes and practices were perpetuated by Western SIEs through their daily lives and interactions with local Thais and other migrant groups. In the next

chapter I discuss the methods I utilized, provide maps of the study area, and discuss the characteristics of participants in this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

For this study, I was concerned with the everyday life, activities and experiences of Western SIEs living and working in Bangkok, Thailand. Accordingly, I utilized a qualitative approach to the data collection, and thus employed participant observation combined with convenience interviews, as well as semi-structured interviews. The goal of this study was to address the following research questions:

1a. What are the factors that influence Westerners to expatriate and live in Bangkok, Thailand?

1b. What are the implications of Westerners expatriating to Bangkok, Thailand?

2a. How do U.S. and U.K. SIEs spatially integrate with the Thai population?

2b. What type of daily activities do SIEs carryout after expatriating to Bangkok, Thailand?

3a. How do SIEs maintain economic, social and political ties with their country of origin?

3b. How do transnational activities help SIEs maintain their Western cultural identity?

4a. How do SIEs economically, politically and socially integrate themselves into Thai society?

4b. What factors impede Western SIEs' integration into Thai society?

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the rational for utilizing qualitative inquiry as my methodological approach. Next, I provide an overview of the main study area, and a description of the research participants from the study group. Then, I describe how I collected data in the field with attention given to procedures related to participant observation and interviewing. Afterwards, I explain the steps used to code and analyze the data. Finally, I conclude by defining positionality, and I discuss how my positionality affected the research process.

Qualitative Methods

In this section, I differentiate between qualitative and quantitative inquiry, and I explain why a qualitative approach is appropriate for interrogating and exploring the everyday lives and experiences of Western SIEs.

Why Qualitative Inquiry?

Qualitative research is mostly concerned with understanding human phenomena; more specifically, qualitative research is associated with the collection, interpretation and analysis of human experiences and human environments (Winchester 2005; Martin 2010). Comparatively, quantitative research focuses more on testing hypothesizes and theories, and typically provides insight about large populations (Martin 2010). Furthermore, quantitative research can be used to make predictions or generalizations about present and future populations and events (Delyser 2008; Martin 2010). However, qualitative researchers typically recognize individual experiences vary depending on place and situation; therefore, qualitative researchers do not necessarily seek to provide generalizations rather they seek an in-depth, valid account of a specific situation, place, or phenomenon that can be compared with other similar research. (Winchester 2005). Consequently, qualitative research is generally considered more interpretive when compared to quantitative research (Pile 1991), and while quantitative research may sometimes be regarded as

objective, qualitative researchers openly acknowledge bias, personal subjectivity, and partiality, considering these aspects through the research process (Crang 2002; Winchester 2005).

Qualitative research promotes a particular approach for asking questions and thinking about human phenomena, asking open-ended research questions beginning with what, how, and why (Hoffman 2007; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2011). Qualitative research approaches are typically "inductive" in nature; therefore, qualitative researchers allow their collected data to "speak" and their findings to "emerge" (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2011). Thus, qualitative data is often made-up of words and texts, and qualitative researchers seek to create critical understandings of social life and processes (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2004). Most importantly, qualitative researchers study, examine and attempt to understand meaning. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, 4) write, "Qualitative researchers are after meaning. The social meaning people attribute to their experiences, circumstances, and situations, as well as the meaning people embed into texts and other objects, are the focus of qualitative research."

Accordingly, in this study I aim to understand the meaning related to group and individual experiences, rather than to test theories or to make generalizations about large populations. Overall, qualitative research methods can be used to provide in-depth insight and understandings about human phenomena; thus, this study's aim is to provide a valid understanding of U.S. and U.K. SIEs living and working in Bangkok, Thailand.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is a qualitative method where the researcher gathers data about people or a group in their natural setting or environment (Spradley 1980; Kearns 2005; Cresswell 2007; Watson and Till 2010). Therefore, participant observation often requires immersion, where researchers are involved with the everyday life and practices of the people being studied — such participant observation is often referred to as ethnography (Emerson et al. 1995; Jorgenson 1989;

Herbert 2000; Megoran 2006; Cresswell 2007). My purpose in participant observation was to learn about SIEs from their point-of-view. Hence, one could argue the central goal of participant observation is not to study people, but to learn from people (Spradley 1980).

Participant observation requires not only close observation but also detailed written note-taking of activities and practices. Unlike other methods such as interviews or focus groups, participant observation examines what people do and how they live, instead of focusing on what people say or claim to do (Herbert 2000). Furthermore, when compared to interviews and focus groups, participant observation is different because it requires a long period of time in the field, which allows new topics, issues, and questions to emerge (Emerson et al. 1995; Herbert 2000). Through long-term observation and participation with a particular study group, participant observation provides researchers with distinct data (yet complementary data to methods such as interviews and focus groups). Therefore, participant observation provides unique insights about human experiences, meaning, and culture, which cannot be obtained through other methods.

Interviews

In interviewing, the interviewer, elicits information through verbal exchanges with another person, the interviewee (Dunn 2005; Longhurst 2008). Interviewing is typically conducted face-to-face, and due to its popularity and widespread use, interviewing is sometimes taken for granted, and considered simple and straightforward; yet, interviewing is complex, as it entails much more than two people simply exchanging words or having a talk (Dunn 2005; McDowell 2010).

Successful interviewing and interview procedures requires meticulous planning and preparation, plus a considerable amount of time. First, researchers must decide on the aim or at least the general topic they wish to explore and investigate (Weiss 1994; Patton 2002). Then, researchers must formulate good interview questions or create an interview guide (Weiss 1994;

Patton 2002; Dunn 2005; Longhurst 2008; Jackson and Russell 2010). Additionally, researchers must tactfully and respectfully negotiate convenient meeting times and places to conduct interviews (Dunn 2005; Longhurst 2008; Jackson and Russell 2010).

Interviews help researchers capture a view of the world from another person's perspective, and document individual experiences and perceptions through the voice and terminology of those being interviewed (Patton 2002). Interviews may provide insight about relationships, challenges and everyday life (Weiss 1994). Most importantly, interviews allow researchers to recognize that people can experience and interpret the same events and situations differently (McGuirk and O'Neill 2005), and these different realities and interpretations vary greatly among people because of their unique blend of class, ethnicity, age and sexuality (Dunn 2005). Furthermore, interviews provide researchers insight into people's emotions, thoughts and feelings (McDowell 2010). Likewise, they offer insight about interior happenings, since researchers can study how events and experiences affect the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of their participants (Weiss 1994).

Study Area and Participants

In this section, I discuss the characteristics of the study area and participants. As mentioned in the introduction, my main study area was the tourist and foreign residential zones located in central Bangkok, which is concentrated along the key thoroughfare of Sukhumvit road (See Figure 1: Map of Participant Observation Areas below for reference), which is also the same route as Bangkok's BTS Skytrain (the BTS Skytrain is a monorail system which is situated directly above Sukhumvit road). In the following subsection, I provide an overview of Thailand, with special attention given to the main study area in central Bangkok.

Study Area

Thailand is a developing country located in mainland Southeast Asia. Moreover, Thailand is a renowned tourist destination, known for its warm climate, low cost of living, vibrant culture, temples, beaches, as well as affable and hospitable people (Cohen 2001). Thailand has a population of around 67 million, with approximately 13% of Chinese descent. Similar to other countries in Southeast Asia, people of Chinese ancestry are concentrated in the capital, and they dominate both business and government (Howard 2008, 2009a). Thailand is predominately a Buddhist country in which approximately 95% of the population claims Theravada Buddhism as their main religion. Islam is the second largest religion in Thailand, and although Bangkok has a moderate Muslim presence (around 18% of the total Muslim population lives in the capital), the majority of Muslims are concentrated in the southernmost provinces (Knodel et al. 1999). Thai society is considerably stratified, and reportedly has the greatest wealth gap in the world, with approximately 1% of the population controlling 67% of the wealth (Heidler 2018).

The capital, Bangkok, is a primate city, which dominates the Thai kingdom, both politically and economically. A primate city is defined as a city which is two to three times larger and more significant than the next largest city within a country (Jefferson 1989). The city itself is huge and sprawling, dominated by major roads, which help link the center of the city to its periphery (Cohen and Neal 2012). The most important road and well-known thoroughfare is Sukhumvit Road, which runs from the city center to the outskirts of town (Cohen and Neal 2012). The most inner-city area of Sukhumvit houses many tourist facilities and hotels, and includes restaurants, shopping malls, travel agencies, massage parlors, coffee shops, bars, and some of Bangkok's most popular sex entertainment centers (Howard 2010; Cohen and Neal 2012).

The main tourist area of Sukhumvit also contains many large upper-end residential buildings, which are mostly inhabited foreign expatriates and affluent Thais (Howard 2010;

Cohen and Neal 2012). This core tourist and expatriate enclave is often referred to as "lower Sukhumvit," which stretches from *soi* 2 to *soi* 33 (*soi* is the Thai word for a side street or alleyway) or between Nana Skytrain station to the Asoke Skytrain station (see Figure 2a: Map of Participant Observation Sites in lower Sukhumvit for reference). However, in recent years new housing developments which attract Western expatriate residents have developed along the Sukhumvit Skytrain route, reaching as far east as the Bearing Skytrain station, and beyond. Accordingly, Western style housing and amenities have slowly spread from lower Sukhumvit to the east along the Sukhumvit Skytrain route. Thus, in recent years, many Western expatriates can be found living near and around Skytrain stations in areas such as Phrakanong, On Nut, and Bearing. This section of Sukhumvit is typically referred to as "upper Sukhumvit" (see Figure 2b: Map of Participant Observation Sites in upper Sukhumvit for reference). These areas could be considered as "new" expatriate areas, as they were previously occupied mostly by middle-class and working class Thais. Therefore, the lower-cost of living combined with the convenience of the BTS Skytrain for intercity travel has attracted Westerners to live in the "upper Sukhumvit" areas.

Western expatriates also live in other areas of central Bangkok, especially along the Silom Skytrain route which provides transportation for the Silom and Sathorn areas. Additionally, some Western expatriates, with the financial means, are located in large housing estates located in the suburbs, in areas such as Nonthaburi, Suan Luang, and Samut Prakarn. So altogether, no specific area exists which is solely occupied by Western expatriates. Instead, expatriates are dispersed throughout the capital, mostly congregating and living in areas which provide Western style amenities. However, as detailed above, the majority of Western expatriates are concentrated in "lower Sukhumvit," with another substantial number of expatriates living in "new" expatriate zones which have formed in "upper Sukhumvit" along the eastern Sukhumvit Skytrain route. The

map below, as well as Figures 2a and 2b, show the main tourist and expatriate zones located in Bangkok, Thailand, which served as my main study area.

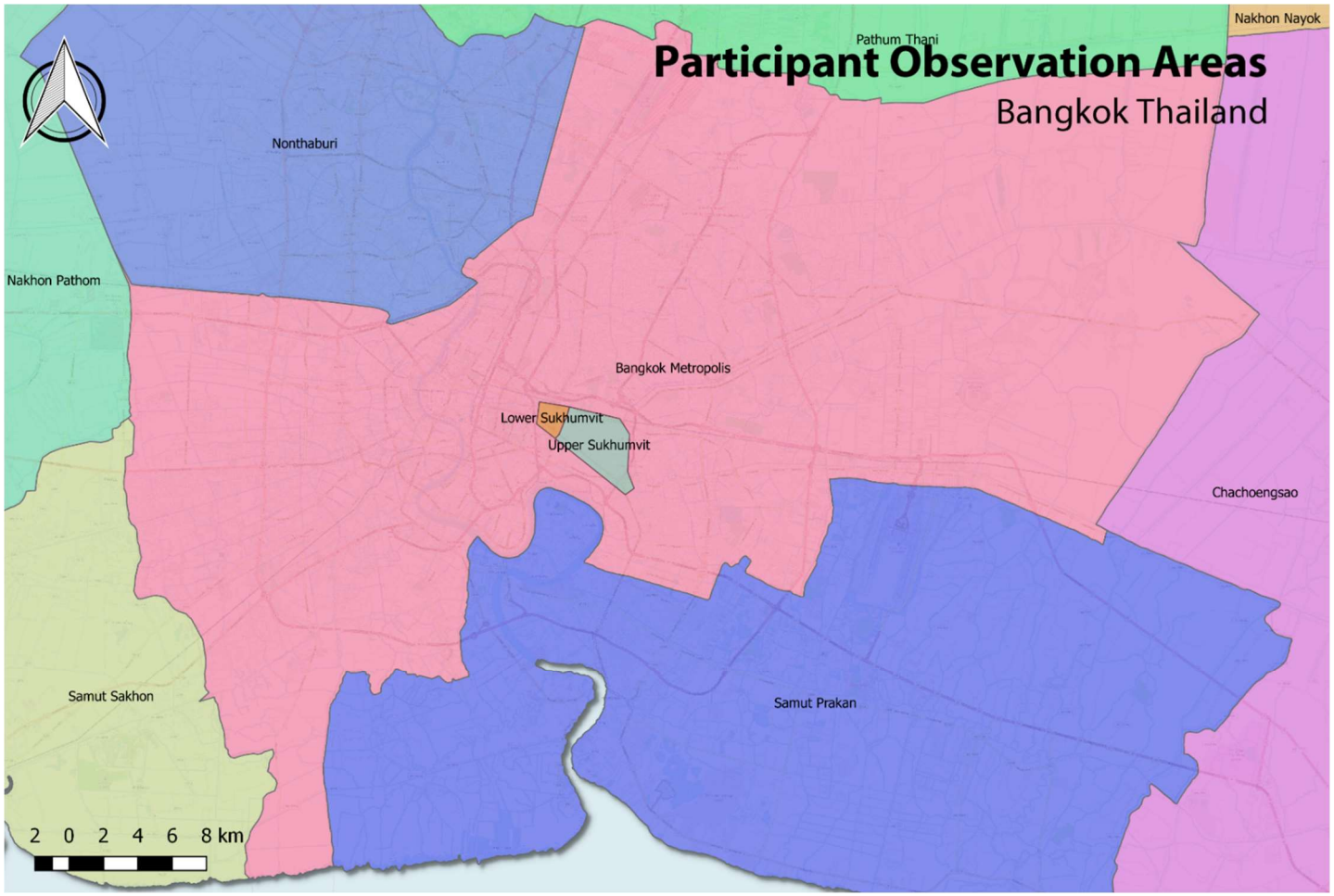


Figure 1. Participant Observation Areas. (Map by Jamey Voorhees)

Characteristics of Westerners in Thailand

Westerners or *farang*, which means white foreigner in Thai, are a heterogeneous group in Thailand. They are adults typically 20 and over, and come from diverse social-economic backgrounds, possessing different levels of education, and are employed in various occupations (Wilson 2008). Furthermore, it is difficult to estimate the exact number of Westerners residing in Thailand, because official statistics are unreliable, as they fail to count individuals who do not register with their respective embassies, and many Westerners live in Thailand under illegal immigration status (Howard 2008, 2009a). However, the most agreed upon estimate is 100,000 Western residents, including "whites" from non-Western regions, such as Latin America, Russia and Eastern Europe (Howard 2009a).

Howard's study (2009a) in Thailand sampled 1003 Western expatriates. He found: 1) the average age of a Western expatriate is 43; 2) the average length of stay in Thailand is 3.5 years; 3) the UK and US are the most common nationalities at 30% and 29% respectively; 4) the large majority of Westerners (96%) are male; 4) most are well educated with more than 60% having a bachelor's degree or higher degree; 5) over 50% have a live-in Thai partner or spouse (Howard 2009a). Moreover, approximately 55% of Western expatriates reside in Bangkok (Howard 2009a). In the next section, I will discuss the characteristics of participants in this study.

Characteristics of the Participants

Between 2014 and 2016, I conducted 50 semi-structured interviews with Western SIEs (see appendix I), and recorded the interviews using a Sony digital voice recorder. Specifically, I conducted semi-structured interviews with Western self-initiated expatriates that had at least one-year living experience in Bangkok, Thailand. Furthermore, these participants came from the U.S. and the U.K. exclusively, with 25 participants from the U.S., and another 25 participants from the U.K. The characteristics of the participants in this study were similar to Howard's (2009a) study

group. The average age of the participants was 41, with fifteen participants under the age of 35 (i.e., millennials). The average length of stay in Thailand for the participants was 6.2 years. Some of the participants had been in Southeast Asia for over 20 years, while others had only one or two years of experience in Asia or Thailand. Eighty percent of the participants at least had a bachelor's degree, with approximately 40% having completed a master's degree or higher. However, the five youngest participants did not have a higher education degree. With concern to romantic relationships, over 55% of the participants had a live-in Thai partner or spouse. Additionally, all of the participants resided in central Bangkok.

Regarding employment, five types of occupational groups emerged: 1) educators; 2) business professionals working as local hires; 3) persons using telecommunication technology to work remotely (i.e., digital nomads); and 4) business owners. Of these four categories, educators were the largest group, consisting of 30 participants. Among the educators, 14 participants worked as university lecturers, four as teachers at international schools, nine as English language teachers, and one as a "freelance" tutor. Additionally, two educators were unemployed and seeking employment. Of the business professionals, three worked as IT managers, another three worked as writers/editors, one as a recruiter for finance professionals, one as a chief financial officer, one as a call center manager, and another as a manager of an expatriate relocation company, for a total of ten business professionals. Only three participants worked remotely, two as computer programmers, and one as an online poker player. In regards to business owners, one person operated a hostel/bar, another operated a comedy club, and another owned and operated an advertising business. Additionally, four participants were identified as being independently wealthy, as they did not require employment for income, and they possessed enough wealth to support themselves. Additional biographical and demographic data can be found in Appendix III.

Participant Recruitment

I obtained participants through utilizing existing friendships and social networks I previously established with Western expatriates in Bangkok. Thus, many participants were acquired through opportunistic approaches, such as "snowballing" or "networking" techniques. Snowballing is when a research participant refers a potential participant, and then subsequently this participants refers a third participant, and so on (Vogt 1999). Consequently, as described in the previous section, this approach led to me recruit a large amount of English teachers and university lecturers because my social network was mostly comprised of educators. Similarly, Howard's (2009a) study group was also heavily comprised of English teachers (approximately 29% of his respondents). This imbalance is most likely due to the high demand of Western English teachers in Thailand. In an attempt to acquire a more balanced participant group I placed recruitment advertisements on various expatriate online forums and Internet social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Thaivisa.com, Internations). However, this strategy was unsuccessful, as no potential participants responded to my online recruitment adverts. Thus, I relied on snowballing techniques for securing participants for this research.

Participant Gender Imbalance

Ensuring an ethnically and gendered balanced representation of expatriates also proved to be difficult, since a relatively low number of minorities and female expatriates live in Asia. Moreover, migration to Thailand, especially self-initiated expatriation, is extremely male-dominated. Howard's study (2009a) about Western expatriates in Thailand had 1003 questionnaire respondents, and out of that group only 34 were female, and of the 34 females, most were spouses of expatriates or Thai citizens, and only a few had migrated independently. Likewise, there is almost a complete absence of expatriate "minorities." Only one percent of Western expatriates found in South East Asia are black or Hispanic (Howard 2009a).

Consequently, only six of my formal participants were women, and only three of the participants were non-white (two Asian-Americans and one Latin American). Hence, white male SIEs of Western origin were the main participants of this study, with 44 in total.

Procedures in the Field

In the following section, I describe the procedures related to carrying out participation observation, as well as convenience and semi-structured interviewing. Additionally, I describe the sites utilized to conduct participant observation and to access participants for both convenience and semi-structured interviews.

Participant Observation and Convenience Interviews

Through participant observation, my goal was to collect data by immersing myself in the everyday world and life of the study group. Thus, I conducted participant observation within the main expatriate zones in Bangkok, Thailand (described in the study area overview above). I recorded my observations and key findings by creating hand-written field notes which were later retyped into a Word document. On many occasions, I utilized my laptop to record my observations directly into a Word document. Additionally, when I did not have my laptop or notebook and pen, I would record notes on my phone using Evernote, and later, I transferred these notes to a Word document. Ultimately, after combining my hand-written and digitally recorded observations, I ended up with a Word document containing approximately 100 pages of field notes.

My participant observation sessions varied in duration, ranging from short sessions of approximately 15 to 30 minutes, to longer sessions which lasted two or three hours. Moreover, I carried out participant observation frequently throughout the entirety of my stay in Bangkok, from early 2014 until mid-2016. A description of my research sites, and the frequency in which I

conducted participant observation at each site is detailed in the section titled, "Summary of Research Sites" (see below).

Additionally, while conducting participant observation I also spontaneously carried out convenience interviews with Westerners I encountered within the study area. The convenience interviews I conducted were informal by nature, and similar to impromptu conversations. The convenience interviews varied in duration and subject matter, and were usually conducted during relaxed social situations. Convenience interviews with Westerners, regardless of nationality, were carried out in English, and transpired in places such as bars, restaurants, shopping malls, and other public areas where I conducted participant observation. Notable quotes and findings derived from convenience interviews were recorded in my field notes, and later transferred to a Word document (as described above).

Additionally, I conducted convenience interviews with Thais who worked and lived in or around Western expatriate zones. When possible convenience interviews with Thais were conducted in English, however in most instances my conversations with Thai citizens were carried out in the Thai language. Similar to convenience interviews with Westerners, convenience interviews with Thais occurred spontaneously or opportunistically. For example, I often conversed with Thai taxi-drivers while I traveled or commuted within central Bangkok. Likewise, when the opportunity was available, I conducted convenience interviews with my Thai friends and acquaintances, typically in public social situations. Convenience interviews with Thais ranged in topic and subject matter, and like my convenience interviews with Westerners, notable findings were recorded in my field notes, and later transferred to Word document (as described above).

Access to Participants

Consequently, in order to gain access to potential participants in central Bangkok I frequented areas in upper and lower Sukhumvit (described above), which are known to attract Western expatriates. I visited these areas in order to conduct participant observation and convenient interviews, as well as to carry out semi-structured interviews. Maps of my main participant observation sites in lower and upper Sukhumvit are shown below (see Figures 2a and 2b). Additionally, I describe these research sites in the next section.

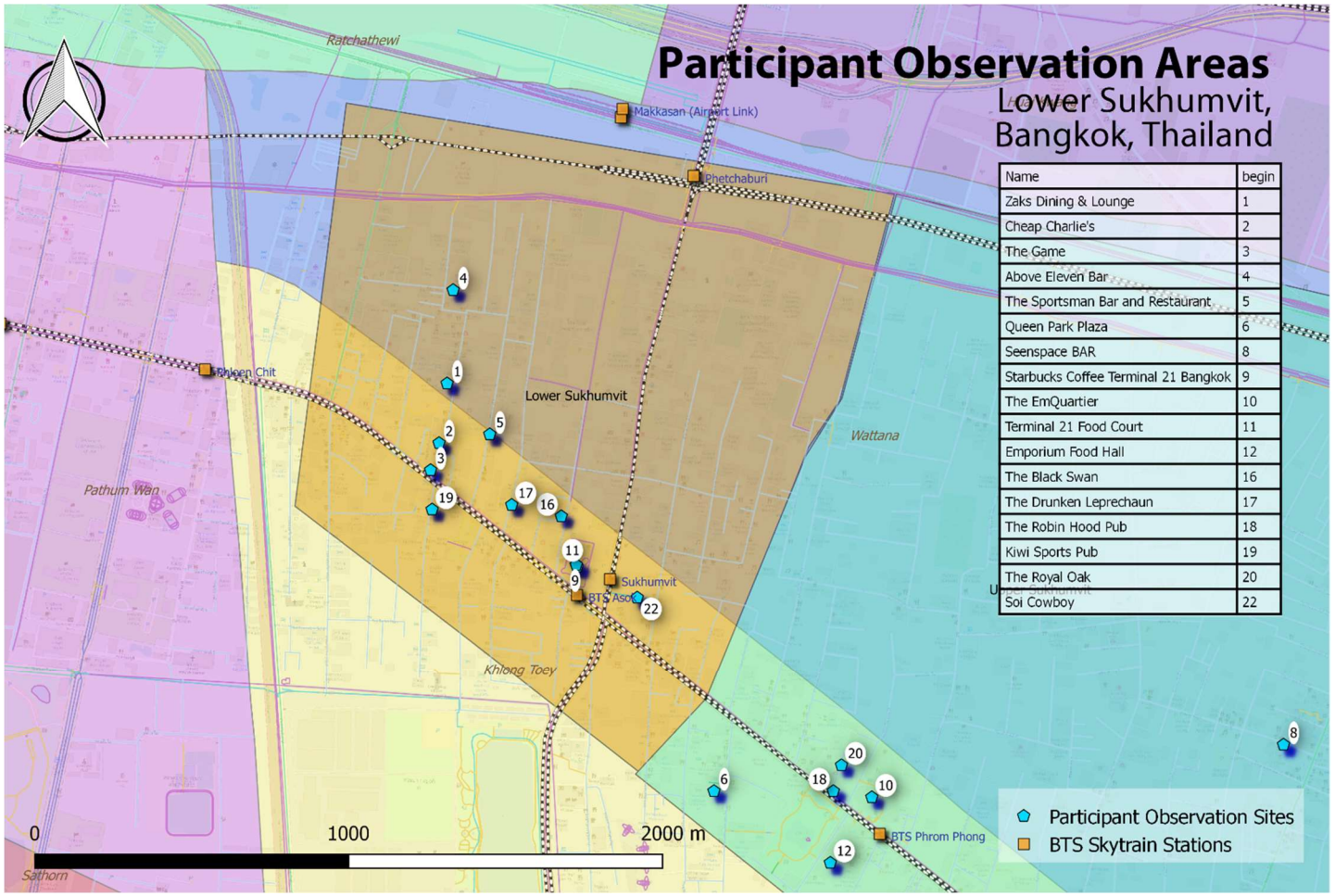


Figure 2a. Participant Observation Sites in lower Sukhumvit. (Map by Jamey Voorhees)

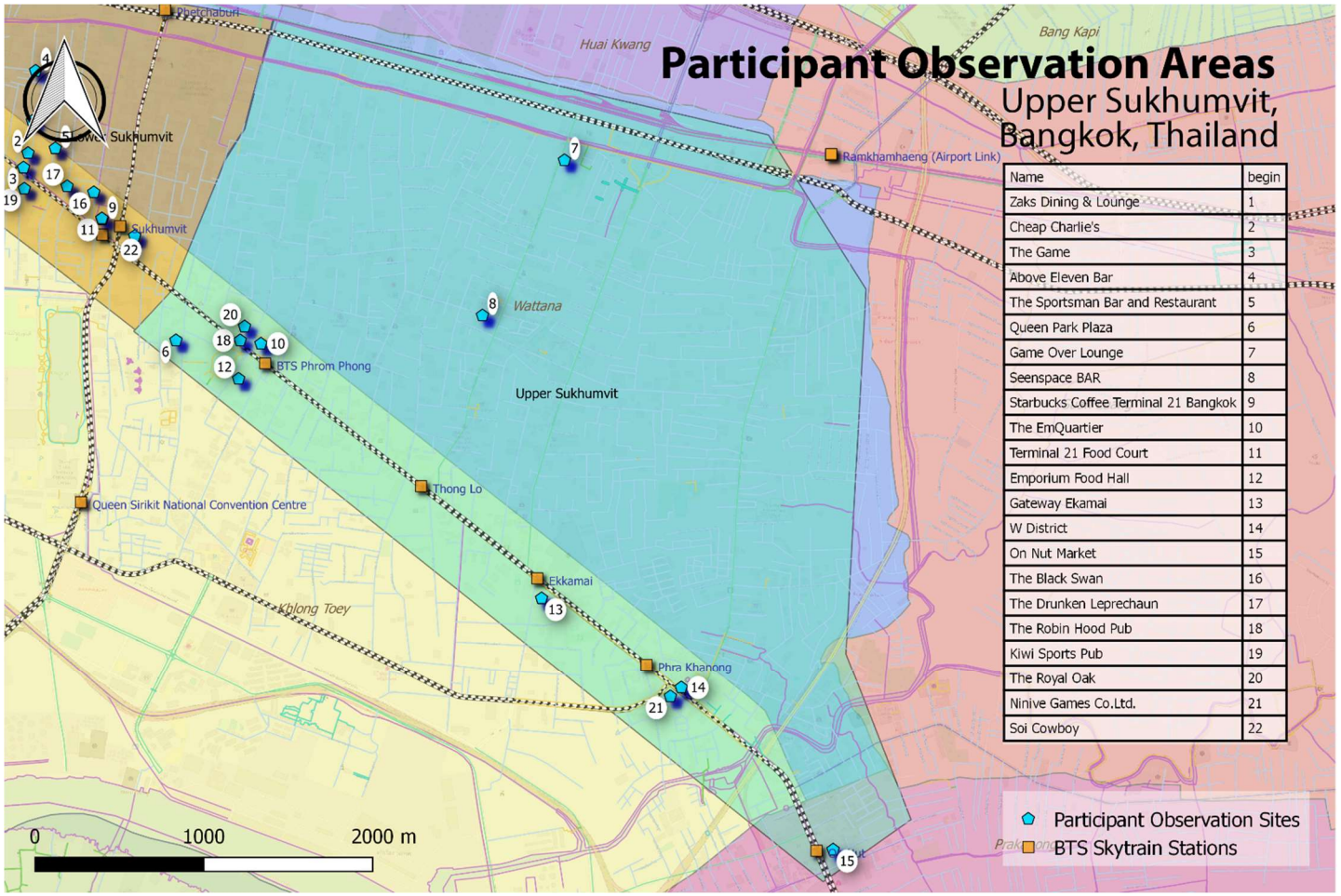


Figure 2b. Participant Observation Sites in upper Sukhumvit. (Map by Jamey Voorhees)

Summary of Research Sites

Approximately six main types of participant observation sites emerged during my field work. I also conducted convenience and semi-structured interviews at some of these research sites as indicated.

1. Food Courts in Lower Sukhumvit

During my field work, I often frequented food courts in order to conduct participant observation and interviews. Altogether, I frequented five different food courts, all located in lower Sukhumvit, except for the Food Republic food court which is located in Siam Center near Siam Square Skytrain station. Food courts provide clean, tasty, and reasonably priced food, thus food courts are popular eating destinations for both Thais, tourists, and Western expatriates. Food courts in Bangkok are typically located in large shopping malls, and they generally provide menus in both Thai and English, and they offer various food options (i.e., Thai, Korean, Chinese, Western, etc.). Food courts are mostly staffed with workers from Thailand's rural provinces as well as workers from surrounding countries such as Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. Food courts provided an excellent environment to view interactions between food court staff, Thai locals, and foreign customers (i.e., tourists of various countries and Western expatriates). Of these food courts, I frequented Terminal 21 the most, approximately once a week over the entire duration of my field work. I visited the Gateway and Emporium food courts less frequently, but as often as every other week. The Emquartier mall and food court opened at the end of my field work, so I only had the opportunity to visit this research site on a few occasions. Similarly, I only visited the Food Republic on a few occasions as it fell slightly outside of my main study area.

2. Expat Bars, Pubs, and Restaurants in Lower Sukhumvit

Approximately 12 "expat" bars or pubs served as sites of participant observation.

By “expat” bar or pub, I mean establishments that are Western-service orientated and cater to Western customers, both Western expatriates and tourists. Many “expat” bars, such as the Black Swan, Robin Hood, and the Royal Oak, are designed after British pubs, and they offer dishes like fish and chips and pints of lager or Guinness. Many bars in lower Sukhumvit are located on *soi* 11, *soi* 13, and other small *sois* and side-*sois* around Nana and Asoke Skytrain stations. The Robin Hood and Royal Oak were the two main “expat” bars that I frequented, usually once a week. The Robin Hood was an English style pub that I utilized often for meeting participants and recoding semi-structured interviews. The Royal Oak hosted a pub quiz in which I attended weekly, and I used this venue for participant observation and to recruit participants for semi-structured interviews as well.

3. Public Spaces, Streets, Alleyways in Lower Sukhumvit

I conducted participant observation in three well-known alleyways or *sois* in lower Sukhumvit: *soi* 11, *soi* 22, and *soi* Cowboy. In the day time these areas are known for street stalls and shopping centers, but in the evening it is nightclubs and bars which attract patrons. Of these *sois*, *soi* 11 is the center of Bangkok nightlife for Western tourists and expatriates, as it is filled with some of the city’s most popular nightclubs and bars. There are also many hotels in and around *soi* 11, which attract tourists, as well as upper end condos which house Western expatriates. Many of the pubs and restaurants where I conducted participant observation are located on or near *soi* 11. *Soi* 22 is a nearby street, which is filled with small hostess bars and some nightclubs. The most famous expatriate haunt on *soi* 22 is the Queen’s Park Plaza, which is a cluster of small bars that cater to East Asian and Western men. *Soi* Cowboy is one of main red-light districts in Bangkok filled with go-go bars which attracts mainly male Western expatriates and tourists. Due to the high concentration of Westerners in lower Sukhumvit,

this area served as my main location for participant observation. Consequently, I conducted participant observation within the public spaces and alleyways of lower Sukhumvit at least once a week throughout the duration of my stay in Bangkok.

4. Night Markets in Upper Sukhumvit

I often frequented open air night markets in order to observe interactions between locals and Westerners. Night markets are filled with small stalls serving food and drinks and similar to food courts, night markets are mostly staffed by Thais from the rural provinces or visiting workers from Thailand's neighboring countries, and they provide a diverse variety of food options for a cheap price. However, unlike shopping mall food courts, night markers often offer entertainment in the form of live music, or televised football matches. The two night markets that I frequented were located in upper Sukhumvit. Specifically, the "W" District night market was situated near the Prakanong BTS station, and the On Nut night market was located near the On Nut BTS Skytrain station. Both night markets were extremely popular with Western expatriates. Many expatriates that I conversed with at the night market bars said the market(s) served as their "local." The term "local" is typically utilized by British or Australians to refer to a place, usually a pub, they frequent often. I conducted both semi-structured and convenience interviews at the night markets, and used relationships I established at the night markets to find participants for this study. The On Nut night market was only a few minutes' walk from my home, thus I visited On Nut night market on an almost daily/nightly basis, especially at the beginning of my field work. Unfortunately, the On Nut night market was eventually closed, in order to build a new condominium, which led to the "W" District's rise in popularity.

5. Board Game Cafés in Upper Sukhumvit

Board game cafés were unique venues I utilized to conduct participant observation and/or to carry out convenience and semi-structured interviews. Coincidently, the popularity of board game cafés increased upon and during my stay in Bangkok. When I first arrived there was only two board game cafés. However, by the end of this study there were over a dozen board game cafés located in central Bangkok. Board game cafés are places where people can meet and drink coffee or beer, eat food, and play board games. The board game cafés served as a community gathering place for both Western expatriates, tourists, and local Thais. Although I visited many board game shops in Bangkok, the two main board game cafés I frequented were Ninive Board Game Café and White Board Café (see figure 2b), which were both located near the Prakanong BTS station, nearby my home. Typically, I visited at least one board game café weekly throughout the duration of my field work in Bangkok.

6. Public Transportation Terminals

While living and collecting data in Bangkok I utilized the Bangkok public transport system, namely the BTS Skytrain. Consequently, I also conducted participant observation at the BTS Skytrain stations or on the trains themselves as I traveled throughout the city. The BTS Skytrain served as another appropriate venue to observe interactions between Westerners and Thais. The Nana, Asoke, Phrom Phong, Thonglor, Ekkamai, Prakanong, and On Nut BTS Skytrain stations were the main places and routes in which I conducted participant observation. Occasionally, I would conduct participant observation on other public transport systems such as the MRT (Metropolitan Rapid Transit), and the Airport Rail Link. Also, when using taxis or *tuk tuks* (a three wheel motorized vehicle) I would carry out convenience interviews with the drivers in Thai, which provided me access to

Thai participants. Considering I relied heavily on public transport throughout my stay in Bangkok, I typically utilized at least one of the above mentioned modes of transport daily. Consequently, I conducted participant observation daily at one of the above mentioned sites.

Semi-Structured Interviews

As mentioned above, I interviewed 50 participants using a semi-structured interview guide. I recorded all of my semi-structured interviews using a Sony digital voice recorder. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in English at convenient meeting places and times determined by the participant(s). The specific sites where I conducted formal interviews are represented in the map(s) above (See Figure 2a and 2b). Most interviews were conducted in public places, such as bars or shopping mall food courts, although some interviews were carried out at my home or the home of the participant. The average duration of each recorded semi-structured interview was approximately one hour and 20 minutes. The longest recorded interview was three hours and 50 minutes, and the shortest interview was 40 minutes in duration. Each semi-structured interview was later transcribed by myself, which involved listening to the audio files of my recorded interviews at half-speed using Windows Media Player, and then converting these electronic recordings word-by-word to a word document.

Coding the data

In this section, I describe how I utilized both manual and electronic coding (via Microsoft Word and Nvivo 11). First, as I transcribed my semi-structured interviews I "open-coded" (Strauss 1987; Cope 2008; Warren and Karner 2010) or pre-coded (Saldaña 2009) the data. This involved creating a two-column Word document, with one column dedicated to the transcribed interview, and the second column dedicated to preliminary jottings and analytical notes. In the column dedicated to transcription, I highlighted and underlined noteworthy participant passages or quotes

that addressed my research questions. The second column was used for writing down preliminary codes as well as recording my analytical memos of ideas that arose during the transcribing phase. By analytical memos, I mean memos created from field notes or interview transcripts, which can be used to reflect on patterns, themes, and concepts which emerge during the coding process (Saldaña 2009). Accordingly, analytical memos are a key part of the coding and analytical process, which can help with the transitional process from coding to a formal written product (Saldaña 2009).

The highlighted quotes from column one were copied and pasted into a word document that I named "Notable Quotes." I then open-coded the "Notable Quotes" document, which involved going through the transcribed data manually (by using pen and hard copies of the data), and creating codes, and looking for emerging patterns or themes that caught my attention. I utilized Saldaña's (2009) approach of coding, which involved organizing my coded data into categories. Then, I used these codes and categories when I electronically coded with Nvivo 11.

In order to electronically code and use the auto-code functions of Nvivo 11, I first prepared or "cleaned" the transcribed interviews within Microsoft Word. This involved formatting the questions and the interviewee's answers in different heading styles, which allows Nvivo 11 to properly differentiate between my voice and the voice of the participants. Once I assigned different heading styles to the participants' voice, I used Nvivo to run word query searches and word frequency searches on terms that emerged from the initial coding. This allowed me to create word clouds (see figures 3a and 3b) and word trees (see figure 4) from the participants responses. Word clouds and word trees are useful visual techniques, which can be used to analyze qualitative data, especially during the preliminary stages of data analysis (McNaught and Lam 2010). Specifically, the world clouds and word trees provided me a way to visualize the responses from my participant interviews, as well as draw attention to findings from my participant observation notes.

Figure 3a. Word cloud from participants' semi-structured interview responses.

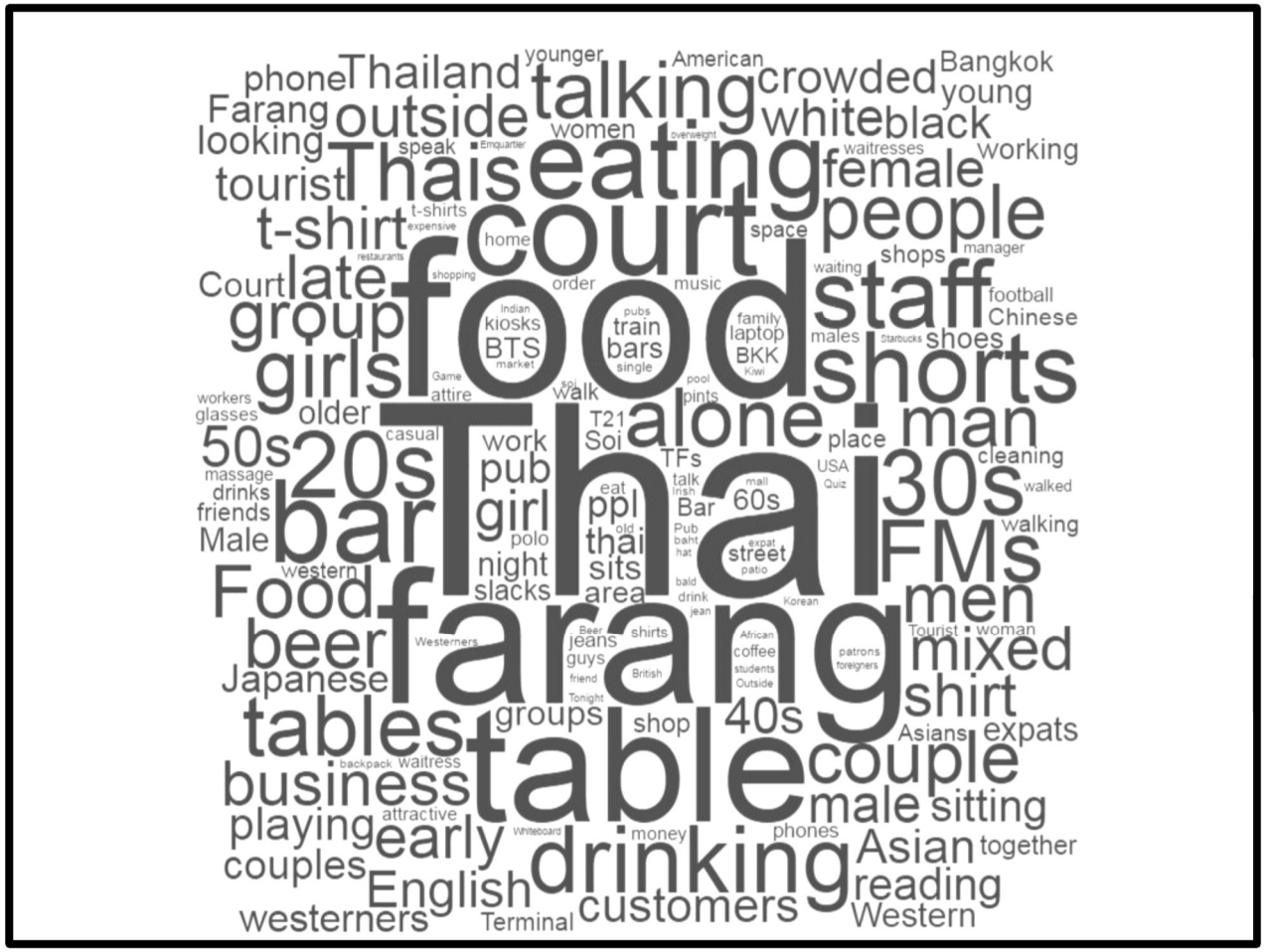


Figure 3b. Word cloud from participant observation field notes.

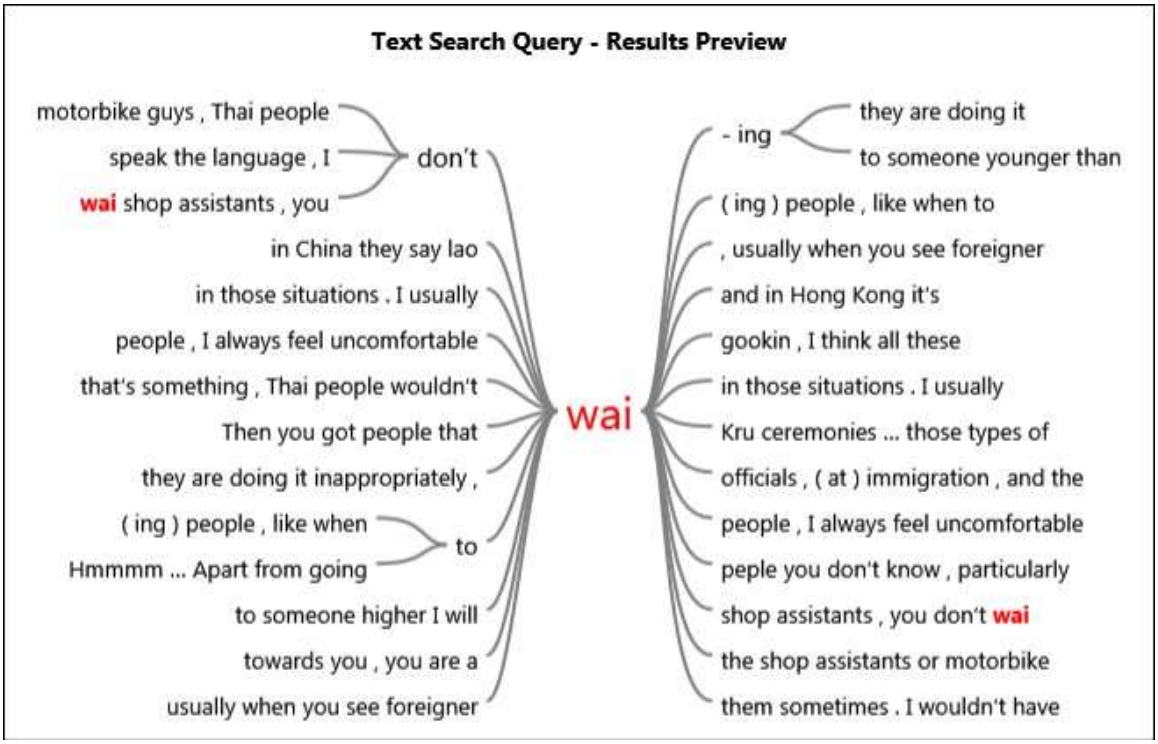


Figure 4. Nvivo word tree example.

In addition, I created different research questions heading styles, so I could create research question "parent" nodes within Nvivo11. Within Nvivo 11, nodes serve as containers of information. Thus, a node itself can represent a code, category, or theme. With Nvivo 11, the user can create a node, and then add (i.e., drop and drag) relevant data into that node. Within Nvivo 11, nodes are typically ordered in a hierarchical manner, with large "parent" nodes populated by smaller "child" nodes. A "parent" node usually represents a broad theme or concept, and it is usually populated by several "child" nodes which represents various codes and/or categories. For example, I placed data related to expatriation "push" and "pull" factors under a large "parent" node called "Q1: Push & Pull Factors," and then within this node, I created "child" nodes (see Figure 5). For example, I created a node for "Positive" factors and a node for "Negative" factors related to expatriation. Then, within each of these "child" nodes, numerous sub-nodes were

created, and then populated with data from the field notes and semi-structured interviews. Finally, I created and assigned analytical memos to the various nodes I created within Nvivo 11.

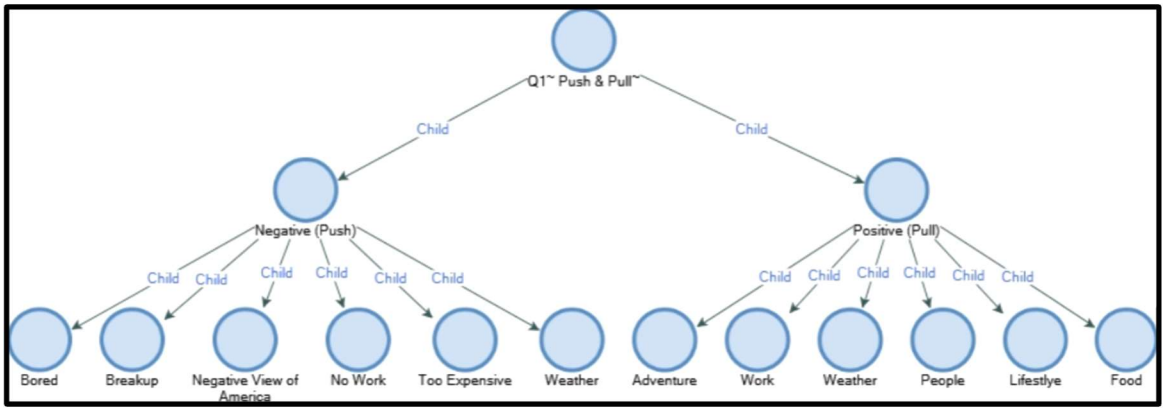


Figure 5. Nvivo node hierarchy example.

Categories to Themes

Overall, Nvivo 11 served as a powerful tool to electronically organize, manipulate, visualize, and analyze the data. I followed Saldaña's (2009) approach of moving from the "particular" to the "general" in order to create theory. Thus, I moved from codes, to categories, to themes, then created analytical memos, which finally led to me making warranted claims about the data. Overall, through the coding and analysis process I derived meanings and understandings from the data, which is reflected later in the proceeding analysis chapters.

Positionality and Reflexivity

The emergence and popularity of qualitative approaches within geography and the social sciences has led to an increased emphasis and awareness of the subjective nature of the research process (Mullings 1999; Widdowfield 2000). Reflexivity can be defined as a self-reflective and self-critical introspective analysis of one's self in relation to one's research (England 1994). Moreover, it is the ongoing process of actively bringing one's self into the research process

(Widdowfield 2000; Etherington 2007; Bondi 2009). Reflexivity can be considered a skill or tool used to critically investigate the environment or world we live in. It allows researchers to reflect on how their past experiences and current personal, social and cultural settings influences the way they conduct fieldwork and interpret and represent the people and phenomenon they study (Etherington 2007). In short, reflexivity reminds researchers that their embedded social biases and subjectivity, combined with their position in life impacts the entire research process (Cupples 2002). Therefore, reflexivity requires an investigation and examination of one's own positionality. Positionality refers to the unique identity and perspective an individual possesses due to their mix of physical and social characteristics such as race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality and other various identifiers or markers that impact one's position in society (Herod 1999; Mullings 1999; Chacko 2004).

While past researchers were often considered neutral and detached from the people they studied (Kobayashi 2003), scholars today are expected to recognize their subjectivity and adopt a more reflexive approach to their work (Widdowfield 2000; Bondi 2009). Reflexivity is now expected and required to conduct good qualitative fieldwork (England 1994; Sheehan 2011) because it requires researchers to critically access their positionality (Chacko 2004) and reflect on the relationships between themselves and those they study (Bondi 2009). Overall, positionality ultimately affects the entire research process: research questions, data collection, analysis and interpretation processes associated with conducting qualitative research. Therefore, the next section is dedicated to acknowledging my positionality and evaluating some of the opportunities and challenges associated with it.

Evaluation of my positionality

Altogether, my position closely matches that of the participants and that of typical Western expatriates in general. I am white, male, educated, and approximately the same age as the average

Western expatriate in Thailand. As mentioned above, the average age of Howard's (2009a) participants was 43, and the participants' average age was 41. During my time in the field my age ranged from 40 to 42. Similarly, like many of the participants I had lived and worked in Asia for approximately six years (at the beginning of this study) voluntarily, as a self-initiated expatriate. Moreover, I also shared the same nationality (USA) of approximately half of the participants, and I previously lived and studied in the UK, which allowed me to better relate and understand my British participants.

Therefore, I studied a group that I was very similar to, and already a part of. Accordingly, this made it challenging to navigate between "insider" and "outsider" roles (Dwyer and Buckle 2009), although I mostly enjoyed an "insider" status, because it allowed me greater access to the participant group (Jorgenson 1989; DeLyser 2008). I had relatively little problems creating relationships with Western expatriates, especially male expatriates, because I have a similar background, experience, and positionality.

However, as a single male, I did have some difficulties approaching and speaking to potential female participants. Women that I had known through friends or work did not pose an issue, however women that I had no previous acquaintance with proved difficult to conduct impromptu or convenience interviews. Moreover, it proved difficult to find women participants that would agree to meet me for a recorded semi-structured interview. Thus, the gender bias towards men in the study, also reflects this difficulty.

Although being a Western expatriate helped me recruit and establish rapport with Western expatriates, my positionality sometimes hindered my recruitment and interactions with local Thais. As discussed previously, I relied on my previous established social network and snowballing to acquire participants. However, since my social network was mostly comprised of Westerners, it was a challenge to acquire local Thais to through snowballing recruitment

techniques. Furthermore, language differences hindered the recruitment of Thai citizens. Additionally, language differences impeded convenience interviews. Although, I speak some Thai, I am not completely fluent, so some meaning was inevitably lost when conversing with Thais in Thai. Similarly, since Thais are not native English speakers, communication was sometimes an issue when I conversed with Thais in English. Also, another obstacles I encountered was Thai citizens' reluctance to voice negative opinions or views about Westerners. Thais are generally known for their friendliness, and more importantly Thais will avoid making comments that could cause themselves (or other people) to "lose face." Losing face is a complex concept which is not easily understood by Westerners. However, "losing face" mostly means losing respect or doing something to embarrass oneself or one's family or friends (Boyle 1998). Indeed, "losing face" or *sia naa* in Thai is a serious matter, and Thais are known to mislead people (say "yes" when they mean "no," or simply not tell the truth) in order to "save face" or not offend others (Boyle 1998). Although, there was no exact way to measure whether or not Thais were avoiding "losing face" during our conversations together, most Thais answered questions about Westerners in a mostly positive manner.

Overall, my positionality provided me with both opportunities and challenges. My positionality offered me easy access to my main study group (Western expatriates), with the exception of female participants. Yet, my positionality somewhat hindered my access to my second study group (local Thais), because of language issues, as well as reluctance of Thais saying negative things about Westerners which could cause myself or them to "lose face." Overall, my positionality served me well throughout the research process, as it allowed me relatively easy access to the main study group.

In the next chapter I examine the structural and motivational factors that influence Westerners to expatriate to Bangkok, Thailand.

CHAPTER IV

"I THINK MY LIFESTYLE IS MUCH BETTER HERE": FACTORS DRIVING SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATION TO BANGKOK, THAILAND

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the structural and motivational push and pull factors that influenced participants in this study to expatriate to Bangkok, Thailand. Traditionally, studies that explored the reasons and motives for international migration typically utilized quantitative data in conjunction with the "push-pull" framework, which originated in early migration studies (Ravenstein 1885; Lee 1966). However, these early studies mostly examined macro-economic factors related to traditional migration movements, namely migration from developing countries to more developed ones (Todaro 1969; Jenkins 1977; Pessar 1982; Sassen-Koob 1988). However, as discussed in the introduction and literature review, globalization and advances in technology has led to new forms of global flows, notably migration and movement from the Global North to the Global South. Although literature on migration and mobility has increased in a response to these new global flows, there remains a lack of studies that examine the individual agency of persons who choose self-initiate to the Global South, for mostly lifestyle reasons. Furthermore, there is a need for contextual studies that explore the structural reasons, as well as the implications of expatriation from the Global North to locations in Southeast Asia. This chapter is intended to feel this gap in the literature, by investigating the structural and motivational factors and circumstances which influence Westerners to expatriate to Bangkok,

Thailand. The next section reviews the main research questions, and also provides a road map for the reminder of the chapter.

Research Questions

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the following research questions:

1a. What are the factors that influence Westerners to expatriate and live in Bangkok, Thailand?

1b. What are the implications of Westerners expatriating to Bangkok, Thailand?

In this chapter, I show the structural as well as the main motivational factors that influenced participants to relocate from their affluent home countries in the Global North, to the less developed country of Thailand. First, I examine the structural factors, including: 1) Thai immigration and visa policies; 2) low-cost of living and socio-economic inequalities which enabled participants to travel and subsequently expatriate to Thailand; and 3) employment that permitted Westerners to make a livable salary and stay legally in Thailand. Second, I examine the motivational factors, all of which related to lifestyle that influenced participants to expatriate to Thailand, including: 1) Thai food; 2) warm weather; 3) friendly people; 4) travel opportunities; and 5) the availability of romantic partners. Throughout this chapter I will utilize a postcolonial approach to interpret my analyses. I will conclude this chapter with a summarization of my findings, and then transition to subsequent chapters.

Structural Factors Enabling Self-Initiated Expatriation to Thailand

All of the participants in this study chose to self-expatriate; however, structural factors enabled them to live and work legally in Thailand. Typically, literature on expatriation and lifestyle migration portrays expatriates as wealthy global "cosmopolitans," (Tung 1998; Chai 2006; Farrer 2010; Lan 2011), who have the ability to freely roam between countries without impediment. This is somewhat true for passport holders going from countries located in the Global North to

countries in the Global south for tourism related trips of 30 days or less. However, in the case of long-term stays and gaining citizenship, Westerners moving to the Global South are relatively restricted, as they are required to abide by the immigration laws of their host countries, which vary from place to place.

Thai Immigration Policies

For participants in this research, Thai immigration policies both enabled and hindered their mobility between their homeland and Thailand. First, Thai immigration policies are set in a way that allow Westerners to stay short-term, but discourage long-term stays in the kingdom. For example, initial entry into Thailand was relatively unconstrained for all the research participants, because passport holders from the US or UK, are automatically granted visa exemptions or tourist visas for a period of thirty days upon arrival. So, in regards to tourism or short-term holiday related travel, Thailand is reasonably open to visitors from inner-circle Western countries. Thailand provides work permits and visas for migrant laborers and professionals, yet permanent residence status or citizenship is nearly impossible for foreigners to obtain. In order to qualify for permanent residency a foreigner must prove 10 years of continuous stay in Thailand, and applicants must also qualify as an expert in a specific business or academic field, or invest three to 10 million Thai baht (approximately $90,000 to $300,000 USD) in a business in Thailand (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand 2018). Consequently, the number of foreigners acquiring permanent residency or citizenship in Thailand is extremely low. Purportedly, the Thai government offers permanent residency to some foreigners who qualify, but the annual quota granting permanent residency in Thailand is a maximum of 100 persons per country (Bangkok Immigration 2018a). Moreover, the Thai government does not report official statistics for naturalized citizens, nor does it provide the numbers for persons who acquire permanent residency, so it is unclear of exactly how many foreigners actually gain Thai citizenship or obtain permanent residency status in Thailand.

With regards to gaining visas for extended stays by foreigners, Thailand prefers to attract affluent retirees (Ono 2015). Thus, Thailand offers a retirement visa, which allows foreigners over the age of 50 to stay long-term. However, in order to acquire a retirement visa, applicants must show a Thai bank statement with holdings of at least 800,000 Thai baht (approximately $25,000 USD), or show proof of a monthly income of at least 60,000 Thai baht (Bangkok Immigration 2018b). Additionally, retirement visa holders must also conduct 90-day visa reporting, which involves checking-in at a Thai immigration office every 90 days (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand 2018). However, for persons under the age of 50 or those without sufficient income to buy an "Elite" visa (discussed below), long-term stays in Thailand can be more problematic. For example, persons under the age of 50 must find a legitimate company or organization to sponsor their work permit and non-immigrant visa, and even then they are subject to 90-day visa reporting (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand 2018).

In previous decades, long-term visitors to Thailand would simply do monthly "visa-runs" to the Thai border (Howard 2008; Green 2015; Botterill 2016). This involved exiting and reentering Thailand overland in order to receive a new 30-day tourist visa on arrival. Many foreigners used this loophole for years as a way to legally stay in Thailand (Howard 2008; Green 2015; Botterill 2016). However, after taking power via a military coup d'état in 2014, the current military junta, has enacted laws which restrict visa-runs and now limits visitors to three tourist visas on arrival over a six-month period (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand 2018). More recently, Thai immigration further reduced the 30-day tourist visa on arrival for overland arrivals, to just a 15-day tourist visa on arrival (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand 2018). Thus, the consistent border visa-runs of the past are now no longer a feasible option, and it has become far more difficult for foreigners who cannot qualify for a retirement visa or acquire a work permit to live long-term in Thailand legally.

Overall, the Thai immigration laws are designed in a way to generate wealth for the Thai kingdom. For example, Thailand offers an "Elite" visa program, which targets wealthy persons who wish to avoid immigration bureaucracy and stay in Thailand long-term (Sritama 2017). The basic "Elite" visa cost 500,000 Thai baht (approximately $15,000 USD), and allows five years of unimpeded entry and stay in Thailand, plus other benefits, such as special airport service, shopping discounts, and importantly no 90-day reporting to immigration (Thailand Elite 2018). Some participants considered purchasing an "Elite" visa, because they wanted to avoid the difficulties associated with Thai immigration. For example, American "Sam" stated:

> The current regime is restricting visas. There seems to be more and more obstacles. Overall, not as accommodating for foreigners now. That is the impression I get with the new regime… immigration is becoming more of draconian, in terms of the visa rules. It can be really restrictive. I'm looking at the "Elite" card, which is expensive… I don't want to go that route, but let's see.

American "Sam's" sentiment was expressed by other participants, who claimed the Thai government was creating xenophobic immigration laws, which made it difficult for Westerners to stay long-term in the kingdom. Furthermore, foreigners, regardless of nationality or visa status, cannot own land in Thailand (Howard 2008). Some participants who had lived in Thailand for many years claimed the Thai government and Thai elites were xenophobic and wanted to push Westerners out of the country. Thus, they argued the Thai government was passing strict immigration laws and guidelines, in order to impede Westerners from gaining Thai citizenship and becoming a part of Thai society.

Many participants said it was becoming more difficult to stay in Thailand legally, because Thai immigration policies frequently changed or were inconsistently enforced. Thus, many participants claimed to be frustrated or confused about Thai immigration laws and processes. Consequently, research participants' most common concerns and complaints were

about the precarious nature of their immigration status, as well as the complexity and bureaucracy related to acquiring and renewing visas. This suggests that neocolonial influence over Thai affairs is non-existent with regards to immigration as individuals who hold passports from the United States and the United Kingdom are subject to abiding to ever-changing Thai visa policies and rules.

Altogether, aggravations related to acquiring and renewing visas were the most common problems participants mentioned when discussing challenges related to living in Bangkok. Participants mostly complained of inept and corrupt immigration officers, ever-changing Thai immigration policy, and the annoyance of 90 day reporting. For example, British "Archie" exclaimed:

> The biggest challenge is visas! Visas are a real hassle! It's one of the reasons we are leaving, because it's a big hassle! When we were on our education visas, every two months we had to trek out to Chaeng Wattana [the main Thai immigration office], and it's so far out! It always ends up being a day of my life, and at least 2,500 baht in fees [approximately $80 USD] and travel. I mean it's not the end of the world. It's "first world" problems, but I don't like immigration.

American "Rick" expressed his frustration with visas and Thai immigration, and stated:

> I'm concerned because the laws can change, and the application of the law depends on the individual. There are many people that work for immigration that don't even understand their own laws, which can make it very difficult for a foreigner to get the proper visa and remain in the country.

Altogether, 80% (40 of 50) participants mentioned problems about acquiring or renewing their visa(s).

Similarly, Howard (2008, 2009a) also mentions issues that Westerners face when acquiring visas in Thailand, which he claims pushes some persons to ultimately relocate to other countries in Southeast Asia, and/or return home. Additionally, Botterill (2016) discusses the

precarious immigration status of Western retirees, and the strategies they employed to legally stay in Thailand, such as utilizing "visa-runs." Additionally, Botterill (2016, 9) argues that although Westerners enjoy a relatively privileged life in Thailand, their lifestyles and mobility are in a "fragile and derooted state" due to the precarious nature of their immigration status, which denies them citizenship and political rights, even though Western retirees are required to pay annual visa renewal fees in order to stay in Thailand.

Overall, the ease of an initial entry into Thailand entices Westerners to visit the country for holidays, yet the inability to gain permanent residency or naturalized citizenship, as well as own any land, is a constant reminder to *farang* of their ambiguous "visitor" status. Hence, neocolonial influence, at least in regards to immigration laws, is lessening in Southeast Asia, because even though participants held passports and came from countries that previously colonized or occupied areas in Southeast Asia, in Thailand they live under strict legal conditions. Ultimately, this constant precarious immigration status negatively affected notions of belonging and place attachment, which led some participants to leave Thailand in order to return home or relocate to other countries in the region.

Low Cost of Living

Another structural factor driving expatriation to Thailand is low-cost of living. Similar to Howard (2008; 2009a) and Ó Brien (2009, 2010) findings, nearly all the research participants claimed that low-cost of living was a major motivating factor for expatriating to Thailand. The low cost of living in Thailand, especially in regards to food, rent, and transportation, enabled participants to enjoy the many positive amenities found in the kingdom. Additionally, the low cost of living in Thailand provided participants with enhanced quality of life, especially for those with income from their home country, because they were able to stretch their home currencies and salaries

much further in Thailand. Many participants claimed they enjoyed a lifestyle in Thailand that they simply could not afford in their home countries. British "Greg" explained:

> There is more financial freedom here. Rent prices, food prices, everything is cheaper. The cost of living is way cheaper here. Back home the rent is getting very, very high. Everything is expensive back home. So, things are easier here. Taxis are cheaper. I actually think it's a very good quality of life here.

Similarly, "Judy" stated, "A lot of Westerners love Thailand. One is cost of living. So, if you have a pile of money back home, when you convert it to the baht, you have a lot. The food. Everything is cheap. It's the cost of living. If you want to live cheaply here, you definitely can."

Furthermore, British participants often mentioned the high cost of living in the UK, as a motivating "push" factor to expatriate to Thailand. Some British expatriates claimed there was a lack of economic opportunities in the UK, and that they were being "priced-out" of their home countries. For example, British "Greg" stated:

> Back home the rent is getting very, very high. Everything is expensive back home, and the recession was still pretty bad… Every news headline, was quite negative. Quite low paying jobs, quite competitive. I just felt like there was a lack of opportunities at that time based on having just a bachelor's degree.

Likewise, some Americans complained about high cost of living and displeasure of economic struggles they faced in the United States. For example, American "Glenn" stated:

> I was living in LA and it was so expensive. So, I was going the wrong way with my finances. I was getting in debt. I was also wanting to get out of LA. I was hoping to find a cheaper cost of living. So, that was big! I wanted to get out of LA.

Altogether, the cost of living seemed to function as both a "push" and "pull" factor in expatriation to Thailand. Although most participants expatriated to Thailand to take advantage of the low cost of living in order to enjoy an improved lifestyle, other participants were pushed to relocate

because they were "priced out" of their home country. These juxtaposed factors show the economic disparity and heterogeneity amongst Westerners living in Thailand. For example, more affluent participants, like those employed by multinationals and working business jobs were on reasonably high Western salaries, while others, such as English language teachers were on considerably lower salaries. However, even participants on low Thai wages typically possessed more social and economic status than their Thai counterparts.

Economic Disparities between the Global North and Global South

Due to the macro-economic disparities that exist between the Global North and Global South, participants were able to enjoy a lower cost of living in Thailand, when compared to their home countries. Specifically, when comparing Thailand to the United States or the United Kingdom, economic disparity is apparent. According to the World Bank, Thailand's GDP per capita is approximately $5,900 USD, while the United States and the United Kingdom's GDP per capita is approximately $57,000 and $40,000 respectively (World Bank Data 2018). Thus, even when adjusted for purchasing power, the average person from the United States and the United Kingdom are far more affluent when compared to the typical citizen of Thailand. Additionally, the exchange rate of the US dollar or UK pound to the Thai baht, although not as lopsided as in the past, is relatively beneficial for Americans and the British with savings or investment accounts in their home country. For example, at the time of my field research the US dollar equaled approximately 33 baht, and one UK pound equaled approximately 55 baht (Xenon Laboratories 2019). Therefore, due to favorable exchange rates and economic disparity between the Global North and South, participants with savings in their home country enjoyed a more affluent status in Thailand.

The reasons for this economic disparity is multifaceted, but one contributing factor is Thailand's historical semi-colonial relations with the West (discussed previously in the literature

review). In general, Western colonialism and imperialism is believed to have created unequal relations and economic imbalances between the Global North and Global South (McCleod 2000). Loomba (2007) argues, that through colonization and domination, Western colonizers and imperialists restructured the economies of colonized and semi-colonized places in order for Western capitalism to flourish, which in turn benefited Western powers and Western people. Although these colonial economic legacies are being challenged by a "Rising East" in recent years (Raghuram, et al. 2014), there remains a considerable economic gap between the West and Thailand, as well as other previously colonized or semi-colonized places. Due to these economic disparities, which inflate buying power for Westerners, participants in this study were encouraged to mobilize the colonial past, and relocate to Thailand, in order to take advantage of these advantages, which provided them with a better lifestyle.

Job Opportunities that Enables Expatriation to Thailand

Most literature on expatriation and lifestyle migration suggest that self-initiated expatriates are less motivated by economic and career related factors, especially when compared to traditional expatriates (Jokinen et al. 2008; Selmer and Lauring 2012; Doherty et al. 2013; Przytula 2015). However, participants in this study claimed they expatriated to Bangkok due to their ability to find employment in the kingdom, which offered them a livable wage as well as a visa to stay legally. The most common phenomenon for participants included them initially visiting Thailand on holiday, and then making the decision to stay in the country long-term. A few of these participants found jobs during their initial holiday, while others returned home first, then later came back to Thailand after they secured jobs online. Most commonly, participants discovered, either through online research or traditional job networking, that they could acquire English language teaching jobs, which would enable them to live in Thailand. For example, British "Ian" said:

> I basically came here on holiday (Thailand). I liked the sunshine. I looked into alternative careers, which I could do here. I researched on the Internet, that the realistic job I could do, or a foreigner could do was teach English in schools. So, I just thought if I could at least manage to do that for a year that would be a success.

Similarly, once British "Hershel" relocated to Thailand with his Thai wife, he started researching possible jobs he could do while living in Thailand, and settled on teaching English. He explained:

> I figured out if you want to survive in this country you have to teach English. I researched it to death, and I knew I didn't want to work at a government school and get paid a pittance. So, I found a decent language school and started working for them, and I really enjoyed it, and I found that I was really good at it. If you work for one of these companies, they will give you a work permit.

The most common entry-level job that participants in this study acquired was teaching English as a second language. Teaching English in Thailand often requires little experience or qualifications, therefore English teaching jobs are relatively easy to obtain for native English speakers, especially for "white" native speakers because of the preference of white or light skin in Thailand (Todd and Pojanapunya 2009). Studies have shown that the Teaching English as a Foreign Language industry is nationally and racially stratified in Thailand, and language schools typically recruit and prefer to hire young, white native English speakers from countries such as the United States and United Kingdom (Ruecker and Ives 2015; Hickey 2018).

Similarly, Leonard (2019) observes the demand for English language in China has led to an unstoppable demand for young, white English speakers, regardless of their qualifications. Lan (2011) claims that the English teaching profession in Taiwan is highly racialized in favor of "white" Westerners, yet black or non-Caucasian applicants, despite having similar or better credentials than their white counterparts, are often denied jobs. In addition, Lan (2001) further argues that white English teachers in Asia are not hired for their professional qualifications, but

instead are employed solely for their native language ability and their cultural knowledge. He also claims that Asian parents seek "authentic" English speakers, which in practice means the English language industry favors white English speakers, preferably with a North American or British accents, yet non-native English speakers from places such as India and the Philippines are denied jobs, or paid much lower wages. Bonnet (2004) notes that "whiteness" is synonymous with the West in the imagination of non-Westerners as well as Western expatriates, which helps to explain why the English language industry considers white Westerners more authentic and desirable when compared to non-white native English speakers. This form of "white privilege" (Kendall 2012, 21) undeniably benefitted participants in this study, as many claimed to acquire English language teaching jobs easily, which enabled them to live and work in Thailand.

Additionally, participants in this study typically earned much high salaries than Thai locals or non-Westerners, even when these persons were employed in similar positions. For example, an unqualified Westerner can typically find a job earning at least 35 to 40 thousand Thai baht a month (approximately $1000 to $1200) as an English language teacher, whereas a Thai or Filipino English language teachers are typically paid half this amount (Ruecker and Ives 2015). In general, Western expatriates earn much more than local workers. For example, at the time of the study, the minimum wage for a Thai citizen was approximately 300 Thai baht a day, which equaled less than $10 USD (Trading Economics 2018). Similar wage disparities exist in India, China, Malawi, Uganda, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, where Western expatriates reportedly earn 400-900% more than their local counterparts (Carr and McWha-Hermann 2016). This prevalent practice of paying Westerners, especially "white" native English speakers, more than non-Westerners reinforces Western "white" privilege and neocolonial relationships, as well as creates resentment within the workplace. Through my participant observation and work in Thailand, I have witnessed firsthand resentment and frustration from Thai teachers regarding salary inequalities.

These uneven wage disparities that exist in the Global South are rooted in colonial and neocolonial discourses and attitudes that reinforce the idea of white Westerners as being the superior "other." Said (1978) argues that Westerners carry internalized assumptions about Easterners as being lazy, illogical, sensual, and/or backwards, whereas, Westerners are often portrayed in a more positive way, and assumed to be logical, educated, and hard-working. Thus, the East is frequently described in negative terms, whereas the West is positioned at a higher socio-cultural rank. Moreover, these assumptions are also internalized by Easterners or non-Westerners living in the Global South. McCleod (2000, 17) writes that not only did the West colonize the territories of the non-West, but they also "colonized the mind," which in turn normalized the uneven relationships between Western and non-Western people. Thus, the hiring practices and salary disparities tolerated in Thailand help perpetuate an uneven way of understanding the world, especially in regards to human relationships between people of different ethnicities and racial backgrounds. The legacy of these orientalist understandings provided privilege and favored treatment for participants in this study, as they were able to easily acquire jobs, especially within the English language teaching industry, sometimes with minimum qualifications.

Yet, notably many participants seemed unaware of their relatively privileged position that they enjoyed in Bangkok. Correspondingly, some participants expressed the expectation of higher salaries because of their nationality and race. Through convenience interviews some participants expressed the attitude that Westerners were more productive and better educated than Thais, thus they should receive higher wages and privileges. Nonetheless, some participants realized their advantageous position, and expressed sympathy for Thais and Filipinos employed as English language teachers because they were paid much lower salaries than Westerners, despite often times having a more difficult workload. American "Leo" commented:

> People will go out of their way to accommodate me here, and the one thing that really gets me is how blind most expatriates are to the amount of privilege they receive on an almost constant basis. I feel that so many Westerners here have the expectation of privilege. For example, the expectation that everyone should automatically speak your language. The English language… and the fact that any random Westerner can move here and get a shitty job at a shitty school, and still earn 30,000 baht a month, with no experience and no college education… But a Thai would actually have to go through some serious shit to make that sort of money.

In response to these privileges due to neocolonial conditions, participants in this study mobilized their ethnicity and capitalized on their native English speaking ability, which enabled them to acquire jobs that are often denied to non-native English speakers or non-Western persons. Overall, my research and analyses indicates that job opportunities, especially in the English language teaching industry, were possible because of the participants' nationality, ethnicity and native English speaking ability. These advantages played a pivotal role, which enabled research participants to successfully expatriate and live in Bangkok, Thailand. Favorable lifestyle attributes of Thailand such as warm weather and romantic partners (discussed further in the next section) also motivated participants to relocate to Thailand, but the main enabling structural factor was a racialized job market, which is unequivocal evidence of Western neocolonialism in Thailand. Moreover, this particular form of neocolonialism influenced hiring practices, especially within the English language teaching industry in Thailand, which privileged participants in this study, with livable wages, as well as work visas. In the next section, I examine the motivational and lifestyle factors, which influenced participants to expatriate to Bangkok, Thailand.

Lifestyle Factors influencing expatriation to Thailand

Expatriation to Thailand is a rather unique form of mobility when compared to movements to other host countries. Notably, the majority of people that expatriate to Thailand have visited the kingdom previously for a holiday or long-term travel (Howard 2008; Ó Brien 2009). Altogether,

82% of the research participants (41 of 50) visited Thailand prior to relocating to Bangkok to live. Most of these participants had backpacked or holidayed in Thailand on several occasions, often for long-term stays, before making a more permanent or semi-permanent move. For example, when asked why he expatriated to Thailand, American "Jack" stated "I had been here before. I had visited many times as a tourist and I always found Thailand to be a very welcoming place that I could adapt to easily." Some participants even claimed they decided to relocate to Thailand while they were still on their holiday. British "Noah" noted, "I had been here [Thailand] on holiday and I had so much fun. I actually remember getting back on the plane when I was leaving from my holiday. And thinking to myself, 'Why am I leaving this place?'" Similarly, British "Gareth" became captivated with Thailand on his first visit to the country, and was motivated to return in order to live on a more long-term basis. He stated:

> I was here in Bangkok for about four weeks. So it actually wasn't that long, and when I came on holiday, I had absolutely no intention to move here to live. I wasn't thinking, "OK, I will go check it out then move there." I just came for a holiday and then decided. It was about the second week I decided I wanted to live here. It was literally that fast.

This phenomenon of individuals first visiting Thailand on holiday, subsequently to return for more periodic visits or relocation suggest movement to Thailand is a form of "consumption-led migration" (Williams and Hall 2002, 18), which is heavily influenced by tourism.

Other scholars have noted that tourism is key driver of migration to Thailand (Howard 2008, 2009a; Ó Brien 2010; Ono 2015). Specifically, the physical attributes and numerous amenities of Thailand motivate once holiday-goers to expatriate to the kingdom. In general, the most common explanations for lifestyle migration and expatriation is the role of the physical attributes and amenities of the host country (King et. al. 2000; Casado-Diaz 2006; Croucher 2009a, 2009b; 2012; Benson 2013; 2016). Additionally, when compared to assigned expatriates,

previous studies show that host country attributes are more important for self-initiated expatriates (Doherty et al. 2013).

Similarly, my research shows that the participants in this study were encouraged to expatriate to Thailand because of the numerous amenities and positive attributes of the kingdom. Thus, the goal for these once holiday-goers or backpackers was to continue the holiday lifestyle and (re)experience the privileged position afforded to them during their initial visit to Thailand. British "Noel" explained his motivations for expatriating to Thailand:

> I traveled around Thailand in 2004, and I loved Thailand. I finished my travels and I went back to London for 3 years and saved money, and of course I wanted to go back to Thailand because of the lifestyle. It was a lifestyle choice. Food. Friendly people, it felt great. That's why I came back.

Like British "Noel," many participants claimed to "fall in love" with Thailand during their first visit to the country, which encouraged them to return to the kingdom. Furthermore, British "Noel's" quote shows that the lifestyle experienced during holidays played an important role in participants' decisions to expatriate to Thailand.

Additionally, participants often compared their lifestyle in their home countries to the lifestyle they experienced in Thailand. For example, British "Diane" stated, "It's a far nicer way of life. Everyone seems a lot more relaxed, it's a lot slower pace of life, and for me I'm a very slow person. I really enjoy life here… At home it's very mundane. In Thailand, every day is a different day, and people still smile and get on with things." Likewise, British "Oscar" explained, "It's the lifestyle… I mean not all expats are hanging out drinking beer in the sun, but a lot of us are, but it's laid back, it's more chilled out, easy lifestyle compared to what you get back in England." Similarly, American "Fred" compared his life in Los Angeles to his life in Bangkok, stating:

> It's an easy place to live in, there's not too much stress. People are very nice. Bangkok is a safer place to live in than Los Angeles, for less than half of what I paid for an apartment in Los Angeles. I get so much more (here). It just doesn't seem worth it for me to live in the states.

Thus, self-expatriation to Bangkok appears to be a comparative exercise, which involves evaluating one's lifestyle at home, and then comparing it to the lifestyle experienced in Thailand. Furthermore, like American "Fred," some participants moved to Thailand in order to escape the economic pressures they faced in their home countries. Altogether, most participants mentioned negative attributes of their home country as a motivating "push" factor to expatriate. Conversely, beyond the visa and immigration grievances, nearly all participants spoke positively about the attributes of Thailand, specifically about the food, favorable climate, friendly people, and travel opportunities, as well the availability of attractive romantic partners, which I examine below.

1. Thai Food

Due to globalization, Thai food is available in most countries around the World, and has become one of the most popular foreign cuisines consumed by Westerners in both Europe and North America (Sunanta 2005). Thus, unsurprisingly, participants considered the availability of Thai food as a motivating "pull" factor for expatriation to Thailand. For example, American "Blanche" exclaimed, "I love the people and the food. The food, I have no problem with the food at all. I love it!" Food was often associated with low cost of living, as many participants talked about the inexpensive cost of food in Thailand. British "Archie" claimed, "Low cost of living is a major one. I love Thai food, and those two combined means Thai food is really cheap!"

Not only did participants express their love of Thai food, but they also claimed to enjoy the many different international cuisines available in Bangkok. British "Ethan" explained:

> I like the food. The food is amazing! Not just the Thai food. I've had the best pizzas here. I've had the best burgers here. All the

> food is great! The thing about English food is that it's simple. So, it's based on how good your produce is. The English don't do fancy things with their food. But yeah, I love the food here!

Additionally, participants claimed the lower cost of living in Bangkok allowed them to consume and frequent restaurants and bars more often than they could in their home cities. British "Dylan" claimed:

> The standard of living you have here. You can do things you wouldn't be able to do at home, and you do them much cheaper, and you can do them a lot. Like for instance, going out to eat. I'm constantly out eating. The food I eat here in a week, is probably the same I would eat in a year back home. Back home you go eat sushi or something for a special meal, but here I go eat sushi nearly every week. It's a big part of your life here, going out to eat, and going out socializing as well. So, the food. The lifestyle.

Thus, the affordability to eat out often, especially compared to their affordability to eat out at restaurants and bars in their home country, positively impacted participants' quality of life.

Beyond providing a better lifestyle, consuming both Thai food and various unfamiliar "exotic" non-Western foods participants were provided a way to interact and experience the "other." Furthermore, through consuming unfamiliar and foreign foods, participants own personal and national identities were reinforced by experiencing the "otherness" through food. Through eating Bardhi et al. (2010, 133) noted, "Food is the site where the relationship between the self and the other is contested." Similarly, Germann-Molz (2007) discussed world travelers who engaged in "culinary tourism" which involved individuals utilizing exploratory food practices to "consume" the exotic "other" and experience new cultures. Moreover, Germann-Molz (2007) claims the consumption of non-Western food in combination with travel and exposure to different cultures leads to individuals to become "cosmopolitanized." A few older participants reported seeking out Western food and restaurants for comfort and familiarity. However, in general, most participants actively sought out Thai food, and very few reported negative experiences in regards

to their encounters with Thai and other non-Western cuisines. This openness to try unfamiliar foods and seeking new cultural experiences is a reflection of the research participants' cosmopolitan attitude and lifestyle. Thus, unlike assigned expatriates, who are reported to mostly seek out familiar Western foods, participants in this study showed a willingness to adapt and eat local cuisines.

2. Climate and Weather

For participants from cooler regions, climate and weather were another motivating "pull" factor for relocation to Thailand. Moreover, many participants discussed weather in their home country as a negative driver or "push" factor. British participants particularly stressed that undesirable weather conditions in their home country was a motivating factor for expatriation. British "Carol" stated:

> The weather I think, is probably one of the main reasons. People say, "It's too hot and sunny!" But I like it. Getting up in the morning in the UK, it's cold, it's wet, it's dreary. You get out of the shower, and you're cold, and you don't want to do anything. I get up about three hours earlier here, but it's still easier. In the UK, you have to go outside and defrost your car and it's cold. I don't know, that's one factor. The weather.

Similarly, British "Benny" said, "One major thing for me is climate. Winter in the UK is grey and windy, it's depressing." and British "Henry" said, "I love the weather [in Thailand], that's a major thing for me. Being English we have the most dreadful weather. England is cold, dark, wet and rainy all at the same time." American participants from the Northeast, also discussed weather as a motivating factor to expatriate. American "Steve" stated:

> When I first came here I came to visit a friend, and I knew nothing about Thailand. I thought Thailand and Taiwan was the exact same thing, and when I came here I couldn't believe the weather. I couldn't believe how cheap it was, and I was impressed with the quality of living… After that I could not go back to the weather of North America.

Although climate and weather is mentioned as a "pull" factor in some expatriation and tourism literature (Howard 2009a; Thorn 2009), there appears to be an overall absence of studies which specifically examine weather and climate as main factors driving mobility. However, in regards to participants in this study, weather and climate was a significant "pull" factor.

3. Friendly People

Thai people are world-renowned for their friendliness, and the often-touted moniker of Thailand is the "Land of Smiles." Thus, many research participants expressed that Thai people are friendly and accommodating. American "Brad" noted the following, "The people are very friendly, not just the people dealing with tourists, but in general the people are friendly, throughout Thailand." Friendly people and the overall feeling of safety was expressed by many participants. For example, American "Blanche" stated, "I like the chaos of Bangkok. But I also feel safe, no problems with walking alone, I'm sure there are areas you shouldn't walk in, but for the most part people are nice and friendly."

Ironically, this idealized vision of Thai friendliness, which is usually first experienced in the context of a holiday, became challenged by participants who lived in Thailand for longer periods. Some participants who had spent many years in Thailand expressed disillusionment with Thai society and culture, and claimed Thai people were not as friendly as in the past. Moreover, some participants claimed Thais were becoming more aggressive and xenophobic towards Westerners in recent years and no longer wanted foreigners in their country. For example, American "Rick" stated, "I am seeing more Thais wanting to have a confrontation with Westerners. They are wanting to show Westerners that they are the boss and that Thailand is their country. So, that's the one thing I've noticed more... I think there is some xenophobia, but I think it's more about a society that's completely lost…" Furthermore, through convenience interviews

some participants expressed "orientalist" (Said 1978) attitudes towards Thais, and claimed they were mostly backwards, lazy, and uneducated. These sentiments were mostly shared by older participants within the study group, and less so by younger participants. So, although Thai friendliness was often noted as a motivating "pull" factor for expatriation, some participants provided a less complimentary description of Thai people and society.

4. Travel Opportunities

Travel within the Thai kingdom, and using Bangkok as a base for travel to visit other places in Southeast Asia, was another motivating "pull" factor which encouraged participants to expatriate to Thailand. In general, participants spoke highly of the beautiful beach locales and physical scenery of Thailand. Furthermore, the ability to easily travel during work holidays and weekends was mentioned as a positive attribute of living in Thailand. For example, British "Gary" emphasized this point, "English people will save money for a whole year just to come to Thailand for holiday. But if you live here, it's on your doorstep, you can go to a world-class beach on the weekend." Furthermore, many participants talked about the ability to travel to other nearby countries. American "Leo" said, "As far as quality of life and things go, it's a good base for travel… I've been to Laos. I've been to Cambodia a couple of times. I've been to Malaysia… It's cheap. It's easy!" According to participants, cheap and easy travel positively contributed to their lifestyle in Thailand, especially when compared to their home country. British "Oliver" explained:

> I think my lifestyle is much better here than it would be back home. That's not just for financial reasons. There's just a lot to do here, because it's the main travel hub of Southeast Asia. There's tons of opportunity to travel. The lifestyle here, there is always somewhere to travel or something to do… It's just a comfortable life… I just think it would be better for me than it would be back home.

Undeniably, the motivation to travel and explore foreign locales is a major factor which drives participants in this study to visit additional places in the Global South.

Thang et al. (2002) contend Japanese women are motivated to expatriate to Singapore because it is viewed as a travel hub. Richardson and McKenna (2002) note that Western academicians mainly relocate to Qatar in order to see more of the world and experience a new adventure. Howard (2008; 2009a), and Ó Brien (2009, 2010) mention that Westerners are motivated to relocate to Thailand because of the travel opportunities the kingdom offers. Additionally, Butler and Hannam (2014) claim Western expatriates are motivated to move to Kuala Lumpur because they want to travel and experience new places and cultures. Similarly, when I asked American "Leo" why he had moved to Thailand, he simply exclaimed, "I wanted to see more of the world!"

To be sure, travel and adventure was often a topic of discussion amongst Western expatriates in Bangkok. Through fieldwork, I observed conversations between Western expatriates which involved telling stories of exploits in Thailand as well as in other non-Western locales, which often times ended up in a competitive form of one-upmanship. One common conversation among expatriates in Bangkok, involved inquiring about how long other expatriates had lived in Thailand. Some expatriates who had lived many years in Thailand felt they were superior to those who had only lived in Thailand of a short time, and they specifically looked down on tourists. Another form of one-upmanship involved discussing how many countries one had traveled and visited. Often these narratives shared between Western expatriates were leveraged as a sort of social capital within expatriate groups, and also used as a way to distinguish oneself from out groups or the "other,", namely non-Westerners and tourists. Likewise, Korpela (2010) claimed that within Western backpacker discourse, travelling to India is seen as a challenge and adventure, which can be used to discover oneself, as well as define one's Western identity. Thus, Westerners utilize travel experiences, as well as expatriation to go especially to

places in the Global South, such as India or Thailand, as a way to confirm their Western identities, namely through their relation to the "other." Thus, travel played an important role in participants' lives, as it was an important "pull" factor, which encouraged participants to expatiate to Thailand, and also reinforced a Western "superior" identity.

5. Availability of Attractive Sexual Partners

Another major "pull" factor mentioned by many participants was the availability of attractive sexual partners in Bangkok. Since the beginnings of the Vietnam War, Western men have been drawn to Thailand in order to pursue sexual experiences made available by the relatively open practice of prostitution allowed in the country (Suntikul 2012). Additionally, the sex industry in Bangkok has been fueled by the West's representation of Thailand as a sexual paradise for men, where Western sexual norms and boundaries are ignored (Kang 2011). This stereotype has a long history, dating back to the 1960's, when Western news media and tourist advertisements began promoting Bangkok as the "sex capital of the world" and the "brothel of the East" (Lenore 1995). Furthermore, the West promoted Bangkok as a "gay heaven," because homosexuality is widely accepted in the kingdom, compared to the West, as it is neither illegal nor considered immoral according to Buddhist texts (Jackson and Sullivan 1999). Thai society is also considerably tolerant to Thailand's crossdressing third gender, called *kathoey* in Thai. Accordingly, the West has interpreted Thai society to be more sexually open and carefree. Subsequently, the West has represented, as well as promoted and advertised, Thailand in a distinct "orientalist" way (Said 1978), as being exotic and sensual. As recent as March 2019, Air Asia used the slogan "Get Off in Thailand" on numerous billboard's and buses around Brisbane, Australia, and subsequently received criticism for promoting sex tourism to Thailand (BBC News 2019).

However, Thai participants in this study contended that the West's representation of Thailand as a sexual paradise is exaggerated and not an accurate reflection of Thai culture and

values. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has also aimed to change Bangkok's debaucherous reputation through promoting Thailand as a family-friendly destination (Khamphee 2018). Nevertheless, in reality, the sex trade continues unabated, and although technically prostitution is illegal in the kingdom, the Thai authorities rarely intervene in the wide spread practice (Cavaglion 2016). Subsequently, Bangkok continues to allow countless massage parlors to operate, and the infamous red-light districts, such as *soi* Cowboy, Nana Plaza, and Patpong attracts thousands of Western sex-tourist annually (Cavaglion 2016). Depending on the report, the sex industry contributes anywhere from two to 10 percent of Thailand's GDP (Chaiyot 2016). Yet, allegedly most commercial related sex transactions in Thailand are domestic, which occur predominately between Thai men and Thai women, whereas foreigners represent a small proportion of sex trade customers (Kempadoo and Doezma 2018). However, prostitution aimed at foreigners occurs in visible areas such as the main tourist and expatriate districts in the center of Bangkok, which help support the reputation of Bangkok as a sex tourist haven (Cohen 2012).

Furthermore, through my observations, sexualized tropes about Thai women, as being exotic, subservient, and promiscuous is reinforced through the interactions Westerners have with Thai prostitutes or "bar girls" within the main tourist zones of Bangkok. These sexualized tropes are also promoted through participant discourses about Thai women. In regards to this study, some participants claimed they were motivated to expatriate to Bangkok, because of the sexual experiences they had during their long-term travel or holidays. For example, when asked what motivated him to relocate to Bangkok, American "Sam" stated, "The girls, I mean, if you are going to be honest are very pretty… It's a fun place. It's the reason why so many tourists come here." Likewise, British "Oliver" said: "It's better here [in Bangkok] because it's way more fun. That's the reason I came here. And I've had a lot of fun here for a long time. For the first six months I was single, and partying and having sex with many girls. I was really living that life!"

American "Glenn" expressed a similar sentiment about Thai women and the Thai nightlife, and explained his own experience:

> I love the party atmosphere here [in Bangkok]. I love the Thai women, I love the bars, I love the club scene, and I love the parties. It's an adult playground! I think it's hard to compare to other places. I don't know where else that's quite like Bangkok.

Thus, some participants initially visited Thailand as sex tourist and experienced the availability of many sexual partners, which influenced them to return to Thailand to live more long-term.

A Westerner who primarily relocates to Thailand for the sex trade is colloquially referred to as a "sexpat." Although, this term is mainly reserved for Westerners living in Pattaya city, it is sometimes applied to Westerners who live in Bangkok and frequent red-light districts. For example, when asked to clarify the meaning of the term "sexpat," British "Dylan" defined it as he understood it to mean: "It's someone who is on a pension or something from home, and he lives in Pattaya all year round. Just because life is easier, and he can sleep with as many women as he likes, or as many women he can afford. That's a sexpat." More importantly, "sexpat" was a label and identity most male research participants did not want to be associated with, due to the negative implications the term carries. However, despite not wanting to be identified as "sexpats," many participants did admit the high availability of attractive sexual partners played a role in their decision to relocate to Bangkok.

Additionally, a common stereotype, which was reinforced through both Thai and expatriate discourse, was that many Western males come to Thailand mainly to seek out romantic companionship, because they were unable to find partners in their home countries. However, once in Thailand Western men can leverage their increased socio-cultural capital related to their visible identity as white Westerners and find attractive partners. Even Westerners from working class backgrounds are viewed as wealthy and desirable (Thongchai 2010). For some Thai women,

especially from the poor northeastern region of Thailand, Western men are highly valued "commodities," because of their perceived ability to provide security and freedom to their partners. Often times, Thai women engaged in tourist-orientated jobs, such as prostitution, obtaining a relationship or marriage with a white Westerner as a way to gain long-term financial support and to receive respect from their families (Cohen 2003; Howard 2009a). Thus, Western men can acquire Thai partners relatively easily, especially when compared to finding partners in their home country. This sentiment was expressed by one Thai female participant "Nut" who recognized this social factor:

> *Farang* are treated like Kings. Thai people think *farang* have money, so poor Thai people see *farang* as a walking bags of money. *Farang* men are treated well because the girls think they are rich. Rich men here can get whatever they want. Many Thai girls are looking for old rich *farang* men. For example, an old retired man cannot find a young attractive girl in his own country so he must come to an Asian country.

Stanley (2012, 221) refers to this as the "superhero" phenomenon, which is due to the way Western masculinity is valued and constructed differently in East Asia. This is similar to Farrer (2002) who shows that Western masculinity is idealized by Chinese women in Shanghai, and Western men are sought after for their perceived ability to provide wealth and the chance to move abroad.

For research participants, the ability to find companionship, as well as employment, was due to the positive attributes Thais assigned to Western men, such as wealth, beauty, and masculinity, which is a distinct "occidentalist" view (Carrier 1995). Some participants themselves also fueled the ideal of white masculinity through their discourse, promoting an "orientalists" view of Thai men as being lazy, weak, feminine, or unreliable. In his study about sex tourism in Thailand, Garrick (2005) noted that "white knight" rescuing discourse was prevalent among Western men, as they would argue that Thai women needed to be saved from Thai men, because

they were bad partners who cheated and were abusive. These sentiments were expressed by some male participants, and they also perpetuated the idea that Westerners were better lovers and providers. The perception of Westerners as ideal partners, especially when compared to Thai men, was maintained by both Western and Thai discourses, which gave male participants in this study an advantage in acquiring Thai romantic and sexual partners.

Conversely, for female research participants, their identities as white Westerners held less socio-cultural capital, and consequently many complained about the difficulty of finding suitable romantic partners in Bangkok, especially those who desired Western partners. The difficulty of Western women to find expatriate men is Asia is well documented (Fechter 2007a, 2007b; Farrer and Dale 2014; Lehman 2014: and Hof 2017). Female participants complained that Western men in Thailand typically pursued local Thai women because of their perceived submissiveness and sexual promiscuity. However, not all female participants desired Western participants, as some female participants expressed their preference for Asian men, thus they mostly engaged in sexual or romantic relationships with Thai locals or with Asians of other nationalities. One participant even referred to herself as female "sexpat" because of the many sexual encounters she had with local Thai men and Cambodian migrants. Yet, in general, female participants reported difficulties in finding suitable partners.

In an overview, the majority of male research participants reported an increased ability to find companionship when holidaying or living in Bangkok. Furthermore, most male participants mentioned the availability of attractive partners as a main motivating "pull" factor for relocation to Thailand. Correspondingly, Howard (2008; 2009a) claimed Western men are drawn to Thailand because of the availability of many affable romantic and sexual partners. Yet, in general, numerous factors contributed to participants expatriating to Thailand. For example, British "George" stated, "I like the low cost of living. I like the climate here. I like the ladies

here… That's definitely been a good thing. Thai women are attractive, but that's not the only reason I've stayed here."

Combination of Lifestyle Factors

In general, participants provided a long list of lifestyle factors which motivated them to expatriate and live in Bangkok, Thailand. For example, American "Lois" stated, "Thailand just works for us. There is good infrastructure, good medical and healthcare… They are friendly. The cost of living is good, the food is good, and the weather is good. Thailand works." Thus, participants relocated to Bangkok seeking a lifestyle that provided access to all of the desirable amenities and traits of Thailand, which most of the participants experienced initially on their holiday(s) to the country. The main attributes which attracted the participants to relocate to Thailand include (but was not limited to): a low cost of living, the food, warm weather, friendly people, travel opportunities, and availability of attractive sexual partners. Some participants also mentioned nightlife, safety, and cheap, reliable medical care as reasons for relocating to Thailand.

Additionally, "white" participants particularly enjoyed the experience of a perceived higher social status in Thailand. A few participants claimed they were treated as "rock stars" or "celebrities" while holidaying or living Thailand. For example, when discussing a visit to the hospital during his holiday, American "Eugene" stated, "I went to Ramkhamhaeng hospital, and it was fine. They walk you around everywhere, because they know you don't speak Thai. You feel like a rock star! I think they are happy to meet an American. If you are respectful back to them, they treat you good as well." Similarly, Lan (2011, 1679) comments that "white privilege" is omnipresent in the everyday lives of Westerners in Taiwan as they are received as the superior "other" by their Taiwanese hosts. The feeling of receiving a "rock star" treatment, is an example of the higher socio-cultural status Westerners experience in Thailand, which encourages them to visit again, and in the case of participants in this study, to expatriate to live long-term.

Overall, nearly all the research participants conveyed a sense that they had a higher standard of living or better lifestyle in Thailand, when compared to their home countries, which suggests that lifestyle expatriation is a comparative exercise, involving comparing one's home to the destination country. Ono (2015) referred to young Japanese males who relocate to Thailand, as "socio-economic refugees" who escape Japan in search of better life abroad. Similarly, many of the participants moved to Thailand in order to escape the stressful lives they experienced in their home countries. Moreover, this comparative exercise involves reflecting and comparing one's self-identity and socio-cultural status that is experienced in their home country, to the new status and identity they experience while visiting or living in Thailand.

Discussion

In this chapter, I examined structural and individual motivational factors that drive self-initiated expatriation to Thailand. As an overview, Thai immigration policies both enable and hamper expatriation to Thailand. Thai immigration allows for persons over the age of 50 with sufficient funds to stay in the kingdom, as well as individuals who have acquired work permits and visas from a sponsoring school or company. Yet, long-term stays are denied for Westerners who cannot acquire a sponsoring organization or are under the age of 50, unless they are willing to pay for an "Elite" visa. Despite these immigration policies, it appears low cost of living enabled by economic disparities between the Global North and Global South, as well as the ability to acquire gainful employment are the main structural factors enabling expatriation to Thailand. Beyond that, self-initiated expatriation to Thailand is mainly a lifestyle choice driven by the many positive attributes and amenities of the kingdom. Notably, expatriation to Thailand is driven by tourism, because most Westerners initially enjoy the numerous attributes and amenities of Thailand on holiday, and then are motivated to return to the country to live long-term. Altogether, the main "pull" factors were the positive lifestyle attributes and amenities of Thailand. Additionally, due to persistent neocolonial and "orientalist" attitudes, participants were

drawn to relocate to Thailand because they enjoyed an improved socio-economic status due to their visible identity as white Westerners. Additionally, the main "push" factors were Westerners desire to escape the economic demands and stressful environments of their home countries. In the next chapter I will discuss the everyday lives of participants, focusing on their spatial distribution, the spaces and places they frequented, as well as the transportation strategies they used to successfully adapt and live in Bangkok, Thailand.

CHAPTER V

"NOW YOU SEE EXPATS ALL OVER THE PLACE": SPATIAL INTEGRATION AND THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

Introduction

In the chapter above, I discussed the structural and motivational push and pull factors that influence Westerners to expatriate to Bangkok. In this chapter, I examine the everyday lives of Western expatriates, with focus on their spatial and social integration. I explore their mobility, the spaces and places they live and frequent, as well as the social interactions they have with local Thais, tourists, and other migrant groups within "contact zones" of Bangkok. I interpret my analyses using a postcolonial lens, considering the impact of Western expatriates' housing strategies on the gentrification processes occurring in Bangkok, and how their daily practices and mobility reinforce and produce both social and spatial inequalities.

Most literature on assigned expatriates, as well as literature on privileged mobility and lifestyle migration, present Western expatriates as advantaged persons who live their everyday lives apart or separated from the host society and culture they live in (Cohen 1977, 1984; Beaverstock 2002, 2005, 2011; Farrer 2010a, 2011; Leonard 2008, 2010; Walsh 2007). Previous research emphasizes that Western expatriates daily lives transpire in an "expatriate bubble" (Cohen 1977; Fechter 2007a; Smiley 2010a, 2010b; Croucher 2012; Butler and Hannam 2014)

segregated from the "other" (Said 1978). Thus, Western expatriates are assumed to live, dine, shop, and socialize strictly within Western-orientated spaces and places. Conversely, most participants in this study lived in Thai neighborhoods and frequented non-Western spaces. However, despite their greater spatial integration, at least when compared to assigned expatriates, outside of commercial transactions and romantic relations with Thai partners, participants generally lived socially separated lives from Thai citizens. This is reflected in participants' housing strategies as well as the spaces they frequented. Thus, as shown in the chapter participants are spatially integrated with Thais, yet living relatively socially segregated lives.

Research Questions

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the following research questions:

2a. How do U.S. and U.K. SIEs spatially integrate within the Thai population?

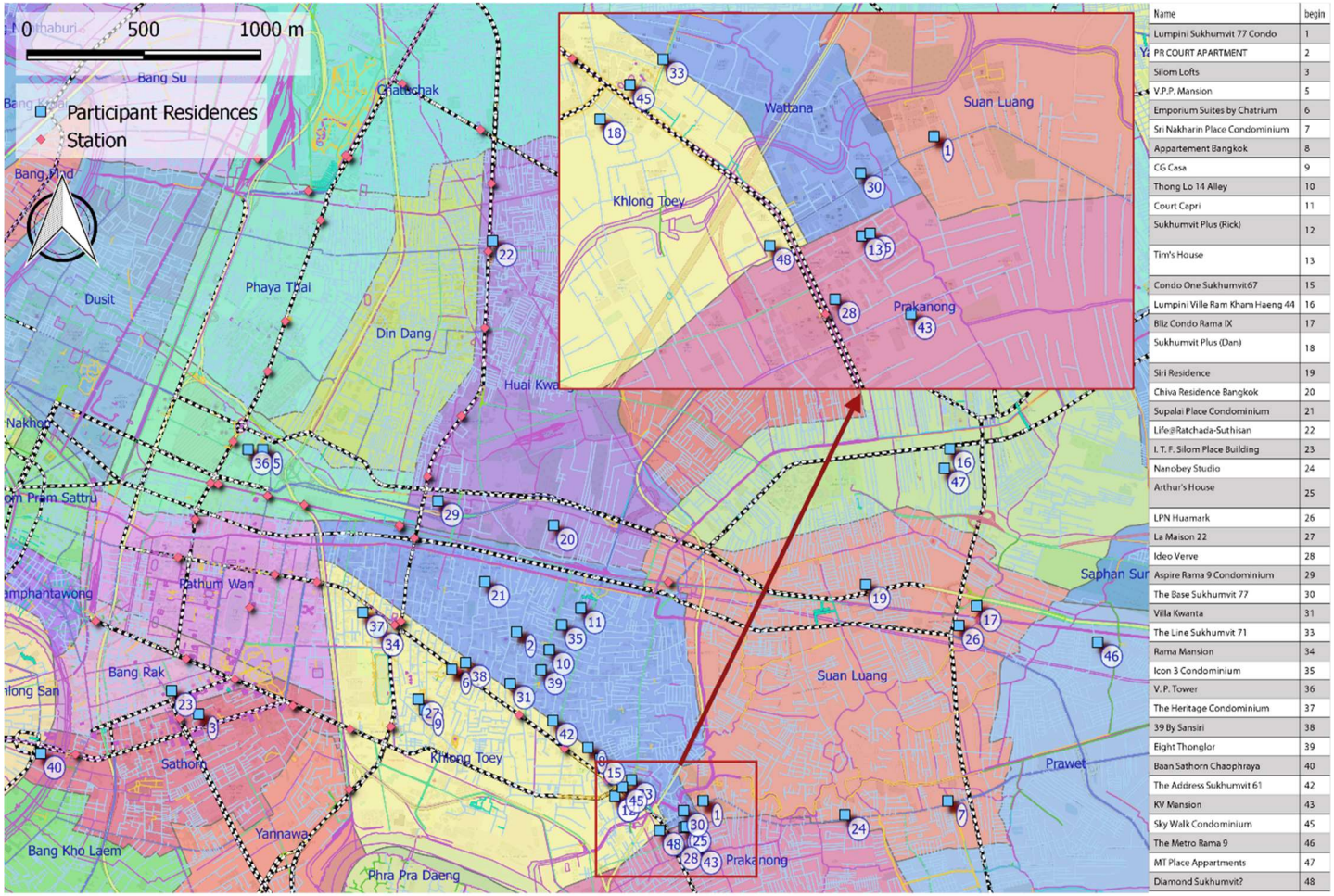
2b. What type of daily activities do SIEs carryout after expatriating to Bangkok, Thailand?

In this first section, I describe the residential distribution and selection strategies of Western SIEs, and examine whether they are spatially segregated or integrated in regards to their physical living spaces. Furthermore, I examine how Western SIEs contribute to the gentrification processes occurring in Bangkok, as well as how they perpetuate neocolonial relations through their housing strategies. Next, I discuss the mobility and everyday activities and places related to living and working in Bangkok. I conclude the chapter with a summary of my findings.

Residential Distribution and Expatriation Influenced Gentrification

When compared to traditional expatriates or assigned expatriates living in other countries, participants in this study were relatively spatially integrated with local citizens, at least in regards to the neighborhoods they reside. As noted in the methods chapter, although participants lived in central Bangkok, mostly in or around major transportation hubs in lower and upper Sukhumvit,

they were not residing in exclusive expatriate enclaves, but instead they were somewhat evenly distributed throughout the city, living in Thai or mixed neighborhoods and/or apartment blocks. A Muslim or Arab ethnic enclave exists on *soi* 3 in lower Sukhumvit (Cohen and Neal 2012), but no distinct areas or districts are strictly reserved for Western expatriates (see Figure 6).



Name	begin
Lumpini Sukhumvit 77 Condo	1
PR COURT APARTMENT	2
Silom Lofts	3
V.P.P. Mansion	5
Emporium Suites by Chatrium	6
Sri Nakharin Place Condominium	7
Appartement Bangkok	8
CG Casa	9
Thong Lo 14 Alley	10
Court Capri	11
Sukhumvit Plus (Rick)	12
Tim's House	13
Condo One Sukhumvit67	15
Lumpini Ville Ram Kham Haeng 44	16
Biliz Condo Rama IX	17
Sukhumvit Plus (Dan)	18
Siri Residence	19
Chiva Residence Bangkok	20
Supalai Place Condominium	21
Life@Ratchada-Suthisan	22
I. T. F. Silom Place Building	23
Nanobey Studio	24
Arthur's House	25
LPN Huamark	26
La Maison 22	27
Ideo Verve	28
Aspire Rama 9 Condominium	29
The Base Sukhumvit 77	30
Villa Kwanta	31
The Line Sukhumvit 71	33
Rama Mansion	34
Icon 3 Condominium	35
V. P. Tower	36
The Heritage Condominium	37
39 By Sansiri	38
Eight Thonglor	39
Baan Sathorn Chaophraya	40
The Address Sukhumvit 61	42
KV Mansion	43
Sky Walk Condominium	45
The Metro Rama 9	46
MT Place Appartments	47
Diamond Sukhumvit?	48

Figure 6. Participant Residences in Bangkok, Thailand. (Map by Jamey Voorhees)

As shown by Figure 6, research participants were widely distributed throughout the city, with many living near or around Sukhumvit road. Altogether, half of the participants (25 in total) lived in the upper Sukhumvit area, with clustering around the Prakanong and On Nut Skytrain stations. Only two participants lived in lower Sukhumvit, which is most likely due to the high cost of housing and living in that area. Five participants lived in or around *soi* Thonglor (i.e., Sukhumvit *soi* 55), a sought-after residential area by affluent Western expatriates, due to its high concentration of upper-end boutique shops and trendy restaurants and night clubs. Additionally, *soi* Thonglor is an area associated with wealthy Thais, commonly referred to as "hi-so" Thais, and it is also the home to the largest Japanese expatriate community in Thailand. Two of participants lived in the Sathorn area, within walking distance of the Silom Skytrain line. Sathorn is the one of main financial districts of Bangkok, and is second only to lower Sukhumvit in terms of attractions and nightlife, making it another area popular with Western tourists and expatriates alike. However, like lower Sukhumvit, this area is also known for its higher cost of living. The remainder of participants (those living away from central Sukhumvit and Sathorn), were spread throughout the city, but typically located within walking distance of public transport hubs, such as the BTS Skytrain, MRT, and Airport Rail Link terminals. The few participants living away from public transport hubs, were participants who possessed their own car or motorbike.

With regards to the ethnic and socio-economic make-up of Bangkok's neighborhoods and districts, most the participants perceived the city as being relatively integrated. For example, during a semi-structured interview with British "Dylan," I asked whether or not Bangkok was ethnically integrated or segregated, he replied:

> I would say integrated. Not fully integrated, but integrated better here than other countries I have seen. Even better here than at home in the UK. Because there are certain areas where there are a lot of *farang*, but they are spread out, we don't have exclusive *farang* areas really, I guess you have areas like On Nut or lower Sukhumvit where a lot of expats live, but you don't have like back home... Where you have Muslim areas and African areas,

> and where you have different pockets of people that are separate from the locals, you don't have that here really.

Additionally, when discussing the socio-economic make-up of Bangkok's neighborhoods and districts, American "Leo" stated, "There are very few exclusively rich neighborhoods, or even exclusively poor neighborhoods, everything is pretty integrated. Poor living around the rich, it's not like America where neighborhoods are more segregated." Thus, research participants perceived themselves as living in relatively ethnically and socio-economically integrated neighborhoods and districts.

Yet, despite most participants perceived their neighborhoods to be mostly integrated, with a mixture between foreigners and Thais, some participants noted that their neighborhoods were changing, and becoming more Western and upscale, in regards to the demographics, housing, and amenities. The processes associated with these types of changes in a neighborhood are typically referred to as gentrification. In general, gentrification is a term associated with the processes of socioeconomic change to a neighborhood, in which lower income residents are displaced by new, relatively wealthier residents (Hackworth 2002). This gentrification process, and coinciding mass displacement, is occurring at a large scale throughout the Global South (Harris 2008; Shaw 2008; Lees 2012), in large cities such as Manila (Choi 2016), Shanghai (He 2009), Singapore (Wong 2006), and Seoul (Shin 2009). Although, the main type of gentrification occurring in these large cities in the Global South is mostly "new-build gentrification," which refers to state-facilitated large-scale development, including the construction of new mass transit systems, retail shopping malls and condominiums (Davidson and Lees 2005). However, research on new-build gentrification in the Global South is in its infancy, and with the exception of Moore (2015), little academic research on gentrification in Bangkok, Thailand exists.

Furthermore, gentrification driven or influenced by Western tourism and expatriation in the Global South is even less studied (Cócola-Gant 2018). However, through this study, and

reflected in the map above, I found that Western expatriates are beginning to cluster around the Prakanong and On Nut Skytrain stations, and subsequently contributing to the gentrification processes occurring in these locations. I contend that the concentration of Western expatriates near these mass transit stations is creating pockets of tourism and expatriation influenced gentrification. For example, American "Rick" who lived nearby the On Nut Skytrain station, noticed the changes in his neighborhood and stated, "It's more Thai here, but it's becoming more and more expat. On Nut is slowly becoming more and more expats." Similarly, British "Oscar" observed, "It used to be, Prakanong and On Nut were way out. Only Thais before, but now you see expats all over the place. More and more Westerners." Research participants claimed they were drawn to Prakanong and On Nut because of the relatively low cost of living in these areas, at least when compared to lower Sukhumvit and other popular expatriate areas like Thonglor. Additionally, participants were attracted to the transportation convenience provided by the Skytrain terminals located in both Prakanong and On Nut neighborhoods.

Besides, Western expatriates, middle-class and affluent Thais and Chinese are drawn to the many modern amenities, such as new shopping malls, retail stores, and restaurants which are located near or around mass transit hubs in both Prakanong and On Nut (Vorng 2011). Moore (2015) notes that Western style consumption venues are mostly concentrated around mass transit hubs in Bangkok, such as Skytrain stations. However, modern amenities that attract Western expatriates and affluent Thais, change the landscape and demographics of neighborhoods. British "Gareth," who lived in Prakanong, stated:

> The immediate area is mainly Thais, and there are plenty of *farang* around. Prakanong used to be a very Thai area, but it's changing… all it takes is going a couple of stops down the BTS. It's Sukhumvit, which is an area a lot of expats live, although my immediate area, Prakanong, has less… I would consider it a Thai area… There's not really any places that are aimed at Westerners or expats… Prakanong is just a little bit beyond that area. Although there is development all around, there is a lifestyle mall being built, which will have coffee shops and things, it's

> spreading out, it's spreading, over the next couple of years you will have more *farang* living here, and there will be more things for *farang*.

Although the exact numbers are difficult to measure, working-class Thais are being pushed out of the areas immediately surrounding BTS Skytrain stations, and they are subsequently replaced with wealthier residents, such as Western expatriates and more affluent Thais. Moore (2015) noted that new-build gentrification is occurring around public transit hubs throughout Bangkok causing dislocation of working-class Thai residents. Correspondingly, as explained in the methods chapter, developers are building more modern-style housing and facilities along the eastern side of the Sukhumvit Skytrain route that encourage wealthier Thais and Westerners to move to these areas, and subsequently contribute to the gentrification process.

Historically, Prakanong and On Nut were predominately areas for lower to middle class Thai neighborhoods (Vorng 2011). However, both the demographics and landscape of these areas are changing due to the development of the BTS Skytrain. Before the BTS Skytrain was built, the areas around Prakanong and On Nut were mostly comprised of low-rise apartments and shop-houses, which were occupied by lower to middle-class Thais. However, in the last few years low-rise apartments have mostly been replaced with high-rise modern condominiums, and night markets and street vendors have been supplanted by modern style community malls and restaurants. According to the Guardian (2017) approximately 15,000 street food vendors, as well as popular marketplaces such as the On Nut night market, have closed in Bangkok due to gentrification.

Prakanong and On Nut are becoming more developed and modern, and they are gentrifying in their own distinct ways. For example, Prakanong is experiencing a more classical or Western style of gentrification. Many new condominiums have been built around the Prakanong Skytrain station, and many older buildings, especially around the W-District

community mall have been re-appropriated for new uses. Previous low-rise apartment buildings have been remodeled and are now used as Western style bars, nightclubs, and restaurants which mostly cater towards tourists and expatriates. Additionally, numerous hostels, which mostly accommodate Western backpackers, have opened around the W-District area. In regards to new-build development, low-rise apartment buildings adjacent to the Prakanong Skytrain station were demolished in 2017, and replaced with the Summer Hill lifestyle mall, which houses a Starbucks, a Tops grocery store, a 24 hour fitness center, as well as other modern venues.

Conversely, the On Nut neighborhood is experiencing more transit orientated and commercialized new-build gentrification. The once vibrant On Nut night market, which was adjacent to the On Nut Skytrain terminal, was demolished in 2016 and replaced by a modern shopping mall, movie theater, and condominiums. American franchises such as McDonald's and Starbucks have both opened in the mall next to the On Nut Skytrain station, where the On Nut night market once stood. Additionally, a lifestyle market called Beacon Place, which is comprised of dozens of old shipping containers, is located a short walk from the On Nut Skytrain station. Beacon Place features a long-time popular dive bar called Cheap Charlie's, which was previously located on Sukhumvit *soi* 11. However, the original Cheap Charlie's bar was forced to move due to gentrification processes occurring in lower Sukhumvit. Beacon Place also has a craft beer bar, a wine bar, and other boutique Western and Japanese restaurants. Altogether, over the last few years, the areas around Prakanong and On Nut Skytrain stations have gentrified, becoming spaces which mostly cater to tourists and expatriates, as well as affluent Thais. Moreover, English is usually the main language spoken in these gentrified and largely westernized spaces, which socially marginalizes local Thais. Overall, in the case of neighborhoods such as Prakanong and On Nut, working-class Thais are being negatively impacted; namely through displacement, segregation, and social-spatial marginalization.

Housing Strategies and Impacts

Additionally, research participants' housing strategies often segregated them from the local Thai "other." For example, although participants resided in predominately Thai neighborhoods, albeit gentrifying ones, they generally occupied rooms in high-rise condominiums sheltered from the chaos of the busy sidewalks and street, and away from the Thai "other." Nearly all research participants lived in high-rise condominiums, typically one-bedroom or studio-style hotel rooms. Furthermore, most participants indicated they lived in relative comfort. Most new-build condominiums offer in-house gyms and swimming pools, and recreational rooms. Moreover, all condominiums have security personnel and CCTV monitoring systems, which provides security for residents, and prevents working-class Thai locals, as well as migrant construction workers from neighboring countries of Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia from entering. Thus, research participants were living in relatively segregated and privileged spaces.

Furthermore, when considering the quality, amenities, and service offered, condos in Bangkok are reasonably inexpensive for most Westerners, especially when compared to similar housing in large global cities in the West, such as New York or London. For instance, the average cost of rent for participants was approximately 15,000 Thai baht (or $500 USD) a month for a condominium in central Bangkok, whereas the average cost for a two-bedroom apartment in New York city is approximately $1,700 USD (or 56,000 Thai baht) and nearly $4000 USD (or 130,000 Thai baht) in Manhattan (Wallace 2015). Many participants admitted they were receiving better quality housing for the cost when compared to their home countries. For instance, when asked about his living situation, British Dylan said, "Much better than it would be at home. Much better quality of living here… I get a lot more for my money. I have a gym here and a pool. I'm near the BTS Skytrain."

Thus, the housing choices made by Western SIEs reflects the relative affluence and privilege they wield in a developing country like Thailand. As explained in the last chapter, Western SIEs take advantage of economic disparities between their home and host country, which allows them to get more for their money, and thus a better lifestyle. Hayes (2014) calls this "geographic arbitrage," and he argues that Westerners are not choosing to relocate to destinations in the Global South because they are wealthy enough to do so, but instead they are choosing countries that allow them to pursue a lifestyle they could not afford in their country of origin.

However, although participants could typically afford modern rental properties in Bangkok, most working-class Thais cannot afford to live in high-rent condominiums located nearby the Skytrain stations. Instead, most local Thais live in low-rise apartments and shop houses, typically located further up the *sois* and side streets away from the main roads. In general, middle-class Thais, Korean and Chinese, as well Western expatriates occupy higher rent condominiums, which are located nearby the Skytrain stations. In turn, this produces a socio-spatial exclusion of working-class Thais. Vorng (2011) and Jenks (2003) contended Bangkok is made-up of two separate worlds, with the BTS Skytrain representing globalization and modernity, and the vibrant streets below representing chaos and the local.

Additionally, since most participants in this study were renters, they were somewhat transient in nature. Thus, participants had no historical or familial ties to the areas they lived, and typically worked and socialized in other parts of Bangkok as well. For example, many participants who lived in On Nut and Prakanong utilized the Skytrain in order to visit the central business districts, namely Western tourist zones in lower Sukhumvit or Sathorn, which offered modern Western style restaurants and amenities. For example, British "Gareth," who lived near the Prakanong Skytrain station, stated, "You know, as long as I can get to *farang*, or other *farang* areas relatively easily, living near the BTS, I can just go a few stops down and be at regular *farang* hangouts." Thus, research participants mostly lived in Thai neighborhoods outside the city

center because of the low cost of living there, but they often frequented Western tourist zones for entertainment and socializing, reinforcing a Western identity.

Spatially Integrated but Socially Separated

Overall, when compared to previous studies about Western expatriates living in the Global South, participants were more spatially integrated, at least in regards to the neighborhoods where they resided. For comparison, Smiley's (2010a, 2010b) work on residential patterns in Dar es Salam showed, due namely to historical city ordinances there, that Westerners were segregated and clustered in expatriate "bubbles." Additionally, Croucher (2012) noted that Western expatriates throughout the Global South, residing in countries like Costa Rica, Mexico, Spain, Portugal, or Morocco, live in expatriate "enclaves" along with other foreigners. Therefore, it appears that Western SIEs living in Bangkok are more spatially integrated than Western migrants living in other parts of the Global South. However, despite the relatively high cohabitation and spatial integration of participants (.i.e., living in predominately Thai neighborhoods), meaningful social interactions with local Thais or other Asian migrant groups remained relatively low. This finding not only matches what other scholars have found about Western expatriates in other countries, but also matches what scholars have discovered about gentrification in the West. Typically, new residents of gentrified areas often self-segregate and have limited contact with long-term residents or local "others" in their neighborhood (Butler and Robson 2001; Butler 2003; 2007; Lees 2008; Davidson 2007; 2010).

From a postcolonial perspective, Western SIEs are play a role in the gentrification processes around areas such Prakanong and On Nut, as they are contributing to the white-Anglo appropriation of desirable areas in the center of Bangkok. Atkinson and Bridge (2005) refer to gentrification as the "new urban colonialism," and claim gentrification in the Global South in general is a form of neocolonialism. In areas such as Prakanong and On Nut, neocolonial

inequality is produced as local working-class Thais are dislocated, and subsequently lose socio-spatial capital associated with living near mass transit hubs. Many working-class Thais, as well as laborers from nearby countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, typically cannot afford to live in the new-build high-rise condominiums located nearby mass transit terminals. Thus, a divide has emerged between local Thai residents and laborer migrants, who typically dwell in low-rise apartments, shop-houses, and makeshift housing located on side streets, and those living in high-rise condominiums located nearby modern amenities, such as Skytrain terminals and community malls. Not only does this divide create fragmented communities, but areas around Prakanong and On Nut are losing their "Thainess" or "sense of place" as they are becoming more Western, both demographically and structurally, which advances neocolonial geographies. Furthermore, Western SIEs further minimize social mixing with local Thais in their neighborhoods, because they often use the BTS Skytrain to travel to developed or tourist areas of town, such as lower Sukhumvit, for shopping, eating, and socializing. Overall, Western SIEs housing strategies and forms of spatial integration impacts the daily lives of local Thais, through social-spatial alienation, which reinforces neocolonial hierarchies. In the next section, I discuss everyday activities such as transportation, shopping, dining, and socializing.

Everyday Activities of Western SIEs

Although Western SIEs are relatively privileged and unique, they are similar to other international migrants because they face everyday challenges, such as acquiring housing, and securing work. Additionally, during their day-to-day lives, Western SIEs must navigate their way through a foreign environment, which includes mundane, yet sometimes challenging tasks, such as utilizing public transportation, shopping and acquiring suitable food, and negotiating public spaces and places. In this next section, I examine these challenges, and explore the ordinary everyday lives of the research participants in this study.

Public Transportation and Walking

As mentioned in the previous section, most participants depended on public transportation, as only 20% of them (10 of 50) acquired their own cars or motorbikes while living in Bangkok. However, even participants with their own vehicles stressed the importance of using public transport because Bangkok traffic congestion is notorious and can cause drivers hours of delay even for short-trips (Limanond et al. 2010). Due to this notoriously bad traffic, transportation strategies were important for research participants in order to avoid frustration over traffic congestion and long delays. To avoid traffic congestion, participants' daily activities mostly occurred near or around BTS Skytrain or MRT stations. American "Sam" stated, "Traffic is an issue. I don't like the traffic. So, I try to maximize my life around the Skytrain. I try to do that. So, yes. The Skytrain or subways are important for me. I don't like to get caught in traffic, but you can't avoid it sometimes…" Similarly, American "Charlie" stated:

> I try to keep my life around the BTS [Skytrain]. I don't venture far from the BTS. Sometimes I have to take a motorbike from the BTS, but I plan my life around the BTS. So, I live near the BTS, and I accept jobs that are within walking distance of the BTS, I do take taxis, but I try to limit it… That's a problem with Bangkok. It is a big city, and transport can be very difficult, traffic is a big problem, so I try to make my own life more convenient by using the BTS.

This preference for public transport is not typical for expatriates in other countries. For example, Fechter (2010) claimed expatriates in Jakarta, Indonesia escaped the "gaze" of the "other" (Hall 1996) through avoiding public spaces and public transportation, and instead favored using their own vehicles or taxis. Furthermore, most literature reports traditional expatriates are typically provided a company car and driver (Lan 2011; Liu et al. 2011; Alshahrani and Morley 2015), and thus typically do not need to rely on public transportation. Conversely, SIEs in Bangkok are responsible for obtaining and paying for their own forms of transportation, which some participants claimed was too expensive, and thus they relied heavily on public transport.

Similarly, Leonard (2008) reported that expatriates hired on local contracts in Hong Kong lived in predominantly Chinese neighborhoods, relied on public transport, and shopped in local markets in order to accommodate their lower income and status.

Other than the BTS Skytrain and MRT, participants mentioned using taxis and other forms of public transport that are unique to Southeast Asia and the Global South, such as motorbike taxis and auto-rickshaws, called *tuk tuk* in Thailand. However, many participants complained about these forms of transportation. One of the most common complaints voiced by research participants was about problems with taxis in Bangkok; partly because of language issues, and also due to Thai taxi drivers' penchant to refuse passengers service. Previous studies show both Western expatriates, as well as Thai citizens, have an overall negative perception about taxi drivers in Thailand (Thadphoothon 2017). Accordingly, most participants claimed to actively avoid taxis altogether.

Many participants also mentioned walking as part of their daily mode of transportation. For instance, American "Woody" stated, "I used to walk everywhere. At some point I started taking the train home…. I used to always walk, but now I take the bike, which is really lazy I guess, but I usually walk home… I try to avoid taxis at all costs." Although many participants relied on walking for their daily transportation, some participants complained about walking in Bangkok, because of the poor conditions of the sidewalks, or because the sidewalks were filled with street vendors, and often used by people on motorbikes. American "Simon" stressed, "You can't walk on the sidewalks, right? You can't walk from the BTS… Have you seen the sidewalk? Sidewalks are broken down, and motorbikes on the sidewalks, it's just too dangerous!"

Despite complaints about the condition of sidewalks, taxis, and traffic congestion, most participants expressed an overall appreciation for the Bangkok's transportation system, because

of its ease of accessibility, relative cheap cost, and due to the numerous options available. British "Chris," claimed:

> I've never had a problem with transportation, Thai transportation however rickety or disorganized it might be, there is always transport to take you somewhere, and the range of transport is one of the things that I think Thailand is very, very good at. Bikes, *tuk tuks*, taxis, BTS, the underground, everything. It's very well structured. It's kind of well broken down, a transport for every need, every niche is taken care of.

Due to participants' reliance on public transportation, they encountered Thai locals and other migrant groups on an everyday basis, yet this spatial integration did not necessarily lead to meaningful social interactions in public spaces. Although participants mentioned commercial exchanges with Thais in public, such as ordering food and purchasing tickets for public transport, they did not report meaningful social interactions that were a result of their daily commutes. Moreover, some participants mentioned avoiding taxis specifically, because they did not want to communicate with the taxi drivers, or because they did not have the Thai language skills to give directions. So, despite participants being spatially integrated through using public transport, they did not report any meaningful social interactions with Thais that occurred due to commuting through public spaces.

Additionally, participants' movement within public space was rarely impeded. Through participant observation, I noted that white Westerners are able to move freely throughout the city and enter establishments, especially those which cater to tourists, such as hotels, hostels, and restaurants, without being stopped or questioned by security. However, local Thais, especially working-class Thais, as well as other non-Westerners were typically denied this privilege, as security at many establishments would stop and question non-Westerners when they attempted to enter. This practice was especially pronounced at high-end hotels and condominiums, which had

security guard presence. Through convenience interviews participants referred to their unimpeded mobility and privilege as the "expat pass" or "white pass."

As an overview, research participants revealed similar strategies, issues, privileges, and constraints, that made their everyday activities related to transportation somewhat similar to each other. In general, for participants without their own vehicles, their mobility was mostly limited to spaces and places around public transport hubs, which many chose to reside nearby. Moreover, when compared to traditional expatriates, participants appeared to have more daily interactions with locals in public space, as they mostly relied on public transport. However, those participants mostly reported superficial or commercial interactions with Thais in public. So, despite being spatially integrated social interactions remained relatively low. In the next sub-sections, I will discuss shopping strategies, food and dining-out, as well as other activities and issues related to participants' everyday lives in Bangkok.

Shopping Habits and Preferences

1. Western-style Retailers:

With regards to acquiring daily necessities and food for home consumption, participants mostly made purchases in large Western-style supermarkets, including popular retailers in Thailand such as Tesco-Lotus, Big C, Tops, and Villa Market. For example, when asked about where he shopped, American "Fred" replied, "I like going to the Big C, and Central, or sometimes I go to the Tesco-Lotus at On Nut for groceries." Similarly, British "Archie" stated, "I tend to go to Big C at Ekkamai or Villa [Market] at Thonglor." Tesco-Lotus is the largest retailer in Thailand (Schaffner et al. 2005). After Tesco-Lotus, Big C, a Thai owned supermarket chain is the second largest retailer in Thailand. Tops was originally a US owned company, but it is now controlled by the Central Group of companies, which is one of Thailand's largest conglomerates, which

operates large shopping malls and department stores throughout Thailand. Villa Market is a Thai family-owned supermarket, which specializes in imported food and goods.

Although these retailers are competitors, they each offer similar goods and services, and they also provide shop floor layouts which are designed in a comparable style to large retailers in the West. Additionally, participants claimed they liked these large supermarkets because they offered services, goods, similar to large supermarkets or retailers found in the West. This helps explain why participants preferred to live near such amenities. Accordingly, Smiley (2010a, 2010b) found that Western expatriates in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania prefer to live nearby and shop in areas and stores which are similar to those found in the West. Further research has shown that Japanese expatriates living in Guangzhou, China, were reported to mostly shop in Japanese owned or Japanese-style supermarket chains, which provides the same products, services, and shop floor layouts as the stores in Japan (Liu et al. 2011). Thus, in regards to shopping for everyday items, studies have shown that expatriates have similar mindset to participants in this study, and they tend to seek-out comfort and familiarity.

Outside of large Western-style retailers, participants also mentioned shopping at small-scale convenient stores or locally owned shops near their home. When asked where he did his shopping, American "Charlie" replied, "7-11. I don't know. Essentials? I don't eat at home, so I don't buy many things, I go to the local mom and pop shop to buy toilet paper and water." Likewise, American "Fraser" stated, "If I need basic supplies it would be Tesco or maybe 7-11." In regards, to the convenient store market, 7-11 dominates Thailand. Western expatriates are often surprised about the sheer number of 7-11s in Thailand. With nearly 9,500 stores in the kingdom, half are located in Bangkok, 7-11s are ubiquitous throughout the country (Shannon 2014). Moreover, 7-11's, like the Western-style supermarkets mentioned above, are similar to, in terms of floor layout and goods offered, convenient stores found in the West, which makes them an attractive choice for expatriates. Family Mart is another Western-style convenient store,

mentioned by the participants, but this retailer controls a much smaller percentage of the convenient store market in Thailand when compared to 7-11 (Shannon 2009).

In general, participants purchased clothing and other accessories from Western-style retailers and shopping malls in Bangkok. Participants frequently mentioned Siam Paragon, Emporium, Emquartier, Central World, and Terminal 21 as places they frequented for shopping and entertainment. Additionally, each of these shopping malls are relatively similar, as they all have large food courts, as well as Western brand-name stores and restaurants, and most importantly they are all located within walking distance of BTS Skytrain or MRT transportation terminals. Coincidently, a few participants mentioned shopping specifically at H&M, a Swedish apparel company, which is popular in Europe and North America. For example, British "Carl" stated, "Clothes shopping I go to H&M always." and American "Leo" said, "If I need a shirt for work or something I will go to H&M in Siam Paragon." Shopping at specific stores might be an attempt to recreate a memory of home, or reinforce a Western identity. For example, Fechter (2010) as well as Hindman (2007) claimed that shopping at Western-style stores is central to identity-making for expatriates living abroad.

Furthermore, while conducting their shopping in the Bangkok cityscape, Western expatriates become visible in predominately Asian public space, and are sometimes stared at and called *farang*. Likewise, Fechter (2005) writes that while in public spaces in Jakarta, Western expatriates experience the "gaze" of locals and are referred to as *bule*, which means "white person" in Indonesian language. Hall (1996) refers to this experience as the "gaze of the other," which Fechter (2005) claims is an unsettling experience for Western expatriates in Jakarta. Although, the participants in this study did not voice concerns about going in public spaces, they still appeared to seek out familiar Western style shopping spaces to buy everyday items. Therefore, Westerners feel comfortable and trust shopping at places like 7-11, an American retail-chain, and Tesco, a British retailer. Altogether, in regards to shopping, participants appeared to

pursue a strategy which involved consuming and engaging with the familiar. From a postcolonial perspective, participants appear to consider Western style retailers as superior to local Thai markets and shops. Although, some participants mentioned buying fruit and vegetables from Thai markets, in general most participants carried out their shopping in Western style venues.

2. Shopping and Reliance on a Thai Partner

Another trend, which emerged from the data, was participants relied on their Thai spouse or partner for everyday shopping. For instance, when asked about shopping, British "David" simply stated, "I rarely shop. My wife goes shopping." and similarly, British "Dylan" replied, "I don't like shopping. Kate [his Thai live-in partner] does most of the shopping." British "Chris" said he would shop at Western style markets with his wife, but his wife would do the shopping for meat at the local Thai market. He stated, "We like to do that [shopping] together. It just feels good, to buy the food together. We usually go to Tops on Thonglor. I don't do Tesco, it's too cheap… Big C is the same. Tops has nice food. Except for meat, my wife buys that in the market." This quote reveals that the participant prefers shopping at places which provide him comfort and familiarity, yet relies on his Thai wife to purchase meat from the local Thai markets, which are more chaotic and unfamiliar.

Additionally, some participants' relied on their Thai partner to purchase their clothes, or have clothes sent to them from their home countries. For example, when asked about how he acquired clothing in Thailand, British "Ian" replied, "I really don't go shopping very much. Maybe once every six months I will buy a pair of shoes. For social clothes, my wife buys them, she knows what I like. Sport shorts and a polo shirt." Thus, some participants actively avoided the hassles of traveling and dealing with shopping in a foreign language. Moreover, with regards to gender roles, participants appeared be engaged in relatively traditional relationships.

Overall, from my observation and data, many *farang*-Thai relationships are more traditional and patriarchal, in regards to gender roles, when compared to the West. For example, most participants' spouses or partners were not employed, but instead were homemakers. Some participants even admitted to giving their spouses or girlfriends a monthly stipend or salary. Botterill (2016) mentions that *farang*-Thai marriages or relationships are often times reciprocal, where the Thai woman takes on traditional gender roles and values and "takes care" of her husband in an exchange of financial support and security. Due to the low salaries and income disparity in developing countries like Thailand, Howard (2008, 2009a) claims there has been an increase in Thai women, especially those from the poorer rural areas, who become *mia farang* (white foreigner's wife), as a way to secure a better life. Howard (2009a) reports that the northeast region, called *Issan* in Thai, has over 15,000 women who are married to Western husbands for money, security, and stability. This study mostly confirms these findings as many participants admitted to financially supporting their Thai partners, and in exchange their partners helped with everyday tasks, especially tasks requiring a Thai language speaker.

3. Thai-Style Markets

Although most participants frequented Western-style retailers, a few engaged with local Thai vendors. For example, some participants claimed to have clothes made for them by local tailors, which are relatively abundant and cheap, when compared to tailors in the West. For instance, British "Chris" said, "For work shirts or work clothes, I have them tailored. I get them from a tailor." And American "Sam" stated, "I know a tailor here for a long time, I get shirts made. He is a friend of mine." Noticeably, Sam's quote may indicate some social integration into the host society, as he has established trust with a local tailor who he refers to as a "friend." However, the local tailor was an ethnic Indian, which is an outgroup within Thai society, and even Thai born Indians are referred to as *kaek* or guest. Regardless, when compared to assigned expatriates' social networks, which are mostly composed of other white native English speakers, a few

participants established friendships or relationships with both local Thais and local non-Westerners, which suggest some participants made efforts to integrate with locals.

Food and Dining-Out

Individual eating practices varied among participants, most likely due to differences in personal tastes and economic status, although some general trends did emerge. First, participants tended to eat out quite frequently, especially when compared to their everyday lives in their home countries. Second, unlike traditional or assigned expatriates, who prefer to consume familiar domestic foods, as an identity anchor to their home country (Gilly 1995; Thompson and Tambyah 1999; Bardhi et al. 2010), most participants chose to eat Thai food regularly, or they at least claimed to consume a mixed diet of Thai, Asian, and Western food. Moreover, assigned expatriates reportedly prefer to dine and socialize in environments and spaces which reminisce their home country (Thompson and Tambyah 1999; Zimmerman, Holman, and Sparrow 2003; Beaverstock 2011; Liu et al 2011), whereas many of participants in this study claimed to eat at local Thai-style establishments, with some participants claiming to eat street food regularly. In this section, I discuss the types of food participants consumed, as well as the places they frequented for dining.

As mentioned above, assigned expatriates typically spurn local cuisine during their overseas assignments and prefer to eat domestic dishes they are more familiar; however, most participants claimed to eat a predominately Thai diet while living in Bangkok. For example, when I asked about his everyday diet, American "Leo" replied, "Generally Thai food, because it's convenient, easy, and cheap, and I like it." When discussing the make-up of their diet, some participants utilized percentages to express the type of food they ate. For example, when asked about his diet, British "Oscar" replied, "About 80% Thai… I prefer Western food for breakfast…

usually I like toast or porridge, but generally I eat Thai food, most of the time." Likewise, American "William" stated:

> Probably 90% Thai, just cheap and easy to get. Usually when I get Western food, the food is ten times more [expensive], and the taste, it's always disappointing. It always disappoints me. If I get a steak or something, I'm disappointed. There is a Western style brewery near here… a German brewery. I ordered a hamburger, the thing cost like 300 baht (approximately $10 USD), I was expecting something good, but it was like meatloaf, it was like a meatloaf burger!

Many participants expressed a similar sentiment; that Western food in Thailand was too expensive, or just not very tasty, so they preferred Thai food instead. For example, British "Dylan" stated, "You have to pay more to eat Western food here, or cook it yourself." Thus, most participants preferred to consume Thai food because it was healthy, when compared to Western food, as well as convenient, and reasonably cheap.

However, some participants consumed a mixed diet, consisting of both Asian and Western cuisines. For example, when discussing his diet, American "Jack" stated, "It's pretty mixed actually. Probably about 50% Thai, about 30% Western, and 20% other Asian food. I like Korean, I'm a big Korean food fan. I eat some Japanese, some Chinese sometimes." Similarly, other participants described their diet as a 50/50 ratio between Western and Asian cuisine. For instance, when discussing his diet, American "Daryl" stated, "I usually have two meals a day. One will be American the other will be Thai. Basically a 50/50 split." This openness and willingness to eat various non-Western foods is an example of the cosmopolitan attitude and identity some participants displayed, as they were not solely seeking out Western food, but instead eating foods from various cultures.

With regards to cooking or dining out, many participants claimed it was cheaper and more convenient to dine out in Bangkok, rather than cook at home. For example, when asked

about dining, British "Benny" stated, "It's so cheap to eat out here. By the time you buy the ingredients, and go home, and cook and clean, I always ask myself, 'Why did I do that?' As much as I love cooking, it seems easier to eat out." Likewise, American "Judy" stressed, "I eat out mostly… And I rarely eat at home, because it's so cheap, and it's fast, cheaper, and I don't know how to cook!" Some participants admitted they could not cook, or they claimed they could not cook at home because their room did not have a kitchen. For example, when talking about food, American "Woody" explained:

> I'm usually eating out. I don't store food. I don't have a kitchen. I have fridge, but I don't have a kitchen, so I don't cook. There really is no need to cook alone. I would have to go buy pots and pans, and have to pay to cook food. It's not really worth it to me… I don't want to store chicken, or vegetables, or rice in my apartment. I can eat out for a dollar! I'm not going to save much money by buying chicken and making myself a meal.

For participants who chose to dine-out often, street food emerged as popular option, mostly due to its convenience. For instance, when asked about acquiring food, British "Carol" replied, "Typically food off the street. I live across from Tesco, but there is so much stuff on the street. We just walk out of our condo and it's there." Likewise, British "David" said:

> Take away. Like street vendors. I will take it back to my flat. Also we eat at the condo or the house, I think we still eat that way, we occasionally cook, but it's far more expensive to fill your refrigerator with food, than to go out. But the street vendors, they are very convenient.

Participants also mentioned dining out at food courts, night markets, and restaurants. For example, when discussing food, American "Woody" stated, "Mostly food courts. But if it's a special occasion I will almost always typically go. I save more than enough money here, so if people are going to a restaurant… I will go." These statements show that some participants were living somewhat frugal lifestyles, as they rented rooms without kitchens and dined out mostly for economic reasons, as it was cheaper than cooking at home. In summary, economic and

convenience factors, as well as personal preferences, influenced how participants consumed food. For example, because it is cheap and ubiquitous throughout Bangkok, Thai food was main part of many participants' everyday diet. This suggests that most participants in this study were open to experiencing foreign cultures and food, at least when compared to assigned expatriates.

However, one participant, British "Ian," expressed the preference for Western food. He said, "Typically if I'm going out to eat food I will eat in expatriate, look-alike pubs… Western bars… anywhere that will cook food like back home." Likewise, Cole and Walsh (2010) wrote that assigned British expatriates typically avoided local Middle-Eastern food, preferring international restaurants or food served at Western style hotels. Furthermore, Cole and Walsh (2010) suggested the practice of eating at Western style places, especially at expatriate clubs and restaurants, contributed to the social separation between locals and British expatriates.

Although, most the participants consumed mixed diets, some such as British "Ian," pursued strategies, which would recreate the familiar, either through cooking at home or dining in Western-style restaurants. Therefore, the few participants who pursued Western food, were seeking comfort and attempting to maintain their cultural identity. Lupton (1996) proposes that food consumption is an important everyday activity which defines who we are. Compared to Western food, Thai food is considerably spicy and different, and encountering new foreign environments, food, and people can be challenging to Western expatriates self-identity and sense of comfort. Bardhi et al. (2010) claimed that the participants in their study used food as a way to set boundaries between themselves and the "other" and served as a strategy of recreating the experience of "home," which provided them with the feeling of security and stability.

Socializing and entertainment

1. Night Markets

With regards to entertainment and socializing, Thai-style night markets, as described in the methodology chapter, emerged as popular places for participants to frequent. When asked about entertainment, American "Joe" replied, "The On Nut market. Sometimes I go to the Royal Oak." Similarly, American "Eugene" stated, "Sometimes the On Nut Market. It's a great place for friends, food, and music. W-District, if it's nice outside." The On Nut market was often mentioned as a "good" place to interact with Thais. As the market's mixed crowd was conducive for social interactions between Thais and Westerners. After the closing of the On Nut market the W-District night market became a popular venue for participants to go mix with Thai locals, although the area around W-District is changing and becoming gentrified (as discussed in the first section). Notably, both the On Nut and W-District night markets are located within walking distance of the BTS Skytrain, which reinforces the notion that many participants' lives are centered on public transportation hubs.

2. Shopping Malls

Besides night markets, shopping malls also emerged as popular venues for participants to frequent. For example, when asked about socializing, American "Woody" stated, "I meet friends at malls… It's hard to justify meeting someone anywhere else other than a mall. Numerous reasons exist for the popularity of shopping malls in Bangkok. First, Thailand is a tropical country, with a daily temperature that is typically over 30 degrees Celsius. Air conditioned shopping malls provide an escape from the sometimes unbearable heat and humidity of the city. Second, the city has few publicly accessible spaces or parks. Only 4.2% of the land in Bangkok is considered green-space, of which over 50% is on private land, such as golf courses, and is not assessable to the average Thai citizen or tourist (Thaiutsa et al. 2008). Third, most of Bangkok's shopping malls are within walking distance from BTS Skytain or MRT transportation hubs, and offer numerous Western-style amenities, such as modern cinemas, restaurants, and name-brand

shops. Finally, shopping malls are popular destinations because of the food courts, which as mentioned previously are one of the main places participants frequented for dining.

3. Expat (Western-Style) Bars

Despite the popularity of malls and night markets, drinking establishments, such as Western-style pubs, bars, and nightclubs, emerged as the most popular venues for socializing and entertainment. Undoubtedly, many participants claimed to drink regularly and socialize at Western-style bars and venues. By Western-Style I mean establishments which cater to Westerners and provide Western fare and drink, as well as Westernized décor, similar to bars and pubs in the United States or Europe. Many English or Irish pubs, which are frequented by expatriates and tourists, are located in lower Sukhumvit, around Asoke and Nana Skytrain stations.

When asked about places they frequented for entertainment and socializing, American "Fraser" stated, "I like the Royal Oak. The English bar or restaurant at *soi* 33/1. There are a couple of other bars at that area that are pretty good." Likewise, British "Benny" stated, "Usually a Western-style bar. I spend most of my time here (the Kiwi Bar)… But I think my favorite bar locally is Oskar's in *soi* 11." The popularity of socializing in Western-style pubs and bars, mainly with other foreigners or Westerners, has been well reported in literature about expatriates (Beaverstock 2002; Scott 2004; Howard 2008; Walsh 2010; Cohen 2011). Socializing at Western-style bars mostly revolves around drinking, watching sports, and participating in pub quizzes.

Many participants, especially British participants, mentioned attending a weekly pub quiz at a British-style pub or bar. Many of my British participants mentioned pub quizzes for socializing. For example, British "Gareth" stated:

> The main place I go to socialize is the pub the Royal Oak, every Wednesday night I go there for the Pub quiz. My girlfriend and another friend, we go there and see other friends. You know? We

> will have a few drinks, compete against each other, and chat. Depending on how the night goes, sometimes we just go home after the quiz, or sometimes we might go somewhere else, and stay out late.

Pub quizzes and drinking are an integral part of British food traditions and culture (James 1997), thus British participants reinforced their identity through taking part of such traditions while living in Bangkok.

4. Local Thai Restaurants and Bars

Besides Western-style bars and pubs, Thai-style venues and nightclubs were also mentioned by participants. For example, when asked where he likes to go for entertainment, British "Noah" stated, "Thai bars. Taksura is one of my favorite ones. Very Thai and awesome… A lot of hi-so bars on Thonglor, just because I like that area… I'm not a hi-so, at all, but I like the style, I love Thai-style!" By Thai Style, the participant is referring to bars in which patrons usually purchase alcohol by the bottle and are served Thai food as snacks, rather than buying alcohol by the drink and eating Western fare. Moreover, Thai-style establishments usually have live Thai music and entertainment, which attract and cater to Thai customers. By "hi-so" bars, the participant is referring to rather posh venues, which are frequented by affluent Thais, or Thais from traditionally wealthy families.

5. Red-Light Districts

Some of the participants also mentioned red-light districts as places they patronized for entertainment, although the participants which mentioned red-light districts claimed they only went to these zones when friends from out-of-town visited. For example, when speaking about entertainment, American "Steve" stated:

> Then of course, there is the nightlife. So, there's lots of bars, then there is the red-light districts, which I sometimes go to, but usually when someone comes to visit. Everybody wants to see

> *soi* Cowboy or Nana. The place I go to the most is *soi* Cowboy. It's not so much about seeing the strippers, but seeing the whole thing. The whole experience. So, *soi* Cowboy you can go with a mixed group of men and women. You can sit on the outside, you are seeing the craziness! All the girls, that are grabbing guys, in their schoolgirl outfits, or they are wearing cowboy hats with daisy dukes, and you go see the "sexpats" walking around, and you got tourists looking stunned and amused. So, there is a lot of neon. It's kind of what people want to see, they want to see the underbelly. So, I will go there with out-of-towners. But once you've seen it as a resident, it's kind of no big deal.

Other male participants made claims similar to American "Steve," and admitted to frequenting red-light districts when they initially arrived in Thailand, but said they no longer went to these type of venues after spending a long time in Bangkok. For instance, American "Charlie" said:

> In the past… in my earlier times, I would've spend a lot of my time in the go-go bars, that was my daily entertainment, but now I don't do that. Now I guess I don't have much entertainment… I will have a beer and have a good conversation, that's my entertainment. Sometimes I will watch a movie at home.

Thus, many participants said they frequented red-light districts after they first arrived to Thailand, or when out-of-town visitors came, yet over time they became indifferent with such venues. Accordingly, many participants claimed they became bored of red-light districts after spending a few months in Thailand. Moreover, even Westerners who continue to frequent red-light districts are not likely to openly admit it, for fear of being labeled a "sexpat." As mentioned in American "Steve's" quote above, a "sexpat" is slang for a Westerner who has relocated to Thailand, or a developing country in general, with the explicit intention to engage in sex tourism and prostitution. A "sexpat" is generally seen to lack morals, drink heavily, and engage in prostitution. Obviously, this is a stereotype or label most expatriates abhor and try to avoid.

With regards to drinking, alcohol provided a form of escape for participants, but also an avenue for socializing with other Westerners, or in some instances with local Thais. Most

participants reported social drinking or binge drinking as part of expatriate social life and culture. For example, British "Gareth" stated:

> It does seem that a lot of activities in Bangkok do revolve around drinking! It doesn't matter where you go, you get towers of beer! Lately, I've been going to a board game place, and they sell beer there. It's one of those things, you go there around 5 o'clock in the evening, you have some beers, you have some pizza, and then the next thing you know, it's 2o'clock in the morning and your plastered!

One possible reason for excessive drinking is that most socializing between expatriates occurs in public places, often at places that offer alcohol. Additionally, the holiday-like atmosphere of tropical Bangkok encourages heavy drinking as well, especially since most participants initially experienced Thailand previously while on holiday. Again, a holiday-like lifestyle is a major pull factor, which influenced participants to self-initiate a move to Thailand.

The phenomenon of heavy drinking among expatriates is well documented in other studies about expatriate communities (see Cohen 1984; Walsh 2007; Beaverstock 2002; Howard 2008, 2009a; Fechter 2010). Of these studies, Cohen's (1984) examination of "drop-out" expatriates in Bangkok, is the most startling, as he portrays his study group as Westerners whose lives are mostly centered on heavy drinking, drug abuse, and sexual encounters with Thai prostitutes. Although the participants in this study group did not appear as debaucherous as Cohen's study group, drinking was nonetheless a large part of their social lives in Bangkok.

6. Expatriate Clubs

Another place associated with Western expatriates is the "expatriate" club. Expatriate clubs abroad are somewhat similar to country clubs in the United States, as in they are relatively exclusive, and they provide their members with numerous amenities, such as tennis courts, swimming pools and a club or lounge, etc. Many scholars have acknowledged the vital role

expatriate clubs play in the everyday social and cultural lives of expatriates and expatriate communities (Cohen 1977; Beaverstock 2002, 2011; Willis and Yeoh 2002; Gustafson 2008). When talking about places he frequented for entertainment and socializing, American "Paul" exclaimed:

> I belong to the British Club. It's an independent club on Silom road… They opened it up to other nationalities. They've got a gym facilities and a pool. They do group activities like Thanksgiving and Christmas roast. They've got a bar down there… You can get all your British Beer. It's members only. Only expats. Well, they have some Indians and Japanese, and I guess you can be Thai but it's usually Thai wives or Thai husbands.

Generally, expatriate club memberships are provided for assigned expatriates as part of their relocation package (Beaverstock 2011); however, SIEs are responsible for paying their own fees and annual dues. Most likely the somewhat high-cost of membership fees deters most SIEs from joining expatriate clubs, which helps explain why only two participants in this study became members of such clubs. Furthermore, the quote from American "Paul" helps demonstrate the exclusivity of expatriate clubs; and more importantly it reveals the exclusiveness and contested nature of the term "expat" itself. By stating the club was "…members only. Only expats." but then saying "Well, they have some Indians and Japanese" indicates which nationalities are included or excluded from being called "expats." As explained in the literature review, expatriate is a racialized term, which is typically reserved specifically for "white" migrants. Furthermore, the legacy of the colonial era segregation is reflected in the policies of expatriate club and the everyday lives of some expatriates. Thus, although expatriate clubs technically open to all nationalities, very few locals join.

Overall, expatriate clubs, as well Western-style bars and pubs enable Western expatriates to continue familiar practices, such as heavy drinking and watching sport, and more importantly it allows the colonial practice of distancing oneself from the Asian "other." However, some Thai

citizens are equally not interested in mixing with Westerners. In her study about British expatriates in Dubai, Walsh (2010), notes that separate socializing spaces is desired by both locals and expatriates. Walsh (2010, 1323), states, "Self/Other distancing takes place in both directions," which suggests it is not only Westerners that self-segregate, but the locals as well. Yet, as mentioned previously, not all participants in this study self-segregated as some participants in frequented Thai-style venues and attempted to socialize or interact with local Thais.

Discussion

Since participants in this study did not receive backing from a supporting organization, their lives and experiences were more challenging and constrained when compared to assigned expatriates. Namely, because many participants did not have the same disposable income and resources as assigned expatriates, and thus were more price sensitive, and in turn, this impacted the type of housing, transportation, and food they could afford. Thus, these circumstances by default made participants more spatially integrated with Thai locals, because they did not have the economic means and resources to isolate themselves in the same manner of traditional or assigned expatriates. However, despite being more spatially integrated than assigned expatriates, participants employed various degrees of boundary-creating practices within the "contact zones" of Bangkok, and although a few participants frequented Thai spaces and sought out interactions with local Thais, most participants avoided meaningful interactions with the local Thai "other." Thus, in summary, participants were living spatially integrated lives with Thais and other non-Westerners, yet they were essentially segregated due to their housing strategies and the spaces they frequented for socializing. Furthermore, older participants tended to pursue a more segregated daily life and lifestyle, which consisted of pursuing Western comforts and familiarity, while younger participants were more open to going to non-Western spaces and interacting with local Thais. Thus, the older participants perpetuated neocolonial attitudes and carried on the

legacy of their colonial ancestors, while the younger and more "cosmopolitanized" participants tended to discontinue neocolonial attitudes and behaviors, as they demonstrated a more global worldview.

CHAPTER VI

"I DON'T TALK TO MY FAMILY NEARLY AS MUCH AS I SHOULD": TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES IN BANGKOK THAILAND

Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined and discussed the residential dwellings, mobility, and everyday spaces and places participants frequented while living and working in Bangkok. Additionally, I discussed how they contributed to the gentrification processes occurring in Bangkok, and how participants continued, and in some instances discontinued, postcolonial attitudes and inequalities through their everyday activities. In this chapter, I explore the socio-cultural, economic, and political transnational activities carried out by participants. Transnational activities are everyday processes and practices transmigrants and expatriates carryout, which helps link their country of origin to their country of current residence (Schiller et al. 1992; Mitchell 2000; Yeoh and Willis 2002; Ley 2004; Smith 2006; Wiles 2008; Beaverstock 2011). Moreover, transnational activities help transmigrants such as Western expatriates maintain their native language, culture and identity. In this chapter, I examine at how transnational activities helped participants adjust to living in Bangkok, as well as reinforce their cultural identities.

Research Questions

An important part of the migrant or expatriate experience is becoming involved in transnational activities, and much has been written about transnationalism and transnational activities. However, less is known specifically about transnational activities carried out by working-age Westerners who have relocated under their own direction to live and work in Bangkok, Thailand. Appropriately, the purpose of this chapter is to answer the following research question(s):

3a. How do SIEs maintain economic, social and political ties with their country of origin?

3b. How do transnational activities help SIEs maintain their Western cultural identity?

In this chapter, I address these questions by utilizing the voices of participants. First, I will discuss the types of transnational activities participants carried out after relocating to Bangkok. Additionally, I examine how these transnational activities helped participants maintain contact with their home countries and their cultural identity, as well adjust to living in a new foreign environment.

Transnational Activities

Participants' transnational activities created links and connections between the Global North (the United States and Great Britain) with the Global South (Thailand) through socio-cultural, economic, and political exchanges. In general, transnationalism and transnational activities are thought to change the relationship between migrant and their home (Al-Ali and Khoser 2002). Furthermore, the relationship with home can impact the way migrants construct or reconstruct their identities once abroad. Wiles (2008) argues that home, migration, and identity are interdependent. Home is often considered synonymous with identity (Blunt 2005), so how a Westerner maintains contact with home after expatriation can either reinforce or erode cultural identity. In some cases, expatriates may become culturally distanced from their own culture and

identity, as well detached from their host culture, depending on their transnational activities. Typically, transnational activities are thought to amplify or reinforce cultural identity in transmigrants. For example, Kong (1999), in her case study about Singaporeans living in Beijing, claimed transnationalism can enhance a sense of one's national identity, rather than erode it. With regards to older participants this proved to be true. However, despite conducting transnational activities, most younger aged participants did not express strong feelings of nationalism, but instead developed a more "cosmopolitan identity" (Grinstien and Wathieu 2012). A cosmopolitan identity is associated with those who have transnational experiences and interactions with persons of different cultures, thus developing an openness and adaptability to engage with other cultures. This type of identity shift is said to be experienced mostly by persons who have exposure to various cultural environments.

Socio-cultural Transnational Activities

With regards to socio-cultural activities, participants employed a wide range of everyday practices to maintain ties to their home countries and help adjust to living in Bangkok. The most frequent socio-cultural transnational activities carried out by participants were: utilizing online social media applications, making phone and video calls by using online telecommunication technology (i.e., chat applications), or writing emails. Other socio-cultural transnational activities included: reading online news websites based in their home countries, as well as taking annual or semi-annual trips home, and hosting friends and family who visit from their home country.

1. Social Media Applications

Of these activities, the most commonly mentioned by participants was the use of social media websites, mainly Facebook, and the use of online chat applications, such as Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Facetime. For example, when asked how he maintained ties with home, British "Chris" replied, "Skype. Facebook is a way. I'm connected to a lot of my old

school friends... Yeah, I try to call my mum about once a week. Just using technology. Facebook is good. Facebook is instantaneous, sometimes I will comment on friend's posts." Similarly, American "Judy" answered, "I contact friends with Facebook and Skype. I Skype with my parents every day. I'm an only child, so… I use the phone, and on the weekends, we do video. I use WhatsApp as well." Some participants specifically praised the use of video chat as a strategy to maintain close relations with friends and family at home. For instance, British "Benny" stated:

> I speak to family, not every day, but at least a few times a week. I've got a daughter and a grandson there… And he's growing up and speaking, so I love talking to him. I think it's essential, because I'm not there, and I'm here. I talk to him on Skype with video, he recognizes me right away! If it wasn't for that technology, he would certainly be wondering who I am.

Through skype "British" Benny was able to express his feelings of love and keep in touch with his family despite the geographic distance between Bangkok and his home town in the UK.

The use of online chat applications as a method to maintain contact with friends and family was almost universal among participants. However, the frequency and degree of use varied, and some participants admitted they did not contact their friends or family frequently. For instance, when asked how often he contacted his friends and family, American "Sam" stated, "Shamefully, very rarely. Rarely. That's unfortunate, but my parents… I email about once a month. Friends, almost rarely. It's just out of sight out of mind, but I'm just not much of a communicator in that sense." And British "Archie" said, "Very few and infrequent. Very little. When I first moved here it was a lot. I just wanted to get on with my life here. Maybe I send an email or a Facebook message about once every three months." And American "Joe" admitted, "I'm really bad about that. I don't talk to my family nearly as much as I should… or my friends. I have to pay my credit card bill. That's about the only contact I have with America." Although these participants did not completely sever ties with their home, their frequency and degree of

socio-cultural transnational activities was low, since they did not actively attempt to maintain a social presence with friends and family in their home country.

Research on the ways migrants use Internet technology and communication applications to maintain contact with their families and reinforce cultural identity is increasing. For example, Hiller and Franz (2004), examined migrant Internet usage through the different phases of the migration experience (pre-migrant to settlement phase). They claimed migrants use the Internet as a research tool about their destination country during the pre-migrant phase in order to research about jobs or housing. My findings are similar, as many participants discussed using the Internet to learn details about living and working in Thailand prior to relocating. For example, participants researched topics such as visa requirements, cost of living, housing, and about finding appropriate work. Furthermore, Hiller and Franz (2004) found that during the post-migrant or settlement phase the Internet is mostly used as a method to maintain contact with home, or make social contact with other migrants in the host country. These findings are similar to mine, as participants claimed to use the Internet to keep contact with friends and loved ones at home, as well as socializing with other Westerners in Thailand, through joining expatriate groups online such as Internations, expatriate Facebook groups, and Meetup groups.

In a more recent study about Western expatriates in Saudi Arabia, Hattingh et al. (2014) examined the Internet as an everyday "tool" to adapt and live in foreign environments. The authors claim 100% of their participants used the Internet while abroad. Their participants specifically used Facebook and other social media platforms, to maintain a social presence in their home country (Hattingh et al. 2014). The Internet, especially social media applications, is reported to help transmigrants adjust and acculturate to new environments, maintain individual identity, as well as lessen the feelings of isolation, loneliness, and homesickness (Hattingh et al. 2014; McPhail and Fisher 2015; Forbush and Foucault-Welles 2016). Additionally, King-O'riain (2015) through a longitudinal study, examined how transnational families living in Ireland relied

on Skype to reduce feelings of longing for loved ones who are geographically distant. Likewise, Aarset (2015) reports Pakistani transmigrants in Norway practice Islam and reinforce religious identity through taking Quran courses via Skype.

Consistent with my findings, nearly all participants in this study admitted to using the Internet as a way to adjust to living in Thailand through keeping contact with friends and family at home. However, participants in this study did not appear to rely on the Internet to the same degree as assigned expatriates or sojourners in other studies. Traditional expatriates are reported to become over reliant on social media, most likely because they are scheduled to return home at a specific date and are more motivated to maintain, and eventually re-establish their social presence once they return to their home country. However, many participants in this study became embedded within Thailand, and did not have a predetermined date for returning home, and thus they were more inclined to create social networks and relations with people residing in Thailand, either with other expatriates or sometimes with local Thais. Thus, participants not only used social media applications to maintain contact with home, but they also used the Internet to reinforce their Western identity by forming new relationships with other Western expatriates living in Thailand.

2. Annual Trips Home

The second most popular transnational activity was making annual trips home. For instance, when asked how he maintained ties with his home country, British "Gary" stated:

> I go back every year. For one or two weeks maximum. That's been pretty steady for about the last 15 or 20 years. Before I lived here I was in Australia and Taiwan, and I always did an annual trip. I still have a bank account there, but I don't own property or anything. I pretty much cut my ties [with Britain] when I left 17 years ago, it's pretty much just keeping in touch with my family.

Like many other participants, British "Gary" became embedded in Thailand and expressed no plans to return to the UK to live, as he had married a Thai national and owned multiple properties in the kingdom. However, despite claiming to have "cut ties" with Britain, which suggests he lacked strong nationalistic feelings, British "Gary" still continued to make annual trips home to the UK in order to stay connected with his friends and loved ones.

Altogether, 80% of participants (40 of 50) claimed to take a two week or one month trip to their home country approximately once every year or year and half. For example, when asked about how often he returned to his home country, American "Lee" replied, "About once every 12 or 18 months. I stay for about a month on each visit. To see family and friends. I usually go to Alabama, Texas, or New England." However, the other 20% of participants described less regular scheduled trips home. For instance, when asked about the frequency of his trips home, American "Arthur" replied, "Not every year… there have been times when I went home twice in one year, but there have also been times when I didn't go home for over 3 years." Some participants took trips home even less regularly, such as British "Chris," who claimed, "My last holiday [to Britain] was 9 years ago. It's amazing how quickly that's gone by! I went back about 2 years ago for my Dad's funeral, but that was just 4 days and I didn't see any friends." Altogether, the majority of participants reported taking trips home, to maintain contact with their friends and family. However, economics possibly played a role in the frequency of trips made by participants. For example, British "Benny" was affluent and took multiple trips home each year, whereas on lower paying salaries, such as English language teachers, reported making less trips to their home countries.

3. Hosting Friends and Family from Home

Additionally, some participants discussed hosting friends or family from their home country. For example, British "Carol" stated, "My two best friends have come to visit me, which is great! And

one of them decided to live here, so she came back. She quit her job and moved here." This phenomena of persons visiting friends or family in Thailand, and then deciding to move to Thailand in order to stay long-term was a somewhat common trend amongst Western SIEs in Thailand. Other participants hosted family members, such as British "Diane," who said, "I haven't been home, but my mum has been here. She comes here every year. My dad has been once, and I believe he is coming again this year." Altogether, the transnational practice of returning home annually or semi-annually, and/or hosting persons from home, is a common trend discussed in literature about transnationalism (Foner 1997; Duval 2004), migration (Massey 1987; Durand et al. 1996; Bell and Ward 2000), mobility (Williams and Hall 2000), and expatriation (Richardson 2006; Richardson and McKenna 2006). These trips home, as well as hosting visitors, helped participants adjust to their lives in Bangkok, and reinforced their cultural identity. Additionally, annual or semi-annual trips to the Global North is a privileged form of mobility, in which many Thai locals, as well as other migrants groups from the Global South are unable to enjoy, because of financial and structural constraints.

4. Following the News Online

Another transnational activity reported by participants was reading the news from their home country, typically through news websites and online media applications. This helped participants stay informed about key events and happenings in their home country. For example, British "Gareth" stated, "I read the news a lot. I read worldwide news, but I tend to use British news channels, like the BBC or the Guardian, so it's more English centric. You know, other things, like sport. I follow British sport, like the Premier League and rugby." Some participants complained about the poor quality of Thai local news, and said they preferred the news from their home countries. The preference of Western media is an example of persistent orientalist attitudes, as many participants considered Thai media or non-Western news inferior. For example, American "Charlie" stated, "I follow local news in America, more than local news in Thailand, but the main

reason is because they are much better websites. Bangkok Post or the Nation… they have a nice presentation, but I tend to prefer international media sources, so I guess I do keep up with what's going on back home." The main topics participants followed were sports, entertainment and business news. However, only a few participants followed political news or expressed the desire to participate in elections in their home countries (discussed further in the section covering political transnational activities).

Reading the news from home is an adjustment strategy, because it can provide comfort to migrants such as Western SIEs living abroad. For example, British "Greg" stated, "I read the news every day. It gives me a little bit of comfort, like I'm still there. I also listen to the radio every morning. I listen to my local city radio every morning." Scott (2004), in his study about British expatriates in Paris, claimed that the consumption of media from one's home country provides cultural and linguistic "comfort" which helps lessen the difficulties of adjusting to a new environment. However, Scott (2004) admits that the meaning and degree of consuming media from home varies with individuals, depending on the length of time a person has been in the host country, and his or her level of integration.

With regards to this study, media consumption seemed to be guided by personal preference, not necessarily the length of time participants spent in Thailand. For example, British "Ian" had lived in Thailand for nine years and stated, "I still follow the news. I still do. I always want to know what's going on back in England. Because I still have family and friends that live there. So, no… I haven't turned my back on England." Overall, staying connected to home via the news media varied among the participants, although most participants made an effort to stay somewhat informed about the happenings in their country of origin.

5. Objects from Home

Another transnational activity involves material exchanges from home to host countries. Literature about mobility and expatriation often mentions expatriates bringing material items from home, which enables them to recreate "home" in their host country (Yeoh and Khoo 1998; Walsh 2006; Wiles 2008; Smiley 2010a, 2010b). According to Blunt (2005) persons experience home in different ways, and one way is by maintaining social relationships (as discussed above). Another way is through symbolic concepts or physical items, such as everyday objects. With regard to recreating "home," Blunt and Varley (2004, 3) argue that home does not necessarily need to be understood as bound or fixed to one location, rather as, "located on the thresholds between memory and nostalgia for the past, everyday life in the present, and future dreams and fears." Likewise, Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark (2015) argue that viewing home as rooted in one place is "outdated," because some individuals, with the means to travel globally, are able to create multiple places of belonging. A few participants in this study, specifically more affluent or independently wealthy individuals, mentioned maintaining homes in both Thailand and their home countries.

Through material exchanges and transferring objects from home to host countries, migrants and expatriates can recreate "home" in more than one geographical place. Tolia-Kelly (2004a, 2004b) noted South Asian migrants in the UK use everyday material items like pictures and paintings to make or recreate home, and these objects are embodied with memories and meanings. With regards to nostalgic items, two participants mentioned bringing teddy bears from home that they received as children. For example, British "Noah" stated, "I've got a blue teddy bear… I've had a lot of people making fun of me… But I've always had that… I brought it with me, because it reminds me of home and stuff." Likewise, British "David" said, "My flat or room is just books and stuff. Academic stuff, but some nostalgia stuff too. Like a teddy bear from when I was a child." For these two participants, the teddy bears provided comfort and a reminder of

home, as well as reinforcement of personal identity. Concerning pictures, a few participants mentioned placing photographs of their friends and family in their apartment or condo in Bangkok. For instance, British "Diane" stated, "I have couple of pictures of my family in my room. Just one or two pictures, that's about it. I'm not very sentimental." Similarly, American "Jack" stated, "We do have pictures around the living room, of my family, but that's about it." American "Charlie" stated, "I have some pictures of my nieces and nephews, but nothing deliberate, just some pictures I have." Thus, according to these participants, they did not attempt to recreate "home," and did not put much meaning or emphasis in the photographs they placed in their room.

The majority of participants did not bring nostalgic items or national symbols from home. For example, when asked about bringing objects to remind him of home, American "Joe" said, "No. Just clothes. The only thing about California I have was given to me from somebody. And it was given to me while I was here." And British "Carol" replied, "No. Nothing like that. My mum gave me a Liverpool calendar, so I was planning to put some of those pictures on the wall but I haven't yet." And British "Chris" stated, "That's a good question. No. Nothing… If you walked into my house, you wouldn't know that a British guy is living there." Equally, American "Fraser" stated, "That's a good question, but no. I don't have… I didn't bring anything with me that says I'm American or reminds me of being American."

Altogether, the majority of participants claimed to have mostly brought practical objects from home, such as computers, laptops, clothes, books, and degree certificates, which are often required for acquiring legal employment and work visas in Thailand. For instance, when asked about bringing physical objects from home, British "Ian" replied, "I brought all the documents that I might need. My degree certificates, and professional qualifications, I brought my driver license with me… and I brought me! Very little really." And British "Gareth" stated, "I don't think I brought any objects to remind me of home… I don't think I'm that sentimental of a

person, I just brought stuff like my PlayStation, or books and clothes. I don't really have any British stuff, flags or mugs. Nothing specifically British." And American "Fred" claimed, "I just brought my clothing, and my computer." No participants claimed to decorate their room or condo with national flags or state memorabilia, suggesting an overall lack of nationalism, or at least a lack of longing for their home or home countries.

One participant, British "Archie," brought tools with the intention of finding work related to furniture making, which was his previous job in the UK. He said, "I brought a whole bunch of tools. Fancy tools for furniture making. But I've never touched them. I should probably sell them. They are worth a lot of money." In the case of British "Archie," it appears his furniture making tools were central to his identity in the UK, but once in Thailand, he abandoned his previous lifestyle and career as a furniture maker, reconstructed his identity and became employed as an English language teacher.

Besides a few exceptions, the majority of participants made little effort to remind themselves of "home," as they did not bring nostalgic items, nor did they decorate their homes in a way to recreate "home." Most likely, economic constraints, and lack of help from a supporting organization, helps explain why most participants moved to Thailand with few physical items. In general, participants relocated to Thailand with only one or two large suitcases, with a weight limit of 50 pounds per bag (depending on airline carrier). Thus, participants mostly brought essential items, such as clothes and paperwork required to acquire work permits and visas. Altogether, only one participant, American "Lois," mentioned using a relocation company when she moved to Thailand. However, American "Lois" was exceptional, as she was older and relatively affluent when compared to other participants. Thus, in general, practicality played a role in why most participants only brought everyday useful items like clothes, computers, and degree certificates.

Additionally, most participants claimed they did not decorate their condo or apartment, in any specific fashion or manner, because they did not own the property, and were only renting their room temporarily. For example, when asked about decorating his apartment or condo, British "David" stated:

> My flat… I always see it as a temporary thing. It's not a home or house, where I own the property or land. I have minimal stuff there. I don't really have a place to distribute my things… I don't really have many possessions, plus I would want to put my things in a house of my own, not in some random condo.

Accordingly, participants were hesitant to spend time or money decorating a condo in which they did not personally own. Moreover, as mentioned by British "David," there was no reason to decorate a room in which he thought was only temporary. Thus, as mentioned in the last chapter, participants often viewed their condo or apartment rooms like a long-stay hotel room. Altogether, most participants (40 of 50) did not own their home or condo in Bangkok, which impacted their willingness to invest in upgrading or decorating their homes. Some participants were too cash-strapped to buy property, while others were hesitant to invest in Thailand because they viewed the housing market as unstable. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, foreigners are not permitted to own land in Thailand. However, despite these limitation, many participants expressed a feeling of belonging in Thailand, or at least expressed the desire to continue living in Thailand.

Low Degree of Transnational Activities and Lack of Homesickness

To summarize, nearly all participants carried out some form of socio-cultural transnational activity, but the frequency and degree of these various transnational activities varied according to individual participant, and in general were relatively low. Furthermore, a few participants carried out no transnational activities at all, and thus had divorced themselves from their friends and family in their home country. Most of these participants had lived in Thailand for many years. For

example, when asked about maintaining contact with her friends and family at home, American "Blanche" stated:

> I've never been back in 25 years. I telephoned early before I got the computer. There was letter writing about once a year, but I'm not so big on that. I try to call my son about once a year. I met up with my grandson on Facebook, to just give it a try, and he happened to be there. We communicated back and forth a little bit, and I finally realized that I don't know him well enough to know what to talk about… So, I just ended up closing my Facebook account.

American "Blanche" was somewhat an outlier, because she was the oldest of the participants, and she had also spent the most years living in Thailand. So, as a result, her lack of connection to home was exceptionally low. She also claimed that she had not traveled to other countries in the region despite living in Thailand for over 25 years.

Overall, when compared to migrant and expatriate experiences described in other works (Beaverstock 2002; Smith 2003; Walsh 2006; Wiles 2008; Croucher 2009a, 2009b; Fechter 2010; Smiley 2010a; Liu et al. 2011), participants in this study carried out a relatively low level of socio-cultural transnational activities. Moreover, participants were not overly attached to their home or countries of origin, and only a few participants expressed feelings of nationalism or longing for home. Furthermore, no participants articulated feelings of culture shock or homesickness, which contradicts most reports on expatriates and transmigrants. For example, Hack-Polay (2012) reports that nearly all migrants and expatriates experience some degree of "homesickness" after relocating to a new country, which is often framed as a form of culture shock. Typically, studies about expatriates and acculturation report Westerners experience some level of homesickness or culture shock while on assignments abroad (Church 1982; Black and Gregersen 1991; Black, Mendenhall and Oddou 1991; Berry 1997; Selmer 1999; Sunkyu, Gentry, and Hyun 2001; Clegg and Gray 2002). One logical possibility in regards to the lack of homesickness and culture shock, is that participants self-initiated their move to Bangkok, rather

than being directed to move abroad by a supporting organization. Additionally, most participants (41 of 50) had visited Thailand prior to relocating, and therefore already had exposure to Thai culture and society, which plausibly helped reduce their levels of culture shock and homesickness. In the next section, I discuss the economic transnational activities carried out by the participants.

Economic transnational activities:

Most participants reported some type of economic connection to their home country, which included: maintaining bank accounts or investment accounts, receiving pension or retirement money, owning property or businesses, and servicing debts from home.

1. Maintaining Bank Accounts at Home

Of these economic transnational activities mentioned above, maintaining a checking or investment account of some type was mentioned by 75% of participants (38 out of 50). For example, when asked about his economic ties to home, British "George" stated, "I have bank accounts. Savings accounts." Likewise, American "Fred" said, "All my money is pretty much in American accounts, but that's about the extent." Twenty-five percent of participants mentioned maintaining investment accounts, which allowed them to trade stocks. For instance, when asked about economic ties to home, American "Norman" replied, "Stock market. I play the stock market… No property. Only stocks." similarly, American "Fraser" said, "I have a Charles Schwab [brokerage] account. But no businesses. I don't have a house or anything." Beyond saving and investment accounts, most participants maintained little economic ties to their home country. Most participants maintained accounts in their home country for investment purposes or in order to service debt at home (discussed in subsequent sections).

2. Retirement Accounts and Pension Funds

Most participants were working-age, so only 10% (5 of 50) mentioned pension or social security as an economic connection to home. For example, when asked about economic ties to home, British "Ian" replied, "Just my pension. I paid into it… about 22 years of working. So, that's it. No, I don't have any businesses in England. I don't own any property." Likewise, American "Leonard" stated, "I have my social security now, and my brother watches that for me in Ohio. But that's about it. No property now. I had a condo in Hawaii, but I sold that." And American "Blanche" said, "I get my social security, but that's it. I sold everything before I left." Each of these participants quoted above had lived in Thailand ten years or longer, and severed all economic ties except for pension. Each of these individuals were embedded in Thailand, and planned to remain in the country long-term.

3. Rental Properties and Business at Home

Approximately 15% (7 of 50) participants mentioned owning rental properties or being investors in businesses in their home country. For example, British "Benny" stated, "I still have a shareholding in a business there. I own property there. I'm the owner of a pub, and it's currently leased to my business partner." Likewise, British "Oscar" claimed, "I've got a house that I rent out, which gives me money every month. I've written a couple of books, I sell on Amazon, which brings me a bit of money each month." Similarly, through convenience interviews, more affluent participants discussed the importance of receiving passive income generated in their home countries. Some said they invested in stocks or real estate at home, rather than investing their money in Thailand, due to the volatile political nature of the country (i.e., 19 coup d'états since 1932). British "Benny" summed up this attitude well, by stating, "My time is invested here, but my financial investments are in the UK." In general, older more financially established

participants were more likely to collect passive income from their home countries. Whereas, none of the younger participants or "millennials" claimed to retrieve money from investments at home.

4. Servicing Debt at Home

Instead of collecting money from investments, younger participants or "millennials" mentioned servicing debts in their home country. A few participants mentioned servicing credit card debts at home, but mainly these participants talked about their obligation to pay back student loan debts. When asked about his economic ties to home, American "Leo" stated, "I have my American bank account to pay my student loans and things like that." Likewise, British "David" said, "Paying off my student loans. Debt. I never bought a house there, and I don't do stock investments. I have a bank account there. I transfer money from here to there, but that's just to pay off debt. So, the main ties [to home] is paying off student loans." These testimonies suggest that although participants have self-initiated a move abroad, some are still financially connected to their home countries, mostly through obligations to pay off student loan debts. Furthermore, this shows that some participants are actually living financially challenged lives, despite the perception in Thailand that all *farang* or Westerners are affluent. During convenience interviews some participants, especially English teachers on low salaries, claimed they made just enough money to live comfortably in Thailand, but after their living costs, they had no money left to save or invest. This contradicts the assumption that Western expatriates are economically privileged and living affluent lifestyles, which is mainly reported in literature about assigned expatriates or lifestyle migrants in the Global South (Bianchi 2000; Warnes 2001; Cohen 2011; Benson 2013; Croucher 2015; Botterill 2016). This also suggests that young participants are not living within a financially secure neocolonial context. Again, the majority of younger participants were teaching English as second language, which often pays around 30,000 Thai baht a month (approximately $1000 USD). Thus, because of debts at home, some younger participants were living financially precarious lives.

5. Severing Economic Ties with Home

Although most participants maintained some form of economic ties to home, others severed their economic ties completely. Altogether, approximately 25% of the participants had no economic ties to home. For example, American "Sam" enthusiastically exclaimed, "Zero! No property! No bank accounts! Zero ties! And the reason for that… I'm considered a non-resident. I had to give up all assets in America. So, I don't pay American taxes." Likewise, American "John" stated, "I closed down all my bank accounts. I got sick of transferring accounts. I couldn't trade stocks. I've got a bank account in Hong Kong, but nothing in America. No property. No debts. No credit card. No bank accounts." And British "Noel" stated, "Nothing. I've been away from home for 18 years. I never had anything. I still don't have anything. No economic ties. I don't have any money!" Moreover, these participants who had severed economic ties to their home country had no plans of repatriating, and thus were embedded in Thailand, and planned to stay long-term.

6. Contributing to the Local Economy

Although some participants were divorced economically from their home country, all were actively contributing to the local economy in Thailand. In general, Western expatriates and retirees are known for infusing money into the local economies of developing countries such as Mexico or Brazil (Croucher 2009a, 2009b, 2012). This serves as another example of the relatively privileged position and perception of expatriates in the Global South, as they are known to have a mostly positive effect on local economies. However, this perception leads some expatriates to think locals are inferior, at least economically. During convenience interviews, some participants expressed the feeling of being financially superior to Thai locals. For example, they expressed the opinion that Thailand and Thai people were poor, and often times participants would refer to Thailand as a "Third World" country. Moreover, participants expressed the notion that Thai government and Thai people rely on money from Western expatriates and tourists. Through

expatriate discourses in Bangkok a shared understanding exists that Thailand needs Westerners in order to financially function and survive. This is an example of continuing neocolonial attitudes, as some Western expatriates identities are tied to the idea of being superior to locals Thais and other migrant groups. Although Westerners do contribute to the local economy, Thailand is not completely reliant on income from tourist or expatriates. Altogether Thailand receives anywhere from nine per cent to 17.7 percent of its GDP from tourism, yet a large majority of this revenue is from regional tourism, namely money from Chinese tourists (Theparat 2017). There are believed to be approximately 100,000 Westerners living in Thailand (Howard 2008). However, the actual economic impact of these Westerners is unknown, as there are no estimates provided by the Thai government. In the next section, I will explore the political transnational activities carried out by participants.

Political Transnational Activities

In general, the participants were apolitical and carried out very little political transnational activities. For example, when asked about his involvement in politics in his home country, British "Noah" exclaimed, "None! Absolutely none! I don't vote. I don't follow it. I don't have any interest in politics really. I don't get into discussions about it. Because I just don't' know enough about it, and I really don't care." Likewise, American "Woody" claimed, "I do not participate. I never bring up politics with people… I'm extremely unpolitical." Similarly, when asked about absentee voting, American "Norman" stated, "No! No! First of all absentee voting is a joke! It's not even counted! And second… when I renewed my driver's license they asked me if I wanted to register to vote, I was like, 'No, I'm going to just fly under the radar.' I mean who wants to be called up for jury duty? I mean really!" Thus, besides a few exceptions the vast majority of participants adamantly claimed they did not partake in politics at home, and most expressed little desire to follow political happenings in their home country.

1. Desire to Participate in Politics Back Home

One the few exceptions was British "Gareth" who expressed genuine interest about politics in his home country. When asked about his degree of political involvement at home, he stated, "I do vote. There are elections coming up. Yeah, I follow politics quite closely, but I've never joined a political party or group. I'm interested in elections and…the government enacting new laws and things." American "Fraser" was another participant who expressed sincere interest in participating in his country's upcoming elections. However, even he was unsure if he would be able to vote abroad or not, because he did not want to register as an overseas citizen. He stated, "Yes, I do vote. However, now that I live over here, I don't want to register as an overseas citizen. I'm not sure I will be able to vote. Plus, I don't think my vote matters anyway." Despite, American "Fraser" desire to vote, he still expressed a relatively negative stance towards politics and the political process in his home country, as he commented that his vote does not matter. Thus, even participants who expressed the desire to participate, did not vote in or take part in the electoral processes occurring in their home countries.

2. Following Political News Back Home

Although most participants claimed to be apolitical and not actively vote, a few said they followed political events and happenings at home through online media outlets. For example, British "Greg" stated, "I follow it. I do read up on it quite a bit. I don't vote, because you have to be in the country." American "Leo" stated, "I don't know how I would meaningfully participate, other than following it. I read the news. It is interesting to me, but when living overseas… especially when you don't know many other Americans it's not discussed a lot. I don't typically talk American politics." Similarly, British "George" claimed, "I don't vote. I don't register to vote. My only participation is following what's going on politically back home." Thus, in general, most participants expressed voter apathy, as even participants interested in political happening

did not take proper steps so they could vote while living abroad. Furthermore, participants showed little interest in Thai politics or political happenings, as expressed by British "Diane," who said, "I was equally uninterested in politics at home as I am in Thai politics. I never really watch the news, I never really have." Through convenience interviews some participants expressed somewhat negative views about the political processes in their home country, which was also expressed by American "Norman" and American "Fraser" above. Additionally, as discussed in the section about material items from home, no participants openly displayed national flags or symbols in their home. Moreover, only 20% (10 of 50) planned to repatriate home, which also helps explain participants' disinterest in political happenings in their home country.

Discussion

Nearly all of the participants admitted to conducting some form of transnational activity, although the degree and level of transnational activity was considerably low for most. In general, migrants are reported to maintain various forms of transnational links to their home country. Additionally, Portes et al. (1999) claimed that migrants with higher economic status and resources conduct a greater degree of transnationalism and transnational activities, especially when compared to more economically challenged migrants. Although, not all the participants were wealthy, the majority at least qualified as "middling migrants," which is a concept presented by Conradson and Latham (2005a, 2005b), as migrants that are neither wealthy nor poor, but rather in the "middle" or middle-class. Regardless of the socio-economic status of participants, the degree of transnational activities they conducted varied, and in most instances were considerably low. Scott (2004), claimed the degree of cross-border activity and contact can be influenced by the time spent in the host country, and the level of integration experienced by the expatriate. For participants like American "Blanche," who had spent over 25 years in Thailand, this assumption appears accurate, as she carried no transnational activities. Accordingly, this study shows that participants who

have spent long periods of time away from their home country, are less inclined to conduct transnational activities. Most participants in this study who had spent considerable time abroad had claimed to have "cut ties" with their home, and were less inclined to maintain properties or banking accounts at home, and they were also less likely to maintain close contact with friends and family at home.

Additionally, Scott (2004), notes that distance (culturally and physically) between home and host country influences the level and intensity of transnational activities an expatriate conducts. Scott's (2004) participants frequently conducted transnational activities, such as taking trips home, following the daily news, and participating in elections. However, Scott's (2004) study group was located in Paris, France which is considerably close to his participants' home country, as it is only 215 miles between London and Paris. This is a minimal distance when compared to the participants in this study, as Bangkok is over 8,000 miles away from the United States and over 5,000 miles away from the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Thai culture and society is considerably different from culture and societies in the West. With this line of thought, geography matters, as physical and cultural distance between home and host country influenced the level and intensity of transnational activities participants in this study conducted.

Overall, the research results suggest that assigned expatriates tend to carry out more transnational activity than self-initiated ones, most likely because assigned expatriates are scheduled to return home after they complete their two or three-year assignment abroad. Thus, assigned expatriates are more inclined and motivated to maintain socio-cultural, economic, and political ties to their homeland. However, participants in this study self-directed their move to Thailand, and no participants had a firm timeline for repatriation, which influenced the way they maintained transnational links and connections to their home country. Altogether, many participants "cut ties" with their home country, and performed only necessary economic transnational activities, such as servicing debt or collecting pensions. Political transnational

activity was nearly non-existent. Participants conducted more socio-cultural transnational activities, which helped them adjust and maintain their Western identity. Even then, some participants, especially those on lower salaries, admitted they did not make frequent trips home. Others admitted their level of contact with friends and family back home was minimal. In the next chapter, I discuss the participant integration, or lack of integration into Thai society, and consider how many participants become embedded and stay long-term in Thailand.

CHAPTER VII

"I'M NOT FULLY INTEGRATED BUT I FEEL LIKE I BELONG HERE": SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES INTEGRATION INTO THAI SOCIETY

Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined transnational activities carried out by participants. In this chapter, I examine how participants integrate themselves, socially, culturally, economically, and politically into Thai society, and I consider the factors that impede participants from greater integration into Thai society. In general, adjusting to new cultural and physical surroundings is a key part of a successful overseas move, which typically involves some form of interaction between migrants and their host society. Appropriately, in this chapter I interrogate how Western self-initiated expatriates pursue different acculturation strategies which help them adjust to living and working in Bangkok.

Research Questions

An important aspect of the expatriation experience is the type of acculturation strategies individuals pursue within their host society. Much has been written on immigrant and expatriate acculturation and cross-cultural adjustment (Mendenhall and Oddou 1985; Black and Gregersen 1991; Tung 1998; Wang and Nayir 2006; Hamberger 2009; Lineberry 2012; Haslberger et al. 2013; Adams and van de Vijver 2015; Mao and Chen 2015; Bierwiaczonek and Waldzus 2016). However, less research has been dedicated to understanding how self-initiated expatriates

acculturate themselves into their host societies. Even less is known about the acculturation strategies of Western SIEs living in Bangkok. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to explore the following research question(s):

4a. How do SIEs economically, politically, and socially integrate themselves into Thai society?

4b. What factors impede or promote Western SIEs' integration into Thai society?

I begin this chapter with a theoretical framework for understanding expatriate acculturation. Second, I focus on how participants in this study socio-culturally acculturated into Thai society. Namely, I explore participants' language acquisition and ability, participation in Thai religions and holidays, as well as the degree in which participants interact and create social relationships with Thai locals. Finally, I conclude by discussing how participants become embedded and settle long-term in Thailand, despite many of them never becoming meaningfully integrated into Thai society. Finally, I conclude the chapter by discussing my findings.

Integration Theoretical Framework

The objective of this section is to provide a theoretical framework to help understand expatriate acculturation and cross-cultural adjustment. Although much has been written on acculturation, much vagueness and contradictory definitions about key terms exist. For example, terms and concepts such as integration, acculturation, adjustment, absorption, assimilation, and incorporation are often used synonymously, which can lead to some misinterpretation. For example, Hamberger (2009) claims the terms integration and assimilation are often treated as similar terms, although he argues that these are two different processes. Therefore, in order to limit confusion, I borrow from Berry's (1997, 2005, 2008, 2010; also see Sam and Berry 2010) acculturation framework to examine how participants in this study adapted to living in Thailand.

According to Berry (1997, 2005), acculturation refers to the adaptation processes and practices in which migrants adopt the cultural aspects of their host nation, yet maintain or preserve cultural aspects of their native culture. Berry (1997, 2005) explains the two main aspects of acculturation related to when individuals encounter a different cultural group: 1) cultural maintenance, defined as the degree in which a migrant maintains his/her native cultural identity; and 2) cultural contact and participation, defined as the degree in which a migrant interacts with and adopts the cultural characteristics and identity of the host group. As described in the Literature Review, Berry (1997, 2005, 2008, 2010) identifies four main acculturation strategies or orientations, which include: assimilation, integration, marginalization, and separation. Subsequently, the acculturation strategy influences the degree of identity change a migrant or expatriate experiences when adjusting to a new environment (see Berry 1997, 2005; Kohonen 2004, 2008; Sussman 2000, 2002; Adams and van de Vijver 2015).

Although most research suggests that assigned expatriates pursue a separation or segregation from the host country acculturation strategy, I contend that many Western SIEs in Thailand appear to pursue an integration acculturation approach, which involves attraction to the host culture with efforts to preserve their own culture as well. Researchers typically measure integration through examining four different aspects: cultural, social, economic, and political (Hamberger 2009). Boswell (2003) describes these four dimensions as follows: 1) cultural, which includes understanding of the host nation's language and cultural norms; 2) social, which involves insertion into the host nation's education and welfare system; 3) economic, which examines a migrant's degree of access to employment and labor market; 4) political, which involves the right to vote and/or gain citizenship. In the subsequent sections I examine each of these four integration dimensions.

Economic Integration

With regards to economic integration and participation, approximately 85% (42 of 50) of the participants were employed locally or owned their own business in Thailand, making them active participants in the Thai labor market. The majority of locally employed participants were working as English language instructors, classroom teachers, or university lecturers. Also, locally employed participants maintained Thai bank accounts, which is typically required in order to be paid in Thai baht. The remaining participants were either working remotely for international companies or were independently wealthy (see appendix V for further biographical data). Additionally, all of the participants were engaged in, as well as contributed to the local Thai economy through renting or owning condos or by employing Thai citizens at their businesses. Participants also spent money locally through every day activities, such as shopping and/or buying food in markets, taking taxis and/or using other forms of public transportation, as well as going to local restaurants and other entertainment venues. Thus, undeniably, participants were economically integrated, as they showed high levels of participation in the local Thai economy.

Political Integration

With regards to political integration, none of the participants had gained citizenship or the legal right to vote in Thailand, since all participants were on some form of temporary or renewable visa, such as a work visa, tourist visa, or education visa. Because they lacked citizenship, participants' active involvement in Thai politics was virtually non-existent. Moreover, the majority of participants showed little interest in following Thai politics. For example, when asked if she followed Thai politics, British "Diane" stated, "Not at all. I have no interest in it really. I should. I get updates from my friends, so I have a very basic understanding. Plus, on a day to day basis, my life isn't really much different depending on who's in power." British Diane's quote reflects the general opinion of most participants, that they are not interested in local politics, and

that Thai political matters do not directly interfere with their lives. This is apparent from the participants' lack of concern about the political uncertainty related to the 2014 coup d'état in Thailand. Notably, most of the semi-structured interviews were conducted around the time or after the 2014 coup d'état, yet no participants expressed concern for their safety or well-being. Instead, most participants claimed they would simply leave the country or return home if the political situation in Thailand became threatening or violent. If necessary participants could take advantage of relatively cheap and assessable air travel to return home if political emergencies or any civil unrest in Thailand arose. This is another example of the unique and relatively privileged status Western expatriates enjoy while living in developing countries in the Global South, such as Thailand.

However, despite showing little interest in Thai politics, some participants claimed to at least follow the subject through various media outlets. However, even for participants who followed Thai politics, they still did not actively participate. For example, when talking about Thai politics, British "Ian" stated, "I follow it because I live here, but I don't get involved. I won't express a direct opinion… Yes, I'm aware of it, very aware of Thai politics." Similarly, British "Carl" claimed, "I will follow big things in the news… general politics. I pay attention to it, but I'm not involved. Honestly, I wouldn't dare be involved in it. I don't think Thais encourage or like that because I'm not Thai." Many participants expressed the feeling that it was not their prerogative to be actively involved in Thai politics because they were not Thai citizens. This clearly shows participants feel somewhat alienated and disenfranchised in the political processes of Thailand. However, when considering the government was controlled by the military during the time of my fieldwork, even Thai citizens were politically disenfranchised. Moreover, British "Carl's" sentiment that Thais discourage non-Thais from being involved in politics is an example of how Westerners despite their relatively privileged status, are still "othered" and not allowed to fully assimilate into Thai society, at least politically.

Furthermore, participants (both Western and Thai) were generally hesitant to openly discuss political matters or the political status of Thailand, due to the country being controlled and censored by a military government. Furthermore, due to stern lèse majesté laws, it is strictly forbidden to discuss the king, queen, or royal family in a critical manner, without serious legal ramifications such as deportation or imprisonment. For example, when asked about his involvement in Thai politics, British "Oscar" replied, "Not much. I try to stay out of it. It's just… You pretty much have to. I don't want to get involved. I just try to stay out of it. You can get in trouble for saying the wrong thing." Thus, due to sensitivity and risk associated with discussing politics openly, I generally avoided having in-depth conversations with participants about political matters.

Socio-cultural Integration

In this next section, I first discuss the cultural distance between Western cultures and Thai culture. In lieu of examining participants' insertion into the Thai public education or welfare system (Boswell 2003), I instead looked at the degree in which participants acquired Thai language, participated in Thai cultural events, and formed friendships or romantic relationships with Thai locals.

1. Cultural Distance

A significant aspect of socio-cultural adjustment is related to the cultural distance between a migrant or expatriate's home and host country. Church (1982, 547) coined the term "cultural distance" when he noted that empirical studies about cross-cultural adjustment showed that the more culturally different or distant a host culture was from a person's own culture, the more difficult it was for that person to culturally adjust. Similarly, Mendenhall and Oddou (1985, 43) supported this notion, and claimed that some cultures are more difficult to adjust to than others, in which they labeled "cultural toughness." Although, there are different approaches to analyzing

cultural distance, Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions, is the most well-known approach. With regard to Thailand, when compared to the UK or the United States, the cultural distance is substantial (see Ng et al. 2007 for a full review of cultural distance scores), especially when considering language. For example, a study by West and Graham (2004) measured the linguistic cultural distance between languages, which suggested that Thai, along with Malay and Javanese, are the most linguistically distant languages from English. Thus, according to Graham (2004), socio-cultural integration, especially with regards to language acquisition, should be somewhat challenging for Western SIEs living and working in Bangkok. Next, I explore participants' language ability and the relative degree of their socio-cultural integration into Thai society.

2. Language Acquisition

Language acquisition and communication can be seen as being crucial to successful migrant and expatriate socio-cultural adjustment. Language ability has long been a benchmark used to evaluate the degree in which immigrants assimilate into a host society (Water and Jiminez 2005). Previous studies suggest a positive relationship between language ability and successful cultural adjustment. Moreover, studies show that successful cultural adjustment can influence the expatriate turnover rate, job performance, as well as general job satisfaction (Shaffer and Harrison 1998; Kraimer et al. 2001; Selmer 2006). Outside the workplace, language ability is also an important part of socio-cultural adjustment for expatriates, as knowledge of the local language is useful when interacting with host citizens and navigating through new foreign environments (Wang and Tran 2012).

When asked about their Thai language ability, participants' responses varied, although many replied with just one-word answers, including, "nonexistent," or "minimal." Even participants who had spent a considerable length of time in Thailand admitted they could not speak Thai well. For example, British "Ian," who had lived in Thailand for approximately nine

years, stated, “Very poor. I’m very lazy when it comes to studying languages. I can get by, but I’m not very good, and I don’t really make any attempt to, not because I don’t want to, but because of time constraints.” Altogether, most participants did not formally or actively study the Thai language, although some put in more efforts than others. British “Carol” explained, “I actually tried to learn my numbers at the beginning. And I’ve picked up things here and there… But I haven’t actively tried to learn to read or write, or anything like that.” American “Sam” said, “I study level 5 [Thai] at a school that teaches 6 levels… I can communicate, I guess on a superficial level. I can read now… my writing is rather poor, but that is something I’m going to be working on the next 3 months. But I’m getting better overall.” However, American “Sam” was a part of small minority, as only 15% (7 of 50) claimed to have taken Thai language lessons by having studied at a language school or university.

Many participants claimed they did not need to learn Thai, because English was so widely used in Bangkok. For example, American “Lois” said, “I can read Thai, but I have no vocabulary. I can read it, but I don’t know what it means. I can sound out words, but everything here is in English! I started out taking lessons, for about a year, but there is no motivation! So, I can speak enough to get by… survival Thai.” As expressed by American “Lois,” English is used throughout Bangkok, especially in tourist zones and in Western-style restaurants and venues. Thus, some participants claimed they did not need to learn Thai or only needed “survival” Thai language ability in order to successfully live and work in Bangkok. For example, British “Charlie” noted:

> Bangkok is kind of weird, isn’t it? There’s so many expats, there’s no real need to speak Thai. I know people that have lived here for years and don’t speak a word. It was the same in Japan. You don’t really need to speak Japanese to live in Tokyo. You know? I knew people that didn’t speak a word, but it was never really an issue.

Some scholars consider the widespread and dominant role of English around the world as a form of colonialism or neocolonialism as a result of British and American imperialism (2002; Tupas 2004; Phillipson 2006; Majhanovich 2013; Pennycook 2017). In the case of Bangkok, Thailand, although never officially colonized, participants benefited from the postcolonial legacy of English becoming a widespread and dominate language in Southeast Asia. Moreover, through convenience interviews some participants expressed the notion that English was in some ways a superior language to Thai, which is an example of participants contributing and perpetuating orientalist attitudes about non-Western culture and languages.

However, despite this attitude, most participants recognized their lack of Thai language ability as a major barrier to socio-cultural integration into Thai society. For example, when asked about barriers to integration, British "Noel" stated, "Language barrier. Language and religion are the main barriers. But I don't feel massive barriers. The Thais don't put up barriers, but language and religion are natural barriers." Similarly, British "David" said, "I think I understand the culture, the people. I think I do understand it quite well. But I would say the whole language thing is a massive barrier. And I feel I can't quite fully understand things until I can read the written language. So, language is the big barrier, both speaking, writing and reading." Yet, despite language being considered a major barrier, most participants made little effort to learn the Thai language. This suggests most participants were not actively trying to assimilate and become more Thai, but instead they pursued a lifestyle and level of integration which maintained or reinforced their own cultural identity. Notably, most participants used English first, even when speaking with Thais in public, and most participants mainly socialized with other native English speakers (discussed in subsequent sections) due to familiarity, and as a way to maintain their Western identity and culture. Overall, Thai language ability and the efforts to learn Thai varied among participants, with most putting little effort into learning Thai, while a few placed a higher value on cultural participation and actively learned the Thai language.

3. Participation in Thai Culture Events

Similar to participant engagement with the Thai language, active participation in Thai culture, such as religion and holidays, varied among participants. Many participants claimed to understand and respect Thai culture, but no participants identified as being a Buddhist or a believer in Buddhism. The main ways participants became involved in Thai traditional culture and Buddhism was through visiting Buddhist temples (sightseeing) and through partaking in highly commercialized Thai public holidays, namely the *Songkran* and *Loy Krathong* festivals. *Songkran* is the celebration of the Buddhist New Year, which occurs in mid-April. *Songkran* is referred to as the water festival, and it is the most popular public holiday in Thailand, which attracts millions of international holiday-goers (Agarwal 2009; Siviroj et al. 2012). *Loy Krathong* or the festival of lights, is another popular holiday, which is typically celebrated by couples placing small Styrofoam decorated baskets (traditionally made of elegantly folded banana leafs) in a river or body of water (Agarwal 2009). Many Westerners and Thais liken *Loy Krathong* to Valentine's Day, a romantic holiday, which is mostly celebrated by couples. Both *Songkran* and *Loy Krathong* are popular and Thai cultural events, which attract Western tourists, as well as expatriates.

The celebrations related to *Songkran*, as well as *Loy Krathong*, have become heavily commercialized and Westernized (Wilson 2017), which helps explains why these two specific holidays are the most popular with foreigners. This sentiment was expressed by American "Joe," who indicated, "I've done *Songkran* twice. Yeah, I guess that's kind of Thai, but it seems to be pretty internationalized now. The whole meaning has changed very much." British "Gareth" expressed a similar view of *Songkran*, and stated:

> *Songkran* is a lot of fun, but I do think all the water fighting, it doesn't seem very Thai anymore. It's evolved from pouring water on people, but it's not religious at all… if anything its hedonistic. It's just 3 days of drinking and throwing water on

> people. To a certain extent it has been taken over by Westerners or by tourists. You know? I remember a few years ago, I went to Koh Chang, it was a week after *Songkran*, but they were still doing *Songkran* things, I asked, "I thought *Songkran* was a week ago?" And they said, 'Oh, we get a lot of tourist for *Songkran*. So, we do *Songkran* for the tourist, and a week later we do *Songkran* for us. For the locals.' Last year or the year before, I took part of *Loy Krathong*. You know? You float the little boat down the river.

British "Gareth's" statement reveals the impact of Westernization and globalization on traditional Thai holidays. This also explains why many participants celebrated the *Songkran* holiday. Since it has become Westernized and commercialized it has an element of familiarity, which does not challenge participants' cultural identity, yet it provides them a way to participate in and experience Thai culture.

Another reason participants participate in Thai holidays and cultural events is because of their Thai partner or spouse. For example, when discussing visiting Buddhist temples, American "Brad" stated, "We [his partner and he] go to temples. I burn incense and I pray for one thing, that's what I've been told to do. I just do what they are doing. I don't understand all of it, but I go through the motions… I pray but not necessarily to Buddha. But as far as going to the temple, if I wasn't in a relationship with Champ [his partner], I wouldn't be doing these things." Likewise, American "Glenn" talked about Thai holidays and being taken to Buddhist temples by his Thai spouse, but he admitted he did not understand the importance and meaning of these events. He explained:

> I did go through a period when temples fascinated me, but after you see a couple a hundred of them. I don't know, they're all pretty much the same! But sometimes my wife will take me to the temple, and I will walk through the temple and do the incense, and gold foil, and shake the stick for the fortune. So, we still do all of that. The problem is… the frustration! I have no clue what we are doing in the temple. There is no English explaining what we are doing, and I don't understand the holidays. And my wife is unable to explain it properly. It's like the *Makha Bucha* Day, I know it's an important religious

> holiday, but I couldn't tell you what it is, or what it's about, or why it's important. But my wife drags me to the temple and I go through the motions, and at the end of the day I'm even more clueless!

American "Glenn's" quote demonstrates that although some participants are willing to participate in Thai cultural events and religious activities, it is mostly at a superficial level because they do not understand the history or meaning associated with such activities. Furthermore, because no English literature or signage is available at Thai temples to help explain religious rituals, the language barrier appears to be a persistent factor which impedes meaningful cultural integration.

Altogether, the participants with Thai partners were more inclined to participate in Thai cultural events, but only at a superficial level. Moreover, in the case of American "Glenn," it appears his involvement in Thai culture events was most likely undertaken in order to appease his wife. The act of "going through the motions" was expressed by other participants as well. For example, when asked about Thai cultural events, British "Chris" replied:

> *Loy Krathong*, *Songkran*, Thai family events, and all that. Anything that's not too taxing! You know? I mean… It's a good question. Thai culture for me revolves around alcohol. But I get involved with the key events… *Songkran*, *Loy Krathong*, and family events. Blessing the office or funerals also, blessing the house, I will go along to that as well.

This statement from British "Chris" suggests participants are willing to participate in events that are familiar and comfortable, but may avoid situations that are culturally different or uncomfortable.

Overall, the freedom to engage or not engage in the local culture depended on the participants' individual preferences, which is another example of how expatriation and lifestyle mobility is distinguished from other forms of migration. For example, other migrant groups, especially those moving from the Global South to the Global North, are often expected to

assimilate and adopt the culture and language of the host society (Castles 2003; Castles et al. 2014; Scott and Cartledge 2009; O'Reilly 2013). However, in general, Western expatriates have the privilege to choose their degree of socio-cultural integration. This notion is supported by British "George," who stated:

> I haven't gone completely native. I'm probably integrated as much as I would like to be. I took the time to try to learn Thai... But that's the thing about Thailand, you can be as integrated as little or as much as you want to be. But I don't go to temples to pray. I'm not out in the morning giving alms to the monks. I have participated in *Songkran* and *Loy Krathong*, but I haven't done that for 4 or 5 years.

Notably, the aspect of familiarity and choice is apparent, as participants are mostly choosing to participate in cultural events or holidays that offer elements of familiarity. Thus, with regards to Thai holidays and cultural events, participants find themselves in a privileged position to choose the degree of socio-cultural integration they want, which allows them to pursue the familiar and maintain their own Western cultural identity.

4. Relations with Local Thais

Another element of socio-cultural integration involved participants forming friendships or relationships with Thai citizens. When I asked participants about the type of friendships and relationships they had established with Thais, their answers varied. Although, the majority of participants had a Thai partner or spouse, or were at least engaged in romantic relations with Thais, only 10% (5 of 50) claimed to have meaningful platonic friendships with Thai citizens. For instance, when asked if he had Thai friends, American "Fred" replied, "I really wouldn't say so. It's kind of unfortunate. I wish I had Thai friends, but I kind of don't." And British "Henry" said, "I'm friendly with a bunch of Thais, but real friends? None." Even participants who had spent considerable time in Thailand, claimed to have very few or no Thai friends. For example, British "Chris," who had lived in Thailand for nearly 20 years, stated, "I've been married, so I have a

Thai wife. Her family… they have accepted me as family. But Friends? I have to be honest, I don't really have many Thai friends. There are people I'm friendly with… But, unfortunately, there isn't any Thai person that I would say, 'Hey! That's my mate!'" Similarly, when I asked American "Rick" about Thai friends, he declared:

> Real friendships… right? People you can trust and build something with? So, I have to say that it's been a challenge for me personally to establish real friendships. Thais have a unique way of looking at foreigners, especially Westerners… especially Western men… For me, I have to say… My primary relationship in this country… in the culture and society is with my wife. She is Thai. So, her family… You know? Her family has accepted me… I am part of it, and so at this very moment I don't feel compelled to find other types of relationships. Working relationships are different. I try to get along with as many people as possible, in order to ensure that I stay employed first and foremost.

American "Rick's" statement provides insight into how some Thais perceive Westerners in Thailand. As mentioned in the first analysis chapter, due to the long history of sex tourism from the West, Thais often associate Western men with the sex trade. Thus, some Thais have the opinion that Western men are only in the kingdom for sexual experiences. As mentioned in Chapter Four, these type of expatriates are colloquially referred to as "sexpats." This is a moniker that participants in this study did not want to be associated with. Additionally, Thais assume Westerners are not interested in learning Thai language or culture, which is a stereotype somewhat supported by my own findings (see the section above on language acquisition). Additionally, American "Rick's" statement reflects the experience of other participants, which is they establish relations with their Thai spouse's families, yet rarely establish meaningful relations with Thais outside of the family.

In general, the greatest degree of socio-cultural integration participants displayed was in the form of inter-ethnic relationships or marriages between male Westerners and Thai women. For example, British "Noel" stated, "I have Thai family. I have in-laws. So, I would say that I'm

fairly integrated. People accept me, and I accept them. Of course, language is a big barrier. I participate in family functions, but my family is pretty easy going. And the family has known foreigners for a while, the auntie is married to a *farang*… My family knows a little bit of English, so I've found integration fairly easy." American "Charlie" stated, "There is some integration, and you look at… a lot of people are married with Thai women. The male expats have relationships… in that way they are not segregated at all. So, I would say there is a lot of integration through relationships, through romantic relationships." Overwhelmingly, a distinctive trend was that male participants established romantic relationships with female Thais, but very few participants had established significant platonic relations with male Thai citizens.

Even the participants who had lived in Thailand for many years lacked platonic relationships with local Thai citizens. For instance, British "George," who had lived in Thailand for nearly 15 years, said, "I've found it quite difficult to become good friends with Thais, especially with males. Females are different, you know because you're dating. But with Thai males, I've only had maybe three Thai male friends since I've been here. And the Thai male friends I've had were from the USA, so they weren't really local Thais." When discussing social interactions with Thais, British "Noah" commented, "In Western culture I can easily chat to anyone in a bar and make friends… In the UK, it is probably easier to make friends with guys than it is with girls. But here it is easier to make friends with girls than it is guys. The guys are a bit more stand-offish… They don't seem to like foreigners that much." Similarly, when discussing relationships between Thais and Westerners, British "Ian" explained:

> There are a lot of male and female relationships… Romantic relationships between Westerners and Thais. But male with male relationships or friendships… Thais with Westerners… Not so much, unless you know them through work. But I don't think that's specific to Thais. From working here I worked with Filipinos… and it was similar. I just think people tend to stick to their own nationalities. Not to be rude, but that's the way I see it. There is always a language barrier. There is a massive language barrier. So, there is always that… I've had friendships with Thai

> guys, but there is always a language barrier. I've had colleagues… But not regular social companions.

The reason for the lack of relations between Western males and Thai males is somewhat unclear, but many participants claimed the language barrier played a major role in impeding social interaction with Thais males and Thai citizens in general. However, language did not seem to impede participants from forming romantic relationships with Thai females. Some participants commented that Thai men do not like Western men, and this is possibly because Western men are often seen in public with Thai women which might cause resentment from single Thai men who do not have the social and/or economic capital to acquire female companionship. Furthermore, public displays of affection are somewhat frowned upon in Asian cultures, including Thailand, and it is common to see Western men holding hands with their Thai partners in central Bangkok, which might offend some Thai citizens. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the negative stereotype that Western men living in Thailand are "sexpats," and they are only in the kingdom to partake in the sex industry or exploit women. This negative assumption and "occidental" view about Western men hindered participants in this study from forming significant friendships with Thai citizens, especially Thai males.

A few participants claimed they established friendships with their Thai male co-workers, but even these relationships did not extend beyond the workplace. For instance, when asked about Thai friends, British "Gary" commented that he had, "A couple Thai friends from work, and we've kept in touch. But I don't have any Thai friends that I met on the street or from going out." However, some female participants appeared to establish relations with other Thai females. For example, British "Carol," claimed to have many Thai friends from work, although she admitted most Thais and Westerners were segregated at the workplace, she explained:

> I have quite a few Thai friends… There are a lot of Thai people at work. But at work it's quite segregated. The *farang* sit with each other, and the Thais sit with each other. But I think that's

> because the Thais speak Thai with each other, and the *farang* speak English to each other. But I go sit with all of them. I go sit with people in my department, so it doesn't really matter. But I go out with them [Thai coworkers] on the weekends.

However, British "Carol" was a somewhat exceptional participant, notably because of her age and gender. In regards to age, British "Carol" was only 25, and she was one of only six female participants.

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, female expatriates are considerably outnumbered by men, especially in Thailand (Howard 2008; 2009a). However, despite this gender gap, studies have reported that female expatriates, when compared to their male counterparts, tend to "fit in" better at the workplace (Cole and McNulty 2011). Some studies reported that women often have a more open attitude towards cultural difference, when compared to males, and thus typically have a higher or equal success rate of socio-cultural adjustment during overseas assignments (Selmer and Leung 2003; Altman and Shortland 2008, Haslberger 2010; Cole and McNulty 2011; Harrison and Michailova 2012; Bastida 2018). Selmer and Lueng (2003) specifically argue females adjust better during overseas assignments due to their high level of career aspiration and their willingness to socialize with their foreign coworkers in order to gain organizational promotions. With regards to female participants in this study, they mostly appeared to successfully adjust to living and working in Thailand.

Besides British "Carol," most participants stressed that it was difficult to establish "real" friendships with Thais. Some participants mentioned having Thai acquaintances, but not friends. For example, American "Simon" suggested, "I know some Thai people from board gaming. But part of the problem is the language barrier, and partly the cultural stuff. I've got some acquaintances, but not a lot of Thai friends." Similarly, British "Archie" replied, "A couple of acquaintances. A couple of my friends have Thai girlfriends or wives. I get on with them, but I don't think I would say we are friends… So no, I don't really have any Thai friends." American

"John" replied, "Other than my wife? I'm pretty close to my wife's family… I guess it's how you define friendship… I have acquaintances." This reoccurring theme of participants claiming to have "acquaintances" demonstrates that participants are interacting and integrating with Thais, yet the level of this integration is relatively limited and somewhat superficial.

Due to the socio-cultural barriers and misunderstandings described previously, mainly the language barrier, the majority of participants reported having social-circles made-up mostly of other Westerners, and many participants expressed their preference for socializing with other native English speakers. For example, American "Sam" highlighted this point:

> If I want to have a good night out with friends, it tends to be with foreigners, just because I'm older now, and I find dealing with my own culture, during my free time, is better. I feel I don't want to have to put in that extra effort, unless they [Thais] are well integrated into Western society… And if they speak English very fluently… Or to be honest unless they are a woman… Then I will make that extra effort. If it's an attractive woman, I can put up with a little bit more.

Moreover, American "Sam's" quote reflects the attitude of most male participants in regards to establishing relations with Thai locals. That is participants did not want to put effort into establishing platonic friendships, yet they were willing to "make that extra effort" in order to acquire Thai female companions. Thus, relations between the Westerners and local Thais was mainly contingent on gender, as participants generally did not pursue friendships with Thai males.

Overall, participants almost exclusively had social networks consisting of other Westerners. For example, when asked about his social circle, British "Gary" offered these details; "Predominately Westerners. I have a fairly close circle of friends that I've pretty much known since I arrived here. I've probably got three or four close friends, from America, New Zealand, and England, and a wider network of acquaintances, but again, mainly English and American."

Likewise, American "Daryl" replied, "International people. Not usually Thais. Canadians, Americans, Brits, Australians… mostly English speakers. But Germans and Scandinavians as well. One of my good friends is French." The preference or desire to socialize with other English speakers was expressed by other participants as well. For example, British "Ian" noted, "I mainly socialize with native English speakers, regardless of their nationality. Native English speaking people." Likewise, British "Henry" said, "Most of my actual mates, or friends, would be Westerners… I have a preference for native English speakers." Typically, participants formed social-circles which provide them with a sense of comfort and familiarity, as expressed by American "Blanche," who explained:

> Once I started associating with the Europeans here in Thailand I felt more comfortable. But I think it helps you, you need to hang on to your own culture, no matter where you are… That's why people gravitate to people with the same cultural background… Especially language, I've mostly had British friends, there weren't many Americans when I first came here, but there were more British and Australians.

Outside of romantic relationships, my research showed that participants preferred socializing with other Westerners, especially other native English language speakers, which provided them a sense of comfort, and also helped reinforce or maintain their Western cultural identity.

Integration and Feeling of Belongingness

When I asked participants if they felt Westerners were integrated or segregated into Thai society, their answers also varied. Most participants felt there was little genuine socio-cultural integration between Westerners and Thais. For example, American "Daryl" declared his perspective, "Segregated. There is two different societies. They are different cultures. Thai society doesn't have a place for foreigners… Some foreigners are integrated through marriage or work, but generally no. Generally it's pretty much 'us' and 'them'." Likewise, British "Archie" presented his explanation:

> For the most part they are segregated. That's just from my observations. For the most part, if you walk around the town. You see *farang* with *farang* and Thais with Thais. If you see *farang* and Thais together it's usually a male *farang* and a female Thai. I would say 95%. It's a very rare case, where it's a male Thai and female *farang*. Besides that you don't tend to see mixed groups. They are the exception rather than the rule. I don't remember going anywhere that seemed like a really equal mix. I don't ever remember noticing that.

Likewise, American "Andy" claimed, "I think most are segregated. That's just what I see when I go out. Sometimes you will see mixed groups, but for the most part they are separated, or it's a relationship, the integration I see is a Western male with a Thai female." Although participants recognized inter-ethnic marriages and relationships allowed a certain degree of socio-cultural integration, most participants expressed felt that meaningful integration into Thai society was not possible because they were not "Thai." For example, "Sam," who noted his observations:

> If you are married to a Thai, you are generally much more integrated, and speak the language, but on the same token you are always going to be a foreigner here. You can live a comfortable life… But you will never be Thai. I think the Thai Chinese, the Vietnamese Thais, they are much more integrated… than the *farang* are… much, much more! You know? We are hardly considered Thais were the other ones would be. We will never be Thai!

Becker and Roensak (2008) claimed non-ethnic Asians are viewed as guests in Thailand because of their physical appearance is different from Thais, yet other ethnic Asian groups, such as Chinese, Mon, and Laotians are more accepted and can become assimilated into Thai society. Similar finding were reported by Farrer (2010a), who claimed expatriates were unable to fully assimilate in Shanghai because the Chinese associated national identity with race. Additionally, both Fechter (2007a) in Jakarta, and Smiley (2010a) in Dar es Salaam, found that socio-cultural integration by European and American expatriates was considerably hindered because of their race and ethnicity. Likewise, the participants in this study claimed they could not fully integrate because of their ethnic positionality or status as white Western foreigners.

As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, Thais typically refer to Western expatriates or foreigners as *farang*, which means a person of European origin, or "white" foreigner. Notably, this labeling of white Westerners by Thais as *farang* is a form of "othering," which creates a barrier or separation between the two groups. Sawrikar and Katz (2010) claimed that white Westerners in predominately non-white countries can be acceptable to stereotypes and experience prejudice, because they do not wield the same power as the dominate non-white group. Although, participants mostly reported receiving preferential or at least equal treatment because of their ethnic identity, participants acknowledged they were outsiders because of their *farang* or foreigner status. In regards to being a *farang* or "Caucasian" in Thailand, British "George" commented:

> Thais do not treat foreigners, especially Caucasians, like a Thai. Everyone I know living here… There is definitely a difference between a Caucasian expat and an Asian expat living here. Like a Japanese or Chinese… or Singaporean. I think they are more accepted. I think because they look more Thai than a Caucasian, or maybe their culture is perceived to be closer to Thai culture than Western culture. Western culture is so different.

British "George's" quote shows the precarious and ambiguous position the participants negotiated while living in Bangkok. Thus, despite Westerners being viewed as the superior "other" they are still treated as outgroup within Thai society.

As a result of cultural differences, language barriers, and visible difference, participants expressed that socio-cultural interaction and integration between Thais and Westerners was hindered. Moreover, these cultural differences made some participants claim that Thais simply avoided them because they were foreigners. This sentiment was explained by British "Hershel," who stated:

> As foreigners I don't think we are really accepted here, we are just tolerated… But it's a Buddhist society and the general aspect is that they like to tolerate things, but it's obvious that they don't

> like a lot of things about us. We are from different cultures and we have a different mindset. It's difficult to learn the language and to understand the many intricate things that they do that is very different. Also, because of the language barrier many people will just generally avoid you. You can try to catch a taxi, and they will just say, 'No!' Because it's too much hassle. They will just say, 'No,' and you get that at shops and everywhere. If they don't want to deal with you, they will just walk away. It has a lot to do with language.

British "Hershel's" statement reveals the perception that because Thais are Buddhist they are presumed to be open and accepting to cultural differences. However, in practice, even participants that attempted to integrate into Thai society, were not allowed to become fully assimilated or become Thai because of their because of their race, skin color, and cultural differences. Similarly, Winichakul (2010) argues that due to visible differences, Westerners and other non-Asians are always considered permanent outsiders in Thailand.

Furthermore, participants claimed the main form of segregation was between the wealthy (or hi-so) Thais and Westerners, rather than between working class Thais and Westerners. For instance, American "Andy" stated:

> In my opinion, there is a distinct class separation. Whether that's because all of the areas that expats live and move in… But it feels like we never get close to the upper echelon of Thai society. In the US you could, because the different classes mix quite well. Here, there is a distinct difference.

Thus, participants claimed to rarely interact with "hi-so" or wealthy Thais, but argued they had many opportunities to interact with working class Thais, especially those engaged in the service industry. For instance, British "Henry" had noted:

> I think it's very easy to interact with low education Thais, and most of the time you go out and do your thing, you are going to constantly meet lower educated Thais… Bartenders, waiters, taxi drivers… I've met some educated Thais through my girlfriend and we can have some wonderfully extensive conversations. So, to answer your question… It's easy to interact with the lower

> class Thais, because they are in the service industry. Those are the people you interact with, the motorbike taxis, the taxi drivers, the 7-11 workers, but it's not so easy to come into contact with the high educated Thais, because they are more segregated.

However, despite the lack of meaningful friendships and integration, many of the participants expressed a feeling of belongingness in Thailand. By "belonging" or "belongingness" I mean the feeling of acceptance by a group or the feeling of comfort related to place (Kunc 1992; Phinney 1992). As discussed in the literature review, the feeling of "belongingness" can be produced through everyday practices (Joseph 1999; Fortier 2000; Edensor 2002). When asked if they felt like they belonged in Thailand, American "John" replied, "This is home, I think I want citizenship," and British "Dylan" said, "Yeah, I have a sense of belonging, especially now, I feel like Bangkok is my home," and American "William" stated, "I feel like I belong here. I don't feel like an outsider." These participants suggest a feeling of belongingness, specifically with British "Dylan" claiming Bangkok is his "home." British "Gareth," who had a Thai wife, but mainly socialized with other Westerners stated, "I fit in here quite well, I'm quite relaxed. I'm happy. I don't ever feel like an outcast. I'm not fully integrated, and that's probably my fault, and I don't feel like I'm Thai or that type of thing, but I feel like I'm comfortable, and I belong here." Notably, American "Eugene" credited the renowned Thai friendliness for his feeling of belongingness, as he explained:

> People here make you feel very welcome. I lived in Hawaii for 14 years, then I went away for a year, and went back, but I felt nothing. You know? There was nothing there for me... but in Thailand, you can go and meet people, and they are friendly. You can talk to strangers… People here are friendly. I feel that it is more of a home, even after a short time here, compared to Hawaii. I feel comfortable with the language, the food, the people, and the transportation.

American "Eugene's" feelings of friendliness among Thai people was reported by other participants. Moreover, studies on tourism have shown that Thailand is known for its hospitality;

and the perception of Thai friendliness is one of the main positive attributes which draws visitors to the kingdom (Tapachai and Waryszak 2000; Henkel et al. 2006). Even the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), promotes the kingdom as "The Land of Smiles."

Nevertheless, some participants, especially those that had lived in Thailand for numerous years, claimed that Thai friendliness towards Westerners was waning, and thus they lacked a feeling of belongingness. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the tightening of visa rules and procedures, which impede Westerners from staying long term in Thailand, has caused some participants to become disenchanted with Thailand and subsequently leave. These changes made some participants feel like visitors in Thailand, despite living in the country for many years. British "Oscar" claimed, "I always feel like a visitor. Even though I've got a job… You still feel like more of a *farang* here. I feel like more of a Westerner, than I did in Hong Kong. You never just quite know if your visa is going to be alright. But generally speaking… I always feel like a foreigner." Similarly, American "Steve" stated:

> I will never be Thai, and I will never be fully accepted here. You're always a foreigner. You know? And that's the word, the word they say, 'farang.' It's never, 'The guy in the blue shirt.' It's, 'the farang.' That's who you are. That's what they see. And it will take a couple of generations for that to change… That is if anyone wants it to change, and right now I don't think anyone does. You will always be a farang.

Pattana (2010) claimed mainstream Thai media and social elites have socially constructed Thais to be an ethnically homogenous group in which Westerners are not included. Nevertheless, despite feeling like a foreigner and expressing a lack of belongingness, neither British "Oscar" nor American "Steve" reported any plans to leave Thailand or return home.

Altogether, only 20% (10 out of 50) of the participants expressed the desire to leave Thailand and repatriate home, mostly because they felt as if they did not belong, or were being treated as outsiders. For instance, when talking about belonging, British "Roger" acknowledged,

"Not so much now. But I remember when I used to get back to the airport coming from England and I would be like, 'I'm back home.' And it felt kind of nice. Getting hit by the heat, and getting a taxi… So it always felt good to be back… Not so much now, so maybe that is the sign that it's time to go. Time to move on." Thus, although most participants reported a desire to stay long-term in Thailand, other participants, especially those who had lived in Thailand for numerous years and had become disenchanted, and admitted they were ready to return home or move to another country.

Discussion

Overall, unlike other immigrant groups, especially those involving migrants moving from developing to more developed countries, Western expatriates who live and work in developing countries are generally not expected to fully assimilate into their host society (Przytuła 2015). Additionally, when compared to migrants moving from the Global South to the Global North, Western expatriates often have much more freedom and options when dealing with the host society, and they are generally not expected or encouraged to fully acculturate or integrate. With regards to this study, all participants achieved economic integration, as they were all participating in the local economy. However, meaningful political integration or active political participation, such as voting, was not legally possible. Due to stifling immigration laws it is a challenge to become a Thai citizen, as there is no "green card" system or other avenues to gain residency. Moreover, meaningful socio-cultural integration into Thai society was rarely realized, and more importantly not pursued by most participants. Even participants with Thai partners or spouses found that it was difficult to form non-romantic friendships with Thais, mostly because of cultural and language barriers, but also because their visual status as Westerners.

However, if using romantic relationships or marriage as a criterion, then many participants displayed a degree of socio-cultural integration, as approximately 55% of participants

had a live-in Thai partner or spouse. Moreover, participants who were married to a Thai citizen (17 of 50) claimed to form positive relations with their spouse's family. So, with this reasoning, participants with Thai spouses were considerably more socio-culturally integrated than participants without Thai spouses. Yet, if using other criterion, such as Thai language fluency, understanding of Thai culture, and establishing and maintaining friendships or social relations with Thai citizens, then the majority of participants' degree of socio-cultural integration was relatively low. Nonetheless, when compared to previous studies about expatriation, participants appeared to be more socio-culturally integrated than assigned or traditional expatriates in other countries.

Additionally, the degree of socio-cultural integration within this study appeared to vary according to age and gender. Notably, younger participants tended to be more integrated when compared to their older counterparts, as they tended to have better language acquisition and seemed more open to forming platonic friendships with local Thais or with other Southeast Asians living in Thailand, such as Cambodian, Laotian, or Burmese immigrants. This sentiment was expressed by British "Noel," who stated, "I've found that younger Westerners living in Bangkok tend to be far more integrated. In Hua Hin, your retired alcoholic *farang* tend to not be integrated at all. So, the younger you are the more likely you are to be integrated, and know the language and care about the people." Also, participants who had lived in other foreign countries or had previous exposure to other cultures tended to be more integrated. Individuals with experience with various cultures are reported to develop a cosmopolitan perspective (Adams and van de Vijver 2015), or a cosmopolitan disposition (Wise 2016), which enables them to adjust to new cultural environments. Approximately five participants reported living in other foreign countries before moving to Thailand, giving them exposure to different people and places, and providing them with a cosmopolitan perspective, this made them more open to socio-cultural integration in Thailand. Nevertheless, it appears that even younger participants or those with a

cosmopolitan disposition were also hindered by language and cultural barriers, which affected their degree of socio-cultural integration.

Despite the lack of socio-cultural integration, as well as the absence of political integration, many participants expressed a desire to remain long-term in Thailand. Altogether, 36% (18 of 50) participants said wanted to remain long-term and retire in Thailand, and the other 44% (22 of 50) participants were either undecided or had no plans to repatriate. In their study about Western SIEs and repatriation, Tharenou and Caulfield (2010) claimed that compared to assigned expatriates, SIEs are more likely to become embedded in their host country. They also argue that Western SIEs are more likely to relocate to a country similar to their original host country (i.e., moving from Thailand to Laos), rather than repatriating home (Tharenou and Caulfield 2010). Additionally, within most mobility and expatriation literature, Western expatriates are portrayed as persons not well adapted to their host environment (Przytuła 2015). For participants in this study, regardless of level of integration, most claimed to be fairly adjusted to living and working in Thailand, which is evident through their propensity to become embedded.

Overall, many of the participants in this study became embedded in Thailand, with only 20% (10 of 50) expressing the desire to repatriate or leave Thailand. Additionally, it appears that some of the reasons that attract Westerners to move to Thailand (see Chapter Four), such as Thai hospitality and romantic relationships with Thai citizens, are some of same reasons they become embedded and decide to stay indefinitely. More importantly, it appears that a lack of socio-cultural or political integration did not impact the participants' feelings of belongingness, as many expressed that they felt as if they fully belonged in Thailand. Even participants who lacked a feeling of belongingness, because they felt as if they were treated as an outsider, because of their status as a white Westerner or a *farang*, still expressed the desire to continue living in Thailand. This indicates that there was no general overarching feeling of belongingness amongst

participants, but instead the participants' sense of belonging was somewhat fluid and multifaceted, and contingent upon their everyday lives and individual experiences.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I discussed the structural factors that grant mobility and privilege to some, such as relatively affluent Western self-initiated expatriates, yet denies it to others, namely persons from developing countries in the Global South. Western mobility combined with the economies in the Global South produce relationships of imbalanced power that tend to favor white, male Western expatriates. Thus, self-initiated expatriation to Thailand is a privileged form of mobility which typically involves Westerners first holidaying and then relocating to a country in which most of its citizens do not have the economic or political means to make similar movements to the Global North. As noted by Cresswell (2006, 2010) not all mobility is created equal since an individual's ability to move across borders and cultures is related to their access to power, technology, as well as social or political networks. With regard to self-initiated expatriation in this study, Westerners had access to power and social networks that were legacies of the colonial and semi-colonial past.

I also showed that Western SIEs occupied a precarious position in Thailand. Although they were considered outsiders from the Thai perspective as white Westerners or *farang*, they were also seen as the superior "other," in regards to their skin color, material wealth, technology, and education. Because of this perceptual legacy of orientalism, Western SIEs enjoyed a relatively high socio-cultural status in Thailand. Thus, because of these understandings Westerner

participants mobilized the colonial past, expatriating to Thailand that offered them a higher socio-cultural status, and privilege.

Overall, in this dissertation I explored three broad questions that are at the core of all migration studies: 1) who moves; 2) why people move; and 3) what happens to people after they move. I answered question one by collecting biographical data on the 50 participants in this study, as well as interviewing these participants to gain a deeper understanding about their individual motivations and identities. I addressed questions one and two in Chapter Four, where I examined the structural and motivational factors that influenced the participants to expatriate to Thailand. I addressed question three in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, where I explored participants' everyday lives, their transnational activities, as well as the ways they integrated or demonstrated an absence of integration within Thai society. In the remainder of this chapter, I summarize the major findings and contributions that emerged from this study. Additionally, I make recommendations for future research.

Findings and Contributions

Through this study, I showed that self-initiated of participants' expatriation to Bangkok was somewhat unique as it is mostly driven by tourism, as most participants holidayed in Thailand prior to relocating to the country. Moreover, my research showed that both structural and motivational factors influenced participants to expatriate to Bangkok. The main structural factors that I found were low cost of living and the ability to acquire employment, which provided participants with livable wages as well as work visas. Motivational factors were specifically related to the holiday-like attributes and amenities of Thailand which provided participants with an improved lifestyle, particularly when compared to their home countries. I found the main motivational drivers of expatriation to Thailand were the following: cheap and easily accessible

food (both Thai and international cuisine), warm weather, friendly people, employment possibilities, travel opportunities, and the availability of attractive romantic partners.

More importantly, I showed that after relocating to Bangkok, participants lived relatively privileged lives. For example, in Chapter Four I described how participants were able to easily acquire English teaching jobs, especially if they were "white" native English speakers. Moreover, due to persistent "orientalist" attitudes which favor white Westerners, participants were able to acquire English teaching jobs with minimal qualifications, and they were often paid higher salaries than non-Caucasian English teachers. Additionally, I showed that male participants were particularly privileged through their enhanced ability to find romantic or sexual partners in Thailand, due to their perceived high socio-cultural and economic status.

In Chapter Five, I showed that participants enjoyed relatively privileged daily lives. First, they could afford to reside in high-rise condominiums, which typically offered luxury amenities, such as swimming pools and on location gyms. Furthermore, the participants generally had the means to live in condominiums located near major transportation terminals, such as the BTS Skytrain, which allowed participants the ability to easily travel to areas of the city which provided Western-style restaurants and venues. Additionally, high-rise condominiums provided participants shelter away from the chaos of the busy streets and sidewalks of Bangkok. Thus, participants' housing strategies allowed them to be spatially integrated within Thai neighborhoods, yet essentially allowed them to be segregated and walled-off from the general public. With regards to shopping, most participants had the privilege and means to seek out familiarity and comfort, as they purchased everyday items at Western-style retailers and shops. Therefore, despite living in a developing country, they were still able to access Western amenities. With regards to mobility, I elucidated that participants enjoyed unimpeded movement throughout Bangkok, because they were rarely stopped by security guards when entering places in the city. Yet, local Thais, especially working-class Thais, did not enjoy the same degree of

privileged movement throughout the city, as they were often stopped and questioned by security guards when entering places, especially venues which catered to Western tourists and expatriates.

Furthermore, I showed that participants exercised privilege through choosing their degree of socio-cultural integration into Thai society. For example, despite using public transport as part of their daily commute, and thus being in Thai public space frequently, participants' interactions with local Thais were mostly superficial in nature. Outside of commercial activities, interactions with Thais was minimal. Additionally, participants generally spoke English when interacting with local Thais, mainly because most participants could not speak the Thai language, and also because Thais did not expect Westerners to assimilate and learn the local language. Participants in reciprocal relationships were further privileged, because their Thai spouses or partners assisted them with everyday tasks, especially tasks which required a Thai language speaker.

In Chapter Six, I showed that participants had the economic means, as well access to technology, to conduct transnational activities, which allowed them to maintain contact with their home countries. Socio-cultural activities mostly included using online social media websites, following the news online, or making annual or semi-annual trips home. Participants also used video conferencing to stay connected to loved ones, or hosted friends and family who came to visit them in Thailand. These were privileges that many economically and politically challenged migrants are unable to enjoy.

In Chapter Seven, I explain that although some participants celebrated Thai holidays, they mostly only participated in commercialized celebrations of *Songkran* and *Loy Krathong*. Some participants described having acquaintances with local Thais, but meaningful friendships between participants and Thai citizens were not reported. I showed that married participants tended to be more socio-culturally integrated as they formed meaningful relationships with their spouses' families, and were also more likely to be economically invested in Thailand as well, by

owning condos or businesses with their Thai spouse. Yet, overall, participants were privileged because they were able to choose how and to what degree they socio-culturally integrated into Thai society.

Beyond revealing how participants enjoyed privileged lives in Bangkok, I also showed how they were distinguished from assigned expatriates described in other studies. In Chapter Five, I showed that, despite being mostly socially segregated, the participants in this research were relatively spatially integrated with the local population, especially when compared to the spatial integration of traditional or assigned expatriates reported in previous studies. Moreover, there was no evidence of participants living in exclusive expatriate enclaves, which is commonly reported in research about assigned expatriates. One unique finding was that participants tended to cluster around transportation hubs, especially around BTS Skytrain terminals, which is not discussed or reported in other studies about assigned expatriates. With regards to dining out, participants were adventurous and often sought out Thai food and other non-Western cuisines. In contrast, assigned expatriates are mostly reported to eat Western cuisine and dine at Western-style venues.

In Chapter Six, I also showed that when compared to reports from previous expatriate and migrant studies, participants in this study carried out a relatively low frequency and intensity of transnational activities. For example, some participants mentioned “cutting ties” to their home country. I contended this was most likely done because participants self-initiated their move, unlike assigned expatriates who are directed to move by a supporting organization. Since participants chose to relocate to Thailand under their own initiative, with most having no firm repatriation plans, they were less inclined to carry out transnational activities which connected them to their home countries.

Moreover, I showed that the degree of transnational activities participants carried out was influenced by the cultural and physical distance between Thailand and the participants' home countries. As Scott (2004) notes, cultural and geographical distance impacts the intensity of transnational activities that an expatriate partakes. A few participants mentioned their friends and families were, "… out of sight, out of mind." Although not discussed directly with the participants, the time-zone difference between Thailand and the United States made it difficult to carry out many spontaneous socio-cultural activities such as phone calls or video conferencing. Thus, in the case of transnational activities, geography matters, because both distance and time influenced the ways participants maintained connections to their home countries.

With regards to belonging, in Chapter Six I showed that, unlike assigned expatriates, participants did not appear to attempt to recreate their "home" with physical or material items. This was most likely due to practical and economic reasons, as the participants did not have the support of an organization or company to pay for their relocation to Thailand. Thus, instead of using physical items to recreate a familiar home to reinforce cultural identity, participants relied mostly on social media to maintain socio-cultural connections to their home. Moreover, the participants reported no culture shock, homesickness, or a longing for their home countries. Since the majority of participants initially experienced Thailand through a holiday prior to expatriation, this most likely reduced their degree of culture shock. Notably, the participants expressed that Thailand provided them with a better lifestyle and life when compared to their home countries, so understandably they would be less inclined to long for their home.

In addition, many participants claimed that they could not be "Thai" because of their status as white foreigners. However, despite participants reporting that they felt as outsiders because of their cultural and ethnic background, some expressed an overall feeling of belonging in Thailand. Moreover, even participants who expressed a lack of belonging still expressed a desire to continue to live in Thailand. Consequently, many participants became embedded and

lived in Thailand for many years or decades, despite their lack of socio-cultural or political integration. Altogether, 36% of participants expressed a desire to retire and remain in Thailand, while only 20% (10 of 50) wanted to leave Thailand. The remainder were undecided about repatriation. These findings challenged previous assumptions about belonging, as participants' criteria and understanding of belonging was considerably different from findings reported in other studies on international migration and expatriation.

Recommendations for Future Research

Since conducting my fieldwork, many Westerners, including some of the participants in this study, have begun to leave Bangkok because of high levels of air pollution, increasingly restrictive Thai immigration and visa laws, and the rising cost of living. First, the recent rise of the Thai baht, combined with the decline of the British pound, has decreased the buying power of many Western expatriates who depend on money from their home country. Consequently, the discourse among many Western expatriates in Bangkok is that the city has become increasingly too expensive. Second, Thai immigration has recently begun to require foreigners to report to Thai immigration authorities (i.e., register a TM 30 form) whenever they travel and stay at a different premises other than their own for more than 24 hours (Bruton 2019). For example, whenever a foreigner travels and stays overnight at a premise other than their own they must report their location to the Thai immigration authorities. Technically, the rule requires land owners or lease holders to report when foreigners are present for more than 24 hours on their premise, yet in practice foreigners are the ones penalized whenever there is a failure to report. Moreover, failure to report or untimely reporting can lead to fines, denied visa extensions, or in extreme cases, deportation. Although this rule has been in place for many years, it has only recently begun to be enforced by the Thai immigration authorities. This recent change has led many Western expatriates to believe that the Thai government is xenophobic and no longer wants Westerners living in the country. These sentiments, combined with health concerns over

increasingly bad air pollution, are causing some expatriates to repatriate home or relocate to other countries in Southeast Asia, namely Vietnam and Cambodia. Due to these recent changes, I recommend a study that examines the negative factors which are contributing to Western expatriates repatriating or leaving Thailand.

Additionally, despite a recent surge in research on lifestyle migration and expatriation, there remains an absence of host local experiences and perceptions within the literature. Therefore, I recommend that future research focus on the perceptions of local Thais in relation to the impacts of Western expatriates in their country. Including local voices and perceptions would provide a holistic view of the expatriate phenomenon in Thailand. Furthermore, this approach might provide a better understanding between local Thais and the Western expatriates who reside in their country.

Overall Significance

The main implications of Western SIEs in this study expatriating to Thailand were the perpetuating of unequal relations, as well as postcolonial and neocolonial understandings of the world. Notably, salary inequalities associated with the English language teaching industry in Thailand, which heavily favors white Westerners, was an example of how neocolonialism emerged through expatriation mobility. Furthermore, the continued spread of English as a dominant language in the region was another way neocolonial values were maintained. Moreover, it appeared that participants were playing a role in a wider gentrification processes within Bangkok. From a postcolonial perspective, the participants were contributing to the white Anglo-appropriation of central Bangkok, especially in the neighborhoods of On Nut and Prakanong. In these areas, participants often lived near the BTS Skytrain terminals, while working-class Thais were being "priced-out" and forced to live in mostly low-rise apartments located away from transportation hubs and other amenities. This spatial division perpetuated neocolonial socio-

spatial inequalities. However, a notable finding was that because of the tightening of Thai immigration laws, Westerners mobility was being impeded and curtailed. This was one example of how neocolonial power was waning, as participants from the United Kingdom and the United States were not receiving preferential treatment with regards to acquiring visas or long-term stays in Thailand. Additionally, participants were not expected to adopt Thai culture or learn Thai language, thus they were allowed to pursue a degree of integration which suited their desires, which is another way neocolonial privilege was perpetuated. Overall, from a postcolonial perspective, self-initiated expatriation to Thailand was in a sense a continuation of colonial modes of mobility, which perpetuated unequal relations and understandings of the world.

This dissertation helped fill the existing lacuna on self-initiated expatriation from the Global North to the Global South. Despite scholars having produced a significant amount of literature about expatriates in the last few decades, the vast majority of studies focuses on assigned expatriates. Furthermore, most research about SIEs has been published in business and management journals and has examined SIEs characteristics and career paths compared to traditional expatriates (Suutari and Brewster 2000; Inkson and Myers 2003; Myers and Pringle 2005; Al Ariss 2010; Biemann and Andresen 2009; Doherty 2013; Doherty et al. 2013; Tharenou 2013; Cerdin and Selmer 2014). Moreover, beyond Cohen's (1984) study on "drop-out" expatriates, no qualitative studies on expatriates in Bangkok exists. Thus, I am hopeful that this study provided insight into the lives of an understudied group. This study can also be used as a reference point for additional qualitative work on lifestyle and self-initiated expatriation to the Global South. Overall, my study contributed to the larger area of work and literature related to international migration, postcolonialism, transnationalism, acculturation, and expatriate everyday lives.

Overall, due to globalization and advances in communication and transportation technologies, international migration and mobility is more complex than ever before. Here, I explored one aspect of contemporary international migration, that of the unique and growing phenomena of Westerners leaving their relatively affluent home countries in the Global North in order to move to developing countries in the Global South. Although more research is needed on the socio-cultural and economic impacts of Western expatriates, as well as tourists, in the Global South. I am hopeful that through this dissertation, by both exploring the factors that motivate Westerners to expatriate to Bangkok, as well as examining the impacts this type of movement has on the Thai society, I have provided insights and awareness about a relatively understudied form of mobility.

REFERENCES

Aarset, Monica. 2015. Transnational practices and local lives. Quran courses via Skype in Norwegian- Pakistani families. *Identities* 23 (4): 1-16.

Adams, Byron and Fons J.R. van de Vijver. 2015. The many faces of expatriate identity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 49 (1): 322-331.

Ahmed, Sarah. 2000. *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. London: Routledge.

Al-Ali, Nadje and Khalid Koser. 2002. *New approaches to migration? Transnational communities and the transformation of home*. London: Routledge.

Alshahrani, Saeed and Michael Morley. 2015. Accounting for variations in the patterns of mobility among conventional and self-initiated expatriates. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 26 (15): 1936-1954.

Altman, Yochanan and Susan Shortland. 2008. Women and international assignments: Taking stock—a 25-year review. *Human Resource Management* 47 (2): 199-216.

Andresen, Maike, Franziska Bergdolt, and Jil Margenfeld. 2013. What Distinguishes Self-Initiated Expatriates from Assigned Expatriates and Migrants? A literature based definition and differentiation of terms. In *Self-Initiated Expatriation: Individual, Organizational, and National Perspectives*. ed. M. Andresen, 11-41. London: Routledge.

Athukorala, Prema-Chandra. 2006. International Labour Migration in East Asia: Trends, patterns and policy issues. *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature* 20 (1): 18-39.

Atkinson, Rowland and Gary Bridge. 2005. *Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism*. London: Routledge.

Bangkok Immigration. 2018a. *Admission of application for residential permit*. http://bangkok.immigration.go.th/intro1.html (last accessed 8 December 2018).

_____. 2018b. *Apply for Non-Immigration Visa Procedure*. http://bangkok.immigration.go.th/en/base.php?page=procedure. (last accessed 8 December 2018).

Bardhi, Fleura, Jacob Ostberg, and Anders Bengtsson. 2010. Negotiating cultural boundaries: Food, travel and consumer identities. *Consumption Markets & Culture* 13 (2): 133-157.

Bastida, Maria. 2018. Yes, they can do it! Exploring female expatriates' effectiveness. *European Research on Management and Business Economics* 24 (2): 114-120.

BBC News. 2019. *AirAsia apologises for 'Get off in Thailand' advert*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-47694416. (last accessed 10 May 2019).

Beaverstock, Jonathan. 1996. Migration, Knowledge and Social Interaction: Expatriate Labour within Investment Banks. *The Royal Geographical Society* 28 (4): 459-470.

_____. 2002. Transnational Elites in Global Cities: British Expatriates in Singapore's Financial District. *Geoforum* 33 (1): 525-538.

_____. 2005. Transnational Elites in Global Cities: British Expatriates in Singapore's Financial District. *Geoforum* 33 (1): 525-538.

_____. 2011. Servicing British Expatriate 'Talent' in Singapore: Exploring Ordinary Transnationalism and the Role of the 'Expatriate' Club. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (5): 709-728.

Becker, Benjawan and Roengsak Thongkaew. 2008. *Thai law for foreigners*. Chiang Mai: Paiboon Publications Press.

Bell, Martin and Gary Ward. 2000. Comparing temporary mobility with permanent migration. *Tourism Geographies* 2 (1): 87-107.

Benson, Michaela. 2010. The Context and Trajectory of Lifestyle Migration. *European Societies* 12 (1): 45-64.

_____. 2013. Postcoloniality and Privilege in New Lifestyle Flows: The Case of North Americans in Panama. *Mobilities* 8 (3): 1-18.

Benson, Michaela and Karen O'Reilly. 2009. Migration and the search for a better way of life: A critical exploration of lifestyle migration. *Sociological Review* 57 (4): 608-625.

Benson, Michaela and Nick Osbaldiston. 2016. Toward a Critical Sociology of Lifestyle Migration: Reconceptualizing Migration and the Search for a Better Way of Life. *The Sociological Review*, 64 (3): 407-423.

Berry, John. 1997. Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation. Applied Psychology: An *International Review* 46 (1): 5-68.

_____. 2005. Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. International Journal of *Intercultural Relations* 29 (1): 697-712.

_____. 2008. Globalization and Acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32 (1): 328-336.

_____. 2010. Acculturation: When Individuals and Groups of Different Cultural Backgrounds Meet. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 5 (1): 472-481.

Berry, John and Rudolf Kalin. 1995. Multicultural and ethnic Attitudes in Canada: An Overview of the 1991 National Survey. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 27 (1): 301-320.

Besharov, Douglas and Mark Lopez. 2016. *Adjusting to a World in Motion: Trends in Global Migration and Migration Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Betts, Alexander. 2013. *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Bhatia, Sunil and Anjali Ram. 2001. Rethinking 'Acculturation' in relation to Diasporic Cultures and Postcolonial Identities. *Human Development* 44 (1): 1-18.

Bianchi, Raoul. 2000. Migrant Tourist-Workers: Exploring the 'Contact Zones' of Post-industrial Tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism* 3 (2): 107-137.

Biemann, Torsten and Maike Andresen. 2009. Self-initiated foreign expatriates versus assigned expatriates: Two distinct types of international careers? *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 25 (4): 430-448.

Bierwiaczonek, Kinga and Sven Waldzus. 2016. Socio-Cultural Factors as Antecedents of Cross-Cultural Adaptation in Expatriates, International Students, and Migrants: A Review. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 47 (6): 767–817.

Black, Stewart and Hal B. Gregersen. 1991. Antecedents to Cross-Cultural Adjustment for Expatriates in Pacific Rim Assignments. *Human Relations* 44 (5): 497-515.

Blunt, Allison. 2005. *Domicile and diaspora: Anglo-Indian women and the spatial politics of home*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Blunt, Allison and Ann Varley. 2004. Introduction: geographies of home. *Cultural Geographies* 11 (1): 3–6.

Blunt, Allison and Cheryl McEwan. 2003. *Postcolonial Geographies: Writing Past Colonialism*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Bondi, Liz. 2009. Teaching Reflexivity: Undoing or Reinscribing Habits of Gender? *Journal of Geography of Higher Education* 33 (3): 327-37.

Botterill, Kate. 2016. Discordant Lifestyle Mobilities in East Asia: Privilege and Precarity of British Retirement in Thailand. *Population, Space, and Place* 23 (5): 1-11.

Boccagni, Paolo. 2011. Reminiscences, Patriotism, Participation: Approaching External Voting in Ecuadorian Immigration to Italy. *International Migration* 49 (3): 76-98.

Bohra-Mishra, Pratikshya and Douglas Massey. 2011. Individual Decisions to Migrate During Civil Conflict. *Demography* 48 (2): 401-424.

Boswell, Christina. 2003. *European Migration Policies in Flux. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

Boyle, John. 1998. Cultural influences on implementing environmental impact assessment: insights from Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 18 (2): 95-116.

Boyle, Paul, Keith Halfacree, and Vaughan Robinson. 1998. *Exploring Contemporary Migration*. Essex: Longman.

Brettell, Caroline. 2003. *Anthropology and Migration: Essays on Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and Identity*. New York: Altamira Press.

Brettell, Caroline and James Hollifield. 2008. *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*. New York: Routledge.

Brewster, Chris and Vesa Suutari. 2000. Making Their Own Way: International Experience Through Self-Initiated Foreign Assignments. *Journal of World Business* 35 (4): 417-436.

Bruton, Christopher. 2019. Thailand Immigration Controls: getting tough with guests. *Bangkok Post*. 24 June: Thailand Regional Forum.

Butcher, Melissa. 2009. Ties that Bind: The Strategic Use of Transnational Relationships in Demarcating Identity and Managing Difference. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (8): 1353-1371.

Butler, Gareth and Kevin Hannam. 2014. Performing Expatriate Mobilities in Kuala Lumpur. *Mobilities* 9 (1): 1-20.

Butler, Tim. 2003. Living in the Bubble: Gentrification and its 'Others' in North London. *Urban Studies* 40 (12): 2469-2486.

_____. 2007. For Gentrification? *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 39 (1): 162-181.

Butler, Tim and Garry. 2001. Social Capital, Gentrification and Neighbourhood Change in London: A Comparison of Three South London Neighbourhoods. *Urban Studies* 38 (12): 2145-2162.

Carrier, James. 1995. *Occidentalism: Images of the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Castells, Manuel. 2010. Globalisation, Networking, Urbanisation: Reflections on the Spatial Dynamics of the Information Age. *Urban Studies* 47(13): 2737-2745.

Castles, Stephen. 2000. *International migration at the beginning of the twenty-first century: global trends and issues*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

_____. 2002. Migration and Community Formation under conditions of Globalization. *International Migration Review* 36 (4): 1143-1168.

_____. 2003. Towards a Sociology of Forced Migration and Social Transformation. *Sociology* 37 (1): 13-34.

_____. 2008. *The Factors that Make and Unmake Migration Policies. In Rethinking Migration: New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*. New York: Berghahn Books.

_____. 2010. Understanding Global Migration: A Social Transformation Perspective. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (10): 1565-1586.

Castles, Stephen, Hein de Haas, and Mark Miller. 2014. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. New York: Guilford Press.

Cerdin, Jean-Luc and Jan Selmer. 2014. Who is a self-initiated expatriate? Towards conceptual clarity of a common notion. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 25 (9): 1281-1301.

Chacko, Elizabeth. 2004. Positionality and Praxis: Fieldwork Experiences in Rural India. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 25 (1): 51-63.

Chai, Rosemary. 2006. White U.S. Expatriate Professionals in Singapore: Desiring to be Cosmopolitans. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 15 (2): 118-132.

Chaiyot, Yongcharoenchai. 2016. The sex workers embraced by the wrong arms of the law. *Bangkok Post* 24 July: Special Report.

Chen, Angela, Yi-Chun Lin, and Airin Sawangpattanakul. 2011. The relationship between cultural intelligence and performance with the mediating effect of cultural shock: A case from the Philippine laborers of Taiwan. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 35 (1): 246-258.

Chilcote, Ronald. 2000. *Imperialism: Theoretical Directions*. New York: Humanity Books.

Choi, Soochan. 2001. Understanding American and Korean Workers' Adaptation to Expatriate Work Environments. *Employee Assistance Quarterly* 17 (3): 33-54.

Christiansen, Connie. 2004. News media consumption among immigrants in Europe: The relevance of diaspora. *Ethnicities* 4 (2): 185-207.

Church, Austin. 1982. Sojourner adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin* 9 (3): 540-572.

Choi, Narae. 2016. Metro Manila through the gentrification lens: Disparities in urban planning and displacement risks. *Urban Studies 53* (3): 577-592.

Clegg, Brett and Sidney J. Gray. 2002. Australian expatriates in Thailand: some insights for expatriate management policies. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 13 (4): 598-623.

Cócola-Gant, Agustin. 2018. Tourism gentrification. In *The Handbook of Gentrification Studies*. ed. L. Lees and M. Philips: Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Cohen, Erik. 1977. Expatriate Communities. *Current Sociology* 24 (3): 5-90.

_____. 1984. The Dropout Expatriates: A Study of Marginal Farangs in Bangkok. *Urban Anthropology* 13 (1): 91-115.

_____. 1986. Lovelorn Farangs: The Correspondence between Foreign Men and Thai Girls. *Anthropological Quarterly* 59 (3): 115-127.

_____. 2001. Thai Tourism. Bangkok: White Lotus.

Cohen, Erik and Mark Neall. 2012. A Middle Eastern Muslim Tourist Enclave in Bangkok. *Tourism Geographies* 14 (4): 570-598.

Cohen, Jeffrey and Ibrahim Sirkeci. 2011. *Cultures of Migration: The Global Nature of Contemporary Mobility*: Austin: University of Texas Press.

Cohen, Robin. 1997. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: UCL Press.

Cohen, Robin and Steven Vertovec. 2003. Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cohen, Scott. 2011. Lifestyle Travelers: Backpacking as a Way of Life. *Annals of Tourism Research* 34 (8): 1535-1555.

Cole, Nina and Yvonne McNulty. 2011. Why do female expatriates "fit-in" better than males?: An analysis of self-transcendence and socio-cultural adjustment. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal* 18 (2): 144-164.

Coles, Anne and Katie Walsh. 2010. From 'Trucial State' to 'Postcolonial' City? The Imaginative Geographies of British Expatriates in Dubai. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (8): 1317-1333.

Conradson, David and Alan Latham. 2005a. Friendship, networks and transnationality in a world city: antipodean transmigrants in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31 (2): 287–305.

_____. 2005b. Transnational urbanism: attending to everyday practices and mobilities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31 (2): 227–233.

Cope, Megan. 2008. Coding Transcripts and Diaries. In *Key Methods in Geography*, ed. N. Clifford, and G. Valentine, 445-460. London: Sage.

Crang, Mike. 2002. Qualitative Methods: the new orthodoxy? *Progress in Human Geography* 26 (5): 647-655.

Cresswell, John. 2007. Designing a Qualitative Study: in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among 5 Traditions*. London: Sage.

Cresswell, Tim. 2006. *On the move: Mobility in the modern Western world*. New York: Routledge.

_____. 2010. Towards a Politics of Mobility. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (1): 17-31.

Croucher, Sheila. 2009a. *The Other Side of the Fence: American Migrants in Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

_____. 2009b. Migrants of Privilege: The Political Transnationalism of Americans in Mexico. *Identities* 16 (4): 463-491.

_____. 2012. Privileged Mobility in an Age of Globality. *Societies* (2): 1-13.

_____. 2015. The Future of Lifestyle Migration: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Latin American Geography* 14 (1): 161-172.

Cupples, Julie. 2002. The field as a landscape of desire: sex and sexuality in geographical fieldwork. *Area* 34 (4): 382-90.

Czaika, Mathias and Hien Haas. 2014. The Globalization of Migration: Has the World Become More Migratory? *International Migration Review* 48 (2): 283-323.

Davidson, Mark. 2007. Gentrification as global habitat: a process of class formation or corporate creation? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32 (4): 490-506.

_____. 2010. Love thy neighbor? Social mixing in London's gentrification frontiers. *Environment & Planning A* 42 (3): 524–544.

Davidson, Mark and Loretta Lees. 2005. New-Build 'Gentrification' and London's Riverside Renaissance. *Environment and Planning A* 37 (7): 1165-1190.

De Haas, Hien. 2010. Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective1. *International Migration Review* 44 (1): 227-264.

Delyser, Dydia. 2008. Teaching Qualitative Geography in Higher Education. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 32 (2): 233-244.

Desforges, Luke. 2000. Traveling the world: Identity and Travel Biography. *Annals of Tourism Research* 27 (4): 926-945.

Doherty, Noeleen. 2013. Understanding the Self-initiated Expatriate: A Review and Directions for Future Research. *International Journal of Management Reviews* 15 (4): 447-469.

Doherty, Noeleen, Julia Richardson, and Kaye Thorn. 2013. Self-initiated expatriation and self-initiated expatriates: Clarification of the research stream. *Career Development International* 18 (1): 97-112.

Dunn, Kevin. 2005. Interviewing. In *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, ed. I. Hay, 79-105. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Durand, Jorge, William Kandel, Emilio Parrado, and Douglas Massey. 1996. International Migration and Development in Mexican Communities. *Demography* 33 (2): 249-264.

Duval, David. 2004. Linking return visits and return migration among Commonwealth Eastern Caribbean migrants in Toronto. *Global Networks* 4 (1): 51–67.

Dwyer, Sonya and Jennifer Buckle. 2009. The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Research* 8 (1): 54-63.

Easthope, Hazel. 2009. Fixed Identities in a mobile world? The relationship between mobility, place, and identity. Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power 16 (1): 61-82.

Edensor, Tim. 2002. *National identity, popular culture and everyday life*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Field notes*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

England, Kim. 1994. Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality, and Feminist Research. *The Professional Geographer* 46 (1): 80-89.

Etherington, Kim. 2007. Ethical research in reflexive relationships. *Qualitative Inquiry* 13 (5): 599-616.

Ewers, Michael. 2007. Migrants, markets and multinationals: competition among world cities for the highly skilled. *GeoJournal* 68 (1): 119-130.

Faist, Thomas. 2000. Transnationalization in international migration: implications for the study of citizenship and culture. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23 (2): 189-222.

Farrer, James. 2008a. From “Passports” to “Joint Ventures”: Intermarriage between Chinese Nationals and Western Expatriates Residing in Shanghai. Asian Studies Review 32 (1): 7-29.

_____. 2008b. Play and Power in Chinese Nightlife Spaces. *China: An International Journal* 6 (1): 1-17.

_____. 2009. Shanghai Bars: patchwork globalization and flexible cosmopolitanism in reform-era urban leisure spaces. *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology* 42 (2): 22–38.

_____. 2010a. A Foreign Adventurer's Paradise? Interracial Sexuality and Alien Sexual Capital in Reform Era Shanghai. *Sexualities* 13 (1): 69-95.

_____. 2010b. ‘New Shanghailanders’ or ‘New Shanghainese’: Western Expatriates’ Narratives of Emplacement in Shanghai. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (8): 1211-1228.

_____. 2011. Global Nightscapes in Shanghai as Ethnosexual Contact Zones. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37(5): 747-764.

Farrer, James and Sonja Dale. 2014. *Sexless in Shanghai: Gendered Mobility Strategies in a Transnational Sexual Field*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Favell, Adrian. 2008. *Eurostars and Eurocities: Free Movement and Mobility in an Integrating Europe*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

Favell, Adrian, Mirian Feldblum, and Michael Smith. 2007. The human face of global mobility: A research agenda. *Society*, 44 (2): 15-25.

Fechter, Anne-Meike. 2005. The 'Other' Stares back: Experiencing whiteness in Jakarta. *Ethnography* 6 (1): 87-103.

_____. 2007a. Transnational Lives: Expatriates in Indonesia. Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing.

_____. 2007b. Living in a Bubble: Expatriates' Transnational Spaces. In *Going First Class: New Approaches to Privileged Travel and Movement*, ed. V. Amit, 33-52. New York: Berghahn Books.

_____. 2010. Gender, Empire, Global Capitalism: Colonial and Corporate Expatriate Wives. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (8): 1279-1297.

Fechter, Anne-Meike, and Walsh, Katie. 2010. Examining 'Expatriate' Continuities: Postcolonial Approaches to Mobile Professionals. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (8): 1197-1210.

Fernquest, Jon and Paritta Wangkiat. 2016. New wave of Chinese coming to live in Thailand. *Bangkok Post*. 23 September: Learning.

Fetterman, David. 1998. *Ethnography: Step by Step*. London: Sage Publications.

Findlay, Allan and W.T.S. Gould. 1989. Skilled International Migration: A Research Agenda. *Area* 21 (1): 3-11.

Findlay, Allan and John Salt. 1989. International Migration of Highly-Skilled Manpower: Theoretical and Developmental Issues. in *Impact of International Migration of Developing Countries*, ed. R. Appleyard, 159-180. Paris: OECD.

Findlay, Allan and Jowett Skeldon. 1996. Skilled International Migration and the Global City: A Study of Expatriates in Hong Kong. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* 21 (1): 49-61.

Foner, Nancy. 1997. What's New About Transnationalism?: New York Immigrants Today and at the Turn of the Century. Diaspora: *A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6 (3): 355-375.

Forbush, Eric and Brooke Foucault-Welles. 2016. Social media use and adaptation among Chinese students beginning to study in the United States. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 50 (1): 1-12.

Fortier, Anne-Marie. 2000. *Migrant belongings. Memory, space, identity*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Germann-Molz, Jennie. 2007. Eating Difference: The Cosmopolitan Mobilities of Culinary Tourism. *Space and Culture* 10 (1): 77-93.

Gilly, Mary. 1995. The consumer acculturation of expatriate Americans. In *Advances in consumer research*, ed. F. Kardes and M. Sujan, 506–10. Provo: Association for Consumer Research.

Gogia, Nupar. 2006. Unpacking Corporeal Mobilities: The Global Voyages of Labour and Leisure. *Environment and Planning A* 38 (2): 359-375.

Grinstein, Amir and Luc Wathieu. 2012. Happily (mal)adjusted: Cosmopolitan identity and expatriate adjustment. *International Journal of Research in Marketing* 29 (1): 337–345

Guarnizo, Luis Eduardo. 1998. The rise of transnational social formations: Mexican and Dominican state responses to transnational migration. *Political Power and Social Theory* 12 (1): 45–94.

_____. 2003. The Economics of Transnational Living. *International Migration Review* 37 (3): 666–699.

Gustafson, Per. 2008. Transnationalism in retirement migration: the case of North European retirees in Spain. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (3): 451-475.

Hackworth, Jason. 2002. Post-recession Gentrification in New York City. *Urban Affairs Review 37* (6): 815–843.

Hall, Stuart. 1996. Ethnicity, Identity and Difference. in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. G. Eley and R.G. Suny, 339–49. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hamberger, Astrid. 2009. Immigrant Integration: Acculturation and Social Integration. Journal of *Identity and Migration Studies* 3 (2): 2-21.

Haslberger, Arno. 2010. Gender differences in expatriate adjustment. *European Journal of International Management* 4 (1): 1-23.

Haslberger, Arno, Chris Brewster and Thomas Hippler. 2013. The Dimensions of Expatriate Adjustment. *Human Resource Management* 52 (3): 331-351.

Harris, Andrew. 2008. From London to Mumbai and Back Again: Gentrification and Public Policy in Comparative Perspective. *Urban Studies* 45 (12): 2407–2428.

Hattingh, Marie, Machdel Matthee, and Hugo Lotriet. 2014. The expatriate information flow model: Towards understanding Internet usage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *South African Computer Journal* 52 (1): 1-17.

Hayes, Mathew. 2014. 'We Gained a Lot over What We Would Have Had': The Geographic Arbitrage of North American Lifestyle Migrants to Cuenca, Ecuador. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40 (12): 1953–1971.

_____. 2015. Moving South: The Economic Motives and Structural Context of North America's Emigrants in Cuenca, Ecuador. *Mobilities* 10 (2): 1-18.

He, Shenjing. 2009. New-Build Gentrification in Central Shanghai: Demographic Changes and Socioeconomic Implications. *Population, Space and Place* 16 (5): 345-361.

Heidler, Scott. 2018. Report: Thailand most unequal country in 2018. *Bangkok Post*. 6 December: Business.

Henkel, Roy, Pattaya Henkel, Wendy Agrusa, Jerome Agrusa, and John Tanner. 2006. Thailand as a tourist destination: Perceptions of international visitors and Thai residents. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 11 (3): 269-287.

Herbert, Steve. 2000. For Ethnography. *Progress in Human Geography* 24 (4): 550-568.

Herod, Andrew. 1999. Reflections on interviewing foreign elites: praxis, positionality, validity, and the cult of the insider. *Geoforum* 30 (4): 313-327.

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene and Patricia Leavy. 2004. *Approaches to Qualitative Research: A Reader on Theory and Practice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 2011. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Hiller, Harry and Tara Franz. 2004. New ties, old ties and lost ties: the use of the Internet in diaspora. *New Media and Society* 6(6): 731-752.

Hindman, Heather. 2007. Learning fear and crafting expectations: expatriate women in Kathmandu. In *Gender and Family among Transnational Professionals*, ed. A. Coles and M. Fechter, 41-62. London: Routledge.

Hoffman, Erwin. 2007. Open-ended interviews, power, and emotional labor. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 36 (3): 318-46.

Hofstede, Geert. 1980. *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Howard, Robert. 2008. Western Retirees in Thailand: motives, experiences, wellbeing, assimilation and future needs. *Ageing and Society* 28 (2): 145-163.

_____. 2009a. The migration of Westerners to Thailand: and unusual flow from developed to developing world. *International Migration* 47 (2): 193-218.

_____. 2009b. Risky Business? Asking tourists what hazards they actually encountered in Thailand. *Tourism Management* 30 (1): 359-365.

_____. 2010. Urban Tourism: A Taxonomy and study of a New Proposed Type. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning and Development* 7 (4): 415-428.

Hugo, Graeme. 2006. Immigration responses to global change in Asia: a review. *Geographical Researc*h 44 (2): 155-172.

_____. 2007. Population Geography. *Progress in Human Geography* 31 (1): 77-88.

Inkson, Kerr and Barbara Myers. 2003. "The big OE": Self-Directed travel and career development. *Career Development International* 8 (4): 170-181.

Itzigsohn, José. 1995. Migrant remittances, labor markets, and household strategies. *Social Force*s 74 (2): 633–657.

Jackson, Peter A. 2004. The Performative State: Semi-coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand. *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 19 (2): 219-253.

_____. 2007. Autonomy and subordination in Thai history: the case for semicolonial analysis. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8 (3): 329-348.

Jackson, Peter A. and Gerard Sullivan. 1999. A Panoply of Roles Sexual and Gender Diversity in Contemporary Thailand. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services* 9 (2/3): 1-27.

Jackson, Peter and Polly Russell. 2010. Life History Interviewing. In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, ed. D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, and L. McDowell, 172-192. London: Sage.

Jackson, Peter and Rachel Harrison. 2010. *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

James, Allison. 1997. How British is British Food? In *Food Health and Identity*, ed. Patricia Caplan. 71-86. London: Routledge.

Javorcik, Beata, Çağlar Özden, Mariana Spatareanu, and Cristina Neagu. 2011. Migrant networks and foreign direct investment. *Journal of Development Economics* 94 (2): 231-241.

Jefferson, Mark. 1989. The Law of the Primate City. *Geographical Review* 79 (2): 226-232.

Jensen, Nathan. 2006. *Nation-States and the Multinational Corporation: A Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jokinen, Tina, Brewster Chris, and Vesa Suutarij. 2008. Career capital during international work experiences: contrasting self-initiated expatriate experiences and assigned expatriation. *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 19 (6): 979-998.

Jorgenson, Danny. 1989. *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies*. London: Sage Publications.

Joseph, Mary. 1999. *Nomadic identities: the performance of citizenship*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kaur, Amarjit. 2010a. Labour migration in Southeast Asia: migration policies, labour exploitation and regulation. *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 15 (1): 6-19.

_____. 2010b. Labour migration trends and policy challenges in Southeast Asia. *Policy and Society* 29 (4): 385-397.

Kearns, Robin. 2005. Knowing Seeing? Undertaking Obsevational Research. in *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, 192-206. ed. I. Hay. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

King-O'Riain, Rebecca Chiyoko. 2015. Emotional streaming and transconnectivity: Skype and emotion practices in transnational families in Ireland. *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs* 15 (2): 256-273.

Kivisto, Peter, and Thomas Faist. 2010. *Beyond a Border: The Causes and Consequences of Contemporary Immigration*. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press.

Knodel, John, Rossarin Soottipong Gray, Porntip Sriwatcharin, and Sara B. Peracca. 1999. Religion and Reproduction: Muslims in Buddhist Thailand. *Population Studies* 53: 149-164.

Knowles, Caroline and Douglas Harper. 2010. *Hong Kong: Migrant Lives, Landscapes, and Journeys*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kobayashi, Audrey. 2003. GPC Ten Years On: is self-reflexivity enough? *Gender, Place and Culture* 10 (4): 345-349.

Kohonen, Eeva. 2004. Learning through narratives about the impact of international assignments on identity. *International Studies of Management and Organization* 34 (3): 27–45.

_____. 2008. The impact of international assignments on expatriates' identity and career aspirations: Reflections upon re-entry. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 24 (4): 20–329.

Kong, Lily. 1999. Globalisation and Singaporean transmigration: re-imagining and negotiating national identity. *Political Geography* 18 (5): 563-589.

Korpela, Mari. 2010. A postcolonial imagination? Westerners searching for authentic in India. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (8): 1299-1315.

Koser, Khalid. 2007. *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford Press.

_____. 2010. Dimensions and dynamics of irregular migration. *Population, Space and Place* 16 (3): 181-193.

Koser, Khalid and John Salt. 1997. The Geography of Highly Skilled International Migration. *International Journal of Population Geography* 3 (1): 285-303.

Kraimer, Maria, Sandy Wayne, and Ren Ata Jaworski. 2001. Sources of support and expatriate performance: The mediating role of expatriate adjustment. *Personnel Psychology* 54 (1): 71–99.

Kunc, Norman. 1992. The need to belong: Rediscovering Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In *Restructuring for caring and effective education*. eds. A. Villa, J. S. Thousand, W. Stainback, and S. Stainback. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Kunz, Sarah. 2016. Privileged Mobilities: Locating the Expatriate in Migration Scholarship. *Geography Compass* 10 (3): 89-101.

Lan, Pei-Chia. 2011. White Privilege, Language Capital and Cultural Ghettoisation: Western High-Skilled Migrants in Taiwan. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (10): 1669-1693.

Lee, Everett. 1966. A Theory of Migration. *Demography* 3 (1): 47-57.

Lees, Loretta. 2008. Gentrification and Social Mixing: Towards an Inclusive Urban Renaissance? *Urban Studies* 45 (12): 2449-2470.

_____. 2012. The geography of gentrification: Thinking through comparative urbanism. *Progress in Human Geography* 36 (2): 155–171.

Leonard, Pauline. 2008. Migrating Identities: Gender, Whiteness and Britishness in Colonial Hong Kong. *Gender, Place and Culture* 15 (1): 45-60.

_____. 2010. Organizing Whiteness: Gender, Nationality and Subjectivity in Postcolonial Hong Kong. *Gender, Work, and Organization* 17 (3): 340-358.

_____. 2019. 'Devils' or 'Superstars'? Making English Language Teachers in China. In *Destination China: Immigration to China in the Post-Reform Era*. ed. A. Lehmann and P. Leonard. 147-172. Palgrave Macmillan: Singapore.

Lester, Alan. 2012. Foreword. *In The New Expatriates: Postcolonial Approaches to Mobile Professionals*, ed. A. Fechter and K. Walsh, 1-8. London: Routledge.

Levitt, Peggy. 1998. Social remittances: Migration driven local-level forms of cultural diffusion. *The International Migration Review* 32 (4): 926-48.

_____. 2001a. *The Transnational Villagers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

_____. 2001b. Transnational migration: taking stock and future directions. *Global Networks* 1 (3): 195–216.

Ley, David. 2004. Transnational spaces and everyday lives. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 29 (2): 151-164.

Li, Wei and Carlos Teixeira. 2007. Immigrants and Transnational Experiences in World Cities. *GeoJournal* 68 (1): 93-102.

Limanond, Thirayoot, Pramuk Prabjabok, and Kraisi Tippayawong. 2010. Exploring impacts of countdown timers on traffic operations and driver behavior at a signalized intersection in Bangkok. *Transport Policy* 17 (6): 420-427.

Liu, Yungang, Tan, Yuwen and Takashi Nakazawa. 2011. Move Globally, Live Locally: The Daily Lives of Japanese Expatriates in Guangzhou, China. Geographical Review of Japan 84 (1): 1-15

Longhurst, Robyn. 2008. Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups. In *Key Methods in Geography*, ed. N.J. Clifford and G. Valentine, 117-132. London: Sage Publications.

Loos, Tamara. 2006. *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.

López-Guerra, Claudio. 2005. Should Expatriates Vote? *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 13 (2): 216–234.

Lupton, Deborah. 1996. *Food, the body and the self*. London: Sage.

Mahroum, Sami. 2000. Highly Skilled Globetrotters: Mapping the International Migration of Human Capital. *R&D Management* 30 (1): 23-31.

Majhanovich, Suzanne. 2013. English as a Tool of Neo-Colonialism and Globalization in Asian Contexts. In *Critical Perspectives on International Education*. ed. Y. Hébert and A. Abdi, 249-261.Rotterdam: Sense.

Malecki, Edward and Michael Ewers. 2007. Labor migration to world cities: with a research agenda for the Arab Gulf. *Progress in Human Geography* 31 (4): 467-484.

Mao, Jina and Yan Chen. 2015. Cultural identity change in expatriates: A social network perspective. *Human Relations* 68 (10): 1533 –1556.

Martin, Deborah. 2010. Reflections on Teaching Qualitative Methods in Geography. in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, ed. D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang and L. McDowell, 25-45. London: Sage.

Massey, Douglas. 1987. Understanding Mexican Migration to the United States. *American Journal of Sociology* 92 (6): 1372-1403.

McDowell, Linda. 2010. Interviewing: Fear and Liking in the Field. in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, ed. D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, and L. Dowell, 156-171. London: Sage.

McGuirk, Pauline and Phillip O'Neill. 2005. Using Questionnaires in Qualitative Human Geography. in *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, ed. I. Hay, 147-162. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McNaught, Carmel and Paul Lam. 2010. Wordle as a Supplementary Research Tool. *The Qualitative Report* 15 (3): 630-643.

McPhail, Ruth and Ron Fisher. 2015. Lesbian and gay expatriates use of social media to aid acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 49 (1): 294-307.

Megoran, Nick. 2006. For Ethnography in political geography: Experiencing and re-imagining Ferghana Valley boundary closures. *Political Geography* 25 (6): 622-640.

Mendenhall, Mark and Gary Oddou. 1985. The Dimensions of Expatriate Acculturation: A Review. *The Academy of Management Review* 10 (1): 39-47.

Mignolo, Walter. 2011. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand. 2018. *Information to Visitors to Thailand*. http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/news3 (last accessed 8 September 2018).

Mitchell, Katharyne. 2000. Transnationalism. *In the Dictionary of Human Geography*. ed. R.J. Johnston, D. Gregory, G. Pratt, and M.J. Watts, 853-855. Oxford: Blackwell.

Miyazaki, Koji. 2008. An Aging Society and Migration to Asia and Oceania. *Senri Ethnological Reports* 77 (1): 139-149.

Moore, Russell. 2015. Gentrification and displacement: The impacts of mass transit in Bangkok. *Urban Policy and Research* 33 (4): 472-489.

Moses, Jonathon. 2006. *International Migration: Globalization's Last Frontier*. New York: Zed Books.

Mullings, Beverly. 1999. Insider or outsider, both or neither: some dilemmas of interviewing in a cross-cultural setting. *Geoforum* 30 (4): 337-350.

Myers, Barbara and Judith Pringles. 2005. Self-initiated foreign experience as accelerated development: Influences of gender. *Journal of World Business* 40 (4): 421–431.

Newbold, Bruce. 2010. *Population Geography*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Ó Brien, Peter. 2009. Factors in the relocation of expatriate restaurateurs to Thailand: the money or the sun? *Journal of the School of Contemporary International Studies, Nagoya University of Foreign Studies* 5 (1): 31-72.

_____. 2010. The careers of chefs: a study of Swiss expatriates working in Thailand. *Journal of the School of Contemporary International Studies, Nagoya University of Foreign Studies* 6 (1): 1-40.

Oudenhoven, Jan Pieter and Colleen Ward. 2013. Fading Majority Cultures: The Implications of Transnationalism and Demographic Changes for Immigrant Acculturation. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 23 (1):81-97.

Oliver, Caroline. 2008. *Retirement Migration: Paradoxes of Ageing*. London: Routledge.

Ono, Mayumi. 2008. Long-stay Tourism and International Retirement Migration: Japanese Retirees in Malaysia. *Senri Ethnological Reports* 77 (1): 151–162.

Østergaard-Nielsen, Eva; 2003. The politics of migrants' transnational political practices. *International Migration Review* 37 (3): 760–786.

Ouyyanont, Porphant. 2001. The Vietnam War and Tourism in Bangkok's Development, 1960-70. *Southeast Asian Studies* 39 (2): 157-187.

Patton, Michael. 2002. *Qualitative Research and Evaluative Methods*. London: Sage.

Pennycook, Alastair. 2017. *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*. London: Routledge.

Pile, Steven. 1991. Practising Interpretative Geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16 (4): 458-469.

Phinney, J. S. 1992. The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 7 (1): 156-176.

Phillipson, Robert. 2006. Linguistic imperialism of neoliberal empire. Critical Inquiry in *Language Studies* 5 (1): 1-43.

Portes, Alejandro. 1999. Conclusion: Towards a new world – the origins and effects of transnational activities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (2): 463-477.

_____. 2001. Introduction: the debates and significance of immigrant transnationalism. *Global Networks* 1 (3): 181-193.

Portes, Alejandro, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, and Patricia Landolt. 1999. The study of transnationalism: pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (2): 217–237.

Pratt, Mary. 1991. Arts of the Contact Zone. *Profession* 91(1): 33-40.

Przytuła, Sylwia. 2015. Migrants, Assigned Expatriates (AE) and Self-initiated Expatriates (SIE) Dfferentiation of Terms and Literature Based Research Review. *Journal of Intercultural Management* 7 (2): 89-111.

Radcliffe, Sarah. 2005. Development and geography: towards a postcolonial development geography? *Progress in Human Geography* 29 (3): 291-298.

Richardson, Julia. 2006. Self-directed expatriation: family matters. *Personnel Review* 35 (4): 469-486.

Richardson, Julia and Steve McKenna. 2006. Exploring relationships with home and host countries: A study of self-directed expatriates. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal* 13 (1): 6-22.

Rogaly, Ben and Becky Taylor. 2010. 'They called them communist then… What d'you call 'em now?... Insurgents?' Narratives of British military expatriates in the context of the new imperialism. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (8): 1335-1351.

Ruecker, Todd and Lindsay Ives. 2015. White Native English Speakers Needed: The Rhetorical Construction of Privilege in Online Teacher Recruitment Spaces. *TESOL Quarterly* 49 (4): 733-756.

Saldaña, Johnny. 2009. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London: Sage.

Salt, John. 1992. The Future of International Labor Migration. *The International Migration Review* 26 (4): 1077-1111.

Sam, David and John Berry. 2010. Acculturation: When Individuals and Groups of Different Cultural Backgrounds Meet. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 5 (4): 472–481.

Sawrikar, Pooja and Ilan Barry Katz. 2010. Only White People can be Racist: What does Power have to do with Prejudice? *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies* 2 (1): 80–99.

Scott, Sam. 2004. Transnational Exchanges amongst Skilled British Migrants in Paris. Population, Space, and Place 10 (5): 391-410.

Scott, Sam and Kim H. Cartledge. 2009. Migrant Assimilation in Europe: A Transnational Family Affair. *International Migration Review* 43 (1): 60-89.

Schaffner, David, Blaire Bokal, Scott Fink, Kimberly Rawls, and Jeremy Schweiger. Food Retail-Price Comparison in Thailand. *Journal of Food Distribution Research* 36 (1): 167-171.

Schiller, Nina, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton. 1992. Transnationalism: a new analytic framework for understanding migration. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 645 (1): 1–24.

Schiller, Nina and Noel Salazar. 2013. Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39 (2): 183-200.

Selmer, Jan. 1999. Culture Shock in China? Adjustment Pattern of Western Expatriate Business Managers. International Business Review 8 (5): 515–534.

_____. 2001a. Adjustment of Western European vs North American expatriate managers in China. *Personnel Review* 30 (1): 6-21.

_____. 2001b. Psychological barriers to adjustment and how they affect coping strategies: Western business expatriates in China. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 2 (1): 151-165.

_____. 2006. Language Ability and Adjustment: Western Expatriates in China. Thunderbird International Business Review 48 (3): 347–368.

Selmer, Jan and Alicia Leung. 2003. International adjustment of female vs male business expatriates. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 14 (7): 1117-31.

Selmer, Jan and Jakob Lauring. 2012. Reasons to expatriate and work outcomes of self-initiated expatriates. *Personnel Review* 41 (5): 665-684.

Shannon, Randall. 2009. The transformation of food retailing in Thailand 1997–2007. *Asia Pacific Business Review* 15 (1): 79-92.

_____. 2014. The expansion of modern trade food retailing in Thailand. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research* 24 (5), 531-543.

Shaw, Kate. 2008. Gentrification: What It Is, Why It Is, and What Can Be Done about It. *Geography Compass* 2 (5): 1697–1728.

Sheehan, Rebecca. 2011. Actor-network theory as a reflexive tool: (inter)personal relations and relationships in the research process. *Area* 43 (3): 336-342.

Shin, Hyun Bang. 2009. Property-based redevelopment and gentrification: The case of Seoul, South Korea. *Geoforum* 40 (5): 906-917.

Schwartz, Seth, Jennifer Unger, Bryron Zamboanga, and Jose Szapocznik. 2010. Rethinking the Concept of Acculturation: Implications for Theory and Research. *American Psychologist* 65 (4): 237-251.

Skeldon, Jowett. 2014. *Migration and Development: a Global Perspective*. London: Routledge.

Smiley, Sarah. 2010a. Expatriate everyday life in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: colonial origins and contemporary legacies. *Social & Cultural Geography* 11 (4): 327-342.

_____. 2010b. Exclusionary Space in Dar es Salaam: Fear and Difference in Expatriate Communities. *Africa Today* 56 (3): 24-40.

Smith, Robert 2003. Migrant membership as an instituted process: Transnationalization, the state and the extra-territorial conduct of Mexican politics. *International Migration Review* 37 (2): 297–343.

_____. 2006. Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, Peter and Louis Eduardo Guarnizo. 2009. Global mobility, shifting borders, and urban citizenship. *Journal of Economic and Social Geography* 100 (5): 610-622.

Spencer, Jonathan. 1997. Post-colonialism and the political imagination. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3 (1): 1-19.

Spradley, James. 1980. *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Stiglitz, Joseph. 2003. *Globalization and its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Strate, Shane. 2015. *The Lost Territories: Thailand's History of National Humiliation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Strauss, Anselm. 1987. *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sunkyu, Jan, James W. Gentry, and Yong J. Hyun. 2001. Cultural Adaptation of Business Expatriates in the Host Marketplace. *Journal of International Business Studies* 32 (2): 369-377.

Sussman, Nan. 2000. The dynamic nature of cultural identity throughout cultural transitions: Why home is not so sweet. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 4 (4): 355–373.

_____. 2002. Testing the Cultural Identity Model of the Cultural Transition Cycle: Sojourners Return Home. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 26 (1): 391-408.

Suutari, Vesa and Chris Brewster. 2000. Making Their Own Way: International Experience Through Self-Initiated Foreign Assignments. *Journal of World Business* 35 (4): 417-436.

Tambiah, Stanley. 2000. Transnational Movements, Diaspora, and Multiple Modernities. *Daedalus* 129 (1): 163-194.

Tapachai, Nirundon and Robert Waryszak. 2000. An examination of the role of beneficial image in tourist destination selection. *Journal of Travel Research* 39 (1): 37-44.

Taylor, Edward. 1999. The New Economics of Labour Migration and the Role of Remittances in the Migration Process. *International Migration* 37 (1): 63-88.

Thadphoothon, Janpha. 2017. Taxi Drivers' Cross-Cultural Communication Problems and Challenges in Bangkok, Thailand. Journal of Reviews on Global Economics 6 (1): 313-320.

Thailand Elite. 2018. *What is Elite Privilege Entry Visa (PE)?* https://www.thai-elite.com/elite-visa.html. (last accessed 18 December 2018).

Thaiutsa, Bunvong, Ladawan Puangchit, Roger Kjelgren, and Wanchai Arunpraparut. 2008. (2008). Urban green space, street tree and heritage large tree assessment in Bangkok, Thailand. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* 7 (3): 219-229.

Thang, Leng, Elizabeth MacLachlan, and Miho Goda. 2002. Expatriates on the Margins—A Study of Japanese Women Working in Singapore. *Geoforum* 33 (1): 539-551.

Tharenou, Phyllis. 2013. Self-initiated expatriates: an alternative to company-assigned expatriates? *Journal of Global Mobility* 1 (3): 336-356.

Tharenou, Phyllis and Natasha Caulfield. 2010. Will I stay or will I go? Explaining repatriation by Self-Initiated Expatriates. *The Academy of Management Journal* 53 (5): 1009-1028.

Theparat, Chatrudee. 2017.Tourism to continue growth spurt in 2017. *Bangkok Post*. 17 February: Business.

Tichenor, Daniel. 2002. *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Tolia-Kelly, Divya. 2004a. Materializing post-colonial geographies: examining the textural landscapes of migration in the South Asian home. *Geoforum* 35 (6): 675–688.

_____. 2004b. Locating processes of identification: Studying the precipitates of re-memory through artefacts in the British Asian home. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 29 (3): 314-329.

Toyota, Mika. 2006. Ageing and transnational house holding: Japanese retirees in Southeast Asia. *International Development Planning Review* 28 (4): 515-531.

Toyota, Mika and Biao Xiang. 2012. The emerging transnational "retirement industry" in Southeast Asia. *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 32 (11/12): 708-719.

Trading Economics. 2018. *Thailand Minimum Daily Wage*. https://tradingeconomics.com/thailand/minimum-wages. (last accessed 8 December 2018).

Tung, Rosalie. 1998. American expatriates abroad: From neophytes to cosmopolitans. Journal of *World Business* 33 (2): 125-144.

Tupas, T. Ruanni F. 2004. The politics of Philippine English: neocolonialism, global politics, and the problem of postcolonialism. *World Englishes* 23 (1): 47-58.

United Nations, Population Division. 2013. International Migration 2013: Migrants by origin and destination. Population Facts. New York: United Nations.

Vertovec, Steven. 1999. Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (1): 447-62.

_____. 2003. Migration and Other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-Fertilization. *International Migration Review* 37 (3): 641-665.

Vogt, Paul. 1999. *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences*. London: Sage.

Waldinger, Roger. 2008. Between "Here" and "There": Immigrant Cross-Border Activities and Loyalties. *International Migration Review* 42 (1): 3-29.

Walsh, Katie. 2006. 'Dad says I'm tied to a shooting star!' Grounding (research on) British expatriate belonging. *Area* 38 (3): 268-278.

_____. 2007. 'It got very debauched, very Dubai!' Heterosexual intimacy amongst single British expatriates. *Social and Cultural Geography* 8 (4): 507-533.

Wang, Xiaoyun and Dilek Zamantili Nayir. 2006. How and when is social networking important? Comparing European expatriate adjustment in China and Turkey. *Journal of International Management* 12 (4): 449–472.

Wang, Yu-Lin and Emma Tran. 2012. Effects of cross-cultural and language training on expatriates' adjustment and job performance in Vietnam. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources* 50 (3): 327-350.

Warnes, Anthony. 2001. The International Dispersal of Pensioners from Affluent Countries. *International Journal of Population Geography* 7 (5): 373-388.

Warren, Carol and Tracy Karner. 2010. Introduction to Qualitative Methods. In *Discovering Qualitative Methods: Field Research, Interviews, and Analysis*. C. Warren and T. Karner, 1-31. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Watson, Annette and Karen Till. 2010. Ethnography and Participant Observation. In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, 121-137. ed. D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, and L. McDowell. London: Sage Publications.

Warren, Carol and Tracy Karner. 2010. *Discovering Qualitative Methods: Field Research, Interviews, and Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Weiss, Robert.1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press.

Widdowfield, Rebekah. 2000. The place of emotion in academic research. *Area* 32 (2): 199-208.

Wiles, Janine. 2008. Sense of home in a transnational social space: New Zealanders in London. *Global Networks* 8 (1): 1470–2266.

Williams Allan, and Michael Hall. 2000. Tourism and migration: New relationships between production and consumption. *Tourism Geographies* 2 (1): 5-27.

Wilson, Allan. 2017. *A Potato in a Rice Field: A Year in Rural Thailand*. Bangkok: Live Less Ordinary.

Wilson, John. 2008. Thai bar girls and farang: a customized inter-cultural professional services market. *Human Resource Development International* 11 (4): 401-415.

Winchester, H.P.M. 2005. Qualitative Research and its Place in Human Geography. In *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, ed. I. Hay, 3-18. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Winichakul, Thongchai. 2011. Siam's Colonial Conditions and the Birth of Thai History. In *Unraveling Myths Southeast Asian Historiography*. ed. V. Grabowsky, 23-45. Bangkok: River Books.

World Bank Data. 2018. *GDP per capita (current US$)*. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator. (last accessed 16 October 2018).

Xenon Laboratories. 2019. *Exchange Currency Converter*. https://www.xe.com/. (last accessed 8 June 2019).

Yamanaka, Keiko. 1993. New Immigration Policy and Unskilled Foreign Workers in Japan. *Pacific Affairs* 66 (1): 72-90.

_____. 2000. Nepalese labour migration to Japan: from global warriors to global workers. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23 (1): 62-93.

Yeoh, Brenda. 2009. Post-Colonialism. In *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. ed. D. Gregory, R. Johnston, G. Pratt, M. Watts, and S. Whatmore, 561-562. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Yeoh, Brenda and Katie Willis. 2002. Gendered transnational communities: a comparison of Singaporean and British migrants in China. *Geoforum* 33 (1): 553-565.

_____. 2004. *State/Nation/Transnation: Perspectives on Transnationalism in the Asia-Pacific*. London: Routledge.

_____. 2005a. Singaporean and British Transmigrates in China and the Cultural Politics of 'Contact Zones'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31 (2): 269-285.

_____. 2005b. Singaporean in China: Transnational women elites and the negotiation of gendered identities. *Geoforum* 36 (1): 211-222.

Yeoh, Brenda and Louisa-May Khoo. 1998. Home, Work and Community: Skilled International Migration and Expatriate Women in Singapore. *International Migration* 36 (2): 159-186.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Western Expatriate Interview Guide:

1) What "push" and "pull" circumstances or factors influence SIEs to relocate and stay in Bangkok, Thailand?

a) What influenced your decision to relocate to Thailand?

b) Did you visit Thailand prior to relocating? If so, where did you visit and how long did you stay?

c) What factors influence your decision to continue living in Thailand?

d) Can you identify any negative events that caused you to relocate to Thailand?

e) What expectations did you have about Thailand before you relocated?

f) How concerned were you about culture adjustment or culture shock before relocating to Thailand?

2) To what degree are SIEs socially and spatially integrated with the local Thai population?

a) What type of relationships or friendships have you established with local Thais?

b) How would you describe your Thai language ability?

c) How often do you participate in Thai cultural events (holidays, etc.)?

d) How would you describe you interest level in Thai culture and language?

e) Are you a member of any clubs or groups? If so, can you describe the nature of the organization(s)?

f) How would you describe your relationship with local Thai people?

g) How would you describe your relationship with your Thai coworkers?

h) Overall, how would you describe your degree of integration into Thai society?

i) How open are Thais to interacting with *farang* / Westerners?

j) Where is a good place for Westerners and Thais to interact and meet?

k) Describe some of your typical interactions with Thai locals.

l) Who do you generally socialize with, people from your own culture / country, individuals from other countries, or local Thais?

m) In your opinion, or from your experiences, do you think *farang* / Westerners are integrated or segregated from Thais?

n) Do you feel like you are allowed to participate with your host culture? If not, what barriers exist that prohibit further participation?

o) Do you feel like you are becoming assimilated (or acculturated), becoming more "Thai" since you arrived?

p) How different are you now compared to when you first arrived to Thailand?

q) How would you describe your social network?

r) Do you mainly watch Western or Thai television programs / movies?

s) To what degree are you involved in local (Thai) politics or political movements?

3) Do SIEs tend to live in expatriate enclaves or are the more evenly dispersed throughout the city?

a) Where do you live?

b) Where do you work?

c) How would you describe your living situation?

d) Would you say you live in a neighborhood composed mostly of expatriates, or composed primarily with local Thais?

e) Do you prefer to live with or near other Westerners or among local Thais?

4) What strategies do SIEs employ to cope and adjust to living and working in a foreign environment, i.e., Bangkok, Thailand?

a) What services or means (Internet or social network, etc.) have you used to acquire information about living or working in Thailand?

b) Before you moved to Thailand did you have any major concerns or worries? If so, how did you address them?

c) What have been your biggest challenges or adjustments so far? How have you overcome these challenges?

d) When you are in public, how do you feel? Do you have concerns about interacting with Thai locals?

e) Do you have anxiety or worries about how to carry yourself in Thai public spaces?

f) How did you go about finding your home / work?

g) What criteria was used in finding a place to live / work?

h) Have you made any special cultural adjustments at work?

i) Did anyone help you adjust to the local culture and environment? If so, who were they and how did they help you?

j) Can you think of any specific activities or experiences that helped you adjust to living / working in Thailand?

k) Can you think of any specific activities or experiences that has made it easier to interact with local Thais?

5) What are the daily activities and everyday experiences of SIEs?

a) Tell me about your typical day when you first arrived in Thailand.

b) Tell me about your typical day now.

c) Tell me about your movement and activity in a typical day.

d) What type of food do you typically consume?

6) Where are the spaces and places SIEs' activities and experiences occur?

a) Where do you typically spend your free time?

b) Where and what do you usually eat?

c) Can you name or describe the places you frequent for socializing?

d) Can you name or describe the places you frequent for shopping?

e) Where do you typically go for entertainment?

f) Where do most of your daily activities take place?

g) What type of transportation do you typically use?

7) How and to what degree do SIEs maintain ties with their country of origin?

a) How have you maintained ties with your country of origin?

b) How often do you contact friends and family living back in your home country?

c) What type of economic ties have you maintained with your home country?

d) How often do you return home to visit your friends or family?

e) Do you plan to return home (permanently) in the future? If so, when?

f) How has your allegiance to your home country changed since you relocated to Thailand?

g) Have you brought any objects to help remind you have home?

h) Have you decorated your current home in a way to remind you of your place of origin?

i) Do you feel as if you have lost any of your original culture?

j) To what degree to you participate in politics in your home country?

8) What issues or problems do SIEs encounter while living in Bangkok, Thailand?

a) What "bad" experiences have you had since you relocated to Thailand?

b) Have you ever felt threatened or endangered while living in Thailand?

c) How often would you say you drink alcohol or use drugs?

d) What influences you to drink (or use drugs)?

e) How would you describe your immigration status?

f) What type of VISA are you currently on?

g) Have you ever experienced any type of medical issues? If so, how did you go about receiving medical care?

h) How do Thais react when you tell them you are from U.S./U.K.?

i) How well do you understand or relate to local Thais?

j) Do you have concerns about returning to your home country?

9) Do SIEs feel like they "belong" in Bangkok, and what is their overall perception of their lifestyle in Thailand?

a) While staying in Thailand, do you feel more or less privileged because of your status as a Westerner?

b) Have you ever felt you were discriminated against by locals because you are a foreigner?

c) How do you feel you have been received by Thai locals?

d) How would you describe your general "lifestyle" in Thailand?

e) To what degree is your lifestyle "Western"?

f) To what degree is your lifestyle "Thai"?

g) Would you say you have better or worse living conditions in Thailand compared to your home country?

h) Overall, you would you consider your relocation a success?

i) How would you describe the experience of other Westerners living in Thailand?

j) What would you tell a friend that was considering relocating to Thailand?

k) If you had to do it over again, would you still relocate to Thailand?

l) How similar is your home country compared to Thailand?

m) Overall, do you feel like you "belong" in Thailand?

Extra Interview Questions:

A) How do Westerners integrate themselves within Thai society?

B) In your opinion, what characteristics are needed to successfully relocate and live in Bangkok, Thailand?

C) In your opinion, what kind of person relocates and lives in Thailand?

D) Can you describe a memorable experience?

E) Are there are any extra remarks you would like to add?

F) Would you like to be informed about the findings of this study?

APPENDIX B

Thai Interview Guide:

a) What is your opinion or view about Westerners (farang) living in Thailand?

b) Do feel there are too many or not enough Westerners living in Bangkok?

c) Why do you think Westerners relocate to live in Bangkok, Thailand?

d) Do you think most Westerners (*farang*) plan to permanently stay in Thailand?

e) How do you think most Westerners spend their free time in Thailand?

f) How do Westerners affect the local economy?

g) What kind of jobs do you associate with Westerners living in Thailand?

h) What experiences have you had with Westerners?

i) What is the relationship between Thais and Westerners?

j) How does your government deal with Westerners moving to Thailand?

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Number	Nationality	Biographical Data	Repatriation / Embeddedness
1.	American "Joe"	Early 30s with a BS degree. Single. Raised in Southern California. Worked as an English teacher then as an IT manager for a language school.	3 years in Bangkok. Repatriated, and now living and working in Northern California for an IT company.
2.	American "Sam"	Mid 40s with a MBA. Single. Lived abroad most of his life. Worked in South Korea as an English teacher, then moved to Hong Kong and worked in the financial/investment industry. Works as a film producer.	2 years living in Thailand, and another 20+ years living and working in Asia. Plans to retire in Thailand.
3.	American "Leo"	Late 20s with a BA degree. Single. Raised in the Midwest. Worked as an English teacher in Southern Thailand, and now works as writer/editor for a law firm in Bangkok.	2 years living in Thailand. Undecided about repatriation.
4.	American "Norman"	Early 40s with a BA degree. Single. Raised in the Midwest. Worked as a writer for a magazine, and now works an English teacher.	10 years living in Bangkok. No immediate plans to repatriate, but plans to return to the USA eventually.
5.	British "David"	Late 40s with a PhD. Married. Raised in Southern England. Worked as an English teacher, currently works as a lecturer at a university.	10 years living in Bangkok. Married to a Thai woman. Plans to repatriate to the UK and start a family.
6.	American "Lois"	Early 60s with a PhD. Married. Raised in the Midwest. Worked as a professor in the USA, then relocated to Bangkok, and works as a lecturer at a university.	8 years living in Thailand. Married to an American man. Owns a condo and plans to retire in Thailand.
7.	British "Chris"	Early 40s with a BS degree. Married. Raised in Southern England. Initially worked as an English teacher, and now owns and operates a mid-sized advertising company.	18 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai woman. Plans to retire in Thailand.
8.	British "Ian"	Early 50s with a BS degree. Raised in Northern England.	9 years living in Thailand.

Number	Nationality	Biographical Data	Repatriation / Embeddedness
9.	American "Woody"	Early 30s with a BS degree. Single. Raised in New England and then worked in Southern California in the IT industry. Works remotely in Bangkok as a computer programmer.	1 year living in Thailand. Undecided about repatriation.
10.	British "Diane"	Early 20s and without a college degree. Single. Raised in Wales. Went to Thailand on holiday, found a job teaching English, and decided to stay.	4 years in Bangkok. Repatriated, and returned to Wales for study.
11.	British "Noah"	Early 20s and without a college degree. Married with one child. Raised in the Northeast of England. Came to Thailand on holiday, found a job teaching English in Bangkok, and eventually opened a hostel and bar on a resort island in the Gulf of Thailand.	4 years living in Thailand. Married to a Cambodian woman and has one child. Owns and operates businesses in Thailand and Cambodia. No plans to repatriate.
12.	British "Gareth"	Late 20s and without a college degree. Married. Raised in the Northeast of England. Came to Thailand on an extended holiday and stayed. Independently wealthy.	4 years living in Thailand. Married to Thai woman. Owns a condo in Bangkok, has investments in Thailand and Cambodia. No plans to repatriate.
13.	American "Fraser"	Early 50s and without a college degree. Single. Raised in the Northeast. Worked for the US federal government, and became disabled. Moved to Thailand and attempted to open a business.	1 year in Thailand. Repatriated, to the USA, and then moved to the Caribbean.
14.	American "Judy"	Mid 30s with a PhD. Married. Raised in Southern California. Worked as a professor in the USA, and then moved with her husband to Thailand. Works as a lecturer at a university.	2 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai man. Owns a condo in Bangkok, but still plans to repatriate to the USA in a couple of years.
15.	British "Oscar"	Early 40s with a BA degree. Married. Raised in Southern England. Worked in Hong Kong as a journalist, and then moved to Thailand. Works as a writer/editor.	2 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai woman. Owns a condo in Bangkok. No plans to repatriate.
Number	Nationality	Biographical Data	Repatriation / Embeddedness

16.	American "Eugene"	Mid 30s with a MS degree. Single. Raised in the Northwest. Worked in East and Southwest Asia as an English teacher, then moved to Bangkok and worked as an English instructor at a university.	1 year in Bangkok. Repatriated, to the USA, and now working again in Southwest Asia.
17.	American "William"	Early 30s with a MS degree. Single. Raised in the Northwest. Worked in the USA and Southwest Asia as an economist. Relocated to Bangkok to attend university. Works as a lecturer at a university.	2 years living in Thailand. Plans to repatriate to the USA after completing his PhD.
18.	British "Charlie"	Mid 30s with a MA degree. Single. Raised in Northern England. Worked in Japan as an English teacher. Relocated to Bangkok and works as a Japanese language teacher at an international school.	7 years living in Thailand. Undecided about repatriation.
19.	American "Blanche"	Early 70s with a MA degree. Single. Raised in the Midwest. Worked in the USA in education. Relocated to Thailand and works as a lecturer at a university.	25+ years living in Thailand. Plans to retire in Thailand.
20.	British "Roger"	Mid 60s with a MS degree. Single. Raised in Southern England. Worked in New York for 20 years, and then relocated to Thailand. Worked as an interior designer, and now works as a lecturer at a university.	12 years living in Thailand with another 8+ years living in East and Southeast Asia. Plans to retire in Southeast Asia.
21.	British "Gary"	Early 40s with a BS degree. Married. Raised in Southern England. Worked in Australia, and then relocated to Thailand. Works as chief financial officer for a large MNC.	13 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai woman. Owns a condo and house in Thailand. Plans to retire in Thailand.
22.	British "Dylan"	Early 20s without a degree. Single. Raised in Wales. Worked as an electrician in the UK, and then relocated to Thailand. Works as an English teacher at a language school.	1 year living in Thailand. Has a live-in Thai girlfriend. Undecided about repatriation.

Number	Nationality	Biographical Data	Repatriation / Embeddedness
23.	American "Paul"	Late 40s with a MS degree. Single. Raised in the Midwest. Worked in Australia in the TV industry, and then relocated to Bangkok. Works as a journalism lecturer at a university.	13 years living in Thailand. Owns a condo in Bangkok. Would like to repatriate or move to another country.
24.	American "Lee"	Early 60s with a JD degree. Married. Raised in the Southeast. Worked as lawyer in Florida. Relocated to Thailand and teaches law at a university.	20+ years living in Thailand. Married to Thai woman. Plans to retire in Thailand.
25.	American "John"	Early 40s with a PhD. Married. Raised in the Northeast. Worked as a financial advisor in NYC, married and relocated to Thailand. Works as a lecturer at a university.	12 years living in Thailand. Married to Thai woman. Owns a condo, and has investments in Thailand. Plans to retire in Thailand.
26.	American "Rick"	Early 40s with a PhD. Married. Raised in Southern California. Works as a lecturer at a university.	15 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai woman. Lives with Thai in-laws. Plans to retire in Thailand.
27.	American "Daryl"	Late 40s with a BS degree. Single. Raised in Midwest. Worked in Korea, and then Hong Kong in the finance industry. Independently wealthy.	8 years living in Thailand. Over 20+ years living in Asia. No plans to repatriate. Plans to retire in Southeast Asia.
28.	British "Carol"	Mid 20s with a MS degree. Single. Raised in Northern England. Works as a speech therapist at an international school.	1 year living in Thailand. Undecided about repatriation.
29.	American "Glenn"	Late 40s with a BS degree. Married. Raised in the Northeast. Works as an IT manager for a large MNC.	8 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai woman. Owns a condo in Bangkok. Plans to retire in Thailand.
30.	British "Carl"	Late 20s with a BS degree. Married. Raised in Northern England. Works as a teacher at an international school.	1 year in Thailand. Married to a British woman. Plans to repatriate.
31.	British "Beth"	Late 20s with a BS degree. Married. Raised in Northern England. Works as a teacher at an international school.	1 year in Thailand. Married to a British man. Plans to repatriate.

Number	Nationality	Biographical Data	Repatriation / Embeddedness
32.	British "Hershel"	Late 30s with a BS degree. Married. Raised in Southern England. Works as an English teacher for a language school.	3 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai woman. No plans to repatriate.
33.	British "Archie"	Mid 30s with a BA degree. Single. Raised in Southern England. Worked remotely in Bangkok as a computer programmer.	2 years in Bangkok. Repatriated, working in England.
34.	British "Ethan"	Early 40s with a BA degree. Single. Raised in Southern England. Worked as a journalist and writer in China, then relocated to Thailand. Works as a writer.	1 year living in Bangkok. Undecided about repatriation.
35.	British "George"	Mid 40s with a BS degree. Single. Raised in Southern England. Worked in Australia in the IT industry, relocated to Thailand. Works as an IT manager for a large Thai company.	14 years in Bangkok. Undecided about repatriation.
36.	American "Andy"	Early 30s without a degree. Single. Raised in the Northeast. Works remotely in Bangkok as a poker player.	1 year living in Bangkok. Undecided about repatriation.
37.	American "Leonard"	Mid 60s with a MS degree. Married. Raised in Southern California. Worked in Hawaii, then relocated to Thailand. Works as a lecturer at a university.	20 years living in Thailand. Married to an American woman with two children. No plans to repatriate.
38.	American "Jack"	Mid 40s with a MS degree. Married. Raised in the Midwest. Works as an English teacher at a university.	11 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai woman. Lives with Thai in-laws. Plans to retire in Thailand.
39.	British "Benny"	Early 60s without a degree. Single. Raised in Southern England. Was restaurateur in England, then relocated to Thailand. Works in the real estate industry in Bangkok.	10 years living in Thailand. No plans to repatriate.
40.	American "Fred"	Early 30s with a BA degree. Single. Raised in Southern California. Worked as an English teacher at a language school. Unemployed at the time of the interview.	1 year living in Bangkok. Undecided about repatriation.
41.	British "Henry"	Early 40s with a BA degree. Single. Raised in Southern England. Landlord of several properties in England, which he manages from Thailand. Independently wealthy.	3 years living in Thailand. Has a live-in Thai girlfriend. Undecided about repatriation.
42.	American "Steve"	Late 40s without a degree. Single. Raised in the Northwest. Worked as a comedian in the US, the relocated to Thailand. Owns operates a comedy club in Bangkok.	5 years living in Thailand. Business in Thailand. No plans to repatriate.

Number	Nationality	Biographical Data	Repatriation / Embeddedness
43.	British "Greg"	Mid 20s with a BA degree. Single. Raised in Wales. Worked as English teacher, and now works as a tutor for Thai university students.	3 years living in Thailand. Has a live-in Thai girlfriend. Undecided about repatriation.
44.	British "Oliver"	Mid 20s without a degree. Single. Raised in Southern England. Worked as an English teacher, and now works in a call center.	1 year living in Thailand. Has a live-in Thai girlfriend. No plans to repatriate.
45.	American "Brad"	Mid 40s with a BA degree. Single. Raised in the Midwest. Worked at an international school in Hong Kong, and then relocated to Thailand. Unemployed at the time of the interview.	1 year living in Thailand. Has a live-in Thai partner. No plans to repatriate.
46.	American "Simon"	Late 50s with a BA degree. Single. Raised in the Northwest. Manages properties in the USA. Independently wealthy.	3 years living in Thailand. Has a live-in Thai partner. No plans to repatriate.
47.	British "Noel"	Early 40s with a MS degree. Married. Raised in Southern England. Worked in finance in England, and then relocated to Thailand. Works as a lecturer at a university.	5 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai woman. Plans to retire in Thailand.
48.	British "Chad"	Early 30s with a MS degree. Single. Raised in Northern England. Worked in communication in England, and then relocated to Thailand. Works as a lecturer at a university.	1 year living in Thailand. Undecided about repatriation.
49.	American "Don"	Early 40s with a MS degree. Single. Raised in the Southwest. Worked as an English teacher in Korea, and then relocated to Thailand. Works as a lecturer at a university.	5 years living in Thailand. Has a live-in Thai girlfriend. Plans to retire in Southeast Asia.
50.	British "Clifford"	Late 40s with a BS degree. Married. Raised in Southern England. Worked as an engineer in England, and then relocated to Thailand. Worked as an English teacher, and now works as a teacher an international school.	14 years living in Thailand. Married to a Thai woman. Plans to retire in Thailand.

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Friday, December 20, 2013
IRB Application No	AS13133
Proposal Title:	Exploring the Lives, Experiences, and Challenges of Western Self-Initiated Expatriates in the "Contact Zones" of Bangkok, Thailand
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 12/19/2016

Principal Investigator(s):

Robert Don Garrett
303 S. Doty
Stillwater, OK 74074

Rebecca Sheehan
337 Murray
Stillwater, OK 74074

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia H. Kennison

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: Exploring the Lives, Experiences, and Challenges of Western Self-Initiated Expatriates in the "Contact Zones" of Bangkok, Thailand

Investigator: Robert D. Garrett, Department of Geography, Oklahoma State University

Purpose:
The purpose of my research is to study the lives, experiences, and challenges of Western self-initiated expatriates who have chosen to relocate and live in Bangkok, Thailand. Specifically, my study examines the following: 1) factors which influence individuals to relocate and stay in Bangkok; 2) the everyday circumstances and conditions expatriates experience after moving to Bangkok; 3) the ways Western SIEs socially and spatially integrate with the Thai population; 4) the economic, social, and political ties SIEs maintain with their country of origin? 5) the ways Western SIEs affect Thailand; and 6) how Thai citizens perceive Western individuals who reside in Thailand.

Procedures:
I will be asking you some questions (in English). I will digitally record and take written notes throughout the interview. The interview may take up to one hour. Please feel free to stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any individual question. Summaries of the interview will be available upon request.

Participation:
Your participation is strictly voluntary. At any time if you feel uncomfortable you may stop answering questions or simply refuse to answer. You can withdraw from the study at any point without penalty.

Confidentiality:
Your participation in this study will be kept confidential at all times. This means I will never reveal your name or connect your name with your answers. Your responses will be kept in my custody and will be under lock and key and only I will have access to it. The data will be stored indefinitely as I intend to use it in the future for publications.

"The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records."

Collected data will be kept with the principal investigator in his home in Bangkok, and then returned to the United States. All interviews stored in the home of the researcher will afford limited access to anyone else. The data will be kept in a locked closet to which only the researcher has the key. Once in the United States, the data will be stored in a locked file cabinet inside a locked office. Pseudonyms will be used for field notes, interview guides, analyses and publication. The data will be stored indefinitely as it may

be used in the future for publications at a later date. Only the principal investigator will have access to interview data.

Compensation:
No form of reimbursement will be administered.

Results and Benefits:
The information from my study may be used to understand the relatively recent phenomena of Westerners self-expatriating to the developing world, thus contributing to migration and expatriate studies. Additionally, my findings may be used to inform individuals considering moving abroad on their own, by making my research available to relocation agencies which help Westerners move and culturally adjust to foreign environments. Likewise, my study will be made available to government agencies in developed and developing countries, potentially to inform migration policies. Furthermore, I will incorporate the research into future geography courses, conference presentations and publication.

Contact Information:
You can contact me via email: My email address is ajarngarrett@yahoo.com or robert.garrett@okstate.edu. My address in the United States is: 303 S. Doty Street, Stillwater, OK 74074. Phone: (001) 918-949-7039.

My advisor is Dr. Rebecca Sheehan. She can be contacted at 364 Murray Hall, Department of Geography, Stillwater, OK 74078. Phone: (001) 405-334-6354. Her email address is Rebecca.sheehan@okstate.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, (001) 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

APPENDIX F

VERBAL CONSENT PROCEDURES

Verbal Consent Procedures for Interviews

Introduction:
Before we begin, I would like to explain why we are asking you to participate in this research, including what this research is about and how we will use the information you provide us. Please feel free to stop me at any time to ask questions or request clarification. Then, I will ask if you if you would like to participate in my research study.

Purpose:
The purpose of my research is to study the lives, experiences, and challenges of Western self-initiated expatriates who have chosen to relocate and live in Bangkok, Thailand.

Procedures/Confidentiality:
Your identity will remain confidential and your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw from the interview at any time. Additionally, you may choose not to answer any question.

If you have questions about the research project or procedures, you can ask me now, throughout the interview, or contact me after the interview. My contact information is on the participant information sheet and on my business card that I have given you. *Researcher will provide business card to participant(s).*

Are you interested in participating in this research study?

VITA

Robert D. Garrett

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: MOVING FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH: UNDERSTANDING SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATION TO BANGKOK, THAILAND

Major Field: Geography

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Geography at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2019.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in International Studies at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2006.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in History at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2001.

Experience:

- Lecturer - Faculty of General Education, Stamford International University, Bangkok, Thailand. 2018 – Present.
- Lab Instructor - Department of Geography, Oklahoma State University. Stillwater, Oklahoma. 2016 – 2017.
- Lecturer - Faculty of General Education, Stamford International University, Bangkok, Thailand. 2014 – 2016.